



Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback  
Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCE  
In A Level Russian (9RU0/03)

## **Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications**

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com) or [www.btec.co.uk](http://www.btec.co.uk). Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at [www.edexcel.com/contactus](http://www.edexcel.com/contactus).

## **Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere**

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: [www.pearson.com/uk](http://www.pearson.com/uk)

Summer 2019

Publications Code 9RU0\_3A\_1906\_ER\*

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2019

## **Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in Russian (9RU0) Paper 3 (9RU03): Speaking**

This speaking assessment consists of two tasks:

- Task 1 – Discussion on a theme
- Task 2 – Presentation and discussion on candidate's independent research project

Please see the Pearson Level 3 Advanced GCE Russian specification (pp. 19-40) for further details of this assessment, and for the mark grids used for assessment. Please see the same document (pp. 8-9) or the "Advice to Teacher/Examiners" section of this report for a list of the themes and sub-themes for this specification.

The tasks are conducted in consecutive order.

The candidate is rewarded for the ability to demonstrate:

- knowledge and understanding of the cultural context by giving ideas, examples and information on one of the themes and on a chosen subject of interest they have researched linked to the social and cultural context of the language studied
- the ability to analyse aspects of the cultural context by presenting and justifying valid arguments, viewpoints and conclusions
- the ability to interact and hold a natural and fluent discourse
- skill in manipulating language accurately
- the ability to respond to written language in speech.

Up to 72 marks are awarded positively for this assessment:

Task 1 – 30 marks:

- 12 marks for Knowledge and understanding of society and culture (AO4)
- 12 marks for Accuracy and range of language (AO3)
- 6 marks for Interaction (AO1)

Task 2 – 42 marks:

- 12 marks for Responding to written language in speech (AO2)
- 12 marks for Knowledge and understanding of society and culture (AO4)
- 12 marks for Accuracy and range of language (AO3)
- 6 marks for Interaction (AO1)

Before the examination, the candidate has 5 minutes to prepare Task 1. During this (supervised) preparation, time the candidate may make notes (up to one side of A4 for each task) but may not have access to a dictionary or any other resource. The candidate takes both the stimulus card and any notes made into the examination, and can refer to these during the assessment. The stimulus card and any notes are collected by the teacher/examiner at the end of the examination.

For Task 1, the candidate chooses one card from a choice of two, on two different sub-themes. The invigilator refers to the sequence provided in the Paper 3 speaking booklet (Instructions to the teacher/examiner) to determine which two sub-themes the candidate will be offered. The invigilator tells the candidate the choice of sub-themes, in English, using the wording for the sub-themes provided on the randomisation grid, e.g. "You may choose 'The lives of young Russians' or 'Perestroika'". The candidate does not see the contents of either card until he or she has chosen the sub-theme.

Pearson issues the teacher/examiner booklet and the stimulus cards to centres before the examining session. These materials are confidential until the end of the examining session for this paper. The dates for the examining session are published in the Pearson examination timetable. In 2019 the examining session finished on May 15.

The conduct of the tasks is as follows:

### **Task 1 – Discussion on a theme (6-7 minutes)**

The teacher/examiner asks two compulsory questions, provided on the teacher/examiner version of the card, in the order in which they are written.

These two set questions may be repeated, but, in the interests of comparability, must not be rephrased.

After asking the two set questions, the teacher/examiner asks follow-up questions and broadens the discussion to cover any other aspect or aspects of the overall theme. For example, if the candidate has (from 2019) stimulus RU5 sub-theme: Массовая культура, then after follow-up questions on the topic of the card (балет) and Массовая культура more generally, the discussion could cover any of the other sub-themes of the theme (Политическая и художественная культура в русскоязычном мире). The other sub-themes in this case are Средства массовой информации and Праздники, фестивали и традиции.

These questions should allow the candidate to demonstrate knowledge of Russian society and culture (Themes 1, 3 and 4) and of the Russian-speaking world (Theme 2).

