



L-Università
ta' Malta

MATSEC
Examinations Board



Examiners' Report

SEC Arabic

Main Session 2025

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A. STATISTICAL INFORMATION

For this year's session, 86 candidates registered for SEC Arabic. Table 1 shows the distribution of levels for the Main 2025 session of the examination:

Level	Number of Candidates
1	3
2	11
3	37
na	35
Total	86

Table 1 shows the distribution of levels of the Main 2025 Session of the examination.

B. COMMENTS

Paper I (Level 1-2-3)

Reading Comprehension and Conversation

Listening

Task 1

This task consisted of listening to a short passage and answering multiple choice questions about it. Performance in this section was highly satisfactory and highlights the capability of direct retrieval of information from a spoken text.

Task 2

This task required candidates to listen for and mark specific pieces of information, therefore testing the ability to scan for detail and filter out false distractors. Examiners noted that performance in this section was also very good.

Reading

Task 1

Here the candidates were asked to read a text and answer questions in a concise manner, with a word or short phrase. Performance was satisfactory and shows that most candidates could find the required details to formulate the correct short answer. Low scores were achieved by those who chose to leave part or all of the section out.

Task 2

This was a more challenging task which required a two-step process; first, deciding if a statement is correct/incorrect, and second, providing the justification for that answer. Most candidates scored a very good grade in this section while others failed to understand what was required of them. This was especially noted as while almost everyone indicated whether it was a true or false statement, many did not mark a justification or else selected an incorrect justification, indicating that a crucial link between the two answers was not made.

Writing

The overall performance in this writing task was weak. This was mostly due to recurring factors such as failing to meet the word count, grammatical and orthographical errors. Moreover, there was a notable number of candidates who left the exercise out. While some tried to meet the basic criteria of essay structure, others repeated the same points and failed to elaborate effectively. It was also evident that candidates need to overcome linguistic limitations such as persistent syntactical errors, repetition of basic vocabulary and lack of punctuation.

Paper II Level 2-3

GRADE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	U	ABS	TOTAL
PAPER 2-3	2	5	14	18	6	5	8	-	7	7	72

The following table shows the distribution of grades for Paper 2-3.

Listening

Task 1

This task consisted of listening to a short passage and marking the sentences which appear in the text. This was the weakest area as many candidates struggled to identify which sentences were included in the passage, showing difficulty in capturing the main content accurately.

Task 2

The focus of this task was matching the given sentence with the appropriate picture that describes it. Candidates performed best on this task. The majority were able to connect spoken information to visual cues effectively, indicating strength in detail recognition.

Task 3

In this task, candidates heard a dialogue and were asked to mark the correct answer given in multiple choice format. Performance in this task was moderate. While some candidates successfully identified correct responses, others had difficulty understanding the dialogue fully.

Reading

Task 1

This section required the identification of information extracted from the given text. Candidates performed very well. This suggests that most could locate and confirm specific pieces of information. It was noted, however, that some candidates marked more sentences than required and failed to avoid the given distractors. It is important that instructions given before the task are read and followed thoroughly.

Task 2

This section tested the understanding of the narrative flow of a story and required candidates to correctly place sentences in chronological order. While many candidates managed to score maximum points, this proved to be the most challenging task for others who failed to understand what was required of them. In fact, some chose to skip some of the sentences and therefore the overall flow of the narrative was compromised. Examiners suggest that candidates should be exposed further to narrative sequencing.

Task 3

This section tested a deeper understanding of a text and the ability to retrieve information and formulate concise answers with it. Candidates performed very well in this section showing their ability to process the text to accurately extract key facts. While not as strong as Task 1, this section confirmed a satisfactory overall competence in detailed reading comprehension. On the other hand, in some cases, this section was partially or totally left out.

Therefore, while the focus on detail identification is to be maintained, additional practice should be dedicated to improving comprehension of narrative structure and chronology.

Writing*Task 1*

Candidates were required to write a short (40-50 words) informal text message to a friend, and guidelines were provided as to which specific content points could be included. However, the performance in this section was generally unsatisfactory. Some common issues which examiners noticed included failing to reach the 40-50 word limit, grammatical and lexical errors and incomplete content. Basic language mistakes, such as lack of punctuation greatly impacted clarity and flow, not to mention orthography which is an area candidates must be suitably trained in for this section.

Task 2

This included a longer and semi-formal writing task (80-100 words), namely an announcement about a party. Once again, it was noted that candidates struggled to organise their ideas effectively, especially when it comes to producing clear sentences and linking ideas. As already mentioned, the word limit was not always met and examiners struggled to make sense out of the text due to errors in simple sentences and orthography. In this section, it was also noted that candidates mostly repeated the same ideas and vocabulary.

It is suggested that candidates are encouraged to read to sustain and improve their vocabulary whilst being trained on how to elaborate and develop their own ideas in writing. Immediate attention should also be given to improving orthography while ensuring that handwriting is clear and legible.

Paper II Level 1-2

GRADE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	U	ABS	TOTAL
PAPER 1-2	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	-	5	2	14

The following table shows the distribution of grades for Paper 1-2.

Listening*Task 1 and 2*

These tasks required candidates to answer multiple choice questions after listening to a short text. In both cases, the results were good and demonstrated that the main points of the text were understood and processed.

Task 3

This section required more attention to detail. The overall performance was weak and suggests that candidates struggle to absorb fine details and resist distractors in the process. It is suggested that candidates are better equipped to handle questions based on general comprehension by paying attention to key points and key words in a spoken text.

Reading

Tasks 1 and 2

These tasks involved identifying information from a read text. Candidates were asked to verify which sentences were mentioned in the given excerpt while disregarding distractors. In both tasks, performance was excellent. Examiners noted that candidates could comprehend functional and narrative texts by accurately locating specific sentences and facts within it.

Task 3

This was the primary area of weakness in the Reading section. While some candidates scored maximum points, the majority failed to analyse the visuals and match them to the four correct statements.

Writing

In both tasks, examiners noticed recurring issues already mentioned in this report. Candidates are finding it increasingly difficult to express themselves in writing as writing tasks of minimum word count such as 30-40 were left out. Errors in orthography of basic words, such as the personal pronouns and the article, impacted the quality of this section greatly. Moreover, limited vocabulary and repetitions were also noted. It is also worth mentioning that a notable number of candidates wrote about a random topic, totally disregarding the title and guidelines given.

Some candidates had no issues reading the text in Modern Standard Arabic and answering the questions. However, several candidates had difficulties expressing themselves in the conversation, often resorting to dialectal Arabic.

Chairperson
Examination Panel 2025