

# **Report on the Components**

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**June 2006**

**1922/MS/R/06**

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The mark schemes are published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which marks were awarded by Examiners. It does not indicate the details of the discussions which took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking commenced.

All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

The reports on the Examinations provide information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Mark schemes and Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers.

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1922/01 Persian Listening

1. General Comments

Candidates' overall performance showed a slight drop compared to last year's. One reason for this may have been an increase in the number of Dari speakers taking the exam this year. (There are some significant lexical and structural differences between Iranian Persian and Afghan Persian - Dari). Other reasons may be gleaned from the following recommendations. Candidates' performance would improve if they could be advised to:

- (a) Familiarise themselves with the various exercise types used.
- (b) Follow the rubrics carefully.
- (c) Observe the word limits set for the various writing tasks.
- (d) Use a pen, rather than a pencil.
- (e) Write legibly.
  
- (f) Pay particular attention to 'spelling', notably the significant role played by the following features in Persian script:
  - 'Dots': the number and position of 'dots' in dot-bearing letters.
  - 'Dented' letters: the exact number of teeth required for each letter.The second 'stroke' needed for the Persian letter (گ) 'g' to distinguish it from (ک) 'k'. The above features are important because a 'violation' of the rules may create a different word with an entirely different meaning. Furthermore, this can be of special significance when answering multiple-choice questions by writing a Persian letter in the box/gap.
  
- (g) Use a style or register that is appropriate to what they have been asked to write. A colloquial style may be considered acceptable in a personal letter or email to a friend, but inappropriate in a formal piece of writing, such as an essay or a business letter. Inappropriate style loses marks.
- (h) Enter all the required details in their appropriate boxes (Centre/Candidate Numbers and their full name).

## **2. Comments on Individual Questions**

### **Section 1**

#### *Exercise 1*

Questions were generally well answered.

#### *Exercise 2*

Questions were generally well answered.

#### *Exercise 3*

Questions were generally well answered. Question 14, however, differentiated the stronger candidates from those who needed to work further.

### **Section 2**

#### *Exercise 4*

Questions were generally well answered.

#### *Exercise 5*

Questions were generally well answered. Some candidates, however, seemed to be unfamiliar with question type. Question 24 played a differentiating role.

### **Section 3**

#### *Exercise 6*

Questions were generally well answered. However, some candidates would have done better if they had received adequate training in the type of questions used in this exercise.

#### *Exercise 7*

Only the very strong candidates managed to obtain full marks for this exercise. Questions 33 and 37 differentiated the stronger candidates.

#### *Exercise 8*

Questions were generally well answered. The stronger candidates who also had a good command of the English language did well in this exercise. Question 38 differentiated the stronger candidates.

## OCR - Persian GCSE (Speaking) – 1922/02

### General Comments

With the number of candidates remaining virtually unchanged from last year it was expected to see a similar pattern in terms of performance in the Speaking section of this year's examinations. However, a number of differences were noted that should give Centres guidelines on how to improve their conduct of the Speaking tests in the next examination series.

### Quality of Recording

The recordings this year were less up to the required standards than was expected. A number of examiners complained about the lack of attention by the conducting teacher to the recording volume or the distance of the candidate from the recorder.. Care must be exercised to conduct the tests in a quiet room that is isolated from the noisy parts of the building. Such disregard to basic detail produces unnecessary strain for the examiner and can inadvertently influence the marking. It is vitally important for the teacher/examiners to familiarise themselves with the cassette player's controls and to test the quality of recording before the examination.

