

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

The majority of candidates did very well on this paper this year demonstrating a good understanding of vocabulary, grammatical structures and general comprehension. Where some candidates struggled was mainly in **Sections 2** and **3**, which involve understanding a longer text in the target language. As in previous years' recommendation, a focus on learning synonyms and answering comprehension questions is highly recommended.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

Most candidates answered these questions correctly. Very few candidates got **Question 1** wrong and did not identify the picture of 'eggs' as the correct one. Some also did not identify the correct time when the aeroplane took off. A focus on learning how to express time and vocabularies of different topics would be beneficial.

Exercise 1, Questions 6–10

The questions in this matching task were generally handled well and the candidates answered most questions correctly. Again, very few chose the wrong answer for **Question 7** (key vocab being garden), **Question 8** (key vocab being newspaper) **Question 9** (key vocab being vegetables) and **Question 10** (key vocab being mobile phone).

Exercise 3, Questions 11–15

Most of these multiple-choice questions were answered correctly. Occasionally, some candidates selected تفاح وليمون instead of تفاح وإجاص for **Question 13**, and some found **Question 14** confusing and selected جنوب شرق instead of وسط المزرعة.

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 16–20

Many candidates did not respond well to this exercise mainly due to a lack of understanding synonyms and opposites. For example, **Question 17** was answered as ممنوع instead of مسموح, **Question 18** was answered as بعيد عن instead of قريب من and **Question 20** was answered as الأفلام instead of الأكل which is a synonym to الطعام in the text.

Exercise 2, Questions 21–29

In the main, candidates did well on these questions and some scored full marks. However, some candidates did not answer **Question 20** correctly by not identifying why Sophie wanted to visit the desert, and some struggled with **Question 24** and **Question 26**. This topic about the desert seems to have been challenging for some candidates. This is evident in some candidates lifting some chunks from the text. So, a focus on reading long texts for comprehension as well as being able to identify specific information is advisable.

Section 3

Exercise 1, Questions 30–34

Some candidates did well in this exercise. Those who identified the true/false statements responded well by giving the correct justifications. However, those who answered wrong to the true/false part have also missed out on getting any marks for the justifications. In addition, candidates should be trained not to give the negation of the statement as a justification because this is not accepted as a correct answer.

Exercise 2, Questions 35–39

Most candidates did not score full marks in this exercise and struggled in identifying the correct response for **Questions 37(i), (ii)** and **Question 39**. Where candidates copied extensive sections from the text that clearly shows a lack of understanding, a mark was not awarded. In some cases, candidates gave both correct answers on one line and gave a third wrong answer on the second line, so only one mark is awarded in this scenario.

There were some candidates who didn't attempt this exercise. Candidates could benefit by engaging in more contextual reading.

In summary, the performance of most candidates displayed very good efforts in learning the language and responding well to different topics. Where candidates did not do so well, they could benefit from extensive reading, learning more vocabulary and revising the grammatical structure of the language.

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 by answering the majority 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. Also, candidates who lost some marks were those whose responses contained errors in not understanding specific vocabulary in **Section 1**.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

Most candidates answered these discrete questions correctly and achieved full mark. For some, **Question 2** was slightly confusing كيف يذهب سعيد؟ the answer to be ticked is (صورة قطار) but instead they chose the picture of the aeroplane.

Exercise 2, Questions 6–10

The questions in this matching task were handled extremely well. Hardly any candidates did not score full marks on this exercise. Some of those who did not, answered **D** instead of **C** for **Question 9**, so they chose the picture of a girl eating instead of a girl buying fruits from the market.

Exercise 3, Questions 11–15

The candidates did very well in these multiple-choice questions and answered the questions correctly. Very few candidates chose the incorrect answer for **Question 11** and **Question 14**.

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 16–20

Most candidates responded well to this exercise but a few struggled with identifying the correct answers to **Question 17**, **Question 19** and **Question 20**. So, a focus on learning about opposites and synonyms is recommended.

