

ARABIC

Paper 3180/01 Composition
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Key messages

Overall performance for this series is very good.

Generally, candidates understood the demands of the questions and produced pieces of writing with good content, well-structured, with good range of vocabulary and variety of sentence lengths and structures. Some of the pieces were impressive. Weaker performances were mainly due to persistent spelling and grammatical errors.

A positive aspect that has been observed is the fact that less candidates deviated from the main topic or wrote irrelevant material. There were very few candidates who wrote an essay instead of a dialogue for **Question 1(c)**.

As observed in previous years, some candidates used lengthy introductions/conclusions at the expense of the main topic(s). Some others used learnt clichés for **1(a)**, **2(a)**, **2(c)**, and **2(d)**. Others have dwelled too long on narrating the preparations to visit the zoo at the expense of describing it and the activities they have done. Another observation is the use of extensive metaphors for **2(a)** and **2(b)** at the expense of the main topic itself. It has also been observed that few candidates used colloquial language for both sections which had an impact on their achievement.

As for language, many candidates did well, but there remain issues with language accuracy particularly for weaker responses, some of which are outlined below.

General comments

The question paper is composed of two main sections, **1** and **2**. **Section 1** includes three questions (**1(a)**, **1(b)**, **1(c)**) from which candidates select one and write about 120 words. The mark is 15. **Section 2** consists of four questions (**2(a)**, **2(b)**, **2(c)**, **2(d)**); the candidates must select one and write about 200 words. The mark for this section is 30. The total mark for the paper is 45.

As mentioned above, performance for this series was very good overall. Many candidates performed very well. This is evident in their understanding of the demands of the questions, producing well-structured pieces, with good style and organisation of ideas, the use of variety of linking words and phrases, mostly accurate language and adhering to word count. Although weaker responses had good content, the main issue was in the persistent spelling and grammatical errors which had an impact on candidates' achievement.

Performance for **Section 1** was very good overall. Performance for **1(a)** was the best, followed by **1(c)**, then by **1(b)**. Similarly, performance for **Section 2** was quite good overall where **2(b)** was the best, followed by **2(c)**, then by **2(d)**, and finally by **2(a)**.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 – Letter, Report, Dialogue or Speech

This section has three options (**a**), (**b**), and (**c**). Options **1(a)** and **1(c)** were the most popular and many candidates achieved 10 marks and above. Performance was very good overall. Generally, candidates displayed good writing skills, and only few exceeded the word count. For some candidates with lower language skills, they were still able to write a letter, speech or a dialogue but their language was

characterised with many spelling and grammatical errors together with the use of colloquial vocabulary and phrases.

- (a) Candidates are required to write a letter to the head of school asking for leave to visit their grandparent. This was the most common choice by candidates. Overall performance was very good. Many candidates adhered to the form of letter writing. Their writing was well-structured, using a brief introductory paragraph in the form of a greeting and the reason behind writing the letter, followed by an explanation as to the reason for taking leave from school, and finishing off with concluding remarks. Most candidates adhered to the word count. Weaker responses were characterised by lengthy introductions/conclusions at the expense of the main topic in addition to many spelling and grammatical errors.
- (b) The question was about delivering a speech in the 'book fair' where candidates are required to offer their ideas about improving the school's library. This was the least common choice by candidates. All candidates understood the demands of the question and were able to produce a piece of writing demonstrating their understanding of the elements of writing a speech. Their content was also relevant.
- (c) For this question, candidates are required to write a dialogue with their GP about ways of maintaining good health. This was the second most popular choice and performance was very good. Most candidates demonstrated good skills in writing a dialogue, offering relevant ideas with an ability to construct 'reported speech'. As for weak performances, the main issue was starting their dialogue with unnecessary long introductory paragraph together with lack of ideas or information about maintaining health as well as persistent spelling and grammatical errors. There were few candidates who did not demonstrate knowledge of writing a dialogue; instead, they wrote an essay about 'how to maintain good health'.

Section 2 – Essay

This section contains four options ((a), (b), (c), (d)). **Question 2(c)** was the most popular, followed by almost equal popularity for options **2(a)** and **2(d)**, and **2(b)** was the least popular. Overall performance was also good. Candidates wrote very interesting stories in **Question 2(b)** and **2(c)**. Many tried hard to excel, and others with weaker responses demonstrated limited language skills, as their writing contained persistent errors in spelling and grammar.

