

Getting Started Guide



AS and A Level Russian

Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Russian (8RU0)

Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in Russian (9RU0)



Getting Started Guide: GCE Russian 2017

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1 Introduction

The AS and A level qualifications are designed to be appealing and engaging to students, while preparing them for future study and work. An inspiring and culturally relevant course has been developed, based on feedback from teachers, students, subject associations, academics and advisors.

The qualification has a clear structure, which will enable students to develop advanced-level, transferable language alongside a deeper cultural appreciation of Russian and Russian-speaking culture. There is an emphasis on promoting understanding of grammar in order to allow spontaneous, creative use of language to suit different purposes. The themes are engaging and relevant, combining familiar and new content. Popular texts and films have been chosen, as well as some less well-known titles, both classical and contemporary.

There is clear progression from AS to A level. These are separate qualifications, but the specifications have been designed so that students for AS and A level can be taught together.

This Getting Started guide provides an overview of the new AS and A level specifications, to help you get to grips with the changes to content and assessment, and to help you understand what these mean for you and your students.

We are providing a package of support to help you plan and implement the new specification.

- **Planning:** mapping documents to show how your old course matches with the new A level; an editable course planner; a student guide; and schemes of work which you can adapt to suit your department
- **Understanding the standard:** specimen papers; example student work with examiner commentaries
- **Tracking learner progress:** specimen papers to support formative assessments and mock exams
- **Personal support:** Alistair Drewery, Subject Advisor
- **Teaching and learning:** a range of guides containing practical approaches to areas such as analysing films and literature, conducting research and essay writing; film and literature PowerPoints to support you with teaching; and ideas for the independent research project.

These support documents are available on the GCE 2017 Russian pages on the Edexcel website: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/russian-2017.coursematerials.html#filterQuery=Pearson-UK:Category%2FTeaching-and-learning-materials>

2 What's changed?

2.1 How have AS and A level changed?

Changes to AS and A level qualifications

From September 2017, A level Russian will be a fully linear qualification. This means that all examinations must be sat (and non-examination assessment submitted) at the end of the course. More information about the implications of the move to linear assessment is given on page 10.

From September 2017, AS level Russian will be a stand-alone qualification. This means that it cannot be used to contribute towards an A level Russian grade. More information about the relationship between AS and A level is given on page 7.

Changes to Assessment Objectives

The AS and A level languages Assessment Objectives have been revised.

There are two main changes to the Assessment Objectives:

- A new AO4 has been introduced. This requires knowledge, understanding and critical response – and at A level analytical response – to cultural and social issues relating to target-language communities.
- AO3 has a greater proportion of the marks than in the previous specification, and has a subtly changed emphasis – there is greater emphasis now on active application of grammar in generating new, independent language.

The Assessment Objectives are the same for both AS and A level, except in AO4.

AO1 20%	Understand and respond: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in speech to spoken language including face-to-face interaction • in writing to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources
AO2 30%	Understand and respond: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in speech to written language drawn from a variety of sources • in writing to written language drawn from a variety of sources
AO3 30%	Manipulate the language accurately, in spoken and written forms, using a range of lexis and structures
AO4 A level 20%	Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically and analytically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken
AO4 AS level 20%	Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken

2.2 Changes to Edexcel GCE Russian

Specification overview

AS level

Paper 1	Listening, reading and translation	Themes 1 and 2	1 hour 45 minutes	40%
Paper 2	Written response to works and translation	Literary work or film	1 hour 40 minutes	30%
Paper 3	Speaking (internally conducted and externally assessed)	Themes 1 and 2	27–30 minutes, including 15 minutes' formal preparation time	30%

A level

Paper 1	Listening, reading and translation	Themes 1, 2, 3 and 4	2 hours	40%
Paper 2	Written response to works and translation	Literary works/film	2 hours 40 minutes	30%
Paper 3	Speaking (internally conducted and externally assessed)	Independent research, plus Themes 1, 2, 3 and 4	21–23 minutes, including 5 minutes' preparation time	30%

Changes to specification content

Specification content is now based around social, political and cultural themes, relating to the Russian language, culture and communities. This will enable students to gain a deeper understanding of the culture related to their language of study, and ensure smooth progression to further study. The themes and assessment model are also designed to promote the development of transferable skills.

These changes are in line with reports published by the A-Level Content Advisory Board (ALCAB), informed by academics, and the Department for Education (DfE), which consulted a range of stakeholders. These reports were both strongly in favour of language A levels which foster 'depth of knowledge, effective understanding and intercultural competence,' (DfE). The reports also identified a need for qualifications which develop transferable skills, especially research skills and 'the capacity for critical thinking on the basis of knowledge of the language, culture and society of the country or countries where the language is spoken' (ALCAB).

