



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel International A Level

In Greek (WGK02)

Unit 2: Writing and Research

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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 the life of a young refugee from Africa, who arrived in Athens when he was 16.

Performance in this section was very good, mostly defined by Level 4 and above characteristics. Many candidates earned 14 marks and above, and many translations were marked by good knowledge of structures and vocabulary and there was some evidence of nuanced translation skills. Communication was often sound, and, in some cases, it was both accurate and sophisticated. In particular, the penultimate paragraph, with the exception of the underlined phrase, yielded excellent translations that showed secure knowledge of vocabulary and structures: *When Diallo arrived in Athens, he was 16 years old, alone, with no family and no money. Thanks to an organisation that looks after unaccompanied children who arrive in Greece, he was able to find a place to live, to make friends and to finally feel safe.*

In certain 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, inability to render certain collocations and expressions from English into Greek, and literal translations that did not quite work in Greek. Even though some of these errors did not obscure meaning, they disqualified the translation from earning the description “Excellent use of vocabulary and Grammar”.

The most common areas that showed unclear or inaccurate transfer of meaning were:

Στάθηκε instead of the correct ξεχώρισε (*stood out*)

Ένας είκοσι χρονών instead of the correct Ένας εικοσάχρονος/ νέος είκοσι ετών (*a 20-year-old*)

Διακοπές προορισμό instead of the correct προορισμός διακοπών (*holiday destination*)

Αναγκάστηκε να φύγει/να πάει από το σχολείο instead of the correct Αναγκάστηκε να παρατήσει (*he had to leave school*)

Υπό χάλια καταστάσεις/ανάντεχες (;) συνθήκες instead of the correct κάτω από άθλιες/κακές συνθήκες (*under terrible conditions*)

Έφυγε instead of the correct ξέφυγε/διέφυγε/ το έσκασε (*he escaped*)

Βρήκε τον εαυτό του instead of the correct βρέθηκε (*found himself*)

Ευχαριστίες σε/ Ευχαριστώ instead of the correct Χάρη σε (*Thanks to*)

Να εκπαιδεύσει/μορφώσει τον εαυτό του instead of the correct Να μορφωθεί (*to educate himself*)

As is often the case, the rendering of adjectives such as δημοφιλής (popular) and ασφαλής (safe) produced many errors, when it came to the manipulation of case.

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:

Ντιάλλο instead of the correct ο Ντιάλλο

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 an indicative translation of this text, please refer to the mark scheme for the summer 2025 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, discursively or creatively, through the two options provided. Responses must consider and address points raised in 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 related to the world of Work and Youth matters and asked candidates to consider the factors that may influence their choice of a professional path (2a). Still within this theme, but with a different purpose in mind, question 2(b) asked candidates to fast forward to the future to narrate and describe in relation to the profession they have chosen to do and explain the factors that influenced their decision.

For indicative answers to this question, please refer to the mark scheme for the summer 2025 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 factors that influence their decision about which professional path to follow and consider aspects such as, parental influence, salary, training required etc.

Performance in this question was occasionally marked by high achievement and more often by achievement in the level 3/4 brackets. While some performed very well, gaining marks from levels 4 and 5, most, despite their demonstrated language skills ("good range of vocabulary and structures" in the "Quality of Language" bracket) did not manage to organise their argument in a consistently cohesive and well-structured manner ("logical sequence" in the category "Content and Communication"). The more successful essays were marked by good organisation and development of a thesis regarding how they would go about choosing a profession and to what extent they are conflicted about what they want to do versus what the market demands. Their position required engagement with the ideas and questions posed in the source text, and those who earned high marks tackled these issues:

Δεν μπορούμε να διαλέξουμε τι θα σπουδάσουμε, δηλαδή τι επάγγελμα θα ακολουθήσουμε, μόνο με βάση το τι μας αρέσει. Έτσι δεν είναι; Δεν πρέπει να είμαστε σίγουροι ότι έχουμε τα κατάλληλα προσόντα;

Φαντάζομαι ότι κανένας δεν θέλει να κάνει μια δουλειά που δεν του εξασφαλίζει μια άνετη ζωή και τη δυνατότητα να αγοράζει ό,τι θέλει. Δεν συμφωνείτε;

Therefore, a successful candidate argued in relation to the questions/thoughts above, and did not produce a broadly conceived essay about jobs today or about what they want to be when they grow up.

A side note about the recommended style for this essay: 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. This is not the space for "pouring one's thoughts onto a page", rather it is an exercise in structured writing in conversation with certain prompts. Underlining the key ideas and questions in the source text (as some do) is a good way to not lose track of this requirement.

