



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

October 2020

Pearson Edexcel GCE

In Russian (9RU0)

Paper 1: Listening, reading and translation

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Examiners' Report on Paper 9RU01 – Autumn 2020

Content of the examination

Students 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).

Students 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.

Students 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 radio programme about a dance festival. There were four multiple-choice questions, set in Russian.

Students found this question accessible and performed well.

Question 2 (five marks) was an extract from advice given to tourists during the White Nights in St Petersburg. There were four questions in Russian, to be answered in Russian. Full sentences were not required.

Students generally responded well, although a few students omitted the key word водные in Q2(г).

Question 3 (nine marks) was an extract from an interview with the Russian footballer Aleksandra Rudenko. Students had to respond in Russian to nine questions in Russian. Full sentences were not required.

Students generally responded very well to these questions. However, in Q3(a) a few students gave теннисом as an answer, misunderstanding the fact that the sport was table tennis. Some in Q3(в) gave a list of things which were important to Aleksandra and did not focus on the one thing which was the most important to her. Q3(e) required the key word лига, which needed to be spelled in an unambiguous way. A few students wrongly wrote команда for this question. In Q3(з), the key idea was not that Aleksandra could already play football well, as some students asserted, but that she said that she would do so in the future.

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

The questions were generally answered accurately, but some students missed the point in Q4(a)(iv) that the question was seeking the idea that the woman thought that the facts were false; the question was not seeking examples of such false facts.

A number of students 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 Q4(b)(i) some students correctly wrote about unemployment, inflation and so on, but did not state that these problems were in the USA. The simple addition of the words в США would have enabled such students to gain marks for this first part of the summary. Likewise, it was insufficient simply to write, as some students did, они молчали, without making it clear who was staying silent about what.

Similar issues arose in Q4(b)(ii). To write поражение в Холодной войне was insufficient without the inclusion of the key word СССР. Students might usefully consider the notion that what they write in the summary needs, as it were, to be understood by someone who has not heard the text or read the question.

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 an article about environmental issues in St Petersburg and required students to respond to four multiple choice questions set in Russian.

They generally did so successfully.

Question 6 (four marks) was a text about fashion and the Russian Orthodox Church. Students were offered a list of statements in Russian from which they had to select the four true ones.

This question was done very well on the whole, with most students achieving three or four marks.

Question 7 (six marks) was an article by a young person who has been studying attitudes towards perestroika. There were six questions to answer in Russian. Full sentences were not required.

Students did so with a good degree of success, although a few needed to be careful not to take the first possible answer which they saw, but rather to read on and assess which of a number of possibilities was relevant. For Q7(д), students had to explain a term from the text in their own words. A number of possible answers were suggested in the mark scheme, but examiners did accept other plausible possibilities.

Question 8 (eight marks) contained six questions to be answered in Russian. The text was a woman's account of how she came to work as a cleaner after finishing university. Although full sentences were not required, students were expected to give all information that was relevant to a full answer. A small number of students gave answers in the first person, as in the text; such answers needed to be manipulated into the third person.

For Q8(a), most students identified which job the author did, but a few omitted to state the reason, which would have been worth another mark. In Q8(в), not all students emphasised that the author did not want still to be a cleaner in the future. For Q8(e), not every student gave a reason for the advice, which would have been worth a second mark.

Question 9 (eight marks) was a literary one which included an adapted episode from a short story by Kazakov. It contained eight questions to be answered in Russian.

All the parts of this question appeared to be accessible to students, many of whom answered it well. As in Q7 above, a small number needed to be careful not to take the first possible answer which they saw, but rather to read on and assess which of a number of possibilities was relevant. Some of the questions require a degree of inference, but such inferences need to be plausible to be worth a mark; also, to state, for example, that the answer is 'not in the text' is unlikely to be a satisfactory response.

In Q9(д), several students noted aspects of the couple's behaviour, without explicitly stating how their relationship had changed, which is what the question required. For Q9(ж) and Q9(з), students had enough material in the text to be able to write correct responses, but a few made incorrect inferences, sometimes to do with skis or skiing.

Translation into English

The content of the translation (Question 10) dealt with mass media in Belarus. 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 students found this a challenging task, and only very few achieved full marks. Students 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 students. However, some failed to distinguish correctly between *государство* and *правительство*, while many different spellings of Belarus and Belarusian were offered.

Summary

Based on performance in this paper, students are offered the following advice:

- 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 Q2, Q3 and Q4(a), you may respond using single words, short phrases or sentences.
- For Q4(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. Ask yourself the question: would a reader be able to understand my summary without having heard the text or read the question?
- For Q7, Q8 and Q9, you may respond using short phrases or sentences. You may use words from the texts, but you must not copy whole sections. Sometimes, phrases from the text need to be manipulated from first person to third person.
- Even though full sentences are not required, you are expected to give all information that is relevant to a full answer. Be aware that sometimes what you hear or read first is not necessarily the correct answer. Make sure that you respond to both parts of two-mark questions.
- For the Translation (Q10), avoid omitting words. Do not leave 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.

