

2018 VCE Arabic written examination report

General comments

The overall performance of students in the 2018 VCE Arabic written examination was good. Many students responded to all the questions, especially in the Listening and responding section.

Some students did not seem to have a clear understanding of the requirements of the examination. Students are reminded that they must familiarise themselves with the examination requirements and criteria.

Written regional differences in responding and in writing were evident. Students are advised that the study design states that 'the language to be studied and assessed is modern standard Arabic'.

There was some evidence that some students had translated vocabulary and sentence structures directly from English to Arabic.

Students should be aware of the different text types and the features required of each text type.

Specific information

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

Section 1 – Listening and responding

To perform well in this section, students should practise fine-tuning their listening and note-taking skills as part of their examination preparation. Students are also advised to take advantage of the two readings of the text and to take detailed notes on the information they hear, so that they are ready to respond to all key words in the questions during the allocated time.

Part A – Answer in English

In this section, students are assessed on their capacity to understand and convey general as well as specific aspects of texts and to convey information accurately and appropriately.

Text 1

Question 1a.

The indication given that Marwān is unwilling to disappoint Nadā is that he says he will change the time he is planning to study with his friend so that he can attend her party.

Question 1b.

Each person contributes to the occasion in the following way:

- Nadā's brother, 'Ahmad: nothing as he is overseas.
- Nadā's father: will decorate the garden.
- Nadā's mother: will prepare the food (with the help of Nadā's cousin).
- Nadā's brother, Farīd: will prepare the list of music they/the guests are going to listen to.

Question 1c.

In terms of Marwān's idea for an activity and reasons why, Nadā is a bit surprised that Marwān is suggesting going out when her family has gone to so much trouble.

Text 2

Question 2a.

Evidence that the movie has been successful is:

- The film reviewer comments that the movie has received the Best Script prize at the Adelaide Film Festival.
- The movie has been very successful/has done extraordinarily well in Australia.

Question 2b.

According to Rashid, the movie appeals to audiences because:

- it is based on a true story told with sincerity/spontaneity
- the public sympathises with the story and understands the situation.

Question 2c.

According to Rashid, the following will influence Osamah's continued interest in film-making. Osamah may write new stories in the coming years as long as:

- public demand is still there for stories/the public appreciates them
- he is able to be creative
- he is able to enjoy himself/his work
- his labour/effort and perseverance in the film led to success (and should encourage him to continue as success breeds success).

Part B – Answer in Arabic

All responses in this section needed to be based on the text. This section was assessed holistically.

In Part B of the Listening and responding section, students are reminded that they are required to demonstrate their capacity in Arabic to understand general and specific aspects of texts.

Text 3

Question 3a.

- إِنَّهُ
الْحَدِيثُ النَّقَائِي الْأُضْحَمُ فِي مِصْرَ
- -
 -
 -
- مِنْ أَكْبَرِ مَعَارِضِ الْكُتُبِ فِي الشَّرْقِ الْأَوْسَطِ (يُرْوَاهُ حَوَالِي مَلِيُونِي شَخْصٍ سَنَوِيًّا) الْمُتَلَقَى الرَّئِيسِي لِكَثِيرٍ مِنَ
الْأُدْبَاءِ وَالْمُفَكِّرِينَ.
- أجحة لكل من دور النشر العربية وغير العربية /

المنشورات العربية والأجنبية
• يقدم ندوات حول المصريين
الأقوياء.

(The following five points demonstrate the significance of the Cairo International Book Fair.

- It is the greatest cultural event in Egypt.
- It is one of the largest book fairs in the Middle East/visited by approximately two million people every year.
- It is the meeting place for many writers and thinkers.
- There are pavilions for both Arab and non-Arab publishing houses/Arabic and foreign publications.
- It offers seminars about powerful Egyptians.)

Question 3b.

يَسْتَضِيفُ الْمَعْرُضُ كُلَّ عَامٍ دَوْلَةً مُخْتَلِفَةً كَضَيْفِ شَرْفٍ
وَيُقَدِّمُ كُلَّ مَا يَخُصُّ هَذِهِ الدَّوْلَةَ مِنْ تَرَاثٍ وَحَضَارَةٍ.

(The country that is selected as guest of honour benefits from the occasion as the fair presents everything that is related to this country's cultural heritage and civilisation. This, therefore, promotes the country's cultural heritage and civilisation.)

