

GCSE

Edexcel GCSE

Modern Greek (1776)

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Examiners' Report

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Paper 1 - Listening and Responding

In general, performance on this paper was of a high standard. Candidates generally found the language domains covered by this year's paper accessible and a significant number were also able to handle inference questions successfully - a trend that has been developing since the 2001 examination and has been commented on in previous reports. Increasingly, centres are recognising the importance of skilful training and preparation of candidates for responses that require them to go beyond literal understanding of the text. Nevertheless, this does remain the most problematic area for a number of candidates and does often require a certain degree of linguistic maturity.

Q1 - 4

These questions proved straightforward to the vast majority of candidates. Very occasionally one random item of vocabulary was unknown, perhaps 'σερβιτόρα' was more commonly misunderstood than others.

Q5 - 8

Once more these questions proved straightforward to the vast majority of candidates. A very small number of candidates was unable to identify some of the phrases used. There was no pattern of miscomprehension.

Q9

This question was answered very well by a large number of candidates. Unfortunately a significant number of candidates lost marks because they were unable to spell very basic words adequately or they perhaps did not think it important. Some errors in spelling are tolerated but it is disappointing when candidates who in every other respect perform well above the standard required for a G grade, cannot write simple Greek words such as 'μπάνιο', 'τηλέφωνο' and 'Ιούλιο'.

Q10 - 13

Performance on this question was generally good but proved suitably challenging to weaker candidates. There was no consistent pattern in the small number of incorrect responses.

Q14 - 16

The majority of candidates answered this section very well. The most common incorrect response was the confusion of '6:45' and '7:15' in Q16 where candidates had to recognise the time but misunderstood 'παρά'.

Q17

This question proved straightforward to the vast majority of candidates. Errors were made very occasionally.

Q18

Most candidates dealt with this question competently. Marks were lost only occasionally.

Q19 - 23

This question proved challenging to a number of candidates but on the whole it was answered well. There was no consistent pattern to mistakes made other than a slight tendency to confuse the answer to Q23, thinking that it should be E, because the word 'μαθήματα' was heard in the recording. It was necessary to listen carefully to the whole extract in order to respond correctly.

Q24

Performance on this question was varied as was expected at this level. However, the topic proved accessible to the majority of candidates who were able to extract some relevant information and correctly attribute at least some of the statements.

Q25

This question proved straightforward to the vast majority of candidates. Errors were made very occasionally in part 'b' where candidates had to recognise a more complicated higher number.

Q26 - 29

These questions proved pleasingly accessible to a large number of candidates. Most candidates were able to score more than one mark on this section.

Marks were lost where candidates' answers showed insufficient attention to the wording of and/or detail in the question to be awarded marks at this level. Lengthy answers are usually unnecessary, but candidates should be prepared to give adequate explanations in order to be awarded one mark.

Q26(a) No significant problems were encountered.

Q26(b) The most common wrong answer was 'losing her job'. This fear was not expressed. The speaker was afraid of being without a job, if she were to leave her present one, not losing her present one.

Q27(a) Candidates often failed to recognise who the speaker did not get on with and referred to people who were not mentioned in the passage. Others cited hypothetical reasons that had nothing to do with the text.

Q27(b) A large number of candidates simply tried to translate a section of the text rather than describe the dilemma the boy faced ie that of choosing between himself and his mother.

Q28(a) Most candidates were able to identify the speaker as being depressed or unhappy.

Q28(b) This question required mostly factual information and was generally answered well. Where marks were lost, it was usually due to a lack of precision in the answer.

Q28(c) Many candidates restricted themselves to suggesting that the girl's parents 'shouted at her' and did not refer specifically to the comments that they made to her which demonstrated a lack of understanding.

Q29(a) A significant number of candidates either did not recognise the word for the 'country' or mistook 'επαρχία' for a place name.

Q29(b) Some candidates answered the question as if it were 'How does the speaker feel?' rather than 'How does he feel *about where he is living?*' As a consequence answers were sometimes inaccurate.

Q29(c) A large number of candidates answered this question successfully. There were also several hypotheses that did not reflect the content of the text.

Paper 2 - Speaking

Performance

Performance was of a very high standard with the majority of candidates able to display a wide range of higher-level skills. Candidates' performed best in circumstances where teacher examiners asked specifically targeted questions that ensured that their candidates were given precise opportunities to demonstrate these skills. Others unfortunately left these opportunities to chance.

Most candidates had prepared their chosen topic well and were given the opportunity by their teacher examiners to display their knowledge and competence. As in previous years candidates able to demonstrate their ability to interact with an interlocutor and not recite rote learnt material were awarded the highest marks.

Candidates' responses to the second and third conversation topics were also of a very high standard. Candidates appeared to be particularly well prepared for the full range of topic areas.

The majority demonstrated the ability to refer to past and future events and to express opinions. Most teacher examiners appear to be aware that this is a very important criterion in assessing candidates' performance. Possibly the least successfully targeted area is reference to the future. Whereas references to the past are elicited with consistent frequency even some of the more experienced centres do sometimes neglect the future.

