



Examiner's Report Principal Examiner
Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel IAL

In Greek (WGK0) Paper 2

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Introduction

This unit is a three-hour examination which is externally assessed and consists of three sections. Total marks for this paper are 80 and its weighting is 50% of the total IAL marks. It is available every January and June. June 2019 marked the second summer examination series of the IAL WGK02 in Greek.

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

Content in this examination is set against 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.

This year's candidates generally performed well, particularly in Sections A and B of the question paper.

A good number of candidates produced competent responses, demonstrating familiarity with the rudiments of essay writing, good knowledge of the topics and texts and a level of language awareness that enabled them to apply their knowledge of Greek, in order to compose pertinent responses, exercise a degree of critical interpretation and offer factually correct details pertaining to their chosen topics and texts.

Performance in Section A was generally satisfactory, communication was mostly sound, with only occasional lapses in structures and vocabulary.

In Section B, candidates generally wrote good essays. There were some candidates whose performance was not as successful as it could have been. Despite evidently good language skills they failed to read questions 2a and 2b carefully, in order to provide succinct but comprehensive responses, which engaged with the stimulus text and contained appropriate exemplification.

There was noticeable improvement in the way candidates handled the questions in Section C. Only a small number wrote overtly long responses, which contained irrelevance and unaccountable digression, that did not serve the candidates' skills and knowledge well. Answers that relied too heavily on description at the expense of analysis and interpretation did not manage to score high marks from the third category of Critical analysis and Organization and Development.

Section A

In this section, candidates are expected to undertake a short translation from English into Greek. The translation is marked according to translation specific assessment criteria, which may be found in the published specification for IAL Greek.

The assessment descriptors for this task 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.

A good number of candidates produced satisfactory translations which showed control of meaning, good command of vocabulary and structures, with many scoring 14 marks and above. Very few candidates lacked the language skills in order to grasp more than the basic sense of the passage and transfer meaning into Greek. A small number of candidates opted for leaving gaps that seriously affected communication. Others offered several translation alternatives instead of sticking with one. In such cases, only the first alternative offered is considered and assessed. Therefore, candidates are advised against this practice.

In general, there were few patterns of errors in structures and slips in vocabulary and expression. These mainly consisted of the following:

- “mobile laundry” challenged some candidates and yielded erroneous patters such as, “κινούμενο μπάνιο”, “κινούμενος θάλαμος”, “κινούμενη μπουγάδα”. In some cases, the translated phrase produced no meaning whatsoever. Candidates are advised to make sure that their translation makes sense
- “migrants” was often translated as “πρόσφυγες”, but this error was tolerated
- “Ithaca Laundry” was often left untranslated
- “Initiative” posed a challenge, even to more successful candidates
- “Service” was often confused with ‘σερβίρισμα’, which makes no sense in this context. Again, candidates are advised to check whether their translation makes sense in the context of the particular piece.

Generally, the translations contained correct vocabulary and grammar, a variety of appropriate structures and few lapses. Some vocabulary slips aside, the level of competence in transferring meaning from English into Greek was impressively high.

SECTION B

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 in different registers and style, creatively or discursively on the topic through two options provided. The assessment 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 this section, 15 for content and communication and 15 for quality of language.

The majority of students performed very well in this section, with many scoring 22 marks and above. A good number of students achieved marks from the top bands (levels 4 and 5) of the categories for “Content and Communication” and “Quality of Language”, with responses to 2a scoring slightly better than responses to 2b.

Question 2 invited candidates to offer opinion regarding a blog writer’s concern about gender stereotypes. There was the option of a more formal discursive piece versus a more personal response to the blog writer herself, which also invited description and commentary from personal experience. Most candidates chose 2(a) which was the more formal, discursive option. The level of performance was satisfactory and most students demonstrated the ability to express and link ideas in a logical and effective sequence. There were some instances where, unaccountably, candidates wrote about bullying, rather than gender stereotypes. In some other cases, careless reading of the rubric and the source text led to writing about race and religion, rather than gender.

