



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Russian (1RU0)

Paper 2H: Speaking

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The Higher tier speaking assessment consists of three tasks:

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| • Task 1 – role play | Higher tier: 2 – 2 ½ mins |
| • Task 2 – picture-based task | Higher tier: 3 – 3 ½ mins |
| • Task 3 – conversation | Higher tier: 5 – 6 mins |

Please see the Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Russian specification (pp. 12-35) for further details of this assessment, and for the mark grids used for assessment. Please see the same document (pp. 8-9) for a list of the themes and topics for this specification.

The tasks must be conducted in consecutive order.

Candidates take the speaking test at either Foundation or Higher tier. Different cards for task 1 and task 2 are set for Foundation and Higher tier.

The total test time at Higher tier is 10-12 minutes (plus 12 minutes to prepare for tasks 1 and 2).

The candidate is rewarded for the ability to communicate and interact effectively through speaking in Russian for different purposes.

Up to 70 marks are awarded positively for this assessment:

Task 1 – role play: 10 marks

- 2 marks for the response to each of the five prompts on the role play card

Task 2 – picture-based task: 24

- 16 marks for *Communication and content*
- 8 marks for *Linguistic knowledge and accuracy*

Task 3 – conversation: 36 marks

- 12 marks for *Communication and content*
- 12 marks for *Interaction and spontaneity*
- 12 marks for *Linguistic knowledge and accuracy*

While the distribution of marks is the same for both Foundation and Higher tier, the mark grids are different. Please see the GCSE Russian (9-1) specification (pp. 20-35) for the mark grids for each tier.

Immediately before the examination, the candidate has 12 minutes to prepare task 1 and task 2. During this supervised preparation time the candidate may make notes (up to one side of A4) but may not have access to a dictionary or any other resource. The candidate takes both the stimulus cards, and any notes made during the preparation time into the examination, and can refer to these during tasks 1 and 2 of the assessment. The stimulus cards and any notes are collected by the teacher/examiner at the end of task 2 (before task 3: conversation).

The role play card for task 1 and the picture-based card for task 2 are allocated to each candidate according to the grid provided by Pearson. It is essential that the centre allocates the correct cards to each candidate.

Pearson issues the teacher/examiner booklet and the candidate cards for tasks 1 and 2 to centres before the examining session. These materials are confidential until the end of the examining session for this paper. The dates for the examining session are published in the Pearson examination timetable.

Candidate performance 2025

Task 1 – role play

Most candidates were clearly aware of the requirements of the exam, though, when asking a question (prompts 4 and 5), some candidates did not seem to know that they had to ask a question based on the prompt on the candidate version of the card. Instead, when the teacher/examiner asked *У тебя/вас есть вопрос?* They just asked any question, often with no reference to the prompt on the card.

Candidates seemed familiar with vocabulary that often occurs in the role play tasks e.g. *мнение, описать, любимый, рекомендовать* and *лучший/лучшая*. They also seemed familiar with the question words and questions often used in the role play tasks e.g. *когда?, что?, как часто?, почему?, где?, какой?, сколько?, сколько стоит?*

The questions the candidates ask do not have to be complicated in order to be awarded 2 marks out of 2. For example, many candidates appear to have learned a simple model which can be applied in different situations and are able to adapt this effectively. An example would be *«Я люблю..., а ты / вы?»*. A formula such as this could be used in HR1 pt5: *«Я люблю гаджеты, а вы?»*, HR7 pt5: *«Я люблю школьные каникулы, а вы?»* etc.

The majority of candidates were aware of the need to use the past tense in response to the unpredictable question (question 3) and did so successfully.

Timing of role play task:

While a recommended timing is given for the role play task (2 - 2 ½ mins at Higher tier), it is important that both candidates and teacher/examiners know that this timing is only recommended. If candidates complete all the tasks in the role play, they can access all the marks available. In practice, the role play often lasts less than the recommended time and this is completely acceptable.

There is no need for the teacher/examiner to extend the time of the role play artificially so that it reaches the recommended time. Extra questions must not be added to the role play and the teacher/examiners response to the candidate's questions (prompts 4 and 5) should be brief, a few words at the most.

Task 2 – picture-based task

Most candidates seemed to have used the preparation time well and were able to offer a good deal of description of the picture in response to the first prompt. There were many very strong performances here, with candidates using a wide range of vocabulary and structures in response to all the prompts. Many candidates not only described what they could see, but also speculated e.g., for HP8: *Я думаю, эти люди – счастливые потому, что они улыбаются* or for HP10: *Мне кажется, что погода – не очень хорошая потому, что они надевают тёплую одежду*. This is to be encouraged, as it helps candidates to access the higher bands of the mark grid for *Communication and content* ('expresses opinions and gives justification').

In this task, candidates are required to refer to both past and future events. Which time frame is to be used when is indicated by the prompt on the candidate card. Most candidates were able to use the appropriate verb tense for these prompts.

A number of candidates included references to past and future events successfully in their description of the photograph, by speculating about what people in the photograph had done prior to the photograph or would do after the photograph, thereby incorporating

different tenses early in the task.

Many candidates were able to develop their answers and responded well to the teacher/examiner prompts (*Почему? Почему нет? Что-нибудь ещё?*). Very few either were unable to do so or refused to do so. When practising this task, candidates should practise giving opinions, reasons for their opinions and further details about the points they make.

Task 3 – conversation

In task 3, two topics are discussed. The candidate chooses the first topic for the conversation, and this dictates which role play, picture-based task and second conversation topic they are allocated.

Candidates may introduce the topic they have chosen for up to one minute, uninterrupted, after which discussion of the topic begins. This year, most candidates began task 3 with a presentation but if they did not, this did not affect their mark in any way.

The most popular choice of first topic were *holidays, school, town* or *who am I?* and candidates usually did very well when presenting and discussing their chosen topic. There were also some very impressive performances by candidates who chose *ambitions* and *environmental issues*. Candidates usually had plenty to say about the topic they had chosen and demonstrated a good range of vocabulary and constructions and a range of verb tenses when talking about it. This is a section of the exam for which candidates can do a good deal of preparation in advance, and this was reflected in their performance in this section.

The second conversation topic is allocated according to the grid provided by Pearson. Most candidates were able to deal well with all the GCSE topics and sympathetic conduct of the test by the teacher/examiner often encouraged candidates to demonstrate the ability to speak at length on a topic, using a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

The way in which the teacher/examiner conducts task 3 can affect a candidate's performance and their ability to access the entire range of marks available. For example, to access the higher bands of the grid for *Linguistic knowledge and accuracy*, candidates must show that they can refer to past, present and future events. If a teacher/examiner does not ask questions which lead to answers in different time frames, the extent to which a candidate can access the available marks may be limited. Similarly, the ability to *respond spontaneously* is credited in the grids for *Interaction and spontaneity*, and so teacher/examiners need to ensure that candidates demonstrate the ability to do this in order to be able to access the entire range of marks available here. Please see *Advice for teacher/examiners* below for further guidance.

Conduct of the speaking test

Please see *GCSE Modern Foreign Language: Conducting Assessments: Administrative Support Guide* (available under the *Forms and administration* tab of the GCSE Russian page of the Pearson Edexcel website) for details of conduct of the speaking test.

It is **essential** that teacher/examiners and centres be aware of the requirements of the test and that the teacher/examiner conducts the test correctly. Incorrect conduct of the test may adversely affect the candidate's ability to access all the marks available. Please see *Advice for teacher/examiners* (below) for further information.

This year, a significant number of candidates were not able to access the full range of

marks available because of errors on the part of the teacher examiner. The most common issues were:

Task 1: role play and task 2: picture-based task – prompts and questions

The questions and prompts on the role play and picture-based task cards must be asked **exactly** as they are written on the card. Questions and prompts may be repeated, but, in the interests of comparability, **must not** be rephrased. If a teacher/examiner does rephrase a question or a prompt, then candidates cannot be awarded marks for their response to that element of the test. This year, a very large number of candidates were unable to access the full range of marks available because the teacher/examiner rephrased questions and prompts in tasks 1 and 2.

Task 2: picture-based task – additional prompts

In order to prompt candidates to develop their answers in the picture-based task, teacher/examiners may use only the prompts on the card i.e., *Почему? Почему нет? Что-нибудь ещё?* If any other prompt is used, the candidate's answer to that element of the test cannot be credited. Again, a very large number of candidates were denied marks because the teacher/examiner used an incorrect prompt in this task.

