

Advice and guidance to candidates

Paper 1 Speaking

Please bear in mind, in both Parts, that the Examiner is not trying to catch the candidate out. S/he is only interested in finding out what level each candidate has reached, in terms both of language and knowledge of subject.

Part I Discussion of an article and related themes

The task of reading and discussing a text is not one about which candidates need be apprehensive. The texts themselves are there to serve as a springboard, and are chosen to avoid excessive difficulty in structure or vocabulary. In choosing which text to prepare for the examination, candidates are recommended to consider whether they have something to say about the topic, rather than worrying whether they will be able to understand the text. Familiarity with the format of this part of the test is important: candidates may prepare by practising short spoken summaries and spontaneous speaking, and by acquiring the language used to express opinions about relevant topics.

In the test itself, candidates should:

- use the preparation time fully
- plan a short overview of the text content
- consider the issue in question and their own reaction(s) to it
- be prepared to take the lead in the discussion
- give their reactions to the ideas and information in the text
- be prepared for discussion of broader issues relating to the general heading on the card.

Part II Prepared oral topic

In Part 2, the choice of topic is very important. It should be neither too broad (which can make it hard to cover the topic or to say anything concrete) nor too narrow (there may not be enough to say).

The best conversations often occur when an element of controversy or debate is brought into the presentation. This could be implicit in the title (e.g. *Was Dalí a great artist or a charlatan?*), or it might be introduced under one of the sub-headings (e.g. *The battle of Verdun: [point iv] the tragic aftermath of a great victory*). Candidates who go beyond the purely descriptive and who express personal views can expect to be rewarded, as long as they are able to support their opinions in the discussion.

In preparation for this section, candidates are recommended to:

- avoid trying to find an 'impressive' obscure topic
- choose a subject which genuinely interests them
- be clear about which aspects of it they wish to discuss
- focus in depth on a few aspects of the topic rather than try to cover it all.

In this Part, candidates should:

- fill in the oral form correctly
- present their introduction 'naturally', even if pre-learned
- be ready to lead the discussion and talk freely about their topic
- show interest in, and personal engagement with, their topic
- show evidence of research
- support opinions with evidence.

They should also expect to:

- be interrupted
- be asked to support, clarify and justify statements
- answer unexpected questions
- give examples
- be stretched to their linguistic 'ceiling'.



Advice and guidance to candidates

Paper 2 Listening and Reading Comprehension

What skills are required?

- inference – candidates have to work out the answers from what is read or heard
- manipulation – candidates may be expected to change language so the answer makes sense
- explanation – candidates may need to give reasons for their answers
- synthesis – points of information may need to be combined in an answer
- writing with accuracy and sophistication: quality of language in answers should be high.

Answering target language questions (Reading and Listening Exercise 1)

Candidates are advised to:

- remember that full sentences are not required – although all the required information must be given
- highlight the key words in the question, so that it is clear what information is needed
- note how many marks are awarded for each question (e.g. if 2 marks are available, two separate points are required)
- try to use their own words and avoid reproducing the language of the texts word for word
- practise building a wide vocabulary in the target language, so that they are at ease with finding synonyms for words in the passages
- remember that their answers must make sense.

Answering English questions (Reading and Listening Exercise 2)

Candidates should:

- write their answers in correct English and check spelling
- beware false friends (words that look alike in the target language and English, but have different meanings)
- realise that some target language words can have more than one meaning. They should choose the correct meaning (e.g. in Spanish *local* can mean 'local' or 'place', depending on the context)
- find the appropriate English word, not necessarily one that looks similar to the target language word (e.g.: *velocidad* in Spanish or *vélocité* in French is usually translated as 'speed' in English, not 'velocity')
- make sure the answer sounds like real English and makes sense
- make sure that they give all that is required, while taking care not to omit any essential points.

Advice and guidance to candidates

Paper 2 Listening and Reading Comprehension

Reading Exercise 3 Translation from English to the target language

Translation involves moving material from one language to another. Good translation is a real art that needs much practice, which is often neglected. The ideal is a translation that reads well and that conveys accurately the sense of the original.

In this exercise, candidates are recommended to:

- study the original text in Reading Exercise 2 carefully: it gives vocabulary and structures that can be used and re-worked
- read the English passage carefully to understand what is required
- study the setting, context and tone of the extracts
- use sensible and intelligent guesses where vocabulary is not known
- avoid leaving gaps
- think carefully about the grammar of the sentence being translated. (candidates often encounter problems in translating tenses correctly, spotting adjectival agreements and linking pronouns with the nouns to which they refer.)
- beware literal translation: the result can easily be a meaningless text
- beware paraphrasing, and not stray too far away from the original (but, on the other hand, not be afraid to change word order, parts of speech, etc.)
- remember that accuracy is more important than creativity.

