



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in Russian (1RU0) Paper 2H: Speaking

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Overview

The first series of this specification produced some very good performances and there were some imaginative and interesting orals with a good level of performance. The achievement of many of the candidates entered was high and teacher-examiners have on the whole engaged with the new specification and its requirements. Many oral assessments were conducted in a manner that allows candidates to demonstrate their ability. There was evidence of a full range of ability entered for Higher tier and performances reflected this throughout all three elements of the exam. The timing of the speaking examination is 10 – 12 minutes for the Higher tier after the initial preparation period of 12 minutes. These are approximate as candidates will take differing amounts of time to complete the role-play task and picture-based discussions. It should be noted that the timings for the role-play task and picture-based discussions are guidelines and many candidates were able to complete these tasks in a much shorter time than indicated in the specification. There is no need to extend these tasks to reach the maximum time suggested. Timings for the conversation tasks are prescribed and should be 5 – 6 minutes for the Higher tier. Teacher-examiners must not extend conversation times to reach the total time of the complete examination. Teacher-examiners should pay close attention to the sequencing grid for the examination which ensures that each candidate is tested on four of the five themes within the specification. This is based on the candidate's choice of theme for the first part of the conversation. Teacher-examiners will then select an appropriate role-play task from those given avoiding the theme of the conversation. Similarly, the choice of picture-based discussion and second conversation theme will follow the same format to avoid any theme being duplicated. Teacher-examiners should be aware that it is necessary to keep to the scenario and the precise wording of the role-play and the picture-based discussions. Where this was not the case, marks could not be awarded for any response made by the candidate. Candidates may have the question repeated where the candidate has not answered, or has asked for a repetition, but may not be rephrased in any way. There were some occasions where candidates were asked

supplementary questions to elicit further information and candidates could not be credited for responses to these questions. Often this was to extend the performance to fulfil the time limit in the specification which is not required. The requirements of the conversation task were not always adhered to and centres should be aware of the necessity to keep to the instructions within the specification. Two themes are tested within the task, the first chosen by the candidate at least two weeks before the test and the other chosen from the two options, depending in the themes allotted by Pearson for the role-play and picture-based discussion. Occasionally candidates were given a second conversation theme that had already been tested in a previous task or in rare cases a theme that the candidate had been asked to select. This is not permitted in the exam.

Role-plays

candidate responses within the role-play do not need to be elaborate but need to focus on completion of the requirement of the bullet point. Some candidates gave on occasion unnecessarily long responses and this had impact on the clarity of communication thus hindering the candidate from achieving full marks as the responses led to some ambiguity.

Candidates should be encouraged to read the scenario carefully in order to understand where the role-play is situated, to aid understanding before completing the task and providing answers that are in context.

Teacher-examiners are reminded that they should adhere to the wording of the role-play including where a candidate is required to ask a question. Teacher-examiners should not prompt candidates with some form of using the word **«Bonpoc»**. Teacher-examiners should also keep to the required register set in the role play and not change it to what they normally use during their teaching. This is not the nature of the assessment.

Occasionally candidates combined bullet points within the role play and where this occurred they were credited for both points. Such responses often elicited some confusion when the teacher-examiner then asked the question referring to the second bullet point.

The unpredictable question was often well done by candidates who anticipated a possible question within the nature of the role play. Less successful responses were evident from some candidates who offered no response or one which had no relevance to the situation of the role-play.

Many candidates found some difficulty in forming a question and teacher-examiners are to be encouraged to practise this skill. There were several instances of less convincing intonation and occasionally statements as an answer to the question rather than a question asked.

HR1

Generally, well answered. Candidates were familiar with café-based dialogue. The unpredictable element «**почему**» was well understood. Candidates coped well with the two requirements of asking a question and produced a good range of suggestions in response to «**рекомендация**» and «**обычно**».

