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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Russian (1RU0)

Paper 1H Listening and understanding in Russian

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Introduction

Generally, candidates coped well with the test types and topics, but some of the requirements proved challenging for candidates and the open-ended questions, requiring answers in English, proved daunting for less successful candidates. Candidates performed well across the paper as a whole and there were some excellent performances. There was evidence of some good listening and exam skills. Many candidates had used the five minutes reading time well (underlining key words in the title, rubric and questions, annotating questions), generally using the time to anticipate what they were about to hear. The questions that were intended to discriminate did so, all candidates understood enough, and felt confident enough, to attempt the whole paper. There were very few candidates who were unable to cope with the demands of the paper - the increase in difficulty as they progressed through did not lead any to give up.

Comments on individual questions.

Questions 1-4 are overlap questions found on both the 1F and 1H papers and included the two questions in Russian. At Higher level, performance on these questions was generally very good.

Questions 1 and 2 were in the target language and were tackled confidently. Candidates were generally more successful in answering Question 1, with 1 (a) and (b) being the most commonly correct and 1 (d) being the most challenging - knowledge of the words “матрёшка” and “плакат” were needed to understand that the answer was “сувениры”. Nearly all candidates clearly understood the rubric. Many were able to use linguistic clues or context to arrive at the correct answers.

Question 2 proved marginally more challenging. Candidates were required to insert names from a list given into sentences which paraphrased the information given on the recording. A very small number of candidates appeared not to understand the rubric for these two questions and attempted to answer with words outside the choices they were given.

Question 3 proved accessible to most candidates. Part 3(iii) relied on understanding inference. This multiple-choice question required careful listening to identify correct and incorrect choices for each part of the question and also the ability to process information.

Question 4 included one inference question and was well answered by all candidates.

Question 5 was multiple choice and was generally well done by candidates who listened to the whole passage. All questions required inference to be drawn. Candidates need to be aware that at this level, more than one choice will be heard, and that ticking an answer because they recognise a word may lead them to incorrect answers.

Question 8 was also multiple choice, part a (i, ii and iii) proving more accessible. As the level of English on the paper became more sophisticated, so did answering prove more challenging for a small number of candidates and part b appeared to be answered less well. Again, candidates needed to deduce the correct answers from what they heard.

Question 10 was testing candidates at Grade 9, therefore going beyond the old A* equivalent. Candidates can therefore expect the linguistic content and level of vocabulary - including words which are not on the vocabulary list - to be more sophisticated and challenging than in previous tests. The emphasis is on drawing inference from a relatively long extract and candidates are advised not to approach this question as a translation exercise. The level of sophistication of language in both the Russian text and the English statements was reflected in the results produced by candidates. Many candidates found it difficult to link statement 10 (i) C to the roles of “Подростки” and “Младшеклассники” in the passage, or the mention of “молодёжных клубов” and opted for answer B. Given the level of difficulty demanded of a Grade 9 question, most candidates coped very well, with few gaining no marks at all

As always, the open-ended questions requiring answers in English proved a good discriminator. There were some excellent performances from more successful candidates on these questions but they proved difficult for less successful candidates. Candidates’ responses often indicated they had understood the gist of the extracts, although lack of attention to detail cost some candidates marks. Only the most successful candidates were able to supply the detail and accuracy required at this level.

The incline in difficulty was evident. All candidates (provided they had answered in English) scored on all three questions and it is not possible to say with certainty, which of the questions proved most challenging. Where candidates did not understand the extract or the question, many either looked for single lexical items that might fit the question or came up with answers that weren’t in the extract. Some common items of vocabulary were not known or confused with other words. It should be borne in mind that Question 7 targets Grade 7 and Question 9 Grades 8/9, however, all candidates should be encouraged to attempt all questions. They should attempt, insofar as it is reasonable to do so, to provide plausible answers to the questions set. It should also be noted that although candidates do not need to answer exactly in the words used in the mark scheme, their answers do have to be unequivocally correct. Some candidates had obviously understood words from the text but had expressed their answers in such a way that they were ambiguous or clearly incorrect.

In Question 6, which was generally very well answered, “на юге” was not widely known. Question 6d required candidates to have understood the idea that there was a variety of music on offer and that there was separate entertainment available for adults and children to gain each mark.

Question 7 had a number of familiar topics at its root, but lack of attention to detail and lack of precision again cost candidates marks. In Question 7a, the answer was “thousands” not “a thousand”. Marked could not be credited in Question 7d for candidates who answered, “They had a fun day”. The word “весело” had been understood, but the question required inference for the correct answer.

Question 9 was generally well answered. 9a (ii) proved the most problematic, in terms of candidates being able to express their answer in clear, comprehensible English.

For this paper, candidates need to:

- carefully read the questions
- be able to understand the questions in Russian and look for linguistic clues
- recognise familiar language in unfamiliar contexts
- listen to the whole rather than focus in on individual items of vocabulary
- recognise the use of negation
- recognise the use of tenses and time indicators
- pay attention to detail, give full rather than partial answers
- have a sound knowledge of vocabulary
- express themselves clearly and unambiguously when writing in English and relate their answers to what is heard in the extract
- apply logic
- read over and correct their answers