Listening Exercise 3 Summary skills

Writing a good summary is a matter of regular practice and also of acquiring the correct technique. An unsuccessful attempt at a summary may be due to lack of understanding of the original text but, more often than not, it is the way the exercise has been tackled that is at fault.

To write a good summary, candidates should:

- listen to the passage carefully until they have a good idea of what the whole text is about
- not start summarising (or even translating) every sentence. (They will not discard the less significant details, and will quickly run out of words.)
- make rough notes rather than a full draft on the question paper. There may not be time to write out a full draft version of the summary and then write out a clean copy.
- remember that it is not necessary to know the meaning of every word in the text
- remember that this is a summary – an exercise in selection – it is impossible to include every piece of information
- make sure that all the bullet points are covered
- spread the words: it is a common error to say too much about the first half of a passage and too little (or nothing at all) about the second half
- ‘prune’ written summaries, removing unnecessary words without deleting the main points that must be conveyed
- stay within the word limit – 100 words must not be exceeded.

Finally, candidates should check that:

- all the bullet points have been covered
- the gist of the passage has been understood
- there is detail and it is well selected
- the material is expressed concisely
- the summary reads well and is informative
- there is no incorrect information.



Advice and guidance to candidates

Paper 3 Writing and Usage

Part I Writing

When choosing a title in the examination, candidates should:

- spend some time reading all the titles
- think carefully about what each topic is and what is being asked in the title
- think about whether they have something to say in response
- consider whether they possess vocabulary in the topic area
- make a very rough plan before choosing a title
- decide what they think and write an essay plan.

When writing the essay, candidates are advised to:

- use the plan to construct a real argument
- write an introduction, discussion and a conclusion
- keep the essay title in mind throughout
- check whether the points made are relevant
- avoid repetition
- write in paragraphs, making a clear, relevant point in each one
- try to use a variety of language and demonstrate linguistic ability
- write complex sentences when appropriate, but without losing the thread of the argument
- remember to try to interest and/or persuade the reader.

Part II Usage

In this Part, the three tests of verbal knowledge, structural manipulation and other aspects of usage cover a wide range of structures, but should not present major difficulty to candidates who have broad experience of the language and an awareness of the need for accuracy in writing. It is useful to be familiar with the format of the tests: this will help candidates to be aware of the type of knowledge required. Intelligent, careful reading of texts in the target language, attention to personal linguistic development in terms of structures, and experience of working through similar tasks can all help in preparation for this section.

In this Part of the examination candidates are recommended to:

- read each question carefully and make sure they understand the sense of the sentence
- avoid leaving any questions unanswered
- use their experience of and 'feel for' the language as well as their knowledge when deciding on an answer (e.g. ask themselves 'Have I heard or seen a similar sentence?')
- proofread carefully their answers to Exercises 1 and 2.

Advice and guidance to candidates

Paper 4 Topics and Texts

In both Parts, candidates should:

- read the question with care, and think about what they are asked to do
- plan their answer and organise their material with close relation to the question
- define the terms of the question in the introduction
- keep the question in mind throughout
- support any assertions with close references to the text and/or film
- make sure quotations, if used, support the argument
- make sure all quotations are accurate
- use paraphrasing and allusion as an alternative to overlong quotations
- take care to include analysis and argument, and avoid narrative
- demonstrate knowledge by using it as supporting evidence for the argument
- exclude information that is irrelevant to the question.

Part I: Cultural Topics

Candidates should:

- make sure that they learn the necessary vocabulary to write about their topic, when preparing for this Part
- remember that the rubric requires reference to only two of the works. Writing about all three may lead to a lack of depth
- try to demonstrate their knowledge of underlying themes, and mention comparisons and links between the two works
- proofread carefully after writing, paying special attention to verb forms and agreements.

Part II: Literary Texts

In context questions candidates should:

- make sure they analyse the extract showing how its content is related to the rest of the work
- avoid using the passage as a springboard for a general essay
- be careful to analyse, rather than re-tell the story of the extract.

RUSSIAN – PRINCIPAL COURSE

Paper 9782/01

Speaking

General comments

Candidates were very well prepared for the examination. They were aware of the requirements of the specification and knew how best to prepare for the exam. The logistics of the examination (the rooms, invigilation, equipment etc.) were well thought through and the tests passed smoothly. Centres are advised to take care to comply fully with the test schedule detailed in the General Regulations.

On the whole, it was felt that the examination session was very successful, the candidates demonstrated an impressive range of skills, and the specification enabled full credit to be awarded for higher levels of skills where appropriate.

Comments on specific parts of the examination

Part I: Discussion of a newspaper article and related topics

This part was generally well completed, and candidates used the preparation time effectively. They were able to offer a wide range of views and opinions on the issues raised by the texts. The most popular topics were Sport (Card 2) and Family (Card 3), with Urban and rural life (Card 1) and Scientific and technological innovation (Card 4) the least popular. All candidates demonstrated an impressive level of language skills and preparation.

Part II: Prepared topic discussion

In this part of the exam the candidates demonstrated knowledge of a wide range of topics, showing thorough research. One of the main impressions from this series is that candidates made excellent use of having a free choice to move away from the traditional subjects that might be expected at this level to ones which were clearly of personal interest. Candidates demonstrated an impressive depth of factual knowledge and analysis. The topics were as varied as the Moscow Circus and the Duality of Dostoyevsky's philosophical views, Malevich's perception of Art and the film 'The 9th Company', the history of the secret network of Moscow's 'Metro 2' and the issues of the Cold War. The interest and the enthusiasm of the candidates showed in the way they spoke about their chosen topics.

Common linguistic problems

It was very pleasing to see practically all candidates demonstrating a variety of appropriate lexis and grammar. However, this was sometimes marred by basic errors in agreement, case and verb endings. Some candidates found it difficult to cope with numerals and expressions like Можно/надо/нужно, and есть| нет («у него есть нет...»).



RUSSIAN – PRINCIPAL COURSE

<p>Paper 9782/02 Reading and Listening</p>
--

General comments

In this paper, a wide range of ability in Reading and Listening skills was shown by candidates. Some lost marks by failing to read the question properly, both in Russian and in English, and by neglecting to note the number of marks, and therefore the number of points required in a particular answer.

Comments on specific questions

Part I: Reading

Reading Text 1

Question 1

Some candidates did not understand the verb used in this question.

Question 2

Most candidates wrote full answers and scored 2 marks.

Question 3

Some candidates failed to understand *обсуждают* in the text, wrongly guessing an answer.

Question 4

Most candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 5

Again, most candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 6

There were many good explanations of this phrase.

Question 7

Candidates who failed to note the tense here failed to score on this question.

Reading Text 2

Question 8

This question proved more challenging for candidates. Some candidates failed to recognise the political context.

Question 9

Few candidates recognised the meaning of *заработку* in the text.



Question 10

Most candidates scored some marks in answering this question.

Question 11

Most candidates answered correctly, though one or two did not understand *adversely affected*.

Question 12

Most answers to this question were correct.

Question 13

Again, most answers to this question were correct.

Question 14

Most answers were correct, though a few candidates thought the catastrophes were economic rather than ecological.

Reading Text 3

Question 15

This question was testing, though many candidates scored highly nevertheless. Some miscopied or failed to manipulate the vocabulary which featured in previous passages.

Part II: Listening

Listening Text 1

Question 16

Some candidates incorrectly thought that Artem was Elena's son.

Question 17

Some failed to change *у меня* to *у неё*.

Question 18

Most answers to this question were correct.

Question 19

Again, most answers here were correct.

Question 20

Again, most answers here were correct.

Question 21

Most candidates scored at least 1 mark here.

Question 22

Most scored at least 1 mark. Some did not recognise *тренируется*.



Listening Text 2

Question 23

A few thought the concert lasted 6 days. Most answers were correct.

Question 24

Some incorrectly understood that Ilya still had a problem with drugs.

Question 25

Most answers to this question were correct.

Question 26

Again, most answers here were correct.

Question 27

Here, most candidates scored at least one mark.

Question 28

Most answers were correct.

Question 29

This question proved more challenging with a number of candidates failing to score here.

Question 30

Most candidates scored at least one mark for this question.

Listening Text 3

Question 31

A few candidates ignored the word limit, thereby losing marks as some of their answers fell outside of the limit. This question proved challenging for some candidates who, having lost the thread of the passage, started to invent its content. A fair number of candidates handled this exercise well or very well.

