

# **Report on the Components**

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**June 2008**

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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## General Certificate of Secondary Education

### GCSE Dutch 1921

#### REPORT ON THE COMPONENTS

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# **1921/01 Listening**

The examination went well this year.

## **Section 1**

### **Exercise 1**

Hardly any mistakes were made in this exercise.

### **Exercise 2**

Most candidates received full marks for this exercise. Some had difficulties with the position with the question on time.

### **Exercise 3**

Most candidates did this exercise well. The weaker ones had a tendency to miss out on the last two questions.

## **Section 2**

### **Exercise 4**

Many candidates did well in this exercise.

### **Exercise 5**

This second exercise of section 2 was a little more difficult but the better candidates did not encounter problems.

## **Section 3**

### **Exercise 6**

Like last year's examination, the first exercise in this section was done well. It should be noted that a word can be misspelled and still receive full marks, since this is a listening test.

### **Exercise 7**

This exercise really started to test listening skills. As was expected, the weaker candidates found the exercise challenging.

### **Exercise 8**

Better candidates managed to score full marks for this exercise.

## **Conclusion**

As in previous years, there were no major problems in this year's examination.

## 1921/02 Speaking

This year's examination went well. The candidates seemed well prepared and most examiners were very supportive, which helped candidates to show their language skills. It is permissible to remind candidates about missed tasks in the role-plays. Some examiners said something like 'I think you need to ask me something', which is allowed and very helpful to the candidates, who sometimes forget tasks because of nerves. The candidates should talk as much as possible since this is a speaking test. Especially in Section 3 and in the General Conversation we are looking for an open conversation, not an interrogation (Question- Answer – Question – Answer).

Some candidates meet the examiner for the first time shortly before the test is taken. It would be very helpful for candidates to meet the examiner before the actual day. If this is not possible, it can still be very useful to meet a little earlier on the day itself. The administration was handled well. Where the appropriate forms were not available, most examiners gave us details of the candidates on a piece of paper, which was very helpful.

At times, the recordings of the speaking tests are not of optimal quality. It is therefore very important to position the candidate as close to the microphone as possible and the examiner a little further away. It could be useful to record a little conversation before the examinations begin, to determine how much or little the machine picks up. It should be remembered that it is not permissible to switch off the recorder at any time during the test. Finally, although it is appreciated that it is difficult to find (native) speakers of Dutch to conduct the test, it is important that the examiner knows enough of the target language not to confuse the candidate. Examiners who speak South African or German might speak a language that is similar to Dutch, but it is very difficult for weaker candidates to understand it. Parents of the candidates may be asked to conduct the test as long as they are supervised.

### Role Play section 1

The role plays in Section 1 caused very few difficulties. Most candidates received full marks for their first role play. Answers can be quite short and still receive full marks (eg. *Hoe wil je daar naartoe? Lopen*)

All role plays in this Section were done well. The examiners kept very well with the role plays, which helped the candidates. It is permissible to indicate to the candidate that they have forgotten a task but it is important to make sure the answer is not given away in doing so.

### Role Play section 2

The role plays in Section 2 did not cause any problems.

### Role Play section 3

This narrative role play is meant for the candidate to show that he or she can 'narrate a story that happened in the past'. A good way to start the Section 3 role play seems to be to prompt the candidate in a natural way (*Ik heb gehoord dat je iets raars/ leuks is overkomen toen je vorige maand naar Amsterdam ging, vertel eens?*), rather than say 'Explain what you see in the pictures'. All candidates who were invited to tell what happened to them last month started off well and managed to tell a story close to the pictures. The risk of asking the candidate to explain what he/she sees is that they may start giving very short information (eg. *Hij staat op, Hij ontbijt, Hij gaat naar het station*) which often causes the examiner to ask short closed questions as well (eg. *Hoe laat ging je ontbijten? Waar ging je naar toe?*). It is important in this Section to keep the questions open and invite the candidates to tell as much as possible by themselves (*Vertel maar, wat is er gebeurd*).

## *Report on the Components taken in June 2008*

Few examiners still use the prompts in the pictures as questions. They are meant to help the candidate to construct the story and not for questioning the candidate.

Sometimes examiners did not ask questions at all during this role play. Candidates are also marked on how they respond to queries of the Examiner, so it is vital to ask some questions during the story.

### **General Conversation**

The topics in this part of the examination open up the conversation quite easily. Most examiners were able to hold a conversation with a natural feel to it, which very often brings out the best in the candidates. The questions in the back of the syllabus should give examiners some ideas of what could be asked. They are only suggested questions though, and should not be asked one by one. It is very important here to create space for the candidate to elaborate. They can only achieve higher marks when they use longer sentences and show initiative in the conversation. One way of achieving this is to ask *waarom* questions. (eg. *Waar woon je liever? In Nederland of in Engeland? Answer In Nederland. Waarom? Vertel eens?*) The best conversations were where the examiner found a topic that was close to the candidate's heart. Asking candidates to tell about their home and family does not usually inspire the candidate to start talking. Many examiners used the questions in the back of the Teacher's booklet as a 'starter-question' and picked up more personal information as soon as possible to make the candidate talk. This technique worked very well and in most cases made the candidate score highly.

