

# Examiners' Report Summer 2009

GCSE

## GCSE Modern Greek (1776)

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Summer 2009

Publications Code UG021542

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## Paper 1 Listening and Responding

### General comments on performance

In general, candidates' performance on this paper was of a high standard. Most of the inference questions proved accessible to a considerable number of candidates. However, a number of them did not go beyond the literal interpretation of the text, and as a result did not perform well at some inference questions. Where a response was required in Greek, there were very few cases of heavily misspelled words not meriting any credit.

### Questions 1-4

These questions proved straightforward to the majority of candidates. However, a significant number did not seem to know the word "μπριζόλα".

### Questions 5 - 8

Excellent performance in this range of questions. Hardly any errors did occur.

### Questions 9

This question was handled very well by the majority of candidates, but proved rightfully challenging to weaker candidates. There was no pattern of miscomprehension.

### 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 as being important. Some errors in spelling were tolerated but it was disappointing when candidates could not spell simple Greek words such as "Σάββατο" and "σινεμά" .

### Questions 11-14

These questions proved challenging to a number of candidates but on the whole they were answered well. Errors were rather frequent in question 14, where a significant number of candidates failed to make the connection between the description "βαρετή" and the speaker's complaint that she was doing the same things all the time at work and that she did not find her work interesting.

### Question 15

Very good level of performance in this question. The topic proved accessible to the majority of candidates who were able to extract some relevant information and identify the correct speaker, with some evidence of inaccuracy exhibited in 15(a) and 15(b). Errors were more frequent in 15(d); even though Elli was in favour of shopping for presents online, it was Haris who stated that online shopping saves valuable time.

### Questions 16-19

Excellent level of performance from the vast majority of candidates, who displayed good awareness of vocabulary relating to different types of entertainment.

### Question 20

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

### Question 21

Very good to excellent level of performance in this question. The topic proved accessible and the majority of candidates managed to score at least three marks out of five.

### Question 22

Excellent performance in this question. Incorrect responses were rare.

### Questions 23 and 24

Performance in these questions was varied, as was expected at this level. The majority of candidates displayed good awareness of vocabulary relating to healthy diet issues and a significant number of candidates were able to extract some relevant information and identify the details that contributed to a full answer. Marks were lost where candidates' answers showed insufficient attention to the wording or detail of the question, especially with regard to 23(c), where a significant number of candidates mentioned the first unhealthy type of food that they heard, e.g. "fried food" or "sugar", and ignored the fact that the speaker identified "fatty food" as being the worst category of food. Other examples include:

23(a) Many candidates neglected to mention that Mrs Filippou appeared on a TV programme and not only on a programme on healthy diet.

23(b) This question was fairly accessible to a significant number of candidates, who successfully identified at least one healthy food, with "fish" being the most popular. However a mark was lost where candidates, instead of giving an example of healthy food, simply stated that "we should eat small portions", a piece of information given to them which merited no marks.

24(a) Most candidates identified at least one piece of information from the text and their answers merited one mark, but in certain cases poor English disadvantaged the candidates. Answers such as "package food" or "food in a packet" were not precise enough to be awarded a mark.

24(c) This question proved challenging for a significant number of candidates who failed to recognise that the speaker was thinking more positively and that he was prepared to make changes to his lifestyle. Many candidates, though, scored one out of the two marks by mentioning that the presenter was going to get cooking lessons. However there was a significant amount of candidates that simply translated what they heard ("he should take cooking lessons") and ended up losing one mark.

24(d) Many candidates successfully drew inference from the text and gave an accurate description of the presenter's lifestyle (i.e. "unhealthy"). Marks were lost where candidates made assumptions that were not drawn from the text (e.g. "lazy").

## Paper 2 Speaking

As was the trend in previous years, performance was of a high standard with the majority of candidates demonstrating 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. Unfortunately, those who did not examine well put some candidates at a disadvantage.

Chosen topics were mostly well-prepared and teacher-examiners who enabled candidates to interact naturally facilitated the award of higher level marks. Candidates' responses to the second and third conversation topics were also of a high standard indicating their familiarity with the full range of topic areas.

The majority of candidates demonstrated the ability to refer to past and future events and to express opinions. Most teacher-examiners in this year's examination series appeared to be aware that this is an important criterion in assessing candidates' performance. They asked relevant questions to help candidates describe present tense activities as well as communicate in both the past and future tenses.

Candidates of the highest level expressed and justified opinions and conveyed attitudes with confidence. In some instances the teacher-examiner's questions did not give sufficient scope for the candidate to develop this type of answer sufficiently and demonstrate these higher level skills. Even very able candidates were not always encouraged to go beyond factual information; they were regularly interrupted and they were not given the chance to express opinions or to convey attitudes.

### Conduct

A few teacher-examiners continue to conduct the oral examination using only questions from the handbook, which are intended for guidance only. 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 evident when they are reciting pre-learnt answers to a number of standard questions. Those 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 perform at the best of their ability when teacher-examiners spent too long asking questions or making lengthy comments based on candidates' responses. Weaker candidates were sometimes disadvantaged because they were asked complicated questions, instead of being given the opportunity to display a broader range of knowledge albeit at a less sophisticated level.

The sequencing of topics across candidates was mostly adhered to and **it should be stressed that candidates must not be aware of their allocated second and third topics before the examination takes place.**

Generally, teacher-examiners were disciplined in allocating an equal and appropriate amount of time to each of the three topics. However equality of timing still remains a problem for some teacher-examiners, as does 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 and that the timing of each topic is set when the candidate starts talking.**

### **Administration**

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

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 small number of teacher-examiners continue to mark the examination. Please note that this is no longer required.



## Paper 3 Reading and Responding

### General Comments On Performance

A high number of candidates demonstrated good comprehension skills and produced accurate and confident responses. There was evidence of satisfactory vocabulary awareness and ability to identify the information targeted by the questions. Rubric violations were rare and most candidates adhered to procedure, selected the correct number of responses and used the correct language to answer question 9, i.e. English; a definite improvement on last year when some candidates failed to read the rubric carefully and answered question 10 in Greek or offered more information than required.

Evidence of misunderstanding and inaccuracies related mainly to questions requiring inference skills.

Weaker candidates found certain aspects of questions 5, 7 and 9 challenging.

### Questions 1-2

These questions were handled well by the majority of candidates.

Question 2(iii) was not used to calculate final grade.

### Question 3

The majority of candidates identified the correct profession for each speaker and showed good familiarity with Minimum Core Vocabulary pertaining to the theme of jobs and future plans.

Some weaker candidates failed to recognise words such as «νοσοκόμα» and «αεροσυνοδός».

### Question 4

This question was handled very well by most candidates. Very rarely, there were errors relating to inability to recognise the item «ζωγραφική».

### Question 5

Performance on this question varied. Although environmental themes have featured widely in all papers for GCSE Modern Greek, there was still some insecurity relating to high frequency vocabulary such as «σκουπίδια», «ανακύκλωση» and «καυσαέρια». Due to its topicality, this topic is of primary importance and candidates are advised to familiarise themselves with lexical sets belonging to this thematic category.

### Question 6

Excellent performance in this question. Responses showed that this year's candidates were familiar with vocabulary relating to daily routine or weekend plans.

### Question 7

Achievement was not always within easy grasp of the candidates in this question, even when it came to some of the more able ones.

Many responses showed that although there was adequate knowledge of vocabulary, hasty reading of the source text led to wrong choices, regarding how to fill the gaps. So even though grammatically and semantically some of these choices made sense, they were not valid responses as the choice did not correspond to the meaning conveyed by the stimulus text. The most obvious patterns were : «οι τουρίστες» instead of «οι κάτοικοι» in 7(i) and «η επικοινωνία» instead of «η συγκοινωνία» in 7 (iii).

Few 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 offered.

#### Question 8

Very good performance in this question, with incorrect responses occurring mainly due to inability to differentiate between “αυστηρός» and «σοβαρός». The vast majority of candidates proved able to distinguish between the various characteristics conveyed by adjectives reserved for descriptions of people and their personalities.

#### Question 9

Levels of achievement varied in this part, as expected with questions targeted at higher levels of ability. Sub-questions, which targeted grades such as A and A\*, proved accessible to a good number of candidates, although a pattern of inaccurate responses did emerge, especially in relation to 9 (d) , (e) and (f).

9 (d) in particular was a good discriminator between A and A\* candidates, as many failed to read the question carefully and identify the “most” important thing, listing several options, in the wrong order of appearance. Such, all inclusive, answers work at the expense of the candidates, especially when the question clearly asks that they identify one item.

