

Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCE

GCE Modern Greek (8613/9613)

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UNIT 1 (6511) - READING AND WRITING

GENERAL COMMENTS ON PERFORMANCE

This year, student performance was of a very good standard. The paper seems to have targeted required knowledge effectively. This year students performed better than previous years in Questions 2 and 4. In general they showed language awareness and successful application of linguistic structures.

Requirements of question paper compared to previous years

- Timing of the examination same as previous year.
- Format of the question paper no changes.
- Numbers of tasks candidates were required to complete same as previous years.
- No changes to assessment criteria.
- Comparable demands on candidates to previous examination series.

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS ON QUESTIONS

Question 1

Candidates performed overall very well.

Some problems: A few candidates did not notice the word *τηλεθεατές* and the phrase *και πολλά άλλα* so they answered 1c and 1d wrongly.

Question 2

This was a very satisfactory performance. The majority of students addressed the components of this exercise well.

There were a number of responses (admittedly smaller than in previous years) which only partially fulfilled the requirements of this question, i.e., they tackled the communicative aspect of the question but not the morphological one.

Examples: *μπορεί* was included in the answer of 2b *να μην είναι μεγάλο* or *να* was left out in *να προσφέρουμε* 2d.

Question 3

Overall the answers were very successful.

However, in 3j the semantically but not grammatically correct distracter *πάει* instead of *παρακολουθήσει* was used.

Question 4

This was handled well by the majority of candidates.

- 4(a) produced no problems for the students. A small number gave only one detail and gained 1 mark
- 4(b) the majority answered giving the two details
- 4(c) A small number of weaker students failed to distinguish between general shopping i.e. clothes and items for people with special interests antique collectors/mountaineers etc
- 4(d) Overall very successful. Weaker candidates missed the word *ψωνίζει* and answered generally about the attractions of the area
- 4(e) Very successful answers
- 4(f) Most candidates answered successfully.
Very few missed the phrase *εκτός από ψώνια* and included shopping in their answers
- 4(g) There was a problem with the answer as most candidates did not think of the simple and obvious answer *στο δρόμο* and lifted from text
- 4(h) Very successful answers. A small number however lifted from the text and gained no marks
- 4(i) Overall a big number of successful answers.
Some students though mentioned going to museums, which is not something one does when tired (going to museums was not in the text either).

Question 5

A good number of candidates reached the "competent" band and above for their translations.

Some students really excelled giving excellent translations showing awareness of nuance e.g with the words *μεταδοτικό / κολλητικό*

On the whole, the first part of the text was more successfully tackled, both in terms of communication and fluency.

Words like: *κολλητικό/ χασμουρητό/ μεταδοτικό/συναισθήματα/ χειρονομίες* or even the word *λεξιλόγιο* proved a bit challenging for the weaker students.

Surprisingly the phrase *Είναι γνωστό* proved also challenging for the weaker students, who translated it as it is famous/ familiar / popular

Question 6

This was a subject very popular with the majority of candidates, who produced pertinent accounts of attitudes towards housework gave their opinions about changes that need to be made in the traditional Greek/Cypriot families for a fairer treatment of working women.

Some weaker candidates misinterpreted bullet point 3 and talked about working conditions in general or opportunities for women.

Thankfully a very small number of candidates produced essays showing an alarming degree of xenophobia and hostility towards the immigrant home helpers.

Knowledge and Understanding: Majority of candidates showed Adequate to very good k/u. , occasionally fairly general.

Language: The majority of candidates produced a fluent and varied language with minor errors. Most common spelling errors being passive verb endings 3rd singular e.g *εργάζετε* instead of *εργάζεται* there was a very small number who used dialect.

UNIT 2 (6512) - READING AND WRITING: TOPICS AND TEXTS

GENERAL COMMENTS ON PERFORMANCE

A fair number of candidates produced competent responses, especially in the first part of the examination. There was a noticeable pattern of breaking away from copying and relying on one's own vocabulary in order to answer question 1, but there's still room for improvement.

Despite their obvious linguistic competence, some candidates did not manage to exploit their skills in order to gain full marks or even make the top grade boundaries.

This was largely due to:

- failure to read the rubric carefully and adhere to the instruction “αλλά όχι ν’ αντιγράψεις ολόκληρες φράσεις”, when it came to tackling the comprehension questions following Text 1
- standard, rather short, pre-learned, similarly worded essays that were used by the majority of candidates from certain centres. These rather weak essays demonstrated minimal first-hand knowledge of the texts or the topics in question.

With regard to question 2 many candidates showed excellent transfer skills and only very few did not have adequate language skills to produce satisfactory transfer of meaning. It was unfortunate that many candidates did not spot the key words that are taken from the Greek source text in question 1 and lost valuable marks by attempting to gloss or leaving gaps.

Topics and Texts were handled well by many candidates, especially with regard to the History questions. At times, there was evidence of unaccountable digression and excessive reliance on narrative, especially with regard to the Samarakis and Cavafy questions.

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS ON QUESTIONS

SECTION 1

Question 1

Many candidates provided pertinent details in a concise manner, in order to address the questions. Some misread the last question and instead of offering opinion with regard to the people working for the organization, expressed their views on the mission or nature of the organization (a question that had been asked earlier, anyway).

