

GCE

This Examiners' report relates to mark scheme

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Examiners' Report

**GCE
Russian (8570/9570)**

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AS Unit 1 (6791) – Listening and Writing

Assessment Principles

This year the specification was amended so that candidates were not required to demonstrate their knowledge of target-language culture and society in question 5 of this paper.

For Q1-Q3 marks were awarded positively for correct information successfully retrieved in response to the questions. For Q4 the quality of Russian was an assessment factor only insofar as it impeded communication; superfluous information, information not contained in the recorded material, and self-contradictory combinations of material did not gain any credit.

Q5(a) and Q5(b) were marked for the content and quality of language of two personal responses in the target language. Up to eight marks for each were awarded according to the published assessment grids.

Q6, the summary question, was assessed according to candidates' ability to understand and convey in concise English (not more than 60 words) the main points of the interview.

Candidates' Performance

Performance on this unit was quite encouraging, the mean mark for the paper being only fractionally lower than the previous year's. No questions presented undue interpretation difficulties for the majority of candidates. Q1 and Q2 proved accessible to the weaker candidates, Q3 was, perhaps surprisingly, less well done than Q4, while Q5 and Q6 provided a challenge to the stronger candidates. Slightly more candidates than last year failed to complete the paper.

Q1

Most candidates scored three or four marks for this question out of the available four. However, many mistakenly selected *неправильно* for (г), perhaps failing to understand that there was no reference in the recorded material to the *amount* of money Gorbachev might have received.

Q2

Most candidates had little difficulty with а), в) and г). Many, however selected the heading **Путешествия по современной России** for б), seizing on the word **современная** in the source stimulus **Как любит одеваться современная русская молодёжь?**, instead of making the connection between **моды** and **одеваться**.

Q3

Far fewer candidates answered this question successfully in comparison with Q1 and Q2. Clearly, many had difficulty interpreting the recorded item and/or the stimulus in the question paper which required six gaps to be filled from a list of 12 possible words. Common errors were the selection of **узнали** for **познакомились** in (i), **многих** for **никаких** in (ii) and **скучным** for **смешным** in (vi). Many failed to recognize the need for a conjunction in (v) and so were unable to select **так как**.

It was encouraging, however, that many candidates, despite selecting the wrong word, were nevertheless able to identify the correct part of speech or grammatical form for the linguistic context.

Practically all candidates followed the rubric for these first three questions.

Q4

Many scored full or nearly full marks on this section. The mark scheme allowed for alternative answers for many questions. Inaccurate language was not penalized insofar as it did not affect effective communication.

- (a) A small number of candidates either misread the question or failed to appreciate the difference between **давно** and **недавно**.
- (б) A substantial minority mistook **новый город** for **новый год**. Quite a few were unable to spell **приезжают** correctly or provide an acceptable alternative verb of motion.
- (в) The numerals in their oblique case forms posed problems for many candidates. A surprisingly large number answered 33 for **тридцати** and a few failed to recognise **трёх** altogether.
- (г) Most candidates were at least able to retrieve **дискомфорт** for this answer, and many successfully supplied one or more of the alternative answers.
- (д) A minority of candidates interpreted **метеочувствительный человек** as a weather expert or weatherman, but more than half provided accurate definitions, often in well-formulated Russian.
- (е) Most demonstrated their understanding of the question by including a reference to **климат** or **акклиматизация** in their answer.
- (ж) Most understood the reference to people becoming tired, but many misspelled **устают**, which typically became **остают**. The reference to lack of oxygen in the air was picked up by the majority.
- (з) Although both elements were not required for the two marks, fewer candidates referred in their answer to **гулять** than to **отдыхать и на работе и на отдыхе**.

Q5(a)

Unfortunately, a large proportion of candidates are still failing to heed the word limit instruction for this question and those who wrote substantially over 30 words were likely to lose marks.

In order to gain the highest mark for content candidates had to give their own view on what other factors, *apart from the weather*, influence people's health and provide a reasonably convincing explanation of at least one of these. Better candidates achieved this very well and among the factors cited were lifestyle (good food and exercise, avoidance of cigarettes, alcohol and drugs), work-life balance, avoidance of stress, family relationships, living conditions and place of residence. Weaker or less attentive candidates lost marks for supplying only one factor or failing to explain their views. Some missed or ignored the reference to **другие факторы** and wrote only about effects of the weather, often repeating material from the recorded stimulus and questions. This underlines the importance of reading the question carefully and responding to it directly.

Q5(б)

Like Q5(a), this question required an individual response from candidates and allowed the majority to score high marks by stating whether or not they would like to take part in a scientific project of this type and by justifying their answer in a reasonably convincing manner. A very small number of candidates did not attempt an answer either because they were unable to interpret the question or because they had mismanaged their time.

The reasons put forward for wanting to take part in the project included altruistic concerns such as wishing to help others, personal interest in science and the effects of weather on people, and the opportunity to travel. Reasons for not wishing to be involved included lack of time and the need to focus on school work, lack of interest in science and doubt about the value of such projects as compared with other forms of human endeavour. A number expressed safety concerns, suggesting they would not wish to put themselves forward as human guinea pigs.

Because of the more open-ended nature of this section of the paper candidates should be encouraged by centres to exploit their strengths, using vocabulary and structures with which they are comfortable.

Q6

As occurred in previous years, a large number of candidates are still losing sight of the fact that this is a summarising task. No marks could be awarded for material beyond the first natural break after 60 words. This often resulted in the candidate's response to (r) *her attitude to problems and challenges*, gaining no credit. Only very few candidates gained no marks by answering in Russian.

(a) what led Olga to open a fitness club in Moscow

Many candidates could not interpret **я всегда скучала по спорту**, though the majority gained their marks by retrieving the information about the lack of fitness clubs and the fact that she used to be a sportswoman.

(б) how she felt about starting up a business

This posed problems for the greatest number of candidates many of whom could not interpret **огромное желание** and **вера в своё дело**. Many, however, gained a mark by answering that she and others lacked experience.

(в) how she believes Russians have changed over the past 10 years

Most candidates were able to retrieve the required two out of four ideas targeted here and understood the key vocabulary well: **к другому образу жизни, новый имидж, энергичного, красивым**.

(г) her attitude to problems and challenges

Again, provided they had observed the word limit, many candidates were able to gain maximum credit for this section. A pleasing number of candidates successfully interpreted **я умела логично справляться с проблемами**.

Advice and Guidance

- Candidates must ensure that their audio equipment is working effectively and that they have spare batteries or audio equipment on hand.
- Candidates should use the mark allocations as a guide to how much information is expected in answers.
- The sequence of questions follows the sequence in which the relevant material can be retrieved from the texts.

- Where appropriate, answers should be worded to ensure they directly respond to questions set.
- Candidates should take care with handwriting clarity, as this understandably tends to deteriorate when writing under the pressures specific to a listening comprehension examination.
- Candidates should avoid repetition of information and redundant words in responding to tasks with a word limit. Vocabulary and phrases from the question should not be copied unnecessarily.
- For the summary, candidates should try to be succinct and avoid supplying too much detail on one point at the expense of others.
- Due attention should be given by candidates to time management for this paper.

