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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level  
In Greek (WGK02)  
Paper 01: Writing and Research

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## **Paper Introduction**

This unit is a three-hour examination which is externally assessed and consists of three sections: Section A, Translation into Greek; Section B, Essay; Section C, Research-based Essay. Total marks for this paper are 80 and its weighting is 50% of the total IAL marks. It is available once a year, in June.

The candidates who study this specification are required to demonstrate skills in the transfer of meaning from English into Greek, in advanced level Greek reading and in continuous writing (Sections A and B). In addition to the discursive or creative essay, and in order to promote research and a deeper knowledge and understanding of Greek speaking cultures and/or societies, students are asked to produce one Greek-language essay in response to questions related to their chosen topic or text in Section C.

Content in Sections A and B draws from a variety of contexts and in relation to the following general topic areas:

- Youth matters
- Lifestyle, health and fitness
- Environment and travel
- Education and employment
- Technology in the Greek-speaking world
- Society in the Greek-speaking world
- Ethics in the Greek-speaking world.

Candidates who sit this examination generally perform very well, particularly in Sections A and B of the question paper.

## **Section A**

### **Question 1**

Question 1 includes one question which requires translation into Greek. The response is marked according to descriptors that span 5 levels of achievement from Level 1 (marks 1-2) to Level 5 (marks 9-10). This grid is applied to each half of the translation and the two sub-totals are added to give a total of 20.

The theme for this year's question 1 came from the general topic area of Lifestyle health and fitness, urban and rural life.

Most candidates performed very well this year, also, (the quality of performance has been on a steady rise, as has the total entry of candidates) and scored marks from levels 4 and 5. Candidates demonstrated good to excellent knowledge and application of grammar and appropriate use of vocabulary, as well as nuanced translation skills. Communication was consistently sound, and, in many cases, it was both accurate and sophisticated. Only in very few cases performance was

marred by intrusive lapses in vocabulary but not so much in structures. The most frequent challenge related to wrong choice of word pertaining to: Greek ministry of education; appoints; national holiday; parade; national costume; marched; applauded.

Only a small number of candidates lacked the language skills in order to grasp more than the basic sense of the passage and transfer meaning into Greek. Few left the occasional phrase untranslated, evidently a result of haste rather than poor language skills. A small number offered several translation alternatives instead of sticking with one. Candidates are advised **against** such practice. For indicative, correct answers to this question, please refer to the mark scheme for the summer 2023 series.

## **Section B**

### **Question 2**

In this section, students are asked to write a 240–280-word essay, in Greek, in response to a short Greek language stimulus. Students choose to write on a given topic, in different registers and style, creatively or discursively, through two options provided. Responses rely on careful reading of a stimulus text in order to be able to answer in a pertinent and comprehensive manner. It is estimated that students spend approximately one hour in this section of the examination.

Assessment in Section B rewards students for communicating relevant information effectively, as well as for the quality of the Greek language produced. A total of 30 marks is awarded for question 2, 15 for content and communication and 15 for quality of language. This year's theme came from the general topic area of Youth Matters and required that candidates engaged either discursively or through narration of a personal experience with the theme of friendship.

For indicative, correct answers to this question, please refer to the mark scheme for the summer 2023 series.

### **Question 2a**

Question 2a is usually a discursive essay that requires critical engagement with the content of the stimulus text and questions that may be posed in it. This year it was the candidates' preferred choice out of the two sub-questions offered. The question invited candidates to offer opinion regarding the concept of friendship in today's society and respond to the questions and comments posed by the writer of the stimulus extract, e.g., 'are friendships created through social media real friendships' or 'is adversity the test of a true friendship'?

Performance in this question was marked by high achievement. The majority performed very well, with many gaining marks from levels 4 and 5, the higher bands of the assessment grid, for both categories, “Content and Communication” and “Quality of Language”. The successful essays were marked by good organisation and development of a thesis regarding the nature of friendship, exploration of the topic of social media friendships and to what extent true friends reveal themselves during challenging times and conclusive remarks consistent with the arguments expressed. In addition to writing in a comprehensible and logical manner, the essays that stood out demonstrated good control of language and style appropriate to the genre of analytical writing. When choosing an essay which requires argumentation and analysis of a position, it is advisable to adopt a formal, factual tone, build an essay structure that begins with an introduction that states one’s position succinctly and proceed to explain, in different paragraphs, the distinct points/questions included in the stimulus text.

There were few instances where, unaccountably, candidates wrote about personal experiences with friendships, with little regard for the content in the stimulus text, which they were required to address by engaging with the points it raised. Unfortunately, an occasional pattern was observed of indifference to the conventions of spelling, clear, legible, well-linked and organised writing, which, as a result, did not meet the demands for an appropriate level of coherence, accuracy and depth.

### **Question 2b**

Question 2b requires a similar engagement with a prompt and the required wordage is the same as in 2a. The style and tone of the essay, however, are more informal, often emotive, and autobiographical, and the expectation is that the content will draw from empirical knowledge and provide some examples of personal nature. Some candidates who are not familiar with this difference between 2a and 2b or did not read the question carefully ended up writing accounts whose style was not appropriate to the demands of this genre and contained abstract arguments that omitted references to a personal sphere of experience.

Many candidates wrote confident and purposeful pieces, with enough variety and interest to persuade the reader of the significance and the relevance of their experience of friendship. Occasionally, performance did not include examples that supported the writer’s claims or details that could help paint the portrait of a close friend. In general, performance in 2b was not as successful as in 2a, precisely because of omissions of examples and narration that drew from one’s personal experience. Question 2b draws its content both from engagement with the prompt and from the perspective of a personal experience- which is not the same as simply stating one's personal opinion and arguing in abstract terms.

## **Section C**

In section C, students must answer one question, in Greek, that relates to a topic, or a text chosen from the prescribed list featured in Section 2.4 of the specification (Set topics, texts and films). A choice of two questions is offered for each of the prescribed topics and texts. Students are expected to write 300–400 words. In few cases, this number was exceeded by far and worked against the candidate's benefit, as the material often included extraneous and irrelevant details that detracted from the pertinence of the piece.

For indicative, correct answers to questions in this section, please refer to the mark scheme for the summer 2023 series.

### **Question 3**

Very few candidates chose question 3. The vast majority of those who did, all but one, selected question 3b, which invited exploration and analysis of the Polytechnic uprising. Many essays showed good factual knowledge of the period and the topic and expressed their observations in good Greek, referring to the social and political characteristics of the period that led to the uprising and commenting on its impact. A small number of essays, however, relied heavily on anecdotal evidence and were not successful in relating details regarding the causes, the actual events and the impact of the uprising.

### **Question 4**

A small number of candidates chose question 4, with no pattern of preference for 4a (The Zurich-London Agreements) or 4b (An event representative of Cypriot people's resistance against the colonial government).

Responses to 4a were generally marked by good factual knowledge of the topic and a good level of depth in the response. The more successful candidates were able to evaluate the aftermath and legacy of the Agreements, beyond a description of their constituent parts, and what they meant for subsequent developments on the island.

Responses to 4b mostly focused on the activities of EOKA or the 1931 October events. A number of essays were characterised by mostly personal responses to the notion of resistance, without consistently presented evidence and details of, e.g., the activities of the EOKA campaign or the main stakeholders and the reasons that led to the October uprising. Since this is a research-based essay, factual, in-depth knowledge of the topic, accompanied by critical analysis in response to the question, are crucial for a full evaluation of the issue under focus and candidates must resist the temptation of presenting views without substantiating evidence.

## Questions 5

A very small number of candidates chose this question and performance was marked by minimal factual knowledge of the material.

## Question 6

The very small number of candidates who studied this set of films wrote very good responses characterised by excellent factual knowledge of the material and consistently applied critical evaluation in response to the question. The few essays in this section argued persuasively, supported by clear explanation and appropriate examples about the aspects of the films that made an impression on them (humour, cinematography, themes) or about the intricate, meaningful and, at times, tense relations between children and adults. In 6b, the most successful essays presented their conclusive remarks in a comparative framework, as required by the question.