Exercise 2, Questions 21–29

In general, most candidates answered these questions correctly and demonstrated a good understanding of the text. Where some candidates lost marks was due to invalidating the answer in **Question 23** where they answered the month of أغسطس instead of يونيو. Also some candidates gave the year instead of the month as an answer. Few students answered **Question 25** and **Question 29** wrong as well in this exercise because they did not seem to have understood the question. **Question 25** asks for أحد الخيارات الزمنية لدفع ثمن الانترنت and **Question 29** asks أين and not لماذا.

Section 3

Exercise 1, Questions 30–34

The majority of candidates responded very well to this exercise and displayed a good understanding of reading a long text, except for the weaker candidates. Some of these weaker candidates either ticked the wrong T/F box or did not give the correct justification to the False statement. It is important to train candidates in this exercise not to give the negation of the statement as a justification because no justification is given, so no mark is awarded.

Exercise 1, Questions 35–39

Most candidates responded well to this exercise. Some candidates struggled with **Question 37**. Candidates needed to identify ‘when will buying an electric car become easier’, and only the more able candidates were able to answer this two mark-question correctly. There were also some candidates who did not attempt this question.

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

The majority of candidates did very well on this paper this year demonstrating a good understanding of vocabulary, grammatical structures and general comprehension. Where some candidates struggled was mainly in **Sections 2** and **3**, which involve understanding a longer text in the target language. As in previous years' recommendation, a focus on learning synonyms and answering comprehension questions is highly recommended.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

Most candidates answered these questions correctly. Very few candidates got **Question 1** wrong and did not identify the picture of 'eggs' as the correct one. Some also did not identify the correct time when the aeroplane took off. A focus on learning how to express time and vocabularies of different topics would be beneficial.

Exercise 1, Questions 6–10

The questions in this matching task were generally handled well and the candidates answered most questions correctly. Again, very few chose the wrong answer for **Question 7** (key vocab being garden), **Question 8** (key vocab being newspaper) **Question 9** (key vocab being vegetables) and **Question 10** (key vocab being mobile phone).

Exercise 3, Questions 11–15

Most of these multiple-choice questions were answered correctly. Occasionally, some candidates selected تفاح وليمون instead of تفاح وإجاص for **Question 13**, and some found **Question 14** confusing and selected جنوب شرق instead of وسط المزرعة.

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 16–20

Many candidates did not respond well to this exercise mainly due to a lack of understanding synonyms and opposites. For example, **Question 17** was answered as ممنوع instead of مسموح, **Question 18** was answered as بعيد عن instead of قريب من and **Question 20** was answered as الأفلام instead of الأكل which is a synonym to الطعام in the text.

Exercise 2, Questions 21–29

In the main, candidates did well on these questions and some scored full marks. However, some candidates did not answer **Question 20** correctly by not identifying why Sophie wanted to visit the desert, and some struggled with **Question 24** and **Question 26**. This topic about the desert seems to have been challenging for some candidates. This is evident in some candidates lifting some chunks from the text. So, a focus on reading long texts for comprehension as well as being able to identify specific information is advisable.

Section 3

Exercise 1, Questions 30–34

Some candidates did well in this exercise. Those who identified the true/false statements responded well by giving the correct justifications. However, those who answered wrong to the true/false part have also missed out on getting any marks for the justifications. In addition, candidates should be trained not to give the negation of the statement as a justification because this is not accepted as a correct answer.

Exercise 2, Questions 35–39

Most candidates did not score full marks in this exercise and struggled in identifying the correct response for **Questions 37(i), (ii)** and **Question 39**. Where candidates copied extensive sections from the text that clearly shows a lack of understanding, a mark was not awarded. In some cases, candidates gave both correct answers on one line and gave a third wrong answer on the second line, so only one mark is awarded in this scenario.

There were some candidates who didn't attempt this exercise. Candidates could benefit by engaging in more contextual reading.

In summary, the performance of most candidates displayed very good efforts in learning the language and responding well to different topics. Where candidates did not do so well, they could benefit from extensive reading, learning more vocabulary and revising the grammatical structure of the language.

ARABIC

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. Cambridge Moderators heard the full range of candidate performance submitted by centres.

Candidate performance

The conduct of this exam was the same as last year as some centres conducted the role plays section well, 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, allowed maximum of two minutes and minimum of one minute to speak on their chosen topic presentation without any interference from the examiner, and responded to questions on their topics in a spontaneous and natural manner for 3–4 minutes. The general conversation section for strong candidates lasted for about 5 minutes, they answered a series of linked questions on two or three topics including opinions and justifications, they used more difficult structures and developed their answers with a variety of tenses, they conveyed both past and future meaning and responded satisfactory to both expected and unexpected questions in both conversations (TC and GC).

Practice for the speaking exam is essential and should be part of the classroom activity. In some 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 noticed that some Teachers/Examiners need to familiarize themselves well with 'the Teacher' Notes', 'the instruction video', the working mark sheet and the 0544 syllabus before the exam in order to conduct the exam accurately.

Teachers/examiners also need to prepare a bank of straightforward questions in many topics as well as unexpected ones for their own use during the exam. If however, 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. It is also very useful also to give the candidates the opportunity to think after asking a question without interfering or rephrasing the question unless the candidate requests as such. It is also worth noting that this exam assesses the candidates' ability to speak in Modern standard Arabic (MSA), so all the questions asked should be in MSA and the candidates should also speak in MSA. The exam also does not assess candidates' general knowledge, so teachers/examiners should avoid general knowledge questions and focus on questions that allow candidates to use past and future tenses.

Teachers/examiners should not interfere during the candidate's presentation unless he/she speaks for more than two minutes.

centres need to work towards achieving greater spontaneity during the exam and to give the candidates the chance to talk freely and show that they can speak clearly, provide explanations, justify opinions, use a range of language, structures and use past and future tenses accurately.

Conduct of the examination

Some examiners had a consistent approach when asking questions to illustrate the candidates' ability to use past and future tenses. Other examiners worked hard to get the best out of the candidates, especially the weaker ones and made sure to ask past and future questions in the TC and GC sections. However some examiner didn't do support their candidates enough, which impacted their final mark. The timings for the Topic/presentation/conversation and the general conversation were just right with the majority of candidates; however, some examiners didn't manage to keep the right time for each part of the exam as they were either too long or too short.

There was some lack of transition from topic presentation/conversation to general conversation in some centres. Few Teachers/Examiners covered areas already covered in the topic conversation during the general conversation. Some Teachers/Examiners created extra tasks by adding more questions to the role play. Few centres missed out either the topic presentation, the topic conversation or the general conversation. Regrettably, the examiners who changed the role-play tasks, missed out some essentials tasks in the role plays that affected the candidate marks.

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**.

There was some good practice where the Teacher/Examiners followed instructions entirely and rephrased questions that the candidate was unsure about. Most of the examiners were consistent in prompting their candidates to expand their answers.

Although it is evident that many centres have worked hard to meet the standards, there is still room for improvement. For instance, the need to ask more probing questions to encourage the use of a variety of structures and tenses is still lacking in many centres.

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. The preparation time does not need to be recorded.

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 ننقل 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 and few centres examined the candidates from one role play only which affected the candidates' marks as they were awarded marks for one role play only.

B Role Plays

The B role plays were more challenging, and 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 and few centres chose to examine the candidates on this role play only which also affected the candidates' marks as they were awarded marks for only one role play.

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

In the samples heard, many candidates had chosen a wide variety of topics for their topic presentation. In very few centres, the range of topics presented by candidates was too narrow. Some candidates were not given ample/sufficient time to extend and elaborate their answers. Examiners must encourage candidates to choose a topic in which they have a specific interest and appropriate to their level of ability. Candidates within a centre must not all prepare the same topic and should not be allowed to choose 'Myself' or 'My life' as this restricts the possibilities for general conversation.

In this section of the exam, the candidate should not be left to talk on his/her own for more than two minutes. The Teacher/Examiner must interrupt the candidate with specific spontaneous questions related to his/her topic presentation. The Teacher/Examiner can also start the discussion on the topic presentation if they found the candidate struggle to talk for more than about 1:20 minutes.

Overall the candidates performed well. In few centres, the candidates' presentations were too short as they were interrupted by the examiner before they had reached one minute. In other centres this section of the exam was either forgotten completely or the candidates were left to talk on their own for more than two minutes and the topic conversation was omitted.

Moderators found that few 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 their answers. On the whole, the timing of this section was either too short or much too long.

General Conversation

The majority of the Teacher/Examiners started the conversation with simple questions then developed their more challenging questions gradually. A small number of Teacher/Examiners were aware of the need to cover two or three different topics in this section of the examination, however the majority of Teacher/Examiners covered too many topics with each candidate.

Few examiners changed the topic frequently and didn't give the opportunity to the candidates to develop their answers and use more complex sentences and structures. 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, several 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

By the end of the examination the Teacher/Examiner should assess the overall performance of the candidate in all parts of the exam, they must look at pronunciation, accent, fluency, respond to questions (expected and unexpected once), the use of structure long sentences, the use of explanations, opinions, justifications and the use of a range of vocabulary and structures. Banded descriptors are enclosed in Table C of the Marking Instructions in the Teachers' Notes booklet. In general, some Teacher/Examiners awarded appropriate marks for this aspect of the examination others were either generous or mean in their marks.

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. As the recommended length is 130–140 words, they 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 one or two tasks 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 example. To obtain higher results, students should be encouraged to write their answer bearing in mind to add enough details for each bullet point to cover all communication points. In addition to this Candidates should respond to these bullet points using the right tense required.

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 inappropriate 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 *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.

The performance of the candidates spanned a range of ability. On the whole, the majority of work was excellent. Most essays were adequately focussed on the topic in question and were well-structured. It was noticed that the number of well-structured scripts, and the overall answers are more positive, comparing with previous sessions.

Some candidates were awarded low grades due to their limited command of the Arabic language. They showed good comprehension skills but need to improve spelling and grammar.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

In this year's exam, candidates were asked to list eight items that they can eat or drink at a restaurant. 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 to award the marks to accordingly.

This section was generally well attempted and the majority of the candidates achieved very good marks, as most of them were successful in listing these items. Though there were some spelling mistakes but they did not hinder understanding. There were also few cases where candidates used colloquial Arabic. Candidates must remember that this exam is an assessment of Modern Standard Arabic.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to write an article about favourite means of transport when going on a trip (80–90 words) covering four main points. This question was awarded 15 marks, 10 marks for communication and 5 marks for Language.

The topic was accessible and of an interest to most students. In the majority of cases the answers were well presented and the correct usage of tenses were implemented. Therefore, most candidates succeeded in communicating most or all of the relevant points without undue difficulty. Some candidates didn't appear to have paid sufficient attention to the details of the information requested in the question. Few students misunderstood the demand of the question and this resulted in a very low mark as none of the requirements of the question were met.

Also, a good number of students did not realise that they had to include more than one thing they do during the trip in their answer. Candidates should be careful when reading the question; it is clearly asking for more than one thing as the plural noun was used. Similarly they were asked what countries they would like to travel to in the future, by mentioning only one country/city candidates struggled to achieve the full amount of allocated marks.

More attention should be paid to accuracy, the most common errors were to do with adjectives' ending and verb endings' agreement.

Section 2

Question 3

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

- **Question 3(a)**, was about writing a letter to the mayor about building a new sports centre. This question posed an appropriate challenge to the candidates. This was the second popular question. Some candidates were not able to fully expand on the idea of why the decision was taken or state their opinion. To be awarded the full mark, students should express their opinion clearly. The quality of the candidate's writing skills varied significantly. Some students missed comprehension points as they did not use the appropriate tenses required.
- **Question 3(b)**, was about writing an essay to the school's newspaper about organising a programme to look after the environment. Most points were addressed fully but the last point about how to encourage other students to care for the environment was not well developed in most of the responses. Candidates must be careful to ensure that they understand the demand of each bullet point and that they use the right tense required. Subject-verb agreement proved to be challenging for some candidates in this question.
- **Question 3(c)**, this question required candidates to write a story about a visit to the zoo and discovering that a lion had escaped. The majority of candidates opted for this question. This question produced some animated responses. The topic is very age-appropriate and of interest to most of the candidates. All points were addressed and in most cases the narrative used good sentence structure, varied vocabulary and description. The language and verb usage were good overall.

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.

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.
- Wrote an irrelevant response.
- Copied from the rubric.

Students 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 students 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. As the recommended length is 130–140 words, they 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 one or two tasks 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 example. To obtain higher results, students should be encouraged to write their answer bearing in mind to add enough details for each bullet point to cover all communication points. In addition to this Candidates should respond to these bullet points using the right tense required.

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 inappropriate 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.

The performance of the candidates spanned a range of ability. On the whole, the majority of work was excellent. Most essays were adequately focussed on the topic in question and were well-structured. It was noticed that the number of well-structured scripts, and the overall answers are more positive, comparing with previous sessions.

Some candidates were awarded low grades due to their limited command of the Arabic language. They showed good comprehension skills but need to improve spelling and grammar.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

In this year's exam, candidates were asked to list eight items that they would take when travelling with families. The candidates are offered an example and some photos that they can use if they wish to. This question was marked out of five and Examiners chose the best five answers to award the marks to accordingly.

This section was generally well attempted and the majority of the candidates achieved very good marks, as most of them were successful in listing these items. There were some spelling mistakes but they did not hinder understanding. There were also few cases where candidates used colloquial Arabic. Candidates must remember that this exam is an assessment of Modern Standard Arabic.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to write an email to a friend (80–90 words) about sports day covering four main points. This question was awarded 15 marks, 10 marks for communication and 5 marks for Language.

The topic was accessible and of interest to most students. In the majority of cases the answers were well presented and the correct usage of tenses was implemented. Therefore, most candidates succeeded in communicating most or all of the relevant points without undue difficulty. Some candidates didn't appear to have paid sufficient attention to the details of the information requested in the question. Few students misunderstood the demand of the question; they thought that they are required to write a short email to their friend asking him/her about the sports they like. This resulted in a very low mark as none of the requirements of the question were met.

Also, a good number of students did not realise that they had to include more than one sport in their answers. Candidates should be careful when reading the question; it is clearly asking for more than one sport as the plural noun was used (what are the kinds of sports you play).

More attention should be paid to accuracy, the most common errors were to do with adjectives' ending and verb endings' agreement.

Section 2

Question 3

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

- **Question 3(a)**, was about writing an email to a friend about organising a national day celebration. This question posed an appropriate challenge to the candidates. This was the second popular question, and when chosen most wrote about their country's Independence Day. A good number of students were not able to fully expand on the idea of how the celebration was successful, they simply stated that it was successful. To be awarded the full mark, students should express the number of the participants or the feeling of the attendees.

The quality of the candidate's writing skills varied significantly. Some students missed comprehension points as they did use the appropriate tenses required.