### Conduct of the Examination

Sections 1 and 2 of the tests (role-plays) continued to be the two sections where most of the errors took place. Some teachers made up additional and occasionally irrelevant questions or responses to the stated written text in the Teacher's Instruction booklet. This practice confused the candidate and delayed the test unnecessarily. The following suggestions are strongly advised:

- Setting the scene correctly and avoiding confusion by not saying the opening sentences in an arbitrary manner in sections 1 and 2.
- Keeping to the correct order of the tasks to be performed by the candidate and the corresponding tasks by the teacher in sections 1 and 2.
- Avoiding conducting section 3 in the manner of an interview. The candidate should be encouraged to take the initiative and not the teacher.
- Adhering to the suggested time lengths in the General Discussion section.
- Encouraging the candidate to speak as opposed to the teacher doing most of the talking and leaving the candidate with only a few words to reply (General Conversation section).

Centres should provide the teacher who is going to conduct the exam with the procedural literature well in advance of the date of the exam and the teacher should adhere to the precise method and sequence of carrying out the tests.

### Comments on Individual Questions

The Speaking test consists of four sections. All candidates must take part in the four sections of the test. The four sections are:

- Section 1 (role-play, consisting of 4 specific tasks)
- Section 2 (role-play, consisting of 4 tasks with one task unspecified)
- Section 3 (narrating a picture-based story with teacher's occasional interjections)
- Section 4 (General conversation with two topics chosen by the candidate and one by the teacher)

In order to avoid subjecting all candidates to the same set of questions in section 1 to 3, each section is set based on a different setting. In total there are three different settings for each section, therefore allowing for variety and randomness in the booklets created per candidate. There are 6 booklets and each booklet contains a different combination of role-plays selected from the three settings stated above. Therefore, no six candidates will have the same set of identical questions.

## **Section 1**

The most attempted of the three role-plays in Section 1 was about “**Buying Lunch in a Café.**” Most of the candidates chose the safe course and suggested options and went for the cheese sandwich, orange juice and chocolate for their dessert. Some candidates ordered the entire range in each task, which clearly indicates their lack of preparation. Also there were a few candidates who didn’t wait for the teacher to ask the relevant questions and ordered all three items in succession. This kind of response may not lose the candidate their marks, but can be a source of confusion for the teacher and the examiner.

The second most frequently attempted role-play in this section was the “**Stationary Shop.**” The majority of candidates did very well in this role-play, presumably out of being familiar with the subject. The second task proved somewhat tricky for a number of candidates, as they couldn’t quickly relate the concept of a writing pad to a notebook. The third task had to be marked with care as “postcard” in Afghani Persian is postcard!

The “**Sports Shop**” role-play was the least attempted of the three role-plays in this section. Most candidates showed little hesitation and did the tasks properly. The athletes among the candidates had little problem with this role-play but some found the concept of “clothes” in a sports shop not readily accessible.



## Section 2

The “**Theme Park**” was the most frequently attempted role-play in Section 2. The open answer varied widely among the candidates but a good majority of them managed it correctly. The task that proved most tricky with the candidates was the third one: “**say you have a 1000 tuman note.**” Here a significant number missed the point and said: “**I have 1000 tumans with me.**” Although this answer is not the same as the task’s instruction, the candidates were given one out of two marks for the answer above.

The “**Art Museum**” role-play was also equally well played out by the majority of the candidates. Almost all candidates found the rest of the tasks were similarly easy to perform with all candidates answering the open-ended question with relative ease.

The “**Taxi Driver**” role-play was the least attempted of all role-plays in this section. It proved a challenging role-play for nearly all the candidates who did it. Teachers too, particularly the female ones, found playing the part of the driver rather tricky which added to some confusion over the conducting this part of the test. All these could have been avoided if both the candidates and their teachers had prepared themselves in advance of the test.

## Section 3

This section was generally performed better than the rest of the role-plays. The candidates could interpret the icons with relative ease, and in most cases adding their own relevant details to the story.

The “**Car Crash**” role-play was the most performed of the three role-plays in the section. Most candidates interpreted the clock icon as graphically as it was shown (7:45 a.m.). As with other icons the candidate is expected to come up with any reasonable interpretation of the icon. The interpretation of ‘hospital visits’ and ‘feelings’ were often very impressive.