- (a) The question is about describing a recent visit to the zoo. This was the third most popular question. Performance was the lowest for this section, but it is still good. Many candidates performed very well and used appropriate adjectives and similes. Their description was well-structured, using good linking words and phrases. Some candidates' writing tended to be more narrative than descriptive, dwelling too long on the preparations prior to the visit to the zoo at the expense of describing it and the activities they have carried out. Very few candidates wrote about a school trip rather than concentrating on describing the zoo. This demonstrates their misunderstanding of the demands of the question or the elements of descriptive writing. It must be noted as well that some candidates forced/exaggerated the use of metaphors and included learnt clichés. This may sometimes have the adverse effect on the quality of the piece and its natural flow. Very few candidates used the present tense instead of the past tense to describe this event.
- (b) Candidates are required to narrate events about a bird standing daily at their windows then flies away. They are asked to narrate or find out where the bird has flown to. Although the question was the least popular, performance was the best for this section. Many candidates were able to narrate the events using their creativity and imagination. The stories were varied and interesting. Like the other questions, weaker performances had good content but suffered from persistent spelling and grammar errors.
- (c) This question is about completing a story based on a trigger statement which is about a phone call from a friend requesting a meeting after two hours, but on arrival to the meeting point one can only find their friend's bicycle and bag. This was the most popular. Performance was also very good, and candidates achieved the second highest performance in this section. Like **Question 2(b)**, candidates created varied and interesting stories, and most candidates demonstrated their understanding of the demands of the question as well as their knowledge of narrative writing. There were few candidates who used lengthy introductions before moving on to the main topic.

- (d) Candidates are required to discuss a topic and present their opinions on the statement that 'it is better to start the day with things that they like even if they were not important'. This was the second most popular choice by candidates. However, candidates did not do as well on this question, but it is still good overall. Many candidates were able to demonstrate their skills in debating and arguing. Many had included in their argument supporters and opposers to the statement offering rationale for each side or giving the pros and cons and finishing off with their opinions. It has been noted that the lower performance, compared to the other questions, was not just due to language accuracy but also due to the lack of relevant ideas and illustrations and the repetitiveness of some of the ideas at different points in the essay.

Language Accuracy

For many candidates, particularly those with lower achievement, the spelling and grammatical errors had significant impact on their grades. Capturing all the errors is beyond the scope of this report, but the following is a list of the most common issues observed:

- Mistakes in the use of الاء المربوطة، ال التعريف، همزات الوصل والقطع، ياء المقصورة والممدودة
- Joining or separating the preposition from the definite article: فلبيت كا الشمس، فلبيت
- Adding ي to attached pronouns and to verbs in the first person or missing the ي in the 2nd person feminine form: أكتب لكي، كي أخبركي، أرجو أن تكون
- Use of the wrong prepositions with some verbs like البحت على، اتصل على
- Adding "alif" to demonstratives and the comparative particle: هذا، ذاك، لكن
- Use of هو instead of the third person masculine attached pronoun: فعل شيء يحبها
- Incorrect use of the non-human plural forms: ثم رأينا الأسود وأطعمناها اللحم instead of ثم رأينا الأسود وأطعمناهم اللحم
- Incorrect use of the dual and regular masculine plural in an 'idafa' construct: instead of وقدم لهم وجبتين إفطار. Candidates should be made aware that the ن of the dual and plural form in an 'idafa' phrase must drop out.
- Many candidates missed the use of the accusative case in sentences containing كان and its sisters: كان كان الطقس مشمساً وجمياً instead of كان الطقس مشمس وجميل. Candidates should be made aware that كان and its sisters will affect the predicate الخبر by making it in the accusative case.
- Candidates also made mistakes by not using the accusative case with transitive verbs: وجدت شيء مرعب instead of وجدت شيئاً مرعباً. Candidates should know that transitive verbs attract the accusative case and that there is no need for using prepositions in these cases: رأيت فجأة بشيء كبير على الأرض instead of رأيت فجأة. وتتهمكم أوضاع الطلاب instead of وتتهمكم بأوضاع الطلاب. نسينا كبيراً على الأرض
- Use of first person singular ي or ني with verbs like اتصل and حكى instead of فقد حكنتني جدتي قصة هذا البيت المهجور. فقد حك لي جدتي قصة هذا البيت المهجور
- Several candidates, including high performing ones, used 'taa' marbuuta ة instead of 'haa' هاء حديقته، حياه. They also used 'taa' ambsuuta ت instead of 'taa' marbuuta ة in words like بدايت يومك، سلحفات، خائفت
- Use on non-emphatic letters instead of emphatic ones: التيب، ذروف صعبة، عسافير
- Mistakes in 'idafa' phrases: زرت الحديقة الحيوانات مؤخراً. Candidates should be advised that the first noun of an 'idafa' phrase never attracts the definite article.
- Confusion in the use of the conjunction و and the connector ف. Candidates should be able to distinguish between the two.
- Errors in subject-verb agreement: بعض الناس يقولو، شيء يحبها الأرض كان سيئ جداً.
- Incorrect negation of the past tense: لم تناولت الفواكه، لم استطعت أن أتصل على صديقي
- Incorrect noun-adjective agreement: تستطيع أن تسجل في نادي رياضية، أكل وجبات صحي، الهوايات تلعب دور مهماً
- Use of the present tense instead of the past to describe past events: عندما أذهب أجد دراجته وحقيبتة فقط
- Incorrect use of relative pronouns: الكثير من الناس الذي تؤيد هذه الظاهرة
- Adding the first person attached pronoun to the present tense verb (first person): أنصحنى الطبيب

- The use of the same linking word or phrase repeatedly. Candidates should learn a variety of connecting words and phrases and use them appropriately in context.
- Separating the conjunction **و** from the following word. Candidates should be made aware that the **و** cannot be written independently or stand alone in a phrase. It must be immediately connected to the word that follows it, without any space.

Recommendations

- Candidates could benefit from training and exercises on the conjugation of the present and past tenses.
- Candidates should use negation of tenses as well as of nouns and adjectives accurately.
- Candidates should avoid overusing the same linking word/phrase repeatedly. Instead, they should demonstrate a variety of linking words and phrases and use them appropriately within the context.
- Candidates need to practise different writing skills to widen their horizon and have more chances to find their best option.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read the questions in both Arabic and English. This may eliminate any chance of misunderstanding the prompt or the demand of the question(s).
- Candidates could also benefit from planning their writing on the blank page(s), especially for **Section B**, where they are required to write more words compared to **Section A**. Additionally, they should learn how to balance writing the introduction, body and conclusion, using appropriate linking words or phrases, and adhering to the word count.
- Candidates should avoid using colloquial language as much as possible. This can be achieved through practice and further reading of different types of texts.
- Candidates should be advised to avoid using lengthy introductions and conclusions or learnt phrases.

ARABIC

Paper 3180/02
Translation and Reading
Comprehension

Key messages

- Read each question carefully to fully understand what is being asked before responding.
- Ensure accuracy in translation, whether from Arabic to English or vice versa.
- Confirm that answers directly respond to the exam questions as sometimes correct answer is given to the wrong question.
- List the answers clearly for questions that require 2 or 3 responses to avoid confusion. Copying a big chunk from the text is considered 'lifting' and marks cannot be awarded unless the answers are very clear.

General comments

The performance of most candidates this year was very good. All the questions were attempted except for very few. It is evident that candidates read the questions well and understood what is required of them. Marking the papers had a positive approach in order to acknowledge and reward candidates' diligence and good performance.

Comments on specific questions

Section A – Translation

Question 1 – Translation from Arabic into English

A good competency of translating the text from Arabic into English was displayed. Many candidates used appropriate vocabulary and correct grammatical structures. Often, full sentences were used with correct spelling, and minor technical errors, which raised the marks. Examples of statements that were translated with ease in this question were: 'اشترى التاجر بيتاً' (The merchant bought a house), 'مرت أيام عديدة' (Many days passed) and 'فرفض وقال' (he refused and said).

However, there were some challenges in translating certain expressions in the text. For example, the phrase 'كان تاجر أمين' was often translated taking 'أمين', to be a someone's name rather than as an adjective meaning 'honest/trustworthy'. Also, the word 'تاجر' was rarely translated correctly as 'merchant'.

Another challenge was the phrase 'في الاستقرار في بلدته', which only few candidates translated it as 'his hometown' or 'his town', most candidates used 'country' instead. Finally, the expression 'يناسب وضعه وثروته' posed difficulty, and the word 'wealth' was very rarely used.

Question 2 – Translation from English into Arabic

Candidates generally performed well in this question. The sentences were short and straightforward which contributed to the good performance. Examples of statements that were easy to translate were: 'your Arabic language', 'when you read' and 'of the sentence'. However, the following statements were more challenging to many candidates with varying degrees: 'vocabulary', 'effective ways', 'regularly', 'look up' and 'exchange letters'. Some candidates had difficulty distinguishing between certain words like 'تحسن' (improve), 'تطوير' (develop), and 'إتقان' (mastery). The word 'regularly' caused significant confusion, with many candidates translating it incorrectly as 'يومية' (daily) or 'دائماً' (always). And finally 'exchange letters' was sometimes translated as 'حروف' (letters of the alphabet) rather than as 'رسائل' (postal letters).

Section B – Reading Comprehension

Questions 3 – 11

Most candidates answered these questions accurately and confidently. A small number of candidates provided correct answers but to the wrong questions and very few left some questions unanswered. Marks were also sometimes lost due to incomplete responses. Here are the comments to the individual questions:

Question 3

Candidates answered the first point as 'أحمر فوق رأسه', which is an incomplete answer. They must mention 'عُرف أحمر'.

Question 4

Candidates must correctly spell the two key words: 'صياحاً & غناء'. Candidates who wrote 'صباحاً' or 'عناء' changed the meaning and lost a mark accordingly.

Question 5

Most of the candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 6

Candidates lost a mark for the second point of the answer, when they did not clarify the condition of 'حتى لو وضع في بيئة مضيئة طوال الوقت', which was 'يصيح في الوقت نفسه'.

Question 7

Candidates lost marks when they mentioned 'يسمع صوت سيارة' or 'يسمع شخص في الحظيرة', because these are examples of rooster's usual response not a necessary one, which are mentioned in the text as 'دوافع ملحة'.

Question 8

Most of the candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 9

Candidates must mention the key word 'صمام' in either both points of the answers or the first point in the answer to secure the mark as this is the only way that ensures the question is fully understood and the answer is clear.

Question 10

Answers that stated 'في القرن العشرين طبع شكله على العملة الذهبية الفرنسية' and 'صورته تزين قمصان لاعبي المنتخب الفرنسي لكرة القدم' lost marks as these examples are in modern times, thus are not the correct answers to the question.

Question 11

Most candidates provided the correct synonyms or explanations to all 6 words instead of just 3 and by doing so increased their chances of securing higher marks.