Students taking only the AS will study two themes:

Theme 1: Развитие российского общества

Theme 2: Политическая и художественная культура в русскоязычном мире

Within these two broad themes there are a number of sub-themes, which can be found below. The content of these themes is assessed in Paper 1 (listening, reading and translation), and Paper 3 (speaking).

As part of the AS, students are also required to study either one text or one film, which will be assessed in Paper 2 (the writing paper).

Students taking the A level will study four themes, of which the first two are the same as for the AS:

Theme 1: Развитие российского общества

Theme 2: Политическая и художественная культура в русскоязычном мире

Theme 3: Москва или Санкт-Петербург – Изменения в жизни большого российского города

Theme 4: Последние годы СССР – М.С. Горбачёв (1985-1991)

Again there are a number of sub-themes, which can be found below. The content of these themes is assessed in Paper 1 (listening, reading and translation) and Paper 3 (speaking).

Students at A level are also required to study either two texts, or one text and one film, which will be assessed in Paper 2 (writing).

Moreover, at A level, students will also be required to undertake an Independent Research Project which will be assessed in the second part of the speaking exam. Further detail on this can be found in Section 5.4.

Comparison of the new specification with the Edexcel A1 and A2 2008

New specification		Previous specification
Theme 1 (AS and A level)	Развитие российского общества <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Жизнь российской молодёжи Образование Мир труда 	Education and employment Youth culture and concerns: relationships Lifestyle: health and fitness
Theme 2 (AS and A level)	Политическая и художественная культура в русскоязычном мире <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Средства массовой информации Массовая культура Праздники, фестивали и традиции 	Youth culture and concerns Customs, traditions, beliefs and religions
Theme 3 (A level only)	Москва или Санкт-Петербург – Изменения в жизни большого российского города <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Изменение населения Общественные проблемы. Окружающая среда 	National [...] events: past, present and future The world around us: [...] environmental issues and the Russian-speaking world (Geographical area) (Aspects of modern society)
Theme 4 (A level only)	Последние годы СССР – М.С. Горбачёв (1985-1991) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Перестройка Гласность 1991 год 	National [...] events: past, present and future (Historical period)
Literary works	Prescribed list of works <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characterisation Structure Stylistic features Concepts and issues 	Free choice of work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> different characters key themes/issues social and cultural setting styles/techniques employed
Films	Prescribed list of films <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characterisation Structure Contexts Techniques 	Free choice of film <ul style="list-style-type: none"> different characters key themes/issues social and cultural setting styles/techniques employed
Independent research (A level only)	Must be linked to the social and cultural context of the Russian-speaking world	Completely free choice – no requirement for research to relate to target-language culture or community
		Travel, tourism International events

3 Planning

3.1 Planning and delivering linear AS and A level courses

Naturally, the key difference of linear qualifications is that students need to retain all that they have learned for examination at the end of the course. In terms of language learning, this is a logical and positive development because students must retain and build on everything they learn in order to master a language effectively.

In terms of planning, teachers will need to consider the following:

- AS assessment is at the end of year 1, though can be done over two years if required; students taking A level do not need to take AS examinations
- A level assessment is at the end of year 2
- retakes are only possible for the entire qualification, not for individual modules.

Course planning needs to cover:

- two themes at AS and four themes at A level
- one literary work or film at AS level and either two texts, or a text and film, at A level
- sufficient practice in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation
- a broad range of grammar and opportunities to use this to generate language independently
- independent research at A level
- development of critical and analytical thinking.

3.2 Suggested resources

The Edexcel AS and A level course is supported by a range of resources.

Our free **online support** for teachers includes:

- vocabulary for literature and film
- guides on literature and film analysis, carrying out research and essay writing
- PowerPoints to support the teaching and learning of film and literature.

3.3 Co-teaching AS and A level

AS and A level have the same basic structure and overlapping content to facilitate co-teaching. It will be possible to teach Themes 1 and 2 and one literary work or film to both AS and A level students.

A level students will, however, need to achieve a higher level in terms of both linguistic and cognitive development. This means that:

- A level students should receive extension work during the first year, encouraging them to develop beyond the requirements of AS
- work from Themes 1 and 2 and the first literary work/film may need to be revisited in year 2 to ensure that students fully apply their more developed linguistic and cognitive skills to the content.

3.4 Delivery models

Possible models for course planning include:

Model 1

Year 1 AS & A level	Theme 1	Literary work/film	Grammar revision	Skills Transferable listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, thinking	A level students carry out independent research
	Theme 2		Grammar development		
	Revision (AS students)				
Year 2 A level only	Theme 3	Literary work/film	Grammar revision		
	Theme 4		Grammar development		
	Revision				

Model 2

Year 1 AS & A level	Theme 1	Literary work/film	Grammar	Skills Transferable listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, thinking
	Theme 2		Revision/ development	
	Literary work/film			
	Revision (AS students)			
Year 2 A level only	Theme 3	Literary work/film		
	Theme 4			
	Independent research			
	Literary work/film			
	Revision			

Model 1 offers a more integrated learning experience, developing all skills together, whereas Model 2 presents a clearer order. Model 1 is potentially more complex to manage, but Model 2 could result in teachers and students running out of time on the second literary work/film and independent research.

