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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

ARABIC

GCE Advanced Level

Paper 9680/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

Almost every candidate attempted all questions on the Paper, although some questions were answered much better than others. The questions which produced the highest standard of answers were **Questions 3** and **4**. In general, candidates failed to demonstrate the quality of language and style of writing required by this syllabus. Candidates require more practice in exam technique and development of their ability to express themselves in a grammatically correct way using a wide range of suitable vocabulary.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Candidates were required to extract the meanings of the underlined words from Passage One. A large number of candidates gave a general meaning for each word, without reference to its specific meaning in the text. Examples of such errors are as follows:

سجلوا : طافوا ، عرفوا

تلمساً : كثيراً

بقاع : أنواع

Candidates would benefit from practice in giving the specific meaning of a particular word according to the context in which it occurs.

Question 2

Candidates were required to make the changes indicated to each sentence, while ensuring that the rest of the sentence remained grammatically correct. An example of what was required was provided by way of illustration. Many candidates answered parts **(a)** and **(e)** correctly. Examples of incorrect answers to the other parts of the question follow:

ب- وهذا النشاط السياحي الكبير كانوا دافعين .

ت- لأن السائحان لاتجذبهما إلا جوانب التميز الثقافي والحضاري.

In order to gain full marks for this question, candidates needed to be familiar with the rules of Arabic grammar, particularly the dual case, particles assimilated to the verb, and defective verbs.

Question 3

Candidates were required to answer in their own words a series of questions which tested their comprehension of Passage One. Many candidates provided correct answers, but imitated the style of the passage. Others wrote in their own style but made grammatical or spelling mistakes. An example of an incorrect answer to part **(b)** follows:

ب- إن الغربيون سوف يتطور اقتصادهم في هذا البلد ويتعلم أدب واللغة والتاريخ هذا المكان

Question 4

This question tested candidates' comprehension of Passage Two. It was well answered by the majority of candidates, although many imitated the author's style. Candidates should therefore practise answering such questions in their own style in order to gain the full number of marks available for quality of language.

Question 5

Candidates were required to answer both parts of this question in no more than 140 words. Part (a) required candidates to use information from both passages, but some candidates used information from only the second passage. Other candidates copied out large sections of the second passage and so lost the marks available for quality of language and style of writing. Many of those candidates who tried to answer in their own words made a large number of grammatical and spelling mistakes and so, again, lost the marks available for quality and style of writing. Examples of such errors follow:

هذين نصين تكلم عن الرحلة الذي إن الرحلة والسفر هي ينقل من مكان إلى مكان آخر.
إذا قررت الذهاب في رحلة استكشاف سأختار مصر لأن هذا بلد تاريخي سأذهب لتعرف عن حياة عربي أريد
أن أعاشر معهم لتحسن لغتي وأريد أن أشاهد نهر النيل وجامعة الأزهار .

Paper 9680/03

Essay

General comments

This is a new examination offered for the first time. The overall performance of the candidates was average.

Recommendations

- It is very important for future candidates to extend their general knowledge through extensive reading and writing.
- Learning new words and expressions and how to use them in appropriate contexts, would enrich their writing.
- Candidates should be given instruction in writing compositions, to include stories, dialogues, letters and reports. Pair work and role-play dealing with these topics can be very useful in the classroom.
- Candidates are recommended to use an Arabic-Arabic dictionary for consultation in their studies in preparation for the examination, as a bilingual dictionary does not give enough information regarding lexical items generally. (Dictionaries are not permitted during the examination.)

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The few candidates who chose this topic did well and adhered to the required number of words. One candidate chose to write about pollution and environmental protection in their country.

Question 2

This topic was the most popular title chosen by candidates. It was a familiar subject to all of them. They gave various dimensions to the learning process and wrote about the value of education.

Question 3

Candidates dealt with this topic successfully. The use of computers and television were written about as important innovations.

Question 4

Candidates managed to give some examples of previous wars and the consequences.

Question 5

This topic was the second most popular title chosen by candidates. They wrote about their own leisure activities and discussed various hobbies including the use of the Internet and information technology in general.

Question 6

Candidates who chose this topic discussed youth as a vital stage of life. Most of them were familiar with the topic and used good expressions and phrases to enhance their ideas.

Paper 9680/04

Texts

General comments

The level of performance of the candidates was varied. Although the books selected for the examination were varied in nature, candidates generally showed a somewhat superficial knowledge of the contents of the texts. The wide choice of books offered and the choice of questions requires the candidates to focus in detail on at least *three* books for achieving high performance in the examination.

The Papers are assessed against descriptions of performance set out in the syllabus, which indicate what is expected by candidates at each level. The following observations affected the performance of candidates in general:

- Candidates answered more questions than required. Some candidates answered all the questions on the Paper but very briefly and without going into any detail. The lack of concentration on three specific questions led to a low performance on the test in general.
- **Questions 1 (a), 2 (a), 3 (a) and 4 (b)** were answered as if they were comprehension questions and not as a literature essay, in which candidates are required to show solid knowledge of the selections, i.e. the answers were very brief and specific. The rubric states that candidates are required to write between 500 – 600 words for each question.

The questions are intended to provide a stimulus to candidates to allow them to bring a focus to their answer. That is why there is either a single question, or a number of short questions following the passage that could be answered as one whole essay.

Most candidates answered the questions in less than 300 words. Although their answers were specific, they did not show close attention to detail of passages or good insight when discussing characters. The knowledge they showed was superficial and pre-learnt.

