

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE Greek (5GK02)  
Paper 01 Speaking in Greek

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## **5GK02 - Unit 2 – Speaking in Greek (2013)**

### **Performance**

This year's examining team listened to some imaginative and interesting orals and were impressed by the level of performance and achievement of many of the students. In general, the majority of centres seemed more familiar with the requirements of the examination and many students were clearly well aware of what was expected of them, if the higher areas of the mark scheme were to be accessed.

The most popular choice of assessment model for the first task was the presentation with follow-up questions on a subject that the students found interesting and exciting. A large number of students had prepared for this task very effectively and showed a high level of competence when presenting in Greek. Similarly, those who chose to bring a picture and discuss it, were able to describe a past experience or talk about someone they admire (e.g. a singer or an athlete) and at the same time show that they can interact naturally on a subject of their preference. The most popular theme for the picture-based discussion was a holiday photo which usually led onto follow-up questions about other holidays, past and future. However, there were some students who had prepared their presentation thoroughly and performed well but who had little left for the all-important interaction. The presentation section fulfils part of the assessment criteria but the follow-up discussion also fulfils other areas. It is therefore very important to ensure that both sections are well prepared and completed.

The majority of students performed very well in the second task, with the best students able to offer a range of justified opinions on a number of topics using complex linguistic structures and a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. Some students, however, did not perform as well in the second task where they had to deal with unpredictable elements and interact with the teacher examiner, due to either their difficulty in understanding the questions or their inability to respond effectively in Greek.

The majority of students demonstrated the ability to refer to past and future events and to express opinions and ideas often employing more complex linguistic structures and sophisticated items of vocabulary. Most teacher-examiners appeared to be aware that this is a very important criterion for assessing students' performance. Teacher-examiners who asked questions which provoked lengthier and more complicated answers obviously advantaged the students, as did those who let a student's answer dictate their next question. This resulted in a more natural and interesting interaction, as opposed to a list of questions which the teacher examiner rigidly adhered to, regardless of the student's answers.

Overall, skilful and appropriate questioning from the teacher-examiner afforded students the opportunities to fulfil their potential in line with the assessment criteria.

## Conduct

While many centres had clearly understood the requirements of the specification well and prepared their students effectively, a number of centres failed to grasp the requirements and this led to a number of errors in the conduct of the examinations, in some cases this disadvantaged the students' performance.

Generally, teacher-examiners were disciplined in allocating an equal and appropriate amount of time to each task. However, as in previous years, timing of the speaking test is still an issue. A number of centres did not observe the requirements relating to the timing of the two conversations and either the conversations were too brief (less than 4 minutes each) or there were too long or there was a lack of balance between the time allocated to each task. Tasks which are longer than 5 minutes might contain rewardable material which cannot be taken into account due to their length. Please ensure that each task lasts for 4-5 minutes and that the timing of each task is set when the student starts talking and not while teacher-examiners read out the centre and student details. If this is not observed, the result is that the student actually speaks for less time than the teacher-examiner believes, which can result in too short a test. Centres should note that the total time for the exam (maximum 10 minutes) should be split evenly across the two tasks. When the student has chosen to make a presentation, this should last between 1-2 minutes maximum, and then it must be followed by follow-up questions and answers.

Some teacher-examiners did not ask any follow-up questions after the students' presentation and moved to the next task or spent too long making lengthy comments of their own or asking the same questions twice during the test, sometimes causing and disadvantaging the student from showing further language skills. Furthermore, students who chose the picture-based discussion were disadvantaged when teacher-examiners moved to the next task immediately after the follow-up questions and before the 4 minutes limit. It must be noted that when the follow-up questions to the presentation finish or the discussion on a picture comes to an end before the time that should be allocated to the task (i.e. minimum 4 minutes), teacher-examiners are advised to ask other questions from the same theme for the remaining time.

It must also be noted that the beginning and end of each task should be announced and the recording should not be stopped until the entire assessment is complete. There are an increasing number of teacher-examiners who fail to announce the beginning of the second task, resulting in confusion in the timing of the two tasks and in difficulty assessing the student's performance.

In some cases, students underperformed when teacher-examiners did not allow the students to finish their presentation, but interrupted them with a question before 1-2 minutes had passed, which subsequently affected the students' concentration. Also, when the students' presentation was too long (over 2 minutes), there was often insufficient time for follow-up questions,

which give students an opportunity to convey opinions and justification. Furthermore, the same topics and questions should not be repeated in the second task, e.g. if a student has spoken about "Fashion" in the presentation and the follow-up questions led into discussion about "Shopping", then in the second task the teacher examiner should not ask questions about "Fashion and Shopping", but choose other topics. The importance of the role of the teacher-examiner is instrumental to good performances. To this extent, students should not be asked mainly questions which can be answered with one word, nor with a list, but should be provided with opportunities to demonstrate their language skills.

Still a significant number of teacher-examiners conducted the speaking test using mainly questions from the Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs) and in some cases in the same order as they appear in the SAMs. These are intended for guidance only and strict adherence to both the order and the content of these questions does not allow for natural conversation. Furthermore, teacher examiners should avoid asking for information that has already been given in the presentation.

It is essential that teacher-examiners ensure that appropriate topics are selected for each task, noting in particular that some of the topics that appeared in the old specification are no longer appropriate. 'School', for example, is no longer an appropriate topic area, although examiners accept that a brief discussion in relation to school might be an appropriate lead-in to a discussion around future employment plans. Teacher-examiners are strictly advised to conduct the speaking test following the guidelines in the new specification and ask questions related to the subtopics of the themes provided.

Each task is assessed separately for Content and Response, Range of Language and Accuracy. As such, students must fulfil the requirements of the mark scheme in each task in order to gain full marks. For example, students failing to use past, present and future time frames in each task are unlikely to be able to score full marks. Equally, students should provide and justify a range of ideas and opinions in each task.

### **Administration**

Administrative guidelines were followed by the majority of centres and examiners received the examined tapes/CDs/USBs and the relevant paperwork within the timeframe allowed. The examining team were pleased to receive a significant proportion of centres' submissions on CD or memory stick this year. Centres are very much encouraged to use these formats, in preference to cassettes.

Centres should check that all students have been successfully recorded before dismissing the student from the examination and before submitting their materials. It is good practice for centres to retain a copy of students' recordings, in case of CDs / cassettes / memory sticks becoming broken in transit.

Where students undertake a picture-based discussion, a copy of the picture used must accompany the examination materials submitted.

A few centres did not download and send a Mark Record Sheet for each student, which resulted in unnecessary work for the examination team and a delay in marking.

**Please send one mark record sheet per student.**

It would be helpful to the examination team if centres made a list of the order of students' recordings, if the order on the attendance register has not been adhered to.

Centres are also reminded of the importance of labelling both the tape (or CD) and the box and of rewinding the tape to the beginning of side A. Teacher-examiners have an important part to play, ensuring that the recording equipment is in good working order, that students are not sitting too far from the microphone, that outside noise is kept to a minimum and that all involved in the conduct of the tests are fully aware of the procedure to follow. This is essential in the case of students who are not tested in the centre entering them, or are examined by a native speaker who is not a teacher at their centre.

Finally, the examiners would like to thank the vast majority of centres and teacher-examiners for conducting the exam effectively and according to the instructions of the conduct of the examination, as well as efficiently completing their administration.

## **Grade Boundaries**

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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