Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE in Russian
(5RU02/01)
Paper 2: Speaking in Russian

GCSE Russian
Unit 2: Speaking
Examiner Report

Foreword

Overall, the examining team was pleased to see many examples of well-prepared candidates being well examined and some very good candidate performances in the last examination session of the current specification 5RU02. Large centres with mostly learner candidates tended to demonstrate the best practice in terms of preparing and examining their candidates effectively, as well as in adhering to the correct administrative procedures for the examination, although a good number of smaller centres or those with native-speaker candidates only also demonstrated good practice. The centres whose candidates performed best were those who understood the crucial role of the Teacher-Examiner as a facilitator in allowing candidates to access the full range of the mark scheme by asking appropriate questions that elicit a full range of tenses (top marks will not be awarded for either task unless examples are heard of a range of tenses) and by ensuring that the candidates themselves are well aware of the mark scheme's requirements. Candidates who understood the importance of taking the initiative and developing more extended answers that included justified opinions, as well as of ensuring that a verb was always used in the answer, were best placed to perform well. Where candidates did not perform well or their performance was restricted, this was most often due to Teacher-Examiners not asking appropriate questions or not conducting the examination according to the instructions laid out in the Specification or in Pearson's I.C.E document or training video for conducting the oral exams (both available via the Edexcel website www.edexcel.com). Specific advice on these areas is also offered later in this report.

Task 1

For Task 1, the presentation with follow-up questions was once again the most popular choice of task type. The vast majority of candidates opting for *Media, Travel and Culture* for Task 1 chose to give a presentation about their holidays. This worked well as a topic choice, allowing plenty of room for opinions and justifications, as well as providing plenty of opportunity to elicit time frames through follow-up questions on future holiday plans and opinions about holidays and travel in general. A number of candidates also chose to talk about a celebrity under this topic area, which also worked well in many cases, although Teacher-Examiners had to be a little more creative in ensuring that all the time frames were given adequate coverage. Candidates opting for the picture-based discussion under *Media, Travel and Culture* mainly based their discussion upon a picture of them on holiday.

Most candidates opting for *Sport, Leisure and Work* for task 1 selected Hobbies or Free Time as the broad basis for their task, with some excellent presentations being heard on candidates' hobbies and a number of picture-based discussions centring around images of the candidate taking part in their favourite sport. These topics again lent themselves well to eliciting opinions and to covering the range of tenses. **Unfortunately, a number of centres once again prepared their candidates to discuss the topic of School Life. This is not a topic for**

this specification and centres who prepared their candidates to discuss this topic were placing their candidates at a considerable disadvantage, as irrelevant material cannot be given credit.

Task 2

Some very pleasing performances were also heard for Task 2, the general conversation. Candidates were able to undertake conversations and express ideas and opinions on a range of topics, with the best candidates showing considerable initiative in responding to open questions and the most effective Teacher-Examiners ensuring that complex language, a range of tenses and a number of justified opinions were elicited from the candidate. Where candidates were less successful on this section, in many cases this was the result of Teacher-Examiners using exclusively closed questions, which did not allow candidates enough opportunity to show initiative and extension in their answers. Although this task is intended to be a conversation, some examiners spoke too much themselves, either by asking very long questions or giving their own opinions or answers to the questions; this often disadvantaged the candidate, as it led to a reduction in the amount of language a candidate could produce in the allotted time

While the majority of centres' preparation of candidates, conduct of the exam and completion of the associated administration was excellent, a disappointingly high number of centres continued to make serious errors of both conduct and administration, in many cases with very serious consequences for their candidates.

• Candidates had to complete **two** tasks, each lasting 4-5 minutes. Timing started from the first utterance from the candidate. The first task had to be a picture-based discussion **or** presentation with follow-up discussion, the second had to be a general discussion on a chosen topic area. The second task should not have included any form of presentation by candidates, but should have been a dialogue throughout. Centres should note that this unit was **not** a Controlled Assessment unit and that the two tasks should have been recorded as a single assessment.

• Tests should have lasted a **total** of 8-10 minutes, with the time divided **equally** between the two tasks. Tasks lasting less than the minimum 4 minutes were likely to disadvantage the candidate; for excessively long tasks, examiners were instructed to stop listening after the maximum 5 minutes.

• The beginning and end of **each** task should have been announced (in **English**), but the recording should **not** have been stopped until the entire assessment is complete.

• Each task was assessed **separately** for Content and Response, Range of Language and Accuracy. As such, candidates had to fulfil the requirements of the mark scheme in **each** task in order to gain full marks. For example, candidates failing to use a range of tenses in each task would not be able to score full marks. Equally, candidates should have given and justified a range of ideas and opinions in **each** task.

• Teacher-Examiners should have ensured that appropriate topics were selected for each task. **'School', for example, was not an appropriate topic area in its own right**, although examiners accepted that a **brief** discussion of school might be an appropriate lead-in to a discussion of future employment plans. Where an inappropriate topic such as 'school' was discussed for an entire task or a significant portion of a task, candidates were unlikely to be able to score highly.

• Centres should note that, while candidates were free to choose the broad topic area for the general conversation, **the focus of the conversation should NOT be known to them in advance** and **standard sequences of questions should not be used** in the assessment or rehearsed in advance.

• Where candidates undertook a picture-based discussion, a copy of the picture used should have accompanied the examination materials submitted.

• Centres should have ensured that a **Mark Record Sheet** (available from the Edexcel website), with Section A **appropriately completed,** accompanied the recording of each candidate. A clear indication should have been made as to whether each task was on the topic of 'Media, travel and culture' or 'Sport, leisure and work'. Centres should **not** have completed Section B – this was for use by the Edexcel-appointed examiner.

• Material should be sent to examiners promptly and should include a completed attendance register. Centres should always check that all candidates have been successfully recorded before submitting their materials. This includes finalising audio CDs after burning, so that they can be played on a normal CD player. If possible, encryption should not be used for USB sticks, as the examiners will not have access to any encryption codes. **It is good practice for centres to retain a copy of candidates' recordings, in case of CDs / memory sticks breaking in transit.**

• When recording candidates, centres should ensure that outside noise is kept to a minimum and that, if an external microphone is used, it favours the candidate rather than the Teacher-Examiner.

In view of the new specification for first examination in 2019, centres are reminded of the importance of ensuring that both teacher-examiners and candidates are fully aware of the new timings, guidelines and topics. This is particularly important for any centres where Russian is not a subject on the main school curriculum.

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