



Oral Component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral examination consists of a seven-minute Conversation, followed by a one-minute introduction of the student's Detailed Study and a seven-minute Discussion on the Detailed Study. Although the criteria for assessing the Conversation and Discussion are essentially the same, the tasks are different.

The Conversation section is based on familiar topics designed to test the students' ability to speak Russian in a linguistically and culturally appropriate way. A very high standard was achieved, and students demonstrated thorough preparation for the exam.

The Discussion tests the students' skills in presenting and exchanging ideas, opinions and information. This year most students were well prepared, able to carry on the discussion and present their ideas and opinions.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Criterion 1: capacity to maintain and advance the exchange

- capacity to link with assessors
- effectiveness of communication and repair strategies
- degree of support necessary to maintain the exchange

The majority of students demonstrated a good capacity to link with the assessors and kept the conversation flowing, using effective repair strategies and requiring minimal support. Some students limited themselves to yes/no or other very short answers that made it difficult for them to be involved in the conversation.

Criterion 2: relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

- relevance of information and ideas
- range of information and ideas
- capacity to support/elaborate on ideas/opinions with reasons and examples/evidence/new ideas

Overall, students had thoroughly prepared themselves for possible questions and answers and could express their point of view confidently and elaborate on the given topic. However, a few students relied on heavily rote-learned conversation, which limited their ability to address some of the assessors' questions logically. Students should be better prepared for a natural exchange of ideas.

Criterion 3: accuracy of vocabulary and grammar

Students should learn the correct vocabulary and grammar. Common mistakes included the following.

Anglicisms, use of English sentence structures

- Беру/Делаю предметы
- Вырастают детей
- Она образовалась
- Я не знаю, если я хотела
- Татуирование

Endings

- Занимаюсь русский
- Дороги ведут
- Ненавию

Agreement

- Влияние для детей
- Звонит на телефон

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- Занимаюсь художественной гимнастики

Style

- Ихние
- Маленько

Register

- Ты/Вы

Stress

- Земл'ю

Criterion 4: range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

- variety of vocabulary and grammar
- appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar to the context, audience and purpose of the task

Most students demonstrated a good knowledge of style and register and a good range of vocabulary, using structures and expressions accurately and appropriately. It would be an advantage if students extended their range of vocabulary beyond simple, everyday language.

Criterion 5: clarity of expression

- pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo

As in previous years, many students tend to use English intonation patterns when speaking Russian. Correct stress and pronunciation are still an issue.

Section 2 – Discussion

In some instances there was a need for greater originality and depth of topics chosen and thorough research by students. A number of students present the same topic year after year, 'The hardship of young children in rural Russia before the October revolution', despite the fact that students are repeatedly advised that they would benefit significantly if they chose a topic that interests them. The topics should be thoroughly researched by the students themselves rather than pre-learned and rehearsed in class. Rote-learned material does not allow them to address the assessors' questions adequately, to come to their own conclusions, draw comparisons, or express opinions and evaluate the situation, and therefore they cannot be fully engaged in the discussion. For example, the students used the same language and answers structured in a certain pattern. However, many students used a variety of resources, including visual aids.

Some of the sub-topics chosen by students this year were:

- Сохранение русской культуры и языка в иммиграции
- Что поддерживало солдат в войне
- Русские традиции и обряды
- Отечественная война - битва под Москвой
- Петербург-сердце русской культуры
- Отражение жизни в искусстве (Кустодиев, Чайковский)
- История русского рока

Criterion 6: capacity to maintain and advance the exchange

- capacity to link with assessors
- effectiveness of communication and repair strategies
- degree of support necessary to maintain the exchange

As in previous years, the majority of topics for discussion were appropriate to the students' level. Only a few students struggled to effectively participate in the discussion, as they heavily relied on their rote-learned material.

Criterion 7: capacity to present information, ideas and opinions on a chosen topic

- capacity to support/elaborate on ideas/opinions with reasons/examples/evidence/new ideas



In general, the students presented the information confidently and were able to support their answers with examples and evidence. Many students researched their sub-topics very well and were able to present different aspects of the issue. Some results for this section were affected by students' lack of research and their inability to analyse the resources.

Criterion 8: accuracy of vocabulary and grammar

Some of the common mistakes are listed below.

Agreement

- Прыгнут через костра
- Он хотел попасть в олимпиадах

Word formation

- Он научил русский язык

Style

- Ихние

Anglicisms

- Я взяла инфомацию

Criterion 9: range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

- variety of vocabulary and grammar
- appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar to the context, audience and purpose of the task

Teachers should draw the students' attention to the following categories, as these are all areas that need improvement:

- agreement
- cases
- anglicisms
- sentence structure.

Criterion 10: clarity of expression

The majority of students did not experience difficulties with stress and pronunciation. However, all students should practise unknown words in advance.

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The results of the first two sections of the written exam, Listening and responding and Reading and responding, were better than in the final section, Writing in Russian. Students' writing skills need to be further developed.

Teachers should emphasise the conventions of different text types and kinds of writing, as students consistently failed to identify the correct features of the text type that they had chosen. Students should be able to identify the tone, register, context, purpose and the audience. Underdeveloped writing skills often prevented students from expressing their ideas and opinions, thus limiting their responses and general performance.

Teachers should encourage students to practise more imaginative writing. Although it might appear to be an easy task, results show that it was more challenging than expected.



SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A – Answer in English

Text 1

Question 1a.

Both of:

- the 170th anniversary of Pushkin's death in the duel
- the opening of the new Pushkin House.

Most students handled the question very well.

Question 1b.

Either of:

- a meeting place for admirers of the Russian language and culture
- a cultural centre.

Question 1c.

Educational activities	Entertainment activities
Any two of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• seminars• conferences• exhibitions• evening Russian school.	Both of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• concerts• film screenings.

A few students struggled to identify 'exhibition' as an educational activity and placed it in the entertainment category.

Text 2

Question 2a.

Take him to the mountains with you.

Question 2b.

Any three of:

- does not whine and whinge
- is gloomy and angry but keeps going
- when you fall off the cliff, he moans but holds you up
- follows you as if to a battle
- stands on the summit with you intoxicated.

The majority of students performed well in comprehending the questions and were able to answer these questions, which were based on the lyrics of a song.

Text 3

Question 3a.

Hand-made presents, because:

- they did not have pocket money
- shopping was not allowed by etiquette.

Only a few students failed to attempt this question.

Question 3b.

Both of:

- the room was full of Christmas trees
- there was a little table with presents next to each tree.

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The majority of students received at least one mark for this question.

Question 3c.

Both of:

- Christmas trees were allocated to staff
- staff were handed Christmas decorations as the children dismantled the Christmas trees.

Not all students were able to answer this question correctly.

Question 3d.

Both of:

- the Tsar's decorations were expensive and imported from Germany
- the general public made their own decorations.

A few students addressed only the first part of the question and divided the answer, therefore receiving only one mark.

Part B – Answer in Russian

Text 4

Question 4a.

Natalya believes that happiness depends on time management in order to balance a happy family, a job and an interesting hobby.

All students responded well to this question.

Question 4b.

Many men died during the wars, especially WWII.

Text 5

Question 5a.

Both of:

- he compares the loss of a mobile phone to the loss of a wallet
- he claims that the SMS addiction is stronger than addiction to cigarettes.

Question 5b.

Any three of:

- people forget how to talk intimately
- people can no longer express their feelings
- people become uncompassionate and indifferent to others
- loneliness
- detachment.

This was one of the most difficult questions for students. Most of them mixed up symptoms of the disease with its consequences.

Section 2 – Reading and Responding

Part A – Answer in English

Text 6

Question 6a.

Both of:

- they were navigators and merchants
- they needed to keep record of the goods.

Question 6b.

Any of:

- it was economical/simpler
- it alleviated difficulties in mastering reading and writing.

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Some students were not able to identify the advantages of the alphabet.

Question 6c.

Both of:

- all languages can be broken into a limited number of characteristic sounds
- most languages have between 25 and 35 such sounds.

Question 6d.

Jewish, Aramaic and Arabic written languages	Greek written language
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retained the ancient direction, from right to left• No vowels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changed the direction, from left to right• Added vowels

Students generally received at least two marks, with most students receiving full marks for this question.

Question 6e.

Either of:

- as easy as A and B
- as easy as ABC.

Text 7

Question 7a.

Both of:

- it will make the production of protein easier
- the new medicine will be cheaper.

Question 7b.

All of:

- it is a natural antibiotic/protects from infections
- it can be used to treat cancer
- it prolongs the life of raw meat.

The majority of students handled this challenging question well.

Question 7c.

Both of:

- not everyone can tolerate the protein produced by chickens
- chickens are more prone to disease/goats are less prone to disease.

Question 7d.

It is not an ordinary egg – it contains protein for medical purposes.

Some students provided a direct translation of the text title rather than interpreting its meaning.

Question 7e.

Kind of writing – informative

Feature (any of):

- conveys information clearly, comprehensively and accurately
- is in an objective style, with impersonal expressions
- has no particular point of view to convey
- uses facts, examples, explanations, analogies and statistical information
- the language, structure and sequence make the message clear and unambiguous
- there are few adjectives and adverbs.

Although many students recognised the informative kind of writing, some were unable to identify a typical feature.



Part B – Answer in Russian

The criteria used when assessing performance in this section were the students' ability to:

- understand general and specific aspects of a text by identifying, analysing and responding to information
- convey information coherently (structure, sequence, accuracy and variety of vocabulary and sentence structure) and appropriately (relevance, use of conventions of the text type).

All students addressed the task successfully; however, a few students did not structure their answer in the form of a personal diary entry.

Section 3– Writing in Russian

The criteria used to assess performance in this section were:

- relevance and depth of treatment of ideas, information, or opinions
- accuracy and range of vocabulary and sentence structures
- the capacity to structure and sequence responses
- the capacity to use conventions of the text type.

In general, students need to be aware of the characteristics of the text types which they may be expected to produce in this section of the examination. In addition, students need to have a sound knowledge of the main characteristics of the five different kinds of writing: personal, imaginative, persuasive, evaluative and informative.

Question 9

This was the least popular question, with only a few students attempting it. Those who did attempt the question failed to provide sufficient evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of the different means of transportation.

Question 10

Not all students demonstrated familiarity with the features of this text type – a persuasive invitation.

Question 11

This proved to be the most popular question; however, most students did not demonstrate adequate the ability to write an informative article, focusing instead on their personal experience.

Question 12

Many students chose this question, perhaps because they thought an imaginative story was an easy way out; however, many students did not perform successfully.