Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE in Russian (5RU01/01)
Paper 1: Listening and Understanding in Russian

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GCSE Russian
Unit 1: Listening
Examiner Report

Foreword

There was a pleasing response to this paper, with the candidates showing sound preparation and the ability to do well over a range of topics.

Question 1

The majority of candidates were able to tackle this question confidently, and almost all scored full marks.

Question 2

This was generally well answered - it was pleasing to see that a large number of candidates knew their numbers well enough to answer question (a) successfully. However, a significant number of candidates seemed to misread question (d), answering "restaurant". As in the past, staples, such as numbers, days of the week and months should be revised regularly with candidates, and the need to read questions carefully emphasised.

Question 3

This was question proved to be largely accessible. The skill to be able to pick key words from a longer text was well demonstrated by the majority of candidates.

Question 4

Candidates seemed well-drilled in recognising verbs used for everyday activities.

Question 5

Some candidates struggled with the elements of inference in parts (iii) and (iv) of this question but generally it was well answered.

Question 6

Only the weakest of candidates experienced any difficulty in answering this question.

Question 7

Candidates coped well with this question, particularly parts (i), (iii) and(v).

Question 8

This question was aimed at the most able candidates and was generally dealt with very well. Candidates did a good job of dealing with the speed and "density" of the text and were able to draw inference, recognise words they had met in a different context and pick out key words to direct them to the correct answers. At this level answers are unlikely to be drawn from the MCV, nor should students expect to understand every word of the text, but to use their ability and skills they have practised in class to deduce and reach the appropriate conclusions.

Again, the need to read the rubric very carefully should be emphasised, as a number of candidates gave two answers for each of Part (b) (i) and (ii) and therefore could not gain credit for including the correct answer.

Question 9

Aimed at the most able candidates and requiring written answers, candidates must read each question very carefully and give clear, detailed answers to be assured of gaining the marks available. Some candidates showed they had some understanding of the text but answers were just too vague to be awarded marks. The question as a whole proved challenging, as was to be expected, given the level of ability it was intended for.

It is important, therefore, that the best candidates are ready to look for inferred answers and be prepared for a number of different question styles, as prescribed for this ability. The text, by nature of the candidates it is intended for, will include some sophisticated grammatical structures, but also a number of cognates and near-cognates, which candidates, particularly of the more able variety, should use to guide them towards the correct answer.

At this level candidates will rarely have to focus on a single word to arrive at the correct answer, but rather a concept, or series of "clues". Candidates should be reminded that use of clear, comprehensible English is essential - in some cases it was clear that candidates had not understood the question properly and/or were unable to render their answer in easily comprehensible English.

This question is not to be treated as a translation activity and candidates should have strategies for picking out key words in a longer text and for not becoming distracted or put off by words they do not know (and which in many cases will not be targeted in the answer).

a) The answer required candidates to recognise a specific date to gain the mark. Although correctly answered by many, "седьмого" was clearly not known by a significant number of candidates. Fewer candidates struggled to identify the correct month as August.

  b) This was generally well answered, with a pleasing number of candidates identifying "ночью" as key.

c) A large number of candidates identified the relevant section of the text to elicit the correct answer but were too vague in their response. "Excursions" and "Music concerts" were not sufficient to gain the marks allotted to this question.

d) Candidates did well in identifying the cognates "пенсионеры" and "ветераны"

e) Most candidates were able to identify the cognate "популярный" but fewer recognised that the superlative "самый популярный" and could therefore not be awarded the mark.

f) This proved to be the most challenging question on the paper. A significant number of students were put off by the mention of Gorky Park in the question, assuming this was as person (most often a comedian) or a pop group. There was also confusion between the verbs "пить" and "петь". A number of candidates were simply unable to render their answer in clear, comprehensible English and were therefore unable to be awarded any marks.

g) This required candidates to recognise "дождь" in an oblique case(" из-за дождя") which many did successfully.

g) The best candidates were able to express the elements of gaining information and possible careers successfully in their answers. However, some answers were too vague to warrant a mark or candidates misunderstood and assumed some kind of employment recruitment centre was to be set up.

Some general observations:

- Candidates will not gain any credit for writing in Russian if the rubric specifies English.
- Candidates should be encouraged to attempt all questions. Again, a small number of candidates ruled themselves out of gaining marks on some questions by not even attempting multiple choice or similar questions.
- Candidates should read the questions (particularly on Question 9) carefully.
- Questions 8 and 9 should not be treated as translation exercises. The ability to draw inference is a skill which able candidates need to practise and be prepared in order to   do themselves justice in the examination.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx