

# ARABIC (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Paper 0544/21

Reading

## Key messages

In their preparation for this paper, candidates are expected to:

- show their understanding of a range of vocabulary relating to topics encountered in daily life
- communicate information using straightforward vocabulary, structures and verbs

## General comments

In general, candidates showed a clear understanding of the tasks and handled the paper very well. Candidates would benefit from reading more widely in the target language as this would help them to feel more confident when tackling **Section 3** of this paper. A large number of candidates performed well on this paper. Candidates who scored low marks were those whose work contained many errors in **sections 2** and **3**.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section 1**

#### **Exercise 1, Questions 1–5**

Most candidates answered these discrete questions correctly. A common mistake was in **Question 5** where candidates chose the picture of the table instead of the picture of the wardrobe.

#### **Exercise 2, Questions 6–10**

The questions in this matching task were generally handled well.

#### **Exercise 3, Questions 11–15**

For this exercise, candidates were given a short text to read followed by five multiple choice questions. As in the previous two exercises, these questions were answered well by the majority of candidates. A few common incorrect answers were in **Question 12** selecting 'fish' instead of 'chicken'; and 'boring' instead of 'interesting' for **Question 15**.

### **Section 2**

#### **Exercise 1, Questions 16–20**

Most candidates answered these questions correctly but there were a few mistakes for **Question 18** and **Question 20**.

#### **Exercise 2, Questions 21–29**

In this exercise, candidates were required to read a more extended passage of Arabic and to answer questions on it, also in Arabic. The most noticeable incorrect answers here were **Question 25** and **Question 28**.

**Section 3**

**Exercise 1 Questions 30-34**

There were some difficulties with **Question 34**.

**Exercise 2, Questions 35–39**

There were no major issues with these questions but sometimes candidates copied too much from the original text, giving the impression that they did not fully understand the questions.

Some candidates struggled with **Question 35** and **Question 38**.

# ARABIC (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Paper 0544/22

Reading

## Key messages

In their preparation for this paper, candidates are expected to:

- demonstrate knowledge of a range of vocabulary relating to topics encountered in daily life
- be able to communicate information using straightforward vocabulary, structures and verbs.

## General comments

In general, candidates showed a clear understanding of the tasks and handled the paper very well. Candidates would benefit in particular from reading more widely in the target language as this would help them to feel more confident when tackling **Section 3** of this paper. A large number of candidates performed very well. Candidates who lost marks were those whose responses contained many errors in **sections 2** and **3**.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section 1**

#### **Exercise 1, Questions 1–5**

Most candidates answered these discrete questions correctly. A common mistake was in **Question 5** where candidates chose the picture of the wardrobe instead of the picture of the table.

#### **Exercise 2, Questions 6–10**

The questions in this matching task were generally handled well and there were hardly any mistakes here.

#### **Exercise 3, Questions 11–15**

For this exercise, candidates were given a short text to read followed by five multiple choice questions. As in the previous two exercises, these questions were answered well by the majority of candidates. A few common incorrect answers were in **Question 11** selecting 'in the afternoon' instead of 'in the evening'; 'Chinese restaurant' instead of 'Arabic restaurant' for **Question 12**, and 'by car' instead of 'by bus' for **Question 15**.

### **Section 2**

#### **Exercise 1, Questions 16–20**

Most candidates answered these questions correctly but there were a few mistakes for **Question 17 – 19**, so a focus on learning synonyms is recommended.

#### **Exercise 2, Questions 21–28**

In this exercise, candidates were required to read a more extended passage of Arabic and to answer questions on it, also in Arabic. The most noticeable incorrect answer here is **Question 27** in which candidates read the question literally, rather than understanding the implied meaning.

**Section 3**

**Exercise 1 Questions 29-33**

There were no major issues with these questions.

**Exercise 2, Questions 34–40**

There were no major issues with these questions although candidates are advised not to copy from the original text as this gives the impression that they did not fully understand the questions. They are encouraged instead to use their own words.

# ARABIC (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Paper 0544/23  
Reading

## Key messages

In their preparation for this paper, candidates are expected to:

- show their understanding of a range of vocabulary relating to topics encountered in daily life
- communicate information using straightforward vocabulary, structures and verbs

## General comments

In general, candidates showed a clear understanding of the tasks and handled the paper very well. Candidates would benefit from reading more widely in the target language as this would help them to feel more confident when tackling **Section 3** of this paper. A large number of candidates performed well on this paper. Candidates who scored low marks were those whose work contained many errors in **sections 2** and **3**.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section 1**

#### **Exercise 1, Questions 1–5**

Most candidates answered these discrete questions correctly. A common mistake was in **Question 5** where candidates chose the picture of the table instead of the picture of the wardrobe.

#### **Exercise 2, Questions 6–10**

The questions in this matching task were generally handled well.

#### **Exercise 3, Questions 11–15**

For this exercise, candidates were given a short text to read followed by five multiple choice questions. As in the previous two exercises, these questions were answered well by the majority of candidates. A few common incorrect answers were in **Question 12** selecting 'fish' instead of 'chicken'; and 'boring' instead of 'interesting' for **Question 15**.

### **Section 2**

#### **Exercise 1, Questions 16–20**

Most candidates answered these questions correctly but there were a few mistakes for **Question 18** and **Question 20**.

#### **Exercise 2, Questions 21–29**

In this exercise, candidates were required to read a more extended passage of Arabic and to answer questions on it, also in Arabic. The most noticeable incorrect answers here were **Question 25** and **Question 28**.

**Section 3**

**Exercise 1 Questions 30-34**

There were some difficulties with **Question 34**.

**Exercise 2, Questions 35–39**

There were no major issues with these questions but sometimes candidates copied too much from the original text, giving the impression that they did not fully understand the questions.

Some candidates struggled with **Question 35** and **Question 38**.

# ARABIC (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Paper 0544/03  
Speaking

## Key Messages

In preparing for, and conducting, the IGCSE Arabic Speaking examination, Centres should bear the following pointers in mind.

- Careful preparation by Teacher/Examiners is essential
- Modern Standard Arabic should be used by both Teacher/Examiner and candidate during the examination
- Teacher/Examiners should adhere to the role play tasks exactly as set out in the Teachers' Notes booklet
- Teacher/Examiners can prompt to allow the candidate to clarify if s/he omits an element of a role play task
- On the Topic Presentation, once the candidate has presented his/her chosen topic for 1–2 minutes, the rest of the five minutes should be spent discussing the topic
- Questions should be more open-ended and probing, allowing candidates to justify opinions and show a wider range of structures
- Teacher/Examiners should ensure they ask questions which give candidates the opportunity to use past, present and future tenses in each of the conversation sections
- Teacher/Examiners should make a clear distinction between the Topic Presentation/Conversation and the General Conversation
- Teacher/Examiners must adhere to the timings in the Teachers' Notes booklet
- Teacher/Examiners are reminded to vary the topics covered and should not ask all candidates the same series of questions
- Candidates should be asked both expected and unexpected questions
- To achieve high marks, candidates do not have to be of native speaker standard
- An Arabic version of the Teachers' Notes booklet is available from the Cambridge Teacher Support website.
- The IGCSE Foreign Language Arabic speaking support video is available to view before conducting the examination <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGBtY5YGmAM>

## General Comments

This paper is common to all candidates. Cambridge Moderators heard the full range of candidate performance submitted by Centres.

### ***Candidate performance***

This year many Centres conducted the role play section well, although some missed out certain sections and a few either changed the role play tasks or conducted the two role plays from section A. Candidates who performed very well on this component covered all parts of the two role plays A and B, presented a topic of their own choice for no more than two minutes, and responded well to both expected and unexpected questions on their topics in a spontaneous and natural manner for three minutes. General conversation for strong candidates lasted for five minutes where they were able to answer a series of linked questions on two or three topics including their opinions and justifications. Strong candidates also developed their answers, using more complex structures, a variety of tenses, and were able to convey both past and future meaning in both conversations.

In many Centres it was evident that speaking practice was a regular part of classroom activity and that candidates were familiar with the requirements of the Speaking examination. In such Centres, the Teacher/Examiner conducting the examination had prepared the role plays well, enabling candidates to show that they could communicate in a variety of everyday situations.

Candidates gained marks by following their cues and answering concisely in the role plays section. They were aware of the need to respond to unexpected questions on the conversation sections. The Teacher/Examiner managed a smooth transition to the conversation sections and then pitched questions at a level appropriate to the candidate, while bearing in mind the descriptors of the mark scheme. Conversations were natural and candidates were given the opportunity to work in a variety of tenses, using a range of structures and vocabulary and covering a selection of different topics across both conversation sections.

In general, Moderators noted that Teacher/Examiners were aware of the need for spontaneity and many conversations featured both predictable and unexpected questions. Candidates were given the opportunity to show that they could respond to questions on topics with which they may have been familiar, but which they had not over-prepared.

A few Centres need to work towards achieving greater spontaneity during the examination. The use of question banks is, of course, useful during the learning process, however, once vocabulary and structures have been acquired, candidates should be encouraged to move gradually away from predictable banks of questions. If the same banks of questions which have been used in class are used in the examination, there is little opportunity for spontaneous conversation. A more effective approach is for Teacher/Examiners to keep eye contact with candidates, listen to what they have to say, and respond accordingly.

### **Conduct of the examination**

Many Teacher/Examiners are clearly at ease in their role and familiar with the requirements of the IGCSE Arabic Speaking examination. The role of the conducting Teacher/Examiner remains crucial in terms of putting the candidate at ease and enabling him/her to work for the available marks. Those Teacher/Examiners who have prepared their own roles fully and are confident in what they are doing are better able to help candidates who experience any difficulty. A well-prepared Teacher/Examiner ensures that his/her candidates are given ample opportunity to demonstrate the full range of their abilities.

Teacher/Examiners are reminded that they are not examining candidates' knowledge on a particular subject, and that they should not keep the tone too formal, but rather adopt the curious, friendly tone of an interested lay person. Divisions between different parts of the examination should be made by the Teacher/Examiner, and targeted questions should be used. Teacher/Examiners are also encouraged to use only a couple of topics and be sure to give students enough time.

In the event that a candidate falls silent, s/he should be encouraged via questioning techniques or the Teacher/Examiner can move to the next section of the test. A small number of Teacher/Examiners chose to remain silent when the candidate could not continue. This resulted in either the candidate disengaging from the conversation or feeling uncomfortable/ unconfident.

There were several instances of Teacher/Examiners omitting sections of the Speaking examination, particularly the Topic Presentation. **Centres are reminded that if a section is omitted, no marks can be awarded.** Teacher/Examiners are reminded that the IGCSE Arabic speaking examination consists of three sections:

- **Part One** is two role plays – Role play A and Role play B, lasting **about five minutes**
- **Part Two** starts with a presentation by the candidate on a topic of his/her choice. The Teacher/Examiner must allow the candidate to speak for about two minutes on his/her prepared topic and then follow this up with specific spontaneous questions related to the topic. This section of the examination should last **about five minutes** in total.
- **Part Three** of the examination is a spontaneous conversation of a more general nature and should last **about five minutes**.

The following section is intended to help Teacher/Examiners elicit the best possible performance from their candidates:

### **Preparation time**

Teacher/Examiners should ensure that they are familiar with the requirements of the Speaking examination before embarking on any examining. Where this worked well, Teacher/Examiners were familiar with the instructions, paperwork, the role play situations and their role in them. As a result, they followed the role play

cues/script provided in the Teachers' Notes booklet and did not confuse candidates by omitting one or more of the prescribed tasks and/or inserting extra tasks.

Teacher/Examiners are reminded that they should cue all tasks as specified in the role plays, that no section of the examination should be omitted, that they should keep to the stipulated timings of five minutes per conversation section, and that they should give candidates the opportunity to respond in a range of tenses and to unexpected as well as predictable questions in both conversation sections.

Many Teacher/Examiners are to be commended on their careful preparation of the role plays. Some, however, had not familiarised themselves sufficiently with the role plays and either miscued or missed out certain tasks. In such cases, candidates could not be awarded marks for tasks they had not attempted.

### Timings

It is helpful to candidates to know before the examination that each of the two conversation sections will last for five minutes. Teacher/Examiners should then adhere to these timings during the examination. In the Topic Presentation, it is always good practice to stop a candidate after they have presented for two minutes and to start to ask questions. The stipulated timings were often not observed and this can have a detrimental effect on candidates' performance: a Speaking examination that is too short may not allow a candidate enough time to demonstrate his/her abilities, and a Speaking examination that is too long may cause the candidate to become tired and therefore increase his/her chance of making errors.

### Transition between different sections of the Speaking examination

Teacher/Examiners are encouraged to make it very clear to candidates when they were moving from one section of the examination to the next. This helps to put candidates at their ease. The transitions can be managed easily by using a phrase such as "سوف ننتقل الآن إلى الجزء الثالث من الامتحان: المحادثة العامة".

### Questioning technique

Teacher/Examiners are reminded that questions to elicit different tenses **must be asked in both** of the conversation sections.

### Recorded sample: quality and composition

The recorded sample should be selected to represent the **full** spread of performance in the Centre. This enables the Moderator to check that the application of the scheme is fair and accurate throughout the Centre's mark range. Where more than one Teacher/Examiner is used (for Centres with large numbers of candidates) the sample should include examples from each Teacher/Examiner. Centres should not select and submit a full recorded sample per Teacher/Examiner: **please include equal numbers of recordings from each Teacher/Examiner.**

In a small number of cases, the CD submitted by the Centre was blank. Centres are reminded to check that the recordings are present on the CD, that all parts of the examination have been recorded, and that all recordings are audible before sending to Cambridge. Please do not submit recordings on a USB/memory stick.

In general, the quality of the recordings was satisfactory, largely due to the more widespread use of digital technology. However, Centres are reminded to check the position of microphones and the quality of the recording, both during the examinations (between candidates) and before samples are despatched to Cambridge. Centres should ensure well in advance of the speaking examination that a suitably quiet room will be available. Rooms, which are too close to a playground or noisy classroom, are to be avoided. It is essential to exclude unnecessary background noise, e.g. phones or bells ringing.

The best quality recordings were produced in small rooms in which mobile phones had been switched off and which were not situated close to noisy areas. Where recordings are saved as .mp3 files, please ensure that these have been labelled in accordance with the naming convention stipulated in the Teachers' Notes booklet. **Please record each exam on a separate file** (each candidate's exam should be recorded on one file only). Please ensure that before each examination, the Teacher/Examiner announces the candidate name, number and role play card number. Please remember to identify all candidates on the recording and mark sheets, using their official examination number. Note that once an examination has begun, **the recording should not be stopped or paused between elements of the examination**, but should run continuously until the end of that candidate's examination.

### Coversheet for moderation sample

Unfortunately, several Centres forgot to include the cover sheet for the moderation sample. This is provided in the Teachers' Notes booklet and should be completed in the Centre and submitted together with the recorded sample and other paperwork.

Overall the range of samples was appropriate although some Centres failed to adhere to the guide line stipulating that they should send the first ten in alphabetical order and the other six spread over the range: top, middle and bottom. Some very large Centres sent all their recordings, which was not required.

### Internal moderation

Centres with a large number of candidates are reminded that they must seek permission from Cambridge before the start of the speaking test period if they wish to use more than one Teacher/Examiner. To assist Centres in their internal moderation procedures, Cambridge has produced guidelines on how to carry out the Internal Standardisation/Moderation of Cambridge IGCSE foreign language Speaking examinations which are sent to a Centre once permission has been granted.

Where permission has been granted, the coordinating Teacher/Examiner is responsible for checking that the mark scheme has been applied consistently by all of the Teacher/Examiners in the Centre. If a particular Teacher/Examiner's marking is judged by his/her colleagues to be out of line with the other marking at the Centre, the marks for candidates examined by that Teacher/Examiner must be adjusted on **both the Working Mark Sheet and on the MS1** before paperwork is submitted to Cambridge.

Centres are reminded to include documentation of permission granted to use more than one Teacher/Examiner, and (as above), where more than one Teacher/Examiner is used (for Centres with large numbers of candidates) for the sample to include examples from each Teacher/Examiner.

### Clerical errors

A number of clerical errors were noted this year. Centres are reminded to check all additions and transcriptions very carefully before submitting their materials to Cambridge. Please note that the marks entered on the MS1/computer should be the same as the ones shown on the Working Mark Sheet. Please remember that the mark scheme does not contain any half marks.

A very small number of Centres had written a candidate number with a total mark on MS1 but that did not exist at all on the working mark sheet and the opposite (exist on WMS but do not appear on MS1).

### Administration

On the whole, the administrative tasks relating to the speaking examination were completed very well. When despatching the materials to Cambridge, please ensure that a copy of the completed working mark sheet(s) is enclosed in the parcel, together with the register, the MS1 and the recording.

When completing the MS1, please make sure to enter clearly the final mark in figures as well as shading the lozenges.

### Application of the mark scheme

Generally, Centres' marking was close to the agreed standard although sometimes adjustments were necessary. Where Centres required considerable adjustment, this was usually due to one of the following:

#### Role plays

- the role play was not introduced by the Examiner causing confusion for the candidate
- the Teacher/Examiner did not prompt or give clarification when asked
- candidates were awarded marks for Role Play tasks which had not been attempted or which were only partially completed
- candidates were awarded marks for a role play which was not completed or for an invented task that was different than the one in the Teachers' Notes Booklet
- candidates were allowed to choose from the role play cards and they ended up choosing tasks from one section only and not the other (both role play were from A and not B)
- candidate were not given 15 minutes preparation for the role plays

- some Examiner did not stick to the prompts in the role play cards.

#### Topic Presentation/Topic Conversation

- some candidates did not prepare a presentation in advance
- the Topic Presentation/Conversation was not conducted
- the Topic Presentation was conducted but there were no follow-up questions or discussion
- candidates were not given the opportunity to use a range of timeframes

#### General Conversation

- there was no distinction between Topic Presentation/Conversation and General Conversation
- the General Conversation was not conducted
- the brevity of the conversation sections meant that candidates did not have the opportunity to demonstrate the range of vocabulary and structures required to score marks in the top bands
- candidates were not given the opportunity to use a range of timeframes
- candidates were not given the opportunity to present a topic of their own
- candidates did not convey past and future meaning accurately or past and future questions were not asked
- the award of marks for some sections that was more than the agreed standard
- half marks instead of whole marks were awarded
- candidates did not have the opportunity to develop their answers and demonstrate more complex structures
- the Teacher/Examiner completed the task for the candidate
- overly-demanding questions were asked of candidates.

#### Comments on Specific Questions

##### ***Role plays***

This section of the test was very well conducted when Teacher/Examiners followed the script provided in the Teachers' Notes booklet. **Marks can only be awarded for completing the tasks as presented on the role play cards.** Candidates should be trained to include a greeting and thanks where appropriate. Centres are reminded that on some tasks a short response may be sufficient to attract a mark of three. Although full sentences with a conjugated verb are often not required to complete a task, should a verb be used by the candidate it must be correct for a mark of three to be appropriate. If the verb is incorrect, the maximum mark that can be awarded for the task is two. Ambiguous pronunciation should be queried because Communication may be affected when pronunciation is unclear. Candidates are allowed to self-correct but cannot be given marks if the Teacher/Examiner completes the task for them (e.g. if the Teacher/Examiner provides an item of vocabulary which the candidate merely repeats).

If a candidate misses out a task, the Teacher/Examiner should try to naturally guide him/her back to it. Some Teacher/Examiners did not introduce role plays, and others created additional role play tasks. In the interests of international standards, and in fairness to candidates, Teacher/Examiners should not miss out parts of the role play tasks, nor replace parts with alternative or different tasks.

If only one part of a task is completed, only one mark can be awarded. Please remember that the mark scheme does not contain any half marks and that a maximum of three marks can be awarded for each task in the role plays. Where a candidate makes no response to a task, no marks can be awarded for that task. The Teacher/Examiner should not offer vocabulary items or options, unless these appear in the Teachers' Notes – candidates must be allowed to work for their marks.

**Each candidate should be examined in two role play situations** which must be one 'A' role play and one 'B' role play, using one role play card only, which should be selected at random by the Teacher/Examiner from the cards supplied by Cambridge. **Candidates are not permitted to choose from the role play cards.** Candidates should be given 15 minutes' preparation time just before the examination to allow them to familiarise themselves with the settings of the role plays.

##### **A Role Plays**

The A role plays are designed to be easier than the B role plays. Most Centres conducted this part of the exam successfully.

##### **B Role Plays**

As always, the B role plays were more demanding in that they required candidates to respond spontaneously to an unexpected question, provide a reaction to a situation, and operate in a tense other than the present tense.

### ***Topic Presentation and Conversation***

Candidates had chosen a wide range of topics for their presentation, many of which were interesting and lively. This year, some topics were rather ambitious but these were generally handled well by the candidates who had chosen them, demonstrating their mastery of the Arabic language.

Some Teacher/Examiners forgot to allow their candidates to present their topic. It is very important that no part of the examination is omitted, as this can severely limit a candidate's marks. Others thought that the second part of the exam is for the candidate only to talk about his presentation without any follow up questions. Teacher/Examiners are reminded that, where a candidate presents his topic for two minutes and shows no sign of finishing his/her Topic Presentation, the Teacher/Examiner must interrupt and follow this up with specific spontaneous questions related to the topic.

Some Teacher/Examiners were well aware of the need to ask questions, which could elicit past and future tenses, and did so to good effect. Teacher/Examiners are reminded to allow the candidate time to expand his/her answer.

Teacher/Examiners are reminded of the need for accurate timing for this section. For several centres, the timing of this section was either too short or much too long.

As above, Teacher/Examiners are reminded of the importance of indicating to candidates that the topic conversation has finished and the general conversation is about to begin.

### ***General Conversation***

Many Teacher/Examiners were aware of the need to cover two or three different topics in this section of the examination, though it may be necessary to cover more topics with less able candidates who will not be able to answer in as much depth. The topics discussed in this part of the examination should be different to those discussed in the Topic presentation/Conversation and **must be chosen by the Teacher/Examiner**, rather than by the candidate.

It was welcome to hear Teacher/Examiners guiding candidates smoothly between topics. It is better to let the conversation flow rather than asking a series of unconnected questions.

In order to award marks in the satisfactory band or above, the candidate must show that he/she can use past and future tenses accurately. It is not sufficient for Teacher/Examiners to ask questions to elicit past and future tenses if the candidate cannot use these tenses successfully in his/her reply. It is useful to practise adverbs of time in the classroom because familiarity with these will help candidates identify the time frame in which they should be operating.

Questions should invite candidates to talk. Where questioning restricts candidates to short or 'yes'/'no' responses, they will not have the opportunity to use the range of structures necessary for access to the higher mark bands.

Overall, conduct of the test was good in this section of the examination. It was welcome to hear those Teacher/Examiners who explained at the beginning that there were three parts to the examination and then went on to examine in these areas.

Regrettably, many of the General Conversations heard by the Moderators were too brief to warrant the award of the highest marks. Teacher/Examiners are reminded that this section of the examination should last approximately **five minutes**.

### ***Impression***

At the end of the examination the Teacher/Examiner must make an assessment of the candidate's pronunciation, accent and fluency based on his/her overall performance. Banded descriptors are enclosed in Table C of the Marking Instructions in the Teachers' Notes booklet. In general, Teacher/Examiners awarded appropriate marks for this aspect of the examination.

# ARABIC (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Paper 0544/41

Writing

## Key Messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to demonstrate that they can communicate in the written form, showing knowledge of a range and variety of vocabulary and applying the grammar and structures of the Arabic language correctly. The Writing paper was in a new format this summer and candidates generally tackled this well, with centres making use of the specimen material available.

When offered a choice of questions, candidates should select the one they consider to be the best suited to their knowledge of Arabic. This may not always be the one they find the most interesting. Then they should prepare a brief plan of their answer in accordance with the set tasks and clearly cross through this as it will not be marked. As the recommended length for **Question 3** is 130–140 words, candidates should plan to spread the answer fairly evenly over the tasks (the Communication points) set out in the rubric. Candidates also plan their time carefully and the time allowed for the paper is ample for the given tasks. When candidates have finished they should make full use of the time left to check through their work.

Candidates should always adhere to the rubric which sets out a number of required elements, each of which carries one or more specific Communication marks. They should read the question carefully and keep to these tasks, keeping their responses on task. If the tasks require a certain tense then candidates must stick to that tense. Candidates should not learn pieces of work by heart and reproduce them in the examination, as these will not meet the requirements of the question. Each sentence should be written thoughtfully, paying attention to the message conveyed, spelling and grammar.

Within the parameters on content imposed by the set tasks, the paper is an exercise in composition so candidates should write that which they are confident is correct Arabic and avoid what they do not know or are not confident to express. Candidates are reminded to present their best Arabic to the Examiner.

Presentation is very important. If the Examiner cannot read what the candidate has written, no marks can be awarded.

In **Questions 2 and 3**, some candidates tended to include long lists of proper nouns such as place names or personal names. This practice is to be discouraged as marks cannot be awarded for such lists and they can take up a significant proportion of the word allocation.

It is also vital that candidates check their writing and make sure they present it in the writing form required – letter writing/article/story. Failure to present the required form of writing will be reflected in the marks gained.

## General comments

The Writing paper consisted of two sections. **Section 1** was made of two questions. **Question 1** is a new question introduced to this paper. Candidates were asked to list eight items that can be found in a school. There was an example and some photos that candidates could use if they wished to, although these were not compulsory. This question was marked out of five and Examiners chose the best five answers and were awarded the marks accordingly. Candidates performed well in this question.

In **Question 2**, candidates were asked to write an email to a friend to invite him to attend a play.

In **Section 2, Question 3**: Candidates were asked to pick one of the following essays:

- **3(a)** a letter to a friend about organising a friend's birthday party.
- **3(b)** an article to the school magazine about a book club.
- **3(c)** an essay about studying Arabic at university.

Candidates are reminded for the need to plan their responses, stick to the rubric and provide a careful response to showcase their writing ability. The quality of written skills varied significantly.

The performance of the candidates spanned a range of ability. On the whole, results were good and in many cases, performances were excellent. Most essays were adequately focussed on the topic in question and were well structured, though many were somewhat unimaginative. There were a number of well-structured scripts, and the overall answers were more targeted, compared with previous years. Given the new format of the examination, this was encouraging.

Candidates are reminded that they are marked on Communication, Accuracy of Verbs and Other Linguistic Features, so must be sure to demonstrate all the parts asked for in the question. Teachers are advised to continue to consult the published mark schemes to remind themselves how the marks are awarded.

Some candidates were awarded low grades due to a rather limited understanding of the Arabic language and showed good understanding but with poor spelling and grammar. A few candidates showed very limited understanding of Arabic and their answers comprised copying rubrics from the question.

Most candidates appeared to have sufficient knowledge of Arabic grammatical structures to enable them to complete the paper without undue difficulty, but there were a number of common basic errors which included:

1. Using *tanween* as a letter and not as *tashkeel* such as أَيْضَان instead of أَيْضًا and صَبَاحِن written صباحاً.
2. Misuse of the gender, when describing male or female objects or people.
3. Confusing التاء المربوطة and التاء الطويلة
4. Confusing التاء المربوطة and الهاء
5. Not applying the correct agreement between feminine nouns and adjectives
6. Verbs used in inappropriate person or tense with expressed subject
7. Not applying feminine adjective to refer to non-human plural
8. Using colloquial spoken dialect
9. Not applying the correct possessive pronoun endings
10. The predicate of kana not used in the accusative case was the most common grammatical mistake
11. Using long and short vowels incorrectly
12. Using prepositions incorrectly.

### Comments on Specific Questions:

#### **Section 1**

This section was generally well attempted and the majority of the candidates achieved very good marks.

#### **Question 1**

In this question the candidates are required to list eight items in Arabic and they will be awarded five marks for the most appropriate items they can see on the seaside. Most candidates were very successful in listing these items.

#### **Question 2**

Careful reading and comprehension of the rubric helped the vast majority of candidates produce appropriate answers suitable for a letter.

Most candidates succeeded in communicating most or all of the relevant points without undue difficulty, although a few candidates did not appear to have paid sufficient attention to the details of the information requested in the question.

The majority met all comprehension points and many answers were well thought through.

More attention should be paid to accuracy and the most common errors concerned adjectival endings and verb ending agreement.

#### **Section 2**

#### **Question 3**

Candidates were required to answer one question from a choice of three. **Question 3(a)** was Organising a birthday party, **Question 3(b)**, describing a book club **Question 3(c)**, Studying Arabic language at university.

Most candidates attempted this question successfully with some excellent responses. However, some responses were brief and lacked detail, which was reflected in the marks awarded.

The majority of students opted for **Question 3(a)** and managed to address all communication points appropriately.

Fewer candidates opted to answer **Question 3(b)** but those who did achieved good marks. Only few of them did not include all communication points. A few candidates did not understand the question.

Candidates who followed the rubrics were successful in achieving the task, but Examiners were not able to award marks to those who wrote an irrelevant response or copied from rubric

**Question 3(c):** This question allowed more scope for the candidates' imagination than the first question as this question was about descriptive writing, although fewer candidates chose this question. Those who did chose it were successful in writing appropriate style, with some showing creativity and flair.

Some students missed Comprehension points as they did not use the future tense when talking about how their camp will help in sorting out environmental issues.

There were some confusing responses from some, due to poor word selection. Sometimes there were instances where sentences or texts could not be followed due to the lack of basic linking devices, incorrect use of tense or pronouns and repetitions.

Compared with previous years (unless the question was not attempted), most candidates managed to apply an appropriate amount of detail to their chosen question. This has a positive impact on results as there was no example of a complete irrelevant answer as in previous years.

As above, Examiners were not able to award marks to those who those who did not stick to answering the question, or copying directly from the rubric.

Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education  
0544 Arabic (Foreign Language) June 2015  
Principal Examiner Report for Teachers

Students generally answered questions with solid language and most of them met the comprehension points. Generally, more attention should be paid to accuracy (gender agreement and spelling). However, a number of students show outstanding level of Arabic, using expressions and adjectives to describe the charity event, film or environmental problems and these answers were a pleasure to read.

# ARABIC (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0544/42

Writing

## Key Messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to demonstrate that they can communicate in the written form, showing knowledge of a range and variety of vocabulary and applying the grammar and structures of the Arabic language correctly. The Writing paper was in a new format this summer and candidates generally tackled this well, with centres making use of the specimen material available.

When offered a choice of questions, candidates should select the one they consider to be the best suited to their knowledge of Arabic. This may not always be the one they find the most interesting. Then they should prepare a brief plan of their answer in accordance with the set tasks and clearly cross through this as it will not be marked. As the recommended length for Question 3 is 130–140 words, candidates should plan to spread the answer fairly evenly over the tasks (the Communication points) set out in the rubric. Candidates also plan their time carefully and the time allowed for the paper is ample for the given tasks. When candidates have finished they should make full use of the time left to check through their work.

Candidates should always adhere to the rubric which sets out a number of required elements, each of which carries one or more specific Communication marks. They should read the question carefully and keep to these tasks, keeping their responses on task. If the tasks require a certain tense then candidates must stick to that tense. Candidates should not learn pieces of work by heart and reproduce them in the examination, as these will not meet the requirements of the question. Each sentence should be written thoughtfully, paying attention to the message conveyed, spelling and grammar.

Within the parameters on content imposed by the set tasks, the paper is an exercise in composition so candidates should write that which they are confident is correct Arabic and avoid what they do not know or are not confident to express. Candidates are reminded to present their best Arabic to the Examiner.

Presentation is very important. If the Examiner cannot read what the candidate has written, no marks can be awarded.

In Questions 2 and 3, some candidates tended to include long lists of proper nouns such as place names or personal names. This practice is to be discouraged as marks cannot be awarded for such lists and they can take up a significant proportion of the word allocation.

It is also vital that candidates check their writing and make sure they present it in the writing form required – letter writing/article/story. Failure to present the required form of writing will be reflected in the marks gained.

## General comments

The Writing paper consisted of two sections. **Section 1** was made of two questions. **Question 1** is a new question introduced to this paper. Candidates were asked to list eight items that can be found at the seaside. There was an example and some photos that candidates could use if they wished to, although these were not compulsory. This question was marked out of five and Examiners chose the best five answers and were awarded the marks accordingly. Candidates performed well in this question.

In **Question 2**, candidates were asked to write a short letter to a friend to tell him that their PE teacher asked them to form a small sports group with three bullet points to write about.

In **Section 2, Question 3**: Candidates were asked to pick one of the following essays:

- **3(a)** a letter to a friend about organising a charity event
- **3(b)** an essay to the school magazine about a film you watched over the summer holiday
- **3(c)** an article about taking part in a school camp about the environment.

Candidates are reminded for the need to plan their responses, stick to the rubric and provide a careful response to showcase their writing ability. The quality of written skills varied significantly.

The performance of the candidates spanned a range of ability. On the whole, results were good and in many cases, performances were excellent. Most essays were adequately focussed on the topic in question and were well structured, though many were somewhat unimaginative. There were a number of well-structured scripts, and the overall answers were more positive, comparing with previous years. Given the new format of the examination, this was encouraging.

Candidates are reminded that they are marked on Communication, Accuracy of Verbs and Other Linguistic Features, so must be sure to demonstrate all the parts asked for in the question. Teachers are advised to continue to consult the published mark schemes to remind themselves how the marks are awarded.

Some candidates were awarded low grades due to a rather limited understanding of the Arabic language and showed good understanding but with poor spelling and grammar. A few candidates showed very limited understanding of Arabic and their answers comprised copying rubrics from the question.

Most candidates appeared to have sufficient knowledge of Arabic grammatical structures to enable them to complete the paper without undue difficulty, but there were a number of common basic errors which included:

1. Using *tanween* as a letter and not as *tashkeel* such as أَيْضَان instead of أَيْضًا and صَبَاحِن written صباحاً.
2. Misuse of the gender, when describing male or female objects or people.
3. Confusing التاء المربوطة and التاء الطويلة
4. Confusing التاء المربوطة and الهاء
5. Not applying the correct agreement between feminine nouns and adjectives
6. Verbs used in inappropriate person or tense with expressed subject
7. Not applying feminine adjective to refer to non-human plural
8. Using colloquial spoken dialect
9. Not applying the correct possessive pronoun endings
10. The predicate of kana not used in the accusative case was the most common grammatical mistake
11. Using long and short vowels incorrectly
12. Using prepositions incorrectly.

## **Comments on Specific Questions:**

### **Section 1**

This section was generally well attempted and the majority of the candidates achieved very good marks.

#### **Question 1**

In this question the candidates are required to list eight items in Arabic and they will be awarded five marks for the most appropriate items they can see on the seaside. Most candidates were very successful in listing these items.

#### **Question 2**

Careful reading and comprehension of the rubric helped the vast majority of candidates produce appropriate answers suitable for a letter.

Most candidates succeeded in communicating most or all of the relevant points without undue difficulty, although a few candidates did not appear to have paid sufficient attention to the details of the information requested in the question.

The majority met all comprehension points and added varied adjectives to describe the benefits of their favourite sport. Many answers were well thought through.

More attention should be paid to accuracy and the most common errors concerned adjectival endings and verb ending agreement.

### **Section 2**

#### **Question 3**

Candidates were required to answer one question from a choice of three. **Question 3(a)**, was Organising a charity event, **Question 3(b)**, watching a famous film **Question 3(c)**, participating in a summer camp.

Most candidates attempted this question successfully with some excellent responses. However, some responses were brief and lacked detail, which was reflected in the marks awarded.

The majority of students opted for **Question 3(a)** and managed to address all communication points appropriately.

Fewer candidates opted to answer **Question 3(b)** but those who did achieved good marks. Only few of them did not include all communication points. A few candidates did not understand the question.

Candidates who followed the rubrics were successful in achieving the task, but Examiners were not able to award marks to those who wrote an irrelevant response or copied from rubric

**Question 3(c):** This question allowed more scope for the candidates' imagination than the first question as this question was about descriptive writing, although fewer candidates chose this question. Those who did chose it were successful in writing appropriate style, with some showing excellent creative talents.

Some students missed Comprehension points as they did not use the future tense when talking about how their camp will help in sorting out environmental issues.

There were some confusing responses from some, due to poor word selection. Sometimes there were instances where sentences or texts could not be followed due to the lack of basic linking devices, incorrect use of tense or pronouns and repetitions.

Compared with previous years (unless the question was not attempted), most candidates managed to apply an appropriate amount of detail to their chosen question. This has a positive impact on results as there was no example of a complete irrelevant answer as in previous years.

As above, Examiners were not able to award marks to those who those who did not stick to answering the question, or copying directly from the rubric.

Students generally answered questions with solid language and most of them met the comprehension points. Generally, more attention should be paid to accuracy (gender agreement and spelling). However, a number of students show outstanding level of Arabic, using expressions and adjectives to describe the charity event, film or environmental problems and these answers were a pleasure to read.