More detailed Schemes of work and other useful planning documents are available as free resources on the Edexcel website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/russian-2017.coursematerials.html#filterQuery=Pearson-UK:Category%2FTeaching-and-learning-materials>

4 Content guidance

The themes and sub-themes identified below are vehicles for the development of linguistic and cognitive skills, as well as cross-cultural awareness. Assessment is predominantly related to the ability to use the target language. Assessment will take place within the themes and sub-themes. Students will need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically – and at A level analytically – to, different aspects relating to the target language community and culture.

4.1 Themes and sub-themes

Theme 1 (AS and A level)	Развитие российского общества	Жизнь российской молодёжи	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • здоровье • отдых • новые технологии
		Образование	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • система образования • жизнь российских школьников
		Мир труда	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • отношения к труду • возможности для молодых россиян • равноправие
Theme 2 (AS and A level)	Политическая и художественная культура в русскоязычном мире	Средства массовой информации	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • свобода выражения • печатная и онлайн пресса • влияние на общество и политику
		Массовая культура	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • музыка • цирк • танец
		Праздники, фестивали и традиции	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • фестивали • праздники • обычаи • традиции
Theme 3 (A level only)	Москва или Санкт-Петербург – Изменения в жизни большого российского города	Изменение населения	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • жизнь в городе • жизнь в пригородах
		Общественные проблемы	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • бездомность • преступность
		Окружающая среда	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Реконструкция и благоустройства города; • загрязнение

Theme 4 (A level only)	Последние годы СССР – М.С. Горбачёв (1985-1991)	Перестройка	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • что вызвало перестройку • экономические изменения • исходы
		Гласность	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • что вызвало гласность • общественные изменения • исходы
		1991 год	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • проблемы для СССР к началу 1991 г. • путч в августе • распад СССР
Literary works	<p>AS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Пиковая дама, Александр Пушкин, 1834 (short story) • Вишнёвый сад, Антон Чехов, 1904 (play) • Неделя как неделя, Наталья Баранская, 1968 (novella) <p>A level (in addition to the AS titles)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ревизор</i>, Николай Гоголь, 1836 (play) • <i>Один день Ивана Денисовича</i>, Александр Солженицын, 1962 (novella) • <i>Сонечка</i>, Людмила Улицкая, 1992 (novella) 		
Films	<p>AS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Крылья</i>, dir. Лариса Шепитько (1966) • <i>Утомлённые солнцем</i>, dir. Никита Михалков (1994) <p>A level (in addition to the AS titles)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Кавказский пленник</i>, dir. Сергей Бодров (1996) • <i>Левиафан</i>, dir. Андрей Звягинцев (2014) 		

Themes 1, 3 and 4 relate to Russia only. Theme 2 relates to the wider Russian-speaking world. This means that in the listening, reading and translation papers, the content may be related to a country other than Russia, though only standard Russian will be used. In the speaking test, students will not be asked to demonstrate specific knowledge about one particular country, but they must be able to justify their viewpoints in relation to a Russian-speaking country they have studied.

Teachers should refer to the guides and other resources available on the Edexcel website for support on how to approach the themes.

Ideas on how to approach the themes and suggested activities can be found in the document *Teaching and learning content ideas*. Note that these are suggestions only and are not prescriptive.

5 Assessment guidance

5.1 Implications of linear assessment

- AS level assessment is at the end of year 1; students taking A level need not take AS level examinations.
- A level assessment is at the end of year 2.
- Retakes are only possible for the entire qualification, not for individual modules.
- Some centres may wish to use AS level as an end-of-year assessment, but this is not compulsory.

5.2 Breakdown of Assessment Objectives

The structure of the AS and A level is identical. The breakdown of Assessment Objectives by paper will be as follows:

Paper	A01	A02	A03	A04	Total
1 Listening, reading and translation	15	25	-	-	40%
2 Written response to works and translation	-	-	20	10	30%
3 Speaking	5	5	10	10	30%
Total	20	30	30	20	100%

5.3 Assessment overview

AS level

Paper 1: Listening, reading and translation

Written examination: 1 hour and 45 minutes

40% of the qualification

64 marks

The paper is split into three sections:

Section A is a listening assessment based on a recording featuring male and female Russian speakers, covering Themes 1 and 2. Students will respond to comprehension questions in the target language, based on a variety of contexts and sources.

Question formats require multiple-choice and open responses. Responses in the target language are required, but students will not be marked on their quality of language. They will also be required to produce a short summary in English. Questions do not require students to respond in full sentences. They can respond using single words or phrases.

This section is worth 24 marks.

Students will have control of the listening player and we recommend they spend no more than 45 minutes on this section.

Section B is a reading assessment based on a variety of text-types and genres, including historical and literary texts.

Historical texts

Our interpretation of historical is that the text was written at least 10 years ago. We do not interpret a historical text as one which was written in the last 10 years about events which took place more than 10 years ago. The text will relate to this specification's themes.

Literary text

An extract from a literary text will be used and will relate to one of the themes of this specification as much as possible. Literary texts are defined as texts written in Russian, for the Russian-speaking audience, for purposes of fiction or non-fiction. This includes texts written by authors who may have Russian as their second language. It naturally excludes materials such as readers written for English learners of Russian in UK classrooms.

Question formats require both multiple-choice and open responses. Questions are set in Russian and responses must be in Russian, though students will not be marked on their quality of language unless it impedes communication.

The reading comprehension will require students to:

- understand the main points, gist and detail from spoken and written material
- infer meaning from complex spoken and written material, including factual and abstract content; in this context, abstract means ideas beyond the norm: e.g. moral, ethical, political values and opinions
- assimilate and use information from spoken and written sources, including material from online media.

This section is worth 28 marks.

For questions in which students respond in the target language, they may use words from the stimulus passage or extract, but they must not transcribe or copy down whole passages. For example:

Text: *В основном я ем фрукты и овощи, чтобы быть здоровым.*

Question: *Согласно тексту, из чего состоит здоровая диета?*

Rewardable answer: *Надо есть фрукты и овощи.*

Non-rewardable answer: *В основном я ем фрукты и овощи, чтобы быть здоровым.*

Students who copy the whole sentence, as exemplified above as the non-rewardable answer, would not be awarded any marks without manipulating the verb in the sentence, *есть*. This is because it does not render an accurate answer to the question. However, as the exemplified rewardable answer shows, students may still use words from the listening passage or reading extract.

We recommend students spend no more than 45 minutes on this section.

Section C is a translation into English and is worth 12 marks. The content of the translation will come from Themes 1 or 2.

We recommend students spend no more than 15 minutes on this section.

Note: students are not permitted access to a dictionary during the examination.

Paper 2: Written response to works and translation

Written examination: 1 hour and 40 minutes

30% of the qualification

60 marks

This paper includes a translation exercise from English into Russian. The content of this passage will relate to either of the two prescribed themes. This forms section A of the paper and is worth 20 marks. We recommend students spend no more than 25 minutes on this section.

The main part of this paper requires an extended response **on either one literary text or one film** listed in Appendix 2 of the specification: *Prescribed literary texts and films*. The questions on the literary texts are in Section B and those for the films are in Section C. The essay is worth 40 marks.

The recommended word count for the extended response is 195–215 words. However, this is guidance only and everything students write will be marked.

For each work there is a choice of two questions and students must respond only to one. There are bullet points to help them structure their answer. It is not compulsory to use the bullet points in a response. However, as can be seen in the indicative content, the bullet points do generally refer to the most obvious responses. If students are able to **respond to the question** fully, without using the bullet points, then they will, of course, be rewarded for doing so. They will not be penalised if they do not use the bullet points but have provided a full and relevant response.

Note: students are not permitted access to a dictionary during the examination.

Paper 3: Speaking

Internally conducted and externally assessed

Total assessment time: between 27 and 30 minutes, which includes a single period of 15 minutes' formal preparation time

30% of the qualification

72 marks

Task 1 is related to Theme 1 and requires students to read and respond to two short texts, followed by a wider discussion on the sub-theme.

Task 2 is related to Theme 2 and requires students to undertake a discussion on one sub-theme.

Full details of the speaking assessment can be found in Section 5.4.

Note: students are not permitted access to a dictionary during the examination.

A level

Paper 1: Listening, reading and translation

Written examination: 2 hours

40% of the qualification

80 marks

Section A is a listening assessment based on a recording featuring male and female Russian speakers, covering Themes 1, 2, 3 and 4. Students will respond to comprehension questions in the target language, based on a variety of contexts and sources.

Question formats require multiple-choice and open responses.

Responses in the target language are required, but students will not be marked on their quality of language. They will also be required to produce a short summary in Russian. Questions do not require students to respond in full sentences. They can respond using single words or phrases. This section is worth 30 marks.

Students will have control of the listening player and we recommend they spend no more than 50 minutes on this section.

Section B is a reading assessment based on a variety of text-types and genres, including historical and literary texts. (See p11 for a definition of historical and literary texts.)

Question formats require both multiple-choice and open response. Questions are set in Russian and responses in Russian are required, though students will not be marked on their quality of language. (See p11 for advice on using vocabulary from the text.) Section B is worth 30 marks.

We recommend students spend no more than 50 minutes on this section.

Section C is a translation into English. This will be an unseen passage and is worth 20 marks.

