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Examiner's Report
Principal Examiner Feedback
Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Greek (1GK0)

Paper: 4F (Writing)

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Principal Examiner's Report

Summer 2023

Specification: 1GK0

Paper: 4F Writing in Greek

Introduction

1GK0 4F is assessed by means of a 1 hour and 20 minutes examination. Candidates are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively through writing in Greek for different purposes and are required to produce responses of varying lengths and types to express ideas and opinions in Greek.

The instructions are in Greek. Word counts are specified for each question. Candidates must answer three open-response questions and complete one short translation into Greek. The total mark for this paper is 60. The use of dictionaries is not allowed.

Questions in this paper address a range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes. They are organised into five themes, each broken down into topics and sub-topics. The five themes are listed below. Please refer to page 9 of the published specification for information on the sub-topics under each theme.

- Theme 1: Identity and culture
- Theme 2: Local area, holiday and travel
- Theme 3: School
- Theme 4: Future aspirations, study and work
- Theme 5: International and global dimension

The length of each response required in 4F and the complexity of language increase across the paper. Recommended word counts are specified for each question, and candidates are advised to adhere to these recommendations, as overly long responses have been proven to contain irrelevance, digression and a certain imbalance regarding the coverage of the various bullet points.

All questions are marked against the assessment criteria as published in the current specification. The question specific indicative content for question 4 may be found in this year's mark scheme for this paper.

Paper Summary

This was the first iteration of the paper in post-pandemic conditions. In general, it was evident that many candidates had been well prepared for the examination and achieved a satisfactory level of success in questions which required narration, description and opinion. Some candidates were less successful in questions which required more than basic information and structures, a formal register or the provision of details across various time frames.

A few candidates left significant gaps in their answers in section C and were challenged by high frequency vocabulary and structures. Common rubric infringements concerned answering a question in the wrong space; answering all questions, instead of selecting 2(a) or 2 (b) and 3(a) or (3b) and writing unnecessarily long answers which invariably contained more errors and digression from the topic.

In conclusion, a good number of candidates scored well throughout the paper. They demonstrated their ability to convey information, develop points using familiar vocabulary and use language with varying degrees of success. Comments on individual questions are below.

Question 1

Q1 assesses candidates on their ability to write to describe and to express opinions. It requires a short description of a photograph and opinion about a topic. This year's question was linked to the theme of 'School' and the topic was 'what school is like'.

This question is worth 12 marks: 6 marks for Communication and Content for writing information relevant to the photograph and the required rubric, and 6 for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy, for accurate application of grammatical structures.

Performance in this question was often satisfactory and occasionally not appropriate for the level of demand for this paper. Many candidates demonstrated acceptable language awareness, mostly characterised by basic vocabulary and structures. Some possessed weak language skills, with inability to apply the conventions of writing in a legible, unambiguous way, often mixing English and Greek characters in their words. At times, the writing was almost illegible and very little relevant meaning emerged. Candidates are advised to familiarise themselves with the conventions of the Greek alphabet before entering for this examination.

Some misunderstood the rubric and simply described the photograph, as if it was unrelated to their own personal experience of exchange school, when in fact it was a picture that was linked to their own experience and was sent by them. A frequent omission related to expressing opinion (what they think of school) in addition to description. The source of this confusion seemed to stem from the candidate's hasty reading of the rubric or lack of understanding of what is expected of them.

Question 2

Q2 assesses candidates on their ability to convey key points in writing and is worth 16 marks: 8 for Communication and Content and 8 for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy.

Candidates must use the formal register. Traditionally, there was no option provided for question 2. As a concession to the disruption caused by the pandemic, an optional aspect to question 2 was introduced. Recommended wordage in this question is 40-50 words.

Question 2(a)

This question was linked to the topic of 'good causes'. It invited a formal email to the director of an animal shelter, in order to offer one's services as volunteer. There four bullet points listed were all compulsory and elicited one's personal details (name, age, etc.); reference to the preferred schedule of the candidate (days and times); reason why they wish to volunteer (one's love for animals, belief in helping) and what experience they have of animals (they have a pet, they helped out in the past, etc.)

2a was the least popular choice with mostly average performance characterised by rehearsed phrases and, often, omission of bullet points.

There was a small number of candidates, whose 'own language' showed significant breakdown, when it departed from the memorised phrases or from copying whole phrases from the bullet points without manipulation, for example: θέλεις να βοηθήσεις γιατί αγαπάω τα ζώα.

Common examples of good performance at this level included use of common, familiar vocabulary, repetition and predominance of high frequency verbs with some inaccurate inflections. In general, performance in this question was as expected at the higher levels of competence, with poor Greek being more pronounced in the essays of weaker candidates.

