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Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Greek (4GK1) Paper 02: Writing

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Introduction

The Pearson Edexcel International GCSE in Greek (First Language) consists of two externally-examined papers: Paper 1, 4GK1/1: Reading, Summary and Grammar, 60% of the qualification, and Paper 2, 4GK1/2: Writing, 40% of the qualification. There are ten topic areas tested across both papers and new test types have been introduced, in addition to extended writing responses, which test summary, comprehension and grammar skills. This was the first summer that this new specification was examined and awarded.

Paper 4GK1/02, Writing is an externally assessed written examination of 1 hour and 30 minutes. Total marks for this paper are 50. The content of this unit is informed by the following 10 topic areas:

- A. Youth matters
- B. Education
- C. Media
- D. Culture
- E. Sport and leisure
- F. Travel and tourism
- G. Business, work and employment
- H. Environment
- I. Health
- J. Technology

This unit consists of three questions. The three titles will include the following purposes: to argue, to narrate, to describe, to persuade, to inform, to explain.

In this paper, students are required to convey their understanding of Greek through two pieces of continuous writing. They are advised to write between 300 and 350 words for each title. The number of words is approximate and students will not be penalised for writing more or fewer words than recommended in the word count, provided that their responses are pertinent, purposeful and within the scope of the question.

Students are required to choose two extended-response writing tasks, which are worth 25 marks each. The forms of writing could include: a discursive essay, a narrative, a description, a letter, an article, an email, a speech or an information leaflet. Irrespective of language skills, a response cannot be deemed satisfactory, if it fails to show a clear focus on the purpose and appropriacy with regard to the intended audience. For a student to gain marks in this paper, evidence of accuracy of language must

be accompanied by good organization of the main thesis/ideas, relevance to the task and focus on the purpose and intended reader(s). In general, students must demonstrate the following skills:

- Communicate meaning effectively in written language in a variety of forms, genres and styles.
- Focus writing on a particular purpose and audience
- Write imaginatively, using a variety of techniques
- Use a wide range of suitable vocabulary
- Use accurate spelling
- Employ a variety of sentence structures for effect
- Structure their work effectively
- Use complex structures
- Use the rules of grammar to create effect, variety and interest.

Recommended time for each task: 45 minutes.

The students who sat this new examination performed well. They were able to communicate a range of relevant points and show clear focus on the task and the intended reader, particularly in question 1. Many were able to score highly from the top bands of the response criteria for Communication and Content (15 marks total) and Accuracy and Application of Language (10 marks total)

Question 1

Question 1 required that students describe convincingly and with enough variety and interest a place that they love spending time in, during the summer months. The bullet point included were suggestive, not prescriptive and were meant to help students compose an answer that contained relevant details that could assist in structuring a response that transitioned well from the description of a favourite place and its unique features, to one's personal feelings and impressions about it, as well as to provide information for those who may wish to visit.

The majority of the students chose this question and performance was generally successful. Students scored from the top bands of the assessment criteria and wrote relevant, albeit not always interesting, descriptions. Those who score highly managed to create the sense of a unique place, avoiding platitudes and descriptions that could apply to any place (especially places by the sea). What distinguished very successful performances from satisfactory ones was a personal, emotive aspect that linked the description to personal experiences, feelings and occasionally the people in it.

The level of language was consistently high, with occasional errors in spelling and a tendency to stay with secure, high frequency vocabulary.

Question 2

Question 2 required that students write a speech in which they try to persuade their fellow students to participate in a specific charity event. Again, the bullet points were not prescriptive but were offered to the students as structural devices and talking points. Those who employed these bullet points in order to organise a response around them generally scored higher than those who did not.

This was the least popular choice out of the three and students who scored highly in this question constructed a response that captured the tone of an oral address that aimed to persuade and inform. They wrote employing the correct register directed at one's fellow students, with an appropriate combination of an informal register with the gravity of the subject. Those whose performance was not satisfactory relied on generalisations and did not adequately describe the type of charity and the type of involvement expected. For someone to be persuaded to do something, i.e. take part in a charity event, they need to be in possession of certain details, including time, place, name of charity and what kind of involvement is expected. This is where the bullet points can prove particularly helpful to students, as they delineate the information that needs to be conveyed in tasks that are focused on persuasion.

Question 3

Question 3 invited students to inform and explain to a newspaper editor the steps that are needed, in order to help the environment in the area where they live. The nature of the piece determined a more formal register and a focus on local environmental problems. A pattern of unsuccessful performance was characterised by the absence of these two elements. Answers which focused on global issues and failed to describe the issues affecting the particular place, where the writer lives, did not score very highly. The more specific the explanation of environmentally friendly acts, the higher the students' score. Answers that adopted the correct register and laid out a fully comprehensive and detailed recommendation, sharply focused on the purpose (to explain and inform) and to the intended reader(s) gained marks from the top tiers of the assessment criteria.

This was the second most popular choice and performance showed that students were well-versed in this topic. Occasionally, though, their prior knowledge and training influenced the treatment of the subject and led them to offer lengthy descriptions about climate change and world-wide environmental problems and devote little space to what was the main focus of the task, i.e. "οι ιδέες σας για την περιβαλλοντική αναβάθμιση της περιοχής σας".

Conclusive remarks

All in all, performance in this examination series was good.

In general, teachers and students who embark on teaching and studying this qualification should take note of the following advice:

- ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for the students to writing for specific purposes and readers under timed conditions
- be aware of the different assessment objectives to ensure that the focus of the questions and the answers relate to the specification requirements
- write succinctly but comprehensively and use the recommended wordage and bullet points as yardsticks of successful performance
- use language imaginatively, persuasively, to interest or to inform and describe, without neglecting to also use a range of complex structures accurately
- allow time to proof-read writing responses in order to achieve the highest possible degree of accuracy
- read all instructions carefully
- indicate the position of the stress, where needed; this is not optional.