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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Arabic (1AA0) Paper 4F: Writing

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Publications Code 1AA0_4F_1906_ER

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Paper Introduction

This was the first year of testing 1AA0 4F, based on the new 2017 GCSE specification.

The paper tests students' comprehension of written material based on the themes of (1) Identity and culture (2) Local area, holiday and travel (3) School (4) Future aspirations, study and work (5) International and global dimension.

Students are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively through writing in Arabic for different purposes and audiences. Students are required to produce responses of varying lengths and types to express ideas and opinions in Arabic. The instructions to students are in Arabic. Word counts are specified for each question. Students must answer all questions.

1AA0_4F_Q01

The question requires the students to respond in Arabic, describing the picture stimulus and what the family may have bought for their older brother's celebration in 20 to 30 words. Most students made some attempt to answer the question fully, however the majority found the task challenging to complete accurately.

Students will find these types of questions less challenging if they have greater experience learning and using the provided vocabulary list found in the specification; furthermore, tasks and lessons on the five themes will help boost confidence to respond to questions such as this.

1AA0_4F_Q02

This question requires students to write a thank you letter between 40-50 words in length to a zoo after a school trip. Four points have been provided as stimulus for the letter, and should be included in the written piece. The majority of students were able to demonstrate the ability to write an official letter and could include all the main points required, however the quality of language and SpaG varied widely. Some students were unable to demonstrate writing skills to the level of composing a letter, to the extent of merely copying out the stimulus text.

The vocabulary list provided in the specification should be used extensively by students to develop writing skills for the purpose of the themes covered in the exam. Students should be exposed to authentic materials and examples to gain experience and familiarity.

1AA0_4F_Q03a

A very popular question for students, and the majority of written responses were adequate for describing an Arabic film festival covering the four points (how did they know about the festival, the invitation of a friend to attend, the film that

was watched and its benefits for their Arabic language skills). Students lost marks if they did not cover the four points mentioned in the stimulus.

Some students found this question very challenging, especially when trying to describe the activities planned after the festival.

Candidates need to study the full vocabulary lists, learn how to construct simple sentences of expression and develop their SpaG skills to maximise potential.

1AA0_4F_Q03b

Some students chose this question yet most found the task expressing their awareness and suggestions on environmental issues (between 80-90 words) very challenging due to their lack of Arabic vocabulary learnt for this topic. The few good responses had included the all the suggested points and expressed their personal views on how to help protect the environment.

1AA0_4F_Q04 (a-e)

Translation means transfer of meaning, with the aim to present the writing as an authentic sentence in the target language. A significant number of students responded well, but with considerable errors for basic grammar, such as mixing word genders and tenses.

All the translation stimuli are included in the vocabulary list; therefore, it is imperative that all students have studied and used all the included words to meet their potential.

Summary

- Students should have a deep awareness of the exam requirements by using the specification, and practice using past papers and the SAMs.
- students should have studied the vocabulary list in the specification
- teachers should have an exam focus with the necessary five themes,
- students should practice exam-style questions and frequently revise of key vocabulary, and complete translation practice tasks.