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# Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2021

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level  
In Arabic (WAA02/01)  
Unit 2: Research, Understanding and Written  
Response

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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 WAA02 contains a passage of 200 words in English titled “Modern Art Exhibition” to translate into Arabic, most students were successful and achieved a good grade. Students mostly performed well in response to the stimulus.

The majority of learners provided an accurate transfer of meaning in a style expected in Arabic. This question was slightly more demanding than the previous series due to a common difficulty for learners to translate the words “Contemporary” and “dynamic” and phrases “guided tours” and “private collectors” into Arabic.

Typically, however, the more challenging words targeting higher ability learners were often mistranslated or transliterated into Arabic from the English by lower ability learners, in particular the word “Artist”, which should be “fannan”, but was translated to the Arabic word for drawer “Rassam”.

## **Question 2 (a)**

The Discursive essay, students were required to write a story based on the events described in the given text of 200 words which describes voluntary work for charity.

Fewer learners chose to discursive essay this series, whereas usually there is a more balanced distribution of students choosing a or b. A notable number of students wrote lower quality responses for this discursive essay as they copied large amounts of the 200-word stimulus into their own 240-word essay, even copying events and names. This demonstrates a lack of skill development to use the stimulus as the intended inspiration, the responses should be an

independent piece of writing with clear input from the student, with their own events, names and characters to respond to the question.

### **Question 2 (b)**

More students chose the creative essay option, to compose an article about offering to volunteer for a charity organisation of their choice. Those who did choose this option were mostly good quality as they pitched their article to the right audience, provided an engaging introduction, a persuasive argument and a conclusion linked strongly back to the stimulus with substantiation. There were strong articles that used a genuine charity organisation and demonstrate excellent awareness of current social issues, reflective and knowledgeable and confident with use of vocabulary and range; weaker articles did not follow the purview of the question and wrote about individuals collecting charity money instead of creating or joining schemes to practically help society and causes.

### **Question 3 (a)**

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

There were no responses to this question.

### **Question 3 (b)**

The second question on Arab science which gives students the flexibility to write an account about the achievements of an early Arab aviator.

One learner response, which demonstrated good knowledge about Abbas bin Firnas, the first scientist to invent a flying machine 600 years before Leonardo Da Vinci.

### **Question 4 (a)**

The first of two essays Arab architecture and art, learners were asked to discuss public squares and reflect on its cultural significance. Though only 12 learners chose this question, most were relevant and good, discussing the cultural and national significance of a public square in an Arabic speaking country of their choice. Only one irrelevant response about public squares was made, as it discussed a square in Cordoba, Spain. Other responses that

lost marks was due to misunderstanding the standard Arabic term for square 'midan' with a mosque.

#### **Question 4 (b)**

The second essay question on Arab art and architecture requires students to discuss regional and classical Arabic songs and their cultural significance. A good range of essays were made which a distinct difference between students of higher and lower ability. This question was more popular than 4a, possibly as the writing suggested enjoyment discussing and comparing the two forms of song – highlighting the historical and cultural influences and associations made locally or internationally based on the music and lyrics of each. Responses were also reflective of the importance of music to individuals and wider society.

#### **Question 5 (a)**

In this section, Comedy in Arabic Cinema, learners must discuss issues faced by women for work in the film "My wife, the general director", focusing on the social attitudes and challenges explored by the film and reflect with their own views.

A popular question for students, the higher ability learners produced balanced essays that directly address the question, and lower ability learners produced essays that generally summarise the film but do not answer the question. This is the most common difference between learners

#### **Question 5 (b)**

In this section on Comedy in Arabic Cinema, learners must compare between blue- and white-collar work through the experiences of characters facing problems with employment in the film "The Soft Hands" with substantiated opinions that must include illustrated situations such as the better opportunities for those seeking manual labour and the narrowing choices of those with professional qualifications and titles, with examples from the film. This comedy film was not as popular as Q5a, however the higher ability learners produced balanced essays that directly address the question, and lower ability learners produced essays that generally summarise the film but do not answer the question.

#### **Question 6 (a)**

In this section, Tragedy in Arabic Cinema, students were required to analyse the character of the husband in the film "I want a solution". Learners should discuss their views of his behaviour towards his wife and give substantiated reasons for their view.

Of the learners that chose Q6a, the responses were mostly good or better, answering the question directly with accurate references to the film. Those who were successful analysed the influence dynamic between the characters of the husband and wife, and the context of the film, avoiding generalisations by giving accurate examples with reflective analysis and technical cinematographic terms.

### **Question 6 (b)**

Tragedy in Arabic Cinema: Learners were required to discuss the conflict between the characters of the authoritarian husband and the romantic wife in the film The wife of the VIP with references to events in the film.

Few chose this question, however compared to the quality of essays produced for Q6a, the responses to The Wife of the VIP were the best of the two options with some excellent analyses.

### **Question 7 (a)**

Arabic poetry: Learners were required analyse the poem "Life Experience" by Al Hadi Adam and discuss the meaning and intent of the poem.

No learners answered this question.

### **Question 7 (b)**

Arabic poetry: Learners were required to discuss the themes explored in the poem " My Levantine Cat by Nizar Qabban"

No students answered this question.

### **Question 8 (a)**

Arabic literature: Learners were required to explain the different stages of life Haya in the novel " Body memory" and discuss which stage they felt was the most important and why.

Higher ability learners answered the literature question with the best approaches to date, making references to the text and substantiating their opinion with authentic evidence. The only common issue seemed to be a dip in spelling accuracy.

### **Question 8 (b)**

Arabic literature: Learners were required to identify the novel *Al Zein's Wedding* as the book detailing the lives and events of a village that transcended social norms. When successfully identifying the film learners should discuss their opinion on the reasons for the main protagonists for marrying despite their social differences.

Though the literature in question changes each year from the required reading list, this question elicited good quality responses from those who referenced the text accurately.

### **Paper Summary**

General student performance was good, with similar translation skills and creativity as the last series.

Long standing errors still occur, which are due to a lack of exam techniques. Some learners 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. Learners 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.

