



Examiners' Report

June 2019

IAL Arabic WAA02 01

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Introduction

Students are required to draw on and apply their knowledge of Arabic language, grammar and lexis by selecting appropriate forms of words to complete sentences, as well as demonstrate an ability to manipulate Arabic language in continuous writing.

Students will be expected to recognise and use Arabic in a variety of contexts and in relation to the following general topic areas: Youth culture and concerns, lifestyle, health and fitness, environment and travel, education and employment, technology in the Arabic-speaking world, society in the Arabic-speaking world, and ethics in the Arabic-speaking world.

Question 1

Question 1 WAA 02 contains a passage of 200 words in English to translate into Arabic, most students were successful and achieved a good grade. Students generally performed well in response to the stimulus. Many used acceptable equivalent words to the challenging phrases and words, however a small number of students demonstrated that they were unable to transfer phrases such as the title, and terms such as "stranded", "petrol can", "repay", "warm clothes" and "inspire". Over all, the performance was very good, and phrases such as "My heart was beating out of my chest" were successfully translated by the majority of students.

Question 2 (a)

The Discursive essay, students were required to write a story based on the events described in the given text which describes the experiences of a young brother and sister spending their summer holiday with their grandparents, away from modern comforts and distractions in the countryside. The students are required to explore the siblings' points of view and reflect on the potential lasting benefits of the experience.

A very popular and successful question from students, promoting the benefits to the siblings to have a break from an online life and enrich their experiences of nature and quality time with their grandparents, some students evidently based some reflections on their own personal experience.

Question 2 (b)

For the creative essay, students were required to compose a persuasive speech about the growing crisis faced by many young Arabs with physical inactivity and excessive fast food consumption to the Minister of Health. Students needed to create a persuasive argument reflecting on the influences of globalisation and the dangers of developing diabetes and higher numbers of obesity compared to earlier generations, and warning the minister to consider the future implications on citizens in the future if these issues are not addressed through education and interventions.

This question proved to be very successful and popular, and inspired students to think politically with great attention to detail.

Question 3 (a)

The first of two questions on Arab science, the students were instructed to discuss the important contribution Ibn Al-Jazar Al-Qayrawani made to medical sciences, together with some biographical details of the scientist's life and background.

Very few students chose this question, and those who did produced unsatisfactory responses. Student knowledge of Arab contributions to science seems to be limited, and may be due to a lack of study in this topic area.

Question 3 (b)

The second question on Arab science which gives students the flexibility to write an account about any Arab astronomer and the discoveries made by the chosen figure, and how they contributed to astronomy.

Student responses were limited to Al-Khawarizmi, and did not produce good quality essays which cover the requirements of the question to discuss the contribution to astronomy and the biography of the astronomer.

Question 4 (a)

The first of two essays on Arab art and architecture, students were asked to discuss the popularity of Arab folklore dancing styles by choosing one named national dance and reflect on its cultural significance. Only one dance style and country should be discussed with detailed and logical substantiated opinions.

A popular question, which produced a variety of styles. Dabka was chosen by the majority of students, and covered a substantiated reflection of the cultural significance.

Question 4 (b)

The second essay question on Arab art and architecture requires students to discuss one Arab castle or fort, and provide an account of its history, cultural significance and the role it has played for national identity.

This question had a low number of responses and few covered the requirements of the question. A number of students scored very low or no marks as they chose to make up forts and castles.

Question 5 (a)

In this section on Comedy in Arabic Cinema, students must evaluate how the film "The Three Who Deceived Her" criticises an outdated educational system, with substantiated opinions which must include an explanation of the relationship between the protagonist and her parents with examples from the film.

A very popular question for students, however the majority of did not score high marks as they chose to write a summary of the film instead of answering the question directly, focussing on the relationship of Naguiba and her parents.

Question 5 (b)

In this section, Comedy in Arabic Cinema, students must discuss the moral of using the protagonist's friend Mamdouh in the film "Husband at Service", focusing on the social attitudes of divorce and the challenges made by the film to this and remarriage.

Another very popular question for students, but again the majority failed to answer the question directly. Students need to analyse characters, themes, and cinematography; simply retelling the general storyline of the film will not answer question.

Question 6 (a)

In this section, Tragedy in Arabic Cinema, students were required to evaluate the main issue raised in the film "Wife of the VIP". Students should avoid retelling the story, and focus on discussing the turning points for the protagonists in terms of the influences of power on behaviour.

A popular question although most students simply retold the general storyline. Those who were successful analysed the influence of power on the characters and avoided generalisations by giving accurate examples of power influences on the characters.

Question 6 (b)

Tragedy in Arabic Cinema: Students were required to explore how the character of the old man in the film "Captain Abu Ra'iad" is treated and valued by his neighbours with references to events in the film.

A popular question, with many students successfully answering the question with logical analysis of the treatment of the character. Fewer numbers of students gave a generalised summary of the storyline than other Arabic Cinema questions.

Question 7 (a)

Arabic poetry: Students were required to discuss the themes explored in the poem "The Winged Philosopher" and evaluate the methods used by the Elia Abu Madi to achieve these themes.

No students answered this question.

Question 7 (b)

Arabic poetry: Students were required to identify that the poem "The birth of purple river" is a pioneering new style by Nazik Al-Malaika called "blank verse/free verse", and discuss the meaning and intent of the poem.

No students answered this question.

Question 8 (a)

Arabic literature: Students were required to analyse the character of Zahra in the novel "The call of the nightingale" as the mother of the two girls living in poverty.

Students need to read the novel, and avoid watching the film which differs greatly from the original. Many responses to this question failed to answer the question directly, and make references to the novel. Those who were successful gave a strong account about Zahra's character as depicted in the novel.

Question 8 (b)

Arabic literature: Students were required to choose one set of opposing emotions such as "admiration and jealousy" and discuss how the novel "Sara" by Abbas Al-Aqad represents them through the two main characters of the novel Hammam and Sara.

Only a few students answered this question, but those who did produced good quality essays that compared the emotions with reference to events and dynamics of the named characters.

Paper Summary

This qualification is increasing in popularity globally, with triple the number of students since the last examination series. General student performance was good, with improvements in translation skills and greater creativity from the essays.

Long standing errors still occur, which are due to a lack of exam techniques. Some students still answer questions on films and novels with generalised summaries of the storylines and completely bypass the actual questions; which results in scoring low to no marks. Students need to be given plenty of opportunity to gain experience with essay questions, and practise techniques to understand the question's requirements and plan responses.

Questions on films, especially comedy and tragedy, continue to prove popular year on year. Few students choose to answer questions on poetry, which suggests some students may not be covering the full specification which can limit their awareness and opportunities.

Grade Boundaries

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