



2012

Languages: Arabic GA 3: Examination

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

For students to be successful in the Arabic written examination, they need to be familiar with all sections of the examination paper and the requirements of the study, as set out in the *VCE Arabic Study Design*. Students need to have thoroughly studied the grammatical requirements of the course so that they are more effectively prepared for the examination. This year, grammatical accuracy and scriptwriting were somewhat disappointing. Many students seemed to score their lowest results in this area. Students and teachers need to review grammatical rules and practise these and the script regularly to help improve results in this area of the examination.

During the year, students also need to practise effective dictionary skills so that the dictionary becomes a valuable tool in the examination for checking spelling as well as selecting the most accurate form of a word.

When sitting the examination, students should make effective use of the 15 minutes of reading time so that they are fully aware of and prepared for the requirements of each question. Students should be reminded that during the reading time they can access their bilingual dictionary if necessary. When reading the questions, students should also carefully refer to the English translations on the paper to ensure that they have accurately understood the questions and, therefore, the answer that is required.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what the answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1 – Listening and responding

To perform well in this section, students should practise finetuning their listening and note-taking skills. They should take advantage of the two readings of the text to make thorough notes on the information that is presented so that they can extract the relevant answers.

Part A – Answer in English

Students need to read and understand the key words question being asked, and provide complete and accurate answers. They are asked to understand and convey general and specific aspects of texts.

Question 1a.

- loves designing buildings
- spends (all) her money on engineering journals
- describes it as a profession
- designing buildings gives her confidence (in herself) and happiness

‘Work with the most famous architects’ was not accepted as an answer.

Question 1b.

- shows determination (for example, when she uses the expression, ‘Family must realise the importance of her working in the field she loves’)
- says she can realise the dream/her dream is strong/says she can make her dream a reality

Many students missed out on marks for Question 1b. as they neglected to take into consideration that they could be asked to infer meanings (as indicated throughout the study design).

Question 1c.

- Helping people and not earning money.
- For him, having a lot of money does not indicate being successful in life.

For the first point, both parts of the answer were needed to be awarded one mark. Partial responses were not awarded any marks.

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Once again, students needed to ensure that complete answers were given, as brief answers often meant that key pieces of information were omitted.

Question 2a.

- His songs are too heavily influenced by Western music.
- Australian journalists think that his songs/music bring the magic of the East (to Australia).

Question 2b.

- nurse
- likes to be in touch with life, to feel the sweetness of life or to share joys and sorrows with people

Question 2c.

- contain truth (be true)/truthfulness
- be sincere/sincerity
- be deep or there must be depth of spirit.

The answer 'rich and colourful words' was not accepted as this did not answer the question asked.

Part B – Answer in Arabic

This section required students to demonstrate their aural comprehension skills and answer in Arabic. It is important for students to write complete, grammatically accurate sentences as this section assessed the accurate use of the Arabic language when responding, as well as comprehension of the text.

Question 3a.

Tumultuous

Question 3b.

- intellectual and scientific discoveries/achievements
- rich heritage or embraces about 14 centuries of history
- spans parts/sections of three continents
- links societies of every nationality, and of different economic and political orientations
- religion connects 800 million people of non-Arabic background

The answer should have been written in paragraph form and should have included references to four of the five points above. For the last point, both parts of the answer were needed to be awarded the full mark.

Scientists and engineers, invented maps and technology, a reference to Columbus and the world being round, taking part in the study of geography – these were examples, not evidence. These answers were therefore not acceptable.

Question 3c.

The impact of the Arabs' introduction of the zero was that it provided solutions to many complicated arithmetical (mathematical) problems.

The word 'complicated' was needed to be awarded the full mark.

Question 3d.

- Arabs guided Europeans to Africa and India.
- Arab scholars taught Columbus that Earth is round.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A – Answer in English

In this section, students were required to carefully read the text that was presented in order to extract the required information. Many students made generalisations in their answers instead of giving accurate responses.

Question 4a.

- people read more but absorb fewer ideas or the ability to absorb new ideas is declining
- lack of reading leads to weaker (or a lower level of) general knowledge

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- loss of opportunity to enhance/develop new ideas

Question 4b.

- read a paragraph instead of one word at a time, train the brain to picture a paragraph or frame each paragraph using a cardboard frame
- overview (or summary) of a paragraph
- train the eye to look at keywords

For the first and last points, all parts of the answer were needed to obtain the full mark. Partial responses were not awarded any marks.

Question 4c.

