



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Greek (1GK0) Paper 2H: Speaking

Higher tier

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Summer 2024

Publications Code 1GK0_2H_pef_20240822

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GCSE Greek Speaking paper Higher tier

2024 Examiner's report

Introduction

The speaking examination for the Higher tier consists of three parts: a role play (RP) with 5 prompts and a maximum of 10 marks, a picture-based task (PBT) with five prompts and a maximum of 24 marks and a conversation of two topic areas and a maximum of 36 marks. There are 10 Higher role plays and 10 Higher picture-based cards. There is also a sequencing grid that centres are asked to follow when deciding which candidate receives which role play, which picture-based card and the theme for the second conversation. Following the sequencing grid is very important, as it ensures that the candidate is tested in four out of five themes of the specification and it avoids duplication. The candidates have 12 minutes preparation time to read through the role play and the picture-based card. In the Higher role play card usually the third prompt has an unpredictable question which refers to the past and the candidate is expected to use a past reference and usually the last two prompts require the candidate to ask two questions. The first task for each picture-based card is a description of the photo, the third task requires a response within a past time frame and the fourth task requires a future time frame. For the Foundation and Higher role plays and picture-based tasks teachers are not allowed to rephrase questions. The questions may be repeated, but no more than twice, so overall the candidates may hear each question up to three times. In the picture-based tasks prompts «Τίποτ' άλλο;» (Anything else?) and/or «Γιατί;» (Why?) have been provided to enable candidates to develop their answers. Only these prompts may be used and there must be no other supplementary questions by the teacher.

The timing for the Higher speaking examination is 10-12 minutes. This is only a guideline for the role play and picture-based tasks and it does not mean that the three tasks cannot be completed successfully in a shorter time. However, timings for the conversation task are prescribed and should be 5 - 6 minutes for the Higher tier and teachers should not extend conversation times to reach the total time of the complete examination. Any response started after 6 min will not be given credit. An equal amount of time should be allocated to both parts of the conversation. If the first conversation is a monologue without questions and answers the mark for Interaction and Spontaneity is capped at 6.

Overview

As in previous years, the examination team was pleased to report that there were some very good performances and that most candidates were well prepared and achieved marks in the upper band. The paper was challenging to some candidates who either were not familiar with the test or were not sufficiently prepared or they did not have the basic skills to communicate their answers and should have entered the Foundation Tier. Most popular RPs were HR5 (Work, looking for work in a sports centre), HR6 (School activities, school trips), HR8 (Travel and Tourist transactions, a dialogue at a lost property office) and HR9 (What school is like, opinion on school and favourite subjects). Most popular PBTs were HP9 (Bringing the world together, helping

the elderly), HP7 (Using languages beyond the classroom, use of foreign languages at work), HP8 (Ambitions, ideal job) and HP3 (Holidays, importance of holidays).

A significant number of candidates underperformed in some parts of the RP (role play) – usually in Q4 and Q5 where they needed to ask a question based on the prompts given to them - and did not offer justification in opinions in PBT (picture-based task). In some cases, the candidates did not familiarise themselves with the RP scenario and as a result they struggled to answer the questions or offered irrelevant responses. That was evident in the first question of the RP when they had to answer an open question «Πώς μπορώ να σας βοηθήσω;» (How can I help you?).

In some cases, marks were lost due to bad examining practices, i.e., wrong timings in conversation or most commonly changing the questions or/and adding new ones in RP and PBT.

The Conversation Task proved to be a rich platform for most candidates to articulate their thoughts, ideas, and detailed information related to the topics. For C1, theme 1 (identity and culture) emerged as a favourite, closely followed by and theme 3 (School) and theme 2 (holidays). Similarly to last year, more and more candidates this year chose for their first conversation topic 5 and talked about the environment often displaying impressive skills.

Task 1: Role play (RP)

It is worth mentioning that the role play task is marked for communication only, unlike the picture-based task and the conversation. Answers should be brief and to the point to avoid confusion and ambiguity. It is very important that candidates read the scenario carefully during the preparation time to understand where the role play is situated and what is expected of them. Crucially, the teacher conducting the test should read out the small introduction in Greek before asking the questions. A few teachers failed to do so and that created an initial confusion. Also, there were some teachers who omitted one of the questions or rephrased one of the questions and as a result they disadvantaged the candidates. Many candidates were successful with the unpredictable question (Q3) and with the formation of a question for Q4 and Q5 of the role play. Some candidates were less successful in framing a question and lost marks due to poor pronunciation or by asking other questions from the prescribed ones.

- Finally, it is worth remembering the Marking Principles agreed across all modern languages:
- If a teacher changes a question or inserts a supplementary question, there can be no credit for a response made by the candidate.
- Where a candidate has offered an incorrect response to a question, the teacher may not repeat the question. If the teacher does so and the candidate then gives a correct response, this is ignored.
- Teachers may repeat each question twice but may not rephrase any of the questions.

