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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Arabic (1AA0) Paper 3H: Reading and
Understanding in Arabic

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Introduction

This is a full scale exam series paper since 2019 summer series after the unusual circumstances caused by COVID which resulted in special exams series in 2020 and 2021.

This Higher Tier Reading and Understanding in Arabic exam paper is made up of 10 questions with a total marks of 50.

This exam for this Higher Tier is 50 minutes long.

The paper draws on vocabulary and structures across all themes and topics covered in this qualification specification. Candidates are assessed on their understanding of standard written Arabic texts based on the aforementioned topics/themes. In addition to two literary texts (Q02 and Q04) from a variety of sources mainly novels and stories, and a short text in Arabic for candidates to translate into English.

Candidates will respond to multiple choice response and open response questions and translate a short text into English, all based on various texts that cover the following five themes: (1) Identity and Culture (2) Local area, holiday and travel (3) School (4) Future aspirations, study and work (5) International and global dimension.

All themes and topics must be studied in the context of both the students' home country and that of countries and communities where Arabic is spoken.

The paper is divided into three sections: In sections A and C, questions are set in English and candidates are required to answer in English. Questions in Section B are set in Arabic and candidates are required to answer in Arabic.

Note for Section C: it consists of 1 translation from Arabic into English question. Candidates should allow enough time for the translation question (10 minutes are recommended).

The vocabulary list -at both Foundation and Higher level- must be studied extensively to enable candidates to understand and express themselves with themes, reading and understanding authentic material. Teachers should

present and exploit a range of vocabulary relevant to the themes and topics in the specification.

Note: in this series Non-Vocabulary words were NOT used in the question papers.

This Higher Tier question paper targets grades 4 to 9:

- question 1: targets grade 4;
- question 2: targets grade 5;
- question 3 and 4: target grades 6 and 7;
- question 5 targets grades 7 and 8;
- questions 6: targets grade 9;
- question 7: targets grades 4;
- question 8: targets grade 5;
- question 9: targets grades 8 and 9;
- question 10: targets grades 6 to 9.
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Questions 1, 2, 7 and 8 are crossover questions with the Foundation Tier question paper.

Below is a summary of how this series cohort performed per each question:

Section A

Q01- crossover with 3F (3 marks): The candidates performance in this 'fill in the blanks' question has seen some excellent responses with full mark scores.

The challenging part (b) didn't prove to be of an issue for a good number of candidates.

Q02- crossover with 3F (4 marks): Some excellent candidates' performance in this question, a large number scoring either the full 5 available marks or 4 out the 5 marks.

However, in part (a), some candidates have confused the word 'والدة' (mother), which is the correct answer with (a) 'والد' (father). The Arabic letter 'ة', in this case, renders the word feminine and candidates should be able to differentiate between feminine and masculine. This mistake has happened in another question in this paper too, which proves the importance for teachers to familiarise students with the feminine/ masculine rule.

In part (b), few students struggled with answering this question and gave various incorrect answers.

Q03 (Total: 5 marks): This is an open response question.

Overall, we could say that the candidates' performance was very good in this question.

With a very small minority, most candidates managed to score 3, 4, or the full available 5 marks.

This type of question requires certain level of processing skills in order to match the statement to the name, which requires a good practice to develop.

Q04 (5 marks): This multiple choice 'literary text' question, has seen some excellent candidates' performance with a noticeable number of candidates scoring the full available 5 marks.

It is typical that a small minority of candidates would face some difficulty in fully understanding the stimulus text which resulted in candidates resort to 'guess work' in some of their answers.

However, the overall candidates' performance in this question was very good.

Q05- (6 marks): This question is a mixture of 'fill in the blanks' (Q05a-d) and open response (Q05e-f) question.

Although this question appears to be a challenging one to most candidates, the candidates' performance in Q05a and Q05d, was good.

However, observation of the candidates' responses in Q05a-d, shows that most candidates had difficulty in giving the correct answer for Q05c. Very few candidates gave the correct answer: 'two gardens'. Examples of incorrect answers were: 'a park', 'plants and trees', 'Islamic design', etc.