Teacher/examiners are advised that it is **not** necessary to cover all of the sub-themes in the theme, which is being tested. The discussion must move away from the topic of the card (in the case above, балет), and should allow the candidate to demonstrate breadth of knowledge, but in practice it is usually in the candidate's interest to explore one or two areas in more depth than to explore a greater number of areas more superficially.

### **Task 2 – Presentation and discussion of the Independent Research Project (10-11 minutes - up to 2 minutes: introduction plus 8-9 minutes: discussion)**

Task 2 consists of two parts:

1. **presentation** of the Independent Research Project (up to 2 minutes)
2. **discussion** of the Independent Research Project (8-9 minutes)

If the candidate's presentation is short, then the discussion can be extended, so that the total overall time of Task 2 is 10-11 minutes.

#### **Task 2 Part 1: Presentation of the Independent Research Project (IRP)**

During the presentation of the IRP, the candidate:

- summarises at least two of the written sources he/she has used as part of his/her research
- outlines the authors' main points and ideas
- gives a personal response to what he/she has read

These written sources must be in Russian. Written articles taken from the internet can be used. The candidate can use video/film and/or other audio sources in

addition to written sources, but during the presentation, the candidate must refer to **at least two Russian written** sources.

12 marks are available for Task 2 Part 1 (introduction of the IRP). These marks are awarded for "Responding to Russian written language in speech".

### **Task 2 Part 2: Discussion of Independent Research Project**

The teacher/examiner discusses the IRP with the candidate, using the key findings and list of sources on form RP3 to help formulate questions. The teacher/examiner should ensure that the questions he/she asks enable the candidate to meet the requirements of the assessment i.e. to elicit examples and information to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Russian-speaking social and cultural context and to analyse aspects of the topic by developing and justifying arguments and forming conclusions.

#### **Timing**

Task 1: 6-7 minutes

Task 2: 10-11 minutes

Timing of both tasks begins from the candidate's first utterance.

The two tasks are timed independently of each other.

#### **Performance 2019**

Many centres this year entered only one candidate, and as a result, not all stimulus cards were used. However, if centres plan to use this material for practice exams, they should note that all stimulus cards make similar demands of candidates.

#### **Task 1 – Discussion of a theme**

##### **General comments**

Candidates should be aware that 12 of the 30 marks available for this part of the exam are awarded for "Knowledge and understanding of society and culture". In order to access the top band for this mark grid, candidates need to offer "Relevant, perceptive ideas consistently supported by pertinent information / examples / references". These need to be "consistently focused on the Russian-speaking cultural and social context". In addition, they need to offer "Analysis of the Russian-speaking cultural and social context demonstrated by consistently developed and justified arguments and viewpoints" and draw "convincing conclusions".

In order to do this, candidates need to demonstrate knowledge which goes beyond the anecdotal and which reflects research into and understanding of the topic being discussed. The focus of the discussion should be Russia (Themes 1, 3 and 4) or the Russian-speaking world (Theme 2). If the candidate is discussing Theme 2, it is sufficient to refer only to examples from Russia in order to access the full range of marks available. There is no requirement to go beyond Russia to other areas of the Russian-speaking world, though of course the candidate may do so if he/she wishes.

A significant number of candidates this year did not offer sufficient information / examples / references to access the full range of marks available for "Knowledge and understanding of society and culture", instead relying on general knowledge. These candidates often ran out of material to discuss, and / or spoke in general terms rather than focusing on Russia / the Russian-speaking context.

The teacher/examiner has a significant role to play here. It is important that the teacher/examiner's questions:

- Encourage the candidate to offer information relevant to Russia / the Russian-speaking context
- Encourage the candidate to offer opinion and analysis.

**Important:**

Teacher/examiners and candidates should be aware that candidates are expected to ask a question or questions as part of the Task 1 discussion (Pearson GCE Russian A level specification, p.21). The teacher/examiner's response to any questions should be brief. Many candidates this year did not ask a question in this section of the test.

