



## Oral Component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

The overall performance of students in the 2007 oral examination was good.

Students were able to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively. They engaged in a discussion with assessors about different aspects of their personal world. A number of students supported their topic in the Discussion with appropriate objects; for example, photographs and maps. Stronger students spoke freely and fluently and were able to correct themselves when they made mistakes. This is an indication of thorough preparation and the selection of appropriate topics for the Detailed Study.

Unfortunately, a small number of students were not well prepared for the task. Students need to be a better prepared and able to use the language spontaneously in an unrehearsed situation. Some students did not seem to have prepared a topic for the Discussion at all. Teachers need to prepare their students to cope with the tasks of the examination. It is important that all students are well prepared for the task and know what will be expected of them.

Some areas of concern included:

- pronunciation: regional differences in pronunciation were evident. Although regional dialect is tolerated, students should be encouraged to use modern, standard Arabic
- lexicon: it was evident that some students had translated vocabulary directly from English to Arabic, and some students used English words. However, this mistake was less evident than in previous years.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

#### Section 1 – Conversation

In this section, students are required to interact with two assessors on topics associated with daily life. Successful students spoke fluently and accurately. They were able to hold a conversation and went beyond providing brief answers to add breadth and depth to their responses. A large number of students presented a wealth of information. Those who performed poorly often did not understand the assessors' comments or the questions. It is important that students are prepared to elaborate on their responses.

#### Section 2 – Discussion

Students need to make good use of the one minute allocated for the introduction of their sub-topic for the Detailed Study.

This year the range of topics was wide and covered many issues. The majority of the themes and the sub-topics were well structured and effectively organised. Students should be encouraged to choose a good sub-topic that allows for adequate discussion. Some of the more traditional topics, such as women in society, should be avoided.

A large number of students showed evidence of thorough preparation, and used adequate vocabulary and terminology. These students were skilled and had the ability to express and elaborate on ideas and opinions and supported these with evidence from the texts studied. They were able to take the discussion further when required.

Although students have the opportunity to choose their own topic, some of the topics chosen were beyond the students' language skills and thus they were unable to offer a range of ideas and opinions or defend their point of view. Students must be adequately prepared to cope with this part of the examination.

## Written Component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students attempted all parts of the examination. The quality of responses was reflected in the different grades and the variety of topics selected. It is important that students are aware of the importance of reading the questions very carefully and understanding exactly what is required in order to gain the maximum marks.



## **SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

### **Section 1 – Listening and responding**

Most students completed this task fairly well. Students generally understood the spoken passages, although some students seemed to find it challenging.

Teachers should expose their students to a variety of listening activities and different text types prior to the examination. Students should be prepared to answer questions that go beyond simply asking for information to be identified from the text; for example, students may be asked to identify the tone of the conversation or the relationship between speakers.

Students need to make use of the reading time to read and understand the questions in order to maximise their performance in this section.

### **Part A – Answer in English**

#### **Text 1**

##### **Question 1**

- Michael Naima had his primary education in Lebanon and returned to work there later in life.
- He moved to Russia to go to university.

##### **Question 2**

All of:

- aspects of language and literature
- images of society
- social justice (fraternity, justice and equality).

##### **Question 3**

Both of:

- a poem
- an article.

##### **Question 4**

Either of:

- innovative
- melodious.

#### **Text 2**

##### **Question 5**

All of:

- to find the latest news about Arabic language and culture
- to learn Arabic
- to access a directory of Arabic websites
- for technical support
- for recreational and cultural games
- to listen to Eastern songs.

### **Part B – Answer in Arabic**

#### **Text 3**

##### **Question 6**

He is the Head of the Department of Psychology at Dar al- culūm University.

##### **Question 7**

They experience:

- shock or fear
- fear of losing their children
- a protective feeling
- a desire to control.



**Question 8**

- independence/freedom as opposed to constraint
- wanting to mature as opposed to wanting the continued warm protection of childhood

**Question 9**

Because:

- it impedes maturation
- they need the authority to feel self-respect and freedom
- they will benefit, and the right path will lead to independence.

**Section 2 – Reading and responding**

There was a lot of information in the two texts, which students needed to read and understand in order to accomplish the tasks effectively. Some students had difficulty identifying and selecting the correct information from the texts. Some students simply copied sections from the text as their answers, which is not the correct way to answer these questions.

**Part A – Answer in English**

**Text 4**

**Question 10**

Sumerian civilisation

- the first civilisation
- inventive

Assyrian civilisation

- reliant on the inventions of previous civilisations
- focussed on military achievements

**Question 11**

All of:

- their homes would be near beautiful palaces and temples
- the building of bridges would have made them in less danger from floods
- the draining of the marshes would have made more land accessible to them
- the invention of tools would have improved their agriculture
- the invention of Cuneiform would have enabled them to record things in writing.

**Question 12**

It was a brilliant and prosperous era during which the existing civilisation was refined and several achievements occurred, such as recording laws on stone tablets, beautification of cities and the creation of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. These peaceful progressions were seen again in the last Babylonian state.

**Question 13**

He uses (any two of):

- superlatives such as ‘the most brilliant...’
- adjectives such as ‘grandiose’, ‘splendid’, ‘refined’ and ‘great’
- nouns such as ‘supremacy’
- verbal expressions such as ‘took great care’ and ‘went to great lengths’.

**Part B – Answer in Arabic**

**Text 5**

**Question 14**

Because:

- of a growing population
- it is the driest area/there is a lack of water.

**Question 15**

By (any two of):

- having adequate pricing policy reforms
- desalinating seawater



- digging wells to extract underground water.

### **Section 3 – Writing in Arabic**

All students attempted this section. Generally the responses were expressed in good, clear language. In general, students showed accuracy in their use of language structures, but teachers need to encourage their students to practise different styles of writing. The imaginative story (Question 20) was the most popular task, and some students responded very well, displaying the necessary creative style of imaginative writing.

#### **Question 16**

Students were asked to write a leaflet for an Arabic travel agency to persuade tourists to visit Australia. Responses needed to use:

- a persuasive writing style as per the study design
- the conventions of a leaflet as a text type.

Responses should have included points such as:

- an introduction to Australia
- two or three aspects that would encourage tourists to visit Australia
- a conclusion.

#### **Question 17**

Students had to write the text of speech for a radio program evaluating the statement ‘Youth is the future of the nation and their needs and issues must be the first priority of this country’. Students needed to use:

- an evaluative writing style as per the study design
- the conventions of a speech as a text type.

Responses should have:

- introduced the speaker and their point of view (for and against)
- presented arguments
- had a conclusion.

#### **Question 18**

For Question 18 students had to write an informative article for a local newspaper on the importance of exercise and good eating habits for people who value their health. Responses needed to:

- introduce exercise and dieting
- discuss the importance of exercise and dieting
- contain a conclusion.

#### **Question 19**

Students were asked to write an informal letter thanking their uncle and aunt for the gift of a large sum of money and telling them how they intended to spend the money. Responses needed to use:

- a personal writing style as per the study design
- the conventions of an informal letter as a text type.

Responses needed to contain:

- an introduction to the letter
- a detailed explanation of how the student was going to spend the money
- a conclusion.

#### **Question 20**

For Question 20 students had to write an imaginative story entitled ‘Lost in the desert’. Students needed to use:

- an imaginative writing style as per the study design
- the conventions of a story as a text type.

Responses should have contained:

- an introduction to the story
- details of the story
- a conclusion.