Maximum Mark	Unit 1 Grade Boundaries				
	A	B	C	D	E
50	33	28	24	20	16

AS Unit 2 (6792) – Reading and Writing

Candidates were not required to demonstrate cultural knowledge of Russia in Q6, the extended writing task (Notice to Centres – June 2003).

Q1

Candidates showed good understanding of this question. There were no problems of vocabulary recognition and candidates of all abilities performed well.

Q2

This question presented some problems to weaker candidates. The main difficulty was in the understanding of the requirements of the task. A large number of candidates endeavoured to answer the statements rather than find the corresponding phrase from the passage. This was particularly evident in (в), (г) and (д).

Several candidates also lifted answers from the text that were too long. They were credited if the target phrase was included.

Q3

The requirement of the task was well understood. There was evidence of some impossible grammatical combinations as well as some plausible combinations, which did not relate to the text.

Q4

Candidates who followed the instructions of the question carefully tended to perform well in this section. The candidates who did not attempt to use their own words were unable to score as highly. Q4(б) produced a range of answers, which included candidates calculating the precise date of the building of “Мать Родина”. Q4(г) was the most difficult question for candidates and a high number failed to understand that Евгений Вучетич was a man and that both the question and text referred to him in the genitive case. This confusion led to a large number of candidates suggesting that “she” had worked as a waitress or the model for the monument rather than the fact that he had been the architect of the monument. Q4(в), (д) and (е) allowed candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to manipulate the language but weaker candidates failed to give sufficient detail to be awarded the two marks available. Q4(ж) was well handled by the majority of candidates with convincing definitions being given of “пенсионерка” in particular.

Q5

This task was well understood by the majority of candidates. Weaker candidates found difficulty with some items of vocabulary and tended to guess answers from minimal understanding of words. Some candidates failed to give sufficient detail in questions for which two marks were on offer. This was notable in particular in Q5(b) where candidates understood that problems had been discovered in the engine systems but did not state that the flight had been stopped. “Спутник” as an item of vocabulary was testing for weaker candidates who thought that this meant astronauts. Q5(f) was the most challenging question with candidates failing to understand that there was a lack in the number of physically fit millionaires and stating simply that there was a lack in the number of people who wanted to participate in space tourism.

Q6

As in previous years a disappointingly high number of candidates disregarded the word limit and automatically lost marks through being unable to respond to all required elements. Many candidates however showed good preparation for the requirement of the task and allowed themselves the opportunity to demonstrate good use of Russian. The subject matter seems to have been easily accessible to all candidates and some impressive answers were given. A large number of candidates interpreted the third bullet point narrowly and talked about the musical tastes of young people rather than talking about the interests of young people in more detail. This may have been because the letter was about attending a pop concert.

Candidates structured the essays well on the whole and there was an impressive range of language on show. A surprisingly common mistake was to write “я понравилась” when referring to what had been good about the concert.

Maximum Mark	Unit 2 Grade Boundaries				
	A	B	C	D	E
80	58	52	47	42	37

AS Unit 3 (6793) – Prepared Oral Topic

Assessment Principles

This unit is assessed positively under the following criteria: Quality of Language (subdivided into Accuracy/Quality of Language), Response and Knowledge and Understanding. A mark out of 20 is awarded for each of the three categories, to give a total mark out of 60.

Conduct of the test

The candidate should be allowed to introduce their chosen topic, uninterrupted, for up to 2 minutes. The test should last 10 – 12 minutes in total. The teacher/examiner should use the subheadings on the candidate's form as the basis for developing the discussion. It is a requirement of the Specification that the teacher-examiner should also test the candidate on his or her ability to engage in a conversation that goes beyond the target-language headings but remains within the chosen topic area.

Under Response, in order to access the entire range of marks available, the candidate must demonstrate the ability to respond when the conversation moves away from predictable areas. If the examiner does not allow the candidate this opportunity, the candidate cannot be awarded more than 14 marks out of 20 for this category. (See also **Advice and Guidance**, below). In view of this, it is very important that candidates fill in the examination form properly. Some candidates used the space provided for subheadings to enter linguistic prompts that did not disclose the direction of their research. This impeded the examiner's ability to judge whether unpredictable questions had been asked in order to award a higher mark for *Response*. The reciting of long passages of pre-learned material should be discouraged by the teacher-examiner. In order to be awarded the higher marks for Response, candidates must engage in spontaneous, fluent discourse. A significant number of able candidates did not demonstrate this, relying on a clearly pre-prepared set of questions and answers.

In order to obtain high marks in the Knowledge/Understanding category candidates must demonstrate a "very detailed, wide ranging and well-researched knowledge of the topic", and centres are reminded that the specification states: "In preparation for this unit, students will need to research their chosen area and undertake extended reading from a variety of sources." At the same time, teacher-examiners should provide candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate the depth of their research by asking appropriate questions, in regards to both the difficulty of the questions and their content. Comparison with the UK or deviation into other languages (eg, Tatar when speaking about Tatarstan) should not be encouraged.

The majority of centres followed the administration instructions, adhering to the time limits indicated. There is no advantage to be gained by a candidate whose teacher-examiner does not observe these limits. No extra credit is given for tests lasting longer than 12 minutes. Tests that are too short often result in the candidate being unable to access the full range of marks available, in particular for Response and Knowledge and Understanding, but also for Quality of Language.

The majority of centres ensured that the recordings of the tests were clear, however, there were problems with the quality of equipment and extraneous noise. Centres must ensure that the recordings are accompanied by a completed Unit 3 Oral Form for each candidate. This form should be completed in Russian. Unfortunately, chasing these forms from individual centres took up a considerable amount of examiners' time.

Performance of Candidates

As last year, the overall level of achievement for this unit was extremely high. Most topics were chosen appropriately and reflected the candidate's research into Russian society and culture. Candidates were able to use their research and knowledge to stimulate discussion and conversation, and give balanced answers to the unpredictable questions.

As a rule, topics that had a definite focus were more successful than topics based on general issues (eg, 'social issues in Russia' where the candidate tried to cover everything from drugs to living standards). In such broad topics candidates tended to rely on general knowledge rather than research and neither gave any detail or nor attempted to substantiate their views. This problem was more typical of Russian-speaking candidates, who often relied on their general knowledge far too much. Often the whole of their topic was based on their personal or family experience. Another problem typical for Russian-speaking candidates who do not come from Russia, was choosing a topic about their country (eg 'Moldova, Kazakhstan, etc, today', 'My town: Odessa') or their country's history/culture (eg 'Stepan Bendera', 'Nursultan Nazyrbaev'), despite the fact that the instructions for the Unit specify that the topic should be rooted in the Russian language culture.

Historical, literary and geographical topics, for example "Mikhail Bulgakov", "Tchaikovsky", "Trotsky", "Moscow", "Rasputin", "Putin" proved very popular once again this year. There was a pleasing range of original topics, for which candidates had generally prepared well, such as "Traditions of the Russian Table" (customs etc. surrounding eating in Russia) "Russian weddings" and "Princess Olga". Such topics require significant research and contain more than enough material to allow the candidate to engage in a discussion lasting 10-12 minutes. They allow the candidate to demonstrate a wealth of information and opinion and to structure their presentation in a logical way. At the same time, candidates should be discouraged from attempting over-complicated topics. For example, the candidate who tried to explain the Russian economy through macro- and micro-economic models did not do himself justice because he was trying to use very complex concepts. A less scientific approach would have allowed him to demonstrate his command of the Russian language better.

