



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International A Level

In Greek (WGK02)

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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 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 text for this year's series was an article about Giannis Antetokounmpo and the translations were marked by excellent knowledge of structures and vocabulary across grades 4-9.

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 7.

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 and turn of phrase but not so much in structures. The most frequent challenges related to translations influenced by mother tongue interference, for example:

ήταν σε καλή διάθεση instead of the correct είχε καλή διάθεση/είχε κέφια

βασισμένη στην Αθήνα instead of the correct με βάση στην Αθήνα

ο μόνος τρόπος μπροστά instead of the correct ο μόνος τρόπος να πας μπροστά/να προοδεύσεις

Even though good knowledge and application of structures was evident across all grades, some candidates were challenged by lexical items such as:

ενθάρρυνε

έμπνευση

πρότυπο

ευρύτερο θετικό μήνυμα

αίσθηση υπερηφάνειας

εμπόδια

A small number of translations failed to include the definite article in front of names, which is a convention in Greek but not in English. Even though this is not considered an error that hinders meaning, it is nevertheless an error that detracts from the fluency of the translation.

For example:

Θωμάς Ζήκας instead of the correct ο Θωμάς Ζήκας

Γιάννης instead of the correct ο Γιάννης

Only a handful of candidates lacked the language skills in order to grasp more than the basic sense of the passage and transfer meaning into Greek. An even smaller 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 2024 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 Technology in the Greek speaking world and required that candidates engaged either discursively or imaginatively with the topic of how modern life is affected by mobile phones and the digital landscape.

For indicative, correct answers to this question, please refer to the mark scheme for the summer 2024 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 modern life and our relationship with technology and respond to at least two of the questions and comments posed by the writer of the stimulus extract, e.g., 'is technology making us unhappy?', 'have we lost the meaning of life?', 'would it have been better to live in a different period, in the past'?

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 pace of daily life,

the nature of modern relationships, the way our work habits have changed, the work-life balance, all within the context of the digital spaces we inhabit. This was not an essay about the pros and cons of technology, and, as such, it did not invite the usual, often pre-learnt arguments about its benefits and disadvantages outside of the context delineated by the source text. Consequently, such broad focus essays, their indisputable language skills aside, did not manage to earn marks from the Level 4 and 5 bands, as they contained significant digression from the rubric and the requirements of an entirely pertinent and purposeful piece.

The majority of the essays for this question were marked by “writing in a comprehensible and logical manner” and by “good range of vocabulary and grammatical structures”. In addition to demonstrating good control of language, good essays stood out for adhering to the stylistic features appropriate to the genre of analytical writing. When writing 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 and substantiate the different arguments posed, in conversation with the concepts/questions in the stimulus text. Underlining the key ideas and questions in the source text (as some do) is a good way to not lose track of this requirement.

There were few instances where, unaccountably, candidates wrote about personal experiences with technology, 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

As with question 2a, question 2b requires a similar engagement with the source text and a prompt. The required wordage is the same as in 2a. The style and tone of the essay, however, are more informal, sometimes emotive or autobiographical, and the expectation is that the content will draw from empirical knowledge or imagined situations and provide some examples of a more 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 privileged discursive arguments over imagination, that were at odds with the more creative aspect of this question.

Many candidates wrote confident and purposeful pieces, with enough variety and interest to recreate an era when technology and mobile phones either did not exist or were not as big a part

of our daily lives. Some drew from narrative accounts by grandparents about what it was like to live in the 50s or the 60s and wrote with enough variety and interest to gain marks from the level 4 and 5 bands. Occasionally, essays were marked by vagueness or inaccuracies about a certain era (there were mobile phones in the early 2000) so there was not a range of sufficient examples to support claims of a simpler and happier life. In general, performance in 2b was not as successful as in 2a, precisely because of omissions of examples and creative scenarios that drew from one's imagination.

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 answers to questions in this section, please refer to the mark scheme for the summer 2024 series.

Question 3

Very few candidates chose question 3. The vast majority of those who did, all but two, selected question 3a, which invited description and analysis of the political events and factors that led to the April 21st coup. Many essays showed good factual knowledge of the period and the topic and expressed their observations in good Greek, referring to the characteristics and main protagonists of the period that led to the colonels' regime. Good examples included, existing political polarisations, failed elections, the cultivation of anti-communist propaganda, etc.

Question 4

A relatively small number of candidates chose question 4, with some preference for 4a (The October 31 uprising). The close knowledge of the topic was impressive, but it was not adequately matched by critical analysis that explored the reasons and impact of the uprising, beyond generalisations. Performance in 4b (the diplomatic efforts to resolve the Cyprus issue) was not as successful as in 4a, both on the aspect of knowledge and the aspect of critical analysis. This is a topic that required a good grasp of dates, names and outcomes and some of the information presented failed to explore with accuracy and depth landmark events, such as the 1956 Harding

proposal for the Cypriot people's right to self-determination, or the 1958 MacMillan plan and the possible partition of the island that it foreshadowed.

Since this is a research-based essay, factual, in-depth knowledge of the historical period, 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 information without conclusive remarks linked to them or presenting arguments without substantiating them with evidence.

Questions 5

No one chose this question.

Question 6

A very small number of candidates studied this set of films and responded to question 6a on the impact of separation on the young protagonists. Most responses were characterised by good factual knowledge of the material but were not as successful in the application of critical evaluation of their material.

Question 7

As expected, and as has been the pattern since the introduction of this specification, this continues to be the most popular question in this paper. An unwelcome pattern in this year's Cavafy essays was that the majority disrespected the recommended wordage for the essays and included unnecessarily long and irrelevant material. We urge centres to advise their students to respect the recommended word limit.

Most 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. In question 7, 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 pinpoint the precise link between a point of view and material drawn from the text.

Explanation accompanied by substantiation and relevant examples are essential for the type of critical analysis expected in Section C. Substantiation should not be in the form of a generic description that sums up what happens in the poem or by referring to details about the poet's

personal life. What is required is a sharp focus on what is relevant to the ideas presented, and any quotation should either support or lead to a conclusive remark that illustrates one's thesis in response to the question. The essays should not offer close readings of poems that do not have a consistently articulated link to the question that is being asked. Such a pattern of close readings outside the framework of the question was evident in question 7a, which invited candidates to discuss three aspects of Cavafy's poetry. On occasion, these aspects emerged tangentially from all-inclusive material, rather than from purposeful writing that demonstrated persuasively that the candidate kept the question in mind, understood it, and wrote in direct response to it. When it falls on the examiner to identify, from what is written, the links between ideas, examples and the question, the response cannot be considered complete. 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 majority of the candidates chose 7b which invited them to explore the ways in which the theme of romantic love is treated in the poems. Most of the candidates selected appropriate evidence from poems such as, *Η αρχή των*, *Ο ήλιος του απογεύματος*, *Μύρης· Αλεξάνδρεια του 340 μ.Χ.*, *Θυμήσου*

Σώμα, in order to present sound arguments about the fleeting nature of love, the impact of historical and political contingencies on love, the power of memory and the relationship between love and the creative process, among others.

Question 8

Noone chose this question.

Conclusion

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

- 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.
- Read all questions carefully, paying particular attention to the distinct requirements of the questions in Section B and C.
- Proof-read what they write and run a 'sense-check'.
- Remember the importance of clear and orderly 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 υ and not the English u). Mixing English and Greek characters leads to loss of marks, as does omitting the position of the stress. 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 the material to the specific requirements of the question and show a full evaluation of the question.
- Consider consistently linking knowledge of the topic or text with conclusive remarks that acknowledge the question. Avoid generic introductions, which are often the same (verbatim) across scripts from a whole centre and consider starting with an acknowledgment of the question and a statement of thesis in response to it.
- 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.

