



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 of the Detailed Study. The criteria for assessing the Conversation and the Discussion are essentially the same, but the tasks are different.

The Conversation section is based on very 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 examination.

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

Overall, students performed according to the standard required, expressing their ideas on familiar situations (family, school, friends, interests and aspirations). Students demonstrated a good capacity to link with assessors. Most of them kept the conversation flowing, using effective repair strategies and requiring minimal support.

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

This year the students prepared themselves for possible questions and answers thoroughly and could express their point of view confidently and elaborate on the given topic.

Criterion 3: accuracy of vocabulary and grammar

The students expressed their ideas using appropriate grammar and varied vocabulary. Style and register were observed and most students were able to self-correct. Common mistakes included the following.

Mistake type	Examples
Anglicisms, use of English sentence structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Взяло время• Делать математику• Роковая банда (rock band)• Хороший с людьми
Word formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Инженерия (engineering)• Работоустройство



Mistake type	Examples
Incorrect use of word	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Доверенность к друзьям (вместо 'доверие') Люблю провожать время (вместо 'проводить') Спрашивал себя вопросы (вместо 'задавал себе') Не поспеваешь (вместо 'не успеваешь')
Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> За нее скучаю Ничего не учатся Играть в компьютер
Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ихний Играюсь
Register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Дурацкая затея Жутко говорить

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

A good knowledge of style and register and a good range of vocabulary were demonstrated. A few students used proverbs and set phrases appropriately such as 'Лучше позже, чем никогда' and 'Жду ответа, как соловей лета'.

Criterion 5: clarity of expression

- pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo

Even though students experienced a few problems with pronunciation, stress and tempo, teachers are advised to focus on Russian intonation patterns. Many students tended to use English intonation patterns when speaking Russian, for instance, using rising intonation at the end of affirmative sentences.

Section 2 – Discussion

In 2009 the range of topics chosen by students and teachers was very wide and interesting. Topics were thoroughly researched. Most students used more than three sources of information. They used books, articles, songs, films and pictures, which helped them to express a good range of ideas and opinions. Individual approaches were also of great benefit. Students were able to address the assessors' questions, come to their own conclusions, draw comparisons and evaluate the situation, and therefore be fully engaged in the discussion.

Some of the topics and sub-topics chosen by students this year included the following.

The Environment

- Сохранение природы в Казахстане
- Сохранение красоты Земли

Art

- Владимир Высоцкий - народный певец, поэт и композитор
- Дружба в лирике Пушкина
- Пасхальные яйца Фаберже
- Влияние русского балета на австралийский
- Русская зима в музыке, живописи и поэзии

Social issues

- Почему защита Родины важна для русских?
- История русской иммиграции в Австралию



Russian history and traditions

- Матрешка: традиция или китч?
- Русское застолье
- Чаепитие в России и Японии
- Масленица
- Военное искусство - Суворов
- Народная русская медицина в современном обществе

Some students were disadvantaged due to poor topic choice. Students are advised against choosing factual and descriptive material and topics that might limit discussion (for example, biography).

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

A variety of appropriate topics was presented. Most students presented the material skilfully and engaged themselves successfully in a free discussion with the assessors.

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

Most students confidently presented the focus of their Detailed Study and named their resources in the introductory statement, which was carefully prepared and rehearsed in advance by the majority of students. Their specific focus was clearly articulated. Most of the students were well prepared 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.

Students presented a good analysis of texts and reflected on the issues, incorporating their opinions and supporting these with reasons/examples/evidence/new ideas. Brainstorming techniques allowed them to respond with specific answers and incorporate information from different resources.

Criterion 8: accuracy of vocabulary and grammar

Teachers should focus on the use of correct language structures to help students respond and make comparisons. Some of the examples are given below.

Mistake type	Examples
Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Красоту у земли хрупкая • Ухаживать за природу
Word formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Вдохление • Поставщик кислорода • Вкласть инвестиции
Incorrect choice of word	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ускоренное испарение воды • Потеряем нашу уникальность
English structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Принимать длинный душ

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

Most students used a very good range of vocabulary, sentence structure and expressions with both simple and complex grammatical structures. However, a few grammatical mistakes were made, such as errors regarding:

- agreement
- cases

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- sentence structure
- word formation.

Criterion 10: clarity of expression

This year students were well prepared for this section and had practised the correct pronunciation and stress.

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The results of the first two sections of the written examination, Listening and Responding and Reading and Responding, were better than in previous years; however, the skills for the Writing section need to be addressed further. In class, teachers should emphasise the conventions of different text types and kinds of writing as some students failed to identify the required features of their chosen text type. Students should be able to identify the tone, register, context, purpose and audience of a text.

