2016 VCE Arabic written examination report

General comments

Students generally performed well on the 2016 Arabic written examination.

It is important that students are prepared for the examination. Students must practise their note-taking skills and ensure that they are prepared to listen for general as well as specific details in texts. Students should be aware of different text types. In the examination, it is recommended that students take note of all aspects of the examination questions and key words.

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

In this section of the examination, students need to be able to respond to a range of questions relating to features of the text, as well as analyse information from spoken texts and identify information relating to the content, purpose and audience of the text.

Most students attempted all questions and generally completed the questions using the correct language. Some students did not respond in the correct language and therefore were unable to receive credit for their responses. Some students did not read some questions carefully, which often resulted in these students writing irrelevant answers. Weaknesses in language were evident in some areas; the most common weaknesses were inaccurate sentence structures and careless use of tenses. However, overall, most responses were of a sound linguistic level. Some students produced excellent responses with a variety of vocabulary and strong sentence structure in Arabic and English.

Text 1
Question 1a.

The two purposes of the call were:

- to find out information about a job as a volunteer
- guiding visitors and assisting spectators (working) at the Football World Cup.

Question 1b.

ᶜĀdil speaks English, Arabic and French.

- He speaks English fluently as he lives in Australia and has been studying in secondary school there. ('Then I continued studying French in secondary school after my return to my country, Australia.' This infers that he went to school in Australia.)
- He has been studying Arabic at secondary school for six years.

- ᶜĀdil (and his family) lived in France for five years and he went to primary school there.
- He then continued studying French at secondary school in Australia.

Question 1c.

If ᶜĀdil is selected, he will:

- need to be there two weeks before the event/the Football World Cup
- have to attend a number of training sessions for the volunteers (in communication and about the services and activities available to the visitors).

Text 2
Question 2a.

The following information is given for people wishing to purchase tickets:

- Tickets can be purchased from the festival website or at the venue.
- There is a discount if four or more tickets are purchased.
- Tickets at the venue are more expensive (the cheapest ticket is $19.50).

Question 2b.

Khaled Khella learned his profession (film-making) by:

- reading books and reviews
- watching movies.

Question 2c.

Khaled Khella could not pursue his studies formally as a result of personal hardship, financial difficulties and distance from the academy.

Part B – Answer in Arabic

Text 3

For Text 3, students were required to respond in Arabic, and responses needed to be in full sentences. Responses in the incorrect language were not awarded any marks.

Question 3a.

التَّحَدُّثُ عَنْ أَهَمِّيَّةِ الْبِيئَةِ فِي الْمُجْتَمَعِ الْعَرَبِيِّ.

(The purpose of the interview was to talk about the importance of the environment in Arab society.)

Question 3b.

عَلَى الدُّوَلِ الْعَرَبِيَّةِ أَنْ

- تَهْتَمَّ بِالْقَضَايَا الْبِيئِيَّةِ اهْتِمَامًا رَئِيسِيًّا
- تُحَدِّدَ اِهْتِمَامَاتِهَا الْبِيئَيَّةَ
- تُحَدِّدَ أَوْلَوِيَّاتِهَا الْبِيئَيَّةَ

(According to Dr Samīra, three things that Arab countries must do to address environmental issues are as follows.

The Arab countries should:

- pay great attention to environmental issues
- define their environmental concerns
- define their priorities.)

Question 3c.

- مَصَادِرُ الطَّاقَةِ: مَصَادِرُ الطَّاقَةِ الْمُسْتَقْبَلِيَّةُ
- النُّفَايَاتُ: مُعَالَجَةُ النُّفَايَاتِ
- مَصَادِرُ الْمَوَادِّ الْغِذَائِيَّةِ: اِبْتِكَارُ المَصَادِرِ الْغِذَائِيَّةِ الْبَدِيلَةِ
- التَّنْمِيَةُ الرِّيفِيَّةُ: تَطْوِيرُ الْمَنَاطِقِ الرِّيفِيَّةِ

- (Energy sources: future energy resources
- Waste: the treatment of waste
- Food sources: developing alternative food sources
- Rural development: development of rural areas.)

