

Arabic B

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 22	23 - 35	36 - 50	51 - 63	64 - 75	76 - 87	88 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 20	21 - 31	32 - 48	49 - 61	62 - 74	75 - 88	89 - 100

Internal assessment

Higher level component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

Standard level component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

General comments

The work submitted was generally of a high standard. Most of the teachers followed the correct procedures in conducting the IA oral exams. All teachers used the correct 2/BIA form and filled in the required items. The teacher's comments were clear and useful in the process of assessing the candidates.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Overall the performance of the candidates was of the required level. In general, there was evidence that the new IA exam procedures encouraged the candidates to demonstrate language skills that enabled them to maintain an effective conversation with fluency and interactive skills to express their ideas efficiently.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Productive skills

Most candidates seemed relatively at ease with the language and could communicate effectively, producing language with high fluency and confidence. The errors made by candidates were often concerned with verb endings and the use of some complex structures. It was evident that the use of sophisticated and precise vocabulary contributed to the development of ideas and expression of views. Very few candidates scored marks beyond 5, this reflects the improvement required in the language standards.

Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills

Most of the candidates were able to express their ideas and opinions clearly and coherently. In some cases there was difficulty in presenting complex ideas so the presentations lacked depth and dealt with topics at a superficial level only. In some cases teachers' questions were difficult and the candidates were not given sufficient time to think before answering the question. This had a negative effect on their marks and centres are reminded to allow candidates time to reflect.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

It is important to remind candidates to speak formal MSA Arabic in the oral exam.

All recordings should now be uploaded on IBIS. No more CDs.

Teachers must remember to write a title or a caption on the photographs. This helps candidates in the preparation and presentation of their work and, in some cases, navigates them to certain points within the photograph and topics for discussion. Also, the caption or the title must be clearly related to the options covered in the teaching material.

The photograph must be clear and if possible coloured and rich in content. Some photographs were very simple and didn't inspire the candidates.

Photographs have to reflect the Arabic cultures to encourage candidates to relate the content to the circumstances and environment he/she is living in.

It has been noticed that there are big discrepancies in marks given in interactive orals and individual orals. Teachers need to remember that they are assessing productive, interactive and receptive skills.

It is important to consider the time frames given for each part of the exam. Candidates have to remember that the presentation should last between 3-4 minutes.

Higher level Written Assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 – 11	12 – 14	15 – 18	19 – 21	22 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a wide range of literature representing different parts of the Arab world presented in all written tasks however many centres focused on one of Maguib Mahfouz's novels. Most of the work submitted was completed well and it seems that teachers have read the guide thoroughly.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A Language

Most of the candidates were awarded high marks in this criterion. A wide range of vocabulary was used and most of the candidates used complex structures to demonstrate their abilities.

Criterion B Content

This is where many candidates lost marks. Although the element of creativity was apparent, it seemed that the idea of using the literary content of the source and relating it to the aim of the assignment was not clear.

Criterion C Format

There were no problems in the format of the texts submitted. Letters, interviews and diaries were the most common text types chosen by the candidates.

Criterion D Rationale

Some candidates didn't fulfil all of the requirements of the rationale and accordingly lost one mark.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

It is important to emphasise that the WA has to be a creative work. Teachers need to encourage and train their candidates how to add the element of creativity into their work.

It is advisable to expose candidates to different Arab writers and authors and not to focus on only one. This exposure enhances the richness of the candidates' literary background. It is not only important to read and understand the literary works but to inform candidates how to use these works as a base for another task.

There should be more emphasis on simple and complex structures to avoid basic mistakes.

Tasks should not be typed; teachers must remember that the WA must be hand written.

Teachers are reminded that in the WA it is not appropriate to present an article on literary analysis or literary criticism.

Standard level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

A range of topics reflecting cultures in the Arabic world were chosen for the WA. The topics were of interest to 17-18 year old candidates and most focussed on issues such as customs and traditions, health, immigration, sports and leisure. The three reading texts were, on average, of an appropriate level of difficulty although some teachers did not adhere to the suitable word limit for each source (300-400 words) and some texts were more suitable for HL candidates. Also, some teachers didn't expose the candidates to different text types and focused more on the content.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Language

The language used in most WAs reflected the abilities of typical SL candidates, however I think some of the candidates could have moved to HL as the errors and mistakes made were more compatible with this level. Most of the errors were grammatical and not vocabulary based therefore they didn't hinder understanding.

Criterion B: Content

Most of the problems in the WAs occurred here. Many candidates didn't make full use of or relate the sources clearly to the aims of their assignment; instead, they were handled in a general way. On the other hand, the chosen text types and the rationales were well organized.

Criterion C: Rationale

I had anticipated more problems with the rationale, however most candidates handled the requirements well.

It is imperative that the requirements of this section are made clear to all candidates.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers must take into consideration the fact that the chosen texts must be related to one theme in the options topics.