We recommend students spend no more than 20 minutes on this section.

Note: students are not permitted access to a dictionary during the examination.

Paper 2: Written response to works and translation

Written examination: 2 hours and 40 minutes

30% of the qualification

120 marks

Section A is a translation into Russian and is worth 20 marks. The content of the passage is related to any of the four themes. We recommend students spend no more than 30 minutes on this section.

Sections B and C comprise a written response to works.

At A level, students are required to respond to two questions on two different works. For each question the maximum mark is 50, totalling 100 for this section. The works may comprise one book and one film, or two books. The works are listed in Appendix 2 of the specification: *Prescribed literary texts and films*. The literary texts listed include a range of novels, plays and a series of short stories. All of the films are feature-length.

There are two questions for each work and students choose one for each of their chosen works. The recommended word count for the extended response is 215-250 words. However, this is guidance only and everything students write will be marked.

Note: students are not permitted access to a dictionary during the examination.

Frequently-asked questions on the writing paper

Why are the AS and A level lists of works different?

To facilitate co-teaching at least half the works are available at both AS and A level. However, some of the works are suitable only for A level study, so for this reason are not on the AS level list.

How much knowledge are students required to have beyond the novel?

We would expect that students acquire some background information in the teaching and learning of the works, including, but not limited to, the following:

- author
- historical and/or political context
- any particular movement to which the work may belong.

In some cases some background information may be essential to the understanding of the plot.

Can students study more than two works? Do they declare all the works on the RP3 form?

If there is time, students can certainly study as many of the set works as they wish, and this would then, of course, afford them a greater choice in the assessment. However, it is important that students have in-depth knowledge of the works studied, including the ability to use quotations. On the RP3 form they should list all the works from the set list that they have studied, and on which, therefore, they can possibly answer in the written examination, especially as the oral assessment will take place before the written assessment. Students should therefore be encouraged to conduct their independent research away from the set lists of works in order to ensure they can meet the criteria of both assessments.

How many quotations do students need to use?

There is no requirement for a specific number of quotations, although quotations are needed to provide a critical analysis with convincing interpretations. This is made clear in the mark scheme *Critical and analytical response (AO4)*:

Critical analysis of issues/themes/cultural or social contexts is evident in relation to particular aspects of the question, with some appropriate interpretations and points of view, sometimes justified by appropriately selected evidence from the work.

Paper 3: Speaking

The speaking assessment is conducted internally and is externally assessed. It is worth 72 marks and comprises 30% of the qualification.

Total assessment time: between 21 and 23 minutes, which includes 5 minutes' formal preparation time.

Task 1 requires students to choose one sub-theme from a choice of two (these can be from any of the four themes). They will then discuss one of the two statements on their chosen stimulus card. Task 1 is worth 30 marks.

Task 2 is the Independent Research Presentation and requires students to give a short summary of their chosen topic, followed by a discussion with the examiner on their research. Task 2 is worth 42 marks.

Full details of the expectations of the speaking assessment can be found in the next section.

NB: All mark schemes can be found in the specifications.

5.4 Further details on the speaking assessment

Paper 3 in both AS and A level is the speaking assessment, which is technically considered a non-examination assessment. In both cases, the teacher will conduct the assessment and send the recordings to Edexcel for marking.

AS level

The total assessment time will be between 27 and 30 minutes, including 15 minutes' preparation time.

Assessments will be conducted by teachers in centres in one session within a prescribed five-week assessment period. This will take place in April and May in any single year.

Before the assessment

The centre will inform Edexcel of the date(s) on which it intends to conduct the speaking assessment. Three days before the centre's assessment window, the teacher will be able to download the secure material in order to ensure smooth running of the examination. The teacher must not share information about the material with anyone in advance of the assessment. Edexcel will provide the centre with a grid detailing the different cards that each candidate will be allocated (an example can be found on page 94 of the Sample Assessment Materials). The teacher can use this grid to plan for the assessment, but must not share details with students.

The assessment

Each student is given 15 minutes' preparation time for the whole of the assessment. This must be in a secure area and students must be invigilated. Students are allowed to make notes on both tasks (maximum of one side of A4 paper), and they can bring these notes into the examination room. The student will be given the stimulus material for Tasks 1 and 2 to prepare within this time.

Task 1: This is to last between 7 and 9 minutes.

This relates to **Theme 1 only**. There is no choice of card and the student must be given the card in accordance with the sequencing grid supplied in the assessment pack.

The student card features two texts relating to the sub-theme, without prompts.

The examiner card has the four questions which must be asked of the student in the order given. Questions must not be rephrased but can be repeated (no more than twice).