HR1

Some candidates ignored the prompt and simply said that they wanted to buy books instead of two Greek books. Very few did not answer Q3 using past references. More specifically, in those cases where the teacher examiner spoke fast it was more difficult to understand that it was «κάνατε» not «κάνετε», although «μέχρι τώρα» should have helped. As a result, some candidates replied by explaining what they usually do when they are in Greece. It is worth mentioning that a candidate who is well prepared for the speaking exam should expect a question referring in the past in Q3, therefore their response should include past references. In Q5 very few candidates ignored part of the prompt and asked about the bookshop's opening hours in general instead of specifying the opening hours on Saturday.

HR2

Most candidates performed very well and they were well prepared to talk about healthy diet.

HR3

Most candidates knew the Greek word for volunteer (εθελοντής/ντρια) and were able to score full marks in Q1-Q3. The word «διαμονή» in Q4 caused problems for a considerable number of candidates, less so the word «ωράριο» in Q5 where there were some instances of misunderstanding «ωράριο» as «ωραίο».

HR4

In Q1 some candidates ignored the prompt and simply asked about trips in general instead of coach trips and similarly in Q5 they asked about the cost of tickets instead of the ticket cost for students. In Q4 the word «διάρκεια» caused problems for some.

HR5

This was the most popular card and many candidates managed to score full marks. In Q1 there was a considerable number of candidates that ignored the second prompt and did not specifically ask for a job in reception or they pronounced the word in English. Q4 was challenging for some who did not understand the meaning of «διαμονή στην πόλη» and asked an irrelevant question.

HR6

This was also a popular RP and most candidates were well prepared to talk about school trips.

HR8

This was a popular card and many candidates managed to score full marks.

HR9

Generally, this RP was answered well and most candidates were well prepared to give an opinion about their school. The word «διάρκεια» in Q4 caused problems for some.

HR10

In Q1 some candidates ignored part of the prompt and asked information on holidays in general instead of holidays on the Greek islands. In Q4 some asked for restaurant prices on a ferry possibly because they misread the Greek word for ticket «εισιτήριο» and they thought it was «εστιατόριο». Finally, in Q5 a considerable number of candidates ignored the prompt «πώς» and asked to book a type of room, instead of asking how to book a room.

Task 2: Picture-based (PBT)

The Higher tier candidates often offered detailed photo descriptions concentrating not only on the physical characteristics and the clothes of the people in the photos but on their feelings and their surroundings. They often went further, explaining what they believed was happening in the photo and used expressions such as «(Μου) φαίνεται ότι...», «Πιστεύω ότι...», «Θα έλεγα ότι δείχνουν...» to enhance the task.

«Φαίνονται/Δείχνουν χαρούμενοι, επειδή χαμογελούν στην κάμερα» was an indication where a candidate could use the picture to give an opinion or make a deduction.

At Higher tier, there was a wide range of marks awarded and this was because there was an uneven level of response across the task. Some candidates were able to give very good descriptions of the photo and offered very good opinions with some justification in question two but were less expansive in the response to questions three and four when dealing with events in the past and the future. The most successful candidates were able to relate past and future events with minimal prompting and there was little hesitancy within the responses. These questions proved to be good differentiators within the mark scheme. A significant number of candidates failed to use the past tense in Q3 and in some cases future references in Q4, either because they did not have the linguistic skills or in some cases because they did not pay sufficient attention to the way the questions were formed. Less confident candidates used mainly the present tense and some attempts to use past reference were unsuccessful and led to some ambiguity. Furthermore, some lost marks because they did not justify their opinion in what was discussed in Questions 2&5.

HP9 & HP10 were challenging to a number of candidates; the theme of helping the elderly proved demanding to some candidates in terms of vocabulary and ideas, similar to the theme on the environment in general.

In some cases, candidates were allowed to 'ramble on' when an acceptable answer had been given and the extra information did not add anything to what had already been said. Examiners are looking for the quality of the response rather than the length. It is counter-productive to go through the supplementary prompts when a perfectly good response has been given. Indeed, the ensuing silence does not help the candidate and it often affects their performance towards the end of the task.

Centres are reminded that the questions within the picture-based discussion are set and **they should not be altered in any way**. Unfortunately, there were instances where teachers reworded or reframed questions or added extra prompts which did not allow candidates to be credited for responses to these questions. For example, in some cases the teacher examiners asked «Τι βλέπεις;» (What do you see?) instead of or after the prescribed question «Περιγράψε τη φωτογραφία» (Describe the photo). This is

not accepted and the candidate's response is discredited for Question 1. There were also occasions where supplementary questions were added in the middle of the task. No credit could be given for these responses and the practice caused confusion for these candidates who had prepared responses to the five bullet points.

Finally, it is worth remembering the Marking Principles agreed across all modern languages:

- Candidates must refer to the visual image in response to the first question.
- Where a teacher changes a question or changes the prompts («Γιατί (όχι);» and «Τίποτ' άλλο;») or inserts a supplementary question which is not scripted, there can be no credit for a response made by the candidate.
- Teachers may repeat each question twice but may not rephrase any of the questions.

