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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

October 2020

Pearson Edexcel GCE

In Arabic (9AA0)

Paper 3: Listening, reading and writing in Arabic

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October 2020

Publications Code 9AA0\_03\_2010\_ER\*

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## **Examiners' Report on Paper 9AA03 – Autumn 2020**

### **General comments**

This report relates to paper 9AA03, which tests students' ability; to listen and respond to spoken Arabic, to read and respond to written Arabic and to demonstrate their ability to respond critically to written and spoken material in Arabic.

The evidence from marking in this session indicates that the paper was effective in differentiating between students of different abilities and that all the questions worked as anticipated.

The published mark scheme provides extensive guidance with regard to the overarching approach to marking, as well as the range of correct, acceptable and rejected responses as they relate to Section A and Section B, as well as indicative content for Section C. Centers should note, however, that the mark scheme is not designed in such a way that every possible answer is included. Examiners look at each answer on merit to allocate marks. The approach to marking is positive, so examiners always seek to reward what students' produce.

It is helpful for centers to distinguish clearly between the assessment objectives stated in the specification. These are: A01- listening and responding in Arabic; A02 – reading and responding in Arabic; A03 – grammar and vocabulary of Arabic; A04 Knowledge and understanding of the countries and communities where Arabic is spoken. In this paper A01 is assessed in Sections A and B; A02 and A03 are assessed in Sections B and C.

There was varied evidence of how well students were prepared for this assessment, but there was some evidence of rubric infringement; this is where students either failed to follow the instructions, for example answering in the wrong language, or ticked more than the required number of boxes in the objective tasks.

### **Comments on each question**

#### **Section A, Listening comprehension**

This section tests students' ability to respond in writing to spoken language. Comprehension is tested via both objective and free response items. The question types follow a similar design to those in paper 1, section B and similar guidance applies. This section carries 30 marks. The listening passages are of varying length and complexity to test students across all grades.

#### **Question 1**

This year Question 1 related to the theme of **Political Culture in the Arab World**, the subtheme: **Arab Identity** and the content was focused on the aspect of **Political philosophy and beliefs of Arabism**.

This is a multiple-choice task with four parts and four options for each part. Centers can usefully note that incorrect options may include an element of distraction in the form of a word or idea from the text. Students, therefore, need to be careful to listen fully and carefully, rather than rely on spotting isolated words. This question targets grades C to E.

Most successfully answered was: 1i

Least successfully answered was: 1iii. This may be due to the inability of the students to recognise that the requirement of the question is the result **not** the problem of identifying the concept of identity. Centers should train the students to read questions thoroughly.

## Question 2

This question related to the theme of **Artistic Culture in the Arab world**, the subtheme: **Music** and the content was focused on the aspect of **The role of music and songs**.

This is again a multiple-choice task with four parts and four options for each part and the same guidance given above in relation to Question 1 would apply. This question targets grades A to E.

Most successfully answered was: iv

Least successfully answered was: 2i. Perhaps this is due to the lack of identifying synonyms of certain words. Training students on expanding their vocabulary is a good skill that centers should develop.

## Question 3

This is a two-part question related to the theme of **Changes in the Arab Society**, the subtheme: **Arabic Family** and the content was focused on the aspect of **The role of the extended family and relatives**.

### Question 3(a)

Students are required to respond in Arabic but there is no requirement to answer in full sentences and there are no marks for the quality of students' written language, so as long as what students had written was comprehensible, and answered the questions correctly, marks were awarded, even where there were errors in the language used. This part question targets grades A to E.

Most successfully answered were: 3a(i), (iii) and (v).

Least successfully answered were:

- 3a(ii) as some candidates did not realise that they should provide an evidence from the text about how family members respect the head of the family.
- 3a(iv) the question was about the most difficulty facing the extended family. Students should respond with one difficulty not two or more.

### Question 3 (b)

Students are required to listen to the second part of the recording and to summarise what they hear, giving just one detail for each of the points. Where students gave more than one detail examiners consider only the first viable response. Some students lifted and transcribed extended parts of the recording in an indiscriminate manner and, because their responses became ambiguous, lost marks. This part question targets grades A to C.

Most successfully answered was: 3b(i) and 3b(ii)

Least successfully answered was:

- The first idea in 3b(ii) about the effect of the extended family on the way the children behave. Some students did not understand how the intervention of different family members gives children mixed messages and hinders the authority of the parents. Students should be trained to understand the gist of the idea and expresses it in their own words.

### Question 4

This question related to the theme of **Political Culture in the Arab World**, the subtheme: **Political conditions in the 21st Century**, and the content was focused on the aspect of **Attitudes to elections and freedom of choice**.

