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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Russian (1RU0)

Paper 4F: Writing in Russian

Foundation Tier

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## **Introduction**

Candidates were assessed on their ability to communicate effectively through writing in Russian.

Candidates needed to communicate effectively in writing for a variety of purposes across a range of specified contexts; to write short texts, using simple sentences and familiar language accurately to convey meaning and exchange information; to produce clear and coherent text of extended length to present facts and express ideas and opinions appropriately for different purposes and in different settings; to make accurate use of a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures, including some more complex forms, to describe and narrate with reference to past, present and future events; to manipulate the language, using and adapting a variety of structures and vocabulary with increasing accuracy and fluency for new purposes, including using appropriate style and register; to make independent, creative and more complex use of the language, as appropriate; to note down key points, express and justify individual thoughts and points of view, in order to interest, inform or convince; and to translate sentences and short texts from English into the assessed language to convey key messages accurately and to apply grammatical knowledge of language and structures in context.

The assessment was out of 60 marks. Each question was set in a context drawn from the themes and topics set by Pearson. The assessment tasks featured general content that was familiar and accessible to all candidates. Candidates were required to produce responses of varying lengths and types to express facts, ideas and opinions in Russian. The length of each response required and complexity of language increased across the paper.

Recommended word counts were specified for each question. Candidates were not penalised for writing more or fewer words than recommended in the word count or for going beyond the mandatory bullets. One question was a translation of a short passage from English into Russian.

All assessments were marked against assessment criteria. The instructions to candidates were all in Russian but the title of each question was set in English. The use of dictionaries was not permitted.

The assessment time was 1 hour and 15 minutes in length. The paper consisted of three open questions and one translation from English into Russian. Candidates had to answer all questions.

Question 1 assessed candidates on their ability to write to describe and to express opinions.

Question 2 had two options from which candidates had to select one and assessed candidates on their ability to note down key points and convey information.

Candidates had to use the formal register.

Question 3 had two options from which candidates had to select one. This question assessed candidates on their ability to convey information, narrate, express opinions, interest, and convince the reader about a certain point. Candidates had to use the informal register.

This question was common to the Higher tier.

Question 4 was the translation question. Candidates were required to translate five sentences from English to Russian. The sentences were ordered by increasing level of difficulty.

### **Question 1**

This question addressed the theme of Identity and Culture the topic of free time, specifically dancing. Candidates were given a photo of young people dancing at a disco. There were two female dancers in the foreground with two male dancers in the background. Candidates had to describe the photo and express their opinion about discos (or this specific disco) in about 15-20 words of Russian. The question could be answered using exclusively a present time frame, but candidates were not penalised for using other tenses.

Most candidates responded to this question with some success. The most successful ones restricted themselves to the recommended word count. Exceeding the word limit often increased the scope for error, ambiguity and irrelevance.

Generally successful responses had candidates scoring marks well for saying who the people in the image were. More successful responses gave clear opinions on the topic of discos but candidates who did not express this opinion could not gain full marks for communication and content. Some candidates described the image using first person responses and this was acceptable.

### **Question 2a**

***For this question an option was given between question 2a and 2b.***

This question addressed the theme of School and the topic of school subjects. Candidates were given four bullet points under the context of responding to an email about thoughts on school subjects; they had to write 30-35 words of Russian. The question could be answered using present and future time frames, but candidates were not penalised for using other tenses. Most candidates found this question straightforward to access, as they appeared to understand some or all of the bullet points.

The first point relating to which subjects that the candidate studies in school was well understood and candidates clearly know the vocabulary for school subjects.

The second point was generally well dealt with but some candidates did not recognise the question "почему".

Point three allowed candidates to give a range of opinions relating to homework. Both positive and negative opinions were acceptable. Most candidates were competent in using "потому что" or "так как" in expanding the response.

The final point was designed to elicit a future tense response in response to describing the candidate's plans for next September.

There were some good responses where all bullet points were attempted and were well linked. These candidates used tenses appropriately, either the future tense with "буду" or the use of "хочу".

### **Question 2b**

***For this question an option was given between question 2a and 2b.***

This question addressed the topic of television. Candidates were given four bullet points under the context of sending an email to a magazine to talk about TV viewing habits; they had to write 30-35 words of Russian. The question could be answered

using present and future time frames, but candidates were not penalised for using other tenses. Some candidates found this question more difficult to access, as they started with a negative point about not watching television which then made other points more problematic to describe.

The first point relating to preferred TV programmes was generally well understood but some candidates merely listed names of TV programmes. The second point was generally well dealt with and most candidates offered competent responses to saying how often they watch TV. Some less convincing Responses failed to deal with "как часто".

Point three allowed candidates to give a range of opinions relating to their personal opinion of sport on TV. The majority of candidates could give a "потому что" or "так как" in expanding the response.

The final point was designed to elicit a future tense response in response to what the candidate will watch on TV in the future. Most candidates were clear on the need to express a future intention but some candidates did not make reference to the "смотреть по телевизору" and simply gave future free time intentions.

There were some good responses where all bullet points were attempted and were well linked. These candidates used tenses appropriately, either the future tense with "буду" or the use of "хочу".

### **Question 3 (a)**

This question addressed the topic of a concert. Candidates were given four bullet points within the context of an email to a friend talking about a visit to a concert; they had to write 60-65 words of Russian. The question had to be answered using past, present and future time frames as well as giving an opinion about preferences.