There is nothing to stop more than one candidate from a centre preparing the same topic. However, in centres where many candidates had prepared the same topic, there was a tendency for the vocabulary and content of the presentations, and for the questions asked by the examiner, to be remarkably similar. This is clearly not in the spirit of this examination.

Careful consideration of the title for the topic is essential. On occasion, candidates chose a topic that was rather limited in content, such as "New Year" or "Christmas", and struggled to find enough to say to sustain 10-12 minutes discussion. A different title ("Russian Festivals", for example) would have extended the area of research and thus given more material for discussion.

Conversely, some candidates chose a seemingly wide-ranging subject but were able to talk about only a narrow area of it. An example would be the topic "Sport in Russia" where the discussion was limited to only one or two sports.

Advice and Guidance

Candidates must choose their topic very carefully. The topic **must be based on Russia, or on a society where the language of communication is Russian**. Many candidates chose a topic which did not comply with this and therefore could not access the full range of marks. The topic for this unit must be firmly rooted in a Russian speaking community. Therefore “Estonia” is **not** a suitable topic, although “The Russian speaking community in Tallin” would be.

The chosen topic should lend itself to thorough research, independent study, extended reading and should contain enough material to allow 10-12 minutes discussion. It should allow the candidate to demonstrate wide-ranging knowledge, including specific details, facts and figures.

The title of the topic, as it is written on the oral form, must be carefully considered. Candidates should write subheadings that will serve both to prompt their memory, and indicate to the examiner the direction of their research, so as to allow to develop the conversation based on the material prepared by the candidates.

The teacher-examiner should be familiar with the requirements of the specification and the mark grids. It would also be in the candidates’ interest to be familiar with the criteria used for assessment.

It is imperative that the test be conducted correctly if candidates are to have every opportunity to be awarded the full range of marks. All examiners should note that the teacher-examiner **must** test the candidates’ ability to discuss unpredictable areas of their topic, if they are to be awarded more than 14 marks out of 20 for Response.

The time requirements should be carefully observed and care should be taken to ensure that the candidate’s performance is clearly recorded. The correct oral form should be completed; this should be sent to the Edexcel examiner with the attendance register and tape. Oral forms should be completed in Russian. Tape boxes and tapes should be marked with the centre number and candidate number(s). Each candidate’s name and number should be clearly announced on the tape.

Please also refer to the description of Unit 3 in the Specification. The most recent mark grids for this unit can be found in the latest edition of the Specification (Issue 4, published in October 2003) and on pp 5-6 of the Notice to Centres dated June 2003.

Maximum Mark	Unit 3 Grade Boundaries				
	A	B	C	D	E
60	46	40	35	30	25

A2 Unit 4.1 (6794/01) – Oral Discussion of Issues

Assessment principles

This unit is assessed positively under the following criteria: Quality of Language, Response and Justification and Debate. From this year onwards, the requirement that the issue selected for the initial debate should relate specifically to Russia has been withdrawn. A mark out of 20 is awarded for each of the three categories, to give a total mark out of 60. Under Justification and Debate up to 5 of the 20 marks were awarded specifically for the grasp of the initial issue.

A copy of the mark grids for this unit can be found in the latest edition of the Specification (Issue 4, published October 2003) and on pp 9-10 of the Edexcel Notice to Centres dated June 2003. A description of the requirements for this unit can be found in the Edexcel Specification for AS and Advanced GCE Modern Foreign Languages.

Conduct of the Test

The candidates should be allowed to introduce their chosen issue, uninterrupted, for up to one minute, after which the same issue should be discussed for up to 4 minutes. After this, at least two further issues should be discussed. The test should last a maximum of 15 minutes in total.

The majority of centres followed these instructions, adhering to the time limits indicated. There is no advantage to be gained by a candidate whose teacher-examiner does not observe these limits. No extra credit is given for tests lasting longer than 15 minutes. Tests that are too short may mean that a candidate cannot access the full range of marks available, in particular for Response and Justification and Debate, but also for Quality of Language.

Candidates' Responses

The majority of candidates chose an appropriate and interesting issue with which to begin this test. In preparing for this unit, candidates must research their chosen issue carefully, as in order to access the highest marks they must demonstrate a "thorough and detailed knowledge of the issue". They should state their stance on this issue on the Declaration of Issue Form, and be prepared to defend their point of view, using facts, figures or other evidence to support their argument.

The majority of candidates chose a suitable issue. The most successful debates were by candidates who clearly believed in their stance on their chosen issue. They were able to put forward a heartfelt and often controversial point of view, providing an excellent start to the examination.

There were many examples of mature and extremely competent performances in this unit. Popular, and successful, issues chosen for discussion included the death penalty, abortion, legalisation of drugs, euthanasia, cloning and smoking. Many candidates demonstrated an impressive range of relevant vocabulary and the ability to debate at a high level. Alongside the traditional 'favourites' there came a range of challenging issues relating to former parts of the USSR, Iraq, Russian spelling reform, the language laws in Latvia, beer advertising on TV, the improvement of living standards in Belarus, and the existence of God.

The majority of teacher-examiners conducted this unit sympathetically, encouraging candidates to give their best performance. Some teacher-examiners were rather aggressive in their approach. This is not necessary, and indeed only likely to unsettle the candidate. However, the teacher-examiner must ask questions that would encourage a debate. Unfortunately, some teacher-examiners tended to ask questions more appropriate for the AS, or even GCSE level.

As for Unit 3, long pre-learned passages are to be discouraged. In order to access the highest marks for Response, candidates must be able to develop and sustain discourse. They cannot do this if they merely regurgitate pre-learned answers.

Advice and Guidance

Both the candidate and the teacher-examiner must be aware that this unit requires the discussion of **issues**, in order that candidates may demonstrate the ability to sustain an argument and to justify their opinion. Some candidates were disadvantaged by an incorrect selection of their initial issue that did not provide an opportunity for debate. Thus, such titles as 'the life and personality of I Turgenev', or 'changes in L Tolstoy's philosophy' are not easily open to controversy. Many candidates lost marks because they were not asked appropriate questions and were therefore not able to demonstrate the ability to sustain a high level of debate and to justify their views. Some teacher-examiners tended to interrupt candidates and speak too much themselves.

Candidates must not know in advance which further issues will be chosen by the teacher-examiner. It is very important that the teacher-examiner decides which further issues will be discussed. Far too many teacher-examiners gave the candidates a free choice.

Where this was the case, the Edexcel examiner had to decide to what extent the candidate had demonstrated the ability to "develop unpredictable areas", assessed under Justification and Debate in the mark grids. In some centres the same 'unpredictable areas' were discussed with all candidates, raising questions about how 'unpredictable' they were.

