

ARABIC (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0544/03
Speaking

Key messages

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

- It is strongly recommended that all examiners watch the instructive video on the following link **before conducting the exam** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGBtY5YGmAM>
- **Modern Standard Arabic** should be used by both Teacher/Examiner and candidate during the examination.
- Careful preparation for the speaking exam by Teacher/Examiners is essential.
- Candidates must have one role play card to study for 15 minutes (preparation time) just before the exam begins.
- Examiners must use the nine cards in rotation, so candidates do not all do the same role plays.
- Candidates entering this examination must know and prepare in advance a topic presentation of their choice.
- Examiners are not allowed to offer the candidates several topics to choose from at the time of the examination as the topic presentation should be prepared well in advance.
- Candidates **must not choose** “myself” or “my life” for their topic presentation as these can overlap the general conversation.
- It is **not advisable** for all candidates in the same Centre to choose the same topic for their presentation.
- Teacher/Examiners **should not change any of the role play tasks** as set out in the Teachers’ Notes booklet.
- Teacher/Examiners can prompt to allow the candidate to clarify if candidates omit an element of a role play task.
- Each candidate’s Speaking Examination **must consist of three parts in one recording file:**
- Role play A and B (from the same role play card given to the candidate for 15 minutes preparation).
- Topic presentation (should be prepared and chosen by the candidate well in advance of the exam and should not exceed 2minutes) + topic conversation (follow up questions focused on the candidate’s presentation where it has both some unprepared open ended questions and some unexpected questions as well).
- General conversation (a discussion around 2/3 topics that **should be chosen by the Examiner** and where it has both some unprepared open ended questions and some unexpected questions as well).
- **Exam sections** must be conducted in the **same order as it is shown in the teachers’ notes** (part one: role plays, part two: topic presentation followed by spontaneous questions related to the topic and finally part three: general conversation).
- On the Topic presentation, once the candidate has presented his/her chosen topic for 1–2 minutes, the rest of the 5 minutes should be spent discussing the topic. The candidate should not be left to speak for their chosen presentation for more than 2 minutes.
- 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 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.
- It is advisable to vary the topics covered in the general conversation with each candidate.
- Candidates should be asked both expected and unexpected questions.
- Where Centres make use of digital recording software, **each candidate’s file must be saved individually** and saved **as .mp3** so that it can be accessed for the purposes of moderation
- Before submitting CDs/USBs to Cambridge, please check to make sure that all recordings are audible

- Please note, once a candidate's 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.
- Teacher/Examiners must adhere to the timings in the Teachers' Notes booklet

General comments

This paper is common to all candidates, whether they follow the Core curriculum or the Extended curriculum. Cambridge Moderators heard the full range of candidate performance submitted by Centres.

Candidate performance

This year some Centres conducted well the role plays section, some missed out tasks and few changed the role play tasks or created more tasks. Candidates who performed very well on this paper covered all sections of the two role plays (A and B), presented a topic of their own choice for no more than 2 minutes, and responded to questions on their topics in a spontaneous and natural manner for 3 minutes. General conversation for strong candidates lasted for 5 minutes, they answered a series of linked questions on two or three topics including their opinions and justifications, they developed their answers, they used more complex structures, a variety of tenses, they expressed both past and future meaning and responded well to both predictable and unexpected questions in both conversations (TC and GC).

In few 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, enabled 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 some teacher/Examiners were not aware of the need for spontaneity and conversations lacked unexpected questions. Some candidates were not 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.

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

From the evidence heard on the recorded samples, few 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 sufficient opportunity to demonstrate the full range of their abilities.

Some Examiners have large Centres and many candidates to cover over a short period of time, which makes it difficult for them to be as interactive as they should be. Other Examiners chose to remain silent when the candidate cannot carry on talking. Few Examiners did not give the candidates the opportunity to talk for at least a minute. Each of these scenarios resulted in the candidate disengaging from the conversation or feeling uncomfortable/unconfident to continue speaking. 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 a friendly approach and tone. Divisions between different parts of the examination should be made by the Teacher/Examiner, and targeted questions should be used.

