

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2009

IGCSE

IGCSE Arabic (4308) Paper 2

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Paper 2

General Comments

The candidates were asked to choose two topics out of six, and to write around 300 words about each of them. The maximum mark for each was 30. The 30 marks were awarded for content and communication (18 marks), language application (6 marks) and accuracy of writing (6 marks). The first five questions are general topics covering different areas of study while the sixth one is a generic picture question which requires the candidate to comment with a story or any other writing style on the details the picture offers.

Candidates that performed well in the exam were those who, in addition to having studied and revised the syllabus in depth, were able to demonstrate good knowledge of the topics they chose to answer, in a high standard level of language use, structure, vocabulary and grammar.

Question one required candidates to write a speech to read to their colleagues. Just over a quarter of the candidates attempted this question; two thirds of them managed to score good marks, others were not successful due to basic weakness in content, communication and style.

Question two required candidates to write in any sort of form about two of their friends. One was a generous person, whereas the other was a tight-fisted person. Candidates were expected to focus on comparing the two personalities, as well as showing the relationship and impression of other people towards each one of them. Just over one third of the candidates attempted this question, with slightly less than one third of them managing to score higher marks due to their good response to the requirements of the question. Candidates who were not successful in obtaining good marks were those who missed the main points required in their answers.

Question three required candidates to specify an invention that they admired and to write about its usefulness to humankind. This question was the most popular question among candidates. More than two thirds of the candidates attempted this question with a majority of them managing to secure higher marks. Most of those who were not successful in scoring well were among those who either concentrated on more than one invention, or focused on the disadvantages of their choice of invention leaving them to write very little on its advantages.

Question four required candidates to explain two lines of a poem. Candidates were expected to comment on each of the main points the poet wants to deliver to the reader, and show some competence in enlarging on the subject. This question was not as popular among the candidates and only around one fifth of them attempted it. As many as two thirds of the candidates managed to score good marks here. Most of the remaining candidates lost substantial marks as they created their own title to write on and forgot to focus on the question itself.

Question five required candidates to write a story on the saying "Time Is Gold". Again, this question was not as popular among candidates as in the first three questions. However, about three quarters of candidates who attempted it were able to score good marks. Most of the candidates who were not successful enough to score well in this question were those who deviated from the main target of the question and wrote about a topic of their own. Such as changing the title from "الوقت من ذهب" to "الوقت كالسيف إن لم تقطعه "قطعك".

Question six is a generic question which required the candidates to reflect on a picture by writing a story on any form of scenario. This question, as in previous exams, was not very popular among candidates. Less than one sixth of the candidates attempted it with less than two thirds of them managing to score good marks. Most of the candidates who were not successful enough to score well here relied on relearned material which they believed would be appropriate for any topic.

Recommendations to students:

- In answering a question in paper 2 move immediately to answering the question and avoid creating your own topic unless you have been told to do so.
- Avoid writing lengthy answers with unnecessary material. You are more likely to make more mistakes as you write too much and hence, may lose marks.
- Try to devise an outline to help you concentrate on the main points and organise your answer in a good order and avoid repetition.
- Watch the clock carefully to ensure that you do not spend too much time on one answer. If you run out of time when you are writing an answer, jot down the remaining main ideas from your outline, just to show that you know the material and with more time could have continued your exposition.
- Remember when answering an essay question to include an introduction, main body and a conclusion in your answer.
- Avoid leaving empty pages between your answers in the answer book.
- Avoid repeated use of the same words and expressions.
- Aim to leave five minutes at the end to check over the coherence and accuracy of your writing.
- Write clearly and do not use tippex to correct mistakes. Instead, you may draw a line through your mistakes. If your handwriting is large you should write on every other line.
- When you write the letter (و) do not leave a space between it and the word after it. As in the following example:

لقد بات الحاسب الآلي من أكثر الأجهزة والاختراعات انتشارا هذه الأيام.

The underlined word should be written as: والاختراعات

- In paper 2 you are always asked to answer two questions. When confronted with a choice, take a moment to decide which topic will best enable you to show what you know in a focused way.

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