

Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCSE

GCSE Modern Greek (1776)

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Paper 1- Listening and Responding

GENERAL COMMENTS ON PERFORMANCE

In general candidates' performance on this paper was satisfactory. The inference questions proved accessible to a considerable number of candidates, although there were some responses which relied on general descriptions and left out essential details. Where a response in Greek was required, there were isolated cases of illegible or heavily misspelled words, which did not merit any credit.

Questions 1-4

Very high level of accuracy in these questions, with the majority of candidates achieving perfect scores.

Questions 5-8

Excellent performance in this range of questions. Errors occurred very rarely, if at all.

Question 9

(a) Performance in this question varied, as is expected for this level of difficulty.

More than half of the responses identified the correct statements.

(b). Many candidates identified the correct speaker and showed good vocabulary awareness of the topic. Errors were rather frequent in 9(iii), where the majority of candidates failed to attribute the statement to Elli; even though Lefteris seemed to be the one who preferred educational programmes, it was Elli who stated that he is alone in this.

Question 10

This question was generally answered well, but proved rightfully challenging to weaker candidates. A significant number of candidates lost marks because they were unable to spell basic words adequately or possibly because they did not consider spelling important. Some errors in spelling were tolerated but it was disappointing when candidates could not spell simple Greek words such as «γάτα» or «φαγητό».

Question 11

(a) Very good to excellent level of performance in this part of the question. The vast majority of candidates identified the correct speaker, with some evidence of inaccuracy exhibited in 11(v).

(b) It seemed that the character descriptions «φιλόδοξος» and «τεμπέλα» proved challenging to some, as many candidates did not fare well in this part of the examination.

Questions 12-15

Excellent level of performance from most candidates, who displayed good awareness of vocabulary relating to special occasions.

Question 16

The majority of responses were accurate and attributed the correct activity to the correct speaker.

Questions 17-19

Excellent level of performance from the vast majority of candidates.

Question 20

Some candidates found the connection between transport problems and the correct day in 20 (a) difficult to ascertain. Most responses were successful in 20 (b) and 20(c).

Questions 21-22

Performance in this question was varied as was expected at this level. The topic proved accessible to many candidates, who were able to extract some relevant information and identify the details that contributed to a full answer. Some responses were not inclusive enough and left out essential details or repeated the same information, in different words. Others failed to use appropriate English in their response, especially with regard to 23 (b), where the single word “economics” was sometimes offered as an answer, in place of “by giving money”, “by donating money” etc. Other examples include:

21 (a): Many candidates neglected to mention that Martha was chosen for the interview because she was voted “volunteer of the month” and not simply because she happened to be “a volunteer”.

21(b): Some answers described Martha's lifestyle before she became a volunteer at length, but without expanding to include all the necessary details. They paraphrased instead the "selfish" nature of her previous life in various ways. Despite the variety in expressing this concept, such answers merited one mark only.

22(c): Most candidates identified the correct information, but in certain cases poor English disadvantaged the candidate. Answers like "go past the office" or "go to the building" were neither precise nor relevant enough. Similarly, the days when one could visit the organisation's headquarters were "during week days" and not "all day" or "when they are open" or even "when shops are open".

Paper 2 - Speaking

General Comments on Performance

Continuing the trend of previous examination series, performance was once again of a high standard with the majority of candidates displaying a broad range of higher-level skills. This was most apparent where teacher-examiners applied a good examination technique, which gave candidates the opportunity to communicate to the best of their ability. Unfortunately, those who did not examine well put some candidates at a disadvantage.

Chosen topics were, on the whole, well-prepared and candidates who were encouraged by teacher-examiners to interact naturally rather than to recite a monologue were awarded the highest level marks. Second and third topics were usually of a good standard also, indicating candidates' preparedness for the full range of topics.

As in previous years, lack of communication in the future tense was evident for some candidates. Use of both the future and past tenses is an important criterion in the assessment of performance, as most teacher-examiners are aware. Past tense events are almost always discussed, but the future is often neglected, which is to the candidate's disadvantage.

The expression and justification of attitudes and opinions was usually evident in higher-level performing candidates. However, even some of these most able candidates were unable to perform to the best of their ability when teacher-examiners did not ask questions designed to facilitate responses beyond the factual.

Conduct

There were still a few teacher-examiners who conducted the examination using only the questions from the handbook, which are intended as guidance only. Strict adherence to both the content and the order of these questions does not facilitate the flexibility required for natural conversation. Teacher-examiners who ask questions relevant to the candidate's previous responses allow for individual communicative competence to be demonstrated.

Some candidates were unable to give their best performance when teacher-examiners spent too long in asking questions or in making lengthy comments of their own based on the candidate's responses. Weaker candidates were sometimes disadvantaged either by being given insufficient time to reply before responses were completed for them or by being asked higher-level questions which were beyond their level of comprehension.

Equality of timing still remains a problem for some teacher-examiners, as does the total length of time spent examining an individual candidate. Examiners are not required to listen to any one topic exceeding 4 minutes in length and often a long first topic has a tendency to be followed by two shorter ones. If a topic length is too brief or there is a lack of balance across the total 8-12 minutes required for all three topics, then the candidate will be at a disadvantage. Please ensure that each topic lasts for 3-4 minutes.

