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Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

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In Greek (5GK04_01) Paper 4
Writing in Greek

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5GK04 2018

Examiner's Report

This was the last examination in the current specification (2009) for GCSE Greek.

This paper, 5GK04, requires that candidates respond to a total of two questions, one from each section, A and B. The questions are linked to the topics prescribed in the specification, which are: media, travel and culture and sport, leisure and work.

Candidates are required to choose one task per section.

The tasks and related assessment criteria have been designed to accommodate a wide range of candidate profiles and reward work from grades G to A*. The paper rewards candidates for effective Communication and Knowledge and Application of Language (As well as accuracy in the second longer task). Tasks are set in English to ensure that assessment is not over reliant on reading ability.

Although elements of the second task are accessible to candidates seeking grades G to C, the task from Section B provides opportunities for stretch and challenge through a more extended writing requirement.

The total mark for this paper is 50, 20 for section A, the shorter writing task, and 30 for section B, the longer writing task. It is important to note that the rubric requires that candidates write no more than 70 words in their response to their chosen question from

Section A, whereas responses addressing the question in section B require a minimum of 120 words.

Candidates who do not address all the bullet points in their question of choice, according to the prescribed word limit, lose valuable marks from the Communication and Content category and, where appropriate, from the Knowledge and Application of Language category. When targeted content is omitted, certain targeted linguistic structures necessary to relate this content are also omitted.

This year's candidates performed very well on all aspects of the questions in both sections. The majority adhered to rubric requirements, addressed most of the required content, as stated in the bullet points, and completed the task ably, as far as knowledge and application of language are concerned.

Comments on individual questions are as follows:

Question 1 (a)

Question 1(a) was the least popular in this series but students who chose it, did very well, as the mean mark of performance was at 15.05 out of 20. The question required that the candidates write a short blog post describing a visit museum and mentioning:

- Where they went and what they saw there
- What they thought of this visit and why.

Many candidates responded to this question fully, demonstrating competent use of complex structures and excellent grasp of appropriate vocabulary, providing, often impressive, details about statues and museum exhibits. There were only few instances, when a candidate omitted to provide a reason why they liked/did not like the visit.

Question 1 (b)

Question 1(b) was the most popular by far in this section. Topics about holiday are usually frequently taught and students come to this examination with good practice regarding description and narration. The question asked students to give a friend a recommendation about holidays mentioning:

- a place they recommend and explain why
- their impressions of a holiday they took recently.

More than 50% of the students who chose this question earned 15 marks or above. They provided good variety of appropriate vocabulary and structures and offered good reasons why one should choose a certain holiday destination.

When a pattern of not so successful responses was observed, this had mostly to do with rather lengthy pre-learned descriptions of a holiday a student had taken, which were also supposed to serve as a recommendation. Often this was not stated clearly or purposefully enough and there was considerable imbalance in the treatment of the content of both bullet points.

Question 1 (c)

The mean mark for performance in this question was 14. This means that some students found aspects of the question challenging and were not able to earn marks from the top tiers of the criteria.

The question asked students to write a short report about sport in their school and mention:

- their favorite sport at school and why they like it
- a sports activity that they took part in recently and what they thought of it.

As is often the case with these two-pronged questions, many students relied on description in the present tense, but neglected to show the range of tenses expected (through the use of the past tense) or offer the required justification.

A good answer provided a short introduction about sport in the students' school and narrated one's impressions of a recent activity, in addition to one's preference in sport.

Question 1 (d)

Approximately less than half of the students who chose this question (41%) earned 15 marks or above. The question invited students to participate in a survey about mobile phones and mention:

- the reasons why their phone is important to them
- how they have used their phone recently.

Able candidates addressed both bullet points well, with occasional use of ambitious structures, unambiguous use of tenses (past tense or present perfect) and reasonable linking of the material. A pattern of unsuccessful treatment of the question was in relation to either the omission of clear and unambiguous reference to a recent example of phone use or lengthy introductions about the importance of mobile phones in general. The latter was not part of the question's requirements and resulted in unaccountable digression from the overall purpose of the piece.

Question 2(a)

This was the second most popular question in Section B and the mean mark for performance was 20.92 out of 30. This suggests that most candidates were able to score good marks from the higher bands of all

three categories: Communication and Content, Knowledge and Application of Language and Accuracy.