Underdeveloped writing skills hindered some students' ability to express ideas and opinions, thus jeopardising general performance. Teachers should encourage students to practise the imaginative kind of writing.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and Responding

Part A – Answer in English

Text 1

Question 1a.

Any three of:

- to maintain health
- to maintain beauty
- to promote a good mood
- it is an old Russian tradition.

Question 1b.

Any three of:

- it alternates between hot steam and a cold bath
- birch twigs
- pine tree benches
- cold water swimming pool
- hot honey tea
- herbal teas.

Text 2

Question 2a.

Any two of:

- this problem is acute even in those countries where the majority of the population is constantly starving
- more than one billion people all over the world are overweight
- more than one nation is quoted as having problems (USA and Australia).

Question 2b.

- Overweight people have their first attack, on average, three and a half years earlier than people with normal weight.
- Obese people are hospitalised with heart attack eight years earlier.

A few students were unable to provide two answers as expected.



Text 3

Question 3a.

	Types of food	Tea tradition
Southern Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fruits vegetables lamb 	Strong black or green tea is brewed in a teapot with no sugar.
Central Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> potatoes cabbage fish 	Tea is brewed in a samovar and served with lemon and sugar, and occasionally with jam.

Question 3b.

Traditional Russian dishes	Dishes introduced by French chefs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>shchi</i> (cabbage soup) <i>borshch</i> (beetroot soup) <i>pelmeni</i> pancakes <i>shashlik</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> chicken Kiev beef stroganoff <i>sharlotka</i>

Not all students were able to identify the dishes introduced by French chefs.

Part B – Answer in Russian

Text 4

Question 4

- Traditionally, three generations were living together: children, parents and grandparents. Most Russian children are now being raised in a small family, only by their parents.
- Traditionally, there used to be many children in a Russian family and older children looked after younger ones. Now, there is often only one or two children.
- Now, children take longer to mature.
- In a modern family parents try to help their children to achieve their goals.

Text 5

Question 5a.

The festival marks the start of warm, good weather.

Question 5b.

Pancakes symbolise the sun, which is in equinox; the festival celebrates this event.

Question 5c.

- In the beginning of the week, Maslenitsa is welcomed with merry songs, people cook pancakes and every guest is treated with pancakes.
- On Wednesday, a visit to the mother-in-law is a must. She must feed her son-in-law with pancakes until he is full.
- On Friday the mother-in-law visits her son-in-law to eat pancakes.
- On the last day of a Maslenitsa week, a straw effigy symbolising winter is put to the flames.

Section 2 – Reading and Responding

Part A – Answer in English

Text 6

Question 6a.

- family, health, financial stability
- qualifications and professionalism
- good connections

Question 6b.

Education is considered important and nowadays the success of young Russians is directly related to a high-quality education.



This seemed to be the most challenging question as not all students managed to provide the correct answer.

Question 6c.

- education
- health
- government
- management

Question 6d.

- Values such as spiritual growth and mutual help become less important.
- Young people do not have strong ideals.

Quite a few students were unable to provide two answers as expected.

Question 6e.

- The younger generation will soon become the major players in the society.
- The younger generation see themselves as a major factor in the stability and development of Russia.

Text 7

Question 7a.

- Dust particles/air pollution reflect the light back into the space.
- As a result of climate change, there is more moisture and more clouds, which prevent the sun's rays from reaching the Earth's surface.

Question 7b.

- 'Global darkening' may seriously affect many aspects of life on the planet, from the use of solar energy to changes in the vegetative season of various plants.
- 'Global darkening' to a certain degree minimises the effects of global warming, which causes melting of glaciers and flooding of coastal areas.

Question 7c.

Text type: article

Features (three of)

- title
- author
- register
- style
- layout
- illustration

A few students experienced problems in addressing the question and were not able to identify the text type and its typical features.

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. Students correctly structured the answer in the form of a personal letter.

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

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- the capacity to use conventions of the text type.

Question 9

Students had to write an article evaluating the ecological problems in their country. This topic was one of the most popular choices. The students produced well-written evaluative pieces on the existing ecological problems.

Question 10

This question required students to write an informative report for a school newspaper on the life and work of a prominent Russian person. This topic was the most popular. All students who attempted this question performed well.

Question 11

Question 11 asked students to write the text of a speech persuading classmates to follow their calling when choosing a career. Students who attempted the question demonstrated an ability to produce their own point of view and support it with strong arguments.

Question 12

Students had to write an imaginative story on space travel for their school magazine. This topic was the least popular, though the students performed very well in accordance with register and genre.