The time requirements should be carefully observed and care should be taken to ensure that the candidate's performance is clearly recorded. The correct oral form should be completed, and sent to the Edexcel examiner with the attendance register and tape. If the candidates are taking the examination at one of the Edexcel centres, the oral form **must** reach the examiner in time to enable them to prepare. The candidate's stance on the issue **must** be clearly stated to avoid causing unnecessary problems for the examiner. Declaration of Issue forms should be completed in Russian. Tape boxes and tapes should be marked with the centre number and candidate number(s). Each candidate's name and number should be clearly announced on the tape.

Maximum Mark	Unit 4.1 Grade Boundaries				
	A	B	C	D	E
60	46	40	35	30	25

A2 Unit 5.1 (6795/01) – Topics and Texts

Assessment Principles

Candidates are required to answer two questions on two different topics or texts or one topic and one text. Each question is worth 45 marks: 30 for Knowledge and Understanding, 9 for Organisation and Development and 6 for Quality of Language, as per the new mark grids. The mark grids can be found in the latest edition of the Specification (Issue 4, published in October 2003) and the Notice to Centres published in June 2003.

Candidates' Responses

Once again, the examiners observed profound differences in the level of preparation by various candidates. Regrettably, this year there were many more poor performances than last. It appeared to be the case that many candidates were answering questions based on scanty and frequently out-of-date general knowledge or a brief encounter with the dust-jacket or introduction to a given text. Quotations were infrequent and often inaccurate. Many candidates appeared to have little idea of how to tackle an essay in any language. Even the responses of good candidates indicated uneven preparation - a well answered question which had been anticipated and / or practised was often followed by a response which indicated a lack of preparation for what might be asked. Some candidates appeared to be reproducing an old essay or notes which were not relevant to the questions set this year. The majority of answers to Q1(a), Q1(b), Q2(a) and Q2(b) were very largely anecdotal with little evidence of serious study. Answers to these questions accounted for one third of all candidates' responses. The biggest failing in responses to the questions on texts continued to be the failure to apply the correct label when talking about a specific text as a genre. The most popular questions were Q1(a), Q1(b), Q2(a), Q6(a), Q6(b), Q7(b) and Q9(a). The most popular question by far was Q6(a). Answers on Pushkin accounted for over 25% of all responses. The next most popular authors were Gogol (12%), Chekhov (11%) and Baranskaya (6%).

Q1(a) Responses varied in quality. Many candidates failed to answer the second part of the question, and when they did, gave a subjective opinion of what a successful businessman should be. The first part of the question often contained biographical inaccuracies and omissions. Oligarchs currently in the news were popular choices for discussion.

Q1(b) On the whole, this question was poorly answered. Essays were usually sensible but lacked detailed information and did not address problems specific to Russia, (eg Chechnya).

Q2(a) The majority of candidates were able to list factors such as increased traffic, pollution of the air and waterways due to chemical and industrial waste and damage to buildings due to acid rain. Few were able to quote any facts or figures to support their assertions and could have been writing about any city in the industrialised world. Very few answers contained more than a passing reference to whether the local people were optimistic or pessimistic about the future of their environment.

Q2(b) There were some good answers to the first half of this question with facts and figures of varying degrees of sophistication. However, few candidates were able to follow through by addressing the second half of the question and discussing their chosen region or city's economic role in the larger context of the Russian Federation.

Q3(a) Most answers were at least of average quality. A lot of candidates clearly knew a great deal of information about conditions in Leningrad during the siege, though many were unable to focus their knowledge on the *end* of the siege specifically. Most candidates did comment on the second part of the question in what were, on the whole, well-balanced answers.

Q3(b) There were very few answers to this question. Almost all were vague and simplistic and contained no specific references to major figures such as Shostakovich or Berggol'ts.

Q4(a) There were very few answers to this question. As in previous years, most candidates penalised themselves by only referring to one text. Answers tended to be descriptive rather than evaluative.

Q4(b) This question attracted only three responses. Once again, most answers ignored one of the two set texts.

Q5(a) There were few answers to this question. Candidates relied on a knowledge of the poet's biography and generalisations about her poetry as the basis of their answers.

Q5(b) A very small number of candidates tackled this question. A couple of answers contained perceptive quotations as a means of supporting the argument.

Q6(a) This question produced the entire range of response in terms of the display of textual knowledge, the ability to analyse and writing in Russian. The majority of candidates displayed a thorough knowledge of the text, and many could quote well from it. Personal response was generally both good and interesting, though relatively few candidates alluded to Lizaveta's ultimate fate as described in the final section of the text.

Q6(b) The range and quality of answers to this question was similar to Q6(a). Some essays contained impressive detail, indicating that this aspect of the text had been well prepared. The second part of the question drew non-literary responses from some candidates about the existence of supernatural forces.

Q7(a) Though there were some good answers to this question, many candidates had only a superficial knowledge of the text and little awareness of the role of the main character, let alone that of his servant.

Q7(b) This question also produced a full range of responses from excellent to very poor. Some candidates failed to understand that the characters are caricatures with grossly exaggerated features. Many got side-tracked into a discussion of what Gogol might have been trying to achieve without making reference to the play in question.

Q8(a) Answers to this question varied in quality from poor to excellent. Most essays displayed sound textual knowledge, though some failed to address the main character's spiritual transformation at the end of the text. The question of whether Ivan Il'ich is a bad person or not was sometimes inadequately answered with a simple "yes" or "no".

Q8(b) Once again, the quality of answer was variable. Those who had anticipated this question generally did well. Most candidates had a sound knowledge of the text and almost all agreed that the structure does help the reader to understand the main themes of the text, though a few were unsure of what these were.

Q9(a) Though many candidates were able to write at length about the play and the role of other characters in it, a surprisingly small number showed a detailed knowledge of Sonya and her part in the drama. Most expressed sympathy for her, if only for superficial reasons. Few essays went into detail about her positive qualities.

Q9(b) This question revealed much about candidates' knowledge and understanding as well as their general preparation for the exam. Though there were some good answers, there were many candidates who had clearly little idea of the themes of the play, let alone how these are interrelated. Some were hazy about what constitutes "conflict" and tried to discuss this as an abstract concept without making reference to the specific conflicts in the text. The second part of the question was consequently rarely discussed in a proper fashion.

Q10(a) Few candidates answered this question, generally with an adequate knowledge of the text, but a less satisfactory analysis of it.

Q10(b) This question was not attempted by many candidates. Unfortunately no candidate properly addressed the second part of the question, although most displayed a satisfactory knowledge of the text.

Q11(a) Candidates generally produced solid answers to the first part of the question, while answers to the second part were at least satisfactory. Only a few candidates went beyond how Dima conducts himself at home to decide whether he deserves to be called "wonderful", comparing him positively to the other Soviet men mentioned or appearing in the text.

Q11(b) Answers to this question usually displayed satisfactory to good textual knowledge, though quotations were sometimes inappropriately used. Essays tended to focus on the problems of a working mother per se rather than deal with this issue in the context of 1960s Soviet communism. Most candidates showed little or no knowledge of the background to the text and were therefore unsure of the extent to which the author is criticising the system. Few candidates appreciated the significance of the political seminar.

Q12(a) There were very few answers to this question. Most answers displayed a pleasing knowledge of the text, though not all candidates discussed the ending. Those essays which contained a discussion of the second part of the question were generally sound in terms of their analysis and resulting opinion.

