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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 Subsidiary Level

Paper 8668/04 Texts

General comments

The level of performance of candidates was varied. In spite of the wide choice of books offered and the number of questions given, in general candidates did not have a good detailed grasp of the content of the texts and as such very few candidates were able to achieve very good marks.

Candidates' work was assessed against the descriptors set out in the marking scheme which is included in the syllabus. The following observations affected the general performance of candidates:

- Candidates should answer only three questions from a choice of eight, each on a different set text. Many candidates answered more questions than was required. Some candidates answered all the questions on the question paper but very briefly, showing that they were not familiar with the requirements of the syllabus and indicating that they may not know any of the texts in any depth.
- Candidates tended to answer **Question 1 (a)**, **Question 2 (a)**, **Question 3 (a)** and **Question 4 (a)** as comprehension questions rather than as essay-type questions in which they should show detailed and solid knowledge of the literary texts selected. Instead their answers were very brief and specific. Candidates should understand that the questions are set as a stimulus to allow them to bring a focus to their answer. The **(b)** essay questions, which required candidates to write between 500 – 600 words, were rarely attempted by candidates.
- Most candidates answered the questions in less than 300 words. Though their answers were specific, they did not show close attention to the detail of the passages or good insight when discussing characters. The knowledge they showed was superficial and at times pre-learnt and not adapted to the question being asked.
- A number of candidates copied out paragraphs from the selected books and used them as their answers. This is not satisfactory, and focuses on only one small part of the question. As such many candidates were unable to express their ideas in a comprehensible way.

Recommendations

- Candidates should focus on reading and understanding only three books chosen from the list of set texts in the syllabus and develop a good knowledge of the major characters or ideas in the texts selected.
- The questions are set to enable to candidate to select and apply the most relevant of these ideas to the question being asked and to support their points with close reference to the texts. Candidates are not penalised for linguistic errors which do not impede the communication of meaning.
- 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.
- In mock/trial tests, teachers can refer to the Mark Scheme contained in the syllabus to evaluate their candidates' answers.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Naguib Mahfouz: *The Whisper of Madness*

- (a) Candidates generally tended to summarise the story without referring directly to the questions given. Most failed to compare the events at the beginning and end of the story. Candidates who were able to do that achieved higher marks because they showed an awareness of the events that linked the beginning and end of the story.
- (b) Naguib Mahfouz criticised Egyptian society in his book. Most candidates who answered this question tended to ignore the characters and the events in the book and wrote about Egyptian society in general. By doing so they failed to write an essay which related to the book.

Question 2

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

- (a) The poem cited in the question paper is about the poet's opinion of the rich. Candidates who answered this question wrote instead about their own ideas about money and rich people rather than referring to the poet's own ideas and poems.
- (b) Very few candidates answered this part of the question.

Question 3

Verses from the *Diwan of Ma'roof al-Russafi*

- (a) Most candidates answered this question very well. Candidates' answers were well organised and comprehensible and demonstrated an ability to interpret the verses well. A few candidates misunderstood the questions as comprehension questions and answered very briefly with no expansion on the main ideas that they were giving.
- (b) Some candidates who answered this question illustrated their understanding of the poem with further examples, but some candidates failed to quote other relevant poems.

Question 4

Taha Hussein, *Stream of Days*

- (a) Candidates who answered this question were able to answer the first question well, but did not effectively answer the following two questions.
- (b) Candidates who answered this question only briefly mentioned two experiences that affected the poet's rise to glory and were unable to elaborate on their points, resulting in far too short an essay.

Question 5

Ihsan Abdul Qadoos, *For Whom Shall I Leave This?*

- (a) Candidates who answered this question wrote a summary and cited different stories from the book but did not relate what they wrote to the question, i.e. how does politics impose itself on human behaviour and culture?
- (b) Most candidates who attempted this question demonstrated that they had read the book, but some candidates wrote about only one story and thus their essays were far too short being about 120 words in length.

Question 6

Selections from the works of Al-Jahiz

- (a) Very few candidates attempted this question and those who did were only able to write a very short paragraph explaining the incident.

(b) Very few candidates attempted this question.

Question 7

Khalil Gibran Khalil, *The Prophet*

(a)(b) In this book the author's philosophies are expressed without concrete incidents or characters. Of the few candidates who attempted this question, weakness in their linguistic ability prevented them from elaborating on those philosophies. They tended instead to write only one or two paragraphs copying the philosophies word for word from the book with no elaboration or analysis.

Question 8

Tawfiq Al-Hakim, *The Diary of a Legal Officer in Rural Areas*

(a)(b) Most candidates answered part **(b)**. Some showed a good level of textual knowledge and supported their ideas with relevant incidents and quotations from the text. Some however copied out the critical analysis written by different authors which is found at the end of the book. They achieved low marks by doing this as they did not attempt to relate the critical analysis to incidents from the book. In some answers there was evidence that candidates may have memorised material and used it to answer the question, which meant that most of the material written was irrelevant.