This is a free response task, where students are required to answer in Arabic There was some evidence that some students did not always read the questions carefully or produced answers which, although correctly locating the information in the text, were not precise answers to the question that was asked or relied on indiscriminate or untargeted lifting from the text.

Centers are reminded that, in free-response questions, examiners apply a strict order of elements and mark only the first viable answer that a student produces. For example, where the required answer is 'dog' a candidate who writes 'dog and cat' will receive a mark, but a student who writes 'cat and dog' will not, because only the student's first viable answer to the question is considered for a mark. This question targets grades A to E.

Most successfully answered were: 4a, b, d, f.

Least successfully answered were:

- 4c: Many students did not mention the first point of 'observing the period of electoral silence' and thought it is enough to mention that 'the candidate should stop promoting himself and his party in the allocated time'.
- 4e: Many students mentioned the idea of 'allowing them to perform the right to vote' without mentioning 'with full transparency and independence'. The latter addition is very important as it explains

the benefit of not influencing the voters, which is what the question is targeting.

## **Section B, Listening, reading and writing task**

### **Question 5(a) and 5(b)**

This question related to the theme of **Changes in Arab Society**, the subtheme: **Media**, and the content was focused on the aspect of **Technology and media**.

This section requires students to identify and write down 4 of the 6 opinions expressed by the speaker for 5(a) and the writer for 5(b). The speaker and writer take broadly contrary stances on the topic concerned. Students who were most successful in these tasks had correctly identified the markers of opinion and point of view ('I think' / 'it seems to me' etcetera) and had distinguished well between fact and opinion. There are no marks of the quality of the students' written language, but some responses were ambiguous owing to the use of language, and so marks could not be awarded. The best answers were clear and concisely expressed. Centers should remind students in future sessions that only one answer should be written on each writing line, and that only four answers are required in total.

#### **In 5(a)**

Most successfully answered were:

- they are free.
- they provide news immediately, as they take place.
- one can read the news wherever s/he is.

Least successfully answered were:

- 5(a) not mentioning; electronic newspapers make the information clearer by using sound and videos.

#### **In5(b)**

Most successfully answered were:

- there is a rising number of readers of traditional newspapers.
- their cost is cheaper than the cost of the internet subscription.
- they rarely have false news.

Least successfully answered was:

- not correctly wording the idea that traditional newspapers are the true meaning of journalism. Some students' ambiguous responses did not reflect this meaning.
- some students mentioned that their price is cheap, which is not what the text mentioned. Students have to be trained on extracting the idea from the text and not lifting words or phrases randomly.

## **Section C**

This section tests students' ability to critically evaluate the points made by the speaker and writer from 5(a) and 5(b). They need to decide with whom they agree and express relevant and substantiated judgements and reach convincing conclusions about the issues raised. They are also assessed here on their ability to write in Arabic.

Centers' attention is drawn to the sample responses in the sample assessment material on the Pearson website and the example response in the mark scheme. Examiners use this example as a guide to the kind of response a student might produce but will always credit any worthy response which approaches the issues from a different angle.

The highest scoring students had successfully expressed judgements on the spoken and written sources that were well expressed and clearly argued, in each case adding their personal, academic response. They had also drawn conclusions that were consistent with their own viewpoints. For example, one student chose to focus on the negative effect of newspapers on the environment because their production necessitates cutting of trees and the chemicals used in ink for printing.

High scoring students also showed a wide variety of structures and vocabulary appropriate to the issues they were discussing; they wrote accurately and showed that they had proofread their own work. Centers are reminded that the mark scheme contains indicative content, but this is not intended to be definitive answer to the statement. Examiners use a levels-based mark scheme and reward all relevant response produced by the student, accepting that each student may approach the task in a different way.

## **Guidance for centers for future sessions**

1. Ensure that all students are familiar with the format of the paper and what they need to do in each section and question.
2. In section A, in the objective tasks, it can be a useful exercise to focus students not only on finding the correct answers, but also looking at why the incorrect options are wrong. This encourages a careful reading of the questions and develops metacognition in terms of how the questions work.
3. In section A free response questions teach students about the 'order of elements' rule and apply it during teaching, so that students learn to produce clear and concise answers.
4. In section B teach students to be guided by the number of marks and the space allowed for writing. This can help them give enough detail and avoid indiscriminate lifts.
5. In section C, ensure that students understand the task and give them practice in linking the spoken and written passages.
6. In section C, ensure students are equipped with a good range of topic specific, academic vocabulary to be able to ensure that the written response is correct in terms of register and not overly colloquial in tone.
7. In section C, give students practice in proof-reading their own work and that of others, looking to correct common errors and develop the habit of writing accurately.



