# Examiners' Report
# Principal Examiner Feedback

# November 2021

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Russian (1RU0)
Paper 4H Writing in Russian

**Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications**

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

**Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere**

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

**Introduction**

Candidates were assessed on their ability to communicate effectively through writing in Russian.

Candidates needed to communicate effectively in writing for a variety of purposes across a range of specified contexts; to write short texts, using simple sentences and familiar language accurately to convey meaning and exchange information; to produce clear and coherent text of extended length to present facts and express ideas and opinions appropriately for different purposes and in different settings; to make accurate use of a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures, including some more complex forms, to describe and narrate with reference to past, present and future events; to manipulate the language, using and adapting a variety of structures and vocabulary with increasing accuracy and fluency for new purposes, including using appropriate style and register; to make independent, creative and more complex use of the language, as appropriate; to note down key points, express and justify individual thoughts and points of view, in order to interest, inform or convince; and to translate sentences and short texts from English into the Russian to convey key messages accurately and to apply grammatical knowledge of language and structures in context.

The assessment was out of 60 marks. Each question was set in a context drawn from the themes and topics from the Pearson specification. The assessment tasks featured general content that was familiar and accessible to all candidates. Candidates were required to produce responses of varying lengths and types to express facts, ideas and opinions in Russian.

The length of each response required and the complexity of language increased across the paper. Recommended word counts were specified for each question. Candidates were not penalised for writing more or fewer words than recommended in the word count or for going beyond the mandatory bullets.

One question was a translation of a short passage from English into Russian. All assessments were marked against assessment criteria. The instructions to candidates were all in Russian. The use of dictionaries was not permitted.

The assessment time was 1 hour and 25 minutes in length. The paper consisted of two questions and one translation from English into Russian.

Candidates had to answer all questions.

Question 1 had two options from which candidates had to select one. This question assessed candidates on their ability to convey information, narrate, express opinions, interest, and convince the reader about a certain point.

Candidates had to use the informal register.

This question was common to the Foundation tier.

Question 2 had two options from which candidates had to select one. This question assessed candidates on their ability to convey information, narrate, express and justify ideas and opinions, and interest or convince the reader.

Candidates had to use the formal register.

Question 3 was the translation question. Candidates were required to translate a short paragraph from English into Russian. The individual sentences were ordered by increasing level of difficulty.

## Question 1 (a)

This question addressed the theme of Identity and Culture and the sub heading of Who Am I? describing hobbies and interests. Candidates were given four bullet points within the context of an email to a friend about hobbies; they had to write 60-65 words of Russian. The question had to be answered using past, present and future time frames as well as giving an opinion of preference. This question was considerably more popular than Q1(b).

Many candidates found this question very accessible with clear evidence of use of tense and "*свободное время*" seemed to be a well recognised topic.

There were some quite lengthy descriptions of how a previous Saturday had been spent and this bullet point sometimes was more fully developed than the response to the other bullet points. Many candidates successfully wrote something about how they usually spend a spend time with their friends in answer to the second task. For the third bullet point some candidates failed to distinguish between the response and to that of the second bullet point. The final bullet point was well accomplished with candidates talking about plans for the end of the exams.

The most successful candidates restricted themselves to the recommended word count. Exceeding the word limit often increased the scope for error, ambiguity and irrelevance. There was also some good evidence of using the stimulus material with successful manipulation of verbs from second to first person.

## Question 1 (b)

This question addressed the theme of Future aspirations, study and work focusing on the topic of using languages beyond the classroom. Candidates were given four bullet points within the context of writing to a friend about languages; candidates were required to write 60-65 words of Russian. The question had to be answered using past, present and future time frames as well as giving an opinion.

This question was considerably less popular than Q1(a).

The bullet points were generally well understood. The first bullet point required candidates to write about which languages they know. Candidates developed this well with good reasons as to why they understood various languages. This helped to demonstrate successful comprehension of the bullet point.

The second point required candidates to talk about how they had sued a foreign language in the past. Many responded successfully and candidates successfully described visits abroad and to describe visits to family members in the Russian speaking world. The third point required an opinion on whether it is important to know languages. Many candidates wrote about the importance of English under this point. The fourth bullet point four was often answered well, with appropriate reference to future intention to speak a language with many candidates describing future study of language.

The most successful candidates restricted themselves to the recommended word count. Exceeding the word limit often increased the scope for error, ambiguity and irrelevance. There was also some good evidence of using the stimulus material with successful manipulation of verbs from second to first person. "*Прошлом*" and "*будущем*" were generally well understood.