At the highest level candidates also expressed and justified opinions and conveyed attitudes with confidence. In some instances the teacher examiner's questions did not give sufficient scope for the candidates to develop this type of answer sufficiently and demonstrate these higher-level skills. Even very able candidates were not always encouraged to go beyond the factual and to justify opinions or to convey attitudes. They were however often able to convey a lot of quite complex information that was indicative of their potential for fulfilling these requirements.

Conduct

Unfortunately there was still a tendency on the part of a small number of teacher examiners to conduct the examination using only the questions in the handbook, which are intended for guidance only. However this was less evident in this year's examination than it has been previously. Teacher examiners appear to be feeling more confident in exploiting the flexibility of the Specification. To be awarded full marks for Content and Communication, candidates are required to fulfil the criterion of responding to a wide range of questions, which is not the case when they are reciting pre-learnt answers to a number of standard questions. The speaking test has been designed to give centres maximum flexibility to allow their candidates to demonstrate their individual strengths in the spoken language. This is explained fully in the published Specification. Adhering rigidly to a set of examples and eliciting responses to identical questions for every candidate is a serious misinterpretation of the Specification, which demands a element of unpredictability.

Sometimes, weaker candidates were disadvantaged because teacher examiners did not ask questions that targeted these candidates' level of competence. Thus they were asked questions with which they had little chance of success instead of being given the opportunity to display a broader range of knowledge albeit at a less sophisticated level.

Teacher examiners seemed to be more familiar with the requirement concerning the sequencing of the topics from candidate to candidate. Problems still occurred where teacher examiners were either unaware of or misunderstood the prescribed combinations. On no account should candidates be aware of their second and third topics at any point before the examination begins.

Generally, teacher examiners were more disciplined in allocating an equal and appropriate amount of time to each of the three topics. Unfortunately a number of centres still did not observe the requirements relating to the timing of the conversation. Excessively short conversations or conversation with a lack of balance across the three topics did disadvantage a number of candidates.

The conversation should last between 8-12 minutes with equal weight given to each topic. A good 'rule of thumb' is to always aim for a minimum of 3 minutes per topic but never exceed 4 minutes for any one topic. Examiners are not required to listen to material recorded in excess of the maximum time stipulated for each topic.

Administration

The examiners were pleased to note that most centres followed the guidelines for the simplified administration of the examination rigorously and most deadlines were met.

Paper 3 - Reading and Responding

Performance was generally of a high standard. A large number of candidates responded well to the requirements of paper 3, although there were some instances of candidates not reading the rubrics with sufficient care.

Detailed comments pertaining to individual questions are as follows.

Q1-2

These questions proved straightforward to the vast majority of candidates. A small number of candidates misread the rubric in question 2 and instead of providing the appropriate day in their answers, they wrote the type of weather that was predicted. This error could have been avoided with a more careful reading of the instructions, as well as of the example, which always provides an indication of what exactly is expected.

Q3

Most candidates dealt with this question competently. Q3(iii) proved challenging for a small number, as they were not able to link the word «αθλητικές» with the words «στάδιο/ γυμναστήριο».

Q4

This question drew from a domain that seemed to be familiar to candidates, as a high level of accuracy was noticeable in the responses. Where there were errors, they again related to the reading of the rubric. For example, “giving up smoking” may be a sound piece of advice, but is not mentioned anywhere in the text. Candidates ought to keep in mind that what may be true, in terms of real life experience, is not necessarily the appropriate answer if it is not part of the information conveyed in the text.

Q5

Performance on this question was varied. Although the topic and language involved were accessible and well within the candidates’ world of experience, difficulties were encountered in completing some of the sentences. Only the very able candidates managed to use their knowledge of grammar and syntax as a helpful tool in completing this task. Some candidates did not recognise the word «συγχαρητήρια» and as they were unable to relate it to a positive feedback, ended up with sentences like: «Συγχαρητήρια. Όλα δείχνουν ότι ... δεν κατάλαβες καλά τα ποιήματα/ ...δεν μελέτησες καλά».

Q6

There was a very high level of accuracy, with the majority of candidates achieving full marks in this question.

Q7

As with Q5, this also proved challenging to a number of candidates. Some responses showed a high level of language awareness and candidates were able to use their knowledge of grammar to their benefit. Errors occurred at the basic level, when candidates filled the blanks with nouns, when it was obvious that the sentence would be left without verb and would therefore make no sense. For example:

«Όμως... φοιτητές στο ότι νέοι...»

Q8

Most candidates understood the question and answered competently. Some failed to provide the appropriate member of family for each description and instead proceeded to illustrate the description with a relevant activity. For example:

Βιβλιόφιλος → Διάβασα

Ζωόφιλος → Έπαιξε με το σκύλο

Such errors could be avoided if candidates used the example as a model for the type of information required.

Q9

Performance was of the highest level in this question and nearly all candidates achieved full marks.