RUSSIAN – PRINCIPAL COURSE

Paper 9782/03
Writing and Usage

General comments

Candidates had clearly been well-prepared for the examination. The paper is in two parts and lasts for 2 hours and 15 minutes in total. Candidates are advised to spend about 1 hour 30 minutes on **Part I** (Discursive Essay) and about 45 minutes on **Part II** (Usage). 40 marks are available for **Part I**, in which candidates write one essay of 250-350 words in Russian, and 20 marks for **Part II** in which candidates complete exercises which test their knowledge of Russian vocabulary and structure.

Nearly all the candidates completed all sections of the paper, and nearly all followed the instruction to write in dark blue or black ink.

Comments on specific questions

Part I: Discursive essay

Candidates write one essay from a choice of five titles. It is suggested that candidates write 250–350 words in Russian, but where candidates exceeded the upper limit the entire essay was assessed. It is unlikely that an essay shorter than 250 words will include sufficient content and range of vocabulary and structure to access the entire range of marks available. A maximum of 24 marks out of 40 are awarded for the accuracy and linguistic range of the essay, and a maximum of 16 marks out of 40 for the development and organisation of ideas.

The majority of candidates wrote a plan for the essay. An essay plan is, it goes without saying, of great help, if not essential, in writing a well-organised and coherently argued essay. In addition, a plan allows the candidate to note down examples, vocabulary and structures which s/he may wish to include in the essay. The essay plan is not assessed. Many candidates wrote the essay on alternate lines of the page, allowing corrections or additions to the essay to be made neatly. In a surprisingly large number of cases the presentation of the work was rather messy and the standard of handwriting poor. Particular difficulty came with the handwritten versions of the letters л, д, б, м and в.

Accuracy and linguistic range is assessed out of 24 marks and the essay does not have to be grammatically without fault to be awarded full marks in this category. In order to access the highest marks here, candidates should aim to include a very wide range of vocabulary appropriate to the title they have chosen in addition to demonstrating the ability to use a range of complex sentence patterns and structures appropriately and accurately. Up to 16 marks are awarded for the development and organisation of the ideas in the essay. Here, in order to access the highest marks, candidates must present an answer to the title which demonstrates that they have understood the question, considered its implications and prepared a well-planned and thoughtful response illustrated with appropriate examples. Examples from anywhere in the world may be used.

In order to be able to access the full range of marks available for this essay, candidates would be well advised to choose a title about which they have clear ideas and views. They need to consider the question from different angles and to draw a clear conclusion. Examples should be incorporated into the essay and used to support strands of the argument. It is very possible that the candidate will have, at the initial planning stage, more material than can be used in an essay of this length. The skill, naturally, comes in selecting the arguments and examples to be used to address the question and the most successful answers reflected the candidates' ability to do just this. Less successful were those essays in which candidates appeared to write everything they knew about the topic, thus losing sight of the question.

- 1(a)** This proved to be the most popular of the 5 titles. A few candidates did not fully address the assertion that the pollution of the planet is the most serious problem in the world, but the majority weighed up pollution against other issues (such as terrorism, the global economic crisis or poverty) before drawing a conclusion. Candidates who answered this question were generally able to use a wide range of topic-specific vocabulary and to use relevant examples, including the topical oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, to support their argument.
- 1(b)** The candidates who chose this title wrote thoughtful and imaginative responses on the whole, with some original ideas and clear indications that candidates had considered the implications of the question. The question did not specifically ask candidates to consider the injustice or otherwise of the fact that one can marry before one can vote, but some chose to do so and made points which added weight to their overall argument. Many referred to the historical reasons for the differences in the ages at which it is legal to marry or to vote (though, of course, factual knowledge is not expected) and several referred to other age-restricted laws such as buying alcohol or joining the army.
- 1(c)** This question was the least popular of the 5 options. It provoked forceful and well-argued responses. Candidates who answered this question had no difficulty finding examples from the UK and from other countries to support their points of view and expressed a wide range of opinions about the importance to a politician of a career compared with the importance of the future of the country. The majority used solid argument to discuss points of view before coming to a conclusion.
- 1(d)** As for **Question (a)**, candidates needed to show that they had taken into account the use of the word 'most' in the title if their answer was to be wholly convincing, and the majority who chose this option did so. Candidates considered the relative importance of, amongst other factors, employment, providing for a family and possessions against the need to be a good citizen, but the majority concluded that they agreed with this statement to a greater or lesser extent. As for **Question (b)**, this question produced some thoughtful and imaginative responses.
- 1(e)** Fewer candidates chose to answer this question. Those who did generally answered well and the issue clearly raised some heartfelt opinions. Most candidates who chose this question mentioned the validity to some extent of the point of view in the title, but went on to argue effectively that, if smokers were not to receive free healthcare, then the same may be true for others for whom disease or injury might be seen to be the result of a lifestyle choice, such as those who are overweight, or those who choose to participate in extreme sports. The benefits of a free healthcare system for all, without exclusions, were often mentioned and almost without exception candidates who chose this title concluded that they disagreed with its sentiment.