There were a large number 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 2 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 not cover areas already covered in the topic conversation, lasting **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 5 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.

Some 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 missed out certain tasks or created new tasks. In such cases, candidates could not be awarded marks for tasks they had not attempted.

Timings

It is essential to give candidates 15 minutes preparation time **just before their Speaking examination** and not during the exam.

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 (the Centre is required to select a range of sample recordings for external moderation, as instructed in the teachers' notes booklet). 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 (usually Centres with large numbers of candidates) the Centre must request permission from Cambridge to conduct and assess speaking tests. A copy of this permission must then be enclosed with the sample for external moderation. In addition, Centres are required to enclose a detailed explanation of internal moderation procedures with the sample. The sample should, wherever possible, include examples from each teacher/Examiner. Centres should not select and submit a full recorded sample per teacher/Examiner. They should include **equal numbers of recordings** from each teacher/Examiner.

In a small number of cases, the CD submitted by the Centre was either blank or submitted on MSV files. 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 it to Cambridge. Please do not submit recordings as MSV files.

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, recreation room 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.

Please make sure that each candidate's exam is recorded on one file only.

Coversheet for moderation sample

Unfortunately a few 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 has been appropriate although some Centres failed to adhere to the guide line stipulating that they should send the first 10 in alphabetical order and the other six spread over the range: top, middle and bottom. Some 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 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.

Clerical errors

A small 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 plays were 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 Examiners did not stick to the prompts in the role play cards.

Topic Presentation/Topic Conversation

- the Topic Presentation/Conversation was not conducted
- some candidates did not prepare a presentation in advance
- the Topic Presentation was conducted but there were no follow-up questions or discussion
- candidates were not given the opportunity to present a topic of their own
- candidates were interrupted several times
- candidates were not given the opportunity to use a range of tenses
- past and future questions were not asked

General Conversation

- there was no distinction between Topic Presentation/Conversation and General Conversation
- 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
- the Teacher/Examiner completed the task for the candidate
- the award of high marks for the conversation section although the candidates did not convey past and future meaning accurately
- the award of fraction of mark while the mark scheme does not contain any half marks
- candidates did not have the opportunity to develop their answers and thus use more complex structures
- the Teacher/Examiner completed the task for the candidate
- overly-demanding questions were asked of candidates
- past and future questions were not asked

Impression

- the award of marks for some sections that was more than the agreed standard
- the column for this mark was left blank

Comments on specific tasks

Role plays

This section of the test was very well conducted when Teacher/Examiners followed the script provided in the Teachers' Notes booklet. Teacher/Examiners are reminded of the need for careful preparation. When the stipulated tasks are changed or omitted and/or extra tasks are added, this will confuse candidates. **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 (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. A very small number of Centres created new tasks.

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. Again, most Centres conducted this part of the examination well but a very small number of Centres created new tasks.

Candidates should not be allowed to choose from role play cards; they should be handed one role play card only and examined from both role play **section A and B.**

Topic Presentation and Conversation

Candidates had chosen a wide range of topics for their presentation, many of which were interesting and lively. 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.

On the whole, the timing of this section was either too short or much too long. 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.

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 not be the same as that discussed in the topic presentation/conversation and **must be chosen by the Teacher/Examiner**, rather than by the candidate.

It is helpful to the candidate if the Teacher/Examiner guides him/her smoothly between topics. Questioning that moves abruptly from topic to topic can be confusing or unsettling for candidates. 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, some Examiners' performance was good in this section of the examination. Few Examiners omitted this section although they started their recording by explaining the 3 parts of the exam to each candidate but unfortunately they conducted the follow up questions to the presentation and forgot to conduct the general conversation.

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 **5 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 but a very small numbers of Centre awarded marks that are more than the maximum in the mark scheme.

