Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

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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 two themes: Развитие российского общества and Политическая и художественная культура в русскоязычном мире.

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 1 hour and 45 minutes. The assessment was out of 64 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 advertisement for a circus festival. There were four multiple-choice questions, set in Russian. Candidates found this question very accessible and performed well.

Question 2 (four marks) was an extract from a text about alternative (non-military) national service. There were four questions in Russian, to be answered in Russian. Full sentences were not required. Candidates generally responded well, although a few candidates gave an incomplete answer for 2(в); больница is a place, and not an example of national service. In 2(г), not every candidate noted the comparative; non-military service is not easy, but it is easier than military service.

Question 3 (eight marks) was an extract from a text reporting on a conference on the role of mass media in the fight against terrorism. Candidates had to respond in Russian to eight questions in Russian. Full sentences were not required. Candidates generally responded very well to these questions. However, in 3(a) some candidates noted the month and not the season of the year, while some in 3(б) thought that the President had spoken with the UN General Secretary. Some wrote in 3(в) that it was the importance of the job of the President, which was spoken about.

Question 4 (eight marks) required candidates to respond to four questions in Russian and to make a brief summary in English. The text contained extracts from an interview with the Minister of Education and was delivered in two sections. The questions were generally answered accurately, but some candidates found the summary more difficult. Some did not note in 4(b) (ii) that *more* people were expected to engage in sport, or that sport in Moscow was to be *developed*. A disappointing number of candidates wrote their summary in Russian, which meant that they achieved no marks for 4(b).

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 report about 'Youth Day' in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia and required candidates to respond to four multiple choice questions set in Russian. They did so very successfully.

Question 6 (four marks) was a newspaper report about a ballet competition in Moscow. 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 (four marks) was an article containing a question from a reader about a health problem, and a doctor's reply. There were four questions to answer in Russian. Full sentences were not required. Candidates did so with some success, although a few did not respond fully enough to 7(б); the issue was not Inna's age as such, but the hormonal changes which she was experiencing at her age.

Question 8 (eight marks) contained eight questions to be answered in Russian. The text was an extract from the biography of a young person living in Siberia. Although full sentences were not required, candidates were expected to give all information that was relevant to a full answer. Some candidates mistakenly thought in 8(д) that Diana liked her house, and in 8(e) that her mother was fond of pets. Most candidates achieved between six and eight marks for this question.

Question 9 (eight marks) was a literary one which included information about the life of a school pupil. It contained eight questions to be answered in Russian. Most candidates achieved between six and eight marks for this question. All the parts of the question appeared to be accessible, but some candidates 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 thought that Olya preferred her old school because it was near her house, or near her friend's house, but a close reading would discover that this was not the reason: но дело не в этом. In 9(б) a few candidates achieved only one mark out of two because they had omitted to write нет or не понравилось. Question 9(г) required candidates to explain the word грустно in their own Russian words; examiners accepted any definition, which did so successfully. The majority correctly wrote either печально or невесело; some gave much longer definitions, with examples. As for Question 9(ж), many acceptable answers were seen, including высокомерная, странная, эгоистка, самовлюблённая, непопулярная and неприятная; given that, the question asked for the candidate's own opinion, words such as хорошая and застенчивая were also accepted.

Translation into English

The content of the translation (Question 10) dealt with the topic of journalism. Many candidates found this a challenging task, and only very, few achieved full marks. The text was divided into twelve 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. 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 problems for multiple candidates.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for all papers can be found on the website at:

https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html