- Question 1 asks students to outline the main ideas of the **first text**.
- Question 2 asks students about a specific detail in the **first text**.
- Question 3 asks students to say whether they agree or disagree with the material highlighted in the **second text** or to compare information between the two.
- Question 4 is an open question about the subject matter of the cards and requires the students to give their opinion. For example: *Do you think the Russian education system puts too much pressure on young people?*

After these four initial questions, the teacher/examiner must then ask follow-up questions on any other aspect(s) of the sub-theme for the remainder of the task. Some optional generic questions are provided in the Sample Assessment Materials, but the questions need to enable the student to demonstrate understanding of the Russian-speaking cultural and social context by expressing relevant ideas and opinions, and providing relevant exemplification/information. For example, *Какие примеры можно привести, чтобы подтвердить эту точку зрения?*

Task 2: This is to last between 5 and 6 minutes.

The task relates to **Theme 2 only**.

The student is given a choice of two cards on two different subthemes (following the sequence outlined by Edexcel) just before the start of the 15 minutes' preparation time. For example, the invigilator will ask the student whether he or she wants a card on 'Popular Culture' or 'Holidays, festivals and traditions'. N.B. The student must not be shown details of the card in advance of making a choice.

Each card has a statement on it, as well as two prompts for the student to consider. For example:

Sub-theme: Средства массовой информации

Statement: Интернет-СМИ больше влияют на русскоязычные сообщества, чем другие виды СМИ.

Prompts: Подготовьтесь к обсуждению следующего, упоминая по крайней мере одну / одно из русскоязычных стран/сообществ, которые вы изучали:

- Интернет-СМИ больше влияют на русскоязычные сообщества, чем другие виды СМИ.
- Влияние других русскоязычных СМИ.

The examiner must first ask the two compulsory questions in the order in which they appear on the teacher card. Questions may be repeated, but rephrasing is not allowed.

The examiner then develops the discussion by asking appropriate follow-up questions relating to the subject matter of the stimulus. In the example above, the examiner could ask:

- Какой пример вы могли бы привести, чтобы подтвердить эту точку зрения?
- Почему это важно?

After this, the examiner must broaden the discussion by moving on to any other aspect(s) of the same sub-theme. In the example above, this means the examiner can then ask questions on *Свобода выражения* or *Влияние на общество и политику*.

Questions asked should allow students to demonstrate understanding of the cultural and social context by expressing and justifying relevant ideas and opinions, providing relevant exemplification/information, and developing arguments and drawing conclusions.

In both Tasks 1 and 2, students should ask questions which elicit opinions as part of the natural discourse and to confirm that their own points of view have been understood. For example: *Вы понимаете, что я имею в виду?*

The examiner must ensure that he or she keeps to times and that students spend the appropriate time on each section. However, students will not be penalised for small variations in timings.

After the assessment:

- Students must sign a declaration form
- Forms and recordings are then submitted to Edexcel for marking.

Frequently-asked questions on AS speaking

How much time do you spend on the compulsory questions?

Examiners must ensure that they adhere to the timings as closely as possible for each task. Within the tasks, the examiner should allow as much time as necessary for students to access the full mark range. However, if students are obviously struggling on a question, then the examiner should move on.

Can you repeat questions, even if students do not ask request this?

It is not necessary to repeat questions. However, if the student has not answered the question correctly, you may wish to ask the question again (note, however, that this could also prove confusing for the student).

Questioning by students: can Edexcel provide a list of typical questions which students are expected to ask?

There are examples of questions which students could ask on page 71 of the Sample Assessment Materials.

Further support is available on the Edexcel website and through training – see the Training for Pearson website.

A level

The total assessment time will be between 21 and 23 minutes, including five minutes' preparation time.

Task 1

Before the assessment

The centre will inform Edexcel of the date(s) on which it intends to conduct the speaking assessment. Three days before the centre's assessment window, the teacher will be able to download the secure material in order to ensure smooth running of the examination. The teacher must not share information about the material with students in advance of the assessment. Edexcel will provide the centre with a grid detailing which student has which card (an example can be found on page 94 of the Sample Assessment Materials). The teacher can use this grid to plan for the assessment, but must not share details with students.

On the day

Part 1 (discussion on a Theme): Students have approximately 6 to 7 minutes' discussion time for this task.

Content for this task will be based on any of the **12 sub-themes** from one of the four overall themes listed on pages 8–9 of the specification. For example, *Образование, Массовая культура, Средства массовой информации*, etc.

The invigilator offers the student a choice of two cards just before the preparation time begins. The invigilator will ask the student, for example, whether he or she wants the card on *World of work* or the card on *Popular Culture*. N.B. the student must **not** see the card until the choice has been made.

On each card are two statements. The student chooses one of these to prepare.

The student is then given five minutes to prepare.

After the five minutes' preparation time, the assessment begins:

- The examiner will start by asking which statement the student has chosen.
- The examiner will then ask the two compulsory questions relating to the statement.
- The examiner will then ask follow-up questions relating to the subject matter on the card.