HR2

This role played produced a range of response dependant on the ability level of the candidate. Some less competent responses did not recognise «**чтение**» thus failing to communicate an opinion. The unpredictable element caused difficulty to some candidates who did not fully understand «**в прошлый раз**» and did not give a reason for visiting a library. Many candidates coped well with the two question asking prompts, but some responses gave an idea of their own personal favourite book for the fourth bullet point.

HR3

This role play was well answered across the ability range of candidates. The topic of holidays seems a well prepared and easy to respond to theme. Many candidates were able to give an opinion on holidays and the unpredictable element of talking about a holiday last year was well developed. Where weaker responses occurred, it was a minor omission of referring to «**прошлом году**».

HR4

This role pay was dealt with well by many candidates. The more able scored high marks for each element of the task. The response to the unpredictable element about what

the candidate had done in Russia produced some well developed and full responses from some candidates. Other responses referenced **when** the candidate had visited Russia. Lower scoring responses to the fourth bullet point occurred when candidates did not grasp the meaning of «**план**» and talked about a future visit. The item «**цена**» was not recognised by some candidates.

HR5

Some candidates had trouble with this role play in failing to recognise the key vocabulary item «**район**». Lower scoring responses did not address the requirement to ask a question for the fourth bullet point and simply gave a personal opinion about museums. The fifth bullet point asking a question about evening activities was generally well communicated.

HR6

School was a generally well recognised topic and the word «**мнение**» was well understood and communicated. Some candidates did not access the full marks for the unpredictable element by failing to communicate the response about a previous interesting lesson in the past tense. Some candidates did not fully grasp the second bullet point where an opinion was required to be given about «**дисциплина**».

HR7

This role play was generally successful amongst candidates who understood «**обмены**» from the rubric of the task. There was some difficulty in responding to the unpredictable element from candidates who did not understand the prompt to talk about activities done on an exchange visit. The two question tasks were well understood.

HR8

Some candidates did not fully appreciate that the first bullet point did not require them to ask a question and did not say where a good restaurant could be located. Candidates must be encouraged to read the instructions about the task in their preparation time. More able candidates used the opportunity to expand a response about why they did or did not like the Russian language for the second bullet point. There was a wide range of response to the unpredictable element asking «**когда**» the candidate had first studied Russian.

The fourth bullet point asking a question about «**иностранный язык**» was underdeveloped by less able candidates.

HR9

Stronger candidates completed full and detailed responses to the role play. Some candidates struggled to access the full mark scheme of the role play. The first bullet point relating to an opinion of going to university was well handled by all levels of response. Some candidates confused the word «**профессия**» with **teacher** and did not respond to the bullet point. The unpredictable element led to less secure responses from some candidates who talked about the ambitions of their friends rather than the opinion of the friends. The fourth bullet point requiring a question about future plans was well answered although the fifth bullet point demonstrated some lack of recognition of «**зарплата**».

HR10

This role play was generally well done by candidates across the range. There were some detailed and impressive responses giving opinions about business as well as the ability to describe an ideal job. The unpredictable element referring to a past response about work was generally well answered with several candidates dealing successfully with a response saying that they had never actually worked. The fourth bullet point proved some lack of recognition of «**зарплата**». The fifth bullet point was dealt with successfully by many candidates.

Picture-based task

This task requires responses to the bullet points and where possible to demonstrate more extended responses than in the role play but these should not be a series of long monologues. Occasionally candidates gave overlong responses, these sometimes contained material which caused communication to be ambiguous, leading to the clarity of communication being impaired and therefore, not able to score full marks. There is, however, the need to develop responses, adapting language to describe, narrate and inform in response to the stimulus questions. There were some good examples of well-prepared candidates who could use adjectives of colour and size, a range of opinion structures and good ability to demonstrate position vocabulary. Candidates should be