Question 9(e) proved challenging for a significant number of candidates who failed to identify the correct details and resorted to platitudes and guesswork, which were not text based. Some gave extremely wordy and complex answers which were difficult to decipher. Candidates are reminded that the space provided underneath each question is a good indication of the length of the answer expected. Responses which spill over to the margins of the page or extend to a page other than the one reserved for the question cause unnecessary complications and delays and hamper the process of marking.

Question 9(f) had two sub sections and gave rise to some correct responses but there was also some confusion. Some answers expressed the same content in two different ways and therefore failed to score full marks: e.g. 9(fi) “they are selfish” and 9(fii) “they only think of themselves” .

With regard to 9(a),(b) and (c) most responses were successful, as they correctly identified all the required information and provided good comparisons that shed light on the differences between Sara’s and Dusan’s case.

Finally, although over the years we have seen definite improvements regarding procedural matters and general presentation of the candidate’s work, candidates should be reminded that the last question is one of the most challenging parts of this paper and it is essential to provide the appropriate details for a full answer and stay clear of platitudes and generalisations.

Superfluous information will not be 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.

## Paper 4 Writing

### General Comments On Performance

This year too, 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 question is 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 «βιβλιοθήκη». Such answers were not rewarded.

Occasionally, weaker candidates mixed English with Greek characters to come up with a hybrid word and failed to score points, also. The use of non Greek characters should be avoided, as words that include non Greek characters do not merit any marks.

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 are ignored.

### Question 2

This is a directed exercise and answers to this question ought to stay within the word limit prescribed and to the point, as prescribed by the bullets. Unaccountable digression often leads to errors and is counterproductive. 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 respond to the prompt "Say you don't feel well" and went straight to the "why". This way, valuable marks were lost, even though the item was relatively straightforward and accessible to candidates of all ranges of ability.

A surprisingly high number of candidates did not know the word for "homework" but paraphrased successfully or glossed, using expressions such as «τι έχω να κάνω για αύριο».

### Question 3

Instructions for question 3 are given in English and as a result, candidates ought to focus 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 gain any marks for doing so.

The most frequent omissions related to the bullet point that required information about «Say what you enjoyed most about your birthday party” and “Say why “. Evaluation of one’s experience or an issue is an important component of continuous writing and candidates ought to look out for such prompts.

One question that challenged some weaker candidates related to the description of one’s friends. A number of candidates proved unable to manipulate gender and number and failed to show the correct adjective and noun agreement, coming up with sentences such as «οι φίλοι μου είναι αστείους» or «οι φίλες μου είναι συμπαθητικοί»

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.

### Question 4

#### (a)

Performance was generally satisfactory but proved slightly challenging to weaker candidates. There was a significant amount of pre-learned essays, which focused on the candidate’s daily routine and failed to address other dimensions such as « Τι κάνεις που **δεν είναι καλό** για την υγεία σου» or «Τι θα ήθελες ν’ αλλάξεις στον τρόπο ζωής σου για να είσαι πιο υγιής». In some cases, there was a tendency to stay with present tense descriptions, even when the question invited use of other tenses. Such responses failed to make it above a certain grade boundary.

This topic was particularly popular with high ability candidates who wrote interesting and convincing accounts of what a healthy lifestyle means to them and what changes are necessary to achieve a good balance in one’s life. Questions that provided a good combination of accurate description and evaluation achieved the highest marks.

#### (b)

The candidates who opted for this question generally performed better than those who opted for question 4(a). The topic was obviously quite familiar to many and even though most stayed with generic descriptions of the obvious (sun, beach, food), they managed to provide answers well within the requirements of the bullet points. There was a noticeable adherence to rubric and very few failed to respond to all of the questions. Some misunderstanding occurred when a very small number of candidates restricted their (basic) narrative to the experience of an airplane journey.

In terms of morphology, the most frequent errors related to formation of tenses, especially with high frequency irregular verbs, some inappropriate use of dialect and inaccuracies relating to noun-adjective agreement.

## Statistics

### Paper 1 Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Grade boundaries	50	45	40	35	31	25	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	49	46	40	34	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	37	29	21	14	7

### Overall Subject Grade Boundaries 1776

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall subject grade boundaries	100	92	82	72	62	50	38	26	14





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Order Code UG021542 Summer 2009

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