Question 3c.

لِلتَّعْبِيرِ عَنِ الْآدَابِ وَالْفُنُونِ وَالْإِعْلَامِ وَالسِّيَّاحَةِ، فَإِنَّ لِهَذِهِ الْمَجَالَاتِ دَوْرًا هَامًّا.
تَسْتُخْدِمُ مِصْرُ مُصْطَلَحَ "الْقُوَى النَّاعِمَةِ" لِلتَّعْبِيرِ عَنِ الْآدَابِ وَالْفُنُونِ وَالْإِعْلَامِ وَالسِّيَّاحَةِ، فَإِنَّ لِهَذِهِ الْمَجَالَاتِ دَوْرًا هَامًّا جِدًّا فِي الْعَلَاقَاتِ الدُّوَلِيَّةِ
وَفِي التَّقْرِيبِ بَيْنَ الشُّعُوبِ وَالدُّوَلِ.

(Egypt uses the term 'soft power(s)' in reference to literature, the arts, the media and tourism. These areas have a very important role in international relations and the rapprochement of people and countries.)

Question 3d.

- مُرُورُ ثَلَاثِينَ عَامًا عَلَى فَوْزِ الْكَاتِبِ نَجِيبِ مَحْفُوظٍ بِجَائِزَةِ نُوبَلٍ
- مُرُورُ مِائَةٍ وَعِشْرِينَ عَامًا عَلَى مِيلَادِ الْكَاتِبِ تَوْفِيقِ الْحَكِيمِ

- (the 30th anniversary of the writer Najīb Maḥfūz winning the Nobel Prize
- the 120th anniversary of the writer Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm's birth)

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A – Answer in English

This section assessed students' capacity to understand and convey general and specific aspects of reading texts. Students were required to source their answers from different parts of the texts and many students were able to do so successfully. All responses were required to be based on the texts.

Text 4

Question 4a.

Students were required to provide evidence from the text that ants are very focused when working. Ants:

- rely on themselves to secure what they need/work independently
- are never tired/they never tire/work tirelessly
- work for long hours
- work to perfection.

Question 4b.

What makes the 'houses' of ants so special is that they are constructed with extreme precision. The text also states that the 'houses' of ants are built as though a skilled engineer designed them.

Question 4c.

For this question, students were required to compare the two different types of ant colonies. Responses included that:

- smaller ones with tens of individuals live in small natural cavities
- there are colonies that occupy large areas of land and are made up of millions of individuals
- there are natural places/environments as opposed to organised places.

Question 4d.

For this question, students were required to describe the leadership style of ants as it was evidenced in the text. Acceptable responses included that ants:

- are self-reliant/they rely entirely on themselves to get what they need
- value teamwork/seem to work united, being able to support the colony/to achieve a set of goals
- are cooperative
- are problem-solvers/have the ability to solve complex problems
- are responsible/each individual is fully aware of their duties/roles
- are self-directed/they don't need to be given direction
- are well-organised.

Question 4e.

Students were required to determine what emotions could be inferred from the writer's language about their attitude towards ants by using evidence from the text to support their response.

Acceptable responses included the following points:

- awe/admiration/impressed – for example, in spite of their small size, ants are capable of doing so much
- astonishment – for example, the writer uses expressions such as 'state of astonishment' or in the last sentence, the writer says 'Human beings could therefore learn a great deal from these small creatures'.

Part B – Answer in Arabic

In this section, students needed to manipulate language to respond in full sentences and produce a coherent and cohesive paragraph in Arabic that included the main points from the text. Most students understood the purpose of the question, and many were able to convey the information accurately and effectively in Arabic without transcribing information directly from the text.

In this section, marks were allocated for identifying the correct points. Marks were also awarded for language. Students were assessed on their capacity to understand general and specific aspects of the text and on their capacity to convey the required information accurately and appropriately.

High-scoring responses accurately expressed ideas. These responses were coherently linked in sentences within the paragraph. Responses that were given in point form did not allow students to demonstrate their ability to manipulate language authentically and consequently were generally not awarded full marks. Students were required to produce an extended response.

Text 5

Question 5

Students were required to write to a friend, outlining the contents of the text and including suggestions based on their own experiences.

