

ARABIC

Paper 9680/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

Overall, candidates performed well on this paper and there was evidence of improvement in the standard of candidates' answers compared to last year.

A few candidates copied out long portions of text from the reading passages, which was not always selective enough to indicate sufficient comprehension. Candidates should be reminded that, as far as possible, they should use their own words in response to **Questions 3, 4 and 5**.

Candidates would benefit from expanding their range of reading materials and from further practice in analysing a variety of texts in order to enrich their vocabulary and to improve their analytical skills.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Many candidates answered this question successfully.

Appropriate answers included the following:

- أ- تناغم: تناسب، أو تآلف، أو توافق، أو تناسق، أو تجانس، أو تطابق
- ب- أبدع: أجمل، أو أروع، أو أحسن، أو أعظم، أو أفضل.
- ت- رصعت: زينت، أو زخرفت، أو صنعت، أو نقشت، أو طرزت.
- ث- للعيان: للشهود، أو للشاهد، أو للمراقب، أو للناظر.
- ج- نواة: قلب، أو أساس، أو وسط، أو مركز، أو جوهر.

Question 2

The majority of candidates answered this question well.

Question 3

Many candidates answered this question well, using their own words effectively in order to demonstrate their comprehension of the reading passage.

Appropriate answers included the following:

- أ- الإسلام أسس حضارة السلام الرائعة، وكذلك الطمأنينة، وجعل من المدن معارض أو متاحف لما أنتجته وصورته حضارة العرب والمسلمين.
- ب- لأنها برأيه اتخذت أشكالاً مختلفة فتعددت أنماطها، وزينت بأجمل الزخارف، ورصعت بالذهب والأحجار الكريمة الراقية، ومئذنة أحمد بن طولون تشهد على هذه العظمة في التصميم وفي دقة ومهارة البناء وجماله.
- ث- لعب المسجد الأموي دوراً أساسياً في حياة سكان مدينة دمشق بوجود قصر الأمير بالقرب منه وكذلك بكثرة الأسواق التي حوله فقد كان المسجد جوهر المدينة ومركزها.



ج- في رأي الكاتب الدليل على تأثر منازل العرب هو أنها قد صممت لتكون انعكاساً لروح الإسلام. فالبيت في الإسلام له حرمة لأنه حرم الأسرة، ولا بد أن يكون مستورا بعيدا عن عامة الناس، لذا نوافذه عالية، وضيقة، تحيط بها جدران عالية.

Section 2

Question 4

There were some very good responses to this question. Many candidates selected appropriate ideas from the reading passage and incorporated them into their answers.

Appropriate answers included the following:

أ- كانوا يستمتعون بظلال الأشجار وبأزهار الغوطة في فصل الربيع، وكانوا يقضون أوقات فراغهم نهارا مع أولادهم وأصحابهم. وكان أصحاب المزارع يتركون الناس يجنون التمار من الأشجار ومن الطرقات العامة.

ب- بيوتها مليئة بالرياحان والأزهار والياسمين الذي كان يتساقط على جدران الطابق الثاني من البيوت، وشجر الليمون يفوح منه رائحة الزهر العطرة في فصل الربيع.

ث - لأن للمسجد الأموي أربعة أبواب وقبة وثلاث مآذن، وتفنن المصممون بتزيينه وبناء أروقة وقبة كبيرة وفسحة كبيرة بها بحرة ماء للوضوء. وعلى الجدران لوحات ورسوم لدور دمشق القديمة تتدفق المياه وسط صحنها الداخلية وتحفها الأشجار وقطع الفسيفساء التي تزين جدران المسجد من الجهة الغربية.

Question 5

There were many good answers to this question.

In part (a), many candidates selected relevant ideas from both reading passages and presented them in a well-structured summary.

In part (b), there were some very interesting opinions expressed and many candidates explained successfully the reasons behind their opinions.

For example:

الشيء الذي يعجبني في المدينة العربية وجود الأسواق الكثيرة حول المسجد، وأن هذه الأسواق متنوعة بأشياء متعددة ومختلفة وكثيرة. وبجانب ذلك أعجب بالمنحوتات الفنية الجميلة التي توجد في المدينة العربية ذلك لأن الفن العربي نادر في مدينتي.

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Paper 9680/03
Essay

General comments

This is an Essay paper in which candidates are required to compose one essay from a choice of five topics. The essay is marked out of 40, with 16 marks available for Content and 24 marks available for Quality of Language.