### Question 2 (a)

This question addressed the theme of Future aspirations, study and work and the topic of
Ambitions with a focus on volunteering. Candidates were given four bullet points within the context of a letter to a volunteering organisation  convincing them to help with the finding of a suitable situation; they had to write 90-110 words of Russian. The question had to be answered using past, present and future time frames.

This question was considerably less more popular than Q2(b).

The first bullet point required candidates to explain what voluntary work interests them and the sphere. The second bullet point required explanation of the usefulness of voluntary work. The third point required candidates to talk about voluntary work that they had carried out in the past , although a larger number merely described work they had done with no reference to the voluntary element. The fourth bullet point required a description of how voluntary work will be helpful to future development.  Many of the candidates produced some excellent essays. They entered fully into the requirements of the question and succeeded in writing a highly convincing letter dealing with the bullet points. They displayed linguistic flair together with an exploration of interesting ideas, justification, logical argument and individual expression. However, some candidates struggled in balancing the requirements of the task and some candidates failed to  read the bullet points very carefully e.g. point 2 which required reference to voluntary work and not shop type work
. Candidates should bear in mind that more than 50% of the mark is for content and communication and the mark scheme stipulates that "top box" answers must "communicate detailed information related to the task" and "develop key points".  As such, it is difficult to produce first-rate answers that deal with a bullet point in the space of a single clause.

### Question 2(b)

This question addressed the theme of Local area, holiday and travel, and the topic of town, region and country with a focus on weather. Candidates were given four bullet points within the context of a Russian school's request for information about weather in the candidate's country; they had to write 90-110 words of Russian. The question had to be answered using past, present and future time frames.

This question was considerably more popular than Q2(a).

The first bullet point required candidates to talk about the typical weather of their home area. The second bullet point required a description of how candidates had spent time during a period of bad weather and this required demonstration of past tense. The third bullet point required candidates to discuss what they will do in their area in a future period of hot weather.  The fourth bullet point asked candidates to talk about the importance of knowing the weather forecast when preparing for a trip out.

The better responses demonstrated full response with a balanced approach to the four bullet points.  Candidates who dealt with the bullet points convincingly were clearly able to talk about past and future events and these bullet points allowed good demonstration of tenses with a good range of vocabulary.

Knowledge of weather vocabulary was impressive with more unusual vocabulary produced frequently.

Less convincing responses did not deal successfully with the second and third bullet points. In the second bullet a significant number did not use any past tense but described in the present how they spend time in bad weather. The total lack of any reference to past tense has significant impact on the application of marks for linguistic knowledge and accuracy as it is essential to prove competence of tenses. The same issue occurred in bullet point 3, with most managing to write about what they do in hot weather but failing to relate it to a future period of hot weather in use of future tense structures. Conditional tense was acceptable as an alternative to future plans.

### *Question 3*

This question addressed the theme of School, and the topic of rules and pressures. Candidates had to translate a paragraph from English to Russian. A significant number achieved full marks, and a pleasing number achieved marks in the top category; the meaning of the passage was fully communicated, and the language and structures were consistently accurate, with errors not hindering clarity.

Vocabulary items which commonly caused problems included 'rules', 'unhappy', and 'essay'. Some words which were often omitted included 'my', and 'so'. Grammatical structures which caused some problems included the use of the modal ('had to'), the past perfect ('used') and the impersonal structure of have ('I will not have').

On the whole, most candidates at least attempted to translate most words, and were able to communicate some of the key ideas without major ambiguity.

Candidates should note that marks are awarded holistically for this task and, if they are not sure of the exact translation of a given word, full marks can still be achieved if they are able to substitute a convincing Russian synonym. For example, "злой" would be a perfectly acceptable rendering of "не доволен" in this task.

### Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- answer the questions within the range of words which is suggested
- read the bullet points carefully and note which tense is required in your response
- write a separate paragraph for each bullet point, as this will help you check that you have covered all of them in detail
- think yourself into the scenario outlined in the instructions and only include material which is relevant to answering the question convincingly
- ensure that your handwriting is as neat as possible
- try to use a variety of grammatical structures

- try to vary the vocabulary you use and avoid repetition
- correct formation of verbs is essential in all questions
- write your answers on the correct pages of the answer booklet if you find that you have written, for example, part of Q2(b) on the page for Q2(a), then please write a brief note so that the examiner (who only sees one question at a time) is aware of this and can take the necessary action
- in Q3, try and translate every word, including what might appear minor words
- try to include near alternatives for vocabulary or structures that you are unsure of in question 3
- care must be taken to write in Cyrillic and not include Latin letters - e.g. u for у, t for т, s for с.  These were the most common
- to access the higher marks there needs to be consistently effective development of all bullet points and creative use of language
- for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy, to access the higher marks, language must be consistently accurate, with several successful examples of each tense, as well as a wide variety of grammatical structures.