HP1

Some candidates ignored the Greek word for 'recently' and in Q3 they talked about a sport they did in the past and not recently. In Q4 some candidates focused mainly on the first part of the question (a new sport they would like to do in the future) ignoring the second part (how they would manage).

HP2

The word «πλεονεκτήματα» posed a problem to some candidates who talked about the disadvantages and not the advantages of the internet in the unseen question Q5.

HP4

The word «εξοχή» and especially «συγκοινωνία» posed a problem to a significant number of candidates; some misunderstood «εξοχή» with «εξωτερικό» and «συγκοινωνία» with «κοινωνία». In many cases the teacher examiners intervened to explain the word «συγκοινωνία» in the unseen question Q5, as a result the candidates lost marks even if they gave a meaningful response after the intervention.

HP7

This was a popular picture card. Although many candidates were able to answer most questions on using foreign languages at work, some were less successful when they described the picture, leaving vital details out, such as what they thought the two people in the photo were doing.

HP9

This was one of the most popular picture cards and in general it was answered well. However, in Q4 many candidates didn't refer to «για έναν καλό σκοπό» but talked about their school plans in general or in some cases they did not refer to school at all. Finally, in the unseen question Q5 some candidates did not know the Greek word for volunteering and they gave an irrelevant response. Some teacher examiners intervened to explain the word «εθελοντισμός», as a result the candidates lost marks even if they gave a meaningful response after the intervention.

HP10

Some candidates found Q2 (the biggest environmental problem) challenging and in some cases, they named a problem, but they did not justify why they thought it was the biggest. Lack of relevant vocabulary was an issue for some candidates and affected their performance in all questions.

Task 3: Conversations (conversation 1 on a chosen theme and conversation 2 on a theme prescribed by Pearson)

In general, the conversations were well conducted and the skilful and appropriate questioning from the teachers afforded candidates the opportunities to fulfil their potential in line with the criteria enabling candidates to achieve their best.

It is essential to be careful with the timings and avoid any imbalance between the two conversations or any shortfall or excess in timings. Most teachers put their students at ease, using a friendly tone of voice and spoke clearly and slowly so that the students had little or no problems in understanding the questions. They also covered a variety of sub-topics within a theme, which resulted in a wider variety of language from the candidates.

For the first Conversation, students should be encouraged to introduce the topic they have chosen for up to one minute prior to the interaction with the teacher. It is equally important to ensure that they are not allowed to go on beyond the 1 minute and teachers should interrupt with their first question if the candidate seems determined to continue with a monologue. Unsurprisingly, the first prepared conversation was often more successful than the second and it was noticeable how the less successful candidates frequently found it difficult to complete their sentences as they struggled to find the right vocabulary, grammatical structures or verb tenses in conversation 2.

Some teachers had clearly not been listening carefully to what the students were saying and confused them by asking questions the answers to which had already been covered in the initial presentation. The Conversations should be allowed to develop naturally and the teachers should listen carefully to what the candidate is saying and build the conversation accordingly. It is worth noting that in the conversation task the candidates are **not** expected to ask questions to the teacher examiners. In some cases, the candidates were prepared to do so and teacher examiners gave lengthy responses taking up valuable time from the candidate's allotted time for each conversation.

Marks were lost mainly when bad examining practice took place; monologues lasting over one minute (Interaction and Spontaneity is affected), the first conversation containing only a monologue (maximum 6 for Interaction and Spontaneity, the first conversation significantly longer than the second (Communication and content is affected) or both conversations together lasted less than 5 minutes (Communication and content is affected).

Finally, it is worth remembering the Marking Principles that have been agreed across all modern languages:

- Higher Conversations should last for between 5 and 6 minutes
- Timings begin with the candidate's first utterance.
- Conversations that are too short are likely to be self-penalising.
- Conversations that are too long: once the 5 minutes for Higher tier candidates have passed, examiners stop listening and assessing at the end of the candidate's response to the current question.
- An equal amount of time must be allocated to each Conversation.
- The candidates are not expected to ask questions in the conversation task, unless they need clarification or they ask for a question to be repeated.
- Where the first Conversation is a monologue and has no interaction, students will be limited to a maximum score of 6 marks for Interaction and Spontaneity. The marks for Communication and Content and Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy, however, are unaffected.

Administration

Administrative guidelines were followed by some centres and the relevant CS2 form was uploaded electronically. Some centres however failed to upload the relevant form and that resulted in delays in marking. Going forward centres are advised to fill in the Word version of the CS2 form adding all information, i.e. the Role play and the Picture task number along with the themes of the first and second conversation.

- Centres should follow the sequencing grid.
- It is very useful if teachers announce the role play card number and the picture card number at the start of the tasks, as well as the theme for each of the Conversations at the beginning of each one.
- Centres should upload separate CS2 form for each tier.

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