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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Russian (1RU0) Paper 4H: Writing

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HIGHER TIER 1RU0/4H

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 Russian 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 from the Pearson specification. 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 the 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. The use of dictionaries was not permitted.

The assessment time was 1 hour and 25 minutes in length. The paper consisted of two questions and one translation from English into Russian. Candidates had to answer all questions.

All headings for questions were set in English.

Question 1 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 Foundation tier.

Question 2 had two options from which candidates had to select one. This question assessed candidates on their ability to convey information, narrate, express and justify ideas and opinions, and interest or convince the reader.

Candidates had to use the formal register.

Question 3 was the translation question. Candidates were required to translate a short paragraph from English into Russian. The individual sentences were ordered by increasing level of difficulty.

Question 1 (a)

This question addressed the topic of technology. Candidates were given four bullet points within the context of an email to a friend about what that friend thinks about technology; 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 slightly less popular than Q1(b).

Many candidates found this question very accessible with clear evidence of use of tense and "технология" seemed to be a well recognised topic. Most candidates coped well with the task. A few candidates merged 2 points together making it difficult to see if the bullet point was addressed or if the coverage was well balanced. Where candidates did not access fully the marks for content was when they did not address one or more of the bullet points or wrote one short and simple sentence to answer the bullet point without any expansion. Some candidates wrote very detailed and accurate answers to one or two of the bullet points but failed to address some bullet points completely and therefore could not access the top band for content. Standardisation agreed for less extensive use of past tense in responding to the bullet point about what the candidate had done recently with their mobile phone. It was agreed that a present tense response to this could allow for a fully expanded answer.

A lot of candidates replaced the word «мобильник» with «телефон» or «internet» as synonyms. Some candidates missed the need to use a past tense for the 2nd bullet point and wrote more generally about how they use technology rather than something they have done recently. Generally good knowledge of the vocabulary and phrases for writing about use of technology. Some candidates struggled to use phrases as competently in the future tense as they could in the present.

The most successful candidates restricted themselves to the recommended word count. Exceeding the word limit often increased the scope for error, ambiguity and irrelevance. There was also some good evidence of using the stimulus material with successful manipulation of verbs to first and third person.

Question 1 (b)

This question addressed the theme of school and the topic of the school day. Candidates were given four bullet points within the context of writing to a friend about what they do every day in school; 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 slightly more popular than Q1(a).

The bullet points were generally well understood. The first bullet point required candidates to write about what constitutes a typical morning for them. Candidates wrote on a range of topics including routine from waking

up to the journey to school. All of these topics demonstrated successful comprehension of the bullet point.

A significant number of candidates showed their confidence with this topic and happily discussed their school.

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 home routine before school rather than the description of the morning routine in school.

It was pleasing to note that in the second bullet point answering the question about their thoughts on school food, some candidates, even with limited language, were able to extend their replies and express their individual thoughts and ideas, e. g. «Еда в школе важная, потому что можно встретить новых людей».

In this question it was often the past tense bullet point that caused the most difficulty, with a number of responses being very factual and saying that nothing interesting had happened at school in the past week as they had exams. A few candidates wrote too generally about school without reference to mornings. «Что интересного было в школе на прошлой неделе?» was sometimes avoided/omitted.

The most successful candidates restricted themselves to the recommended word count. Exceeding the word limit often increased the scope for error, ambiguity and irrelevance. There was also some good evidence of using the stimulus material with successful manipulation of verbs to first and third person.

Question 2 (a)

This question addressed the theme of International and global dimension and the topic of "being green". Candidates were given four bullet points within the context of an article to interest the readers of a website about what is important for the future of the planet; they had to write 90-110 words of Russian. The question had to be answered using past, present and future time frames.

This question was more slightly more popular than Q2(b).

Many candidates produced responses which demonstrated good knowledge of appropriate vocabulary. Some less convincing responses gave lengthy but general answers on ecology, sometimes managing not to answer the question specifically which affected the mark for communication and content. Candidates largely were quite knowledgeable on the green agenda given this is a current and relevant topic and showed evidence of being well taught. Most candidates were able to answer the first bullet point very well (the biggest problem for the planet) and then write about what they do to be green, however this was often too general without reference to recently or use of the past tense. The third bullet point about shopping in the future was less successfully managed by less strong candidates. Stronger candidates wrote about what they will buy or try to buy less of, but the majority wrote about avoiding single use plastic carrier bags. A few candidates did not mention shopping at all. *In response to the question*

"Как вы будете делать покупки в будущем?" some candidates recognised the ecology-related issue with this but some did not, and talked merely about what or where they will buy in the future. A significant number of candidates endeavoured to link the final bullet point about way of life to the environment, but this occasionally meant that they missed out a reference to way of life or young people.

