



**B O A R D O F S T U D I E S**  
N E W S O U T H W A L E S

1999 HSC  
**Arabic**

Notes from the Examination Centre

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# 1999 Higher School Certificate Arabic Notes from the Examination Centre

## 2 Unit (General)

### Listening and Speaking Examinations

#### Speaking Skills (15 marks)

##### General Comments

The overall standard of the candidates was satisfactory. Fluent use of Modern Standard Arabic was evident. Few candidates resorted to the use of dialect. Those who did were penalised.

Candidates need to pay more attention to addressing people with the correct terminology, eg 'librarian' المكتبة وكيلة and 'doctor' يا حضرة الطبيب.

The future tense was challenging to a large number of the candidates who resorted to the use of the present tense.

##### Specific Comments

##### Question 1

- the word 'librarian' المكتبة وكيلة was often omitted
- the word 'article' مقالة was often translated as 'magazine' مجلة or 'newspaper' جريدة
- the expression 'Arabic/English dictionary' قاموس عربي/إنكليزي was translated incorrectly by many candidates
- the word 'borrow' أستعير proved very challenging for most of the candidates. It was often translated as 'take' أخذ or 'rent' أستأجر
- the expression 'for one week' لأسبوع واحد was often given in dialect as لجمعة واحدة

### Question 2

- the expression 'it will be a beautiful day' سيكون الطقس جميلاً was often translated in the present tense
- the expression 'a temperature range of' درجة الحرارة ستتراوح مل بين was often translated as 'the temperature' الحرارة
- 'Celsius' مئوية was omitted by most of the candidates
- the command form of 'bring' أجلب معك proved challenging to a significant number of candidates who resorted to using the dialect form جيب معك
- the words 'hat' قبعة and 'sunglasses' نظارات شمسية were often rendered in the dialect form of برنيطة and عوينات
- the expression 'I will bring' سأجلب معي proved most challenging and many candidates did not convey the future tense appropriately

### Question 3

- the expression 'tell the doctor' يا حضرة الطبيب was often rendered colloquially as دكتور
- the expression 'my right leg is swollen' رجلي اليمنى مورمة was most challenging and either omitted or rendered incorrectly in colloquial Arabic as إجري اليمين مكسورة
- the expression 'not able to' لا أستطيع was confused by many candidates who translated it as 'it is not' ليس

### Question 4

- the word 'experience' خبرة was often omitted
- the word 'just' توأ proved to be a good discriminator as it was only used by the more capable candidates
- the expression 'I am willing to' أنا مستعد أن was often translated as 'I want to' أريد أن
- the expression 'as well' أيضاً was often omitted

### Question 5

- the word 'overseas' الخارج was not handled well by most candidates and was often omitted
- the expression 'I/we have chosen' إخترت/إخترنا was often translated as I/we decided قررت/قررنا
- the word 'Europe' يوروبا was sometimes incorrectly translated
- the countries 'Switzerland' سويسرا and 'Spain' إسبانيا were often mispronounced.

## Listening Skills (25 marks)

### General Comments

This part of the examination proved to be very challenging for candidates. Many of them demonstrated an understanding of the gist of items but did not include all the relevant details in their responses. Very few candidates demonstrated a depth of understanding of Arabic.

### Specific Comments

#### Item 1

- Part (a) 'Mathematics' الرياضيات was mistaken for 'sport' الرياضة.
- Part (c) In subsection (i) 'Business administration' في مجال إدارة الأعمال was demanding for many candidates.

#### Item 2

- Part (a) 'use humour' يستخدم الفكاهة was understood by only a very small number of candidates.
- Part (c) 'Greece' اليونان was translated as 'Japan' اليابان.

#### Item 3

- Part (a) 'kneeling and worshipping its creator', تسجد متعبدة لخالقها, was often translated as 'bowing to its creator'.
- Part (b) In subsection (ii) 'because of the way its branches hang down', نظراً لتهدل أغصانها, was omitted by most candidates.

#### Item 4

- Part (a) 'President of the SRC' رئيسة لمجلس الطلاب was often translated as 'captain of the school'.
- Part (c) the expression 'staff and parents' الهيئة التعليمية وأولياء الأمور was often omitted.

**Item 5**

- Part (a) النحت والأدب 'sculpture and literature' was omitted by most candidates.
- Part (b) إستعراضات فنية 'artistic displays' was challenging for most candidates.
- Part (c) السكان الأصليين 'indigenous people' was misunderstood by most candidates.

**Item 6**

- Part (a) برج الميزان 'Libra' was often translated as 'scales'.
- الشجاعة والصرافة The phrase 'courage and openness' was challenging for most candidates.

