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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2022

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In Arabic (WAA02)

Paper 01: Writing and Research

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Introduction

Candidates are required to draw on and apply their knowledge and culture of the Arabic language, grammar, and lexis by selecting appropriate forms of words to complete sentences and demonstrating an ability to manipulate the Arabic language in continuous writing.

Candidates are 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.

Unit 2 is a 3-hour examination divided into three sections.

Section A: Translation - candidates undertake a short translation (200 words) from English into Arabic.

Section B: Creative/Discursive Essay, where candidates write a 240–280-word essay, in Arabic, in response to a short authentic Arabic-language stimulus. Candidates choose to write creatively or discursively on the topic through two options provided. The assessment rewards candidates for communicating relevant information effectively and the quality of the Arabic language produced.

Section C: Research-based Essay, where candidates answer one of 12 essay question options in Arabic that relate to a topic, or a text chosen from the prescribed list of set topics, texts, and films. A choice of two questions is offered for each prescribed topic and text, and the candidates write an essay between 300–400 words in length.

Question 1

Question 1 WAA02 contains 200 words passage in English titled "Arabic Coffee" to translate into Arabic; A majority of candidates were successful and achieved a good grade. Candidates mostly performed well in response to the stimulus.

The majority of candidates provided an accurate transfer of meaning in style expected in Arabic. However, some candidates found the following terms challenging to translate into Arabic:

- United Nations الأمم المتحدة
- Educational تربوي
- Scientific علمي
- Cultural organisation منظمة ثقافية
- Segments شرائح (المجتمع)

Typically, candidates who mistranslated the above terms did not consider the context in the sentences. Translation techniques should include contextualizing the words as indicators to help the translator transfer accurate meaning into the target language.

Question 2 (a)

For the creative essay option, candidates were required to write a story based on the events described in the given text of 100 words that describe how to be successful in school.

A majority of candidates who chose the creative essay of between 240-280 words were able to respond appropriately with characters, setting (time and place), events, and story plot with an ending. Some candidates chose this question, though there was a range of skills shown; however, some candidates did not seem to understand the requirements of writing a story, writing an article instead.

It would be advantageous for candidates to gain experience writing structured stories for creative essays using a variety of stimuli and be confident with the different requirements for a discursive article essay.

Question 2 (b)

As a majority of candidates chose the discursive essay option, a popular question to compose an article about a project to serve society. Those who chose this option were mostly of good quality. They pitched their article to the right audience provided an engaging introduction, a persuasive argument, and a conclusion linked strongly to the stimulus.

There were some strong articles that used genuinely good ideas, demonstrating excellent awareness, reflection and knowledge, and confidence with the use of vocabulary and range. Less strong articles did not follow the purview of the question and wrote lower quality responses for this discursive essay as they copied large amounts of the 100-word stimulus into their own 240–280-word essay. This demonstrates a lack of skill development to use the stimulus as the intended inspiration; the responses should be independent writing with clear input from the candidates, with their own knowledge and research studies.

Question 3 (a)

In the first of two questions on Arab science, candidates were instructed to discuss the important contribution Ibn Sina made to medicine and astronomy and some biographical details of the scientist's life and background.

There were only four responses to this question, some of which were excellent with a clear depth of knowledge of Ibn Sina.

Question 3 (b)

The second question on Arab science gives candidates the flexibility to write an account about an Arab mathematician. Only two candidates chose this question, and both performed well.

Question 4 (a)

Candidates were asked to discuss two Arabic carpet-making forms in terms of styles, uses, and origins. There were only two responses, but those who did choose this question wrote good quality essays with a strong demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the art form.

Question 4 (b)

A more popular question, this second essay question on Arab art and architecture requires candidates to compare rural and urban architecture in an Arabic-speaking country.

There were good answers from candidates who chose this question option by describing a different environment and the age of these buildings with good reflection.

Question 5 (a)

In this section, Comedy in Arabic Cinema, candidates must identify the director of the film 'Soft hands' and analyse the political and social issues that influenced the personality of Shaukat Helmy. They were also asked to reflect on their views of the films' ending.

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

Question 5 (b)

In this section on Comedy in Arabic Cinema, candidates must identify the film and discuss the chief of police's approach to public safety in the film "The three are working her." Candidates were asked to discuss the reasons why the heroine approached him several times and their views of the officer's role.

Essays should include substantiated opinions that illustrated situations highlighted by the candidates from the film. Higher ability candidates produced balanced essays that directly address the question to accurately analyse the situation and provide thoughtful opinions regarding the officer's role., and lower ability candidates produced essays that generally summarise the film but do not answer the question.

Question 6 (a)

In this section, Tragedy in Arabic Cinema, candidates were required to identify the film and analyse the factors behind the downfall of Hisham Abu Al-Wafa following the 1977 bread riots. Candidates should discuss their views give substantiated reasons for their view.

Of the candidates that chose Q6a, the responses were mostly good or better, answering the question directly with accurate references to the film. yuyuyuyuyuyCandidates who were successful analysed the protagonist's character the context of the film and avoided generalisations by giving accurate examples with reflective analysis and technical cinematographic terms.

Question 6 (b)

Tragedy in Arabic Cinema: candidates were required to identify the film that depicted the obstacles women face in order to obtain their legal rights and analyse the techniques used by the director to highlight the suffering of the wife, providing their opinions on them.

There was a range of very good responses; however, some other responses were not able to identify the correct film (their writing suggests a misreading of the question or not fully reading the question).

Question 7 (a)

Arabic poetry: candidates were required analyse the poem "Nazik Malaika" and discuss how the poet used language and poetic style to describe war and its impact on people.

No candidates answered this question.

Question 7 (b)

Arabic poetry: Candidates were required to discuss a poem about "Nizar Qabbani."

No candidates answered this question.

Question 8 (a)

Arabic literature: Candidates were asked to explain the meaning of the title "The Bamboo Stalk" and analyse how Jose faced the identity struggle he was exposed to. Candidates were also asked to discuss their opinions of the writer's style. Of those who chose this question, the majority did a good job of analysing the question focus. Higher ability candidates answered the literature question with a good approach by making references to the text and substantiating their opinion with authentic evidence.

Question 8 (b)

Arabic literature: Very few chose this question, and candidates were required to identify two characters who were moving to France. These essays were of very good quality.

Paper Summary

General candidate 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 practice. Some candidates 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. Candidates need to be given plenty of opportunities to gain experience with essay questions and practice 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 candidates choose to answer questions on poetry, which suggests some candidates may not be covering the full specification, which can limit their awareness and opportunities, which is concerning as 70% of Arabic literature for the past thousand years to the modern era is poetry.

