2020 VCE Arabic written examination report

General comments

2020 was the first year this study was delivered according to the newly accredited *VCE Arabic Study Design 2020–2024* and examination specifications. It is important that students and teachers familiarise themselves with the [specifications for written examinations](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/past-examinations/Pages/Arabic.aspx), available on the VCE Arabic Second Language examinations webpage.

Most students attempted all parts of the examination and the quality of responses was reflected in the range of grades according to criteria and marking guidelines.

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

Part A – Listening and responding in English

This section assessed the students’ capacity to understand and convey general and specific aspects of texts.

A significant number of students found Text 3 challenging. Students who scored highly in this section of the examination provided relevant responses that addressed all aspects of the question. Their answers were logical and well formulated.

Most of the students were able to complete this Section of the paper correctly and receive the highest marks. Some students wrote the correct answers in the ‘Notes’ section on the lower half of the page but did not transfer them to the space provided for the answers and so could not be awarded marks.

Students who scored highly provided correct responses, demonstrating that they understood the general meaning and specific elements of both the oral and written texts, while also incorporating complex language structures. Students who scored highly demonstrated the ability to apply grammar rules (such as gender, conjugation, use of appropriate articles and spelling of words) when responding in Arabic.

Students are advised that it is important to:

* take notes for both the listening and reading sections of the examination
* use a bilingual dictionary when necessary and be familiar with using a bilingual dictionary
* attempt all questions
* be familiar with different text types and different kinds of writing when responding to Section 3.

Question 1a

Twoways in which visitors to Morocco should show respect to local people include:

* wearing modest clothing
* avoiding taking close-up photos without consent

Question 1b

Visitors should bring the following different clothing depending on the season:

* cotton or linen clothing in summer
* a waterproof coat in winter
* a suitable jacket in spring and autumn.

Question 1c

The advice given is to have enough cash, preferably Moroccan currency.

Two reasons for the advice given:

* While credit cards are accepted in most hotels and restaurants, shopkeepers in the markets accept cash only.
* It may be difficult to find automatic teller machines in the market.

Question 1d

Two reasons why green tea with mint is important in Moroccan culture are:

* It is the national drink.
* It is served everywhere to welcome guests.

Students who included these two points in a single sentence were still awarded the two marks.

Part B – Listening and responding in Arabic

In this part of the examination students were assessed on their understanding of the listening text and their ability to accurately convey appropriate information from the text in Arabic. The information presented in the response needed to be relevant to the question. Students were marked holistically according to the following criteria:

* the capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts
* the capacity to convey information and opinions accurately and appropriately.

They were not awarded separate marks for content and language. Responses that included the relevant information and were expressed clearly in Arabic were awarded full marks.

Question 2a

Two examples of New Years’ resolutions people make are:

* Refraining from having unhealthy heavy meals / eating healthy meals.
* Taking part in physical fitness classes.

Question 2b

In response to the question ‘what effects can friends, classmates and family members have on our health?’, the following would have been correct responses:

* We tend to imitate our friends, classmates and family members, including their bad habits.
* A study has found that friends and relatives (or the ‘social circle’) of obese people may also put on weight.
* Friends influence our behaviour and mood.

Question 2c

The correct response was:

* The way a person is treated on the Internet (in the messages they receive) influences the way they treat others (in the messages they post).

Question 2d

Two pieces of evidence from the text that show that the speaker used scientific evidence in his speech are:

* A study of the title ‘The effect of social networks on us’ / [or:] a study on the effects social networks have on us.
* Research (anonymous) exploring the idea that emotions are catching.

Section 2

Part A - Reading, listening and responding in English

Question 3a

Rami Malek has won:

* a Golden Globe Award
* an Oscar (Academy Award) for best actor
* a British Academy of Film and Television (BAFTA) Award
* two Emmy Awards
* other awards last year.

Question 3b

Four common points between the two actors are:

* They both have Egyptian ancestry.
* Their Arab parents migrated to America.
* They have both starred in television series.
* They have been both nominated for awards for roles in television series.

Question 3c

Differences between the two actors included the following:

* Rami Malek was born in Los Angeles and Ramy Youssef was born in New York City.
* Rami Malek has been nominated for the Best Actor in a Television Drama Award, while Ramy Youssef was nominated on the list of Best Television Actor in Comedy or Musical.
* Rami Malek is an actor, while Ramy Youssef is an actor, writer and director.
* Rami Malek has been nominated for a Golden Globe before, while this is Ramy Youssef’s first nomination.

Question 3d

Samir Ibrahim was qualified to be interviewed about Rami Malek:

* because he was a cinema critic
* because he wrote a book on Rami Malek.

Question 3e

Rami Malek was inspired to pursue acting as a career as follows:

* His teacher at school noticed his talent in the field of dramatic interpretation and encouraged him to act.
* Even though his family at first wanted him to pursue a different career, after seeing him perform they supported his entrance into the acting profession.

Question 3f

A correct response would have included the following information:

The power of acting was a turning point in Rami Malek’s life because he discovered, through his own experience, that an actor’s performance can touch people emotionally, and elicit an emotional response from the audience. He experienced this when, during his first performance, he saw, for the first time ever, his father become emotional. It made him realise that his acting would lead to something special.

Part B – Reading and responding in Arabic

Students were required to demonstrate an understanding of the stimulus text/texts and to address the requirements of the task by conveying the relevant information from the text/texts that was appropriate for the audience and the prescribed writing style and text type.

Student responses were assessed holistically according to the assessment criteria and the expected qualities published in the examination specifications on the VCAA website. The criteria for this section are:

* the capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts
* the capacity to convey information and opinions accurately and appropriately.

Students were not awarded separate marks for content and language accuracy; however, language accuracy was an important expected quality that was considered in the assessment. A number of students provided lengthy responses beyond the scope of the task and some included additional information that was irrelevant.

Question 4

Successful completion of this task required students to read and understand the given text and demonstrate the ability to respond to the question by giving appropriate information in the relevant format.

Answers to this task were varied but needed to include the key issues facing the Nile, which were:

* The construction of the largest dam on the African continent over the course of the Nile.
* Only a little rain may fall, which may lead to a decrease in water level.
* Desertification is due to the phenomenon of climate change, which is a matter that occurs along the Nile Valley.
* The increase in population in the area, and the absence of appropriate waste disposal, has led to increased pollution of the Nile.

High-scoring responses addressed each of the abovementioned assessment criteria, contained appropriate and accurate vocabulary and grammar, and completed the task in the required text type.

Section 3 – Writing in Arabic

Questions 5–8

The four questions presented in this section covered four different text types and styles of writing. It is important to carefully take note of the specific information in the topic. Careful planning of responses enables students to ensure that they have met all the requirements of the task. Although not the only criteria for this section of the examination, students are reminded of the importance of legible handwriting, accurate spelling, correct use of punctuation and paragraphs.

All students attempted this section, but overall they did not answer the questions in depth. In some cases students’ responses were quite short even though they seemed able to express complex ideas, their Arabic was of high quality and they were capable of writing more. The necessary creative skills were not evident in some student responses. The most popular topic was the imaginative story and the least popular was the speech. Although most students coped appropriately with the conventions of the form (creative, persuasive etc.), they had some problems with linking and sequencing ideas. Some students used a wide range of vocabulary, but most used only familiar and predictable vocabulary.