For example, student 1 is given the choice of *World of Work* or *Education*. The student chooses *Education*. There are two statements on the card with prompts:

А В России лучше всего учиться в школе с углублённым изучением иностранных языков.

Подготовьтесь к обсуждению следующего:

- В России лучше учиться в школе с углублённым изучением иностранных языков.
- Что такое сбалансированный учебный план в школе в России.

Б В России существует хороший выбор школ для учеников.

Подготовьтесь к обсуждению следующего:

- Существует хороший выбор школ для учеников в России.
- Школа, в которой лучше всего учиться в России

Student 1 decides to speak about specialist language schools, as in statement A.

The examiner will confirm the choice with the student in the assessment and then ask the two questions on the card:

A В России лучше всего учиться в школе с углублённым изучением иностранных языков.

- 1 Считаете ли вы, что в России лучше всего учиться в школе с углублённым изучением иностранных языков?
- 2 Рассмотрите, что такое сбалансированный учебный план в средней школе в сегодняшней России.

The examiner will then follow up with additional questions relating to the subject matter on the stimulus card.

Part 2

The examiner must then broaden the discussion to cover aspects of the overall theme. In the example above, this would mean the examiner could ask questions on education, the life of young Russians or the world of work.

The questions must enable the student to meet the assessment criteria, i.e. to elicit examples and information to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the cultural and social context, and to analyse aspects of the theme by developing and justifying arguments and forming conclusions. The examiner may use some of the generic questions as provided in the Sample Assessment Materials. For example: *Какие примеры можно привести, чтобы подтвердить эту точку зрения?*

Frequently-asked questions

In Part 1 do students need to adopt a 'for/against' position on the statement?

No, this is not necessary as the statement might not necessarily allow them to do this. However, they must be able to justify their opinions.

How much factual knowledge do students need to have?

Teachers should consult the *Knowledge and understanding mark grid* in the specification or the Sample Assessment Materials as this provides detail on how students are rewarded. There is no requirement for students to be able to list facts. However, they do need to provide examples and justify these examples.

Note also that Task 1 is marked as a whole, so it might be possible for students to provide fuller detail in the follow-up questions.

In the speaking assessment, can the examiner change the formal question to the informal form, or is that considered to be rephrasing?

Questions should be asked as they are written on the card.

If a student says "Do you mean ...?" after the examiner asks the question, can you answer "Yes" or "No"?

We would encourage the examiner to repeat the question as phrased on the card. However, if the student is struggling, then we would expect there to be some additional support, though this may affect the mark the student is ultimately awarded.

Can you ask the invigilator which cards students have chosen, or do you have to wait until the students tell you?

It is fine for the invigilator to tell you which card students have chosen.

Task 2: Independent research project (IRP)

Students have approximately 10 to 11 minutes for this task.

Prior to the exam

Choosing the project

The independent research project (IRP) allows students to conduct in-depth research into an aspect of Russian-speaking culture or life in which they are particularly interested. Students should be encouraged to think carefully about what they want to research, as the subject must allow them not only to showcase what they have learned about the subject, but also to analyse the subject in some depth.

The IRP may be based on any of the four themes of study or on a subject of interest of the student's choosing, but must relate to the Russian-speaking cultural and social context. Should students choose a subject relating to one of the specification themes, it is possible that the same theme could come up in Task 1. Students should therefore go beyond the specification sub-themes and should ensure they have conducted wider reading on their chosen subject.

The IRP must **not** be based on one of the literary works or films studied for Paper 2. Students will receive a mark of zero for Task 2 if their IRP focuses on a work studied for Paper 2. However, an IRP could focus on a wider exploration of the author or film-maker of those works studied. For example, if studying a novel by a particular author for Paper 2, the IRP must not focus on that novel as this would be a duplication of content. However, the independent research could focus on the life of the author, or the aspects of society which motivated the author in the broader sense.

Ideas for the IRP can be found on the Edexcel website.

Once students have chosen the subject which they wish to research they will need to decide upon a question or statement which they will then investigate individually. This might also help students to narrow down their choice of subject.

When to start the independent research project (IRP)

The IRP can be started at any point within the two-year course. However, the IRP form must be submitted to Edexcel at least three weeks before the start of the assessment. This form requires students to note down key findings, as well as sources. This is to allow teacher-examiners the time to prepare their questions.

Sources

As part of the assessment, students must refer to at least two **written** Russian-speaking sources and the student's declaration form provides space for up to four. These could, of course, be from newspaper articles, perhaps found on the internet. We advise students to keep a record of all the sources they have used, and teachers to give some support in how to use sources. There are many websites to which students can be directed, and it is also advisable that teachers help students locate resources.

The assessment

Part 1: Students give a presentation of a maximum of two minutes. This presentation must include:

- a summary of at least two of the written Russian-speaking sources they have used as part of their research
- the authors' main points/ideas
- a personal response.