Q12(b) This question was attempted by very few candidates indeed. Those who did attempt it, failed to address the question.

Advice and Guidance

For the examination itself, candidates should be aware of the following:

- candidates should answer two questions only
- the question numbers should be written on the front of the answer booklet
- candidates are unlikely to score well if they write less than 180 words per answer

Candidates should be aware that while it will not always be necessary or possible to give equal weight in their answers to every part of the question, the best answers will address all parts of the question to some degree. All questions, whether literary or topical, will require both detailed knowledge and evaluation.

An essay is unlikely to be effective without a conclusion, though this should not simply be a repetition of earlier points in the same form of words. Quotation is the most likely way of successfully demonstrating textual knowledge, though this must be appropriate, accurate and not too long.

The question should be addressed without irrelevance and digression. However interesting and informative digression may be, it will not count towards the marks awarded.

The questions on topics must be prepared for in the same way as those on texts. Candidates are unlikely to score well unless they have studied the topic areas and can quote facts and figures to support their arguments. With regard to the first and second prescribed topics, it should be noted that answers that do not relate to the Russian Federation will score no marks.

All candidates should try to write their essays in a register appropriate for a formal examination, avoiding colloquial language and abbreviations.

Maximum Mark	Unit 5.1 Grade Boundaries				
	A	B	C	D	E
90	55	47	40	33	26

A2 Unit 5.2 (6795/02) – Coursework

Candidates are required to write two pieces of coursework in Russian. The first essay should be between 350 and 400 words in length and the second 700-800. The essays are to be written on two distinct topics relating to the target country/culture.

Assessment principles

Coursework is assessed positively by the candidates' teachers and then a sample is moderated by an Edexcel moderator. New assessment grids have been introduced for summer 2004 to reflect changes in assessment objective weightings in this Specification. The grids can be found on pages 12-13 in the Notice to Centres – Changes to MFL specification published in June 2003 and in the latest edition of the Specification (Issue 4, published October 2003). Marks are awarded by reference to these grids under the following three categories: Knowledge and Understanding (30 marks); Organisation and Development of Material (9 marks); Quality of Language (6 marks).

Candidates continue to be awarded marks for the qualities listed on pages 15-17 of the Coursework Guide.

The mark for the long essay is doubled, so the total marks are as follows: $30 + 9 + 6 = 45$ (short essay); $30 + 9 + 6 = 45 \times 2 = 90$ (long essay). Hence the total for Unit 5.2 is 135 marks.

Candidates' Responses

As in previous years, there were many pieces of coursework which were a pleasure to moderate. These offered:

- very good presentation with carefully structured plans and detailed bibliographies;
- titles with a clear focus either directly related to Russia or Russian culture;
- coherence, reflected in wide reading, relevant detail, analysis, personal response and independent judgement.

The Internet as a source of material continues to provide the basis for most candidates' research. Candidates chose in roughly equal proportions topics relating to contemporary themes, historical events or literature. Essays covered drugs, smoking, President Putin, education, changes after 1991, divorce, alcoholism and problems facing Russian youth (orphans, homelessness). Very popular again were the Nord Ost siege, often linked with terrorism, and the Kursk incident. Other categories included tourism, the economy and ecology. Religion also appeared, along with recent and classic films. There were, again, excellent essays written on literary themes.

The vast majority of essays reflected the candidates' interest in their chosen topic and candidates continued to improve in incorporating into their work the all-important degree of analysis and independent judgement needed for the highest Knowledge and Understanding marks. There were very few essays that were too short and it was pleasing to see how many candidates managed to précis material to ensure that the first essay did not exceed 400 words. There were, however, frequent examples of overlong essays. Please refer to page 6 of the Coursework Guide for confirmation of word limits.

Choosing the right title

Candidates are getting better at choosing essay titles that give them the scope to analyse, evaluate and offer their personal judgements. Essay titles incorporating such key words as: Как, Каким образом, Почему, До какой степени, and even just ли, проблема, значение and анализ tended to be more successful.

However, as in previous years, some topics chosen by candidates did not give them the opportunity to develop an argument and draw their own conclusions. Such essays cannot score the highest marks for Knowledge and Understanding, where credit is awarded for analysis and personal judgement. Although in writing such essays candidates may have done a great deal of research into a topic close to their hearts and conveyed this interest and many facts in the coursework, if they do not analyse and evaluate their material or offer any element of personal judgement, they cannot score the highest marks. Please note that candidates are likely to score under 17/30 for Knowledge and Understanding if they do not display the 'beginnings of independent judgement'.

Equally, to obtain the best marks for Organisation and Development, there needs to be evidence of an exchange of ideas, debate or evaluation of material. This year some candidates again underachieved because they chose topics that were far too broad; titles such as *Aids in Russia*, *Alcoholism in Russia* and *Divorce in Russia* were particularly inappropriate for the short essay, where precision is required.

Since Coursework is meant to be the outcome of personal and independent research, a mere factual summary of a period in history or a brief description of a well-known tourist destination does not merit the highest marks. It was pleasing that there were only a few essays this year that read like detailed entries from encyclopaedia. In the few instances that occurred, it was no surprise to see children's encyclopaedias listed in the bibliographies. In such cases, candidates are strongly advised to create a synthesis of factual material derived from such sources combined with their own judgements and evaluations.

Although candidates should not have any guidance once they have started writing their essays, teachers can help them with the choice of title and with the plan. It is crucial that candidates get the right advice at the outset. It is understood that some non-learner candidates are not formally taught but, as teachers must be involved in at least mentoring them, they should pass on the advice that purely factual titles simply do not allow the candidate to develop a point of view.

Plans

In the main, the more convincing the plan, the more convincing the final product. The plans tended to be the most effective were those that gave headings and brief (eg 10 words) reasons for each heading. The essays which carefully followed such plans tended to have higher marks for Organisation and Development because the plan had made candidates think carefully about the structure of their essays.

Some pieces lacked full effectiveness due to insufficient plans and, as in previous years, there were plans that appeared to have been written retrospectively. A common weakness was for plans to be too long. In such cases, candidates tended to give an edited version of the essay rather than providing a coherent structure for it. It would be better to have bullet points with, for example, abstract nouns, which could then be turned into verbs in the main body of the essay. It is undoubtedly advantageous to the candidates to have a sufficiently detailed but not overlong plan. It should be well focussed and structured for easy reference while the essay is being written.

Bibliographies

In the main, candidates had full, relevant bibliographies but, in cases where they chose a highly personal response to one or two works of literature, there was sometimes little, if any, evidence of literature being read other than the novel or play itself. In some cases, especially with some non-learner candidates, there were minimal or even no bibliographies. This inevitably had repercussions for marks in the Organisation and Development section. The very best coursework is a **synthesis** of personal opinion and analysis of critical thought and this is why research is so important.

Many candidates effectively attributed quotations when magazines and journals were used as source material. Please remember that the title, date and page number of the publication should be clearly stated. Internet sources continue to be used extensively, but please ensure that candidates record **specific sources**, not just generic web sites. When candidates append printouts of material from websites, this is both interesting and helpful. However, please ask them to send only the relevant pages.