# ARABIC (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Paper 0544/43

Writing

## Key Messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to demonstrate that they can communicate in the written form, showing knowledge of a range and variety of vocabulary and applying the grammar and structures of the Arabic language correctly. The Writing paper was in a new format this summer and candidates generally tackled this well, with centres making use of the specimen material available.

When offered a choice of questions, candidates should select the one they consider to be the best suited to their knowledge of Arabic. This may not always be the one they find the most interesting. Then they should prepare a brief plan of their answer in accordance with the set tasks and clearly cross through this as it will not be marked. As the recommended length for **Question 3** is 130–140 words, candidates should plan to spread the answer fairly evenly over the tasks (the Communication points) set out in the rubric. Candidates also plan their time carefully and the time allowed for the paper is ample for the given tasks. When candidates have finished they should make full use of the time left to check through their work.

Candidates should always adhere to the rubric which sets out a number of required elements, each of which carries one or more specific Communication marks. They should read the question carefully and keep to these tasks, keeping their responses on task. If the tasks require a certain tense then candidates must stick to that tense. Candidates should not learn pieces of work by heart and reproduce them in the examination, as these will not meet the requirements of the question. Each sentence should be written thoughtfully, paying attention to the message conveyed, spelling and grammar.

Within the parameters on content imposed by the set tasks, the paper is an exercise in composition so candidates should write that which they are confident is correct Arabic and avoid what they do not know or are not confident to express. Candidates are reminded to present their best Arabic to the Examiner.

Presentation is very important. If the Examiner cannot read what the candidate has written, no marks can be awarded.

In **Questions 2 and 3**, some candidates tended to include long lists of proper nouns such as place names or personal names. This practice is to be discouraged as marks cannot be awarded for such lists and they can take up a significant proportion of the word allocation.

It is also vital that candidates check their writing and make sure they present it in the writing form required – letter writing/article/story. Failure to present the required form of writing will be reflected in the marks gained.

## General comments

The Writing paper consisted of two sections. **Section 1** was made of two questions. **Question 1** is a new question introduced to this paper. Candidates were asked to list eight items that can be found in a school. There was an example and some photos that candidates could use if they wished to, although these were not compulsory. This question was marked out of five and Examiners chose the best five answers and were awarded the marks accordingly. Candidates performed well in this question.

In **Question 2**, candidates were asked to write an email to a friend to invite him to attend a play.

In **Section 2, Question 3**: Candidates were asked to pick one of the following essays:

- **3(a)** a letter to a friend about organising a friend's birthday party.
- **3(b)** an article to the school magazine about a book club.
- **3(c)** an essay about studying Arabic at university.

Candidates are reminded for the need to plan their responses, stick to the rubric and provide a careful response to showcase their writing ability. The quality of written skills varied significantly.

The performance of the candidates spanned a range of ability. On the whole, results were good and in many cases, performances were excellent. Most essays were adequately focussed on the topic in question and were well structured, though many were somewhat unimaginative. There were a number of well-structured scripts, and the overall answers were more targeted, compared with previous years. Given the new format of the examination, this was encouraging.

Candidates are reminded that they are marked on Communication, Accuracy of Verbs and Other Linguistic Features, so must be sure to demonstrate all the parts asked for in the question. Teachers are advised to continue to consult the published mark schemes to remind themselves how the marks are awarded.

Some candidates were awarded low grades due to a rather limited understanding of the Arabic language and showed good understanding but with poor spelling and grammar. A few candidates showed very limited understanding of Arabic and their answers comprised copying rubrics from the question.

Most candidates appeared to have sufficient knowledge of Arabic grammatical structures to enable them to complete the paper without undue difficulty, but there were a number of common basic errors which included:

1. Using *tanween* as a letter and not as *tashkeel* such as أَيْضَان instead of أَيْضًا and صَبَاحِن written صباحاً.
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9. Not applying the correct possessive pronoun endings
10. The predicate of kana not used in the accusative case was the most common grammatical mistake
11. Using long and short vowels incorrectly
12. Using prepositions incorrectly.

### Comments on Specific Questions:

#### **Section 1**

This section was generally well attempted and the majority of the candidates achieved very good marks.

#### **Question 1**

In this question the candidates are required to list eight items in Arabic and they will be awarded five marks for the most appropriate items they can see on the seaside. Most candidates were very successful in listing these items.

#### **Question 2**

Careful reading and comprehension of the rubric helped the vast majority of candidates produce appropriate answers suitable for a letter.

Most candidates succeeded in communicating most or all of the relevant points without undue difficulty, although a few candidates did not appear to have paid sufficient attention to the details of the information requested in the question.

The majority met all comprehension points and many answers were well thought through.

More attention should be paid to accuracy and the most common errors concerned adjectival endings and verb ending agreement.

#### **Section 2**

#### **Question 3**

Candidates were required to answer one question from a choice of three. **Question 3(a)** was Organising a birthday party, **Question 3(b)**, describing a book club **Question 3(c)**, Studying Arabic language at university.

Most candidates attempted this question successfully with some excellent responses. However, some responses were brief and lacked detail, which was reflected in the marks awarded.

The majority of students opted for **Question 3(a)** and managed to address all communication points appropriately.

Fewer candidates opted to answer **Question 3(b)** but those who did achieved good marks. Only few of them did not include all communication points. A few candidates did not understand the question.

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**Question 3(c):** This question allowed more scope for the candidates' imagination than the first question as this question was about descriptive writing, although fewer candidates chose this question. Those who did chose it were successful in writing appropriate style, with some showing creativity and flair.

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