The “**Snowy Day**” role-play was the second most attempted of the three. A good number of candidates showed imagination in coming up with a variety of snow games, however, some used the English terms to describe such games like “snow-boards”.

The “**Exam Eve Dream**” was the least attempted but surprisingly better performed in comparison with the other two role-plays in section 3. Some candidates showed creativity with interpreting or coming up with more complex stories when describing their tension in racing to turn up at the examination room in the nick of time! Obviously a frightfully real experience for some candidates!

### General Conversation

As in previous years, time keeping of this section was poor. In most recordings, the duration of this section was either well below or well above the approximate time allocation of five minutes. Also it was observed that the teacher would ask questions that had often a single ‘yes’ or ‘no’ for an answer. The aim of this section is to test the candidate's ability to speak with as little prompting and advanced hinting as possible. It is not meant to be an interview.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Although there were noticeable improvements in the overall performances of the candidates and the conducting teachers, a number of centres showed total disregard for the rules of conducting a Speaking test. The following recommendations are made on the basis of the Examiners observations:

- I) Centres need to provide the conducting teachers with the OCR Specification well in advance of the examination date.
- II) Centres can vastly improve the quality of their candidates' performance by arranging 'mock examinations' for them in advance of the real test.
- III) Teachers conducting the tests should explain to the candidates, before the test, that it is the candidate who must do most of the talking and not the teacher.
- IV) Teachers must avoid conducting the test in the manner of an interview. This particularly applies to Section 3, and General Conversation. They must not ask students questions that can be answered by a simple 'yes' or 'no'.
- V) Teachers must observe the time allocations for each section and not prolong the conversations unnecessarily.
- VI) It was observed that a number of teachers deviated sharply from the suggested teacher's prompts in role-plays 1 and 2 and followed 'their own' made up stories. This is a completely unacceptable practice and invariably will damage the candidates' marks due to that section.
- VII) Teachers conducting the exams should ensure there is enough recording time left on the relevant side of the cassette before starting the exam for a new candidate.
- VIII) Persian speaking tests are not internally moderated. Centres must provide the teachers with mark sheets for the details of the candidate and topics of General Conversation to be specified. But teachers must not enter their own marks on the mark sheets. This is the task of the external examiners and spaces provided for marking must be left blank.
- IX) It is strongly recommended that teachers conducting the speaking exam differentiate between the four different sections of the exam, by clearly stating on the recordings the start and finish of each section. This would make the marking process simpler, which would eventually benefit the candidate. This particularly applies to the General Conversation section.

*Report on the Units Taken in June 2006*

- X) The centres that send the exam material to the examiners for marking, need to ensure that they send the material in as organised a manner as possible, to avoid mistakes and confusion for the examiners. Before the cassettes are sent to the examiners, the teacher must rewind all the cassettes to the beginning of side A.

## GCSE Persian Reading 1922/03

**General Comments:** This year's students fall into two categories. A small percentage who had sat the paper with no preparation or familiarity with the exam format & achieved very low grades and the overwhelming majority who performed quite well. In general the grades achieved were quite high.

### SECTION 1

**General comments:** Students generally coped well with exercises in this section. No question in either exercise 1, 2 or 3 seemed to be misleading or causing confusion.

#### **Exercise 1**

Straight forward set of questions & clear images. Well handled. No problems noticed.

#### **Exercise 2:**

Instructions well understood. Questions handled well. No problems noticed.

#### **Exercise 3:**

Questions in this exercise were well understood & no problems noticed. No amendments required to the marking scheme.

### SECTION 2

**General Comments:** Questions in the 2 exercises in this section are set with direct reference to relevant texts. Students need to be reminded to read the text carefully before attempting to answer the questions.

**Exercise 4:** No changes to Mark Scheme. No specific problems noticed.

**Exercise 5:** No problems noticed. No changes required to Mark Scheme.

### SECTION 3

**General Comments:** It is advisable to remind students to read the text carefully before attempting to answer questions in this section. All questions in exercises 7 & 8 require answers based on the relevant texts.