In conclusion, it is important to have references to all sources because it allows for an accurate assessment of the extent to which a candidate has synthesised information rather than just editing it.

Quality of language

Many candidates again produced a very high standard of language, and even when errors were present, only seldom did they impede communication. Common areas of difficulty included:

- the conjugation of irregular verbs like *содержать* and *сказать*;
- *-овать* and *-евать* verbs in the present tense;
- the declension of feminine soft sign nouns;
- the declension of adjectives;
- the use of the animate genitive after transitive verbs;
- the confusion of *весь*, *все* and *всё*;
- when to use *свой*, *своя* *свои* and not *его*, *её* and *их*;
- compound conjunctions;
- passive constructions;
- prepositions and the cases governed by them.

The words «если» and «ли» were sometimes confused and the subjunctive past aspect with *хотеть* was often inaccurately formed. However, «if» constructions with «если» and «если бы» were often well handled. There were some problems with indirect statements and questions. Many errors could easily have been typing errors when candidates chose to word process their work, but overall, the majority of candidates again put a great deal of thought into the language that they used and it was a pleasure to read fluent, accurate essays. This is very much to the credit of teaching staff and candidates alike.

Moderators were also grateful to teachers who used the mark grids to write detailed comments at the end of essays. These were often informative and useful in confirming the moderators' conclusions. Teacher assessment of the language components was usually consistent with moderators'. In some cases there was a tendency towards generosity in teachers' marks, especially for Knowledge and Understanding when candidates:

- were too factual in their treatment;
- did not firmly link their essay to Russia;
- exceeded the word limit in one or both of their essays (even though their stated word counts were allegedly of the correct length);
- failed to develop their arguments succinctly;
- merely wrote a narrative/descriptive piece of work.

Maximum Mark	Unit 5.2 Grade Boundaries				
	A	B	C	D	E
135	105	90	76	62	48

A2 Unit 6(a) (6796/01) – Listening and Writing

Changes to the Specification

This year the comprehension section was marked out of a total of 15 (formerly 17) with no separate mark for Quality of Language. The greatest change was that the summary was marked out of 20 (formerly only 8). Out of this total up to 15 marks could be awarded for communication in the summary and 5 marks for quality of continuous English (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling).

Candidate performance

This paper proved suitably demanding at A2 level. Practically all candidates completed the paper and were given the opportunity to demonstrate their skill at retrieving information, drawing inferences from the stimulus, and producing an effective summary of heard material in continuous English.

Q1

This question was tackled successfully by the majority of candidates who were able score high marks.

- (a) Most candidates scored their two marks by referring to the fact that the Artists' Union would not buy the artists' work or give them orders, but a few provided the alternative answer concerning the market economy and everyone having to earn their living through their own efforts.
- (б) Most candidates scored the maximum three marks.
- (в) The majority of candidates supplied the expected answer that there are now more galleries, but a substantial number answered that the reason for it being strange that it had not become easier to sell artworks was that one had to pay to display. This was marked correct at a reasonable deduction.
- (г) Most gained both marks.
- (д) Practically all candidates understood this question and gained the mark for referring either to the need to pay or that exhibiting was too expensive.
- (е) Again the majority scored at least two of the three marks. A pleasing number of stronger candidates proved they had understood **это было потребностью нашей души** either by expressing the idea in their own words or changing **нашей души** to **их** or sometimes **ихней души!** Candidates need to be aware that they are unlikely to score marks if their answers consist exclusively of word for word quotations from the interview.
- (ж) Though well answered by stronger candidates, a substantial minority appeared not to have fully understood this question, which, however, had been carefully formulated to require a deductive answer. Some did not recognise the need to begin their answer with **Нет** or at least to strongly imply this in the rest of their answer. Many claimed that Tatyana believed *life* would be better abroad, though nothing she says implies this view.
- (з) The majority of candidates interpreted this question well and gained the mark. Some supplied this answer (that suffering could assist the creative process) to justify their answer for (ж), where it was accepted, provided that the same answer was not also used for (з)

Advice and guidance to candidates for the comprehension

- Bear in mind that some of the questions in this section require inferential or deductive answers, but such inferences and deductions must be rooted in the stimulus.
- Read the questions carefully before attempting to answer.
- Use the mark allocation as a guide to the amount of detail required for each answer.
- Write your answers clearly in Russian.

Q2

As in previous years, a small number of candidates scored no marks for writing their answers in Russian.

The majority of candidates demonstrated good or very good summary skills and managed to score 10 or above out of the available 15 marks. It must be emphasised, however, that no credit can be given for any work beyond the first natural break after the 100 word limit has been reached. Unfortunately, a substantial number of candidates either disregarded this restriction or else lacked the ability to set down their points concisely enough. It was not uncommon for 100 words to be reached before the last one or two bullet points had been covered.

- Russian artists and the West

Most candidates identified the two ideas here: interest in the West and a desire to be on a world level.

- why there is a shortage of patrons of art

Only two details were required here with most candidates realising that there was a shortage of millionaires wishing to invest in art. A mere translation: *new Russians have nothing on their walls* gained no credit in itself and merely wasted words.

- works of art that people inherit

Most candidates successfully and concisely listed four relevant details and gained maximum credit.

- whether there are any stars of Russian art

Weaker candidates did not always interpret this correctly, stating that there were no art stars in *business* rather than in a *showbusiness sense*. The idea that an art star may be considered one who is especially respected by other artists was often not included, but the strongest candidates understood and expressed this idea concisely.

- her experience of and feelings about working to order

This section provided another opportunity to convey several ideas concisely and gain maximum credit. For example: *Tatyana did a few portraits to order but didn't enjoy it.* would have sufficed here.

- her definition of the artist's vocation

This presented interpretational problems for some candidates as it was the most abstract notion expressed in the interview. A substantial number did however successfully translate or paraphrase: **передавать свои впечатления о жизни, которая окружает.**

Quality of English (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling)

Fewer candidates than last year lost marks for failing to write their summary in continuous English. Understandably, candidates for whom English is not their main language of communication tended to make grammatical errors such as omission of or inaccurate use of articles, incorrect prepositions and verb conjugation. However, many native English speakers failed to score the maximum 5 marks through misspellings of such words as *million(n)aires*, *colleagues*, *museums*, *auction* and *prefers*. It should also be borne in mind that poor style, lexis and syntax can also lead to a lower mark being awarded for GPS. Punctuation was generally of a high standard.

Advice and Guidance to candidates for the summary:

- This is all the more important now that this section of the paper carries so many marks.
- Ensure continuous English is used. The summary must be self-contained and meaningful without reference to the bullet points.
- Contractions such as *'hasn't'* and *'don't'* are acceptable and in fact a good strategy, as they economise on words.
- Avoid abbreviations such as &.
- Ensure all points made relate directly to the bullet points listed in the question paper.
- Use concise language, avoiding repetition and redundancy.
- Avoid giving too much detail for one stimulus at the expense of the others.
- Count the number of words used, as credit will not be given to material beyond the first natural break after 100 words.
- If necessary, go back through your work, crossing out redundant words and phrases.
- Time permitting, it may be useful to write an initial draft in note form.