ARABIC

Paper 0544/21
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

A good number of candidates answered all the questions correctly and scored good marks. This shows that some Centres have prepared their candidates well for this paper. However, many candidates struggled in **Sections 2** and **3**. There were a number of questions which were not attempted. This demonstrates a lack of comprehending long reading texts.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

The candidates answered most questions correctly. Some confused the picture of the umbrella with the sun hat in **Question 1** and the picture of the trousers with that of the socks in **Question 5**.

Exercise 1, Questions 6–10

The questions in this matching task were handled well by many candidates but there were also a number of errors especially in **Questions 6, 7** and **9**. Some weaker candidates were not awarded any marks in this exercise.

Exercise 3, Questions 11–15

On these multiple-choice questions, most candidates did well and answered all questions correctly. Some errors were made in **Question 12** answering غرفة النوم instead of الحقيبة and in **Question 13** answering للفطور instead of للغداء.

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 16–20

Most candidates did well in identifying the synonyms in these questions. However, some errors were made in answering **Question 17** المدينة instead of الريف and in **Question 18** الأموال instead of النقود. Some candidates lifted the answer from the text instead of the grid, failing to identify the synonym which is the aim of this exercise.

Exercise 2, Questions 21–25

In the main, the candidates did fairly well in these questions. Some errors were made in answering **Question 22** which required comprehending the gist of the text and identifying that students get a loan from the bank to travel abroad. Working part time does not cover their fees and living expenses. Some errors were also made in identifying the types of grants available to students in **Questions 23(ii)** and **(iii)**, and finally errors were also made in answering **Questions 25(i)** and **(ii)** about 'who assists Salem in his application form'. If candidates state 'his colleagues' only, they did not get the mark because this is an incomplete answer and they should state 'his colleagues who had a grant to study abroad' before him.

Section 3

Exercise 1, Questions 26–30

Most candidates did well in identifying the 'True' and 'False' statements in this exercise but the weaker candidates struggled especially in giving the justification. Weaker candidates did not attempt some questions in this exercise which indicates that they struggled or ran out of time.

Exercise 2, Questions 31–34

Some candidates made a good attempt of answering the questions on this challenging text. Weaker candidates struggled with **Questions 31** and **33**. Hence, candidates could benefit from reading longer texts with some complex grammatical structures and an extended variety of vocabulary.

ARABIC

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

Most candidates did extremely well answering most of the questions correctly. Where candidates did not score highly, they could benefit from reading more widely in the target language, as this would help them feel more confident when responding to **Sections 2** and **3** of this paper.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

The majority of candidates answered these discrete questions correctly. Some however answered **Question 2** incorrectly and instead of selecting the first picture (كوباً من الماء), they selected either picture 2 (tap of water) or picture 3 (bottle of water). Few candidates also answered **Question 3** incorrectly (دراجة جديدة للبيع) and instead of selecting picture 2, they selected picture 3 which is (صورة جرار).

Exercise 2, Questions 6–10

Most candidates demonstrated excellent understanding of the questions in this exercise and were successful in matching the sentences with the pictures except for **Question 9**.

Exercise 3, Questions 11–15

The candidates did extremely well in these multiple-choice questions and answered the questions correctly. Very few candidates chose the incorrect answer for **Question 12** confusing كثيرة with قليلة and **Question 15** confusing أبويه with ولده.

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 16–20

Most candidates responded well to these questions, however some answered using words from the text rather than from the grid e.g. كنية rather than مقعد in **Question 17** and رَبَّ instead of نَشَف in **Question 20**.

Exercise 2, Questions 21–26

Candidates answered these questions correctly. However, some candidates struggled with **Question 23(iii)** and **Question 24(i)**. In **Question 23(iii)** candidates could benefit from understanding how to apply connectives when required. This is because the answer to **Question 23(ii)** is in the negative. So, candidates lost the mark for not mentioning **أو** or **و** in **Question 23(iii)**. In **Question 24(i)**, some candidates answered the question completely wrong and some failed to identify whose grandmother. If they answered **الجدّة** only or **جدتها** or **جدة سلمى**, they lost the mark. They need to understand the comprehension to identify the correct answer as **جدة معلمة التغذية**.

