

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE Russian (5RU02)
Paper 1 Speaking in Russian

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GCSE Russian

Unit 2 Speaking in Russian

Examiner Report

Overall, the examining team was pleased to see a good standard of Russian on display again this year, with many students clearly having been very well prepared for the examination and some impressive language on display. Many centres, in particular those with large cohorts of learner students, were familiar with the requirements of the specification and were able successfully to facilitate their students in accessing the higher areas of the mark scheme. Many Teacher Examiners seemed comfortable with the requirements of the examination and had clearly prepared their students very effectively. The teacher examiner's role in the examination is crucial, with the best asking clear and open questions and leaving room for students to speak and to show off a range of language. 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 students.

Students generally responded well to the ownership of the tasks that is afforded by the specification 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 students had prepared for this task very effectively and were clearly discussing topics of genuine interest to them. 'Sport' remained the most popular choice under *Sport, Leisure and Work*, with 'My hobbies' also being a popular option. Of those students opting to tackle *Media, Travel and Culture* for the first task, the majority chose to discuss their best or worst holiday, with a good number also opting to discuss their favourite celebrity. All of these topic choices worked well, affording opportunities for both open and closed questioning and thus allowing teacher examiners to stretch good students while supporting weaker students.

A significant minority of students opted for 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 students selecting photos of their sporting heroes as a basis for discussion. Some students provided pictures of themselves engaging in their favourite sport, which also worked well. Both of these options led effectively into a consideration of the wider context of a healthy lifestyle.

Task 2 also saw some very competent student performances, with the best students able to offer a range of justified opinions on a number of topics using complex linguistic structures and unusual vocabulary. Many students 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', 'Healthy Lifestyle', 'Travel', and 'My Local Area'.

While many centres had clearly understood the requirements of the specification well and prepared their students effectively, a disappointingly large number of centres failed 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 students' attainment. The examining team would offer the following advice to centres, to ensure efficient processing of their students' submissions and to ensure that students have access to the full range of marks available:

- Students must complete **two** tasks, each lasting 4-5 minutes; the first must be a picture-based discussion **or** presentation with follow-up discussion, the second must be a general discussion on a chosen topic area. The second task should not include any form of presentation by students, but should be a dialogue throughout. Centres should note that this is **not** a Controlled Assessment unit and that the two tasks should be recorded as a single assessment.
- 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 student; for excessively long tasks, examiners will stop listening after the maximum 5 minutes.
- The beginning and end of **each** task should be announced (in **English**), 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, 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 give and justify a range of ideas and opinions in **each** task.
- 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 on the legacy GCSE 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. Where an inappropriate topic such as 'school' is discussed for an entire task or a significant portion of a task, students are unlikely to be able to score highly.
- Centres should note that, while students 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 and standard sequences of questions should not be used in the assessment or rehearsed in advance.
- Where students undertake a picture-based discussion, a copy of the picture used, or a description of it, 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 student.

- Centres should check that all students have been successfully recorded before submitting their materials. This includes finalising audio CDs after burning, so that they can be played on a normal CD player. **It is good practice for centres to retain a copy of students' recordings, in case of CDs / cassettes / memory sticks becoming broken in transit.**
- The examining team were pleased to receive the vast majority 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 students, centres should ensure that outside noise is kept to a minimum and that, if an external microphone is used, it favours the student rather than the Teacher examiner.

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>

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