Advice to centres

Ensure that candidates are given opportunities to develop summarising skills.

A2 Unit 6(b) (6796/02) – Reading and Writing

The total awarded for this paper is 25 marks as in previous years. But the marks were allocated differently. In the first question 15 marks are available with 8 being awarded for answering the questions and 7 being awarded for Quality of Language. A sliding scale was used to ensure that candidates had to manipulate the language and not rely on lifted sections from the text.

For the second question, the transfer of meaning task, 10 marks were available. The passage was divided into 30 assessable elements worth 1 or 0. The total was then divided by 3 and rounded up or down as appropriate.

Q1

Candidates showed good evidence of having been well prepared for this task. A surprisingly high number of candidates ignored the instruction of using one's own words and lifted directly from the passage. This was less of an issue in question (б) where candidates had to define the phrase “далеко не лёгкой”.

Q1(a) and Q1(в) were best answered by candidates and easily understood from the passage. Q1(д) allowed candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their ability in using Russian though a number of weaker candidates misunderstood what Jacques Rogge was saying about the chances of the Olympic Games being awarded to Moscow.

Q1(г) proved to be the most challenging with the majority of candidates seeming to understand the concept of the “заявочная книга” but finding it more difficult to explain why such an application needed to be completed.

Q2

The sectioning of the text worked well and allowed all candidates the opportunity to be rewarded for their efforts. It was noteworthy that candidates had been well prepared for this type of task and knew to use the stimulus material for vocabulary.

A surprisingly high number of candidates failed to gain the mark for *thirtieth* and there was an overwhelming tendency to offer *thirteenth* as the answer. *Hosting the Olympiad* also presented some difficulty but a range of answers was acceptable for this including “иметь Олимпиаду”. Some candidates could not be credited through failing to put the acronym *IOC* into Russian. The most testing item in the task was the phrase *written application*. Even the strongest candidates regularly took the phrase “заявочную книгу” from the text and could not be awarded the mark. A large number of answers were offered for *in eight years* and any that suggested that the building of the infrastructure was ongoing throughout the eight years was accepted.

A2 Unit 6(c) (6796/03) – Writing in Registers

Assessment Principles

The Unit was assessed positively for Content (Creative and Discursive essays) or Response (TBA), Accuracy of Language, Range and Appropriateness of Lexis, and Manipulation of Language. The revised mark grids, used for the first time this summer, can be found on pp.15-16 of the Edexcel Notice to Centres – Changes to GCE MFL Specification, Issue 1, June 2003.

Candidates' Performance

This year many candidates exceeded the number of words allowed, often by quite a large margin. This has improved slightly from last year, but is still significant. Candidates should know that work in excess of the word limit will not be marked and that this very often has an adverse effect on the content and quality of their work. All candidates are advised to write a plan for their answers, to encourage convincing structure to material and its organisation into a response within the word allocation.

Most candidates had prepared well for this examination. Many demonstrated an impressive range of vocabulary and idiom, including impressively natural colloquial language. The best candidates were able to integrate pre-learnt phrases successfully into the body of the response. However, some candidates experienced significant problems with case endings and grammar. This occasionally added to unconvincing literal translation of English to result in impeded communication.

It should be noted that clarity of handwriting is necessary for marks in the Accuracy grid. Handwriting must be sufficiently clear to distinguish letters. Several letters were prone to being indistinguishable – м, т, ш, и, л, е, ж, н, for example, sometimes appeared as a series of loops, while а, о and я also looked the same in some scripts. For examination purposes, candidates need to demonstrate clearly that they can spell and inflect accurately. Some other candidates were not aware of the different nature of Russian letters: for example, writing ш as an English 'w', or к and л as tall letters, like their Latin counterparts. Similarly, capital letters were often used inappropriately for days of the week, names of months and languages.

In the TBAs, relatively few candidates knew the basic construction: я говорю по-русски. In the formal letters, questions were frequently asked in an inappropriately colloquial spoken form: that is to say as an ordinary statement relying on intonation. The Russian construction using the particle ли for the equivalent English construction using 'if' when we mean 'whether' - for example, *'I don't know if we shall come'* – was rarely known.

All candidates should consider the register of the question they have chosen to answer. It may also be helpful to candidates to be aware of the assessment criteria in the mark grids. Creative essays should be creative; successful discursive essays should generally present more than one point of view for discussion; TBAs require formal or informal language, depending on the task.

Section A – Creative Writing

- Q1** This question was generally answered well and imaginatively. Some candidates, however, spent too long in describing what led up to the boy winning the prize, leaving not enough words to say ‘what comes next’, thus losing marks. Many candidates went over the word limit, usually adversely affecting their conclusion, and so earning fewer marks for effective organisation of content.
- Q2** This question prompted some very imaginative stories, though they were often marred by candidates going over the word limit. Few candidates realised the requirement of the essay to be a newspaper article.
- Q3** Some very good, imaginative answers were offered for this question, quite often with successful use of colloquial Russian (thus scoring as highly as a candidate using gerunds and participles well in a discursive essay, for example). Many candidates missed the requirement for ‘stage directions’; some even wrote prose. Again, many candidates went over the word limit.

Section B – Discursive Essays

Among discursive essays, Q4 and Q5 proved more popular than Q6 and Q7. There were some good opportunities to write on practised subjects, and there were many examples of well-planned essays. The best discursive essays included consideration of different points of view, examples to back up arguments and a logical conclusion.

- Q4** Many presented the case ‘for’ and ‘against’ living in the country as opposed to the city. There was an opportunity to raise many issues – pollution, traffic, noise, transport, crime, employment, leisure activities – though a few concentrated too much on environmental issues.
- Q5** There was an opportunity here to invoke the riches of Russian culture, history, or life in general. Some limited themselves to a discussion of stereotypes, occasionally concentrating too much on the bears and vodka, but there were also many examples of well-structured and nicely developed essays. While only a superficial knowledge of Russian culture might have been displayed, the latter earned high Content marks for their clarity and organisation of ideas. Some others, though full of detailed knowledge, were merely lists of Russia’s riches, and so lost marks for Content, especially if they went well over the word limit and thus came to no proper conclusion.
- Q6** Some candidates displayed good background knowledge of developments since the fall of Communism. This question was not popular, but for those interested in the subject, and who had practised the necessary language, it provided a good opportunity to do well.
- Q7** Many candidates focused on the cold war in answers to this question. The best responses also referred to contemporary issues, such as competition in business, politics, oligarchs, the mafia etc. Some candidates misunderstood or misread the question, writing about why Russians should fear Western Europe. While fears are often mutual, this nevertheless occasionally led to some ‘lopsided’ answers. Many candidates went over the word limit.

Section C – Task-based assignments

These questions proved popular with many candidates who had practised this kind of task. Many were skilled in writing letters in the necessary register. The best TBA responses do not simply point out differences in the correspondents' requirements, but seek to suggest alternatives, solutions and compromises. They consider all the issues raised in the data – both the Russian text and English information – and write an answer that would be beneficial and productive. Addresses, fax and telephone numbers are not included in the word count. But the beginning and endings of letters are (Уважаемый,,, / Искренне ваш/а,,, etc.).