Also, some candidates answered **Question 26** with **الناس** or **كل الناس** using common sense rather than the source text.

Section 3

Exercise 1, Questions 27–31

The majority of candidates answered this section well except for the weaker candidates. Some struggled with giving the correct justification in **Question 30J** and **Question 31J**. This required a deeper understanding of the text.

Exercise 2, Questions 32–36

Many candidates attempted answering this exercise with variable success. Some did well in understanding the gist of the text but those who struggled resorted to blindly copying too much from the original text, especially in answering **Question 36**.

Overall, the Centres have prepared their candidates very well for this Reading exam.

ARABIC

Paper 0544/23
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

A good number of candidates answered all the questions correctly and scored good marks. This shows that some Centres have prepared their candidates well for this paper. However, many candidates struggled in **Sections 2** and **3**. There were a number of questions which were not attempted. This demonstrates a lack of comprehending long reading texts.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

The candidates answered most questions correctly. Some confused the picture of the umbrella with the sun hat in **Question 1** and the picture of the trousers with that of the socks in **Question 5**.

Exercise 1, Questions 6–10

The questions in this matching task were handled well by many candidates but there were also a number of errors especially in **Questions 6, 7** and **9**. Some weaker candidates were not awarded any marks in this exercise.

Exercise 3, Questions 11–15

On these multiple-choice questions, most candidates did well and answered all questions correctly. Some errors were made in **Question 12** answering غرفة النوم instead of الحقيبة and in **Question 13** answering للفطور instead of للغداء.

Section 2

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Most candidates did well in identifying the synonyms in these questions. However, some errors were made in answering **Question 17** المدينة instead of الريف and in **Question 18** الأموال instead of النقود. Some candidates lifted the answer from the text instead of the grid, failing to identify the synonym which is the aim of this exercise.

Exercise 2, Questions 21–25

In the main, the candidates did fairly well in these questions. Some errors were made in answering **Question 22** which required comprehending the gist of the text and identifying that students get a loan from the bank to travel abroad. Working part time does not cover their fees and living expenses. Some errors were also made in identifying the types of grants available to students in **Questions 23(ii)** and **(iii)**, and finally errors were also made in answering **Questions 25(i)** and **(ii)** about 'who assists Salem in his application form'. If candidates state 'his colleagues' only, they did not get the mark because this is an incomplete answer and they should state 'his colleagues who had a grant to study abroad' before him.

Section 3

Exercise 1, Questions 26–30

Most candidates did well in identifying the 'True' and 'False' statements in this exercise but the weaker candidates struggled especially in giving the justification. Weaker candidates did not attempt some questions in this exercise which indicates that they struggled or ran out of time.

Exercise 2, Questions 31–34

Some candidates made a good attempt of answering the questions on this challenging text. Weaker candidates struggled with **Questions 31** and **33**. Hence, candidates could benefit from reading longer texts with some complex grammatical structures and an extended variety of vocabulary.

ARABIC

Paper 0544/41
Writing

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to demonstrate that they can communicate in writing, showing knowledge of a range and variety of vocabulary and applying the grammar and structures of the Arabic language correctly.

When a choice of questions is offered, candidates should select the question 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. If they devote too much of the answer to the first or second task, they may not have enough words left to complete the later tasks. If they cover all the points in 100 words they might be reduced to padding out the ending to reach 130 –140 words, so they should look to identify the areas where they can expand their response with examples. To obtain higher results, candidates should be encouraged to write their answer bearing in mind to add enough details for each bullet point to cover all communication points.

Candidates should remember that the rubric is not a rough guide but that it 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, avoiding irrelevance. If the tasks require a certain tense then they should stick to that tense and not drift into irrelevant tenses.

Each sentence should be written thoughtfully, paying close attention to the message conveyed, spelling and grammar. When candidates have finished they should make full use of the time left to check their work for errors.

Within the limits on content imposed by the set tasks, the paper is an exercise in free composition so candidates should write that which they are confident is correct Arabic and avoid what they do not know. 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. Handwriting must always be legible.