**Comments on stimulus cards**

Stimulus RU1 was the most popular, and also often answered well. Most candidates mentioned smartphone usage, social media (ВКонтакте, Одноклассники) and why they were popular. Some talked about the negative effect of technology on health, mentioning addiction, eye problems and obesity. A few broadened it into new developments in medicine and education. There was, however, a danger of discussion of this topic becoming too general and not related to Russia. Option A was more popular than option B.

Stimulus RU2: Candidates often compared old and new exam systems in Russia, talked about the ЕГЭ and its advantages (e.g. it is fairer than the previous system) and disadvantages (e.g. corruption). Some mentioned the differences in achievement between those from the big cities and the provinces. Many candidates had good knowledge of the Russian education system. Option A was more popular than option B.

Stimulus RU3: This was approached well by most candidates. Many were able to refer to statistics and often expressed concerns about unemployment. Immigration was blamed in many cases. There was mention of the Russian government's schemes to help young people find jobs, the problem of lack of experience and how to get it and the importance of a degree or HE in finding a job. Options A and B seemed equally popular.

Stimulus RU4: This was not as well done as other cards. There was some lack of awareness of what СМИ includes. However, those who did well, did very well, and talked about all kinds of media and its use – corruption, propaganda, power etc. Several mentioned that internet news was more reliable than other sources and talked about why the government was against this. Options A and B were equally popular.

Stimulus RU5: A surprising number of the candidates who answered this card knew very little about ballet and, apart from saying whether ballet was popular or not, struggled to find much to say. Option B was more popular than option A.

Stimulus RU6. This was a popular choice. The best candidates were able to offer a good deal of information, differentiated between religious and state holidays as well as Soviet and post-Soviet holidays. Most candidates discussed Russian holidays and festivals, although some talked about celebrations in Kazakhstan and in the Baltic countries. Many talked about how important close friends and family are to the Russian-speaking population. Option B was more popular than option A.

Stimulus RU7 was another popular choice. Some candidates did not make it clear which city they had studied (the same is true, too, of Stimulus RU8 and Stimulus RU9). The negative rather than positive aspect of population change was often

mentioned, supported by statistics about unemployment, crime and homelessness from the best candidates. The rise in housing costs was often mentioned, with details, as was the fact that many people now move to the suburbs, but there is a lack of facilities there for younger people. Options A and B appeared equally popular.

Stimulus RU8: Some candidates described the increased police presence and CCTV as a positive, decreasing crime. Others added that it has had no effect on serious crime like murder. Again, the best candidates gave examples and statistics to back up their assertions. Almost all said that ecology/pollution was a more significant problem than crime, citing air pollution as the most serious issue facing Moscow and St Petersburg. Options A and B were equally popular.

Stimulus RU9: Positive effects mentioned were parks and new transport links in Moscow (which help with environmental concerns and general well-being of residents), and shops and leisure facilities in St Petersburg. Negatives included disruption to residents, traffic jams and the rise in housing costs. Some candidates discussed the importance (or lack of it) of preserving historic centres e.g. should we build modern structures on Red Square? Such discussion was often backed up well with examples. Option A was more popular than Option B.

Stimulus RU10 proved to be one of the more difficult for candidates. Those who had prepared well often did very well, talking about stagnation under Brezhnev and the necessity for new policies and younger leaders, which were generally supported with evidence. Some candidates were able to offer evidence about the failure of the economy, including statistics. Negative aspects were described as the fact that things got worse at first and the economy was not seen to improve and that Gorbachev lost support because change did not happen quickly enough. Others said that Gorbachev did not realise the effect his policies would have and how quickly things would change. Where this was supported with examples, dates etc., the candidate often spoke well. Weaker candidates often just mentioned the obvious and were struggling to say much more than "the situation was bad in the 1990s". Options A and B were equally popular.

Stimulus RU11: As for stimulus RU10, well-prepared candidates often scored well and the less well-prepared stuck to broad generalisations. There were some good descriptions of Glasnost', mentioning increased awareness of what was happening outside the USSR and the problems of freedom of speech. Options A and B were equally popular.