Neither teachers nor language assistants should see or hear the presentation in advance of the examination. However, in order to ensure that students are prepared for the assessment and understand what will happen on the day, we would recommend that teachers give students a small practice project to complete at the end of year 1, which they could then use as a 'mock' speaking assessment. Students could even use work completed for their set work for Paper 2, so as to get accustomed to the format of the exam.

Part 2: Following on from the presentation, the examiner then moves on to a discussion of the student's research, including a wider exploration of the content of the student's presentation and of their research as a whole. The examiner should use the *RP3 form*, completed by the student, to identify questions in advance, in order to ensure that the discussion remains focused on the research.

In **both** tasks, students are expected to ask questions that elicit opinions as part of the natural discourse and to confirm that their own points of view have been understood. A list of suggested questions has been provided in the specification and should be shared with students.

Examiners should not give lengthy answers, but acknowledge the question and move on. If the student does not ask a question, this can be prompted by the examiner.

Frequently-asked questions

Can students make comparisons with the home country?

There may, of course, be instances where it is necessary or interesting to bring in examples or comparisons with the home country. For example, this could be used to strengthen an argument. However, the assessment criteria for *Knowledge and understanding of society and culture* (AO4) clearly rewards students who focus on Russian-speaking cultural and social contexts, so we would recommend that comparison with the home country is limited.

Can students refer to their literary works/films as evidence to support their argument?

Quotations from the literary works or close reference to the films may be applicable for use as evidence to support an argument. However, students must refer to two other written Russian-speaking sources in order to access marks from the grid *Responding to written language in speech* (AO2).

Can all my students cover the same topic?

It is envisaged, especially in large centres, that some students might have similar interests and might therefore wish to cover the same topic. This is acceptable and encourages teamwork. However, the statement or question for each student's project **must** be different, as well as the angle from which they are approaching it.

What can teachers help their students with?

Below is a list of what teachers must and must not do. Further clarification can also be sought from the assessment team.

What sources should my students use?

Teachers should help their students in identifying suitable sources, and also help them analyse sources. Students should be encouraged to use a variety of sources, including (but not limited to):

- newspaper articles
- videos from the period in time (such as news reports or speeches)
- academic articles
- critical reviews for books and films.

Independent research – Advice for teachers in supporting students

Teachers **can**:

- give guidance on developing research skills (including methodology and analytical tools).
- give guidance on selecting a subject and question or statement for the student's IRP.
- explain what independence means (see definition in *Guidance on the independent research project* in the specification).
- comment on the suitability of the research area (availability of resources, time constraints).
- give guidance and advice on completing *Form RP3*.
- advise on and direct students to the Assessment Objectives.
- provide a selection of resources for student access.

Teachers must:

- confirm that the question or statement has the potential to meet the requirements of the assessment criteria, and offer general guidance on any necessary amendments.
- ensure that the question or statement does **not** correspond with one of the literary works or films which the student has studied for Paper 2. Teachers will be able to identify this from the information given on *Form RP3*. Students will receive a mark of zero for Task 2 if their IRP focuses on a work studied for Paper 2.
- review each student's *Form RP3*. Teachers should ensure that the research can suitably fulfil the specification requirements and should give general guidance on the methodology and analytical tools which the student could use.
- promote good practice, such as referencing and using a bibliography system.
- sign the student's *Form RP3* before the examination to declare that the IRP is wholly the student's work.
- monitor the different research projects being undertaken in a centre to ensure that independence is being maintained. If more than one student chooses to research the same topic, the teacher must ensure that each student has a different question or statement and, therefore, an independent focus.

Teachers must not:

- give students a choice of questions or statements from which they then choose, including a group question or statement for whole-class research.
- give detailed feedback or guidance to individual students about how to improve their work to meet the requirements of the assessment criteria. The guidance provided should only enable students to take the initiative in making amendments rather than detailing what amendments should be made. This could include:
 - suggesting additional sources to consult.
 - broadening or narrowing their topic of research.
- rehearse or provisionally assess the student's presentation.
- provide access to, or rehearse, questions which will be used in the assessment of the student's independent research.

Examining technique checklist

The following guidelines will be helpful for teacher-examiners in preparing to administer the speaking assessments.

- The examiner's opening should put the student at ease.
- The examiner should remain friendly and encouraging throughout.
- The examiner should keep input to a minimum.
- There should be a predominance of open questions and encouragement.
- The examiner should refrain from proffering anecdotes, opinions, advice or information.
- The conversation/discussion should flow naturally.
- The examiner should take the student beyond learned or prepared material.
- The examiner should interrupt any pre-rehearsed sections.
- The examiner's interventions should be sufficiently demanding.
- The examiner should take the student to his/her linguistic ceiling.
- The closing should be upbeat, but not effusive.
- The examiner should keep to time for all elements of the assessments.