Question 3d.

- يَسْتَطِيعُ الْوَالِدَانِ تَشْجِيعَ أَوْلادِهِنَّ عَلَى مُمَارَسَةِ عَادَاتٍ بِيئِيَّةٍ آمِنَةٍ
- تَسْتَطِيعُ الْعَائِلاتُ فِي الْمَنَازِلِ تَعْلِيمَ الأَوْلاد عَادَاتٍ بِيئِيَّةً جَيِّدَةً (كَإِعَادَةِ تَدْوِيرِ النُّفَايَات، وَوَضْعِهَا فِي مَكَانِهَا الصَّحِيحِ وَعَدَمِ إِلْقَائِهَا عَشْوَائِيًّا)

- (Parents can encourage their children to have good environmental habits
- Families can teach children good environmental practices (for example, recycling, putting things in their right place, not littering).

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Students should carefully read each text more than once in order to establish overall meaning and to ensure that they do not miss any details in the texts. Unfamiliar words should have been verified by using dictionaries. Some students had difficulty selecting the correct information from the texts.

Part A – Answer in English

Text 4
Question 4a.

By his first question in the first paragraph, the writer is questioning whether:

- people will turn to using technology instead of conventional books (once this technology becomes available)
- there will be more trees (on the planet) as a result (as they will not be used to produce paper for books).

Question 4b.

The advantage(s) and disadvantage(s) of electronic ink, as given by the writer in his argument are:

Advantages

- cost-effective electronic ink technology
- inexpensive
- extraordinary
- erasable
- non-toxic.

Disadvantage

- need funds for energy to run servers

Question 4c.

The writer believes that:

- electronic books have transformed people's lifestyles
- paper books are not as effective as e-books for providing information to people in remote places (for example, 'in distant countries')/e-books reach more people
- when using e-books, people are more actively involved in the process than they are when using paper books ('They have understood the need to involve people in the reading process, too, by tapping into the visual and spatial memory of the electronic book.')
- paper books take up too much physical room, whereas e-books are a better way of storing thousands of texts ('They have created ways to electronically store any manuscript or page from among thousands of texts.')
- learning languages becomes easier with electronic books (for example, interactive dictionaries can be accessed by pressing a button)
- it is harder to find information in books. E-books are more accessible on a micro level. (For example, it is now more efficient to locate key specific words, annotate paragraphs or examine illustrations in detail.)
- electronic books are easier to carry around than paper books (for example, you don't have to carry heavy books when going to work or on holiday).

Question 4d.

According to the text, people with special needs can benefit from using e-books as follows.

- People who have vision impairment are able to adjust texts/adjust font sizes and illuminate/adjust page brightness; all of which have created more accessibility.
- People who have a hearing impairment, as well as those who wish to listen to a text, oral discourse or oral readings are available.
- For people with a disability/those who have back problems, a weightless library is available.

Question 4e.

Two examples of techniques the writer uses to persuade the reader to support his point of view are as follows.

- He uses lots of positive and descriptive adjectives such as 'extraordinary', 'inexpensive', 'erasable' and 'non-toxic'.
- He addresses the reader directly by using 'you'/the second-person singular so that the reader feels the message is personal.

Responses needed to be supported by at least one example from the text.

While the majority of students knew the advantages and disadvantages of technology, only some could give the required answers. Students need to look for details within the text.

Part B – Answer in Arabic

Text 5
Question 5

Text 5 was a letter written by a father to his daughter on the occasion of her 18th birthday. The students had to write the text of the conversation the daughter would have with her father, discussing the points raised in the letter.

Suggested response:

- Text type: conversation (and contain the structure of a speech; content, register, style and layout)
- Audience: informal conversation with father
- Personal writing

Content could have included:

- introduction, middle, conclusion
- informative content and language referring to points raised by the father
- outcome(s) or concluding statement.