Timings in task 2: picture-based task and task 3: conversation

The recommended timings for each task are:

- Task 1 – role play Higher tier: 2 - 2 ½ mins
- Task 2 – picture-based task Higher tier: 3 - 3 ½ mins
- Task 3 – conversation Higher tier: 5 - 6 mins

As mentioned previously, in practice the role play often takes less than the recommended time and this is not an issue; if the role play tasks are completed, candidates can access all the marks available for this element of the exam.

For the picture-based task, it is in the candidates' interest to ensure that the recommended timings are observed, in order that candidates can access the higher bands of the mark grids. Here, in the grid for *Communication and content*, candidates are rewarded for *developed responses* and *effective adaptation of language to describe, narrate and inform*. Teacher/examiners can prompt candidates to develop their answers using the prompts on the teacher/examiner card. If this task is significantly shorter than the recommended time, candidates may not include sufficient content to be able to access the entire range of marks for this task, and this was the case for a significant number of candidates this year.

As for the picture-based task, it is in a candidate's best interest to observe the recommended timing for task 3: conversation. The time available for task 3 should be divided equally between the two conversation topics i.e. 2 ½ - 3 mins for each topic at Higher tier. Where the time spent discussing either topic is significantly shorter than the recommended time, the candidate may not be able to access the full range of marks available for this task.

References to past, present and future events (task 3: conversation)

In order to access the full range of marks available for *Linguistic knowledge and accuracy* in task 3: conversation, candidates need to make reference to past, present and future events. In a number of cases this year the teacher/examiner did not ask questions which required a response in a time frame other than the present, and so a candidate's access

to the full range of marks available for this mark grid was limited.

Administration of the speaking test

This year, most centres provided recordings of a suitable quality. It is essential to do a practice recording before beginning to record the speaking tests, to check that both the candidate and the teacher/examiner can be heard clearly. Similarly, it is essential that the tests are recorded in a place where there will be no interference from outside sources (noisy corridors, lawn mowers, traffic noise etc.).

Most centres uploaded the correct material to Learner Work Transfer (LWT). Please refer to the *GCSE Modern Foreign Languages Conducting Assessments: Administrative Support Guide* (available on the Pearson Edexcel website) for instructions on the administration of the speaking test and the uploading of recordings and documents to the Learner Work Transfer platform.

Most centres allocated the correct role play, picture-based task and second conversation topic to each candidate i.e., they followed the order prescribed by the distribution grid. It is **essential** that this grid is followed, so that a particular theme is not tested more than once in a speaking test.

In a small number of centres, candidates entered for Higher tier were tested on the Foundation tier cards, and vice versa. It is essential that candidates are tested on the correct tier cards.

Advice for candidates:

- Make sure that you are familiar with the requirements for tasks 1, 2 and 3
- Practise past role play and picture-based tasks
- Learn the words that occur frequently in these tasks (e.g., мнение, описать)
- Learn the question words (когда? где? кто? почему? etc.)
- Read the introduction to the role play and to the picture-based task carefully
- Know that you can use words and phrases on the role play and picture-based task cards in your answers
- Learn how to ask, in Russian, for a question to be repeated
- Read the role play card carefully and use the correct form of address (ты or вы)
- In task 2: picture-based task and task 3: conversation, develop your answers as far as possible; give opinions, reasons for your opinions and plenty of detail
- Demonstrate that you can refer to past, present and future events.

Advice for teacher/examiners:

- Do not speak too much, keep teacher/examiner intervention to a minimum
- Observe the recommended timings for tasks 2 and 3 (use a timer or stopwatch)
- In tasks 1 and 2, ask the questions **exactly** as they are written on the teacher/examiner cards
- **Do not** ask extra questions in task 1: role play
- In task 1: role play, give **brief** answers to the candidate's questions
- In task 2: picture-based task, use **only** the allowed prompts (Почему? Почему нет? Что-нибудь ещё?)
- In task 3: conversation, ensure that your questions prompt candidates to refer to past, present and future events
- In task 3: conversation, encourage the candidate to speak spontaneously, discourage long passages of pre-learned material
- Share the mark grids with the candidates so that they understand how they are being assessed.