Typical responses included comments related to:

- consuming more fruit and vegetables may lead to an increase in happiness
- research on eating habits
- observation related to positive mental changes
- relation to diet relying on the daily consumption of fruit and vegetables
- increase in the life expectancy of people who change their eating habits
- positive change in the level of happiness takes 24 months for its effects to emerge in full
- a result produced by research is more effective than traditional advice as far as convincing people to follow healthy diets is concerned.

Section 3 – Writing in Arabic

In this section of the examination, students were asked to show their ability to write an original text on one of five topics. These topics included five kinds of writing and five text types.

Students are reminded that they are assessed according to the following criteria:

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

All five questions in this section were attempted by students. Most students displayed good knowledge of the different characteristics of the text type and the style of writing in which they chose to write. Conversely, some students who had strong linguistic skills seemed to be unfamiliar with the text type and the style of writing.

High-scoring responses were often very sophisticated. They included ideas that were developed coherently within paragraphs and that were linked effectively. These responses did not digress from the topic and did not include material that was unrelated to the task.

When selecting a topic, students should choose one that is familiar to them and requires the kind of writing and text type that suits them best or that has more familiar text type characteristics.

Some students could benefit from learning to organise their ideas into coherently developed paragraphs. More attention could also be paid to accuracy of language and Arabic script as these areas tended to detract from the logical flow of the writing.

Question 6

Students were required to write a story for school magazine readers. The story was based on the student finding a magic cloak that permitted them to become invisible. Students were required to use their imagination and to write the story based on this new fantastic power and what they would do with it.

- Theme: the individual – personal world
- Audience: school magazine readers
- Context: the advantages and consequences of having special powers
- Text type: story
- Kind of writing: imaginative

Responses could have included:

- finding a magic cloak and invisibility
- points related to the new fantastic power and consequences/adventures
- introduction, complication and resolution

Question 7

Students were required to consider the scenario that their school was mounting a campaign to ban the use of computer technology after 7.00 pm in order to encourage families to communicate more. Students were asked to write the script of a speech that they would present to their fellow students, outlining the aims and expected benefits of this campaign.

- Theme: the world of work (technology), social issues and the individual – family and friends
- Audience: school community
- Context: social issues related to technology
- Text type: script of a speech
- Kind of writing: informative

Responses could have included:

- reference/comment about the school mounting a campaign to ban the use of computer technology after 7.00 pm
- the importance of encouraging families to communicate more
- aims of the campaign
- expected benefits of the campaign
- introduction, middle and conclusion

Question 8

Students were required to consider a scenario where they are very good at sport and where they plan to become a professional athlete after they complete their university degree. Students were then asked to write an article for the school newsletter, persuading parents of the importance of encouraging their children to follow their dreams.

- Theme: the individual – education, aspirations and health
- Audience: newsletter readers
- Context: priorities for the future, and sport
- Text type: article
- Kind of writing: persuasive

Responses could have included:

- reference to/mention of being good at sport
- plans to become a professional athlete after completing university degree
- points to persuade parents of the importance of encouraging their children to pursue their dreams
- focus on the importance of encouraging their children to follow their dreams
- introduction, middle and conclusion

Question 9

Students were asked to write a report for the website of their local community, evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of the use of social media sites.

- Theme: the changing world – social issues
- Audience: readers of the local community website
- Context: impact of social media sites on society
- Text type: report
- Kind of writing: evaluative

Responses could have included:

- advantages of the use of social media sites, for example, connection, finding information, sharing information, finding families, staying connected with people worldwide, etc.
- disadvantages of the use of social media sites, for example, danger of meeting the wrong people, time-wasting, possible increase in narcissism, gambling, etc.
- introduction, middle and conclusion

Question 10

Students were required to consider a scenario where they have spent a whole week with their childhood friend. During this week, they discovered that their friend had changed a lot since their last meeting. Students were required to write a diary entry about their feelings during this week.

- Theme: Arabic-speaking communities – lifestyles and the individual, family and friends
- Audience: self
- Context: family and friends
- Text type: journal entry
- Type of writing: personal

Responses could have included:

- reference to/comment about spending a week with your childhood friend and how this eventuated
- discovery of friend having changed a lot since last meeting
- comments to contextualise the change
- feelings during this week and reasons why