Part II: Usage

Exercise 1 Questions 2–6

The five questions in this section tested the candidates' knowledge of verb conjugations. Any acceptable correct version of the infinitive given in brackets in the context of the given sentence was allowed. Verb conjugations were generally well known, with many candidates scoring full marks on this section. The most challenging question proved to be **Question 6**, where it seemed that a number of candidates either could not conjugate "начать" or did not understand "Как только она придёт".

Exercise 2 Questions 7–11

Some candidates did not take note of the instruction not to use "но", "а" or "и" when joining the two sentences into one, and therefore could not be awarded the mark for this question. The majority of candidates, though, observed this requirement.

There were many candidates who were able to manipulate the language as required in this section and this exercise proved to be a good test of knowledge of the structure of Russian. Candidates were usually able to use "который" and compound conjunctions successfully. The most difficult questions proved to be number 8, where candidates misunderstood "до матча", and number 9, where some candidates found it difficult to express accurately who was telephoning whom.

On the whole, though, this exercise was completed successfully and a good number of candidates scored 4 or 5 out of 5.

Exercise 3 Questions 12–32

As for the previous two exercises in **Part II**, many candidates scored full marks or almost full marks for Exercise 3, and very few scored less than half marks. The answers which were most often not known were numbers 16, 18, 20, 27 and 32. In preparing for this type of test, candidates should revise thoroughly both the declensions of nouns and adjectives, and the cases which follow different prepositions in Russian.



RUSSIAN – PRINCIPAL COURSE

<p>Paper 9782/04</p> <p>Topics and Texts</p>
--

General comments

Though there were natural differences in the level to which candidates were prepared for Paper 4, the Examiners were pleased to note a generally high standard of content knowledge in the answers. Almost all candidates appeared to have studied their chosen works in great detail. Not all candidates were able to select appropriate material from their stock of knowledge and adapt this to the question they were meant to be answering. The best answers showed the ability to exclude irrelevant information which, though interesting and accurate, did not add weight to the argument. Many essays contained numerous quotations, though these were not always appropriate, accurate or successfully integrated into the candidates' discourse. Some answers displayed a lack of originality. The language in the answers varied from outstanding to satisfactory. A minority of essays were rather short.

Comments on specific questions

Part I: Cultural Topics

Question 1

- A** Some answers displayed a surprising lack of understanding about the feelings of the younger children in the books and film towards their respective parents or surrogate parents. Answers did not always show how the success of the relationships depicted in the works is related to the adults' ability to understand the needs, emotions and psychology of very young children. The relationships between teenagers and their parents were better understood. Some answers contained perceptive detail and appropriate quotation.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 2

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 3

- A** This question was very popular. Most answers contained an impressive amount of content and background knowledge about the chosen works. Candidates were often able to include appropriate and perceptive quotations to support their arguments. In a minority of answers the second part of the question was partially or wholly ignored.
- B** The answers to this question were generally as successful as those to **Question 3A**. They were equally well-written and impressive in their scope.

Question 4

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

- B** While candidates clearly had an impressive stock of knowledge about their chosen works, not all selected or gave enough weight to the most obvious points for discussion in their answers. More consideration of the main characters and the events which befall them in relation to the historical context would have been appropriate.

Question 5

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Part II: Literary Texts

Question 6

- A** This question was very popular, and the answers to it reflected the full range of achievement. All candidates correctly identified the context of the extract. Commentary on the content ranged from paraphrased translation without discussion of the significance of what is featured in the extract, to detailed discussion of its significance. All candidates were able to identify a range of poetic techniques, but not everyone said that they were effective, let alone in what way. The least successful element of this question was the consideration of how the extract relates to the rest of the text. Some candidates had surprisingly little to say about this, despite or perhaps because of having concentrated on discussing the language and poetic techniques, often in great detail.
- B** This question was also very popular with the answers varying in quality. Though many were very good or excellent and contained outstanding textual knowledge and appropriate quotation, some candidates failed to address the question despite obvious sound textual knowledge.
- C** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 7

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 8

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 9

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 10

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 11

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 12

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 13

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