The question invited students to describe a concert they recently attended and write about:

- their impressions of it
- the type of music they like and the next concert they will attend

This was clearly a topic that students with music interests had a lot to write about. We read detailed and very good descriptions of clothes, stage design, dancing and the atmosphere in the music venue. These were all very pertinent content, but where it became superfluous was when students wrote title after title, in English, the songs they listened to. This added very little to the variety and interest of the piece and if anything, it detracted from its purpose. Occasional lapses concerned the omission of the second part of the bullet point, which invited future references.

Question 2 (b)

Question 2 (b) was the most popular in this section. More than half of the candidates who chose this question earned 22 marks or above, which indicates solid language skills and ability to write with appropriate detail and variety. The question invited students to write about a place that is **important** to them, not about a place where they went on holiday and ate local food or swam in the sea. An enjoyable holiday, which was the theme of several responses, is not sufficient evidence of importance, especially as this is neither stated nor justified, and this occasional slip was responsible for lapses in relevant content.

A good essay described the place and the reason it was special to the candidate and provided details about a memorable thing that the student did there. A successful piece contained appropriate variety, beyond the high frequency range of *πήγα* and *έφαγα*, and often moving descriptions of important places in one's childhood memories, populated by loving grandparents and loyal friends. These accounts that made it very clear that the place was familiar and important for emotional reasons were a delight to read.

Question 2 (c)

This was the least popular question in this section and the mean mark for performance at 19.15 was also the lowest out of the mean marks for the 4 questions.

The question invited students to write about young people's television viewing habits and mention:

- what they think about television programmes and which ones they watch
- details of a programme they watched recently.

A similar pattern such as the one observed in 2(a) was also in evidence here. When it came to describing their impression of something they watched or the programmes they like, a number of students over-used words in English, as in addition to titles in English, they included place names and the names of actors in English. Names could be translated where

appropriate (e.g. Το νησί της αγάπης, Οι ειδήσεις) and some attempt at transliteration of names (especially if there are many offered) could be more successful than writing them in English.

A good response provided a short introduction about young people's viewing habits, without turning into a discursive essay on television, turned its attention to the candidate's viewing preferences and did not neglect to use a range of tenses when describing a recent programme that they watched.

Question 2 (d)

49% of the candidates who chose this question earned 22 marks or above. They wrote clear and coherent responses with only occasional lapses when it came to descriptions of something they recently took part in.

The question invited candidates to write about a school club they recently joined and mention:

- the kind of club it is and why they joined
- a club activity they took part in and what they thought of it.

The majority of candidates chose to write about a sport club and occasionally, especially when it came to less able candidates, there was significant overlap between what they wrote for question 1c and what they wrote for question 2 (d).

Summary

Even though this is the last examination series of the legacy GCSE in Greek, the guidance below might be useful for the candidates studying for the new specification

- Read each question carefully to decide which one fits your world of experience and strengths in language structures and vocabulary better. Make sure that you understand fully what is expected of you (to interest, to persuade?) and who your audience is. It matters who you write for, as this will determine the register of your response
- Respond to the questions within the framework of the bullet points, in order to construct a good response. Try not to favour one bullet point over another and write in a balanced way, including all required content
- Ensure that you employ a good variety of appropriate vocabulary and structures. Many times, required content is tied to a specific time frame and, if this is omitted, marks are limited in the category that assesses Knowledge and Application of Language
- Observe the rules of orthography and indicate the position of the stress, when appropriate
- Try to link your various ideas and descriptions into a whole, using subordination, rather than write sentences in isolation
- Familiarise yourselves with the cases and the correct inflections of articles, nouns and adjectives. Inconsistent use of the nominative and accusative cases is still responsible for many inaccuracies, e.g. "οι άνθρωποι" versus "τους ανθρώπους".
- In general, avoid using generic pre-learned material, which may often be irrelevant to the requirements of the particular question. Avoid lists (especially of food, which seem to be inserted everywhere). Remember that when you write more than the recommended number of words, you run the risk of including material that is irrelevant and detracts from the purpose of your response.

Finally, we would like to thank all the teachers and students who have taught and studied this specification over the years. We look forward to seeing you in the new one!

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