Despite some improvement, with regard to compliance with the rubric, there were two noticeable trends.

The first concerned copying phrases from the text, verbatim. The second concerned lengthy narratives, almost mini essays, which contained considerable irrelevance and were inclusive of almost all the information contained in the text; which was both superfluous and inappropriate as an answer to a particular question.

When this occurs, all inclusive answers cannot merit full marks. In questions, for example, where two details are required, candidates are advised against “playing safe”, by providing a list of 5 details, leaving it to the examiner to single out the two correct ones. In such cases, only the first two details mentioned merit consideration.

Question 2

The majority of candidates translated competently. Main areas of difficulty related to isolated words such as “independent”, “government” and “rely”. The vast majority found the second paragraph less challenging and many wrote excellent translations of the last two sentences. A frequent error related to the translation of “they will not need to” as «δεν θα πρέπει» instead of «δεν θα χρειάζεται».

SECTION 2

Many candidates offered well balanced and pertinent responses to the questions. Unfortunately there was a noticeable trend of extremely lengthy, all-inclusive essays that gave painstaking summaries of the plot of the stories of Samarakis without any evidence of ability to analyse or substantiate points.

Questions 3 and 4

Most of those who attempted the popular questions on History gave good perceptive accounts, inclusive of important details and clearly expressed.

There were some rubric violations, when responses in 3(a) discussed periods outside the scope of the specification (i.e. Greece's involvement in the First World War) or when responses in 4(a) addressed the significance of a historical period, rather than the significance of an influential personality.

This year, as before, there was some passion and enthusiasm at the expense of pertinence and analysis, especially with regard to 3(b) and 4(a).

The most successful responses came from 4(b). Candidates showed good awareness of the historical period in question, grounded their points in fact and substantiated them with data support.

Question 5

The few candidates who attempted the Geography questions, 5 (b) in particular, gave the weakest answers. Continuing on the pattern of previous years, many essays showed minimal regard for the question and gave pre-learnt responses, which were mostly outside the requirements of the question. Many responses for both 5(a) and 5(b) focused largely on tourism and platitudes describing a beautiful landscape, without expanding to address the particular details that would have made a conclusive and pertinent essay. It would be a significant improvement if candidates abandoned the practice of writing what they know and adopted the practice of responding to the question with information which is relevant.

Answers focusing on Sri Lanka, South Africa or Corfu were not taken into consideration.

Question 6

Very few candidates attempted this topic. Those who did, expressed equal preference for (a) and (b) and wrote mostly interesting, clear and pertinent accounts that indicated good insight into the topic and the text “The third wedding wreath”, in particular.

Question 7

This was one of the most popular questions of this section. The quality of responses varied from clearly expressed and largely relevant to less than satisfactory responses containing material that was not relevant to the purposes of the question. A number of set, memorised phrases were used by many students, who had obviously little or no knowledge of the primary texts, and ended up confusing the titles of the poems, discussing the stories of Samarakis as poems written by Cavafy (!!!).

The question on whether Cavafy’ characters are heroes or not gave rise to many interesting essays, some of them standing out for original thought and independent judgement. Unfortunately, the ones on “memory” struggled for relevance, but were mostly unconvincing accounts of the themes of «Η πόλις» and «Ιθάκη», the two poems that feature in most essays, irrespective of their relevance to the question.

Question 8

Very few candidates attempted this question, to varying degrees of success. Those who did preferred (a) to (b). Their accounts were mostly generic, without enough reference to the role of the adolescents in the play, focusing instead on description of their games and adventures.

Question 9

Some confusion with Samarakis notwithstanding, the few candidates, who wrote on Ioannou, showed good knowledge of the stories and ability to argue persuasively and with clarity. Some interpreted the key word «σκοτεινά» as “gloomy”, others as “obscure”. Surprisingly, both versions produced good, relevant accounts, which substantiated their choice of interpretation convincingly.

Question 10

Some of the best and the weaker responses were to be found in this part of section 2. Although the majority of candidates demonstrated their knowledge of the stories, there was a noticeable weakness in applying this knowledge to the requirements of the questions. Others relied on explanation and extensive narrative. Many offered pre-learnt material as a generic introduction that extended to more than one pages, leaving the examiner in doubt as to whether the candidate had first hand knowledge of the texts.

Some candidates did not have to provide summaries of each and every short story, but, alas, they did, linking each paragraph with the set phrase, «άλλος ένα απλός άνθρωπος υπάρχει και στο διήγημα...», which hardly constitutes analysis. There were some very sound attempts to substantiate the point arguing about the ordinariness of Samarakis' characters, by focusing on the characters themselves, rather than every mundane detail of the plot, and taking it a step further to analyse the significance of this in terms of reader response.

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

Statistics

Unit 6511 Reading and Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	75	66	57	49	41
Uniform boundary mark	300	240	210	243	195	147

Unit 6512 Reading and Writing: Topics and Texts

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	140	103	90	77	65	53
Uniform boundary mark	300	240	210	180	150	120

Notes:

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

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

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