Stimulus RU12: Candidates often spoke of the positive reaction to the August Putsch and the optimism of the people, but how the problems with availability of food and other goods were still there. There was a desire for stability and a feeling that Gorbachev was not in control. Candidates described Yeltsin's appeal to the people. The strongest candidates backed up what they said with facts and figures, dates and examples, but some were not really aware of what happened beyond a superficial level. Options A and B were equally popular.

## **Task 2: Presentation and discussion of Independent Research Project**

### **Choice of topic:**

Almost without exception, candidates chose a suitable topic for the IRP, that is, one related to the Russian-speaking cultural and social context. On occasion the candidate chose a topic which related to the Russian-speaking context initially, but drifted into more general, global issues. Often topics relating to technology or the environment were prone to do this. On occasion the topic title was a little vague (e.g. Schools in Russia) and did not allow the candidate to explore issues and offer specific detail.

Many candidates followed the advice in the document "A level Russian – ideas for the independent research project" (available on the Pearson Edexcel website) to phrase the title of and treat the topic in a way which allowed them to access all bands of the mark scheme. In order to be able to demonstrate the ability to "develop and justify arguments and viewpoints", it is often helpful to phrase the topic as a question, for example "Why did...?" or "To what extent...?".

Many candidates chose a historical topic, e.g. "Was the October Revolution inevitable?", "Was Lenin a good leader?", "The importance of Russian Fairy Tales", "Why was St Petersburg a 'window to the West'?". Some discussed topics from more recent history such as issues between Russian and Ukraine, Crimea or the opponents of Putin's government. A large number of candidates focused on individuals, for example Vrubel', Stanislavsky, Sergei Esenin, Regina Barskaya or Count Yusupov. There were a large number of original (and interesting) topics such as Graffiti Art in Russia, the Tretyakov Gallery, the rights and wrongs of selling bottled water from Lake Baikal, the differences between modern volunteering in Russia and the Soviet Dobrovoltsy and Russian cinematography.

### **Part 1 – introduction**

A significant number of candidates failed to mention in their introduction the Russian written sources they had used. Instead they often gave an overview of their chosen topic and then began to talk through their 'findings' from the RP3 form. Some candidates mentioned sources they had used but failed to analyse these, or to give a personal reaction to them. A few candidates gave presentations which went beyond two minutes and therefore not all the information they gave on their sources could be credited. A small number referred only to English language sources.

It is **essential** that candidates are aware of the requirements of this part of the test. If only one Russian written source is referred to by name during the introduction, then a maximum of 3 marks of 12 can be awarded. If no Russian written sources are referred to by name during the presentation, then 0 marks are awarded for this part of the test.

### **Part 2 – discussion of the IRP**

The majority of teacher/examiners conducted a sympathetic discussion of the IRP, using the headings on the RP3 form to help them formulate their questions. Teacher/examiners generally allowed and encouraged candidates to show the full extent of their knowledge of the topic they had chosen, and followed the list of candidate's findings to ensure that the conversation was going in the intended direction. Most teacher/examiners respected the timing of this section of the test.

As for Task 1, teacher/examiners and candidates should be aware that candidates are expected to ask a question or questions as part of the Task 2 discussion



(Pearson GCE Russian A level specification, p.21). The teacher/examiner's response to any questions should be brief. Many candidates this year did not ask a question in this section of the test.

**Advice for teacher/examiners (Tasks 1 and 2):**

- Do not speak too much, keep teacher/examiner intervention to a minimum
- Respect the timing of the exam
- In Task 1, ask the questions exactly as they are written on the teacher/examiner version of the stimulus card
- Encourage the candidate to offer knowledge and understanding that relates to Russia/the Russian-speaking context (in both parts of the test)
- Ask questions that encourage the candidate to give a critical response to the topics discussed.
- Make sure that candidates know that they should ask a question or questions in both Task 1 and Task 2
- Make sure that candidates choose a suitable topic for the IRP i.e. one rooted in the Russian-speaking context
- Use the headings on the RP3 form to develop discussion of the IRP

The majority of centres this year followed the instructions for the conduct and for the submission of the speaking test, and provided a completed Candidate speaking authentication sheet (one per centre) and an RP3 form (one per candidate). Copies of these documents, together with the "Administrative support guide – conducting speaking tests" document are available on the Pearson website (<https://qualifications.pearson.com>). Nearly all the tests received this year were of suitable recording quality.

Where a test is too short it may not be possible for the candidate to access the full range of marks available. Similarly, if the guidance as to the topics to be covered is not followed, the candidate may not be able to access all of the mark grids. It therefore essential that teacher/examiners are familiar with the requirements of the conduct of the tests.

It is essential that the teacher/examiner is aware of the requirements of 9RU03, as incorrectly conducted tests can adversely affect the candidate's mark. As mentioned previously, further advice about the conduct of the test can be found on the Pearson website.

**General – preparation of candidates for the 9RU03 exam:**

- Share the mark grids and the indicative content for the SAMs material and previous speaking tests with candidates, so that they are familiar with the requirements of the exam
- Ensure that candidates practise asking questions during the exam
- Ensure that candidates have a "bank" of examples and information that they can use to demonstrate knowledge of Russia (Themes 1, 3 and 4) and the Russian-speaking world (Theme 2). Examples of the type of knowledge that might be used in Task 1 can be found in the indicative content in the markschemes for 9RU03
- Ensure that candidates practise preparing and responding to the speaking test cards in timed conditions
- Provide candidates with generic phrases and topic-specific vocabulary that can be used in the exam
- Engage the candidate in genuine conversation by responding to what the candidate says and encouraging the candidate to develop and to build on what he or she says.

### **Recording and submitting the tests**

- Follow the instructions in the “Administrative support guide – conducting speaking tests” document available on the Pearson website (<https://qualifications.pearson.com>)
- Ensure that the recording equipment used is suitable and will provide a clear recording of the candidate’s performance
- If USBs or CDs are password protected, send the password to the Pearson examiner at his/her home address under separate cover.

A level Russian Themes and sub-themes:

#### **Тема 1: Развитие российского общества**

Theme 1 is set in the context of **Russia only**.

Sub-theme 1:

- Жизнь российской молодёжи  
Здоровье; отдых; новые технологии.

Sub-theme 2:

- Образование  
Система образования; жизнь российских школьников.

Sub-theme 3:

- Мир труда  
Отношение к труду; возможности для молодых россиян; равноправие.

#### **Тема 2: Политическая и художественная культура в русскоязычном мире**

Theme 2 is set in the context of the **Russian-speaking world**.

Sub-theme 1:

- Средства массовой информации  
Свобода выражения; печатная и онлайн пресса; влияние на общество и политику.

Sub-theme 2:

- Массовая культура  
Музыка, цирк и танец.

Sub-theme 3:

- Праздники, фестивали и традиции  
Фестивали; праздники; обычаи; традиции

#### **Тема 3: Москва или Санкт-Петербург - Изменения в жизни большого российского города**

Theme 3 is set in the context of **Russia only**.

Sub-theme 1:

- Изменение населения  
Жизнь в городе; жизнь в пригородах.

Sub-theme 2:

- Общественные проблемы  
Бездомность; преступность.

Sub-theme 3;

- Окружающая среда

Реконструкция и благоустройства города; загрязнение.

**Тема 4: Последние годы СССР – М.С. Горбачёв (1985-1991)**

Theme 4 is set in the context of **Russia only**.

Sub-theme 1:

- Перестройка

Что вызвало перестройку; экономические изменения; исходы.

Sub-theme 2:

- Гласность

Что вызвало гласность; общественные изменения; исходы.

Sub-theme 3:

- 1991 год

Проблемы для СССР к началу 1991 г.; путч в августе; распад СССР.

## **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>