Overall, the performance of candidates was satisfactory. Some candidates produced good or excellent responses. A general improvement was noted compared to previous years.

The majority of essays contained coherent lines of argument and were well structured.

The best answers incorporated candidates' personal experience and ideas drawn from material studied in class. A small number of essays demonstrated little evidence of imagination or originality. It seemed that some candidates were over-reliant on material memorised in advance, which was not always relevant or used in an appropriate way.

Candidates should be reminded that on the question paper they will see the general Set Topic, as stated in the syllabus, followed by the specific question they must answer. In some cases, candidates wrote on the broad topic area instead of answering the specific question. Candidates should be reminded to read the question carefully before beginning to answer, and to ensure that they have answered the question asked.

The majority of essays read quite smoothly. Weaker answers were characterised by frequent, albeit minor, grammatical errors. These included, for example: the incorrect use of *al-* in the *idaafa* construction; the use of *li-anna* followed immediately by a verb; the misspelling of *(wa-)laakin*; the widespread treatment of *wa-* as a separate word in its own right, allowing it to be written on its own at the end of a line.

Many candidates adhered to the word limits specified in the question paper. A few candidates exceeded the specified word limits: candidates should be reminded that going beyond this does not improve the quality of the work presented and may indeed increase the likelihood of errors occurring.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Responses to this question were generally thoughtful and well written.

Question 2

Answers to this question tended to be well written and often incorporated a range of interesting ideas.

Question 3

This was a popular question. The best essays were thoughtful and extremely well written. Some responses seemed to show excessive reliance on memorised material, which wasn't always relevant or appropriate to the question. Some candidates wrote competently about environmental issues in general, but did not include sufficient detail to address the specific question asked.

Question 4

This topic also proved popular, and many responses showed good control of the Arabic language. The content of some answers was rather limited and a number of candidates placed rather too much emphasis on a single theme, particularly 'migration to the city'. Candidates need to make sure that they incorporate a range of ideas into their essays.

Question 5

The best responses here were well structured and well written. Some responses seemed to show excessive reliance on memorised material, which wasn't always relevant or appropriate to the question. A number of candidates incorporated proverbs or similar material into their answers, and in many cases this proved effective.



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Paper 9680/04

Texts

General comments

Overall, candidates' performance on this paper was good. Candidates seemed better prepared for the examination this year: they seemed more focused in their answers and in their approach to dealing with the different aspects of the questions.

There was an improvement in candidates' approach to organising their answers and also in their language and sentence structure.

Last year it was noted that handwriting sometimes proved quite difficult to read, and this year it was pleasing to note an improvement in this area.

Candidates should be reminded to write in black or dark blue pen; some wrote in pencil and this was sometimes difficult to read.

A number of candidates made good use of an essay plan to help them identify the main points that they wanted to mention, before embarking on writing their essays.

It is disappointing to note that a number of candidates are still misreading the question paper rubrics. Candidates should answer **three** questions in total (choosing **either (a) or (b)** in each case). They should answer one question from **Section 1**, one from **Section 2** and one other of their choice. Each answer must be on a **different** set text. It is important that all candidates are aware of this. This year some candidates did not do as well on this paper as they should have done, either because they answered only one or two questions in total, or because they answered four questions, thereby not allowing themselves sufficient time to provide enough detail.

Candidates need to be encouraged to read the questions thoroughly. Some questions asked candidates to comment on stories within the set text; some candidates answered with reference to just one story, thereby limiting their mark.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1: *Bayt sayyi' al-sum'a*, Najīb Mahfūz

- (a) This was a popular question. In general, candidates demonstrated a complete understanding of the set text and of the different characters involved in creating the events of the story. Some candidates were unable to achieve high marks because they answered the question briefly as a reading comprehension rather than as an essay topic. Candidates should be reminded that, in passage-based questions, the passage is a stimulus passage, to be used as a springboard to give them a starting point for their answer.
- (b) This was another popular question. Some candidates lost marks because they did not read the question carefully and wrote about just one story from the book: the question asked "*How did the different characters in the stories (not story) of Najīb Mahfūz...*".

Question 2: *Dīwān Imru' al-Qays*

- (a) As in **Question 1(a)**, many candidates produced only a brief response to the questions, without providing adequate elaboration of their points. When explaining the poem, candidates needed to



include relevant events/incidents from the poet's life that affected his poetry. Most candidates wrote generally on the topic, without relating the different verses of the poem.