Furthermore, to a lesser extent, some candidates found Q05a challenging and many of their answers were: 'flowers', 'plants', 'path', etc. while the correct answer is: 'the design/old buildings'.

Regarding Q05e-f, the same evaluation of candidates performance for Q05a-d applies. Despite a noticeable number of candidates answering Q05e correctly,

many candidates found this question very challenging and to a larger extent they found Q05f more challenging and many candidates described how the system works but didn't mention the idea that it 'still works today', which is the right answer.

Q06 (5 marks): This question is divided into two parts: a multiple choice part for 3 marks and an open response part for 2 marks.

The candidates' performance in the multiple choice was good and many candidates were awarded either the full 3 available marks or 2 marks.

Common incorrect candidates' answers were in crossing (A) and (C), which are incorrect answers.

Regarding this part of the question, it is worth noting that a number of candidates submitted blank responses or crossed one or two boxes only.

In the open response part, candidates' performance in Q06b was of a mixture, however a significant number of candidates gave the correct answer for (c), while a less number of candidates gave the correct answer for (b): 'reads stories for them'.

Section B

Q07- crossover with 3F (5 marks): It was clear that this cohort candidates performed very well in this target language multiple choice question.

A good number of candidates scored the full 5 available marks and many others scored 4 marks.

The common incorrect answer was for Q07iii. While the correct answer is (C) 'صعوبة' (difficulty), a number of candidates crossed (A) 'سهولة' (ease) as their answer! (The same was observed in the 3F cohort responses to Q07iii).

Q08- crossover with 3F (5 marks): In this question 'fill in the blanks' target language question, a noticeable number of candidates managed to score the full 5 available marks or 4 marks. However, on the other hand, there was a number of candidates who didn't perform as well, with scores of 1 or 0.

It is important for candidates to be given the opportunities to practise this type of questions, where a matching of the statement to a name is a skill which can be developed through practising. It is important for candidates not to randomly select the name to match a statement resulting in a 0 score.

Q09 (5 marks): This is an open response target language question. There is an impressive candidates' performance in this question with very good attempts by candidates.

A significant number of candidates struggled with reaching the right decision on what is the answer to Q09c and Q09d. Two important points to flag for the future benefit to candidates regarding the type of these questions: the first point is related to Q09C; candidates need to read the question: ما هو الشيء الذي حصلت كأول امرأة في العالم؟_The key phrase is "كأول امرأة في العالم؟", this determines which award Zoha did receive (The Royal Golden Award). Many candidates gave 'جائزة برينكيز', which is not the targeted award in the question according to the text.

The second point is related to Q09d; the question was: كيف يمكن وصف أعمال "زها" المعمارية؟ أذكر شيئين. Again the key phrase is "وصف أعمال" how Zoha's work could be described? Candidates answers were to different question; how Zoha-herself- could be describes? Which is an incorrect understanding of the question.

Section C

Q10- translation (7 marks):

Some good performance by many candidates, with scores of a noticeable number of candidates scoring the full 7 available marks, 6 marks or 5 marks. However, there was a number of candidates who struggled with the translation of the Arabic text into English had their response either incomplete, full of gaps, or blank.

Conclusion and advice:

- As mentioned in the introduction, the exam paper will cover all topics and this means it is very familiar, such as environment.
- Candidates should be very familiar with the vocabulary list as all questions would contain some of these words in them, sometimes act as the 'key word' in the question or the answer.
- As expected, candidates performed better in multiple questions compared to open response questions. More emphasis should be put on practising and familiarising candidates with working with open response type of questions.

- To avoid losing marks, candidates should be made aware of the techniques of answering the multiple choice questions, i.e. cross only the number of answers they were asked to give (not to cross less and nor more).
- Candidates should be able to differentiate between feminine and masculine. Some candidates lost precious 2 marks in Q02 and Q06, due to not being aware that 'ة' renders the word feminine. This proves the importance for teachers to familiarise students with the feminine/ masculine rule.
- It seems that this cohort struggled with the three target language questions, which leads to a feeling that the preparation for this type of questions wasn't sufficient.
- Candidates need to have structured tuition on translating short Arabic texts into English. Candidates have 7 marks available for the translation question.

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