

GCE
Persian

Advanced GCE A2 **H595**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS **H195**

OCR Report to Centres June 2016

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

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F885 Persian Listening, Reading and Writing 1

General Comments:

This was the eighth series of Unit F885, GCE Persian AS examination. The format of the question paper this year was very similar to that of 2015. The number of candidates sitting the exam 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 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) *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) Allocate time appropriately for completing different sections within the time allocated for each task.
- e) Write legibly.

f) Learn and practise the use of advanced grammar such as relative clauses, passive structures 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 Task 7a & 7b.

- g) Use correct spelling and pay attention to the use of prepositions.

- h) Be fully aware of the AS topics in the GCE Specification for Persian.

- i) Use a formal style in the Reading and Writing sections rather than a colloquial one.

j) Develop their knowledge of vocabulary and use a range of vocabulary, particularly in answering question 7a and 7b in the Writing section as there are separate marks allocated for this activity.

- k) Write in the allocated spaces and avoid writing in the margins, this is particularly important as the papers are marked onscreen.

- l) Use pen and not pencil.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A: Listening and Writing

Task 1 – Listening – Questions 1-12

The majority of candidates responded very well to the questions in this Task. Questions 4, 5 and 11 provided differentiation for better candidates.

Task 2 – Listening – Questions 1-13

The questions were answered quite well by the majority of candidates, however some candidates had problems selecting the correct vocabulary option. Gaps for numbers 9, 13 and 18 provided differentiation.

Task 3 – Listening Comprehension

Most candidates responded very well to the questions in this task. Questions 2, 3 & 4 provided good differentiation for the more able candidates and Questions 1 and 7 were accessible to all candidates. Particular attention was required to respond correctly to Question 2.

Task 4 – Listening and Writing

This task required a good understanding and knowledge of both the Persian and English languages and was generally well answered. More able candidates were identified by their ability to correctly transfer the meaning of the first and the last sentence, using the correct structures of the target language.

Section B: Reading and Writing

Task 5 – Reading

The format of two parts of the task in this was the same as last year and seemed accessible for the majority of candidates. Most candidates responded very well to both parts of the Task, particularly to Part B. In Part A, Questions 2 and 9 provided differentiation. Particular attention was required to respond correctly to Questions 5 and 6. In Part B Question 3 provided some differentiation.

Task 6 – Reading Comprehension Questions 1-12

Questions for this task were generally responded to well, although some candidates had problems with questions 3 and 4. Questions 3 and 10 provided good differentiation for better candidates. Candidates are advised not to copy the text in answering the questions in this task as they lose marks in Quality of Language.

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

Most candidates responded very well to parts a and b of this section. In Question 7a, candidates have been advised that they need to transfer **all** the information points in the text 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.

Responses to question 7b were generally better compared to last year. However, it should be emphasised again that candidates are required to read the question(s) in this section carefully and answer the question by discussing the points relevant to the question and then by giving their own opinions about them. However, this year the responses were much better and more relevant compared to last year. Some candidates discussed and developed only the points in Part a which was not acceptable. The questions in 7b are usually open so that the candidates have the opportunity to use their imagination. It should also be noted that using colloquial style is not appropriate in essay writing as it requires formal writing.

F886 Persian Listening, Reading and Writing 2 (A2)

General Comments

Most of the candidates were able to answer most of the questions. It was only a few candidates who didn't answer Section C.

Candidates can improve their performance if they are encouraged to:

- familiarise themselves with different exercise types and specific rubrics in exam papers. Working on past papers is a good way to learn them.
- understand the rubrics and follow them accordingly.
- to learn how to approach different types of writing like essay, email, weblog and lecture.
- to pay attention to ensure that their writing produces a legible, structured and organised response. It should follow a logical sequence and develop an argument, analyse, evaluate and draw conclusions.
- 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.
- 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.
- write the number of the question in Section C in the appropriate box to show which question they want to write about.
- not attach blank papers to exam papers.
- complete half-finished sentences in Persian with correct grammar and sentences which make sense otherwise they lose Quality language marks.
- Pay particular attention to 'spelling'. Wrong spelling could create a different word with an entirely different meaning.
- to have good time management otherwise they will lose marks in some sections - Candidates should learn about all A2 topics and improve their vocabulary knowledge about each A2 topic.
- to write only in black ink.

Candidates who Speak **Dari (spoken in Afghanistan)** need to learn differences between Dari and Persian as spoken in Iran. This mostly involves vocabulary, pronunciation and some grammatical structures.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A – Listening and writing

Exercise 1

Candidates' performances were generally good in this section. As the rubrics for this exercise were in English, candidates whose English was as good as their Persian did well in this exercise. Question 'e' provided differentiation.

Exercise 2

The majority of candidates answered the questions very well. Since the questions were in Persian, candidates with stronger reading and writing skills in Persian did very well in this exercise. As the question has quality marks too, candidates should pay attention to grammar in their answers. Question 'j' and 'm' were good indicators for differentiation.

Section B – Reading and Writing

Exercise 3

Questions were generally well answered. Question 2 and 7 were good differentiators. They should choose the correct answer for words or phrases based on their meaning in the text.

Exercise 4

Candidates should find and write the exact synonym in the text for each question (writing another definition from their own knowledge resulted in the loss of a mark). Question 'e' and 'h' were a good example of differentiating questions. Candidates need to build up their knowledge of vocabulary to perform better in this section.

Exercise 5

Candidates need to pay attention to the rubric and paragraph numbers that help them to find correct answers. There are always some distractor answers which are not correct according to the text so candidates need to have a good understanding of the text.

Exercise 6

Responses to this section were good. It was a good differentiation question as candidates need to understand the text in order to write the correct answer in their own words.

Exercise 7

Questions were generally well answered. Question 'c' was a good differentiation question.

Exercise 8

This was a 'transfer of meaning' task. Only candidates with a good knowledge and understanding 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.

Using correct grammar and spelling counts in marking too. As lots of candidates translate the name of book 'Shahnameh', it would be beneficial if they learned about famous literature resources.

Exercise 9

Candidates should fill gaps based on the meaning of the text, not based on their thoughts. Paragraph number has been mentioned as indication for each question. Also the sentences should be correct grammatically. They need to use their own words. Questions 'd' and 'e' differentiated the stronger candidates.

Exercise 10

Questions were generally well answered. Candidates need to define the whole phrase or words with their own words. Describing only one of the words will result in losing the whole mark. Question 'g' was a good differentiation question for stronger candidates.

Exercise 11

As this involved writing in target language and required explanation candidates should pay attention to correct use of grammar for quality of language mark. Question 'd' was a good differentiator.

Section C – Writing

Exercise 12 -19

It was the first year that only a few candidates didn't attempt to answer this section and most of the answers were acceptable and provided relevant knowledge. Questions '13', '15', '16' and 19 were the most popular which is a good indication that they either were more prepared for these questions or have a personal experience. There are 8 questions out of 13 different A2 subtopics which give candidates a wide range of choice. This section plays a very significant part in differentiating the stronger candidates, who studied and prepared themselves for the exam:

- (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
- (d) A good general knowledge of different A2 topics with regard to the target language
- (e) Responses to the chosen question required the development of ideas and points of view with exemplification to clarify the argument
- (f) Writing in paragraphs and following the correct formal structure of an essay should be considered in this section too.
- (g) Using correct punctuation
- (h) Writing the number of the question that they have chosen the associated box is crucial

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Education and Learning

Telephone: 01223 553998
Facsimile: 01223 552627
Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553

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