Candidates should be taught how to make full use of the content of the sources and ways in which to relate them to the rationale in order to produce a coherent text.

Candidates should be instructed how to follow the requirements of writing a WA rationale so as not to lose marks.

Candidates should be exposed to the writing conventions of different text types as this needs to be reflected in their work.

Attention should be given to practising common grammatical errors such as noun verb agreement and the formation of some complex grammatical structures.

Please ensure that texts are attached and not accompanied by the web address.

The source of the materials must be written clearly as the examiner may need to go back to the original source if the print is not clear or the font is too small.

Please remember that all Written Assignments must be hand written. Accordingly, please encourage candidates to focus on the clarity of their hand writing as it helps in the process of marking.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 23	24 - 31	32 - 37	38 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 60

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Most of the candidates were able to demonstrate very good reading comprehension skills and the ability to handle different question types. This year there was a marked improvement in drawing inferences and responding to literary questions, which has been a problematic area for candidates in the past, this shows that teachers are reading and responding to the subject reports. However, many candidates struggled with the exercises which asked them to identify the correct words or phrases from a text and more practice is required on this type of question. In addition, many candidates still find exercises which test their ability to understand the meaning of words in context challenging and would benefit from more practise in this area.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Most of the candidates were able to handle the topics related to the options and issues in the Arab world. Candidates showed a good level of reading comprehension and it was clear that they understood the texts. In addition to this, it is evident that there is an overall improvement

in the ability to handle the literary text and deal with literary features. Most candidates were successfully able to match questions to paragraphs and select true statements correctly. Also, there was a clear improvement in the skills of close reading and handling of inferences.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Text A

Qs 1 – 2: Completed well by all of the candidates

Qs 5 – 7: Most of the candidates were able to justify the true and false questions. However, in many cases the justification given for question 6 was wrong.

Qs 8 -11: Many candidates were not able to put the right connectors in the appropriate place. I advise teachers to work on this point.

Text B

Qs 12 – 14: Strong and average candidates were able to answer these questions correctly however they proved more problematic for weaker candidates.

Qs 15 – 17: Completed well by the majority of candidates.

Qs 18 – 19: These questions asked candidates to relate pronouns to nouns in the text. They were difficult questions and many candidates were unable to locate the nouns.

Qs 20 – 21: Completed well.

Text C

Qs 22 – 25: The true and false sentences were completed successfully by most of the candidates; however few candidates were able to give the correct justification for question 5.

Qs 26 – 32: Easily answered by many candidates.

Text D

Qs33 – 38: The answers demonstrated good comprehension of the fourth text.

Qs 39 – 42: Some candidates were confused in the multiple choice questions as they were required to infer meaning from the text.

Qs 43 – 46: The matching questions were difficult for average and weak candidates. It is advised that teachers help their candidates with learning strategies on how to establish meaning through context.

Text E

Qs 47 – 53: Most of the candidates showed a good understanding of the task.

Qs 54 – 56: Again the matching vocabulary exercise was problematic for average and weak candidates.

Qs 57 – 60: Completed well by the majority of the candidates.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should advise candidates to provide complete justifications in True/False questions and not to omit essential parts which are required to justify the statement given.

Teachers should remind candidates that it is only permissible to choose one response in multiple-choice questions.

Teachers should give candidates adequate practice on understanding new vocabulary in context and provide them with learning strategies on how to decipher the meaning of words they have not encountered before.

It is important to educate candidates about how to manage their time in exams and allow enough time to review their work.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 19	20 - 24	25 – 29	30 - 35	36 - 40	41 - 45

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Most of the candidates handled the exam very well.

Some candidates had difficulty with the questions that asked them to identify the noun in the text to which a particular pronoun was referring, but this was probably because this is the first time these questions have been included in the exam.

It was noted that some centres have not trained their candidates on the importance of including “keywords” in justification questions. In some cases an essential word is omitted or irrelevant/excessive information is provided for which no mark can be awarded.

Some candidates found it difficult to understand the meaning of a word or expression through context and inference alone.

One of the main problems encountered was that candidates of average ability were not able to manage their time properly as some scripts were incomplete. This was more evident for weaker candidates as not only were answers incomplete, but simple mistakes were also made in easy questions.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Most of the candidates seemed to be well prepared for the different types of texts and full range of question types in the exam. They were able to handle the topics related to the options and issues in the Arab world and showed good levels of reading comprehension. In

addition, they were able to locate and select the answers and handle information needed from the text.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Text A

Qs1 - 4: This proved to be an easy set of questions as an opening for the exam. The questions were answered correctly by a good number of candidates; however some candidates provided the incorrect justification for question 3.

Qs 5-7: Candidates did not encounter any problems with these questions.

Qs 8-10: Surprisingly, questions 8 and 9 seemed to be problematic for many candidates. I think this may be due to the fact that this is the first time this type of question has appeared in an Arabic paper.