encouraged to justify opinions and to try to give more than **«хорошо»** and **«интересно»**. Many candidates showed the ability to give physical description alongside clothing description. There were some examples of candidates who used first person structures to describe the pictures with examples such as **«я на каникулах»** and **«я в школе»**. Occasionally candidates gave elaborate responses after a suitable answer had been given and the extra information did not add anything to what had already been said. Examiners award higher marks for the quality of the response rather than the length. Some teacher-examiners did not help candidates by asking the supplementary prompts when a developed response has been given. Indeed, the ensuing silence as the candidate is unable to develop further information does not help the flow of response. Some of the tasks were thus overlong, there is nothing to be gained by this and some candidate's performances deteriorated towards the end of the task and appeared to also have an impact on the performance within the conversation as they tired. There were responses which were brief, and some questions required considerable prompting by the teacher-examiner, using the prompts given within the task, or were unanswered. This cannot allow a candidate to access the upper boxes of the mark scheme. There was a wide variation in the pronunciation and intonation of candidates and on occasion the inaccuracy of pronunciation led to no communication. Teachers are to be encouraged to work on pronunciation of opinion phrases. Successful candidates made good use of the preparation time to prepare useful and purposeful notes. Less successful candidates read stilted responses which did not add to the quality of conversation. Candidates should not read out written full responses but should use notes. Intonation is an issue in such responses. Centres are reminded that the questions within the Picture-based discussion are set and they should not be altered in any way. There was evidence of teacher-examiners rewording or reframing questions and this does not allow candidates to be credited for responses to these questions. There were also occasions where supplementary questions were added in the middle of the task. No credit is awarded for response to supplementary questions.

HP1

This picture proved to be accessible for many candidates who could give a full description of the image. Candidates proved good practice and preparation the task by using a range of impressive vocabulary in the description. Some candidates mentioned the subject being studied from the open book. Many candidates were clear in communicating the different tenses required. The future tense in particular was well demonstrated. The unpredictable element requiring candidates to talk about who they like to spend time with was well communicated by the more able but there was some lack of understanding of «**с кем**».

HP2

The prompts to this picture were well communicated by many candidates. There was a range of suggestions as to where the picture was set ranging from library to school to a hall of residence. Many candidates referenced the three people in the image and there were some instances of candidates describing the relationship between the people. The past and future elements were clearly communicated although some candidates did not reference «**читать**» in their response to the future prompt. The cognate «**электронные**» was well understood in the unpredictable task.

HP3

Descriptions of the photo were well developed by a range of candidates. There was good evidence of descriptions of people, clothing and moods of the people in the photo. Stronger candidates also made reference to the fact that coffee was being consumed and described the souvenirs on sale with opinions on both of these points. The reference to past and future elements of the task were generally well communicated although some responses did not fully deal with the element of «**активно**» to access the highest marks for communication. The unpredictable element relating to «**новые рестораны**» was understood with good responses given.

HP4

Response to this photo were developed and showed good ability to expand responses by many candidates. There were clear descriptions of weather and the people on the photo with expanded response about where the people in the photo had been and what they had bought. Opinions on cold weather were communicated well and the

tense questions relating to a visit to tourist sites as well as summer plans with family allowed candidates to speak clearly. The unpredictable task caused some confusion to weaker candidates who failed to communicate about «*твой район*» and instead described «*Москва*».

HP5

The photograph in a school setting was very accessible to candidates who could describe the content and expand well. Candidates gave full descriptions of the clothing being worn, the contents of the classroom and some more able candidates referred to the difference between the Russian classroom and a UK classroom. Most candidates were able to give an opinion relating to the number of exams that they do although some did not seem to understand «*слишком много*». The past and future requirements were easily communicated by many candidates with some candidates talking about what they will do directly after this specific exam. Most candidates were clear on the unpredictable element although recognition of «*дисциплина*» caused some lack of clarity from less confident candidates.

HP6

This picture allowed for some expansive description of the two people in the photo. The topic of school activities was clear to many candidates. The second bullet point relating to opinions on drama activities in school was well handled. The third bullet point was not always clearly communicated by weaker candidates who did not seem to grasp «*как часто*». The fourth bullet point allowed for some good responses about how the candidate plans to be involved with music in the future. Some candidates struggled to expand on the unpredictable element with opinions given on clubs that they attend rather than referring to the number of clubs on offer.

