

OCR Report to Centres

June 2013

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

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F885 Persian Listening, Reading and Writing 1

This was the fifth series of Unit F885, GCE Persian AS examination. The format of the question paper this year was not different to that of 2012. The number of candidates sitting this paper was almost the same as last year.

Many candidates used their knowledge and skills appropriately to respond to the tasks in all sections, however some did not seem to have knowledge and skills required to answer the questions in Tasks 5, 6 and 7 correctly. Appropriate time allocation for each section is essential for candidates to improve their performance.

Candidates' performance will also improve if they can:

- a) Familiarise themselves with the various exercise types and the rubrics of the tasks.
- b) Read the rubrics and follow them carefully.
- c) Allocate time appropriately for completing different sections within the time allocated for each task.
- d) Write legibly.
- e) Learn and practise the use of advanced grammar such as relative clauses and conditionals. This is particularly relevant for Task 4, the transfer of meaning task, for answering the questions in Section B Reading Comprehension and for the Writing section, both 7a & 7b.
- f) Use correct spelling and pay attention to the use of prepositions.
- g) Be fully aware of the AS topics in the GCE Specification for Persian.
- h) Use a formal style in the Reading and Writing sections rather than a colloquial one.
- i) Develop their knowledge of vocabulary and use a range of vocabulary in the Reading and Writing sections as there are separate marks allocated for this activity.
- j) Write in the allocated spaces and avoid writing in the margins, this is particularly important as the papers are marked onscreen.
- k) Use pen and not pencil.

Section A: Listening and Writing

Task 1 - Listening - Question 1-12

The majority of candidates responded well to these questions. Questions 2 and 6 provided good differentiation for the more able candidates.

Task 2 - Listening

The questions were answered very well, although some candidates had problems with questions 6 and 11.

Task 3 - Listening Comprehension

Most candidates responded well to the questions in this task. Question 4 provided good differentiation for the more able candidates and Question 9 was accessible to all candidates. Particular attention was required to respond correctly to Questions 3 and 8.

Task 4 - Listening and Writing

This task required a good understanding and knowledge in both languages and was generally well responded to. Better candidates were identified by their ability to correctly transfer the meaning of the first sentence, using the correct structures.

Section B: Reading and Writing

Task 5 - Reading

The format of this task was the same as last year. Many candidates responded well to both parts of the task, particularly to Part B. In Part A, Questions 2 and 9 and in Part B Question 7 provided good differentiation.

Task 6 - Reading Comprehension Questions 1-10

Questions were generally responded to well. Questions 4 and 7 provided good differentiation.

Task 7 - Reading and Writing Parts 7a & 7b

In Question 7a, candidates are advised that they need to transfer all the information points by using their own words and rephrasing the sentences. Marks were not awarded to those candidates who copied the text and used more than five consecutive words from the text.

For Question 7b, there were candidates of all levels, including a number of better candidates who did not answer the question asked. Instead they responded by writing about the benefits of sports and fitness, with no direct reference to what part sports played in their own lives. These candidates were not awarded marks for the parts of the essay that were not relevant to their own personal experiences and as a result lost a significant portion of the marks for this section. It is very important that candidates read the question carefully and respond to the question asked in this section.

F886 Persian Listening, Reading and Writing 2

General Comments

Most candidates performed well. Their performance would improve further if they could be encouraged to:

- a) Familiarise themselves with the various exercise types and rubrics used in the exam.
- b) Follow the rubrics carefully.
- c) **Speakers of Dari (spoken in Afghanistan):**
Familiarise themselves with the differences between Dari and Persian as spoken in Iran. This mostly involves vocabulary, pronunciation and some grammatical structures.
- d) Observe the word limits set for the various writing tasks (where applicable).
- e) Write legibly.
- f) Where applicable, use a style or register that is appropriate to what they have been asked to write. A colloquial style may be considered acceptable in a personal letter or an email to a friend, but inappropriate in a formal piece of writing, such as an essay or a business letter. Inappropriate style loses marks.
- g) Write answers in the allocated spaces, and within the page frame - i.e. avoid writing on the margins. This is particularly significant for on-line marking. See also below.
- h) Where candidates are required to answer questions in Persian, there is no need to repeat part of the question in the answer, thus overrunning the allocated space. In answer to the question: 'Why did Ali turn on the TV?' a short answer such as: 'To watch the news' would be acceptable and indeed preferable to 'He turned on the TV because he wanted to watch the news.'
- i) Where candidates are required to complete half-finished sentences in Persian, they need to remember that their completed sentences should be grammatically correct and make sense.
- j) Pay particular attention to 'spelling', notably the significant role played by the following features in Persian script:
 - 'Dots': the number and position of 'dots' in dot-bearing letters.
 - 'Dented' letters: the exact number of 'teeth' required for each letter, e.g. س (s) and ش (sh).
 - The second 'stroke' needed for the Persian letter گ (g) to distinguish it from ک (k).

The above features are important because a 'violation' of the rules may create a different word with an entirely different meaning. Furthermore, this can be of special significance when answering multiple-choice questions by writing a Persian letter in the box/gap.

Comments on Individual Questions

Exercise 1

Questions were generally well answered. Since the rubrics for this exercise were in English, candidates whose English was as good as their Persian did well in this exercise.

Exercise 2

Questions were generally well answered. Since the rubrics for this exercise were in Persian, candidates with stronger reading and writing skills in Persian did very well in this exercise. Questions 2(p) and 2(r) differentiated between candidates. The Quality of Language criteria played an important differentiating role as candidates had to write the answers in their own words, with no possibility of 'lifting'. (In the reading section, however, candidates may lift chunks from the text.

Exercise 3

Questions were generally well answered. Question 3 played a differentiating role.

Exercise 4

Questions were generally well answered.

Exercise 5

Questions were generally well answered. Question 5 played a differentiating role.

Exercise 6

Questions were generally well answered.

Exercise 7

Only the better candidates managed to obtain full marks for this exercise.

Exercise 8

This was a 'transfer of meaning' task. Only candidates with a sound knowledge of both languages managed to obtain full marks for this exercise. It played an important differentiating part as candidates had to demonstrate their understanding of the source language text (Persian) as well as command of the target language (English) when transferring meaning.

Exercise 9

Questions were generally well answered. Question 9(e) differentiated the better candidates.

Exercise 10

Questions were generally well answered. Question 10(b) was answered correctly by the better candidates.

Exercise 11

Questions were generally well answered. Questions 11(c), 11(f) and 11(g) differentiated well.

Exercise 12

Section C (Writing) played a very significant part in differentiating the better candidates, who displayed:

- (a) Genuine insight in responding to the task providing consistently relevant information in support of their points of view and opinions;
- (b) Logical organisation of thought in developing and structuring their argument;
- (c) High and consistent level of accuracy in a wide range of vocabulary and idiom with a variety of complex sentence structures.

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