### **Conclusion**

All in all there were very few problems with the speaking tests this year. Thanks to the good work of many examiners, most of the candidates were at ease and the conversations sounded natural. Thank you all for the good work!

## 1921/03 Reading

### General comments

The majority of candidates did well in the 2008 examination. Section 1 was done very well by the majority of candidates. A few forgot to tick a box or ticked two boxes for one question but, on the whole, there were few problems. As always, it is important that candidates read the rubric, the example and the text of each exercise carefully. Some candidates do not write very clearly. When letters need to be written in boxes, capital letters should be used, and if for example a B is changed to a D or E, it should be done very clearly or otherwise rewritten.

In Section 2 candidates coped well with the higher level of difficulty, especially in the exercise about theme parks and tourist attractions.

Section 3 was naturally even more demanding in order to achieve the intended differentiation, but almost all candidates completed the paper. There was no indication that there was not enough time. Candidates need to realise that when they have to fill in one or two words, the gap is big enough for its purpose. If there is not enough space, it is usually because the candidate has written too many words.

### Comments on individual questions

#### Section 1

##### Exercise 1: Questions 1-4

The four multiple-choice questions were generally answered correctly. In Q.4 a small number of candidates did not know that the bridge was closed and opted for the petrol station or the shop.

##### Exercise 2: Questions 5-10

Candidates were asked to read some short advertisements and match them with icons. This exercise was also done well, although some candidates did not answer Q.6 correctly, which was E for garage personnel. Some candidates wrote G for fire brigade.

##### Exercise 3: Questions 11-15

This exercise was more demanding in that candidates had to read four descriptions of how people were dressed, then read corresponding statements and tick the correct name in the grid. For each statement only one box had to be ticked. This was made clear in the rubric and shown in the example. Some candidates ticked two boxes, or did not put in a tick for each statement. Q.13 caused some problems, although it was the only question about headgear and Cees was the only one who was wearing something on his head.

#### Section 2

##### Exercise 4: Questions 16-20

The topic of this exercise was familiar to most candidates, as it dealt with theme parks and other tourist attractions. Again careful reading was the key to success. Q.16 about the admission charge was generally well done as most candidates spotted the word *goedkoopste* (cheapest) in D. Q.17 was no problem as long as the candidate understood the 'under 13' reference, so the answer was A. Q.18 – D was the correct answer because of the animals. Qs.19 and 20 received mainly good answers, E and B.

### Exercise 5: Questions 21-25

This exercise was about a girl's daily activities. Most candidates did very well, although some found Qs.22 and 23 harder than the other questions. Q.21: What did she buy? The answer was curtains (B) which matched her duvet (A). Q.22 asked about the afternoon activity, which was tidying her room (B) after lunch, not sewing. Q.23 showed Carmen being bored by the film (A). In Q.24 Carmen's father lost his suitcase (B), not his hand luggage with the tennis bag (C), and definitely not a rucksack which was not mentioned in the text at all. Most candidates got this right. Q.25 was about Carmen's new job. She was no longer going to work at the baker's (A). Her new job was working in a restaurant (C), either washing up or working in the restaurant itself.

### Section 3

#### Exercise 6: Questions 26-31

Candidates had to read the text and write no more than two Dutch words in the following statements to show their understanding of the text. In Q.26 the only possible answer was *geboren* (born). Some candidates wrote *Rijnsburg*, but the text did not mention where the woman lived. Q.27: the perfect answer was *emigreerden* (emigrated), other possibilities were *gingen* or *verhuisden*. The spelling did not need to be perfect. The perfect tense of these verbs was also allowed. The simplest answer to Q.28 was *iemand* (someone), but answers such as 'people' and 'emigrants' were also possible. In Q.29 the man wanted to know where they were from. This restricted possible answers to the Dutch for 'which country / town / village / place'. Any reaction such as 'interesting', 'fabulous' or 'nice' was allowed in Q.30. Quite a few answers were possible in Q.31: the Dutch for 'together / both / next to each other / as girls', but '14 years ago' was not allowed.

Many candidates made more than one mistake in this exercise, but no particular question stood out. Copying three or four words from the text did not work.

#### Exercise 7: Questions 32-36

In this exercise again, both text and questions needed to be read very carefully. Q.32 asked when the writer gathered his information for his column. He wrote it on Friday afternoon, but during the week he read papers and watched television, collecting his information without knowing (C). The other questions also demanded a serious effort at reading comprehension, but many candidates answered the majority of the questions correctly. Q.35 was potentially the most difficult question, but quite a few answered this one correctly and made a mistake in one of the other questions.

#### Exercise 8: Questions 37-40

Many candidates performed well in this exercise. In some instances it seemed that candidates relaxed a little in this last exercise with English questions, making mistakes where they had not done so in the two previous exercises.



## 1921/04 Writing

### General comments

The majority of candidates did well in the examination and most did very well in Sections 1 and 2. In Section 1 more marks are given for communication than quality or accuracy of language, which enabled many candidates to get very high marks. In Q.2 candidates dealt better with the verbs than with the time element. It became apparent that candidates do not always look very carefully at the example as the word *kwart* could have been used again, but many wrote *quart* instead.