**Exercise 6:** No problems with answers to the questions in this exercise. No changes required to Mark Scheme.

**Exercise 7:** The candidates did not seem to have encountered any problems in answering Qs 31-36. However the answer required to Q 34 was 'lack of practice in **speaking Farsi** and not **Farsi** in General, those who did not read the question properly lost the mark.

**Exercise 8:** Qs 37-40

It was decided to limit the acceptable options as answers to these questions. Therefore the only acceptable answer for Q37 was 'common border' or an answer specifically reflecting it. The required answer to Q40 was also narrowed down to 'Anahita Temple' as it was felt that the text was quite straight forward.

## 1922/04 Persian Writing

### 1. General Comments

Candidates' overall performance showed a slight drop compared to last year's. One reason for this may have been an increase in the number of Dari speakers taking the exam this year. (There are some significant lexical and structural differences between Iranian Persian and Afghan Persian - Dari). Other reasons may be gleaned from the following recommendations. Candidates' performance would improve if they could be advised to:

- (i) Familiarise themselves with the various exercise types used.
- (j) Follow the rubrics carefully.
- (k) Observe the word limits set for the various writing tasks.
- (l) Use a pen, rather than a pencil.
- (m) Write legibly.
  
- (n) Pay particular attention to 'spelling', notably the significant role played by the following features in Persian script:
  - 'Dots': the number and position of 'dots' in dot-bearing letters.
  - 'Dented' letters: the exact number of teeth required for each letter.
  - The second 'stroke' needed for the Persian letter (گ) 'g' to distinguish it from (ک) 'k'.The above features are important because a 'violation' of the rules may create a different word with an entirely different meaning. Furthermore, this can be of special significance when answering multiple-choice questions by writing a Persian letter in the box/gap.
  
- (o) Use a style or register that is appropriate to what they have been asked to write. A colloquial style may be considered acceptable in a personal letter or email to a friend, but inappropriate in a formal piece of writing, such as an essay or a business letter. Inappropriate style loses marks.
- (p) Enter all the required details in their appropriate boxes (Centre/Candidate Numbers and their full name).

## **2. Comments on Individual Questions**

### **Section 1**

#### *Exercise 1*

Most candidates gave eight or more items in Persian. Words (including those European loan words) commonly used in Iran were accepted and given appropriate marks.

#### *Exercise 2*

Most candidates handled this exercise well. Some appeared to be unfamiliar with the exercise type.

#### *Exercise 3*

The subtasks in this exercise were carried out generally well. A few candidates appeared to have missed one or more of the subtasks. Some candidates had not written complete sentences, which clearly went against the instructions.

### **Section 2**

#### *Exercise 4*

The subtasks in this exercise were carried out generally well. More candidates chose to write on topic 1. A few did not follow the rubrics and wrote on both topics, in which case the more comprehensive piece was marked.

### **Section 3**

#### *Exercise 5*

The subtasks in this exercise were carried out generally well. More candidates chose the first topic. Many wrote in excess of the word limit. Some candidates used a colloquial, almost casual style, which was considered inappropriate for this task, and therefore lost a few marks for quality of language.

**General Certificate of Secondary Education Persian 1922  
June 2006 Assessment Series**

**Component Threshold Marks**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Max Mark</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
01 - Listening	40	33	28	23	19	16	13	10
02 - Speaking	50	41	36	31	25	20	15	10
03 - Reading	40	31	26	22	18	15	12	9
04 - Writing	80	67	58	49	40	31	23	15

**N.B. Component marks are scaled to a weighted mark out of 50.  
Each component represents 25% of the overall award**

**Overall**

	<b>Max</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
Overall Threshold Marks	<b>200</b>								
Percentage in Grade		33.4	25.2	14.7	10.4	5.8	3.6	2.6	2.6
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		33.4	58.6	73.3	83.7	89.5	93.1	95.7	98.3

The total entry for the examination was 482









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