In **Questions 2** and **3**, some candidates tend to include long lists of proper nouns such as place names or personal names. This practice is to be discouraged as the mark scheme does not allow the award of accuracy ticks to 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 their response in the required form of writing will be reflected in the marks gained.

General comments

The Writing paper consisted of two sections each marked as follows:

Section 1, **Question 1** is marked out of 5 marks, the candidates are required to list 8 items in Arabic and the marks are awarded to five correct items. **Question 2** is marked out of 15 marks, the candidates are required to answer this question and the marks are awarded as follows: 10 marks for communication and 5 for language.

Section 2 is marked out of 30 marks, the candidates are required to answer one question from a choice of 3 and the marks are awarded as, 10 marks for communication, 8 for verbs and 12 for language.

The total mark for the paper is 50 marks.

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.

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 some persistent errors including:

- 1 Using *tanween* as a letter and not as *tashkeel* such as *أيضاً* instead of *أيضًا* and *صباحاً* written *صباحن*.
- 2 Misuse of the gender, when describing male or female objects or people.
- 3 Confusing *التاء الطويلة* and *التاء المربوطة*
- 4 Confusing *الهاء* and *التاء المربوطة*
- 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.
- 13 Good handwriting and presentation is very advisable as in few cases Examiners were unable to read answers. The majority of candidates' handwriting was readable. There were few cases though where handwriting created a barrier to understanding candidate's writing.

It was noted that few candidates wrote completely irrelevant essays.

Time management did not appear to be a problem as the majority of candidates managed to complete both tasks.

The performance of the candidates spanned a range of ability. On the whole, but the majority achieved results that were good and in many cases the performances were excellent. Most essays were adequately focused on the topic in question and were well structured, though many were somewhat unimaginative. It was noticed that the number of well-structured scripts, and the overall answers are more positive, comparing with previous sessions.

Comments on specific questions:

Section 1

Question 1

In this year's exam, candidates were asked to list 8 professions. The candidates are offered an example and some photos that candidates can use if they wish to. This question was marked out of 5 and Examiners chose the best 5 answers and were awarded the marks accordingly.

This section was generally well attempted and the majority of the candidates achieved very good marks, as the majority of candidates have answered correctly.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to write a short letter (80–90 words) to a friend about a traditional celebration they have attended covering 4 main points. Most candidates succeeded in communicating most or all of the relevant points without undue difficulty, while few candidates did not appear to have paid sufficient attention to the details of the information requested in the question. Some candidates missed some communication marks as they did not elaborate on their opinion about the celebration. There were few that wrote completely outside of the topic and lost marks as a result.

This question was awarded 15 marks, 10 marks for communication and 5 marks for Language. More attention should be paid to accuracy, most common errors were to do with adjectives' ending and verb ending agreement.

Section 2

Question 3

Candidates are required to answer one question from a choice of three:

Question 3(a) was to write a letter to the youth magazine explaining a project candidates organised to solve the issue of traffic in town. Most candidates attempted this question successfully and their responses were excellent; however, some responses were brief and lacked some details. Less candidates chose this question. Many of them did not answer the first point correctly and omitted to mention the way this project was planned for. The rest of the points were covered well and many candidates managed to achieve a very good score on the content. The language and verb usage was good overall.

Question 3(b) was to write an article to the school's head teacher explaining the use of technology to friends. Many candidates chose this question and managed to cover all the requested points and achieved full mark for the content. The language was of a good standard but the verb usage was considerably less than what is required. This question was also well answered, but some candidates missed out on the use of future tense that relates to the final communication point.

Question 3(c) asked candidates to write a story about having their photo printed in the newspaper. The majority of candidates opted for this question and there were many good stories. Some candidates missed comprehension points as they did not use the future tense. This question was the most popular. Many candidates responded well to this question. Stronger candidates made good use of adjectives to describe and elaborate on the story elements. Candidates who did not manage to score well were those having difficulties in forming basic sentences, or had very poor and difficult to read handwriting.