This year there appeared to be fewer candidates who translated the questions in Q.3 instead of answering them.

The majority of candidates did well in Section 2, but communication marks were sometimes lost by failing to cover all the required elements, and subsequently quality of language marks were lost by not producing a past/perfect tense or future tense/reference.

There are always a few candidates who write two (usually very short) essays instead of one. Marks can be given for only one, and short essays often do not include all the required elements.

In Section 3 marks were also lost when candidates failed to cover all the tasks. Furthermore, there is a tendency to write lengthy essays. Sometimes candidates write so much about one task, that they have to finish in a hurry and often miss an element with the resulting loss of communication marks.

Candidates who write no more than 150 words tend to write a more coherent and creative essay. This is good for both communication marks and quality of language marks, as everything they have written will be assessed for quality of language.

In both Sections 2 and 3 more candidates chose to answer question 1 rather than 2.

It cannot be said often enough that candidates should make sure they read the rubrics, examples and questions carefully, before attempting to answer any of the questions.

### Comments on individual questions

#### Question 1

The majority of candidates gave eight good answers on the topic of 'sports day'. Minor spelling mistakes were allowed, but English words, which may look similar to Dutch ones such as 'ball', 'brook' or 'chocolate', cannot score. If a candidate wrote two words on one line, and one of them was wrong, no mark was given. The icons are suggestions only and many candidates found their own items to take to a sports day, usually different kinds of food or sports equipment.

#### Question 2

Many candidates received full marks for communication, but not for accuracy. Quite a few candidates had problems with Dutch times. In Q.1 *douch* was frequently misspelt; *doech/doesch/doesch*, but not *doch*, were allowed for communication. The word *acht* came in many different spellings, but was usually good enough for a communication mark. However, in Q.2 *sing* instead of *zing* was English and did not score at all. '9.30 often became *half negen* instead of *half tien*, so no mark, but *negen uur dertig* was acceptable. Q.3 had to be about cooking or eating, not about drinking tea or coffee. *Kook* was the obvious answer, but *koek* has a completely different meaning and was not allowed. The time, 17.45, ie. *kwart voor zes* was often completely wrong, or misspelt.

### **Question 3**

Most candidates did very well in this exercise by answering the questions in the present tense about what they do on Saturdays. Quite a few candidates answered some of the questions in the past or perfect. This was unnecessary, but a mark was awarded. In Q.1 candidates sometimes said when they went shopping rather than where. Some went to Dutch locations and others to English ones; they were all correct. Many candidates went by bus, by car or on foot. Some bought food, whilst others bought clothes or games. In Q.4 many candidates mentioned visiting a museum, the park or their grandmother's house and received full marks, but visiting Egypt was unacceptable. Spending money either in euros or pounds was never a problem, and if there was not enough money left for eating in a restaurant, then sandwiches in the park were a good alternative.

Most candidates answered in short sentences and received good marks for quality of language.

### **Section 2**

#### **Question 4**

- 1 Candidates were asked to write about their stay with relatives in the country. Many wrote about staying on their grandparents' farm. Although the majority of candidates did well, quite a few forgot to cover some of the required elements. Some went to a friend's house, did not describe the house, went to stay in town, described the town, or in the final task did something completely different or forgot to do it at all. Fifty per cent of the marks are for communication and quite a few marks were lost by not sticking to the tasks.
- 2 In question candidates were asked to write about their preparation for and an incident during an examination. Many mobiles rang, even a few teachers' mobiles, and sometimes punishment was severe. Candidates did not always mention what they were going to do when the examination was over.

### **Section 3**

#### **Question 5**

- 1 Candidates were asked to write about where they went on their seaside holiday. They had to include an account of what happened one day, give and justify their opinion about this event, and state what they would like to do next time and why.

Some candidates omitted their holiday destination, but there were countless encounters with sharks and drowning people who miraculously survived. The majority of candidates gave their opinions and justification with ease. Sometimes a daily programme was described, rather than an incident, which also meant there was no opinion or justification. Other candidates omitted the last task.

- 2 Candidates had to write about an old photograph, relate where and why it was taken, what happened, give an opinion and justification and finally decide where the next photograph was going to be taken and why. Many funny and touching stories were written. However, here again some elements were sometimes omitted with the resulting loss of marks.

# Grade Thresholds

General Certificate of Secondary Education  
Dutch (Specification Code 1921)  
June 2008 Examination Series

## Component Threshold Marks

Component	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
01 - Listening	40	33	28	24	20	16	13	10
02 - Speaking	50	41	35	29	24	19	15	11
03 - Reading	40	34	29	24	20	17	14	11
04 - Writing	80	66	57	48	40	32	25	18

**N.B. Component marks are scaled to a weighted mark out of 50.  
Each component represents 25% of the overall award**

## Overall

	Max	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	<b>200</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>46</b>
Percentage in Grade		25.80	38.86	15.08	11.73	3.69	2.35	1.34	0.84
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		25.80	64.66	79.73	91.46	95.14	97.49	98.83	99.67

The total entry for the examination was 597

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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