

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in Greek (5GK02/01)
Paper 2: Speaking in Greek

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GCSE Greek

Unit 2 Speaking in Greek

Examiners' Report

Performance

The overall standard was again high this year and the examining team was pleased with the level of performance and achievement of many of the candidates. In general, centres seemed more familiar with the requirements of the examination and many candidates were clearly well aware of what was expected of them, if the upper areas of the mark scheme were to be accessed. There were, inevitably, candidates who were far less expansive, but nevertheless managed to communicate information relevant to their chosen topic.

The most popular choice of assessment model for the first task was a presentation with follow-up questions on a subject that the candidates found interesting and exciting. "Holidays" from Media, Travel and Culture and "Hobbies and Sport" from Sport, Leisure and Work were both very popular choices. In the majority of cases these topics worked well, allowing plenty of room for opinions and justifications, as well as providing many opportunities to elicit time frames through follow-up questions on future holiday plans and opinions about holidays and travel in general. However, there were some candidates who had prepared their presentation thoroughly and performed well but who had little left for the rest of the task - this is equally important as it shows the candidates' ability to interact with the teacher examiner. It is crucial to ensure that the presentation and the follow-up discussion are well prepared and completed, as they fulfil different assessment criteria.

This year the most popular theme for the picture-based discussion was a holiday photo which could open up to questions about past and future holidays, thus displaying competence with tenses. Centres should note that a copy of the picture used for this option should be submitted to the examiner along with the candidate's Mark Record Sheet. A considerable number of candidates chose photos of their own hobbies (sport and music being the favourites) as a basis for discussion whereas others chose a photo related to a "profession" with many candidates talking about their favourite. This often led effectively into a consideration of their wider interests, healthy lifestyle or future plans and, at the same time, showed they interact naturally on a subject of their preference.

Some very pleasing performances were also heard for the second task, the general conversation, with the best candidates able to offer a range of justified opinions on a number of topics using complex linguistic structures and sophisticated vocabulary. Some candidates, 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. A few candidates just repeated what the teacher examiner said and failed to expand.

Most candidates understood the requirements of the mark scheme and used a wide range of appropriate vocabulary, structures and a variety of different tenses. Candidates who understood the importance of taking the initiative and developing more extended answers that included justified opinions, as well as ensuring that a verb was always used in the answer, were best placed to perform well. On the whole, students were aware of the fact that their results would be enhanced by having a genuine interaction, rather than reciting a pre-learnt script. Some of the topics that were discussed with some success for this part of the assessment included "Free Time", "Internet, computers and mobile phones", "Future plans" and "Healthy eating and living".

Overall, skilful and appropriate questioning from the teacher examiner afforded candidates the opportunities to give lengthier answers enabling them to access the upper areas of the marks available.

Conduct

The majority of teacher examiners demonstrated very good practice in terms of preparing and examining their candidates effectively. They encouraged their students to choose a topic that was of interest to them and led the conversations sympathetically and efficiently, following the rules regarding timings and ensuring a spontaneous exchange could take place. The centres whose candidates performed best were those who understood the crucial role of the teacher examiner as a facilitator in allowing candidates to access the full range of the mark scheme. More specifically they asked appropriate questions that elicited a full range of tenses and ensured that the candidates themselves were well aware of the mark scheme's requirements. Equally, the best teacher examiners re-phrased questions when candidates were struggling or unsure, or simply moved on swiftly to a different question.

Less successful teacher examiners tended only to ask closed questions, to interrupt or talk over students, or to ask questions that did not elicit a full range of tenses thus disadvantaging their candidates. Moreover, some teacher examiners spoke too much themselves, either by asking very long questions or giving their own opinions or answers to the questions; this may disadvantage the candidate, as this will lead to a reduction in the amount of language they can produce in the allotted time. Also, in some cases candidates' performance was restricted, often due to teacher examiners not conducting the examination according to the instructions laid out in the Specification or in Pearson's ICE document (Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination – Lesser taught languages) or training video for conducting the oral exams (both available via the Pearson Edexcel website www.edexcel.com). Unfortunately, a number of centres continue to prepare their candidates to discuss the topic of School Life or the topic "My family". These are not topics for this specification and centres who prepare their candidates to discuss these topics are placing their candidates at a considerable disadvantage, as irrelevant material cannot be given credit.

In general, the orals were well conducted and allowed candidates to achieve their best. However, there was an increasing number of centres

that failed to fully grasp the requirements and this led to a number of errors in the administration and conduct of the examinations, in some cases with serious consequences for candidates' performances.

