

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2010

GCSE

GCSE Arabic (5AR01)

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Unit 1 - Listening and Understanding

Only 285 candidates took this paper which follows the new GCSE 2009 Arabic specification. This year has seen the final sitting of the legacy specification (1606/1607) which the majority of candidates had been following. The good news is that the performance of candidates in the new specification compares favourably with the legacy.

Teachers will be reassured to know that the standard of language and many of the testing types used in this paper have remained the same. The 'peaks and troughs' approach allowed the candidates to score marks where they could (see the analysis of marks scored in question 8 below). Furthermore, there has been emphasis on testing the skill of listening and understanding Arabic exclusively.

- All titles and rubrics of the nine questions are in English
- All questions are in English
- There is less dependence on the use of pictures (which can sometimes be clumsy and difficult to interpret quickly (see comment on question 6(i) below)

Here is an analysis of the nine questions and how the candidates performed in them.

Question 1 Holidays In Britain (Target: grade G)

Test type: multiple choice.

The vocabulary covered here was familiar to most, with almost all candidates getting the mark for question 1(i).

Question 2 Shopping (Target: grade E)

Test type: Questions in English (short responses in English)

This is a more challenging question involving description of purchased item and its price.

- (a) Description: nearly 78% of the candidates scored the full 2 marks.
(b) Price: This proved harder with only about 53% getting the figures right.
(c) Candidates fared better here, 68.4% getting it right.

Question 3 Favourite Types Of Film (Target: grade D)

Test Type: placing an X in the correct box in a grid.

The most challenging film types were fantasy and romance.

The most accessible was الأفلام التاريخية . Horror films, الأفلام المرعبة , scored well because there is an elaboration in the stimulus: Haroon explains that he is afraid of watching horror films in the cinema. The word أخاف is more accessible to candidates at this target level than مرعبة

Here are the percentages of candidates scoring the mark for these questions:

(i) 51.4% (ii) 93.3% (iii) 70.7% (iv) 76.8% (v) 51.9%

Question 4 At The Hotel (Target: grade C)

Test Type: multiple choice.

Performance in this question was better than in the previous question even though this was based on an elaborate conversation at the reception desk. One good reason may be because the topic and the vocabulary used here were well covered by the candidates. It is curious to find, however, that the questions relating to expressions of time (regarding room reservation and length of stay) scored the lowest marks here.

(i) 68.9% (ii) 90.9% (iii) 83.3% (iv) 68.8% (v) 76.8%

Question 5 An Interview With A Young Sportsman (Target: grade B)

Test Type: Gap filling (using letters related to words or phrases in English)

Here again, the candidates scored well overall. The topic and the radio interview style are familiar ground to our candidates. The authenticity of this question concentrated attention on what was being communicated, all except for question (iv). Could this be because candidates do not expect a good sportsman to be excellent in his studies as well?

The scores were:

(i) 92.6% (ii) 96.5% (iii) 75.8% (iv) 56.1% (v) 64.6%

Question 6 Family (Target: grade F)

Test Type: Multiple choice using pictures.

We are testing language at its most basic here, yet the errors in some of the questions were astonishing. It is surprising that 11% of the candidates who took this test did not know the word **قطعة** for cat. More disappointing was the score in (i) where you have to identify the picture that fits the family. It may well be that under the pressure of time, the candidates chose wrongly or randomly. Or it could be that they did not understand the comparatives **أكبر مني** and **أصغر مني**

The scores were: (i) 76.1% (ii) 85.9% (iii) 93% (iv) 96.5% (v) 88.8%

Question 7 At The Restaurant (Target: grade D)

Test Type: grid

This question proved too hard or confusing for some candidates. Yet the vocabulary used and the repetition within the text of the food items ordered should have made matters easier. One explanation may be that this question type requires a lot of cross referencing.

Score: (a) (i) and (ii) 51.6% (b) (i) and (ii) 60.4% (c) 64.2%

Question 8 Career Interview (Target: A*)

Test Type: Identifying the correct statements (five from ten).

This was the most challenging question of all where just under 38% of candidates scored full marks. However, this question was rewarding in many ways. The topic was engaging enough to get the attention of all, and no one scored 0/5. The question proved an excellent discriminator, with the following distribution of marks:

Out of the 285 candidates, 4 scored 1 mark, 29 scored 2 marks, 67 scored 3 marks, 108 scored 4 marks and 77 scored full marks.

Question 9 School Open Day (Target: A)

Test Type: Questions and short written answers in English.

Three of the ten marks for this question were awarded for listing three exhibits that can be seen at the school on open day. Only a third of the candidates managed to name three correctly. There was a fair bit of guess work but the mean score for question (e) was 1.93/3.

Performance in other parts of the question was as expected at this target level.

Score: (a) 88.4% (b) 63.9% (c) (i) 83.5% (ii) 71.9% (d) (i) 61.8% (ii) 64.6% (e) 37%
(f) 53.7%

On the whole, this has been a very encouraging start to the new specification.

Grade Boundaries

Raw Mark boundaries

Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
50	42	37	32	28	25	22	19	16

Uniform Mark Scale boundaries

Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
70	63	56	49	42	35	28	21	14

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