Q10

Candidates' response were generally accurate. A small number of responses showed that «ανεργία» and «πτυχίο» were challenging items for some.

Q11

Performance on this question varied. The topic and the language involved seemed to be familiar for many and there were instances where candidates gained full marks. There was a noticeable failure to complete the task in an acceptable way when candidates provided their own opinion about the environment and omitted to identify points in the text.

Q11(b) and (c) stood out as the ones when personal opinion or even guesswork dominated some answers. The answer “Consumers can show their concern by recycling” may be true but does not draw on information from the text.

Other challenges related to knowledge of vocabulary and the words that proved to be an obstacle for many were «εθνικά σύνορα», «διαμαρτυρηθείτε» and «ρυπαίνουν», which surprisingly some candidates failed to link to «ρύπανση» as in the phrase «ρύπανση του περιβάλλοντος».

Q11(a) was answered well by the majority, as both “people’s indifference” and the reasons for it, were correctly identified. In Q11(e), the majority pointed out that according to the writer of the article the future looked bleak but only a few managed to expand and provide the second detail that pertained to what needed to be done.

Paper 4 - Writing

Performance was generally of a high standard. A large number of candidates responded well to the requirements of paper 4, although there was a noticeable pattern of haste in the reading of the rubrics.

Detailed comments pertaining to individual questions are as follows.

Q1, 2 and 3 gave the majority of candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to provide information, describe and justify opinion, within the framework of the prescribed tasks. Certain aspects of the continuous writing in Q4(a) and 4(b) proved more challenging and there is definitely some room for improvement in performance, with regard to knowledge of structures as well as careful reading of the instructions.

Q1

This task was marked for communication only and proved straightforward for the vast majority of candidates. There was some evidence of inconsistency with the letters of the Greek alphabet, with some candidates mixing Roman and Greek characters, but these were isolated incidents.

Q2

Most candidates completed the task successfully, especially with regard to requirements relating to content. There were some inconsistencies that stemmed from limited knowledge of grammar («θέλω να έρθεις / έρθω στο σπίτι σου..») but this was not the norm. As with previous years, some departed from the prescribed bullet points and gave lengthier and irrelevant accounts in fluent Greek, which, notwithstanding their admirable accuracy failed to address the specific task very well.

Q3

Candidates tackled this question in a satisfactory manner, as any topics relating to school life seem to be well rehearsed and familiar. As with question 2, though, it is important to expand providing detail relevant to the task and not launch into descriptions of schools and teachers to the detriment of the rest of the bullet points. If there was one bullet point that tended to be ignored or nominally mentioned, it was the last one about the school activity or event that the candidate was asked to comment on. This was sometimes left out or at times referred to with the standard phrase « Σχεδιάζω καμία σχολική εκδήλωση στο μέλλον», which was in fact lifted from the rubric with little or no manipulation.

Q4(a)

A number of candidates understood the task and responded clearly and fully to its requirements. It was obvious that the majority had been prepared well and taught vocabulary relevant to this topic.

Although it was expected that the majority of students would perform well in this question, it was surprising to see a pattern of answers emerging, which showed that some of the task may have been misunderstood, leading to either irrelevance or significant omissions. This pattern related to responses that left the first two bullet points out and focused on a description of either a past event or the planning of a future one. The topic of celebrations is one that most candidates are familiar with and has featured in past papers many times. It was disappointing to see so many essays, possibly rehearsed, that left out information which was not particularly taxing or challenging as it involved the use of the Present Tense and knowledge of food vocabulary.

Although many candidates showed ability to go beyond a minimal response and elaborated providing detail and explanation, the omission of half the task stopped them from achieving high marks.

Q4(b)

Candidates' responses varied from successful to satisfactory. Where marks were lost, this was mostly due to insufficient detail or poor attempts to link the information provided into a coherent piece.

In certain cases, some inconsistencies were noted, which detracted from the pertinence and the clarity of the piece as a whole. These related to the issue of who the letter was addressed to. Some candidates started with «Αγαπητή Γιολάντα» and continued with «Διάλεξα τη Γιολάντα...» instead of « Σε διάλεξα...» creating structures that led to ambiguity and lack of clarity.

Overall, however, candidates completed the majority of the task and managed to expand and express opinion suitable for this particular task.. It was felt that some would have benefited more from another year of study and practice, especially with regard to grammar. Tenses were secure with certain verbs («πηγαίνω», «είμαι») but there were lapses with regard to more ambitious structures like the Conditional, the Imperfect or the Subjunctive.

Statistics

Overall Subject Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Overall subject grade boundaries	100	89	79	69	59	48	37	26	15	0

Paper 1 Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 1 grade boundaries	50	42	38	34	30	24	19	14	9	0

Paper 2 Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 2 grade boundaries	20	20	17	14	12	9	7	5	3	0

Paper 3 Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 3 grade boundaries	50	42	37	32	27	22	17	13	9	0

Paper 4 Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 4 grade boundaries	55	49	44	39	35	28	21	14	7	0

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