This question was considerably less popular than Q3(b).

The first bullet point required candidates to describe when they had been to a concert recently. Less convincing responses made reference to the "когда" requirement and simply described a concert.

The second bullet point required a description of what type of music the candidate prefers. Some skilful responses related this back to the first bullet point to say that the reason for the concert visit was because this was their favourite music. It was perfectly acceptable to write about the fact that the candidate had more than one favoured musical type.

The third point required an opinion on whether the candidate preferred to listen to music at home or at live at a concert. Some very competent responses referred to quality of reception. Less successful responses did not compare the two items and merely stated that the candidate liked being at home.

The fourth bullet point required a future tenses response as to when the candidate will listen to music in the future. Candidates showed good evidence in being able to use future tense in response to this bullet point.

Many candidates produced some really excellent essays; they entered fully into the requirements of the question and succeeded in writing a highly convincing article dealing with the bullet points. They displayed linguistic flair together with an

exploration of interesting ideas, justification, logical argument and individual expression. However, some candidates struggled in balancing the requirements of the task and other candidates failed to read the bullet points carefully.

Candidates should bear in mind that more than 50% of the mark is for content and communication and the mark scheme stipulates that "top box" answers must "communicate detailed information related to the task" and "develop key points". As such, it is difficult to produce first-rate answers that deal with a bullet point in the space of a single clause. About 15 – 18 words per bullet point produces a balanced answer. Content marks were capped by some candidates because they did not cover all bullet points fully.

### **Question 3 (b)**

This question addressed the theme of home town. Candidates were given four bullet points within the context of writing to a friend sharing information about their home town; candidates were required to write 60-65 words of Russian. The question had to be answered using past, present and future time frames as well as giving an opinion.

This question was considerably more popular than Q3(a).

The bullet points were generally well understood. A significant number of candidates showed their confidence with this topic and happily discussed their town.

The first bullet point required candidates to write about what they like about their home town. Candidates wrote on a range of topics including shops, cafes, cinemas, sports facilities and being with friends. All of these topics demonstrated successful comprehension of the bullet point.

At times candidates were repetitive with the vocabulary due to the limitation of their vocabulary range or using the words from the tasks. Some candidates failed to access full marks for communication and content by describing their town without expressing an opinion on what they liked.

The second bullet point required candidates to use past tense to say what they had done recently in town. Some candidates did not access the full marks for content because they produced generic responses about what they had done but did not always relate this to town. Stronger candidates demonstrated linguistic flair and gave reasons as to why they had done these things.

The third bullet required candidates to give a description of what they usually do on a Saturday in town. There were some impressive descriptions given with full justification. Some candidates did not access the full content mark by missing out reference to Saturday or by answering in the wrong time frame and describing a past or future Saturday.

The fourth bullet point asked candidates to talk about what they will do in during the holidays in order to relax. This proved to be a very accessible bullet point for candidate across the ability range. Better answers demonstrated full response with a balanced approach to the four bullet points.

Candidates were clearly able to talk about past and future events in town and these bullet points allowed good demonstration of tenses with a good range of vocabulary. Less convincing responses did not develop the first and third bullet points.

Candidates should bear in mind that more than 50% of the mark is for content and communication and the mark scheme stipulates that "top box" answers must "communicate detailed information related to the task" and "develop key points". As such, it is difficult to produce first-rate answers that deal with a bullet point in the space of a single clause. About 15 – 18 words per bullet point produces a balanced answer. Content marks were capped by some candidates because they did not cover all bullet points fully.

#### **Question 4 (a)**

Question 4 addressed the theme of Local area, holiday and travel and the topic of travel.

Candidates had to translate five sentences from English to Russian. The level of difficulty increased throughout the questions. The first three questions allowed two marks per response and the final two questions were awarded three marks per response. The first question required a present tense response, the second question required use of a time phrase, the third question required an adverb, the fourth question required adjective and negative and the fifth question required past tense and reason.

Several candidates found this a challenging question. However grammatical accuracy was not essential as long as meaning was communicated. Very few achieved full marks. Many found particular items of vocabulary a problem, for example "**hotels**", "**winter**", "**sometimes**", "**stay**", "**sunny**", "**August**", "**visited**", "**new**". Others found difficulty with grammar, such as prepositions and the plural nouns such as "**hotels**" and "**friends**".

However most candidates at least attempted each sentence and were rewarded in most cases with a mark for a partial translation.

## Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- answer the questions within the range of words which is suggested
- read the bullet points carefully and note which tense is required in your response
- be aware that words such as *прошлом* (past) suggest that your response should be about a past event, while *будущее* (future) suggests that your answer should feature a future event.
- other key words in question instructions such as *почему* (why) require a reasons
- be prepared to write in the first person and in the third person
- correct formation of verbs is essential in all questions
- in Q1, write both a description of the photo and an opinion
- there is no need to use tenses other than the present in Q1
- in Q2 and Q3, answer all four of the bullet points
- Q2 uses a formal register, so the instructions will say *вы* rather than *ты*
- Q2 requires only present and future time frames in your response
- in Q3, try and vary the language you use, and avoid repetition
- in Q4, try and translate all the words, as you will get credit even for partially correct answers
- ensure that your handwriting is as legible as neat as possible
- do not write English script in your response
- check your letter formation and check for confusion between letter such as *б,в*  
*п,р г,д м,т и,н*