The candidates are awarded 30 marks for **Question 3**, 10 for communicating the relevant points, 8 for accurate use of verbs and 10 for using wide range of structures, producing longer fluent sentences by using wide range of accurate vocabulary. Most candidates attempted this question successfully and their responses were excellent; however, some responses were brief and lacked some detail, which was reflected in the marks awarded.

The majority of candidates who opted for **Question 3(a)** managed to address all communication points appropriately, while a small number of candidates were not awarded communication marks or were only awarded half the marks as their points were not clear and were not fully understood.

Overall, candidates who followed the rubrics were successful in achieving the task, but Examiners were not able to award marks to those who:

- did not attempt this **Question**.
- wrote an irrelevant response.

- copied their response from the rubric.

Candidates generally answered questions with good language use and most of them met the comprehension points needed. Again, more attention should be paid to accuracy (gender agreement and spelling). However, some candidates showed an outstanding level of using expressions and adjectives to describe their chosen topic, and their answers were pleasant to read.

ARABIC

Paper 0544/42
Writing

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to demonstrate that they can communicate in writing, showing knowledge of a range and variety of vocabulary and applying the grammar and structures of the Arabic language correctly.

When a choice of questions is offered, candidates should select the question 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. If they devote too much of the answer to the first or second task, they may not have enough words left to complete the later tasks. If they cover all the points in 100 words they might be reduced to padding out the ending to reach 130 –140 words, so they should look to identify the areas where they can expand their response with examples. To obtain higher results, candidates should be encouraged to write their answer bearing in mind to add enough details for each bullet point to cover all communication points.

Candidates should remember that the rubric is not a rough guide but that it 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, avoiding irrelevance. If the tasks require a certain tense then they should stick to that tense and not drift into irrelevant tenses.

Each sentence should be written thoughtfully, paying close attention to the message conveyed, spelling and grammar. When candidates have finished they should make full use of the time left to check their work for errors.

Within the limits on content imposed by the set tasks, the paper is an exercise in free composition so candidates should write that which they are confident is correct Arabic and avoid what they do not know. 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. Handwriting must always be legible.

In **Questions 2** and **3**, some candidates tend to include long lists of proper nouns such as place names or personal names. This practice is to be discouraged as the mark scheme does not allow the award of accuracy ticks to 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 their response in the required form of writing will be reflected in the marks gained.

General comments

The Writing paper consisted of two sections each marked as follows:

Section 1, **Question 1** is marked out of 5 marks, the candidates are required to list 8 items in Arabic and the marks are awarded to five correct items. **Question 2** is marked out of 15 marks, the candidates are required to answer this question and the marks are awarded as follows: 10 marks for communication and 5 for language.

Section 2 is marked out of 30 marks, the candidates are required to answer one question from a choice of 3 and the marks are awarded as, 10 marks for communication, 8 for verbs and 12 for language.

The total mark for the paper is 50 marks.

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.

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 some persistent errors including:

- 1 Using *tanween* as a letter and not as *tashkeel* such as **أيضاً** instead of **أيضًا** and **صباحن** written **صباحاً**.
- 2 Misuse of the gender, when describing male or female objects or people.
- 3 Confusing **التاء الطويلة** and **التاء المربوطة**
- 4 Confusing **الهاء** and **التاء المربوطة**
- 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.
- 13 Good handwriting and presentation is very advisable as in few cases Examiners were unable to read answers. The majority of candidates' handwriting was readable. There were few cases though where handwriting created a barrier to understanding candidate's writing.

It was noted that few candidates wrote completely irrelevant essays.

Time management did not appear to be a problem as the majority of candidates managed to complete both tasks.

The performance of the candidates spanned a range of ability. On the whole, but the majority achieved results that were good and in many cases the performances were excellent. Most essays were adequately focused on the topic in question and were well structured, though many were somewhat unimaginative. It was noticed that the number of well-structured scripts, and the overall answers are more positive, comparing with previous sessions.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

In this year's exam, candidates were asked to list eight school subjects that candidates have on their school timetables. The candidates are offered an example and some photos that candidates can use if they wish to. This question was marked out of five and Examiners chose the best five answers and were awarded the marks accordingly.

