

GCSE

Edexcel GCSE

Arabic (1606/1607)

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Examiners' Report

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Paper 1 Listening and Responding

On the whole, the paper was well received with enough easy material to engage weaker candidates but it also included questions that were demanding enough to test the concentration and comprehension of the ablest as well.

Question 1

Some candidates felt they had to include Picture G in their answers though it was there as a distracter and had nothing to do with "arriving at school".

Question 2

Matching words to pictures should be easy enough, but some candidates were caught out for not listening to the whole information given. For example, in Q.2 (ii) descriptors are not only for size but colour too, if candidates miss **بيضاء اللون** the word **كبيرة** would not help them, since the umbrella in B is the same size as that in A.

We must admit, however, that in Q2 (v), it is not easy to match words with pictures that are not clear enough. "shoes" should be depicted clearly and boldly. Some candidates found it difficult to distinguish the figure in Picture B, and what he/she is holding.

Question 3

Quite a few candidates gave one reason only in Q.3 (iii) where, in most cases, they missed or did not understand **راتبي قليل**

Question 4

Many basic weaknesses were exposed in four out of five parts of the question, which leads to the conclusion that many candidates do not read what is required of them carefully nor are they precise or accurate enough in their responses.

In Q.4 (i) a number of candidates thought that it would be sufficient to write that the Jordanian citizen found the snake in Jordan, missing out the specific location **جنوب الأردن**

Both Q.4 (ii) and Q.4 (iii) required candidates to be numerate in Arabic and to be able to distinguish words connected with length and weight. This was beyond the knowledge of many, though it should not be, as knowledge of these is a useful life skill. For instance, instead of 30 cm. for the length of the snake, some wrote 30 metres, others 30 kilometres.

Expressions of weight were also used loosely and indiscriminately. However, it was Q.4 (v) that was least well answered. Candidates who had difficulty here either failed to understand the question or thought that the two-headed quality of the snake having already been established early on in the listening passage, that they had to look for other information, e.g. the fact that the snake could control each head independently from the other. Such candidates were not quick enough to pick up that information from tape and then write it all down.

Question 5

There were many instances of candidates not following the given instructions here. In cloze tests where gaps are to be filled from a given list of words, strictly speaking, only the proper use of these words should be accepted and not additional equivalent words such as were conceded in marking this question. Candidates must read the question, understand it and stick to the requirements accordingly.

Weaker candidates confused the sounds of **شارع** and **إشارة**

Question 6, 7, 8 and 9

Ticking the relevant boxes was an easy exercise for most. Low marks were scored by weak candidates who had difficulty either in understanding the stimulus or reading the given alternatives or both.

Question 10

This proved very testing for many. Rubrics, as usual, were not read very accurately, which made correct answers more difficult. Answers had to be inferred in some instances. This was confusing for some candidates, as they are all used to expecting to reproduce certain words that they actually hear in the listening text.

Question 11

The Nutrition and Health topic of the text was familiar ground for most candidates. It used their common stock of knowledge, and many candidates actually answered from that common stock, rather than from specific points alluded to in the listening text. There was some overlap in the questions but the mark scheme ensured that candidates had to stick to the text to obtain the mark.

Paper 2 Speaking

There has been no change in the requirement of the syllabus. Schools are fully aware of the areas of study the candidates should be prepared to cover in their exam.

Candidates Performance

Examiners have noticed an overall improvement in candidate's performance. This seemed to be more applicable to the most popular areas of study such as 'In the UK and Abroad', 'Home, House and Daily Routine' and 'Education and Employment'.

The common feature among the weak candidates was the pre-learnt material. This improvement in performance was more among weaker candidates than the stronger ones.

There has been a remarkable progress and improvement in comparison with previous years. Nevertheless examiners still believe that the supervising teachers should attend some of Edexcel's training to ensure applying and following the right procedures when conducting the exam.

Paper 3 Reading and Responding

Question 1

This proved a successful question even for weaker candidates, as most of them were able to match most of the pictures to the words.

Question 2

This was definitely more difficult, though still easy for stronger candidates. Weak candidates either could not read the sentences with understanding and therefore had to guess answers, or they were deceived by the useful distracters e.g. In Qu1, they might associate نام مبكراً with الصباح or الساعة. Similarly in Q3, pupils might B (الصباح) instead of A (الساعة).

Question 3

This was quite well done, despite the length of the text. This may have been because even weaker pupils were able to distinguish the familiar language associated with time (...الساعة). Some pupils would have had some difficulty with the literary use of ordinal numbers, as inexperienced readers would expect the more colloquial use of cardinal numbers for the time. The pictures were disappointingly blurred and possibly inappropriate e.g. is the lady definitely sitting in a bus in picture A, or is picture C surely a cinema?

Question 4

This was a generally easy question, though (a) more so than the others. I feel the picture (b) is somewhat culturally biased.

Question 5

This proved rather difficult; I think this was because there is a lot of language to process, and weaker candidates are not used to reading so much. The easiest match was with the names e.g. ... إيني . إينك. The word 'the visitors' (الزائرين) proved a popular but incorrect alternative to 'the residing' (الساكنين) due to obvious reasons i.e. they are both verbal nouns. Weak candidates made incorrect associations between الطب and الكلية, which is much more familiar probably than that between الحقوق and الكلية. There was also a tendency to make the familiar association between بزواج and نهنتكم.

Question 6

This was quite well done. Candidates only needed to be able to read parts of the body, as عندهم آلام في الصداع would have been fairly familiar even to weaker candidates.

Question 7

This was also surprisingly well done, because there was quite a lot of language for pupils to read with understanding. The distracters proved to be popular with weaker readers, so they did their job! Sentence no.3 is a good illustration of this: weaker candidates would have read that the lady had a معطف and sentence no. 3 begins تلبس المرأة معطفاً: a number of candidates made this incorrect association without reading, or being able to read, further.

Question 8

This question in general was obviously one of the questions targeting higher levels candidates, possibly because, for many, the subject matter is unfamiliar. Weaker candidate had difficulty distinguishing the name of the country from مدينة عمانية , and association between text and question in Q2 proved beyond them. Question 3 was easier, but many pupils missed "approximately" 1000 kilometres. Questions 4 and 5 were also rather difficult for weaker candidates as they failed to extract information not directly supplied word for word from the text for use in the answer.

Question 9

Some of the questions here were quite well done, e.g. in Q2 even weak candidates could recognise the number of the year. In Q(c), there was a tendency to give the meaning of حافظ القرآن as "reading the Quran", which obviously did not happen as Taha Hussain was already blind, and did not have access to Braille. Some pupils had difficulty transferring the meaning of ذلك الوقت المبكر into 'early childhood' , which is a testing elements targeting higher levels candidates.

Questions (f), (g) and (h) were set to distinguish between weaker and stronger candidates. Weaker candidates did try to answer question (h) but were confused and failed lamentably to find connection between education on the one hand and air and water on the other. Some lucky ones among the weaker candidates had a successful guess.

Paper 4 Writing

Question 1

In general, candidates answered this question satisfactorily, only the very weak being unable to write five types of sport, or at least transliterate into Arabic names of sports in English. It was sometimes difficult for candidates to distinguish between a sport and a game.

Question 2

Most pupils were able to mention some or all of the bullet points, though the weaker ones lost marks on their use of Arabic when the latter made comprehension difficult. Stronger candidates did well to incorporate the bullet points into a letter which embraced the wider aspects of the subject and therefore was read as a more authentic piece of written Arabic. Weaker candidates tended to present the bullet points as items of information discrete from each other, but in doing so were unable to compare to the stronger pupils in terms of style. Even so, they received the marks for communication of the subject matter.

Question 3

This question was quite well answered. Better candidates were able to incorporate the bullet points authentically into a letter which addressed more than just the bullet points themselves. They mentioned details of how they kept the children happy, e.g. with food, toys, or the types of games they played. Such papers received the highest marks. Many candidates, however, could not aim so high, but were able to receive respectable marks by a dogged adherence to the bullet points and the notes provided.

Weaker candidates were very often unable to develop the diary notes into proper sentences, so whilst they may not have lost many marks on communication, certainly lost out on knowledge of language and accuracy. Candidates who could write with a good style received good marks for language knowledge.

Questions 4 and 5

There was more equal division between choice of answering Q4 or Q5.

More often than not, the more fluent and confident candidates chose Q4. It was popular probably because many teenage candidates could sympathise with the difficulties of facing parental pressure. There were many useful, relevant and interesting points to make without any major recourse to the bullet points provided. Fareed's problem was considered with maturity and certainty. The stand taken by many candidates was backed by their cultural background. Very few were those who recommended Fareed to take up music. They all insisted (some, very persuasively) on the importance of university education and its role in future success.

Q5 was, predictably, the safer option. Weaker candidates seemed to choose in their minds a topic they could write on, e.g. a holiday, a historic or religious figure they have studied in another discipline, and then say that it came from a particular film or book. They may even have been briefed by their teacher to do this : to learn a topic by heart and repeat it in the exam so as to avoid writing something badly. Such responses are easily spotted for there is often a stark contrast in vocabulary and style with much weaker answers in questions 2 and 3 by the same candidate.

Statistics

Overall Subject Grade Boundaries (Four skills)

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Overall subject grade boundaries	100	84	73	62	52	43	35	27	19	0

(NB each paper is worth 25% of the total)

Overall Subject Grade Boundaries (Three skills)

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Overall subject grade boundaries	100	80	70	60	50	42	34	27	20	0

(NB each paper is worth 33% of the total)

Paper 1 Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 1 grade boundaries	50	40	34	28	23	19	16	13	10	0

Paper 2 Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 2 grade boundaries	20	18	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	0

Paper 3 Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 3 grade boundaries	50	41	37	33	29	24	20	16	12	0

Paper 4 Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 4 grade boundaries	55	45	38	31	25	20	16	12	8	0

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