Those who chose 2 (b) also performed well, managing to relate personal experiences in a compelling way that supported their main argument. Occasionally, examples were rather basic and illustrated a candidate’s frustration with a personal experience (e.g. being unnecessarily punished in Primary school, because they were a boy) rather than substantiating a thesis regarding the issue of gender stereotypes. Examples are habitually invited in this section of the examination, but candidates are reminded that examples ought to be used to substantiate a position and they cannot constitute the whole narrative, in absence of critical framing.

On the rare occasion that answers failed to perform at level 4 or 5, this was mostly due to omissions regarding the citing of examples, or a certain imbalance in the treatment of the topic, where opinion tilted heavily towards one side only, without substantiation or expansion. In the case of the creative piece or more personal responses, candidates are reminded that the adoption of a correct register and tone are an important aspect of addressing the task effectively. Writing to a friend/ a fellow student requires an informal register and a certain familiarity with the addressee.

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.

This was the second summer exam series of the WGK02 specification and candidates stayed with topics and texts familiar to them through the A level legacy specification, ignoring the questions from the modules on *Films and documentaries: Conversations about crisis in Greek society* and *Short stories from the Greek-speaking world*.

Comments on individual questions are as follows:

Question 3

Very few candidates chose question 3 and the majority of those who did selected question 3b. Question 3b invited them to comment on the events and the impact of the Polytechnic uprising. A small number of essays showed good factual knowledge of the period and the topic and expressed their observations in good Greek. The majority, however, relied heavily on anecdotal evidence and unnecessarily emotional and patriotic narratives that were not successful in relating details regarding the causes, the events and the impact of the uprising.

Question 4

Very few candidates answered the questions on the History of Cyprus. Those who did were in possession of the appropriate facts in relation to the nature of Cypriot society and economy (3a) and the relations between the Church of Cyprus and the Colonial Government and the role of the Cypriot Clergy during the period in question.

If there was a discernible pattern of not entirely successful responses, this related to very long answers in 3(a), which laid out facts in a list-like manner and did not frame the candidates' impressive knowledge critically.

Question 6

Question 6 was the second most popular question among this year's candidates. Almost everyone who chose this question chose 6(b) and wrote about family tensions and the way they affect the children in the films of this module.

In general, the level of performance was satisfactory or very good, with many candidates at Level 5 for Content and Quality of Language and Level 4, for critical analysis, organization and development. Students were able to identify the appropriate details regarding the family dramas in each film, the role of the young protagonists in these and how these quarrels or challenges influenced them, as children and later on as adults. Most candidates demonstrated good factual knowledge of the films, offered relevant supporting evidence to substantiate their arguments and explained their views clearly and unambiguously.

Where lapses and omissions were observed, these had to do with weak critical analysis and with overtly long narrative and retelling of the plot (albeit with relevant details).

Question 7

As expected, this was the most popular question and it yielded successful answers, especially in relation to 7(a), which invited candidates to comment on the challenges that many of the characters in the poem encounter and the ways in which they face them. A pattern of misunderstanding emerged in 7 (b). A number of candidates did not read the question carefully and instead of writing about poetics, the way Cavafy treats the theme and role of poetry in his poems, they wrote about what *they* consider to be the purpose of Cavafy's poems. Even though these responses showed acceptable factual knowledge of the

poems, they failed to score high marks from the categories of Critical analysis (AO3) and organisation and development (AO2).

On the contrary, question 7 (a) was tackled very well by the majority of candidates. They were able to distinguish between characters responding to challenges on the one hand and the poet himself advising characters about the correct way to deal with a certain challenge, on the other (e.g. in the poems *Απολείπειν ο Θεός Αντώνιον, Η πόλις, Όσο μπορείς*). A successful performance was also marked by expanding one's point and framing the attitude to a challenge within a system of values and ideas, advocated by Cavafy.

Conclusion

All in all, the candidates in this examination series performed well and wrote their responses in good Greek.

In Section A, transfer of meaning from English into Greek was handled very well by a good number of candidates, despite slips in orthography and occasional wrong choice of vocabulary.

In Section B, students were able to write clearly and persuasively, with an impressive range of vocabulary and structures. There were few instances of inappropriate register and style.

In Section C, there was an obvious preference for the questions on the poems of Cavafy and the film module on family and childhood. There was a noticeable pattern of meaningful conclusive remarks that linked to an argument substantiated by the essay content and a level of depth in the responses, beyond superficial description.