**Item 7**

- Part (a) القطب الشمالي 'The North Pole' was often omitted.
- Part (c) تتراوح ما بين ٤ و ٩ درجات مئوية تحت الصفر 'the temperature ranges between four and nine degrees Celsius below zero.' Most candidates omitted 'below zero'.
- Part (d) يذوب كلياً 'it melts completely' was omitted by 95% of candidates.

**Item 8**

- Part (c) أنهار/نهر 'river(s)' was often omitted.
- يفقد توازنه 'losing his balance' proved challenging for most candidates.
- Part (d) لا يتمكنون بمقدرة على مواجهة الأمواج العالية 'can't overcome the high waves' was demanding for candidates.

**Item 9**

- Part (a) نصب فخاً 'set up a trap' was omitted by 80% of candidates.
- Part (c) لقب 'given the title/named' was overlooked by most.
- Part (d) خفيفة الحركة 'fast' was often translated as 'light' or 'light moving'.

## Written Examination

### Section I - Reading Skills (30 marks)

#### General Comments

The majority of candidates handled the Reading Skills questions reasonably well. Some candidates however, showed a tendency to answer the questions in general terms omitting relevant details. About 15% of the candidature did not attempt the questions. Candidates are strongly advised to reread their answers to ensure that they make sense. (Note comments to Part (e) below.)

#### Specific Comments

##### Question 1

- Part (a) In subsection (i) Most candidates misunderstood the expression *تنطلق من* 'leaves from' and as a result, answered (a) (i) incorrectly.
- In subsection (ii) *المتاجر* 'shops/stores' was often omitted.
- Part (b) *ساعية بريد* 'postman/woman' was often translated as 'delivery person'.
- Part (c) *المفاجيء* 'sudden' was often omitted.
- Part (d) *منتصف النهار* 'midday' was often translated as 'half way through the day'.
- Part (e) In subsection (i) *المرأة أقرب الى هذه المهنة من الرجل* 'a woman is better suited for this job than a man' was often translated as 'a woman is closer to this job than a man'.
- In subsection (ii) *يتفاءلون* 'they were optimistic' was often omitted.
- Part (f) In subsection (ii) *مصاعد كهربائية* 'elevators/lifts' was often translated as simply 'electricity'.
- Part (g) *البطاقات البريدية* 'postcards' was often translated as 'letters' or 'mail' or omitted altogether.

##### Question 2

#### Specific Comments

- Part (a) *المتقفين* 'the educated' was often omitted.
- Part (b) *المطاعم العربية والغربية* 'Arabic and Western Restaurants' was often translated as 'Lebanese and other restaurants'
- Part (d) *تهجير* 'abandonment' was often omitted or translated sometimes as 'destroyed' or 'ruined'. Generally, candidates had difficulty expressing this idea.



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- Part (e) مجد 'glory' proved challenging for most candidates.
- Part (f) أسبوعاً كاملاً 'one full week', was often translated as 'two weeks'.  
يغلق الشارع أمام السيارات 'the street was closed to cars' was often misunderstood and translated as 'the cars blocked the street'.  
المصنوعات المحلية 'the local products' proved challenging for most candidates, and was often omitted.
- Part (g) رقصات شعبية 'traditional dances' was sometimes translated as 'belly dancing'.

**Question 3**

- Part (a) كان 'Cannes' was mistaken for the verb كان 'he was'.
- Part (b) الإسكندرية 'Alexandria' was generally transliterated.
- Part (c) الدراما 'the subject drama' was mistaken for the name of the teacher and often translated as 'Dram'.
- Part (d) In subsection (i) مصرف 'bank' was rendered as 'money exchange organisation'.  
In subsection (ii) many candidates omitted the word إخراج 'directing'.
- Part (e) رافقت جدتي 'I went with my grandmother' was often translated as 'I met my grandfather'.
- Part (f) The question of issues was poorly handled due to the lack of understanding of the word قضايا 'issues' الطبقية الإجتماعية 'social classes' was often omitted or translated as 'social life' and 'gathering'.

## Section II - Writing Skills (15 marks)

### General Comments

Most candidates used Modern Standard Arabic and were familiar with the correct discourse forms. The use of colloquial forms was penalised. In the weaker responses, candidates made many spelling and grammatical mistakes. It was obvious that 10% of the candidates found the Writing Skills question most challenging and as a result did not make a serious attempt. Candidates need to note the following areas of concern:

- punctuation
- the difference between strong and weak letters for example:

ق instead of ك

ض instead of د

ح instead of ه

ص instead of س

- pronouns
- gender
- verb tenses

### Specific Comments

#### Question 4a

Few candidates attempted this question. Of those who did, some did not answer the second part of this question which required them to express their expectations about their first day on the job.

#### Question 4b

This question was the second most popular question, and was attempted by 15% of candidates. It was handled satisfactorily.

#### Question 4c

This question was the most popular and attempted by 80% of the candidates who handled it very well.

#### Question 4d

Very few candidates attempted this question and found it most challenging. Rather than focusing on the picture, most tended to describe a day out at the beach.

**Section III - Options (15 marks)**

**Part A - Contemporary Writing**

**Question 5**

This question was by far the most popular. In general it was handled reasonably well. Almost all students were familiar with the prescribed stories and provided an outline of the main themes. Some candidates however, simply retold the plot.

The more able candidates elaborated on the main themes as required in the question and provided relevant textual evidence from the stories to support their comments.

**Part B - Song**

**Question 6**

No candidates attempted this question.

**Part C - Film/Play**

**Question 7**

A significant number of candidates who attempted this question discussed the themes in depth and discussed the theatrical techniques at length with relevant references to the play. These candidates handled the question extremely well.

## 3 Unit (Additional)

### Listening Skills (15 marks)

#### General Comments

The 3 Unit Listening skills exam was handled satisfactorily by most candidates, the majority of whom chose to answer in Arabic.

#### Section 1

In this section, Questions 2, 3 (b), and 4 proved to be challenging for some candidates.

#### Section 2

Some candidates did not answer in point form as required and were penalised.

A small number of candidates did not attempt this section.

### Writing Skills (35 marks)

#### Question 1

#### General Comments

The majority of the candidates handled the writing skills well. Most exceeded the word limit. Candidates are reminded to write 100–150 words. All four questions this year, proved to be popular. 30% of the candidates selected Topic 1 - The Internet. This was followed by both Topics 2 - Learning Languages, and Topic 3 - Unemployment, which were both attempted by 25% of the candidates. 20% chose the translation.

#### Specific Comments

#### Topic 1

The Internet was handled very well by the majority of the candidates who were able to discuss at length both requirements of the question, ie the positive and negative aspects of the Internet. It was obviously a topic of interest to them. It was the most popular topic and was discussed at length.

It was noted that many technological terms were written in English rather than being rendered in Arabic, eg

Email البريد الإلكتروني

Websites الشبكة اللاسلكية

Chatroom غرفة المحادثة

## Topic 2

The topic of the Importance of Learning a Language proved challenging for most candidates. They tended to discuss the issue in general terms without relating it to the second part of the question, ie in our multicultural society.

## Topic 3

The unemployment topic was handled satisfactorily. Some candidates, however, tended to discuss unemployment in general terms without relating it to the Youth in Contemporary Australian Society, as required by the second part of the question.

## Translation

20% of the candidates who attempted the translation performed well. The remainder, however, found it most challenging and encountered difficulties in expressing the following words and expressions:

- the World Health Organisation منظمة الصحة العالمية
- issued أصدرت
- report تقرير
- three and a half million people بحلول 2020 ثلاثة ملايين ونصف المليون من الناس عام ٢٠٢٠
- on average, smokers will die 22 years younger than معدل أعمار المدخنين أقل ب ٢٢ سنة من غير المدخنين
- developing nations البلدان النامية
- tobacco companies dump cheap cigarettes on أسواق جديدة بالسجائر الرخيصة مثل...  
تعمد شركات التبغ إلى إغراق أسواق جديدة بالسجائر الرخيصة مثل...
- however ومع ذلك
- you are no more at risk from cancer than a non smoker لن تكون عرضة للإصابة بمرض السرطان أكثر من غير المدخن

## Question 2 Literature (20 marks)

### General Comments

Approximately 40% of the candidates chose part (a) while the remaining 60% chose part (b). Those who selected part (b) in general performed better.

### **Specific Comments**

In parts (a) and (b) subsection (i), most candidates summarised the short extract provided from the story rather than discussing the context of the passage as required by the question.

In parts (a) and (b) subsection (ii), most candidates discussed the relevance of the quotations from both stories, demonstrating a good understanding of both stories.

In parts (a) and (b) subsection (iii), most candidates chose appropriate stories to discuss the statement. Some, however, tended to discuss only two of the three aspects required in the question. Social classes (one of the aspects) was often omitted.

Despite choosing relevant stories, some candidates found it challenging to discuss the aspects and often resorted to retelling the plots. Quotations were sometimes included that were not related to the question. Other candidates discussed the stories in general without identifying the particular required aspects of the question, ie social classes, social injustice and the way rich people treat the poor.