HP7

This card presented some difficulty to some candidates. The description element was generally well communicated with most candidates describing the airport location as well as the professional attire of the people. Some candidates found it difficult to expand on the second bullet point which required an opinion about the use of the Russian language in work. The third bullet point had a range of answers about what the candidate wanted to do when younger. In the fourth bullet point there were some

impressive answers from more able candidates saying whether they will work abroad in the future, but other responses simply talked about future plans with no reference to «*за границей*». Many candidates were able to give an answer to the unpredictable element of the work of a business person.

HP8

The description element of this picture was well presented by many candidates who could describe sport, people and location with some expansion about why the people were doing the activities. Candidates who clearly understood the second bullet point had an impressive range of opinions relating to the role of a volunteer, but other responses did not expand on this beyond simple opinion. The verb «*помогал*» presented some difficulty to less able candidates in the past tense bullet point and some candidates seemed to be unable to prepare a response to this prompt. The future tense fourth bullet point allowed candidates to present a good and expanded response about future plans. The unpredictable element caused some difficulty to less able candidates who either did not understand «*важное*» or could not come up with a response to the concept of the importance of «*зарплата*».

HP9

This photograph task allowed candidates a good opportunity to describe people and clothes and make reference to music events. Some candidates spent a lot of time in describing many of the people in the picture and did not refer to the event. Many candidates had an opinion on the topic of music festivals and could communicate this well. The past tense element allowed candidates to talk about a festival that they had attended and there was reference to film, literary and careers festivals as well as music events. The future tense prompt was well prepared generally. The unpredictable element presented some difficulty to some candidates who seemed to understand half of the prompt. «*Свободное время с друзьями*» was understood by many candidates but the concept of «*дорого стоит*» was ignored by a significant number.

HP10

The theme of environmental issues was generally well done by many candidates who encountered this picture. There was a good range of description of the picture with good knowledge of transport and transport problem vocabulary. Many candidates

could give clear opinions on the topic of «**городском транспорте**». The past tense element showed good understanding of «**ехал**» and candidates could also talk about the future element of learning to drive. Some less able responses did not expand on the idea of «**загрязнение**» and other candidates simply referenced the pros and cons of living in town.

Conversation

Conversations were generally well conducted and there was evidence of well-prepared candidates who could participate in impressive conversations which were led by candidates. This allows candidates to access the whole mark scheme anticipated for higher tier. Most teacher-examiners conducted this part of the exam sympathetically and encouraged candidates to participate. Teacher-examiners must familiarise themselves with the timings given within the specification. The Higher conversation should last between 5 and 6 minutes. The introduction by the candidate should not exceed one minute. Some centres elongated the conversation to make up the total time of the whole examination when the role-play and picture-based task took less time than suggested in the specification. This should not be done; the conversation has discrete timings. Examiners stop marking at the end of the candidate's response after 6 minutes of the higher conversations. Any material beyond that cannot be considered for assessment. Centres are reminded that in the conversation task, there are two themes tested, the first chosen by the candidate and the second by Pearson according to the sequencing grid. Candidates may give a presentation of up to one minute on their chosen theme and each theme should be of roughly equal length. The first theme showed evidence of more than half the time in several cases. This leads to insufficient time spent on the Pearson chosen theme in some centres. This may affect marks awarded as the conversation is marked globally and examiners take into consideration performances across both themes. The purpose of the presentation is to allow candidates to begin the conversation confidently and the follow-up discussion that allows them to explore this with the teacher-examiner in more detail before moving to a second theme. Candidates should not go through a list of pre learnt questions. Centres must ensure that both themes are well represented and accomplished equally. There