- read the headlines
- read the heavy print/bold print
- read the first and last lines of each paragraph
- to get the gist
- the main point of a newspaper article is in the initial part of the article or is in the first and the last lines of the paragraph

Question 4d.

- one can read in comfort
- reading should be a positive and pleasant experience
- ability to read without too much effort

The answer had to include the three points listed above.

Question 4e.

- Train yourself to go or get into the habit of going to the public library.
- Go and see authors speak when they launch their new books.
- Read all kinds/levels of topics (even if you find them difficult to understand).

To answer the question, students had to use the information in the text. For the first and second points, both parts were needed to answer the question. Partial answers were not awarded any marks.

Question 4f.

- collect seeds from the new ideas read or provides ideas/foundations for general knowledge
- improves ability to think or leads to more mature thinking
- the ability to link ideas together and formulate new ones or provides the opportunity to develop people's minds

Weaker students did not address this question properly as they neglected to use evidence from the text.

Part B – Answer in Arabic

Once again, in Part B some students were unable to demonstrate their comprehension of the text. This was evident, for instance, when they transcribed large sections of the information that was presented rather than giving effective responses. While students must base their answers on the text provided, they must also display the ability to reorganise information in a logical and sequential manner, and include only information that is relevant to the question.

Students generally found this text to be quite challenging as they did not accurately take note of the key words in the question.

Question 5a.

- Be patient as things will improve.
- Learn English well before leaving.
- Do not think that by going to live with an Arab family you will be communicating in Arabic.
or
Even if someone in the host family says they speak Arabic, do not believe that you will understand them because they could be speaking a different Arabic language/dialect from standard Arabic.

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- Get help from teachers at school.
- Listen carefully and you will find that the Arabic spoken by some people who have lived a long time in Australia contains English words that are pronounced in the Arabic way.
- The weather is unpredictable. Be prepared and bring the right clothes.

Once again, excellent students addressed all key words in the question and based their responses on the information provided in Rashid's diary in their own words. They accurately wrote one or more paragraphs on the advice that Rashid should give to his classmates who are thinking about undertaking a similar student exchange program. They mentioned at least four points.

The answer also needed to be based on the text. Any external factors introduced as a result of the student's prior knowledge and that were not found in the text were regarded as irrelevant.

Question 5b.

- living with people from home country
 - they are Arabs (positive)
 - but they speak English (negative)
 - when they speak Arabic, you cannot understand the dialect (negative)
- improved language skills or able to communicate better
- able to understand the phenomenon of English in Arabic language or was interesting
- even capricious weather can have positive aspects (positive)
- weather was awful (negative)
- teacher was helpful (positive)

For this response, students were required to use evidence from the text to support their answer. The overall answer should have reflected a positive experience. However, students could also refer to or include negative aspects of the experience, provided they supported their response with appropriate evidence.

Section 3 – Writing in Arabic

The standard of the Arabic language in this year's examination was good. However, students should focus more attention on all aspects of questions in the examination and ensure they have practised different styles of writing.

The 15 marks related to criteria for this section were divided as follows.

- five marks for content (breadth and depth)
- five marks for structure and sequence (correct text type, including register and cohesive devices)
- five marks for the correct use of Arabic, including range and sophistication of vocabulary and grammar, and correct spelling

All questions in Section 3 were attempted, except Question 10. Question 8 proved to be the most popular.

As in past years, students continued to make careless grammatical and spelling errors, including inappropriate use of verb tenses and conjugations, incorrect agreements and poor use of prepositions. The range of tenses used was disappointing as many students did not extend their writing beyond the present or past tenses.

The writing task related to writing a story was generally not done successfully. Students need to improve their understanding of what is required in order to produce an engaging story.

It is important that students read their chosen question carefully and plan their writing to ensure that content, purpose and audience are addressed accurately and appropriately according to the question. It is also important that students follow the correct format for the text type that they have chosen.

Question 6

This question was attempted by a number of students. Many students seemed unable to construct an article. Students must practise different styles of writing in order to prepare for this section of the examination.

Question 7

This question was attempted by a number of students. Although many students mentioned online shopping, the majority of students did not include the advantages/disadvantages of online shopping. Instead they wrote about the

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advantages/disadvantages of computers. To ensure that all aspects of the question are addressed, students need to read and understand the question before writing.

Question 8

This was the most popular question in this section and students produced effective imaginative writing. However, there were still evidence of many grammatical and spelling mistakes.

Question 9

Few students attempted this question. Some students were not familiar with the text type requirements related to a diary entry.

Question 10

Students were required to write a report for an Arabic television station about the things that attract young people.