- A number of candidates copied paragraphs from the selected books and used them as answers. Copying word for word showed that the candidates may have read the text but are probably unable to see beyond the main plot in the story. Some candidates demonstrated problems with the language and subsequently were unable to express their ideas comprehensibly.
- Some candidates answered two questions on the same text, e.g. **1 (a)** and **1 (b)**. In such cases, the best mark is counted. Candidates must answer on three *different* texts.

Helpful hints for Teachers and candidates

To help the candidates achieve a high grade, try to encourage them to look for the major themes in their chosen texts and then apply these ideas when answering the question, giving details from the text as supportive evidence. The questions used are very broad questions and candidates have a lot of flexibility. The aim is to select the most relevant main ideas for each question and incorporate those ideas with evidence. It is the ideas and evidence with examples from the texts that is being looked for, rather than a large number of words and an unfocused answer.

- Candidates should learn to organise their answers around the central concepts and ideas (an outline helps).
- Candidates should provide examples from the novel, play, or any of the books they choose to support their answers.
- Candidates should summarise in a sentence or two the main points at the end of their answer to show that they have answered the questions comprehensively.
- Candidates should make sure that they have answered *three* questions from *three different* selections.
- In mock/trial examinations it is helpful to refer to the syllabus and the mark scheme which is included to evaluate candidates' work.

Comments on specific questions

The following observations are derived from the candidates' answers.

Question 1

Naguib Mahfouz "*The Whisper of Madness*"

- (a) This question was one of the most popular questions answered by candidates. The question is direct and seeks precise information on why the Officer wanted to see the Minister and what the results of the meeting were. Candidates showed a good knowledge of the book, but most did not achieve good marks because they dealt with them as if they were comprehension questions with answers that were very short (one or two sentences only). A few candidates focused on the relationship between the two characters and tried to shed light on the events with quotations from the novel itself. Candidates did not expand their answer in the third question where they had to write about the circumstances of the main character.
- (b) Candidates who answered this question showed a good ability to organise the material and they provided a controlled and structured answer with in-depth illustrations from the book. Candidates seemed more comfortable answering the essay question than short answer questions.

Question 2

"Abu Al-A'la Al-ma'rri, *His Life, His Poetry*"

- (a) Candidates answered this question as a comprehension test and not as a literature test. Their answers, therefore, were short with no illustrations or examples from the poet's life and works.
- (b) Not enough candidates answered this part of the question to make general comments appropriate.

Question 3

M'arouf Al-Russafi "*Selected Poems*"

- (a) This was one of the most popular questions. Most candidates were able to explain and write about the poem and the poet in detail. Again, the candidates misunderstood the questions as comprehension questions and answered very briefly with no expansion on the main ideas that they were giving. Although the linguistic features of the candidates' writing should not affect the marks drastically, it would help if candidates write in a legible and organised manner.

- (b) Candidates who answered this question tried to illustrate their understanding of the poem, but again they wrote about the first part of the question and did not manage to relate it to the poet and his poems.

Question 4

Taha Hussein “*Al – Ayyam*” Parts I+II+III

- (a) Most candidates answered this question. It was interesting to note that they wrote the appropriate amount of words in their answers and did not treat the question as a short comprehension. This might be an indication that candidates read the book in detail as a biography and were able to relate to the different incidents that happened in Taha Hussein’s life. The only weakness that was apparent in the answers was that the candidates wrote what they remembered of the events but did not directly relate it to the question on how Taha Hussein faced all the hardships in his life. Candidates rarely used quotations from the book.
- (b) Candidates answered the question as a narrative about his life and used information mostly from Part II of the book. The questions asked are based on the *three parts* of the book as stated in the syllabus.

Question 5

Ihsan Abdul Qadoos “*For Whom Shall I Leave All This*”

- (a) Candidates wrote in detail about the relationship between Man and Order in general. They ignored the section of the question where it asks them to refer to the events and the characters in the novel. Candidates neglected the different characters that appear in the novel and showed no understanding of the novel and its plot.
- (b) Not enough candidates answered this part of the question to make general comments appropriate.

Question 6

Al-Jahiz “*Al-Bayyan Wa-attabyeen*”

- (a) Candidates who answered this question were able to explain the incident but failed to develop the ideas and write explicitly.
- (b) The question was a good and general one in terms of writing about learning from the moment of birth until his death. Candidates wrote about the quotation only and ignored the rest of the question where it asks them to support their answer from incidents from the book itself.

Question 7

Gibran Khalil Gibran “*The Prophet*”

- (a)(b) Not enough candidates answered this question to make a general comment appropriate.

Question 8

Taufiq Al-Hakim “*The Diary of a Legal Officer in Rural Areas*”

- (a)(b) Nearly 75% of the candidates answered (b). They showed a good level of textual knowledge and supported their ideas with relevant incidents and quotations from the book. Some candidates misunderstood the topic completely and wrote about the life and culture of Egyptian society in general without relating it to the incidents in the book. A few candidates copied word for word remarks written about the book by different literary critics. These candidates showed no indication of having read the book.

General comments

Some candidates followed the word order and style of the English text in their translations, and this had a detrimental effect on the flow of their Arabic. There were many words that appeared as dictionary translations bearing no relation to the context and subject of the passage. Many candidates also made a large number of spelling mistakes, and used incorrect tenses of the verb. On the whole the standard of candidates' writing in Arabic would benefit from further practice of the following:

- Extensive reading of Arabic texts to increase vocabulary and improve familiarity with different styles of Arabic writing;
- Translation exercises in preparation for the examination, perhaps using newspapers and magazines.
- Grammar and spelling exercises.

Some candidates' were unfamiliar with terms such as 'travel agent' and 'travel brochure', even though travel is a fairly common and popular subject for A Level candidates.

Some candidates left whole sentences untranslated and there were some candidates whose work contained such a large number of errors that it was very difficult to understand what had been written.