Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In A Level Russian (9RU0/01)

Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Translation

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Content of the examination

Candidates were assessed on their understanding of spoken and written Russian from a variety of types of authentic texts and listening material, as well as their ability to translate accurately from Russian into English. Texts and recordings varied in length to include some extended passages. All spoken and written materials were culturally relevant to Russia and Russian-speaking countries and communities, and were drawn from four themes: Развитие российского общества, Политическая и художественная культура в русскоязычном мире, Москва или Санкт-Петербург – Изменения в жизни российского города and Последние годы СССР – М. С. Горбачёв (1985-1991).

Candidates were given the opportunity to understand main points, gist and detail from spoken and written material; infer meaning from complex spoken and written material; assimilate and use information from spoken and written sources, including material from online media; summarise information from spoken sources, reporting key points and subject matter; and to translate from Russian into English.

The total assessment time was 2 hours. The assessment was out of 80 marks. Candidates had to answer all questions. The use of dictionaries was not permitted.

Listening

The listening section was made up of spoken passages covering different registers and types, including authentic communication involving one or more speakers. Sources included material from online media.

Question 1 (four marks) used a text from a television programme about a jazz musician. There were four multiple-choice questions, set in Russian.

Candidates found this question very accessible and performed well.

Question 2 (five marks) was an extract from a speech given by the Governor of St Petersburg on security in the city. There were four questions in Russian, to be answered in Russian. Full sentences were not required.

Candidates generally responded well, although a few candidates wrongly gave first person rather than third person answers for 2(б) and 2(г). In 2(г), the correct response noted the attitude of the Governor, rather than stating that he is facing a lot of difficult work in the future.

Question 3 (nine marks) was an extract from a discussion between two people on perestroika. Candidates had to respond in Russian to nine questions in Russian. Full sentences were not required.

Candidates generally responded very well to these questions. However, in 3(а) a few candidates gave the wrong year, while some in 3(б) described the start of the propaganda campaign, rather than its end. Some misunderstood in 3(в) (and elsewhere in the paper) the word согласно, and thought that they were being asked about whether or not there was some kind of agreement. In this question, some candidates wrongly gave 'the fight with dangerous forces' rather than just 'dangerous forces'. Others thought that perestroika itself was the answer. 3(г) required a specific reference to 'work' and not just 'lost motivation'. In 3(ж), some candidates referred to foreign policy, but did not give the specific response that the foreign policy problem was the war in Afghanistan. In 3(и), a number of candidates expressed the idea that perestroika helped the country out of its depression; this idea

was accepted as a correct response. A few candidates misunderstood and claimed that due to perestroika, the country had fallen into a depression.

Question 4 (twelve marks) required candidates to respond to five questions in Russian and to make two brief summaries in Russian. The text contained extracts from a text about eating breakfast and was delivered in two sections.

The questions were generally answered accurately, but some candidates found the summary more difficult. Not all ensured that their sentences or phrases linked coherently together to make a viable summary, as the task requires. In 4(a)(v), some candidates did not transcribe мясных and частота correctly, which led to a change in meaning and ambiguity.

Reading
The reading section was made up of texts containing both factual and abstract content and was authentic or adapted from authentic sources. The texts included contemporary, historical, literary, fiction and non-fiction, written for different purposes and audiences.

Question 5 (four marks) was a blog from a young Russian person and his career plans, and required candidates to respond to four multiple choice questions set in Russian.

They did so very successfully.

Question 6 (four marks) was a weather report. Candidates were offered a list of statements in Russian from which they had to select the four true ones.

This question was done well overall, with most candidates achieving three or four marks.

Question 7 (six marks) was an article attitudes towards traditional culture. There were six questions to answer in Russian. Full sentences were not required.

Candidates did so with some success, although a few did not respond correctly to 7(б); many candidates' answers included something to do with the 'Soviet citizen'. In 7(г), some candidates wrongly wrote that tea ceremonies were an example of Western culture. For 7(е), many candidates said that старшее поколение or simply старшие were raising the younger members of the family; the correct response was старшие дети.

Question 8 (eight marks) contained seven questions to be answered in Russian. The text was about life and technology in the future. Although full sentences were not required, candidates were expected to give all information that was relevant to a full answer.

For 8(a), very few candidates noted that the author's change of mood came after he had seen a film. However, most candidates correctly gave the information required for the second mark. In 8(б), candidates had to explain a term from the text in their own words. In an effort to find a good explanation, some candidates became somewhat too inventive and consequently strayed too far from the original meaning. In 8(в), some candidates described the air as 'clean', which was not a full answer. For 8(ж), many candidates wrote about illness, but not all stated that (according to the text) the result of a sedentary life was death.

Question 9 (eight marks) was a literary one which included an episode from the night of 20 August, 1991 in the White House in Moscow. It contained eight questions to be answered in Russian.

All the parts of this question appeared to be accessible to candidates, many of whom answered it well. Some candidates occasionally did not write complete answers, or failed to manipulate their response from the first person of the narrative to the third person required by the question. In 9(a) several candidates referred to the crowd outside as the cause of the narrator's lack of sleep, rather than the uncomfortable chair he was sitting on. The majority of candidates correctly inferred in 9(в) the response жёстко or коротко from the sentence about the President's speech to the crowd. Question 9(ж) also required candidates to infer a response; most wrote that the narrator was scared of the General, or that the General was строгий. A few candidates went further, and many were credited for their plausible responses, such as чтобы Генерал поскорее ушёл. In 9(з), the majority of candidates noted that the narrator thought that he would be bored, but other plausible responses were also accepted.

Translation into English

The content of the translation (Question 10) dealt with the topic of animal welfare, particularly in circuses and zoos. The text was divided into twenty sections, each worth one mark. A translation was regarded as successful if an English speaker could understand it without having understood the text in its original language. Variants on the acceptable answers proposed in the mark scheme were accepted if they conveyed the same intended meaning.

Many candidates found this a challenging task, and only very, few achieved full marks. Candidates sometimes got close to the correct meaning, but then wrote the wrong tense, or wrote a plural instead of a singular, or misspelled a word in such a way that its meaning became ambiguous, or else they omitted words. The vocabulary and structures contained within the text all appeared to be accessible, with no particular words causing major problems for candidates, with the possible exception of the phrase в невыносимых условиях.

Advice to Candidates

- Ensure you use a decent black pen and make your handwriting as legible as possible.
- Avoid using extra pages; you may do rough work on the blank pages of the question paper, or in the white spaces.
- Rough work must be crossed out, so that there is no ambiguity about what needs to be marked and what needs to be ignored.
- Time your work carefully, ensuring that you leave enough time to do the Translation.
- For questions 2, 3 and 4(a), you may respond using single words, short phrases or sentences. For question 4(b), you may respond using short phrases or sentences, but you should be aware that the task is to write a summary, so your phrases or sentences must follow on coherently from one to another.
- For questions 7, 8 and 9, you may respond using short phrases or sentences. You may use words from the texts, but you must not copy whole sections.
- Even though full sentences are not required, you are expected to give all information that is relevant to a full answer.
- For the Translation (Question 10), avoid leaving gaps, since no marks are awarded for blank spaces. Check that your English is grammatically correct

and that each sentence makes sense. Be very careful about details such as tenses, singulars and plurals.

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