



2011

Languages: Arabic GA 3: Examination

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students who undertook the 2011 Arabic examination demonstrated a high standard in the use of the Arabic language. Teachers and their students are therefore to be commended on their efforts. However, students need to place more emphasis on answering the questions fully. Some students failed to read the questions properly and did not address all aspects of the questions. Students are reminded that they should use the number of lines provided as a guide to the length of response needed for each question.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A – Answer in English

This task assesses students' capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts. Students should carefully read all questions in this section during reading time and be ready to listen for specific information.

Text 1

Most students were able to determine that the conversation was taking place in a bakery; however, they were not as successful at describing *Shrak* bread in the amount of detail required. In addition, a large proportion of students struggled to answer the question related to how *Taboon* bread is made. Many students did not include sufficient detail in their response to attain full marks. To state that *Taboon* bread was baked in an oven was not sufficient. The crucial part of this answer required adding the detail that the bread was baked in an oven resembling a pit or sunk in the ground. Students should ensure that they include appropriate detail in their responses.

Question 1a.

In a bakery

Question 1b.

Shrak bread:

- is made from wheat or corn
- has no yeast added
- is usually very thin
- has a round shape
- is preferably eaten warm.

Question 1c.

It is baked in an oven resembling a pit/sunk in the ground, which is full of rounded, heated stones.

Question 1d.

In the countries in the Arabian Gulf

Text 2

Question 2a.

- It addressed FIFA's philosophy to reach all regions all over the world.
- To further develop the game of soccer.

Question 2b.

- shopping facilities
- historic and touristy architecture
- colourful bazaars
- camel racing

Students needed to answer this question by using the information from the listening text, and should not have used information that was not found in the text.



Part B – Answer in Arabic

In this part of the examination students were required to demonstrate their capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts and convey information accurately and appropriately. Students should make every effort to practise this skill when preparing for the written examination. It is suggested that they work methodically and in an organised manner, as many weaker students used a disorganised approach when responding to this section of the paper.

Conversely, it was evident that strong students read the questions carefully; they addressed each aspect of the question and responded to the questions using the correct amount of detail.

In this section, students are required to answer in full sentences in Arabic. It was disappointing that some students gave the correct response, but they neglected to follow the instructions and answer in full sentences.

Text 3

Question 3a.

- cooperation
- motivation for common good
- division of labour
- organisation
- there is a leader
- diligence

Question 3b.

Out of materials they gather with their legs, which they mix with their saliva

Question 3c.

- secretes perfume
- (from) gland at rear of back
- flaps wings where the group is flying

Question 3d.

To protect the honey from deteriorating:

- an air conditioning system maintains the correct temperature
- the wax layer prevents deterioration/fermentation.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

This section assesses students' knowledge and skill in analysing and responding to information from written texts. It is very important that students use the reading time to ensure they understand the questions before attempting to answer them, and that they understand the vocabulary in the texts. They then need to establish the link between the text and the questions asked, so they must read both the texts and the questions very carefully. Students also need to understand the required task.

Part A – Answer in English

This section assesses students' capacity to understand and convey general and specific aspects of texts.

The majority of students were able to complete this part of the examination quite successfully. They addressed the key words in the question, and there was evidence that they had made good use of dictionaries.

Text 4

Question 4a.

Music:

- is an ancient art form
- has an immortal nature/character
- uses different technologies as it develops over time
- is a spiritual pleasure in which man finds recreation.

Question 4b.

- The pharaohs' land was situated on each side of the river.
- The river provided a habitat for diverse birds.

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- These were natural surroundings.
- All of these musical sounds gave the Egyptians a deep appreciation for music.

Question 4c.

- They discovered that music has magic/magical tunes which can influence others.
- Music can control nature.
- Music can control unknown evil forces.
- Music can bring pleasure to people.

Question 4d.

- a painting of a musical school was found in one of the tombs
- the lyre
- percussion instruments
- portraits of musicians playing music for the farmers

Question 4e.

- schools
- teachers
- instruments were developed
- technological development of instruments

Part B – Answer in Arabic

In this section of the examination students are required to demonstrate their capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts and their ability to convey information accurately and appropriately. Most students had little difficulty in selecting the relevant points. Students should ensure that they demonstrate their ability to express themselves in Arabic, not simply copy information directly from the text. They must make a concerted effort to respond in their own words.

Students were generally able to respond effectively to the questions asked. However, there was evidence that weaker students did not adequately revise the linguistic elements, did not always read all parts and key words in the question, or, in some cases, used information that was not relevant and that was not in the texts provided. Some students did not write the script accurately.

Text 5

Question 5a.

Baalbek played a role in Phoenician/Roman history.

Question 5b.

Any four of:

- huge citadel
- vast architecture
- fortress
- number of temples
- carved stone
- decorations.

Question 5c.

- Lions' heads indicate the importance of lions.
- There are bunches of grapes/vine leaves.

Question 5d.

The variety of words to describe the citadel, such as:

- beauty
- harmony
- splendour
- strength.



Section 3 – Writing in Arabic

In this section students are assessed on their ability to express ideas through the creation of an original text in Arabic. The following criteria are used. Each criterion carries five marks.

- relevance, breadth and depth
- appropriateness of structure and sequence
- accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Students were given a choice of five questions, each of which contained a different topic, kind of writing and text type. All five questions in this section were attempted to some degree by students, with Question 8 being the most popular. When selecting a topic, students should choose one which is familiar to them, for which they have a good range of vocabulary and can express themselves in Arabic with competence. Some students attempted to use pre-prepared material that was poorly connected to the topic and used language that was inappropriate to the task. They were often unable to incorporate this information into their text in a meaningful and logical way. In order to maximise their performance, students should pay special attention to the text types and the kind of writing required.

Students should read the tasks very carefully, in both English and Arabic, paying attention to key words and noting each aspect of the task. Misreading or overlooking a key word can put a student on the wrong track altogether. In terms of text types, students should not only pay attention to the features of the text type, but should also practice the various kinds of writing: informative, persuasive, evaluative, personal and imaginative. These five kinds of writing are covered in the examination every year, and teachers should prepare their students accordingly.

This year, the most popular and most successful topics were those related to technology and fitness. Strong students wrote fluently and addressed all parts of the task. The imaginative story was challenging for many students. A number of the weaker students ignored the conventions for imaginative writing, preferring to write what was tantamount to 'pre-learned' work. Many students completed the letter describing a recently seen Arabic movie quite successfully. Weaker students, however, wrote a review, ignoring the features of a letter and the context in which this review should have been written. A surprising number of students ignored some parts of Question 10, and only answered sections of the question. This was disappointing, as in many cases the students who had selected this question had some excellent content, but did not address all parts of the question.

Criterion 2 refers not only to the text type features, but also to the overall structure of a text. A well-structured text includes a variety of coordinate and subordinate structures and conjunctions. Regardless of the topic, text type or kind of writing, logical progression of the text and linking of ideas are essential. Students should have acquired a wide variety of vocabulary by this stage; however, the majority of students used rather basic vocabulary, and often used words incorrectly. Many students showed a general lack of understanding of basic Arabic grammatical structures relating to verb forms, word order and pronouns. Students should avoid word-for-word translations and instead aim to create a text that is correctly written. Students should learn, practise and revise the foundations of Arabic grammar before they move on to more difficult structures. Free and creative writing should be practised throughout their schooling, as should the other styles of writing listed in the study design.