## Question 7

As expected, and as has been the pattern, this was the most popular question and it yielded successful answers, especially in relation to 7b, which invited candidates to comment on how the importance of poetry is treated in Cavafy's poems. The majority of the candidates chose 7a, which invited them to explain the selection of three poems that are meaningful to them. The majority of the responses in this section showed good factual knowledge of the poems and included a range of appropriate supporting evidence in the form of apt quotations. Even though explanation accompanied by substantiation and relevant examples are essential for the type of critical analysis in Section C, when it comes to the poetry question, substantiation should not be in the form of a generic description that sums up what happens in the poem or by referring to the poet's biography, without a sharp focus on what is relevant. In question 7, therefore, relevant supporting evidence is more effective when it comes in the form of a quotation (albeit short), rather than an all-inclusive summary that does not show the link between a point of view and evidence from the text.

A refreshing pattern in this year's essays was that the majority respected the recommended wordage for the essays.

Most of the candidates who chose 7a showed a preference for the so-called historical or didactic poems (e.g., *Απολείπειν ο Θεός Αντώνιον*, *Εν Σπάρτη*, *Αλεξανδρινοί Βασιλείς*, *Η πόλις*, *Όσο μπορείς*). A successful performance was marked by a full explanation of why the poem was meaningful to the candidate, an avoidance of overly detailed description without analysis and avoidance of repetition of the same distinguishing concept (e.g., self-respect) across three poems that share the same thematic thread. Additionally, the essays that scored marks from the top bands of the criteria employed language that was appropriate to the task and used specialist terms to analyse the poems.

The smaller number of candidates who chose question 7b provided good, often excellent, responses on the topic of Cavafy's poetics, remaining consistently focused on the issue under examination. These essays included impressive variety in the selection of poems (*Καισαρίων, Η αρχή των, Το πρώτο Σκαλί, Ο Δαρείος, Μελαγχολία του Ιάσονος Κλεάνδρου· ποιητού εν Κομμαγηνή·595 μ.Χ.*), purposeful organisation of the argument and explanation and conclusive remarks that linked the different ways in which the topic is treated in the various poems.

### **Question 8**

Only two candidates chose this question. Performance was at the lower end of achievement, mostly due to weak grasp of the material.

### **Conclusion**

Candidates who enter for this qualification ought to consider the following, when preparing for or sitting this examination:

- Familiarise themselves with the specification and the reading/viewing lists under each topic, therefore ensuring that they answer by citing the correct source. For example, the responses to question 5 should draw examples from the films and documentaries listed under question 5, rather than the films listed under question 6.
- Read all questions carefully, paying particular attention to the distinct requirements of the questions in Section B and C.
- Ensure that their translation reads naturally in Greek. It is often not possible to translate word-for-word from the original English text as the conventions for creating meaning in English are different to the conventions in Greek, which is an inflected language and relies on case, not word order.
- In question 1, make a sensible guess at the unknown words from the context. Attempts to paraphrase show that candidates are in control of meaning.
- Try not to omit whole phrases in question 1.
- Proof-read what they write and run a 'sense-check'.
- Remember the importance of clear and careful presentation in their answers.
- Pay attention to the rules of orthography throughout their response and present a legible answer that does not spill over the margins of the page. Try to observe the conventions of the Greek alphabet and writing system and not mix English and Greek characters (using the Greek u and not the English u). Indicating the position of the

stress where needed is a required convention. Knowledge of the rules governing the stress system must be demonstrated throughout the paper.

- When practising writing, familiarise themselves with the assessment criteria for each question, in order to ensure that there is clarity regarding expectations and awareness of what is required for an effective response.
- Pay attention to rubric and discriminate between what to include and what to exclude. Although factual knowledge of the topics and text is required and assessed out of 10, a pertinent response must link this knowledge to the specific requirements of the question and show a full evaluation of the question. All-inclusive answers may earn the candidate some marks, but unless the question is addressed, these answers will not earn marks from the top tiers of the assessment criteria.

*Thank you for choosing to study this specification.*