- (b) There were some excellent responses to this question. The best answers explained clearly how environmental factors had affected the poet's life and poems. Some candidates successfully used the poem in **Question 2(a)** as a springboard for their answer to this question. Weaker answers were characterised by a tendency to talk generally about the poet's life without referring to any of his poems to support the answer.

Question 3: *Umarā' al-shi'r al-'Abbāsī*, Anīs al-Miqdasī

- (a) Many candidates showed good knowledge of the selected poem and of the life of the poet. A number of candidates commented on the poet's life but did not refer to the poem, which meant that they could not earn the highest marks.
- (b) There was a mixed response to this question. Candidates were well prepared to write about the poet and his life in general terms, but were not able to support their essays with examples of his poetry.

Section 2

Question 4: *Damī, dumū' wa-btisāmatī*, Ihsān 'Abd al-Quddūs

- (a) Candidates were asked to write about the different stories that they had read in the set text. Some candidates wrote about only one story and so lost marks because they were unable to answer the question fully. There were some very good answers to this question and the best ones reflected the ideas through various incidents in different short stories.
- (b) This was a popular question. Many were able to write clearly and concisely about the characters in the stories who were sad and frustrated with love and life in general. As in **Question 1(b)**, some candidates referred only to one story, which meant that their mark was limited. A few candidates lost marks on this question because their use of poor language in their answers sometimes impeded understanding.

Question 5: *al-'Abarāt*, Mustafā Lutfi al-Manfalūtī

- (a) This was another popular question. Many candidates wrote in detail about the story of the mother who lost both her brother and son. A number of candidates wrote a general summary of the story but did not answer the specific question asked, i.e. to explain the mother's feelings of not knowing what happened to her brother and son. As in **Question 4(b)**, a few candidates lost marks because their use of poor language in their answers sometimes impeded understanding.
- (b) In general, answers to this question were good or very good and most candidates demonstrated very good knowledge and understanding of the events in the different stories and the disastrous impact that these had on peoples' lives. It was pleasing that candidates who answered this question usually based their responses on at least two stories (as required by the question) rather than on just one story. The majority of candidates composed a thorough answer to this question and showed good focus on the stories and characters. The best answers demonstrated a good and detailed approach to the events of the stories.

Questions 6: *Du'a al-Karawan*, Taha Hussein

- (a) There were a number of good answers to this question and these were characterised by sound knowledge and understanding of the events in the story. Many candidates succeeded in explaining clearly how the struggle in the story was based on love, revenge and domination. As in previous questions, a few candidates lost marks because their use of poor language in their answers sometimes impeded understanding.
- (b) Answers to this question tended to be poor. Most candidates wrote about the main character in general and did not address the specific question ("Why was the story called *Du'a al-Karawan*?"). The majority of candidates did not mention the bird, which was a key element.

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Paper 9680/05

Prose

General comments

In this paper, candidates are required to translate a short passage from English into Arabic.

A number of candidates produced good translations, and some candidates produced excellent ones.

Candidates need to make sure that they understand the grammatical rules governing the use of numbers in Arabic, all cases of the present tense and conjugation of the verb, gender agreements and correct use of adjectives.

The following is a list of common errors seen in candidates' answers, and are areas in which candidates would benefit from further practice.

- Candidates seemed unsure how to translate the phrase 'family farms' and many translated it as أسرة الحيوانات meaning 'the family of animals'. A correct translation would have been مزارع عائلية
- Many candidates translated 'small industries' as مصانع صغيرة . A correct translation would have been صناعات صغيرة
- The word 'tribes' was translated by many candidates as أحزاب meaning 'parties'. A correct translation would have been قبائل
- The word 'furs' was often translated as جلود meaning 'skins' or 'leathers'. A correct translation would have been فرو
- Several candidates transliterated the words 'tobacco' and 'Europe' rather than translating them. Correct translations would have been تنغ and أوروبا respectively.
- The phrase 'import duties' was sometimes translated as 'export duties'.
- A number of candidates translated the word 'incident' as محادثة meaning 'conversation'. A correct translation would have been حادثة
- The word 'harbour' was frequently translated as 'airport'.
- 'United States' was translated by many candidates as 'Single States'.

In addition, candidates seemed insecure in their use of the points of the compass (North, South, East, West). 'East India' and 'East coast' were frequently translated as 'West India' and 'West coast' respectively. Candidates would benefit from further practice in using the points of the compass.

