

Examiners' Report /  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCSE Russian (5RU02) Paper 01

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## Examiner Report

Overall, the examining team was pleased to see a good standard of Russian on display again this year, with many candidates clearly having been very well prepared for the examination and some impressive language on display. In general, centres seemed more familiar with the requirements of this relatively new examination and many candidates were clearly well aware of what was expected of them, if the higher areas of the mark scheme were to be accessed. The team's positive impression of the greater emphasis on communication in the new mark scheme and the greater number of overall marks available was confirmed by this year's cohort.

Many teacher examiners seemed comfortable with the requirements of the examination and had clearly prepared their candidates very effectively. Candidates generally responded well to the ownership of the tasks that is afforded by the current format and were able to discuss their chosen topics in some detail, presenting interesting and varied information.

The most popular assessment model for Task 1 was once again the presentation with follow-up questions. A large number of candidates had prepared for this task very effectively and were clearly discussing topics of genuine interest to them. 'Sport' was, in the Olympic year, a very popular choice under *Sport, Leisure and Work*, with 'My hobbies' also being a popular option. Of those candidates opting to tackle *Media, Travel and Culture* for the first task, the majority chose to discuss their best or worst holiday. All of these topic choices worked well, affording opportunities for both open and closed questioning and thus allowing teacher examiners to stretch good candidates while supporting weaker candidates.

While still in the minority, a larger number of candidates this year chose the picture-based discussion for Task 1. 'Holidays' again proved to be a very popular choice for this assessment model, as did 'Sport' with a number of candidates choosing photos of their own sporting endeavours as a basis for discussion. This often led effectively into a consideration of their wider interests, healthy lifestyle, etc.

Task 2 saw some very competent performances, with the best candidates able to offer a range of justified opinions on a number of topics using complex linguistic structures and unusual vocabulary. Most candidates and teacher examiners clearly understood the requirements of the mark scheme and were careful to ensure that a range of time frames were used. Topics that were discussed with some success for this part of the assessment included 'Free Time', 'Work Experience', 'Health and Fitness' and 'Media'.

While many centres had clearly understood the requirements of the specification well and prepared their candidates effectively, a number of centres failed fully to 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 the candidates' performance. 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:

- Tests should last a **total** of 8-10 minutes, with the time divided **equally** between the two tasks. Tasks lasting less than the minimum 4 minutes are likely to disadvantage the candidate; for excessively long tasks, examiners will stop listening after the maximum 5 minutes.
- The beginning and end of **each** task should be announced, but the recording should **not** be stopped until the entire assessment is complete.
- 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 give and justify a range of ideas and opinions in each task.
- It is essential that TEs ensure that appropriate topics are selected for each task, noting in particular that some of the topics that appeared on the old specification are no longer appropriate topics. 'School', for example, is no longer an appropriate topic area in its own right, although examiners accept that a **brief** discussion of school might be an appropriate lead-in to a discussion of future employment plans.
- Centres should note that, while candidates are free to choose the broad topic area for the general conversation, the focus of the conversation should **not** be known to them in advance.
- 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 Edexcel website), with Section A appropriately completed, accompanies the recording of each candidate.
- Centres should check that all candidates have been successfully recorded before submitting their materials. **It is good practice for centres to retain a copy of candidates' recordings, in case of CDs / cassettes / memory sticks becoming broken in transit.**
- 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, rather than submitting their recordings on cassette.
- When recording candidates, centres should ensure that outside noise is kept to a minimum and that, if an external microphone is used, it favours the candidate rather than the teacher examiner.

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