

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCSE

GCSE Arabic (1606-7)

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information please call our Customer Services on 0870 240 9800, or visit our website at www.edexcel.org.uk.

Summer 2007

Publications Code UA 018945

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Edexcel Ltd 2007

Contents

Paper 1 Examiner's Report	5
Paper 2 Examiner's Report	7
Paper 3 Examiner's Report	9
Paper 4 Examiner's Report	11
Statistics	13

Paper 1

General

In general, topics and vocabulary were well chosen. The easier questions were usually within the compass of the weaker candidates and the more difficult questions, by the very nature of the listening skill, were demanding because of the speed with which candidates had to remember details, or listen and write answers virtually simultaneously.

This paper consists of 17 questions that catered for all candidates' levels.

Question 1 to 5 are matching pictures to words. These proved to be very popular among all students.

Question 5 to 10 are multiple choice questions where students have to tick the right picture and this question also was very popular.

Question 11 was slightly more challenging than the previous questions because it is difficult sometimes to draw the line between naturalness of spoken language with all that entails in terms of stress, rhythm and intonation. Section E of this question was more challenging, candidates found it difficult to remember the full name of the hotel as mentioned in the text. The high-pitched syllable at the end of the name of the hotel was not an easily recognised sound. Examiners decided to award a full mark for this section as long as the candidate mentions the word 'hotel' in Arabic.

Question 12 is a multiple-choice question, where the task is to identify the correct word out of three in each section. Sections D and E was felt to have brought some uncertainty to slower listeners as each correct answer was side by side with clear distracters from information included in the passage. They, therefore, differentiated well between different levels of candidates.

Question 13 proved to be more challenging for a good number of candidates as it was more demanding on good listening ability and identification of phrases of measurement, time and date. This is a good question to differentiate between various levels.

Question 14 was to complete sentences based on text. Many candidates of higher level found it easy and were able to score full marks. Some logical over-lapping in the answers was approved by the examiners taking into consideration the levels of weaker candidates.

Question 15 required filling gaps with words from the box. The presence of the two numbers, 248 and 284, provided excellent distracters and distinguished between numerate and innumerate candidates. Likewise, the presence of the word 'free' in Arabic majjaanan, was a good distracter, as candidates were expecting its use in the context of the question.

Question 16 required details in response to questions. Section A was straightforward and most of the candidates found it accessible. However, section B, was found to be more demanding to a small number of candidates.

Question 17 was designed to be answered in English. Incomplete, vague or inaccurate answers remain a problem with a few candidates.

Paper 2

The requirements and the administration of this year's oral examination are exactly the same as in previous years. Edexcel gives centres, in plenty of time, all the materials and instructions necessary for a smooth operation. The examination works well with centres that are fully conversant with the required procedure and that prepare their candidates well. However, in some centres (where the language may not be taught as part of the curriculum and where an Arabic speaker is perhaps co-opted to deliver the examination) there are many procedural problems that cause concern.

Sample questions: These are provided as mere examples to start off a conversation. They are not meant to be systematically by the teacher-examiner, and doing so does not allow for natural conversation.

The best way to make use of these sample questions is to start a conversation with one or two and modify subsequent ones to follow the drift of the discussion with the candidate. Teacher-examiners should allow candidates sufficient time to answer the question.

In preparing our students for the oral examination, our aim should be to develop in them spontaneity, variety and fluency in response and not a fixed uttering that is learnt by heart in answer to a pre-drilled sequence of questions.

Another major area of concern is the quality of the recording from some centres. Clear guidance is given in the examination booklet on how to proceed and yet we still get many cases where the voice of the teacher examiner is loud and clear while the candidate's voice is difficult to hear.

Paper 3

This paper consists of 8 questions.

Question 1: Most candidates were able to cope well with this question. A very few number of candidates were not able to link the picture of a house with trees with the word 'farmer'.

Question 2: The question elicited a good level of performance from the majority of candidates.

Question 3: Performance here varied, as was expected at this level. Some words proved challenging to a number of candidates. Some responses indicated that students were not familiar with the vocabulary.