The examining team would offer the following advice to centres, to ensure efficient processing of their candidates' submissions and to ensure that candidates have access to the full range of marks available:

- Candidates must complete two tasks, each lasting 4-5 minutes. Task 1 must be either a presentation with follow-up questions **or** a picture-based discussion. Task 2 should not include any form of presentation or monologue by candidates, but should be a dialogue throughout.
- Overall the oral test should last 8-10 minutes with the time split evenly across the two tasks. **The timing of each task is set when the candidate starts talking and not while teacher examiners read out the centre and candidate details.** If this is not observed, the result is that the candidate actually speaks for less time than the teacher examiner believes, which can result in too short a test. Tasks which are longer than 5 minutes might contain rewardable material which cannot be taken into account due to their length.
- When the candidate has chosen to make a presentation, this should last between 1-2 minutes at maximum, and then it must be followed by questions and answers.
- 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 during the remaining time.
- The beginning and end of each task should be announced, but the recording should not be stopped until the entire assessment is complete. Moreover, only one teacher examiner should conduct the test. Also, there is 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 candidates' performance.
- 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 topics. For example "School" or "My house", or "My family", are no longer appropriate topic areas in their own right, although examiners accept that a brief discussion of school might be an appropriate lead in to a discussion of future employment plans. **An inappropriate topic such as "school" or a discussion on the differences between schools in the UK and in Greece or a lengthy presentation of one's family can have a considerable**

adverse effect on the marks the candidate is able to achieve for the task, because much of the material covered is likely to be considered irrelevant and non-rewardable.

- After the candidate's presentation, avoid asking follow-up questions that cover exactly the same ground as that in the presentation, as it makes the candidate use the same language and repeat information already given rather than taking the conversation forward, expanding on details and opinions. Often when the teacher examiner asked a question about something the candidate had already stated in the presentation, this led to some hesitation and confusion.
- Centres should note that, although candidates are free to choose the broad topic area for the first task, the focus of the conversation should not be known to them in advance and standard sequences of questions should not be used in the assessment or rehearsed in advance.
- The same topics and questions should not be repeated in the second task, e.g. if a candidate has spoken about "Fashion" in the presentation and the follow-up questions led into a discussion about "Shopping", then in the second task the teacher examiner should not ask questions about "Fashion and Shopping", but should choose other topics.
- Candidates should not be asked questions which can be mainly answered with one word or a list, but should be provided with opportunities to offer lengthier and more complicated responses to demonstrate their language skills. The importance of the role of the teacher examiner is instrumental to good performances.
- Each task is assessed separately for Content and Response, Range of Language and Accuracy. As such, candidates must fulfil the requirements of the mark scheme in each task in order to gain full marks. For example, candidates failing to use past, present and future time frames in each task are unlikely to be able to score full marks. Equally, candidates should provide and justify a range of ideas and opinions in each task.
- Centres should check that the teacher examiner is familiar with the format of the test and that s/he has the linguistic ability to conduct the test, otherwise the candidate will be disadvantaged.
- Clear guidance on all aspects of the preparation and conduct of the oral examination is available via the Edexcel website in the form of the Specification, the Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination document and via a training video giving comprehensive advice on preparing for and conducting the GCSE oral exam for the lesser taught languages. For the slides of the video please follow the link: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/subject-updates/languages/Latest%20PDF%20of%20slides.pdf>. There is also a YouTube video that offers very useful advice on how to prepare and

conduct the oral exam:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_9SAXmiRCM

Administration

Administrative guidelines were followed by the majority of centres and examiners received the examined CDs/USBs and the relevant paperwork within the timeframe allowed. The examining team were pleased to receive a significant proportion of centres' submissions on time this year.

- Centres should check that all candidates have been successfully recorded before dismissing the candidate from the examination and before submitting their materials. This year some of the recordings were barely audible. It is good practice for centres **to retain a copy** of candidates' recordings, in case CDs or memory sticks become damaged or get lost during transit.
- Where candidates undertake a picture-based discussion, a copy of the picture used must accompany the examination materials submitted.
- Centres must ensure that a Mark Record Sheet (available from the Pearson Edexcel website), with Section A appropriately completed, accompanies the recording of each student. **Please send one mark record sheet per candidate.**
- Centres should make a list of the order of candidates' recordings, where the order on the attendance register has not been adhered to.
- Centres are also reminded of the importance of labelling the CDs. Teacher examiners have an important part to play, ensuring that the recording equipment is in good working order; that candidates 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 be followed. This is essential in the case of candidates 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, it is pleasing to report both a continued excellent standard of candidates' performances and a reduction in the number of administrative issues. The examining team 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 completing their administration efficiently.

Grade Boundaries

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

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>