Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

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Introduction

1GK0 4H is assessed by means of a 1 hour and 25 minute examination. Students are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively through writing in Greek for different purposes and are required to produce responses of varying lengths and types to express ideas and opinions in Greek. The instructions to students are all in Greek and word counts are specified for each question.

Paper 4H requires that students answer two open-response questions and one translation into Greek. The total mark for this paper is 60. The use of dictionaries is not allowed.

Questions in this paper address a range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes. They are organised into five themes, each broken down into topics and sub-topics. The five themes are: identity and culture, local area, holiday and travel, school, future aspirations, study and work and international and global dimension.

Recommended word counts are specified for each question, although students will not be penalised for writing more or fewer words than recommended in the word count, as long as these are pertinent to the question asked and the style and register required.

All questions are marked against the assessment criteria as published in the current specification.

This is the first examination of the new specification GCSE 2017 (9-1) Greek. There were some familiar test types, open response questions in Greek, but there were also some significant changes, which include translation, the introduction of style, register and purpose and the fact that all rubrics are now in Greek. Although this is the first run of the new specification, it is noteworthy that students demonstrated good understanding of the rubrics and the new format.

In general, it was evident that most students had been well prepared for the examination. Most entrants at this level achieved success on questions which required description, narration, justification and opinion. Some students were less successful in questions which required a certain formal register, the provision of details across various time frames or the knowledge of vocabulary specific to a theme.

In conclusion, a good number of students scored very well throughout the paper. They demonstrated their ability to convey information, develop points using familiar vocabulary and use language with consistently high degrees of success.

Question 1

Q1 has two options from which students have to select one. This question assesses students on their ability to convey information, narrate, express opinions and interests, and convince the reader about a certain point. Students must use the informal register. This question is common to the Foundation tier.

Question 1 (a)

Q1 (a) related to the theme of "identity and culture" and focused on friendship and what makes a good friend. It required that students write an essay in which they describe a good friend, refer to things that they did and will do together and offer opinions on the characteristics of a good friend. This question was worth 20 marks: 12 for Communication and Content, the ability to write information relevant to the task, with effective adaptation of language to narrate, inform and give convincing personal opinions, and 8 marks for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy, which involves evidence of accurate language and structures, good linking of the piece as a whole and successful reference to past, present and future events.

The level of success was high. A large number of students were able to write clear descriptions of friends, with predominantly accurate and unambiguous references to past and future events, using a broad range of vocabulary.

Rare patterns of unsatisfactory performance related to the following:

- Unnecessarily lengthy descriptions of a specific bullet point, mostly about what one does with a friend on a daily basis, which were not immediately relevant to the task.
- Extensive references to a specific bullet point and only a cursory reference to opinion (what makes a good friendship). Such inconsistencies detract from the effectiveness of the piece as a whole.
- Omission of key points, more often than not in relation to expressing opinions about what makes a good friendship.

Question 1 (b)

Q1 (b) related to the theme of "international and global dimension" and focused on a sporting event, a friendly match between two teams from different countries.

It required that students write an email to a friend, in which they issue an invitation to go abroad to watch a sports event and offer opinion about friendly international matches. This question was also worth 20 marks: 12 for Communication and Content, the ability to write information relevant to the task, with effective adaptation of language to narrate, inform and give convincing personal opinions, and 8 marks for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy, which involves evidence of accurate language and structures, good linking of the piece as a whole and successful reference to past, present and future events.

The level of success was satisfactory. A good number of students were able to write clear descriptions referring to the specifics of time and place, writing convincingly about the reasons why the two friends should attend a sports event abroad and offering interesting views on friendly matches between countries.

Patterns of unsatisfactory performance related to the following:

- Either too lengthy or too short descriptions of a specific bullet point and extensive references to other bullet points and extraneous details, which detracted from the purpose of the piece and provided no information on the student's plans and interest in this particular sport event
- Omission of key points, more often than not in relation to expressing opinions about the importance of sports events of this type

Question 2

Question 2 has two options from which students have to select one. This question assesses students on their ability to convey information, narrate, express and justify ideas and opinions, and interest or convince the reader, as well as use the formal register.

Question 2 (a)

Question 2 (a) related to the theme of "Future Aspirations, Study and Work" and focused on volunteering. It required that students write an email using the formal register, in which they are trying to persuade their teacher to turn the attention of the student volunteer group towards a specific problem. In this question, students were asked to write 130-150 words identifying a problem that merits attention, laying out a plan regarding how the students can help, describing their own experience as volunteers and offering opinions about the importance of being a volunteer. This question was worth 28 marks: 12 for Communication and Content, which involves the ability to communicate relevant facts, expand, express individual thoughts and opinion, while maintaining appropriate use of register and style throughout, and 8 marks for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy, which invites accurate use of a variety of complex grammatical structures, cohesion and successful references to various time frames. The purpose of this particular question focused on persuasion and the student's ability to write in order to convince was a main factor of assessing performance.

The level of success in this question was satisfactory. A good number of students were able to write clear descriptions referring to the required specifics and offered passionate accounts of their own experience as volunteers and the importance of helping with an issue that they identified as important.

Patterns of unsatisfactory performance related to the following:

- Either too lengthy or too short descriptions of a specific bullet point and extensive references to other bullet points and extraneous details, which detracted from the purpose of the piece and provided no information on the reason why the particular issue was the one deserving the attention of volunteers
- Confusing the experience of being a volunteer with the experience of working in a summer job
- Failure to link opinions and facts in an organised way

Question 2 (b)

Question 2 (a) related to the theme of "Local Area, Holiday and Travel"" and focused on the places visitors should see and the things they could do. It required that students write to a magazine in order to interest readers in a particular place that the student knows and likes.

In this question, students were also asked to write 130-150 words, describing their ideal place and what young people can do there in the space of a weekend, while also offering a glimpse of their own experiences and explaining why they chose that particular place.

This question was worth 28 marks: 12 for Communication and Content, which involves the ability to communicate relevant facts, expand, express individual thoughts and opinions, while maintaining appropriate use of register and style throughout, and 8 marks for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy, which invites accurate use of a variety of complex grammatical structures, cohesion and successful references to various time frames. The purpose of this particular question focused on writing to interest, and the student's ability to adapt their language in order to interest and give convincing opinions was a main factor of assessing performance.

The level of success in this question was high. Most students were able to write clear and compelling descriptions of a place referring to the required specifics of the rubric with appropriate expansion of key points.

Patterns of unsatisfactory performance related to the following:

- Either too lengthy or too short descriptions of a specific bullet point and extensive references to other bullet points and extraneous details, which detracted from the purpose of the piece and provided no information on the reason why the student chose this particular place. In fact, this conclusion was often left to the examiner to draw, as it was not stated purposefully and clearly
- Occasionally resorting to very generic and basic descriptions of what one did or can do in a particular place, failing to convey creative enough images or interesting enough descriptions of the "ideal weekend"
- Failure to link opinions and facts in an organised way

Question 3

This question related to the theme of "School" and focused on what the experience of a new school is like. It was worth 12 marks and consisted of 4 sentences ordered in rising degrees of complexity.

This was the first time that translation from Greek into English was used as a tool for testing writing skills in Greek. Most students were able to achieve at least half of the 12 marks awarded, which indicates that the meaning of the passage was communicated with good degrees of success: from partially to fully.

There were some patterns of lexical challenges that emerged from samples of student performance. Areas of weakness occasionally related to vocabulary (e.g. glad, unfortunately, moved) but mostly had to do with failure to convey "I don't have to take the bus" accurately. Most students, including those who had been successful in handling the previous questions well, resorted to "δεν πρέπει να παίρνω" instead of the correct "δεν χρειάζεται να παίρνω". Another common pattern of unsatisfactory performance related to the literal translation of "do well", which should be conveyed as "θα τα πάω καλά".

Paper Summary

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

- Read every question on the exam paper before you begin to write your answers.
- Since questions 1 and 2 offer a choice, please make sure you write about a topic that interests you and that you have something to say about.
- Look very carefully at the whole question, including the rubric, to make sure that you fully understand what you are being asked to do.
- Pay attention to key words in the bullet points, as these will help you to answer each of the bullet points correctly.
- Answer each of the bullet points in the order that they appear, so that you do not end up omitting any. Use a new paragraph for each one.
- Leave enough time to check your work carefully at the end of the exam.
- Familiarise yourself with the assessment criteria, so that you are aware of the aspects involved in assessing performance. This is particularly important for questions that elicit the use of a formal register or purpose linked to persuasion, interest etc.