

GCE

Persian

Advanced GCE A2 **H595**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS **H195**

OCR Report to Centres June 2017

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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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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 almost the same as that of 2015. The number of candidates sitting the exam for 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 the knowledge and skills required to answer the questions in Tasks 6 and 7 correctly. Appropriate time management for each section is essential for candidates to improve their performance.

Candidates' performance will also improve if they:

- 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 and use of 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 6 and 11 provided differentiation for more able candidates.

Task 2 – Listening – Questions 1-13

The table of vocabulary, from which candidates were due to select the appropriate words to fill the gaps in the text, was illegible due to printing issues. Following a review of all responses to this task, it was decided to grant the full 13 marks to all candidates for this task in order to prevent any candidates from being disadvantaged.

Task 3 - Listening Comprehension

Most candidates responded very well to the questions in this task. Questions 5 & 8 provided good differentiation for the more able candidates and Questions 1, 4 and 9 were accessible to all candidates.

Task 4 - Listening and Writing

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

Section B: Reading and Writing

Task 5 - Reading

The format of this task 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, but particularly to Part B. In Part A, Questions 2 and 9 provided differentiation. Particular attention was required to respond correctly to Questions 4 and 8.

Task 6 - Reading Comprehension Questions 1-12

These questions were generally responded to well, although some candidates had problems with questions 3 and 4. Questions 4, 10 and 12 provided good differentiation for more able candidates. Candidates are advised not to copy a relevant section of 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 both 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 asked, discussing the points relevant to the question and giving their own opinions about them. However, this year the responses was 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 a colloquial style is not appropriate in essay writing as it requires formal writing.

F886 Persian Listening, Reading and Writing 2 (A2)

General Comments:

Most candidates answered most of the questions. Only a few candidates didn't answer Section C.

Candidates could 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.
- familiarise themselves with the rubrics, so that they understand and follow them accordingly.
- For candidates who Speak ***Dari (spoken in Afghanistan)*** learn differences between Dari and Persian as spoken in Iran. This mostly involves vocabulary, pronunciation and some grammatical structures.
- learn how to write different styles of writing like essay, email, weblog and lecture; as this is needed for Section C. Also candidates need to pay attention to their writing to make sure their response is readable, structured and organised. Their response should follow a logical sequence and develop an argument, analyse, evaluate and draw conclusions.
- 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. The use of an 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 important for on-line marking.
- write the number of question in Section C in the appropriate box to show which question they want to write about.
- not attach blank papers to their exam papers.
- make sure that where they complete half-finished sentences in Persian, they do so with correct grammar and sentences. They should make sure the sentences make sense otherwise they will lose mark(s) for quality of language.
- pay particular attention to spelling; incorrect spelling could create a different word with an entirely different meaning which could cost marks.
- manage their time; as it is a long paper candidates should have good time management, otherwise they could lose marks.
- learn about all of the A2 topics and improve their vocabulary knowledge about each A2 topics.
- write only in black ink.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A - Listening and writing

Exercise 1

Candidates' performance was generally good in this section. Although the rubrics for this exercise are in English, candidates whose English is as good as their Persian performed well, but in some questions they need to pay more attention to answer the question. Question 'a' 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 there is a quality of language mark available, candidates should make sure they use the correct grammar in their answers. Questions 'm' and 'n' differentiated well, as candidates were required to understand the text and question and derive the correct answer.

Section B – Reading and Writing

Exercise 3

Questions were generally well answered. Question 4 and 6 differentiated between candidates' ability. 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 will result in lost marks). Question 'b' and 'd' were a good example of questions that differentiated. Candidates need to develop their knowledge of vocabulary to improve their performance in this section.

Exercise 5

Candidates need to pay attention to the rubric and paragraph numbers to help them find the correct answers. There are always some distractors 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 provided good differentiation as candidates should understand the text and write the correct answer using their own words.

Exercise 7

Questions were generally well answered. Question 'a' and 'b' provided good differentiation.

Exercise 8

This was a transfer of meaning task. Only candidates with a good knowledge and understanding of both languages managed to achieve full marks for this exercise. The exercise differentiated well, as candidates had to demonstrate their understanding of the target language text (Persian) as well as their command of English when transferring meaning. Using correct grammar and spelling is also important, as marks are available for this.

Exercise 9

Candidates should fill gaps based on the meaning of the text, not based on their thoughts. Paragraph numbers are given as an indication for each question. Sentences should be grammatically correct and candidates need to use their own words. Question 'd' differentiated the stronger candidates.

Exercise 10

Questions were generally answered well. Candidates need to define whole phrases or words using their own words. Describing only one of the words will mean the loss of a whole mark. Questions 'f' and 'g' provided good differentiation for stronger candidates.

Exercise 11

As this involved writing in the target language and required explanation, candidates should pay attention to the correct use of grammar for the quality of language mark. Question 'd' provided good differentiation.

Section C - Writing

Exercise 12 -19

This year candidates attempted to answer different topics which shows they were more prepared and had greater knowledge of all topics. Their answers were acceptable and demonstrated relevant knowledge. Questions 13, 14, 17, 18 and 19 were the most popular; which is a good indication that candidates were either more prepared for these questions or have personal experience of these topics. There are eight questions out of 13 different A2 sub-topics which means candidates have 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 and showed:

- (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 idioms with a variety of complex sentence structures;
- (d) good general knowledge of different A2 topics in regards to the target language;
- (e) their ability to answer the chosen question and develop their ideas and points of view with examples from the target language country to clarify the argument;
- (f) their ability to write in paragraphs and follow the correct formal structure of writing
- (g) their use of correct punctuation

Candidates should write the question number that they choose to write about in the associated box, as this is crucial.

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