

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2009

IGCSE

IGCSE Arabic (4308) Paper 1

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Paper 1

The paper comprised of three sections which were to be attempted in 2 hours 15 minutes. As in previous exams, the three sections were designed to assess candidates' reading comprehension, writing and knowledge of grammar respectively.

Section 1

Section one was a passage extracted from an article by 'Fatema Ahmad Al Kaabi' which was published in 'The Educational prospects' magazine, (Jan 2003). The main theme of the text was how to look after and encourage gifted students. This section was designed to test candidates' reading comprehension through five questions which covered a variety of bullet points.

The length of the passage was adequate for candidates with different reading speeds and understanding abilities. The text was followed by five questions which required candidates to respond with answers based on the information provided in their own words and style.

The majority of candidates showed a good understanding of the questions and were able to locate the right answers from the text, use their own style and words and hence secured good marks.

Very few candidates found it difficult to organise their thoughts. Those that did gave answers that were not directly related to the text, especially in question 5, and therefore could not score the full marks.

The overall performance and responses to the questions were good, and showed good improvement and better preparation than in previous exam series.

Section 2

This section was made up of a short passage called 'Brain Juice' taken from a famous book called 'The Wiseman's Stick' by prominent Egyptian writer Tawfik Al Hakeem. The story was about how to encourage new generations to read more. Candidates were required to answer two questions about the text. The questions were designed to test candidates' level of reading ability as well as their writing skill. Question 1 was a straight forward test of candidates' reading comprehension and ability to respond in good language and style.

Question 2 required a much deeper understanding of the text where candidates had to write a short story based on the theme and the message of the text. The most successful candidates were those who managed to write a short story in line with the spirit of the given text. Many of the less able candidates understood the question but were only able to copy words and phrases in the given text and therefore were not able to secure the 10 marks allocated to the question.

Section 3

This section was designed to test candidates' knowledge of Arabic grammar. It contained four questions to cover a wide range of grammatical areas. Candidates' answers showed great improvement on the last exam series.

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