Administration

Administrative guidelines were followed by the majority of centres and examiners received the examined tapes within the timeframe allowed.

Attendance registers were omitted in some cases. Please note that attendance registers should be sent to the examiner, even if the candidates do not attend the examination.

The downloading of electronic LT3s was again not carried out by some centres and this caused time-consuming extra work for the examination team. Please send one LT3 form per candidate.

A minority of teacher-examiners still continue to mark the examination. Please note that this is not a requirement of the specification and will in no way influence the examiner's marks.

Paper 3 - Reading and Responding

GENERAL COMMENTS ON PERFORMANCE

Many candidates demonstrated good comprehension skills and produced accurate and confident responses. Evidence of misunderstanding and inaccuracies related mainly to questions requiring inference skills. Few candidates failed to read the rubric carefully and answered question 10 in Greek. There was a pattern of offering more information than required, especially with regard to question 10. Superfluous information is not taken into account and students are advised to offer concise answers, using the space available, avoiding writing their answers in the margins of the page or below the line.

Weaker candidates found certain aspects of questions 5, 8 and 10 challenging.

Questions 1-2

These questions were handled well by the majority of candidates. Few candidates were not familiar with the word «κομμωτήριο», even though it appears in the MCV.

Question 3

The majority of candidates identified the missing word correctly and showed good awareness of vocabulary. The most challenging item proved to be 3(d). Responses showed that some candidates were not familiar with «θερινά σπορ» and failed to make the connection with «θαλάσσιο σκι».

Question 4

This question was handled very well by most candidates. Occasionally, there were more ticks than necessary, even though the rubric specifically asked for four.

Question 5

Performance on this question varied. Many candidates identified the missing word correctly, obviously helped by their knowledge of vocabulary, but also grammar. The most common error related to the choice of «στο μυαλό» instead of «στο σώμα» in 5 (e). Some candidates who could not make up their mind offered more than one choice for each sub-question. In such cases, the examiners took into account only the first item that the candidate wrote.

Question 6

Very good performance in this question. Responses showed that the candidates are very familiar with vocabulary relating to various means of transport.

Question 7

In this question, there was evidence of good knowledge of vocabulary relating to descriptions of people, especially with regard to 7(i) and (iv). Some responses showed that the word «μελαχροινός» was challenging to weaker candidates.

Question 8

This question proved challenging to some, especially with regard to 10 (d), as the connection between «προσωπικότητα» and «χαρακτήρα» was not obvious to some candidates. Here too, despite instructions, more than 5 boxes were often ticked, causing unnecessary loss of valuable marks. Candidates ought to distinguish between statements that may be generally true but are not based on the information in the text. Although it may be true that “parents use mobiles”, this information does not appear in the text and, therefore, does not constitute a valid response.

Question 9

Very good performance in this question, with incorrect responses occurring mainly with regard to 9(ii). Many candidates did not seem to be familiar with the word «χαρτζιλίκι» and failed to make the connection between 9(b) and 9(ii).

Question 10

The sub-questions, which targeted the higher grades, proved accessible to many candidates, although a pattern of inaccurate responses did emerge, especially in relation to 10 (c) and 10 (d).

With regard to 10(a), most responses were successful, as they correctly identified both factors that affect children’s experience with reading, i.e. family and school. Some candidates brought outside knowledge to the question and responded inappropriately, based on their own experience of how they acquired reading skills.

10 (b) was handled correctly by many candidates. Some answers, however, proved too generic and failed to identify the mission of the Centre correctly as “helping parents with the task of introducing books to children”. General answers such as “helping parents” did not earn any marks.

10 (c) was handled correctly by many candidates but there was a pattern of wrong answers that failed to include the necessary details that would earn the candidates full marks. Many responses offered “information about life”, instead of “information about the authors’ lives” and “visits to schools”, instead of “authors visit schools”. Similarly, with 10 (d) as with 10 (c), the difference between a correct and an incorrect answer was in the details. Students of a practical nature might be interested in the activities of the centre not because they are “writing a book” or because they can “make a book”, but because book games allow them to learn how “a book is written or made”.

A pattern of incomplete responses emerged with question 10 (e), when candidates identified “libraries”, but not “on-line libraries” as one of the innovations of the Book Centre.

Finally, candidates are reminded that, as this is one of the most challenging parts of this paper, it is essential to provide the appropriate details for a full answer and stay clear of platitudes and generalisations.

Paper 4 - Writing

GENERAL COMMENTS ON PERFORMANCE

In general, many candidates demonstrated good writing skills and produced fairly accurate and pertinent responses. There was evidence of ability to narrate and evaluate in response to the questions set and many candidates displayed high levels of accuracy. On certain occasions, misunderstanding of the question and hasty reading of the bullet points led to significant omissions and irrelevance.

A small number of candidates ignored the rules of the Greek alphabet and the conventions of the stress system. Consequently, they were penalised. Candidates are reminded that the position of the stress ought to be indicated, where necessary.

