

GCSE

Persian

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J735**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **J035**
J135

OCR Report to Centres June 2017

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This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which marks were awarded by examiners. It does not indicate the details of the discussions which took place at an examiners' meeting before marking commenced.

All examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the report on the examination.

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A821 Listening

General Comments:

It would be useful for all centres to advise students on the distribution of marks and the difficulty level of questions in papers every year; students will benefit from knowing the importance of accuracy in the final exercises of the paper

Comments on Individual Questions:

Exercise 1

Questions 1-5

All candidates generally performed well, which shows their familiarity with the question type as well as their comprehension of pre-GCSE topics and basic conversations.

Exercise 2

Questions 6-12

Clear questions, with some challenging vocabulary used. . Q12 seemed to have caused confusion for some candidates as it required the interpretation of the word “rest” and the selection of the relevant picture.

Exercise 3

Questions 13-18

As the demand of these questions increased, more candidates lost marks, but generally candidates appeared to have fully understood the task which shows a level of preparation for the exam. Questions 13 and 14 needed the candidates to understand the continuation/second part of a line of the dialogue and to understand the idiomatic use of the word “why” in Persian.

Exercise 4

Questions 19-24

Candidates’ responses demonstrated understanding of longer and more complex sentence structures in Persian. Question 20 caused some to lose marks as their response was not accurate enough or showed they did not know the key word. It was essential to mention the key word ‘party/ceremony’ in their response.

Exercise 5

Questions 25-30

Generally, candidates dealt really well with the challenge of this question. Question 29 appeared to have confused some candidates. While their given response was correct as a general fact, it was not accurate based on the conversation they had heard for this question; therefore, Centres are advised to ensure students are clear that they need to use the actual text/words in responding to a question and make interpretations when needs be.

Exercise 6

Questions 31-36

There were a high level of correct responses in spite of the level of difficulty; this shows the accessibility of this kind of question to students as opposed to word/phase/sentence writing. Candidates dealt with listening and selecting the right letter from the choices given (multiple choices).

Exercise 7

Questions 37-42

Candidates are differentiated here as the level of difficulty is increasing. This exercise demands accurate understanding and fluent writing to reflect their comprehension. Accuracy is crucial at

this level and Centres are advised to train students to be precise and detailed in responding to these questions, also to ensure their answer is “logically” correct- For instance where the question asks about what “he” has done, candidates should respond referring to “he” and not an irrelevant pronoun like “I”.

Exercise 8

Questions 43-50

At this stage candidates are expected to understand the conversation and make relevant interpretations and respond to a higher order thinking question, for instance in question 46, comparison is a must and those who only referred to one of the characters lost marks. Overall though, it was great to see the amount good thinking and comprehension in many papers. Additionally, candidates lost marks for lack of accuracy, so Centres might want to emphasise optional parts of sentences such as adverbs and ensure candidates know and understand a variety of them to be able to include these in their response; examples of this are questions 47 and 48.

A822 Speaking

General Comments:

Overall candidates performed very well and teachers / examiners conducted the exam well, however some centres invited non-specialist teachers / examiners who did not conduct the assessment in accordance with the requirements, which is essential.

Part 1

For most candidates, the level of accuracy of presentations was high, however many candidates were not able to give a presentation due to examiner's interruptions or were unable to finish their presentations. Some candidates did not structure their presentations, whilst others delivered their presentations in a formal/non-colloquial way; this could have been because candidates memorised the topic prior to the exam; however it seems that some candidates were instructed to present in a formal way.

Teachers / examiners need to explain to candidates that their language skill and fluency is marked, not their ability to memorise a text. Due to being prepared for this part, candidates usually scored higher marks than they did in part 2.

The most popular topics chosen for the presentation were sport and health, holiday, home, family and food, and school life. Talking about Nawrooz was another topic although not as popular as the others.

In the first part, questions should be related to the topic chosen by candidates, however teachers / examiners quite often ignored the candidate's choice and asked questions about other topics. Many questions asked in this part were not relevant to the conversation. Examiners/teachers should know questions suggested by OCR are not meant to be translated vaguely word by word.

Part 2

In this part, candidates can choose a topic from three suggestions. However, it seems, there were instances where the topic was chosen for them. In this part, the candidate will select the topic and respond to questions, expand on the topic and speak freely on the issues related to the topic. Therefore, questions should be related to the topic chosen by candidates, however teachers / examiners quite often asked questions about other topics. Many questions asked in this part were not appropriate and most importantly not related to the conversation. Teachers / examiners are reminded OCR has provided different questions for different topics that could be used. The aim of the examiner must be to provide the candidate with ample opportunities to speak as freely and as expansively as possible.

There were instances where the teacher / examiner talked more than the candidate and expressed their opinion about different subjects and summarised what the candidate said. There were also some instances where the teacher / examiner taught the candidate. Examiners should know they are not required to teach candidates in such a stressful time and this is not part of the assessment.

Unfortunately many questions were closed; examiners are reminded to ask open ended questions.

Most popular topics chosen in part 2 were holiday, home and local area, sport and TV, films and music.

Comments and recommendations

Type of questions

- The questions asked should allow candidates to express their opinions. Therefore **open questions must be asked. Teacher / examiners can help candidate to express themselves and expand their opinions**
- Teachers / examiners **must avoid asking ambiguous questions.** Ambiguity occurs when examiner translates OCR question papers or cannot follow what candidate says. Unfortunately a few centres invited non-specialist examiners who did not seem to be aware of this exam and its procedures.
- The exam is to test candidates' skills therefore **teachers/examiners must avoid talking more than candidates or asking questions that test candidate's general knowledge. Examiners should also be aware of GCSE level and avoid asking questions higher than the level.**

Teachers / examiners

- Teachers/ examiners should instruct candidates prior to the test about timings and advise them to talk colloquially, however they need to take in to account that the exam is stressful for candidates and using timers with alarms may add to the stress.
- Teachers/ examiners should be patient and **must not interrupt candidates or distract them.**
- Teachers/ examiners **should not** mark the mark sheet or give the candidate feedback on their performance.
- Teachers/ examiners **must make themselves familiar with OCR instructions** prior to the exam.
- Teachers/ examiners must follow OCR instructions and take in to account that the exam has two parts and that two different topics should be discussed during the exam.
- Teachers / examiners are reminded the exam is not an interview and that candidates can be helped with a friendly manner to express their opinions. However, teacher / examiners should not whisper or tell the candidate what to say.
- Candidates should express themselves at greater length and complexity and it is teacher/ examiner's responsibility to manage the conversation and ask appropriate questions.
- In the second part of the test, candidates can choose a topic from the list presented by teacher / examiner. Teachers / examiners should ask questions related to the topic chosen and **must not change the topic in the middle of conversation.**
- It is the teacher / examiner's responsibility to make sure the list of topics presented to candidate does not have overlap with the first topic chosen by the candidate in previous part.
- Teachers / examiners **should listen to candidates properly and avoid asking repetitive questions.** (e.g. if the candidate says (s)he does not have a brother, the teacher / examiner should not ask where candidate is going with her / his brother at the weekend)
- Teachers / examiners are reminded that long explanations from them that elicit a yes/ no or short answer response from candidates do not enable their language skills to be measured.
- Teachers / examiners **must not ask questions related to candidates' personal life and privacy.**
- Teachers / examiners should not translate words for candidates or use English words instead of Persian.
- Teachers / examiners should not ask questions that require research and that they should also take the candidate's age, level of the qualification and experience in to account.

Technical issues

- Teachers / examiners should make sure the microphone is close to the candidate not themselves.
- The **Exam should be conducted in a quiet place** as noisy backgrounds distract candidates and affect the result.
- Both parts should be recorded on one CD not separate CDs.
- When recording is started pauses are not accepted.
- Centres should avoid sending recordings on USB. The CD provided should be used.

Centre's responsibilities

- Centres should follow OCR instructions and ensure that the assessments have taken place by the deadline.
- Inviting a knowledgeable skilful and experienced teacher /examiner is centre's responsibility.

A823 Reading

General Comments:

Candidates seem to have found the paper accessible. The majority of the candidates seem to have sufficient knowledge of Persian and adequate familiarity with the exam format

Comments on Individual Questions:

Exercise 1: Qs 1-5

Straight forward set of questions which were very well answered.

Exercise 2: Qs 6-12

Questions & rubrics were well understood and questions well answered.

Exercise 3: Qs 13-18

Questions & rubrics well understood. However **it is worth reminding candidates they are expected to choose the answers from the list/bank of words provided in the box. Similar words or phrases reflecting the same meaning are not accepted as correct answers and will result in marks being lost .**

Exercise 4: Qs 19-24

Rubrics well understood. No problem identified in the accessibility with this exercise.

Exercise 5: Qs 25-30

Candidates have generally understood this exercise and answered the questions well.

Exercise 6: Qs 31-36

Once again the attention of the candidate needs to be drawn to the fact that as indicated in the rubrics, **all answers can be found among the words listed for them in the box.** Answers not included in the list are not accepted.

Exercise 7: Qs 37-42

Candidates need to be advised to read the text carefully before attempting to answer these questions.

Candidates can achieve marks only if they answer the questions fully.

Exercise 8: Qs 43-48

Candidates also need to be reminded that at this stage in the paper, the answers need to be **precise.** Those who have copied out sentences from the text have not gained marks.

A824 Writing

General Comments:

Generally, candidates used their Persian language knowledge appropriately to respond to the two questions they chose from the five options.

Various excellent answers gave detailed accounts on the selected subject using an array of vocabulary and a great range of tenses. Brilliant answers followed the guide but also gave further illustrative detail to the description.

Exceptional answers gave a range of justifications for points made, in different tenses.

Other candidates needed to develop their style of writing beyond mere present tense and avoid crafting responses that seemed like bullet points.

A few candidates seemed to misunderstand the requirement of the chosen questions, responding to questions completely in English rather than Persian - unlike last year.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No. 1

Most candidates answered this question. There were responses that showed a clear and eloquent style with an ability to provide strong explanations and justifications.

It was pleasing to see candidates use varying tenses in their response when considering their subject matter.

Question No. 2

This question was answered well by candidates. The best answers delved into the effect of sports on a person's health.

Question No. 3

The candidates that attempted this question generally gave strong answers that showed clear understanding. Most responses provided a good variety of tenses, vocabulary and examples to create the type of narrative the question required.

Question No. 4

This was a well answered question. Candidates achieved higher marks when they engaged with the topic and gave exact examples of experiences. Candidates generally did well with meeting the criteria of the question and their writing supported their chosen topic.

Question No. 5

This question was answered well by candidates. Those that attempted it generally demonstrated a strong understanding of what the question required and were able to secure good marks. Strong candidates gave detailed responses with good vocabulary, tenses and justifications.

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