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

Question 2

Candidates were asked to write a short article (80–90 words) about their favourite food covering four main points. Most candidates succeeded in communicating most or all of the relevant points without undue difficulty, while few candidates didn't appear to have paid sufficient attention to the details of the information requested in the question. Some candidates missed some communication marks as they haven't listed enough food items.

This question was awarded 15 marks, 10 marks for communication and 5 marks for Language.

More attention should be paid to accuracy, most common errors were to do with adjectives ending and verbs ending agreement.

Section 2

Question 3

Candidates are required to answer one question from a choice of three:

- **Question 3(a)**, was to write a speech to the school head teacher about school uniform. Most candidates attempted this question successfully and their responses were excellent; however, some responses were brief and lacked some details. Less candidates chose this question. Many of them didn't answer the first point correctly as they simply rewrote the question in their essay, 'why did the school head teacher decide to change the uniform?'. The rest of the points were covered well and many candidates managed to achieve a very good score on the content. The language and verb usage was good overall.
- **Question 3(b)**, was to write an article for the school's newspaper talking about the tourists attractions in your town. The least number of candidates chose this question. Many of them managed to cover all the requested points and achieved full mark for the content. The language was of a good standard but the verb usage was considerably less than what is required even though many candidates showed excellence in the language. This question was also well answered, but there were quite few instances where students confused the tourist attractions with the environment and drifted away from writing within context.
- **Question 3(c)**, asked candidates to write a story about helping out poor families. The majority of candidates opted for this question and there were many outstanding stories. Some students missed comprehension points as they did not use the future tense. Many candidates responded well to this question. Stronger candidates made good use of adjectives to describe and elaborate on the story elements. Candidates who did not manage to score well were those having difficulties in forming basic sentences, or had very poor and difficult to read handwriting.

The candidates are awarded 30 marks for **Question 3**, 10 for communicating the relevant points, 8 for accurate use of verbs and 10 for using wide range of structures, producing longer fluent sentences by using wide range of accurate vocabulary. Most candidates attempted this question successfully and their responses were excellent; however, some responses were brief and lacked some detail, which was reflected in the marks awarded.

The majority of students who opted for **Question 3(a)** managed to address all communication points appropriately, while a small number of candidates were not awarded communication marks or were only awarded half the marks as their points were not clear and were not fully understood.

Candidates who followed the rubrics were successful in achieving the task, but Examiners were not able to award marks to those who:

- did not attempt this part or any part.
- wrote an irrelevant response.
- copied from rubric

Candidates generally answered questions with good language use and most of them met the comprehension points needed. Again, more attention should be paid to accuracy (gender agreement and spelling). However, some candidates showed an outstanding level of using expressions and adjectives to describe their chosen topic, and their answers were pleasant to read.

ARABIC

Paper 0544/43
Writing

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to demonstrate that they can communicate in writing, showing knowledge of a range and variety of vocabulary and applying the grammar and structures of the Arabic language correctly.

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Candidates should remember that the rubric is not a rough guide but that it 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, avoiding irrelevance. If the tasks require a certain tense then they should stick to that tense and not drift into irrelevant tenses.

Each sentence should be written thoughtfully, paying close attention to the message conveyed, spelling and grammar. When candidates have finished they should make full use of the time left to check their work for errors.

Within the limits on content imposed by the set tasks, the paper is an exercise in free composition so candidates should write that which they are confident is correct Arabic and avoid what they do not know. 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. Handwriting must always be legible.

In **Questions 2** and **3**, some candidates tend to include long lists of proper nouns such as place names or personal names. This practice is to be discouraged as the mark scheme does not allow the award of accuracy ticks to 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 their response in the required form of writing will be reflected in the marks gained.

General comments

The Writing paper consisted of two sections each marked as follows:

Section 1, **Question 1** is marked out of 5 marks, the candidates are required to list 8 items in Arabic and the marks are awarded to five correct items. **Question 2** is marked out of 15 marks, the candidates are required to answer this question and the marks are awarded as follows: 10 marks for communication and 5 for language.