Question 2(b)

This question was based on the topic of 'Using Languages Beyond the Classroom/Travel'. The question required from candidates to write a formal email to the head of a summer camp in Greece, to apply for a spot in the programme, while also mentioning the reason they are interested in participating; why they are learning Greek; what their favorite things to do are and when exactly they are interested in going. The question invited narration, description and opinion.

2b candidates performed better and showed better adherence to the rubric, with some examples of straightforward grammatical structures and high frequency vocabulary. At the higher end, there was noticeably better adaptation of language to narrate and develop points. Patterns of omissions were evident, when candidates failed to refer and expand on a certain bullet point, usually the third and fourth ones.

A significant area of weakness was failure to construct references to time lines other than the present.

Question 3

Question 3 is common to 4H. It is worth 20 marks: 12 for Communication and Content, the ability to write 80-90 words with information relevant to the task, with effective adaptation of language to narrate, inform and give convincing personal opinions, and 8 marks for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy, which involves evidence of accurate language and structures, good linking of the piece as a whole and successful reference to past, present and future events.

Question 3(a)

This year, question 3 (a) drew its content from the theme of 'Identity and Culture' and the topic was 'family'. It required that candidates write an email to a friend in Greece, in which they describe their family; they narrate in relation to a recent family experience; explain what they'd like to do with their family in the future and offer opinion as to why family is important to them.

3a was the popular choice and the one tackled successfully by the majority of candidates, since this is one of the most rehearsed topics in the specification. Performance was mostly marked by communication of information relevant to the task at descriptive level and successful application of grammatical structures, in the Present and Future tense mostly, with only the most vigilant candidates using references to the past. There was either a misreading of the rubric or the candidates lacked the skill to respond ably and accurately to the request for information regarding "what you all did as a family recently". Instead, they wrote about what they usually do with their family, failing to demonstrate their knowledge of using multiple time frames, the Simple Past in particular.

Here, more than in any other question there were lengthy and irrelevant descriptions of cats, dogs and holidays in Greece which took up almost two pages at the expense of expanding and showing ability to adapt language to address other bullet points. Often, the required opinion was expressed rather hastily in one sentence.

Candidates are advised to demonstrate a sense of balance when they respond to the various requests for information and opinion required by the essay questions.

Question 3(b)

Question 3(b) fell under the theme of 'Local Area Holiday and Travel' and the topic was 'eating out'. It required that candidates write a review about a place where they ate recently, describing it, explaining why they went there, sharing their opinion and offering a recommendation to those who are thinking of visiting it.

Many candidates conveyed relevant information appropriate to the task, using basic structures and a good range of straightforward vocabulary. Often, points were made with effective development and good linking of extended sentences, particularly in relation to the second and the third bullet points, with often superficial reference and minimal expansion of the first and fourth bullet points.

Because of these omissions, there was not enough evidence of the ability to employ the full range of structures, tenses in particular, expected at this level of demand. Some students erred on the side of description, when they provided long lists of types of food, without offering opinion as to what they liked the best in that restaurant or making the required recommendations.

An area of weakness, therefore, was in relation to either omitting some of the required information, in favour of rehearsed sentences about the topic of food.

Question 4

This question related to the theme of 'Future aspirations/ Study and work' and the topic was 'jobs'. It consisted of 5 discrete sentences, worth a total of 12 marks. The sentences in this question proceed in order of rising complexity and, towards the end, the translation elicits references to different time frames (e.g., 'I started', 'so I can go').

Performance in this question was satisfactory at the higher end of competence, with some surprising examples of significant weaknesses in basic vocabulary like 'bookshop', 'I work', and even common time references like 'last Saturday' or 'in the summer'.

In general, many candidates were able to achieve at least half of the available marks, which indicates that the meaning of the passage was communicated with degrees of success, from partial to full.

Conclusion

Based on their performance in this paper, candidates are asked to consider the following:

- read every question in the exam paper before they begin to write their answers. When a question offers a choice, e.g., question 3, they ought to make sure that they write about a topic that interests them, that they have something to say about and whose time frames they are able to address
- look very carefully at the whole question, including the rubric, to make sure that they fully understand what they are being asked to do
- pay attention to key words in the bullet points, as these will help them to answer each of the bullet points correctly. Make sure to alter the pronouns and the person of the verbs in the bullet points, where appropriate (e.g., 'γιατί θέλεις να πας' should become 'θέλω να πάω')
- answer each of the bullet points in the order that they appear, so that they do not end up omitting any. Use a new paragraph for each one
- leave enough time to check their work carefully at the end of the exam

- familiarise themselves with the assessment criteria, so that they are aware of the aspects involved in assessing performance. This is particularly important for questions that elicit the use of a formal register or purpose
- be reminded of the importance of clear and legible writing and accurate, correctly spelled language to ensure an unambiguous response.

Thank you for choosing to study this specification.