

Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCE

GCE Russian(8570/8590)

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6791/01 Listening and Writing Examiner's report

Assessment Principles

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 grids published in the Specification.

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 suggested that the paper was about as challenging as last year. No questions presented undue interpretational difficulties for the majority of candidates. The three non verbal questions, Q2 was the most accessible to weaker candidates with some parts of Q1 and Q3 proving more challenging. Q4 was dealt with well by the majority of candidates who generally scored well over half marks. The tasks in Q5 were rarely misunderstood, even by the weaker candidates. As in previous years, Q6 proved quite challenging for most candidates, though the majority scored 5 or above of the 8 marks available. Unfortunately, there appeared to be a higher number of candidates than usual exceeding the 60-word limit and a surprising number of apparent native speakers scored 0 for answers exclusively in Russian.

Question 1 (Как надо есть)

The majority of candidates scored at least 3 out of 4 in this section. Part (в) proved the most straightforward, probably because of the direct correspondence between **небольшими порциями** in the question rubric and **маленькими порциями**. It had been expected that the final part (г) would prove the most challenging, as the 'unknown' option, but was this was in fact as well done as parts (а) and (б). Clearly most candidates recognised the equivalence between **похудеть** and **потерять вес** in part (б).

Question 2 (Новости)

Candidates had to select the 5 correct headings from a list of 8 possible news headlines. To gain the marks it was necessary to understand and link up key language in titles given the rubric with those in the recorded extract:

- (а) с днём рождения - клубу ... исполнилось 6 лет
- (б) Не забудем русских ... за границей - Защита прав и интересов россиян ... за рубежом
- (в) Второе место для российской спортсменки - бегунья ... получила серебрянную медаль
- (г) жертвы военного конфликта - о гибели двух ... солдат
- (д) Экономический прогресс! - рост индустрии

The most common error was where candidates answered 8 instead of 1 for part (г). Some candidates no doubt saw the growth of trade between Russia and the USA as economic

progress and may have been distracted away from **рост индустрии**. However, the stimulus for part (д) made no reference to **торговля** (trade) and candidates should be aware of the need to consider the whole of the stimulus in choosing the most appropriate option.

Question 3 (Вопросы Президенту)

Candidates tend to find cloze tests challenging and indeed this question was less well done than Questions 1 and 2.

To be successful in choosing the correct words to fill the gaps, it was necessary to make the connections given below between words in the pool and language used in the stimulus. Of course, a generalised understanding of the stimulus and summary provided a fuller context for comprehension:

- i) **полдень** - **двенадцать ноль ноль**
- ii) **телевидении** - **центральных телеканалов**
- iii) **решат** - **выбирать**
- iv) **главные** - **самые важные**
- v) **Неважно откуда вы звоните** - **из любой точки мира**

Many candidates selected **уберут** from the pool instead of **решат**, possibly confusing this with **выберут** in the stimulus. A relatively small minority of candidates fell for the distractor **когда** instead of the correct **откуда**

Question 4 (Проект ТАСИС и развитие туризма на Северо-Западе России)

As in previous years, this year's question on a project to develop tourism in North-West Russia proved accessible to candidates as a whole, though some questions, especially the last two, served as good discriminators. Inaccurate language is not penalised in this section provided that it does not severely impede communication, but very poor spellings may lose marks, especially where the word in question resembles another word in the language. Examples of commonly misspelled words, often involving confusion of vowels, are: **увеличить** (often **увилить**) **число** (**чесло**), **рыбалка** (**рибалка**), **лодка** (**лотка**), **привлекательный** (**превликательный**)

Under pressure candidates sometimes confuse alphabets. An example is **город**. It is our policy to allow one such confusion per word, provided communication is not severely impaired.

However, the Russian produced by the majority of candidates in this section was sufficiently accurate in spelling and grammar to attract marks. Unlike in the corresponding comprehension section in Unit 2, candidates are not required to manipulate the target language for this question in Unit 1, therefore transcriptions of appropriate recorded material are acceptable.

- (a) This proved a straightforward opening question for the vast majority of candidates.
- (б) Again, most candidates gained both marks for this question, as the mark scheme allowed a wide range of answers and combinations of information. Some clearly failed to understand **исторический** and transcribed this as **старический** perhaps believing they had heard a cognate of **старый**. Most candidates managed the spelling of **достопримечательности** often in an oblique case.
- (в) The vast majority gained both marks, as only two of the four types of leisure activities were required. Some confused **походы** with **охота**.
- (г) This question required a little more interpretation, but most gained the mark either for conveying the idea that tourists had only heard of St. Petersburg or didn't know about the other towns.

(д) Misspellings of **инфраструктура** sometimes came close to losing the candidate the mark, but the vast majority scored on this question.

(е) This proved a testing question, as in order to gain both marks the candidate had to make it clear that the idea that the towns were dangerous and uninteresting was a perception, not fact. They, therefore, needed to preface their response with **Считают, что...** or words to that effect.

(ж) This was another challenging question, though most candidates gained at least one of the two marks available. Many scored only one mark for simply referring to the ease of travel to the three East European capitals. In order to gain both marks it was necessary to contrast this with the difficulty and/or cost of obtaining a visa to travel to Russia. Some misunderstood the point made and claimed that only Russians had to obtain a visa to travel to these cities.

Question 5

Q5 As in previous years, it was felt that the accessible Russian used in these tasks ensured that even the weakest candidates had the best possible chance of understanding what was required. Very few misinterpreted either task, but regrettably a small number of candidates left this section blank or almost blank, possibly with the intention of returning to it. It should be remembered that this question carries a total of 16 marks out of the 50 for the paper and it is inadvisable to spend too long on the earlier sections. As always, markers were flexible with regard to how candidates chose to formulate and structure their answers.

5 (a) (Content)

Fewer candidates managed to score high marks for content in this part than for 5 (б). In order to gain the maximum mark they needed to refer to any two aspects of the project mentioned in the stimulus and give substantiated opinions on them. These opinions could refer to a wide range of ideas expressed in the stimulus such as the advantages or disadvantages of linking up the regions in the North-West of Russia and increasing the number of tourists, what the cities have to offer to tourists and why they have not been attractive to tourists in the past. Candidates who chose to refer to the issue of travel being more straightforward to other East European capitals were also given credit, although this was arguably not directly relevant to the project itself. The notion which appealed to the greatest number of candidates was probably the benefit of attracting tourists to other towns in this region in order to dispel the negative perceptions which people tend to hold about the Russian provinces. Other popular ideas were how publicising the active leisure pursuits on offer could attract more tourist interest and the implicit need to develop the tourist industry infrastructure.

Candidates who simply agreed or disagreed with aspects of the project without offering reasons, or who expressed their own opinions on tourism in Russia with any reference at all to points raised in the stimulus, could not expect to be awarded more than 2 marks for content.

5 (б) (Content)

The vast majority of candidates were able to score 3 or 4 marks by putting forward and explaining two reasons why they felt or didn't feel that tourism was force for good in the modern world. Most thought it was beneficial, citing, for example, the economic advantages for the countries concerned, job creation and improving a country's image. A smaller number opted to discuss the negative effects of tourism such as environmental damage and problems caused for local communities. It was perfectly acceptable for candidates to present one beneficial and one detrimental effect of tourism, though very few did so. Marks were lost in this section for answers referring exclusively to Russia,

those repeating much of the material offered in 5a, and answers which merely described effects of tourism without any attempt to evaluate them.

Quality of Language

As in previous years, the quality of language for both 5(a) and 5(б) was quite encouraging overall, though one examiner felt that the standard was generally lower among non-native speaker learner candidates. Nevertheless, a substantial number of non-native speaker candidates scored 3 or 4 marks for producing largely accurate Russian containing a wide range of lexis appropriate to the tasks and only a minority displayed a weak grasp of lexis and grammatical structures. Hardly any candidates failed to score altogether where an answer had been attempted and most kept within the word limit. Many candidates exhibited an impressive grasp of the lexis outside that provided in stimulus and comprehension questions. Examples are: **окружающая среда, международные отношения, приезжать, прибыль, позволять, стоимость, положительная (роль), ознакомиться с, природа, способствовать**. Many candidates have clearly been well trained in presenting and linking their ideas with such devices as: **во-первых, во-вторых, с одной стороны, с другой стороны, однако, к сожалению, не только.... но и**.

It should be borne in mind that while it is expected that in 5(a) candidates will cite ideas from the listening passage, maximum marks for quality of language cannot be gained merely for reproducing the lexis and structures of the stimulus.

Question 6 (Роман Билык рассказывает о поп-группе «Звери»)

As in previous years, this question proved the most challenging, as the task requires not only good comprehension skills, but also the ability to discern the main points made in the interview and to summarise these concisely within the 60-word limit. It was felt by examiners this year that more candidates than normal lost marks through exceeding the word limit. Many such candidates would have avoided this problem by heeding the rubric: *You need not answer in complete sentences*. Again, this year a small number of candidates regrettably scored no marks, as their answers were in Russian. It is appreciated that many native speaker candidates may lack sound examination techniques through not having attended conventional classes, but centres should remind all candidates to read the rubric thoroughly before attempting questions.

(a) Any two aspects of the group's history could gain maximum marks. Successful combinations included: 'He came to Moscow and advertised on the Internet', 'He advertised on the internet and group members immediately came', 'Two members left, but others came'. Some candidates used up nearly half their 60 words by including every detail in continuous English.

Common misunderstandings were that the guitarists joined the band rather than left.

(b) Here again, just two distinct details about the educational background of the group members were sufficient. For example, '(their educational background) was not at all musical, they all studied different things' or two examples of what different members had studied were sufficient. Many candidates believed that *not all* the members had a musical background as opposed to *none* of them. The key word here was **наоборот**. Candidates who chose to translate **в аэрокосмическом лицее, в авиационном техникуме** often struggled to find a convincing equivalent in English, but renderings which conveyed roughly what had been studied gained a mark. **Строительство** did not present many problems, however.

(c) This part was generally well done with most candidates being able to pick out at least two details from Roman's answer about the secret of the group's individuality: 'they do

everything differently, write their own songs, decide where and how to perform and look'. Fewer candidates retrieved the last detail, suggesting they may have not understood **выглядеть (на сцене)**

(d) It was unfortunate that many candidates failed to score in this section having already exceeded the word limit. This was all the more disappointing, as the two marks could have been gained in a matter of four words: 'It's serious, hard work'. Some candidates had clearly avoided this problem and saved words by crossing out the first part of their initial response about how his experience on tour was not as people imagine: 'being met, taken to a restaurant and introduced to girls (after a concert)'.

Advice and Guidance to centres and candidates:

- Candidates must ensure that their audio equipment is working effectively and that they have spare batteries or audio equipment on hand. For the third year centres had the option of using CDs rather than audio cassettes.
- Mark allocations should be used as a guide to how much information is expected in answers. It is normal practice in the comprehension question to leave one line for the candidate's answer for each mark allocated.
- 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.
- Take care with handwriting clarity, as this understandably tends to deteriorate when writing under the pressures specific to a listening comprehension examination.
- Avoid repetition of information and redundant words in responding to tasks with a word limit. Do not copy out vocabulary and phrases from the question unnecessarily.
- For the summary, try to be succinct and avoid supplying too much detail on one point at the expense of others. *Examiners are instructed to count the words for Q6 and stop marking after the first natural break beyond 60 words.*
- Due attention should be given by candidates to time management for this paper.

6792/01 Reading and Writing Examiner's report

No change to the allocation of marks from the previous year. Six questions with differing assessment requirements were set. In Question 1 candidates were required to extract information from a news type report on a poetry festival. Six responses were required to summarise the passage. Questions 2 & 3 were based on one stimulus passage about the introduction of a new subject into the Russian school system. Question 2 required candidates to use the text complete sentences. Six beginnings to sentences were set with 10 possible endings. Question 3 required candidates to use the stimulus passage to define words/phrases for six marks. Question 4 set questions in Russian to be answered in Russian on a text about illegal downloading of music from the internet worth 10 marks. Question 5 required responses in English to questions in English on a Russian stimulus about the life of Garry Kasparov. Question 6 required candidates to write a target language response of 100-120 words to a stimulus passage worth 40 marks. This was broken into 20 marks for Content and 20 marks for Quality of Language. Overall total for the paper is 80 marks.

The content of the paper seemed to be accessible to candidates of all ability levels. Very few candidates scored low marks on question 6 which accounts for 50% of the total of the paper. The level of difficulty proved appropriate to the range of attainment anticipated at AS level. There was gradual progression in difficulty throughout the paper. Candidates seem to have found sufficient time to complete the paper. There seem to be fewer candidates who wrote over the word limit for question 6 and very few indeed among taught candidates. Candidates and centres are becoming more aware of the need to write succinctly. There is a worrying trend for many candidates to write phonetically and candidates must be aware of accuracy of spelling as well as of grammar.