Q8 In the best answers, candidates considered:

- the correct way to begin and end a letter;
- the correct register for this letter;
- the need to write a job application stressing plus points: being sporty, ability to sail/swim, knowing languages, wanting to work with children, being good at drawing/music;
- that the holiday was booked at wrong time;
- the need to finish camp early, because of university course;
- wanting clarification of accommodation and wages, help with transport and visas.

Many candidates spent too many words on the CV part of the task, not leaving enough to do more than mention accommodation, wages, transport and visas. Many were over the word limit.

Q9 In the best answers, candidates considered:

- the correct way to begin and end a letter;
- the correct register for this letter;
- that the host school wants the British to arrive 2 days earlier (restriction on dates British are available);
- what the British like about the proposed programme;
- what the British would like to add to the programme;
- whether the British are willing to participate in a concert;
- that some of the British group would like to learn a little Russian;
- that the British have 16 who want to participate in the Exchange, but the Russians have only 12.

Many candidates focused mainly on the four points mentioned under 'relevant facts' and not enough on the actual letter in Russian, causing several to ignore the concert. Many candidates only mentioned the fact of the difference in exchange student numbers without addressing the problem.

Maximum Mark	Unit 6 Grade Boundaries				
	A	B	C	D	E
100	70	61	53	45	37

GRADE AWARDS AND UNIFORM MARK SYSTEM IN MODULAR AS/A2 MODERN LANGUAGES

Grade Award Procedure

Candidates' work is graded unit by unit at the award meeting. The **unit** grade boundaries E and A are determined by inspection of candidates' work in each unit/paper. For each unit the grade B, C and D boundaries are calculated by dividing the mark interval between the A and E boundaries by 4. Where there is a remainder of 1 the extra mark is added to the A-B mark range. Where there is a remainder of 2, 1 extra mark is added to each of the A-B and the B-C mark ranges. Where there is a remainder of 3, 1 extra mark is added to the A-B, B-C and C-D mark ranges.

The **subject** grade boundaries A, B, C, D, E are determined by aggregating the module performances on the Uniform Mark System (see below).

Comparability of Options

In the interests of comparability across the Advanced level options, the papers in each language are set and moderated by a team consisting of the Chair of Examiners, Chief Examiner, Principal Examiners and Revisers who check and compare the draft papers; the units/papers are marked and graded on the same basis, with the Chair of Examiners having an overall co-ordinating role for the subject as a whole. The examiners for the different languages liaise as closely as possible on question paper setting and mark scheme construction.

At each examination the Chair of Examiners, Chief Examiner and Principal Examiners scrutinise and compare candidates' performance on common papers and on option papers. The aim is to secure comparability of standards and fairness to all candidates regardless of which options they take. The option papers are graded using grade boundaries which may differ from option to option depending on the examiners' judgement of the overall comparability of papers and candidates' performance.

The examiners are required to take into account the difficulty/accessibility of the papers and the performance of candidates by comparison with previous examinations and to determine unit/paper grade boundaries which maintain the closest possible year-on-year consistency of standards: to help in this process, statistics on previous examinations together with the relevant question papers and archive scripts are made available for reference at the grade award stage. A more difficult paper taken by a comparable candidature which produced lower average marks than at the previous examination session would lead to lower grade boundaries; there could well be a number of grade boundary variations across modules/papers from examination to examination.

Uniform Mark System

The result for each unit is issued as a standardised mark on a uniform mark scale. This ensures that all unit results are put into the module bank on a standardised basis regardless of when the units are taken. The process for arriving at module and overall subject results is as follows:

Each unit is marked using the mark scheme and the maximum mark shown in the syllabus. Grade boundaries are set for each unit at the award meeting. The grade boundary marks are converted to the uniform marks shown in the table below, with the intermediate values calculated accordingly. The overall subject grade then depends on the aggregate of the uniform marks across the units.

Candidates may cash in their AS and/or A2 results at the end of their course or they may decline to cash them in if they plan to re-take some or all units to improve their results. The rules for banking modules, cashing in results, and declining results are given in the Edexcel Information Manual which has been issued to all centres.

Grade Boundary tables

The Grade Boundary tables for the UMS can be found on the following page.

**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY
Modern Languages Uniform Mark System**

SUBJECT		UNIT		
		1	2	3
Grade		Weighting 30%	Weighting 40%	Weighting 30%
	UM 300 max	UM 90 max	UM 120 max	UM 90 max
A	240	72	96	72
B	210	63	84	63
C	180	54	72	54
D	150	45	60	45
E	120	36	48	36
N	90	27	36	27

**ADVANCED LEVEL
Modern Languages Uniform Mark System**

SUBJECT		UNIT					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Grade		Weighting 15%	Weighting 20%	Weighting 15%	Weighting 15%	Weighting 15%	Weighting 20%
	UM 600 max	UM 90 max	UM 120 max	UM 90 max	UM 90 max	UM 90 max	UM 120 max
A	480	72	96	72	72	72	96
B	420	63	84	63	63	63	84
C	360	54	72	54	54	54	72
D	300	45	60	45	45	45	60
E	240	36	48	36	36	36	48
N	180	27	36	27	27	27	36

MAKING ENTRIES FOR AS/A2 IN MODERN LANGUAGES

Teachers are advised to liaise with their Examinations Officers to ensure that their students are correctly entered for the AS/A examinations. Full information on the administrative aspects and entry procedures is given in *The Information Manual*.

The entry procedure may be summarised as follows:

1. All candidates must be entered for the relevant units using the **unit numbers** and the appropriate **option codes**.
2. At any examination session where candidates will be eligible for the award of an overall AS or A subject grade and wish to claim a certificate the candidates must also be entered using the overall **syllabus reference numbers**: these reference numbers are known as **cash-in codes**.

TRAINING COURSES FOR 2004-2005

A programme of training courses has been arranged for teachers preparing candidates for the AS/A examinations in modern foreign languages. Information regarding the national programme of training for the 2004-2005 academic year is available on the website (www.edexcel.org.uk) and via regular mail outs of information to centres throughout the year. Further guidance on training is available from: Professional Development and Training, Edexcel, Stewart House, 32 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DN, tel. 0870 240 9800, fax. 020 7758 5951, E-mail: trainingenquiries@edexcel.org.uk.

SPECIFICATION AND TEACHERS' HANDBOOK

A Teachers' Handbook for the modern languages specification is available for £6.00 (plus pp) from Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts NG18 4LN; direct tel. 01623 467 467, fax. 01623 450 481; E-mail: publications@linneydirect.co.uk. The publication code to quote for the Teachers' Handbook is UA007563.

The Handbook gives further guidance on modularity, non-literary topics, literature taught and tested through the target language, the unit 3 and 4/1 oral tests, and Information Technology in language learning; it contains bilingual literary glossaries for French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish and Urdu.

A Coursework Guide and Oral Training Guide are also available from publications.

Centres requiring extra copies of the **AS/A2 specification** booklet should obtain them from Edexcel Publications.

Publication order code: MFL Specification UA006082

The specification and specimen papers are also available on the Edexcel website: <http://www.edexcel.org.uk>.

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