Question 4: This was comparatively straightforward, except for some words referring to P.E. clothes which seemed to cause some confusion to weaker candidates.

Question 5: This was an extremely well-judged question. Candidates had to think very carefully before answering each question. Many of the distracting sentences did an excellent job of distracting, particularly sentence 8.

Question 6: Even though this question contained challenging vocabulary the performance of candidates was very good.

Question 7: Section A proved more accessible than Section B as it involved finding the correct part of the relevant sentences, while Section B demanded a more analytical and thoughtful approach.

Question 8: This question was designed to be answered in English; hence, knowledge of English was essential, as well as knowledge of Arabic to score higher marks. As this question is set to differentiate between different levels, it was anticipated that some candidates were not familiar with some of the words and idioms used in the text.

Paper 4

Question 1: Most candidates found the question accessible and straightforward. The supporting pictures proved very useful too: many candidates knew the Arabic words for horse-riding, swimming, playing cards or chess. The pictures are there to provide examples of what is required. However, some of the weaker candidates felt compelled to include them in their list even though they lacked the vocabulary.

Question 2: The general response was very good here. Most candidates used their own ill-health or that of a relative as a reason for missing school. The request for extra lessons and for a parent - teacher appointment was also well handled by most. Candidates who lacked basic vocabulary and structures struggled badly here, with very confusing (and sometimes amusing) consequences. "Last week" and "next week" were confused; "sorry" became "angry", *أسف / عاصف*, and there were those who did not know or could not write the most elementary phrases to express need, thanks or greetings. As expected, weaker candidates struggled with or ignored the use of past and future tenses and there were many who did not even sign their "letter".

Question 3: The structured guidelines in this question kept the candidates on what was required of them. There were many good answers with relevant elaborations on certain bullet points. Weaker candidates found it difficult to deal with the basic task, let alone develop a point. They lacked the vocabulary for "Western food", "shops nearby", "swimming pool". There were many instances of colloquial language and transliteration from English, which is a clear signal that the basic Arabic vocabulary of the course has not been absorbed.

Question 4: In this question candidates are asked to write about their *ideal* house. Many candidates did not appreciate the key word for ideal = *مثالي* and were satisfied with a description of rooms, furniture, the garden, and so on. Some took the house that they live as the ideal, which is fine. They went on further to say that it was not size of rooms nor richness of furnishings that were important but the warm spirit and love that permeate the home. With such candidates *البيت المثالي* does not merely mean "ideal house" but "ideal home". Such essays were a pleasure to read. Obviously, a good deal of thought and preparation had gone into producing them. There were also quite a few candidates who wanted hundreds of rooms, huge parks for gardens with a zoo thrown in for good measure. This was a popular choice, and even very weak candidates who could not write more than a couple of sentences managed to score some marks.

Question 5: An equal number of candidates chose to answer this question instead of Q.4. However, here again, it was disappointing that some candidates did not read the whole question or chose to ignore the first line of the rubric which stated that candidates had to write about a visit to a school. Consequently, such candidates wrote about a visit to somewhere other than a school, and then incongruously answered the third bullet-point by giving their opinion about their school. Those candidates who knew exactly what was required of them produced some excellent essays that covered every aspect of the question. By and large, they preserved their allegiance to their school and described them with warmth and love. They did not want to change very much in their schools beyond an enlarged playground or a library full of books.

With both topics (Q.4 and Q.5), there were many candidates who wrote far fewer than 150 words and they lost marks because of it. Teachers need to be aware of the examination requirements and they need to give their students practice in constructing text of the required length.

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	62	44	36	28	20	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	79	69	59	49	42	35	28		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	35	30	25	21	17	13	9	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	42	37	32	27	23	19	16	13	0

Paper 4 Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 4 grade boundaries	55	44	37	30	24	20	17	14	11	0

Further copies of this publication are available from
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467
Fax 01623 450481

Email publications@linneydirect.com

Order Code UA 018945 Summer 2007

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit www.edexcel.org.uk/qualifications
Alternatively, you can contact Customer Services at www.edexcel.org.uk/ask or on 0870 240 9800

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales no.4496750
Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH