

# ARABIC

Paper 9680/02  
Reading and Writing

## General comments

Overall the standard of answers this session was good and there is clear evidence of an improvement in the standard since last session in the quality of language and accuracy of answers. The question which candidates found most challenging was **Question 5**.

Candidates need to practise grammatical structures such as *inna* and its sisters, conjugation of verbs, and adverbs. Candidates should also read widely and practise summarising. They should pay attention to correct spelling. Examples of common spelling errors were as follows:

يأدي الحرب ، كان الحرب ، فرصة رؤية هذه المغار ، هتان المغامرات تتكون من بالمائية ، الحرب قد أدى .

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

Most candidates who attempted this question managed to produce good answers. Examiners were looking for antonyms of the stated vocabulary.

Candidates who did not score well were those who wrote answers such as the following:

أ- جامد / جافة  
ب- الصغرى

### Question 2

Examiners were looking for answers which provided the required grammatical structure. Answers which scored full marks included the following:

أ- بقيت المغارة منذ اكتشافها وتأهيلها قبلة أنظار اللبنانيين .  
ب- كأنها مرفق سياحي.  
ت- فيها سقف محفور حفرا طبيعيا .  
ث - يستقبلك في الممر الحديث مؤثر صوتي.  
ج- تقف مفتونين.

The most common mistakes included the following:

أ- بقيت المغارة منذ اكتشافهما وتأهيلهما قبلة أنظار اللبنانيين.  
ب- كأنها مرفقا سياحيا .  
ت- فيها سقف محفورة حفرتا طبيعيا.  
ث- تستقبلك في الممر الحديث مؤثر صوتي.  
ج- تقف مفتوتين.

### Question 3

Examiners were looking for answers which demonstrated candidates' comprehension of Text One, expressed in the candidates' own words and style of writing. The following is part of an answer which scored good marks:

أ- استطاع الماء منذ القديم أن يحت في باطن الأرض طرقات و ممرات بدو و ببطء وكأنه نحات يصنع تماثيل عديدة فابتكر قناطر و قبا فائقة الجمال وبقيت يد الإنسان بعيدة عن عمليات الإبداع هذه.

The following is an example of an answer which did not contain what Examiners were looking for:

أ- تكونت مغارة جعيتا في وادي نهر الكلب على بعد 20 كيلومتر إلى الشمال من العاصمة بيروت.

#### Question 4

Examiners were looking for answers which demonstrated candidates' comprehension of Text Two, with good use of language and expressed in the candidates' own words. The following is part of an answer which scored good marks:

أ- لأنها تمتعت بعدد من الخصال العربية الجميلة مثل التسامح ، والصبر ، والسخاء.  
ت- الصعود على الجبال ، العوم أو السباحة ، التصوير .

The following is an example of an answer which did not contain what Examiners were looking for:

ت- فالزائرون يمكنون أن يتمتعون.  
ج- هناك طرق وأسواق ليس باسماء هؤلاء الزوار. نرى مجتمع محافظ.

#### Question 5

Candidates were required to summarise scenes from the two texts and mention what might make a tourist unhappy about his visit to a particular country.

Many candidates lost marks for the following reasons:

- Copying out portions of text from one or both texts.
- Copying out irrelevant sections of the text.
- Writing about ideas in the texts which were unrelated to the scene.
- Poor quality of language.
- Writing about what might make a visitor happy rather than unhappy, as required by the question rubric.

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Paper 9680/03

Essay

## General comments

The question paper gave a choice of six titles, with the overall mark being out of 40: 24 marks for language and 16 for content. The standards achieved by the candidates varied considerably, though the overall performance of the candidates was generally satisfactory. The best essays were grammatically sound, stylistically elegant, well-structured and had coherent lines of argument. On the other hand, some essays were deficient in some or all of these respects. Although a significant number of essays appeared to rely at least partly on memorised formulae, this feature was less evident than in scripts from the previous year and there were few if any instances of 'pre-learned' essays being submitted as scripts.

As in previous examinations, there were frequent grammatical errors, for example in the use of the *idaafa* construction, and some candidates continued to demonstrate an inadequate grasp of the principles of Arabic word order.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Question 1**

As last year, almost no candidates answered this question, the only one requiring candidates to relate their answer specifically to their own country.

### **Question 2**

This proved a popular topic. Many essays were well written, and occasionally thought provoking, though in others there was an over-reliance on pre-learned formulae which occasionally did not relate well to the specific question.

### **Question 3**

A few candidates opted for this question, on law and order, though it was not as popular as **Questions 2** or **5**. The essays produced were, however, generally well written, with a range of interesting ideas.

### **Question 4**

This question, on life in the country and the city, attracted a number of candidates, though again, it was not as popular as **Questions 2** or **5**. The quality of the essays was rather variable.

### **Question 5**

This question, on sport, proved very popular, and elicited a number of excellent answers, though overall the quality was again rather variable. Although the writing was often competent, many of the ideas expressed were conventional and rather unimaginative, and there was evidence of a greater reliance on pre-rehearsed formulae than in some other questions.

### **Question 6**

Few candidates opted for this topic, but the essays produced were generally competently written.

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**Paper 9680/04**

**Texts**

## General comments

The paper was comparable in standard to those of recent years and was well received by most candidates. Candidates are required to answer three out of twelve questions. Although notes and books are allowed in the exam, Examiners were looking for the candidates' ability to write answers in an effective way without copying large chunks from the relevant book or using the prepared notes and quotations.

Candidates this year were more structured in their answer paper: question numbers were neatly and clearly written in the margins and the order of questions was followed. It was obvious that candidates had been well prepared for the examination: candidates from one particular Centre wrote a very neat outline of their answers first and then developed it in their writing. This method of writing an outline of the answer first worked well as the candidates concerned achieved good grades. The handwriting of most candidates was neat and legible in most cases thus no marks were lost due to lack of understanding. The Centres are to be commended for their hard work.

