2017 VCE Arabic written examination report

General comments

The overall performance of students in the 2017 VCE Arabic written examination was good. Many students responded to all 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 to 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' (page 7).

There was evidence that some students had translated vocabulary and sentence structures directly from English to Arabic. In a small number of cases, English words were used when the student did not know the equivalent word in 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

For this section, students were required to demonstrate their capacity to understand and convey general and specific aspects of texts.

Part A – Answer in English

Text 1

Text 1 assessed students' ability to understand instructions embedded in a context.

Question 1a.

- Dehydration: drink plenty of water, consume coffee and tea in moderation, and use a skin moisturiser because of the dry air
- Ear pressure: swallow (your saliva) and yawn often during take-off and landing

Question 1b.

Reasons given for moving one's legs during a flight were:

- to ease muscle fatigue or to encourage blood flow/circulation

- to ease the swelling of the feet.

Text 2

Text 2 consisted of a radio advertisement.

Question 2a.

The international fame of Moroccan cuisine was based on the following:

- It combines the influences of many kinds of cuisines from different parts of the world (Eastern Arab, European, Berber, Andalusian and African).
- It creates particular flavours by mixing sugar and salt (in some dishes).
- It uses some fruits (e.g. apples) in preparing some dishes.

Question 2b.

Apart from eating delicious food, the following activities awaited visitors:

- watching a demonstration of the techniques of old French cuisine
- receiving practical lessons in preparing some dishes.

Question 2c.

- International chefs can take part.
- They can contribute to the further development of Moroccan cuisine/cuisine from Morocco and beyond.
- They can exchange ideas about their cuisine/promote intercultural understanding/exchanges between the many participating cultures.

Part B – Answer in Arabic

For this part, students were required to show their capacity to understand and convey general and specific aspects of texts.

Text 3

Text 3 was a radio interview.

Question 3a.

The three professionals Dr 'Ibrāhīm mentioned during the interview and who use body language in their work were:

- teacher(s)
- doctors(s)
- engineer(s).

Question 3b.

The three parts of the body mentioned by Dr 'Ibrāhīm and an explanation of how each is used to clarify meaning during conversation were:

- the eye
    - The eye gives us one of the most important keys of the personality. If the pupil of the eye widens, that is an indication that a person has heard something that pleased him.
    - If the pupil of the eye narrows, the opposite has occurred.

- the eyebrows
  - If a person raises one eyebrow, it indicates that you have told him something that he either does not believe or that he believes to be impossible.
  - Raising both eyebrows indicates surprise.
- the mouth
  - When a person covers his mouth with the palm of his hand, it is a definite indication of his conviction that he is hearing lies.

The majority of the students answered this question very well.

Text 4

Text 4 was a magazine article.

Question 4a.

According to the article, the challenge for people who take part in this game was:

- to use maps to locate/find virtual characters called 'Pokémons'
- to capture Pokémon characters.

Question 4b.

Ways in which players benefit from playing this game were:

- entertainment
- discovering the real world around them
- doing some physical exercise
- using Google maps to get to real locations (which develops their orientation skills)
- group meetings (which improve their social skills and push them to engage more with other members of their society).

Question 4c.

Students were required to explain four techniques the writer used to persuade the reader of their point of view. In addition, they were required to provide evidence from the text to justify their responses.

Sample responses included:

- suggests that those who have not heard of the game do not know what is going on in the real world, do not keep up with the advancement of the game and thus are somehow inadequate ('If you have not heard of the Pokémon Go game before, you might need help to learn more about what is going on around you in the world ...')
- emphasises the game's popularity by using strong adjectives ('unprecedented', 'overwhelming')
- uses strong metaphors (the game has 'flooded the world' as 'an overwhelming wave of the craze')
- provides a positive evaluation of Pokémon Go, citing positive comments from other sources ('... people never stop praising how the game helps to bring people together and how it pushes them to move and be active again ...')
- provides a detailed and convincing list of activities that support their generally positive opinion of the game ('involves ... physical exercise, group meetings, uses Google maps', etc.)
- compares Pokémon Go with other achievements of technology which have a negative effect on people's way of life (thanks to Pokémon Go) 'it seems as if people have rediscovered what a walk in the park or a friendly conversation between people can mean, after technology had made our lives 'easier' – which means that we are happy to sit all day ...')

Question 4d.

	Text 4
Text type	magazine article
Two missing features from the text	author, date
Purpose of the text	to provide information or to be informative
Example of inclusive language in the text	the use of 'our'; for example, 'in our contemporary world', 'it opens our eyes'

Students were required to demonstrate their understanding of the text by completing the table.

Part B – Answer in Arabic

For this part, students were required to show their capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts, as well as their capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately.

Text 5

Text 5 consisted of a fact-based internet article.

Question 5

Students were required to read an article and then imagine that they were among the students addressed by the professor at the Oxford Union. They were then required to write a note of approximately 150 words in Arabic to Professor Hawking, disagreeing with at least five points he raised in his lecture. This meant that the students were required to have a sound understanding of the text before being able to respond.

The variety of language students used to express their opinions was excellent.

Section 3 – Writing in Arabic

Students were required to respond to one question and demonstrate relevance, breadth and depth of content, appropriateness of structure and sequence as well as write with accuracy and using a range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar.

Many students chose Question 6, the imaginative story.

Students performed extremely well in this section.

Question 6

Students were required to write an imaginative story about a student for a school competition. Their story had to end with the words, '… and he/she was still laughing'.

The following are other points/responses students could have included:

- format of a story suitable for students
- introduction, situation, complication, resolution, conclusion
- imaginative writing – should be engaging and relevant, and appropriate for school students.

Question 7

Students were required to write the script of a speech that they would give in front of their fellow students on the value of learning about and understanding other cultures besides their own.

The following are points/responses students could have included:

- speech (title, topic, structure, content, register, style, layout)
- semi-formal because the speech is for fellow students
- persuasive language
- points about the value of learning about and understanding other cultures
- introduction, middle, conclusion
- appropriate language for a speech: interjections, rhetorical questions, etc.
- speech should have been engaging.

Few students selected this question.

Question 8

Students were required to write an article to inform the local council about local environmental issues arising in the student's community.

The following are points/responses students could have included:

- article: title, content, author, register, style, layout
- introduction, middle, conclusion
- environmental issues arising in the student's community and suggestions on possible ways to address these.

Question 9

Students were required to write an evaluative report for the Olympic committee of their country about the advantages and disadvantages that the Olympic Games may have for the host country.

The following are points/responses students could have included:

- evaluative writing
- report: topic, structure, content, author, register, style, layout
- report addressed to the Olympic committee
- introduction, middle, conclusion
- advantages and disadvantages of hosting
- concluding statement.

Question 10

Students were required to write a page in their personal journal, beginning with, 'If I become famous, it will be because of …'.

The following are points/responses students could have included:

- journal entry: date, place, time, structure (sequence of thought), opening, content, conclusion, register, style, layout
- use of stylistic features (such as interjections, suspension points, etc.)
- personal writing (author has a conversation with him/herself).