were a few occasions when candidates were asked to choose their second theme. This is not permitted. Successful examining was most evident when teacher-examiners used the presentation as a starting point, and the remaining time to follow-up on ideas given by the candidate, to probe further about the subject, and allow the candidate to take part in a spontaneous exchange. The task was often less successful where the presentation was followed by a sequence of well-rehearsed questions and answers. This did not allow candidates to access the higher mark bands as there is a need for spontaneity, interaction and an ability to deal with unpredictable questions within both themes. In these cases, teacher-examiners did not take the opportunities offered by the candidate to explore in more detail what had been said. Best practice demonstrated by well prepared centres is evident when the teacher- examiners respond to the answers of the candidates rather than having a pre-set list of questions which do not allow candidates the opportunity to take part in a truly spontaneous interaction, thus preventing them accessing the higher mark bands for Interaction and Spontaneity. Most successful examining was evident when teacher-examiners asked questions appropriate to the level of the candidate being examined, challenging the candidate by asking for further explanation of points made and tailoring their questions to the responses of the candidate thus promoting more spontaneous conversations. For candidates to access the higher mark bands they must also be given the opportunities to interact and to deal with unpredictable elements. Less confident candidates should have the opportunity to respond to more modest questions using language which they are able to manipulate rather than attempt questions that they do not understand or have the capacity to answer. There were occasions when less competent candidates were asked some very challenging questions where a simpler line of questioning would have instead enabled them to access higher marks for Communication and Content of Higher tier. There were occasions where teacher-examiners asked too many closed questions as well as candidates merely responding to an option of two choices in a response. There was some evidence of less successful examining when candidates were not given enough thinking time before teacher-examiners rephrased questions or moved on to another question. Within the mark schemes there is a need for candidates to be able to produce developed responses and extended sequences of speech to reach

the higher mark bands for Communication and Content. There should be evidence of using the language creatively to express thoughts, ideas and opinions and these appropriately justified with a range of vocabulary. More able candidates took opportunities to express a range of ideas and points of view and to demonstrate a range of more complex structures and vocabulary to reach the higher mark bands for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy. These structures and expectations are outlined in the grammar and structures and vocabulary sections in Appendices 2 and 3 of the specification. At Foundation tier limited manipulation of variety of straightforward structures and minimal use of complex structures can allow candidates to access the higher marks in the grid. This should include some successful references to past, present and future timeframes. It was clear that many centres and candidates are aware of the need to use the different time frames with good examples of tense usage as well as using more ambitious vocabulary and structures. It was clear that some candidates who had been entered for the higher tier of the exam could have achieved a more successful outcome at foundation tier. Teacher-examiners are to be encouraged to enter candidates for the tier relevant to their ability.

Administration

It is important that centres check their recordings before sending off the samples. There were cases where the candidates could not be heard clearly. There is a need for minimal background noise so that the candidate being examined can be clearly heard. It is also important that the recording favours the candidate rather than the examiner although both must be able to be heard.

There were many cases where there were difficulties in accessing recordings following the encryption of the USB. Some centres failed to send the examiner under separate cover the password and there were also incorrect passwords or problems with unlocking the USB due to the software used in the encryption. Centres are reminded that recordings should only be sent using USB sticks. It is important to check for compatibility and details of accepted digital formats (.mp3 (at least 192 kbit/s), .wav, .wma), these are listed in the Administrative support guide. There were a significant number of centres where USBs were incorrectly labelled and centres are kindly

reminded to include with the USBs the track list, giving details of the centre number, candidate name and number, language and series. Centres should check the labelling of the USB, especially where the software just details Track 1, Track 2 etc. These should be changed to reflect the correct labelling as indicated in The Administrative support guide. It also avoids confusion if details of the candidate name and number are announced clearly at the start of each speaking examination and the role-play number and picture-based discussion number are announced at the beginning of each task. The teacher-examiner should also announce the start of each theme in the conversation. It is not necessary to announce the specification, centre number and centre name before each candidate.

Centres are reminded that once the examination has started no English should be used during the examination to indicate the start and finish of the various components and this should be done in the target language. The Administrative support guide gives details of all requirements for the successful administration of the examination and centres are encouraged to read this well in advance of the examination.

Centres must ensure that the correct paper work is included and must have the signatures of the candidates as well as the teacher-examiner. Assessments cannot be marked without this information.