Candidates need to adhere to the word limit given for each question. Writing in excess of the word limit can often lead to a deterioration in the quality of work; on the other hand, writing synopses or short answers weakens the work.

In general the results reflect the improving standard of candidates from the different Centres. Candidates were more focused in their answers and in their approach to dealing with the different demands of the questions.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section 1**

*Miramar*, Najib Mahfuz

#### **Question 1(a)**

This was one of the most popular questions. Candidates tended to write short answers to the questions rather than write in detail. Candidates need to be reminded that the questions are pointers intended to lead to a full comprehensible essay of between 500 – 600 words.

#### **Question 1(b)**

The majority of candidates answered this question. Most were able to identify the main character in the story and tried to show how the other characters revolve around her. On the whole candidates showed a good understanding of the novel and the era in which it was written.

*Diwan Umru-il-Qais*

#### **Question 2(a)**

This question is a very straightforward one. Candidates were asked to read selected verses from a poem and then answer questions to show their understanding. Candidates who answered the question found it difficult to bring in the full context that is reflected in the poem and therefore did not bring into their answers examples from other poems they have read. Candidates should be trained to re-phrase the verses of a poem in a structured manner in order to show their understanding of the significance of the words given in relation to the whole poem. Most candidates failed to do that. Some candidates gave only synonyms of the

words in the verses without further explanation. Those candidates received marks in the lower band rather than the higher one.

### Question 2(b)

Candidates used **Question 2(a)** as a springboard to answering this question. Candidates wrote effectively about the poet's life and philosophy. Some candidates were able to use well-chosen and relevant verses to illustrate the life of the poet and the social issues related to his life. Most candidates did well in this question.

*Umara' al-Shi'r al abbasi, Anees Almaqdisy*

### Question 3(a)

Very few candidates answered this question. Those that did were able to explain the poem with all the pictures involved. They were also able to analyse the poem and relate it to the poet's life and philosophy.

### Question 3(b)

Most candidates answered this question. Many were able to write about the poet's philosophy of life but failed to quote poems to illustrate his points. Candidates also failed to refer to specific situations in the poet's life and social status.

## Section 2

*Dami, dumu'i wa-btisamati, Ihsan 'Abd al-Quddus*

### Question 4(a)

This question was the most popular and most candidates were able to relate some of the morals that prevailed in Egyptian society to the incidents of the story. Unfortunately many candidates summarised the story without referring to the initial question of how the morals are reflected in the incidents discussed. Candidates showed little attempt to analyse and discuss the different characters involved.

### Question 4(b)

Many candidates answered this question. They showed good understanding of Egyptian society and the struggle between 'Parents and Children' as reflected in the different stories in the book. Most candidates quoted examples from at least three stories. Most answers given were not merely a summary but an analysis of the characters of the different stories.

*al-Mutasha'il, Imil Habibi*

### Questions 5(a) and 5(b)

Very few candidates chose this question. Candidates who did wrote very little and were not able to develop the points. They were not able to see beyond the framework of the incidents of the story.

*Shahrazad, Tawfiq al-Hakim*

### Question 6(a)

This was one of the most popular questions. Candidates were required to write about the importance of the events occurring in the play. Some candidates succeeded in summarizing and evaluating the events on occasion, others only summarised events and copied selected passages from the play without linking the ideas and events together. They failed to relate the events in the play to the main question, that is, of the role and importance of *Shahrazad*, to that extent their answers were superficial.

### Question 6(b)

Many candidates answered this question. They were able to write about *Shahrazad* as a powerful character influencing and changing the King's life. Unfortunately most candidates did not write very clearly about her influence on the other characters in the play or about the role of the other characters in justifying the King's actions. This put them in a lower mark band because they failed to address the specific question asked.

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Paper 9680/05

Prose

## General comments

Candidates were required to supply an Arabic translation of the English text. The standard of answers this session showed an improvement from the previous session. However, candidates should be given more practice in all cases of the defective verbs, masculine and feminine, adjectives, and vocabulary relating to daily life and hobbies.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

Examiners were looking for translations of the opening sentence 'Voluntary work is not often the type of work young people look for' which read as follows:

عمل التطوع ليس العمل الذي يتطلع إليه الشباب

And of the following extract 'you are not just giving your community a much-needed service: it's also a great way to make friends' thus:

إنك لا تعطي مجتمعك أكثر الخدمات أهمية فحسب ، بل

هي طريقة عظيمة للتعرف على أصدقاء جدد

Common mistakes in translation were as follows:

a) Candidates seemed unsure how to translate the word 'clubs'. Some wrote ملهى which means 'nightclub'. Others wrote حفلة which means 'party'.

The correct Arabic translation would have been النوادي

b) Many candidates translated 'the worst thing' as الشيء الأهم which means 'the most important thing'. The correct translation would have been أسوأ شيء

c) The word 'oppression' was translated by many candidates as الغضب meaning 'anger'. The correct translation would have been الظلم

d) The word 'assertive' was translated by many candidates as صرامة meaning 'force'. The correct translation would have been الجزم

e) In some cases, candidates lost marks as their work contained many spelling mistakes, or their handwriting was illegible. Examples of some common spelling mistakes were the following:

- عمل فادنى لا دائما نواع العمل ناس شباب يحثون عن وشيء خير ذلك بلغا ذلك أنت لا تفعل راد تقلب ...

- عمل السريع لا دائما نوع العمل يبحث الشباب وشيء الأستية كالطبع ذلك أن أنت لم يدفع ثمن 1 ...