Most students attempted this question and answered it well; however, students need to be introduced to different text types in order to correctly fulfil the question requirements.

Section 3 – Writing in Arabic

Almost all students attempted Section 3. Student responses covered the entire marking range. A number of students produced excellent pieces. These students successfully structured their writing, including a beginning, ideas that were fluid and well sequenced, and an appropriate conclusion. Most students wrote in the appropriate text type, but common errors included incorrect vocabulary, linking of sentences and grammatical structures.

Students are encouraged to refer back to the criteria in order to ensure that all aspects of the task have been addressed properly. Students are also strongly encouraged to address all parts of the task.

Question 6

Students were required to write a letter to the editor of a newspaper, outlining their personal opinion on whether society has changed and whether people are generally less respectful of others than ever before. Students produced a variety of letters. Some students agreed and others disagreed. Acceptable responses included the following.

- Theme: the changing world – social issues
- Audience: readers and editor of the local newspaper
- Context: living together – different age groups in society
- Text type: letter to the editor/formal letter (and contain a title/heading, content [factual information], register, style, layout)
- Type of writing: personal
- introduction, middle, conclusion
- informative content and language referring to an elderly man, comment that society has changed a lot, examples of people being generally less respectful of others compared with in the past
- outcome(s) or concluding statements

Question 7

Students were required to write an article for their school magazine, outlining the aims of the animal protection association.

Students wrote well-structured articles and some produced excellent pieces of writing. Acceptable responses included the following.

- Theme: the changing world – environmental issues
- Audience: readers of the school magazine
- Context: protection of animals

- Text type: magazine article (title/topic, date, place, content, by-line [fictional name], register, style, layout)
- Type of writing: persuasive
- reference to belonging to an association dedicated to the protection of animals
- outline of the program of the association
- a range of comments seeking to persuade the audience to become members of this association and a range of well-developed reasons for participating in the program's activities
- persuasive language
- conclusion

Question 8

Students were required to write the script of a speech that they would give in front of the formal school assembly, to inform schoolmates and teachers of findings of workshops about what young people can do for the development and improvement of their society.

This question was attempted by a small number of students. The students who understood the task produced very good pieces of writing. Acceptable responses included the following.

- Theme: the changing world – social issues
- Audience: secondary school students
- Context: school assembly
- Text type: speech (topic/title, structure, content, register, style, layout)
- Type of writing: informative
- interjections, suspension points, rhetorical questions, etc.
- greetings, lead-in sentence(s), elaborated points
- reference to why the speech is being given
- reference to the context of the speech
- comments related to the findings of the discussions
- formal, informative language offering possible ideas and suggestions
- conclusion

Question 9

Students were required to write an email to their friend, evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of their friend choosing not to go to university after graduating from high school.

Some students wrote very good advice to their friend. Acceptable responses included the following.

- Theme: the individual – education and aspirations
- Audience: a friend
- Context: career choices
- Text type: email (topic/title, structure, content, register, style, layout)
- Type of writing: evaluative
- greetings, lead-in sentence(s), elaborated points
- informal language
- reference to context: a friend not wanting to go to university after graduating from secondary school
- points evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of this decision for their future
- evaluative language offering possible ideas and suggestions
- conclusion

Question 10

Students were required to write an imaginative story for a school competition entitled 'Lost in the sands of Arabia'.

This question was attempted by a large number of students. These students' responses showed their ability to write imaginatively.

Acceptable responses included the following.

- Theme: Arabic-speaking communities – lifestyles
- Audience: school magazine readers
- Context: life in the Arabian desert
- Text type: story (title/topic, structure, content, author [fictional name], register, style, layout)
- Type of writing: imaginative
- reference to the context: short story competition, title 'Lost in the sands of Arabia'.
- ideas related to being lost and to 'what happened next?'
- development of the story: situation, complication, resolution, conclusion
- well-developed ideas