- **Question 3(b)**, was about writing an article to the school magazine about work experience. This question was the least popular question of the three. The students who did choose this question had some very interesting ideas. Most points were addressed fully but the last point about how to encourage other students to take up work experience was not well developed in most of the responses. Candidates must be careful to ensure that they understand the demand of each bullet point and that they use the right tense required. Subject-verb agreement proved to be challenging for some candidates in this question.
- **Question 3(c)**, this question was about writing a story about getting a pet and how candidates convinced their family to agree. This question by far was the most popular question and it produced

some very animated responses. The topic is very age-appropriate and of interest to most of the candidates. All points were addressed and in most cases the narrative used good sentence structure, varied vocabulary and description. The language and verb usage were good overall.

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.

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.
- Wrote an irrelevant response.
- Copied from the rubric.

Students 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 students 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.

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. As the recommended length is 130–140 words, they 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 one or two tasks 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 example. To obtain higher results, students should be encouraged to write their answer bearing in mind to add enough details for each bullet point to cover all communication points. In addition to this Candidates should respond to these bullet points using the right tense required.

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 inappropriate 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 *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.

The performance of the candidates spanned a range of ability. On the whole, the majority of work was excellent. Most essays were adequately focussed on the topic in question and were well-structured. It was noticed that the number of well-structured scripts, and the overall answers are more positive, comparing with previous sessions.

Some candidates were awarded low grades due to their limited command of the Arabic language. They showed good comprehension skills but need to improve spelling and grammar.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

In this year's exam, candidates were asked to list eight items that they can eat or drink at a restaurant. 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 to award the marks to accordingly.

This section was generally well attempted and the majority of the candidates achieved very good marks, as most of them were successful in listing these items. Though there were some spelling mistakes but they did not hinder understanding. There were also few cases where candidates used colloquial Arabic. Candidates must remember that this exam is an assessment of Modern Standard Arabic.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to write an article about favourite means of transport when going on a trip (80–90 words) covering four main points. This question was awarded 15 marks, 10 marks for communication and 5 marks for Language.

The topic was accessible and of an interest to most students. In the majority of cases the answers were well presented and the correct usage of tenses were implemented. Therefore, most candidates succeeded in communicating most or all of the relevant points without undue difficulty. Some candidates didn't appear to have paid sufficient attention to the details of the information requested in the question. Few students misunderstood the demand of the question and this resulted in a very low mark as none of the requirements of the question were met.

Also, a good number of students did not realise that they had to include more than one thing they do during the trip in their answer. Candidates should be careful when reading the question; it is clearly asking for more than one thing as the plural noun was used. Similarly they were asked what countries they would like to travel to in the future, by mentioning only one country/city candidates struggled to achieve the full amount of allocated marks.

More attention should be paid to accuracy, the most common errors were to do with adjectives' ending and verb endings' agreement.

Section 2

Question 3

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

- **Question 3(a)**, was about writing a letter to the mayor about building a new sports centre. This question posed an appropriate challenge to the candidates. This was the second popular question. Some candidates were not able to fully expand on the idea of why the decision was taken or state their opinion. To be awarded the full mark, students should express their opinion clearly. The quality of the candidate's writing skills varied significantly. Some students missed comprehension points as they did not use the appropriate tenses required.
- **Question 3(b)**, was about writing an essay to the school's newspaper about organising a programme to look after the environment. Most points were addressed fully but the last point about how to encourage other students to care for the environment was not well developed in most of the responses. Candidates must be careful to ensure that they understand the demand of each bullet point and that they use the right tense required. Subject-verb agreement proved to be challenging for some candidates in this question.
- **Question 3(c)**, this question required candidates to write a story about a visit to the zoo and discovering that a lion had escaped. The majority of candidates opted for this question. This question produced some animated responses. The topic is very age-appropriate and of interest to most of the candidates. All points were addressed and in most cases the narrative used good sentence structure, varied vocabulary and description. The language and verb usage were good overall.

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.

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.
- Wrote an irrelevant response.
- Copied from the rubric.

Students 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 students showed an outstanding level of using expressions and adjectives to describe their chosen topic, and their answers were pleasant to read.