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Most candidates appeared to have sufficient knowledge of Arabic grammatical structures to enable them to complete the paper without undue difficulty, but there were some persistent errors including:

- 1 Using *tanween* as a letter and not as *tashkeel* such as *أيضاً* instead of *أيضًا* and *صباحاً* written *صباحن*.
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- 11 Using long and short vowels incorrectly.
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It was noted that few candidates wrote completely irrelevant essays.

Time management did not appear to be a problem as the majority of candidates managed to complete both tasks.

The performance of the candidates spanned a range of ability. On the whole, but the majority achieved results that were good and in many cases the performances were excellent. Most essays were adequately focused on the topic in question and were well structured, though many were somewhat unimaginative. It was noticed that the number of well-structured scripts, and the overall answers are more positive, comparing with previous sessions.

Comments on specific questions:

Section 1

Question 1

In this year's exam, candidates were asked to list 8 professions. The candidates are offered an example and some photos that candidates can use if they wish to. This question was marked out of 5 and Examiners chose the best 5 answers and were awarded the marks accordingly.

This section was generally well attempted and the majority of the candidates achieved very good marks, as the majority of candidates have answered correctly.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to write a short letter (80–90 words) to a friend about a traditional celebration they have attended covering 4 main points. Most candidates succeeded in communicating most or all of the relevant points without undue difficulty, while few candidates did not appear to have paid sufficient attention to the details of the information requested in the question. Some candidates missed some communication marks as they did not elaborate on their opinion about the celebration. There were few that wrote completely outside of the topic and lost marks as a result.

This question was awarded 15 marks, 10 marks for communication and 5 marks for Language. More attention should be paid to accuracy, most common errors were to do with adjectives' ending and verb ending agreement.

Section 2

Question 3

Candidates are required to answer one question from a choice of three:

Question 3(a) was to write a letter to the youth magazine explaining a project candidates organised to solve the issue of traffic in town. Most candidates attempted this question successfully and their responses were excellent; however, some responses were brief and lacked some details. Less candidates chose this question. Many of them did not answer the first point correctly and omitted to mention the way this project was planned for. The rest of the points were covered well and many candidates managed to achieve a very good score on the content. The language and verb usage was good overall.

Question 3(b) was to write an article to the school's head teacher explaining the use of technology to friends. Many candidates chose this question and managed to cover all the requested points and achieved full mark for the content. The language was of a good standard but the verb usage was considerably less than what is required. This question was also well answered, but some candidates missed out on the use of future tense that relates to the final communication point.

Question 3(c) asked candidates to write a story about having their photo printed in the newspaper. The majority of candidates opted for this question and there were many good stories. Some candidates missed comprehension points as they did not use the future tense. This question was the most popular. Many candidates responded well to this question. Stronger candidates made good use of adjectives to describe and elaborate on the story elements. Candidates who did not manage to score well were those having difficulties in forming basic sentences, or had very poor and difficult to read handwriting.

The candidates are awarded 30 marks for **Question 3**, 10 for communicating the relevant points, 8 for accurate use of verbs and 10 for using wide range of structures, producing longer fluent sentences by using wide range of accurate vocabulary. Most candidates attempted this question successfully and their responses were excellent; however, some responses were brief and lacked some detail, which was reflected in the marks awarded.

The majority of candidates who opted for **Question 3(a)** managed to address all communication points appropriately, while a small number of candidates were not awarded communication marks or were only awarded half the marks as their points were not clear and were not fully understood.

Overall, candidates who followed the rubrics were successful in achieving the task, but Examiners were not able to award marks to those who:

- did not attempt this **Question**.
- wrote an irrelevant response.

- copied their response from the rubric.

Candidates generally answered questions with good language use and most of them met the comprehension points needed. Again, more attention should be paid to accuracy (gender agreement and spelling). However, some candidates showed an outstanding level of using expressions and adjectives to describe their chosen topic, and their answers were pleasant to read.