

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCE

GCE O Level Modern Greek (7615)

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Contents

7615 Examiner's Report	5
Statistics	7

O Level Modern Greek 7615

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General Comments

A good number of the candidates who sat the June 2007 examination in Modern Greek performed very well and provided good translations, both from English into Greek and vice versa. Question 3 provoked pertinent and interesting accounts and there was evidence of good language skills in most essays. There was, however, a number of responses that displayed minimal knowledge of English and as a result, left a significant part of the exam paper unanswered or handled inadequately. As the O level in Modern Greek is largely examined through the medium of English and 60% of the final mark is reserved for translation, fluency in Modern Greek ought to be accompanied by sufficient knowledge of English, in order for the candidates to achieve a satisfactory grade.

This year there was noticeable improvement regarding rubric and wordage restrictions. A small number of candidates ignored the rules of the Greek alphabet and the conventions of the stress system. Consequently, they were penalized. Candidates are reminded that the position of the stress ought to be indicated, where necessary, with the appropriate diacritic. Circles and stars are not acceptable alternatives of the stress mark. Moreover, Greek letters ought to be rendered appropriately and not substituted by their equivalent Latin characters as, for example, “t” and “u” cannot replace the Greek characters “τ “ and “ υ“. Candidates are also reminded that sloppiness, messy writing and carelessness regarding the presentation of their responses ultimately work to their disadvantage.

Comments on individual questions are as follows:

Question 1a and 1b

Many answers showed evidence of fluency and satisfactory awareness of grammar and syntax. Question 1b proved, by far, more popular as many found the subject matter dear to their heart. Familiarity with the subject matter, however, had some negative repercussions as some candidates ignored the content of the source text and filled in gaps using their knowledge of Ronaldinho’s biography. There were some instances of literal renditions of idiomatic expressions and mother tongue interference and most candidates seemed more challenged by the intricacies of grammar, rather than vocabulary.

The most frequent patterns relating to errors are as follows:

(i) With regard to Tenses, a number of students seemed to lack sufficient knowledge of the principal parts of verbs, especially when it came to irregular verbs.

1(a)

- The Simple Past Tense of the verb "to be born" proved beyond the grasp of many candidates. «Γεννήθηκα», was often rendered as “I birthed” or “I born”, instead of “I was born”.
- The irregular past of the verb “to send” was sometimes rendered as “sended”, instead of “sent”.

- When a small number of candidates attempted to translate «είχε δώσει», the Past Perfect of the verb “to give” was often wrongly replaced by Simple Past or, when the Past Perfect was employed, the past participle was “gived” instead of “given”. A similar pattern was adopted with the translation of «είχε σκεφτεί» and «μόλις είχαν βγει».
- As the majority of the text refers to Ronaldinho’s habits and routines, the Simple Present would be the appropriate Tense to translate expressions such as:
«παίζει ποδόσφαιρο» (plays football)
«αγκαλιάζει» (hugs)
«χαμογελά» (smiles)
- «Γεννημένος» was not always conveyed as “born”.

(ii) With regard to Vocabulary, the following seemed to pose difficulty.

- «κυριακάτικη» was sometimes translated as “Cypriot” or “Saturday”
- «πτώση» was often rendered as “increase”, instead of “decrease” or “drop”
- «ηλιοβασίλεμα» was surprisingly confused with “sunrise”
- «υπακούει» was often mistaken for «ακούει» and translated as “hears”
- «μπορεί να λένε» was often rendered as “are able to say”
- «καθαρό» was sometimes translated as “clear” instead of clean, when it came to «καθαρό παιχνίδι»; similarly, when it came to «καθαρό ορίζοντα», many opted for “clean”, instead of “clear”.

Even though many responses were not always entirely successful, they yielded results which, despite their awkwardness, betrayed that the candidate had some control over the meaning of the passage.

Question 2

Most candidates gained high marks in this section. They produced competent translations and there were very few grammatical inaccuracies. Despite evidence of occasional errors, the translations usually read well and communicated the sense of the source text correctly. There were a few instances of wrong use of vocabulary, but generally the language communicated well and grammatical lapses were rare. The challenges that confronted a small number of candidates were mainly restricted to vocabulary and did not affect the communicative efficiency of the translations seriously.

Certain patterns relating to errors were as follows:

- The phrase “nothing in this book can maintain your interest” was more often than not translated without the essential double negative as, «τίποτα σου τραβά το ενδιαφέρον», instead of «τίποτα δεν σου τραβά το ενδιαφέρον»
- “shelves” was very often translated as “sleeves” instead of “shelves”
- “Deadlines” proved to be quite a challenge for the majority of candidates. Very few opted for the appropriate «προθεσμίες» or «διορίεις» and offered instead «ημερομηνίες λήξης» or «νεκρές γραμμές».

Question 3

Candidates used a wide range of vocabulary and employed complex structures and idiom in order to respond to the question. There was a preference for the topics concerning friendship, the transition from primary to secondary school and the environment. Very few candidates chose to write on the importance of literature or the behaviour of today's youth.

There was a very refreshing pattern of candidates sticking to the prescribed word limit and providing mostly pertinent and coherent accounts of their ideas and experience. There were very few lapses into irrelevance and the kind of digression that is evidence of a pre-learned essay. Most candidates wrote with satisfactory variety and gave fluent and confident accounts and descriptions of their chosen topics.

With regard to 1(a), a number of candidates failed to focus on evaluating their school experience and wrote largely descriptive accounts of life in either primary school or secondary school, without comparing the two.

In certain cases, careless reading of the rubric in 1(b) meant that students wrote about the merits of a good friendship or the things they usually enjoy with their friends, instead of addressing the specifics of the question.

One observation which ought to be taken seriously by the candidates concerns the presentation of their work. Many candidates presented essays that were hardly legible, the writing not only being hard to read but also marked by smudges and asterisks and words being crossed out over and over again. It would be a courtesy to the examiners on the part of the candidates to take some extra care when writing this exam paper.

Statistics

7615 Grade Boundaries

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
	71	57	44	39	32

Notes

Maximum Mark (Raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

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