The most successful candidates restricted themselves to the recommended word count. Exceeding the word limit often increased the scope for error, ambiguity and irrelevance. There was also some good evidence of using the stimulus material with successful manipulation of verbs to first and third person.

Question 2(b)

This question addressed the topic of tourist sites. Candidates were given four bullet points within the context of a Russian magazine's request for information about tourist sites in the candidate's home region; they had to write 90-110 words of Russian. The question had to be answered using past, present and future time frames.

This question was slightly less popular than Q2(a).

Candidates, who opted for this question, gave informative and creative answers describing sights in the UK, Russia and several other home areas. Many expressed their passion for the area they live in, and demonstrated a breadth of relevant vocabulary. Strongest answers were particularly evident in the creative and original answering the last bullet point on why young people should visit historic places.

For the first bullet point some candidates just wrote about where they live without making recommendations for tourists, but generally this bullet point was answered well. The past tense bullet point proved challenging, with some candidates not writing about a place they had visited recently or not describing the place. The future tense was generally managed well with the majority of candidates saying that their area will improve in the future. The final bullet point was occasionally answered less convincingly (e.g. it's important to visit historical places because history is important) or without reference to young people.

In some responses the first two bullet points were merged and some candidates could not access the full mark scheme for linguistic knowledge and accuracy due to this. There were some very convincing responses to bullet point four - reasons for young people visiting historical places. Less convincing responses did not refer to young people.

The most successful candidates restricted themselves to the recommended word count. Exceeding the word limit often increased the scope for error, ambiguity and irrelevance. There was also some good evidence of using the stimulus material with successful manipulation of verbs to first and third person.

Question 3

This question addressed the theme of Identity and Culture the topic of celebrations/festivals. Candidates had to translate a paragraph from English to Russian. A significant number of candidates could not achieve full marks due to the missing out of vocabulary items, but a pleasing number achieved marks in the top category; the meaning of the passage was fully communicated, and the language and structures were consistently accurate, with errors not hindering clarity. A significant number of candidates did not know the key vocabulary 'Christmas', 'Easter', 'eggs' and 'to celebrate'. Time phrases also proved challenging. Some candidates confused the words Easter and eastern. 'Bright' was unfamiliar to many candidates, although there were a number of good attempts made to substitute a different word. A significant number of candidates confused 'bright' with 'brought'. Less secure responses did not 'I will go abroad'. On the whole, most candidates at least attempted to translate most words, and were able to communicate some of the key ideas without major ambiguity.

Candidates should note that marks are awarded holistically for this task and, if they are not sure of the exact translation of a given word, full marks can still be achieved if they are able to substitute a convincing Russian synonym.

Common errors to beware, as they did not communicate accurately the intended meaning, included:

Common errors and replacements:

Рождество – Новый год, Пасха

Пасха – Эстер, Истер, восток, на востоке России

Купил шоколад - ел, принёс шоколад

Яркие яйца

- A range of adjectives could be accepted if they implied bright/attractive/painted
- the specific term: "крашенки"
- Some verbs: стучался яйцами, разбивал яйца

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
- write a separate paragraph for each bullet point, as this will help you check that you have covered all of them in detail
- think yourself into the scenario outlined in the instructions and only include material which is relevant to answering the question convincingly
- ensure that your handwriting is as neat as possible
- try to use a variety of grammatical structures

- try to vary the vocabulary you use and avoid repetition
- correct formation of verbs is essential in all questions. Ensure responding to the bullet point in the set tense of the point.
- write your answers on the correct pages of the answer booklet if you find that you have written, for example, part of Q2(b) on the page for Q2(a), then please write a brief note so that the examiner (who only sees one question at a time) is aware of this and can take the necessary action
- in Q3, try and translate every word, including what might appear minor words
- try to include near alternatives for vocabulary or structures that you are unsure of in question 3
- care must be taken to write in Cyrillic and not include Latin letters - e.g. u for y, t for τ, s for c. These were the most common
- to access the higher marks there needs to be consistently effective development of all bullet points and creative use of language
- for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy, to access the higher marks, language must be consistently accurate, with convincing examples of each tense, as well as a wide variety of grammatical structures.