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. In fact, even though some ticked the 2(b) box, their essay read as if it was intended to be 2(a). Candidates are advised to be extra vigilant when they make and indicate a choice.

Few candidates wrote confident and purposeful pieces, with enough variety and interest to construct a future era, when their future self described their professional routine and looked back at how they got there. Most failed to pay attention to the rubric and spoke as 15-year-olds pondering their future choices, which was incorrect. Unlike question 2(a), question 2 (b) required looking back, not forward.

The recommended style adopted for this kind of essay requires imaginative narration and individual ideas, in order to fulfill the requirements expected for level 4 and above: "in creative essays, there is considerable variety and interest, and the reader's attention is captured" (Level 4).

And

“In creative essays, there is exemplary variety and interest, and the piece is a pleasure to read” (Level 5).

In general, performance in 2b was not as successful as in 2a, precisely because of the omission of a creative scenario that drew from one’s imagination and the presence of a discursive, abstract tone that did not match the requirements of the question.

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 some 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 2025 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 role of the royal family in Greek politics. Many essays showed good factual knowledge of the period and the topic and expressed their observations in good Greek, referring to specific events that created tension between the palace and politicians and the Greek society at large, e.g. Princess Sophia’s dowry, Lambrakis’ assassination, the 1961 elections etc.

Question 4

A relatively small number of candidates chose question 4, with a slight preference for 4a, which invited a description and assessment of the contributions of a major personality from Cyprus. The close knowledge of the topic was often impressive, but it was not adequately matched by critical analysis that explored dispassionately and beyond generalisations, the reasons why this personality is deemed important. Some candidates chose to discuss personalities from the UK, which was incorrect. Others discussed an array of personalities, which was also incorrect, as the requirement was to select one that stood out. As a result, performance in this question was not as successful. 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.

Performance in 4b (the role of the church during the period studied) was more successful than 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 explored with accuracy and depth landmark contributions by the church and the role of clerics in education, welfare and the preservation of a national consciousness.

Questions 5 and 6

No one chose question 5. Only a handful of candidates chose question 6 and they performed very well on all three aspects of the assessment criteria: Content and Communication text; Quality of Language; Critical Analysis, Organisation and Development. There are no other observations of note.

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 centers to advise their students to respect the recommended word limit** and not write all-inclusive accounts of poems, without addressing the question directly.

Many of the responses in this section showed excellent factual knowledge of the poems discussed, even though these poems were not always the most suitable for the question asked. For example, one would be hard pressed to persuade that *Απ' τες εννιά* is a historical poem. So even though close knowledge of the work may be in evidence, it needs to be *relevant* work for the candidate to earn good marks.

Many candidates included a range of appropriate supporting evidence in the form of apt quotations, which was very welcome. 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. In this respect, **we would like to discourage close readings of the poem that include, rather than purposefully identify, relevance.** Candidates are not invited to ask everything they know, rather what the question asks of them. What is required is a sharp focus on what is pertinent 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, it should not be left dangling.

As mentioned earlier, we cannot stress enough that the essays should not offer close readings of poems, when these readings 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 has been gaining traction amongst the candidates and this is a worrying pattern. 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 or successful.

The majority of the candidates chose 7a which invited them to discuss the treatment of religion in these poems. Many candidates selected appropriate evidence from poems such as, Μύρης ·Αλεξάνδρεια του 340 μ.Χ., *Ο Ιουλιανός εν Νικομηδεία* and *Ιγνατίου Τάφος*, in order to present sound portrayals of religious practices and beliefs. In most cases, what was often missing was critical engagement, or an element of subtlety in the analysis of these beliefs, which were sometimes taken at face value, instead of as insecurely grounded in their ambiguous contexts. For example, Ignatios is not unambiguously a Christian convert; the pagan maid is not an example of a pious caretaker, Myris and his friend are not exact opposites, entrenched in their different religions, they also have contact zones, etc.

A smaller number of candidates chose question 7 (b), which was about Cavafy's engagement with history. These candidates performed better and secured better grades on all aspects of the assessment criteria. With very few exceptions, the chosen poems were relevant, and the analysis went beyond description to identify the subtexts behind the portrayal of certain leaders (e.g. Cleopatra versus Kratisikleia) or certain moments in history (for example Thermopylai versus the battle of Magnesia).

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.

Question 8

Only three candidates chose this question, and they all showed minimal to no knowledge of the short stories.

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 Sections 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 u 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. Lengthy answers are often all inclusive and contain material that may be accurate but is ultimately irrelevant.

Thank you for choosing to study this specification