Candidates are also reminded that sloppiness, messy writing and carelessness regarding the presentation of their responses ultimately work to their disadvantage. Moreover, it is essential to respond to the questions within the framework of the bullet points mentioned and the word limit imposed.

Question 1

This was marked for comprehension only and consequently the vast majority of candidates performed very well. On rare occasions candidates reproduced in their answers the word mentioned in the example, i.e. the word “κάλτσες”. Such answers were not rewarded. Sometimes two versions of the word “money” were offered within the same answer, «χρήματα» and «λεφτά». In such cases only one version was accepted as correct.

Candidates are reminded that the pictures are there to help them and under no circumstances do they constitute prescriptive advice. The rubric of this question stipulates that only 5 answers are required. Therefore, any additional items are considered surplus and ignored. Also, the use of non Greek characters should be avoided, as words that include non Greek characters do not merit any marks.

Some responses indicated that the candidates were not quite prepared and ready for this examination. The answers they offered included Latin characters and the spelling mistakes, even in high frequency straight forward words, sometimes prevented comprehension.

Question 2

This is a directed exercise and answers to this question ought to stay within the word limit prescribed and to the point. Unaccountable digression often leads to errors and is counter productive. Candidates ought to read the bullet points carefully and respond by writing the required information. A pattern of misunderstanding emerged when many responses failed to ask “what the guest would like to do” and suggested instead a number of options for entertainment or stated what the writer of the note had planned to do that evening. Such responses may have deviated from the rubric but received some credit for language accuracy, where appropriate.

Question 3

The instructions for question 3 are given in English and as a result, candidates ought to concentrate on the bullet points given in English, in order to compose their answers. The Greek text is offered as an extra student-friendly stimulus and is not there to be copied verbatim. Candidates who reproduced the text of the Greek stimulus verbatim did not earn any marks for doing this.

The most frequent omissions related to the bullet point that required information about “which place you have visited” and “why you liked” a particular one. Many responses failed to include more than one place and did not offer any evaluation. In terms of “personal details”, the name and age, even perhaps the place of residence would have been considered adequate. Candidates did not have to go into details regarding colour of one’s eyes or hair.

In this question, as is the case with question 4 also, candidates ought to demonstrate their knowledge of various tenses, as well as their general grammar awareness, in order to achieve high marks; “Playing safe”, both in terms of vocabulary as well as structures, means that the response will not gain marks coming from the top tiers of the assessment criteria. Moreover, a substantial number of candidates overused non-Greek words in their accounts. In a narrative which ought to contain 70 words, overuse of non Greek words is an unwelcome intrusion.

Question 4

(a)

Performance was generally good but proved slightly challenging to weaker candidates. There was a significant amount of prelearned essays, which focused on the candidate’s experience of P.E, without paying adequate attention to the specific

bullet points. Some candidates did not address the last bullet point that invited them to discuss the significance of sport for them or if they did, they tackled it with a minimal response that briefly stated, «ο αθλητισμός έχει σημασία για μένα».

Many answers offered varied and appropriate examples of the “best and the worst” moments in sport. Some candidates wrote about their own personal experience («η χειρότερη στιγμή ήταν όταν έσπασα το πόδι μου παίζοντας ποδόσφαιρο»), or about an experience relating to a game or an event they watched («η χειρότερη στιγμή ήταν όταν έχασε η ομάδα μου»). Both types of response were rewarded for their appropriacy.

(b)

Many candidates who opted for this question either ignored the bullet points asking for an evaluation of the way young people enjoy themselves or the one asking them to state what changes they would like to see. As has been the pattern with previous years, descriptions relating to personal experience focused extensively on eating and drinking (with an inappropriate amount of wordage dedicated to the names of the dishes that the candidate ate at a certain restaurant), whereas evidence of opinion was restricted to short phrases.

A common pattern of digression related to ‘pre-learnt’ answers being slotted in and constituting an unnecessarily large part of the essay. For example, students devoted two or three paragraphs to the perils of drugs for young people, without offering a balanced account of all the various aspects of the task in question. Such inappropriately lengthy accounts were not seen as entirely relevant to the demands of this particular question, as they occurred at the expense of other required information as well as wordage.

In terms of morphology, the most frequent errors related to erroneous formation of tenses, the wrong use of the third person impersonal verb «πρέπει» in the first person singular or plural as «πρέπω» and «πρέπουμε» and inaccurate spellings, (especially with regard to the nominative plural of masculine nouns, e.g. «οι φίλη»); agreement of adjectives and nouns; and the third person singular of the Present Indicative, which was often written with «η» instead of «ει», e.g. «πηγαίνη»). Some answers relied on limited vocabulary and structures, an overuse of the verb «πηγαίνω» and «τρώω», not always spelled or conjugated correctly.

Statistics

Paper 1 Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Grade boundaries	50	40	36	32	28	24	19	14	9

Paper 2 Speaking

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

Paper 3 Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Grade boundaries	50	41	37	33	29	23	18	13	8

Paper 4 Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Grade boundaries	55	48	44	40	36	28	21	14	7

Overall Subject Grade Boundaries 1776

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall subject grade boundaries	100	86	76	68	60	48	37	26	15

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