Text B:

Qs 11 - 15: Completed well by all candidates, except for question 15, as many candidates didn't read the paragraph carefully enough to extract the correct information.

Qs 16 -17: Good responses.

Qs 18 - 21: Many candidates lost marks on this set of questions which required them to choose the correct connective. Although a very common question in Arabic exams, it seemed to cause confusion to some candidates.

Text C:

Qs 22 - 26: Completed well by most candidates.

Qs 27 – 29: Weak candidates had problems with question 29, the justification was not correct in many cases.

Qs 30 - 33: 'Complete the questions' is an easy task for an average-ability candidate; however some candidates were not able to choose the appropriate word to fill in the blanks.

Text D:

Qs 34 – 39: Completed well. Candidates' comprehension was clear and complete.

Qs 40 - 41: No problems.

Qs 42 - 45: As mentioned previously many candidates were not able to work out meaning in context, accordingly some candidates failed to gain a full mark.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should ensure that their candidates understand completely the rubric for the True/False questions: the justification and short answer questions must be in the form of a quotation and that quotation must be brief.

Candidates need to be advised against providing two responses in multiple-choice questions.

Teachers should give adequate guidance on understanding new vocabulary through context and provide candidates with strategies on how to work out the meaning of words they have never encountered before.

It is important to train candidates how to manage their time in an exam and to plan for time to review their work.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 19	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 35	36 - 39	40 - 45

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Generally there is an improvement in the language competence of candidates; however, some candidates still demonstrate problems with syntax. Grammatical errors include poor verb conjugations and a poor grasp of negation. Also, numerous spelling mistakes obscured the meaning of many words and this should be an area of focus within teaching. Regarding the text types, many candidates were not familiar with the text type of a 'diary' and consequently it was produced as more of a letter.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

The interview, essay and article text types all appear to have been well taught. Most candidates were able to use the appropriate register and style and to present their ideas in an organized way

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Q1: Candidates were able to produce good work with interesting and relevant ideas

Q2 & 4: Very few candidates chose these tasks.

Q3: This task was a very popular one. Most of the candidates who dealt with this topic were clearly interested in writing about this issue and were well informed. Many candidates were able to follow the conventions of an opinion based article.

Q5: Many candidates were interested in writing on this topic about the effect of technology on their lives. Their writing demonstrated good thinking skills and well organized ideas.

Q6: Most of the candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the task. The candidates gained good marks on the language criteria however they struggled to present their argument and ideas convincingly.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be encouraged to write the correct number of words. Overly long answers tend to lose structure and focus.

Candidates should also pay attention to ideas and supporting details. Thin answers with trivial ideas are not likely to attain a high mark even if the language is good.

It is important to help candidates to practice how to manage their time in exams, especially between parts 1 and 2.

Candidates should be trained on how to present their ideas and express their supporting ideas convincingly.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 18	19 - 22	23 - 25

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

The candidates seemed well prepared for the exam and overall no specific areas of weakness were identified, however there are still mistakes with simple sentence structure: subject – verb - agreement and broken plurals. The diary and report format were clearly not familiar to some candidates and therefore they selected the essay or the letter instead.

It is worth pointing out that some centres should have advised their candidates to join the Ab initio level as the candidates' written work showed very poor sentence structures and continuous mistakes with very simple verb conjugations and vocabulary.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Overall, this year there was an improvement in the quality of work presented. Many candidates were impressive in their use of language and used the appropriate register and style. Many candidates were able to follow the conventions of letter and essay writing but failed to understand the format of a diary and a report.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Q1: Many candidates enjoyed writing on this topic. The essay format was clear and candidates were able to express their ideas and views regarding their point of view of western celebrations.

Q2: Not many candidates wrote on this topic, maybe the idea of working whilst studying is not a common idea in the Arab world. Also, not many candidates were familiar with the idea of a survey and the conventions of writing a report.

Q3: This topic was a very popular one. Many candidates wrote letters to the city mayor explaining the harmful effect on the local citizens of building a factory for chemical products. The candidates had very reasonable ideas, solutions and suggestions to protect the environment from pollution. Most of the candidates followed the conventions of writing the letter

Q4: Few candidates wrote on this topic and of those who did, the text type was not clear as a speech.

Q5: This was the most popular question and, in general, completed well. Most of the candidates were able to convey convincing ideas about how a new technology product would have an impact on their lives, whether positive or negative. The only problem with this topic was that many candidates didn't use the correct format in writing a diary entry; weaker candidates used the format of an article or a letter.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

There should be a focus on the importance of using the appropriate format for each text type with particular reference to the correct format for a diary entry and the conventions of writing a report.

Candidates should be encouraged to always write clearly and legibly. It should be explained to them how this facilitates the marking process.

Teachers should focus on the use of simple grammatical structures and vocabulary as many unnecessary mistakes are made here.