

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCE Russian (6RU03) Paper 1A

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Publications Code US033002

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Assessment Principles

The unit is assessed according to the marking grids on pages 36 and 37 of the current Specification: Response (20), Quality of Language (7), Reading and Research (7), Comprehension and Development (16). The total is marks for this paper is 50.

Conduct of the Test

The candidate should outline the initial issue for about 1 minute, adopting a definite stance towards this. The more able candidates will support their opinions with evidence of reading and research, often quoting statistics and sources and / or citing the views of others. They should then justify and defend their views for up to four minutes during which the examiner should adopt a point of view **in opposition** to the candidate's. Simply asking the candidate questions about their views does not constitute an adequate challenge to them and will not allow the candidate adequate scope to defend and justify them. After the first five minutes, the examiner should initiate a spontaneous discussion on **at least two** further issues. The entire test should last between 11 and 13 minutes.

Performance of Candidates

Most candidates chose suitable issues. The most popular continue to be: "I am against / in favour of abortion / death penalty / euthanasia/ legalisation of drugs". Same-sex marriage, the question of increased fees for Higher Education, who or what is to blame for the current world economic crisis, the fairness of the recent elections in Russia, environmental concerns and matters to do with the Olympics were also very popular this time round. The most successful issues continue to be those about which the candidate can express strong views, but which also allow an equally strong point of view to be expressed by the examiner. In other words, for examination purposes, the most suitable issues are those which are not black and white.

Many candidates, demonstrated an excellent ability to take the initiative, show in-depth reading and research and use sophisticated vocabulary, structures and powers of argument. In order for candidates to perform to the best of their ability teacher examiners must ensure the test is conducted correctly. Common errors in the conduct of the exams included: tests that were the wrong length, some did not move on from the original issue and others did not contain at least two further issues or often asked inappropriate questions for this unit. Centres should note that short tests will incur a time penalty and long tests serve no purpose as nothing a candidate says after the end of the sentence being spoken as the 13th minute elapses will be credited. Revisiting AS and GCSE questions will not allow candidates to demonstrate the appropriate linguistic and intellectual skills necessary to score highly in this unit. It should also be noted that it is not in the spirit of the exam to ask the same questions to all candidates at one centre.

Advice and Guidance

Candidates should:

- write their chosen issue on the form in Russian, clearly indicating their stance. (Я за... / Я против... / Я думаю, что... etc)
- research their chosen issue carefully
- try to give statistics to support their arguments, and avoid saying "statistics show that..."
- quote specific sources, not just say "someone said that..."
- demonstrate a clear grasp of the initial issue
- if being examined by an examiner who is not their teacher, send the oral form to the relevant person in good time for the examiner to prepare the fairest possible test.

Teacher examiners should:

- observe the correct time limits
- make sure the test consists only of the discussion of issues
- make sure that at least two distinct issues have been discussed after the original one has been completed
- make sure that the additional issues are genuinely unpredictable. (If a candidate is struggling with one unpredictable issue, it is easy to move on quickly to another which might produce a better performance)
- allow candidates to develop their responses and be careful not to dominate the argument
- check that the recording has been recorded clearly
- mark the tapes, CDs or memory sticks and their boxes clearly with the centre name, centre number, candidate numbers and names of candidates
- announce the above at appropriate places on all tapes
- make sure that the tests have been recorded and can be played back at a suitable volume
- make sure the recordings are securely packed
- if in doubt about how to conduct the test, consult the Oral Training Guide on the Edexcel website.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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Order Code US033002 Summer 2012

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