Question 1 *Русская Поэзия В Англии*

This multiple choice type question is marked electronically. The question gives candidates the opportunity to read a short extract and then choose the six appropriate phrases to summarise the passage. Most candidates scored high marks on this question demonstrating sound recognition of vocabulary items. Candidates appreciated that in **A** there was no mention in the stimulus passage of *сентябрь*. **Б** Was well recognised with the link between *поэзии* and *поэтический*. Most candidates appreciated that *первый* could not be *традиционный* in **В**. Question **Г** was well understood with clear links between *Англии* and *Лондона*. Question **Д** was also well recognised with *песни* being mentioned both in the question and in the stimulus. Weaker candidates struggled with **Е** and did not appreciate that *пирожки и квас* are *продукты*. Stronger candidates recognised that *мало* and *много* are opposites in question **Ж** and did not offer this response. Question **З** was less successful amongst weaker candidates who did not connect *в разных странах* and *по всему миру*. The cognate *раунд* was well recognised in question **И**. Question **К** presented some difficulty to weaker candidates who could not see the connection between *ещё не знают* and *скоро узнают*.

Question 2 *Школьник - тоже человек*

This question seems to have been successfully responded to by the majority of candidates. Where candidates sometimes lose the mark is in searching for the grammatical fit rather than reading the stimulus passage. There is more than one grammatical fit for the majority of the questions.

In order to achieve the mark in **A** candidates had to see the connection between *отреагировали* and *недовольны решением*. Candidates had to read the passage to find the correct answer to **Б** that *будет новый предмет*. Candidates had to understand

учебник in order to attain the mark in *В*. Question *Г* seems to have had the highest number of grammatical fit responses with the fact that the *представитель будет работать* and not saying that *студенты не интересуются языками*. Question *Д* was well answered with the majority of candidates understanding *согласны*. Question *Е* was also well understood by the majority of candidates.

Question 3 *Школьник - тоже человек*

The majority of candidates clearly understood the stimulus material but some encountered problems in actually attempting to answer the question using the text to find a response rather than define. It is important that candidates are familiar with this type of exercise. *А* was well understood by the majority of candidates and both *предмет* and *школьную программу* were acceptable answers. Weaker candidates failed to score the mark in *Б* by looking forward a grammatical fit and incorrectly selecting *современным* as opposed to the correct *не скучным*. Most candidates scored well with the connection between *специалистами* and *экспертами* in question *В*. Weaker candidates failed to recognise the connection between *книга* and *учебник* in question *Г*. Question *Д* presented most difficulty in this part of the exam with candidates not appreciating that telling that something is good is *рекомендуют*. Candidates of all abilities coped well with *Е* and both *на прошлой неделе* and *в последнее время* were acceptable responses.

Question 4 *Пираты XXI Века*

Candidates dealt well on the whole with this question and attainment on this question seems improved in line with 2007. There was less evidence of candidates lifting answers directly from the text and much better ability to use own words. This implies that candidates are better prepared for the question type. Question *А* was well attempted with a simple *нет* being acceptable. Weaker candidates failed to score the mark in *Б* by failing to manipulate the ordinal number *третий* to the cardinal *три* or indeed to the digit *3*. Question *В* again involved some manipulation from nationalities to country names and this was well dealt with on the whole. Stronger candidates scored the mark in *Г* with manipulation or writing the year *2007*. Weaker candidates gave the specific date in June with no reference to the year. Stronger candidates gave good definitions of *по газетным данным* in question *Д* but weaker candidates failed to appreciate what the question was actually asking. Minimal manipulation was required in question *Е* and stronger candidates coped well with this requirement. The definition of *непросто* was well answered with more able candidates covering all options with very full definitions. Most commonly *трудно* and *тяжело* were correctly suggested. Question *З* was the most testing of this section. Candidates were required to manipulate two concepts for the two available marks. The ideas to be communicated were *доказательство* and *незаконности* and stronger candidates completed this well and fluently. The idea of a change in the *закон об авторских правах* was also accepted if candidates manipulated their response. The biggest impression from this question was the evidence of weakness of Russian spelling. Many candidates are offering phonetic spellings and not showing sufficient accuracy. In some circumstances this can jeopardise a mark.

Question 5 *Великий Чемпион*

This question seemed to be very “candidate friendly”. Most candidates scored a high number of marks in responding in English. A very small number ignored the rubric and wrote responses in Russian.

Question (a) was well answered with candidates of all abilities demonstrating good knowledge of *самым великим*.

Question (b) was well answered by stronger candidates with weaker candidates failing to appreciate that *двух десятилетий* is in fact *twenty* years and not *two* or *ten*. Question (c) was answered successfully with the majority of candidates scoring one of the two marks. Where candidates tended to lose the mark was to mention Kasparov's enthusiasm when it was in fact his friends who were enthusiastic. Very good understanding of *боялся* was evident in question (d) with candidates scoring well on this question. Question (e) was well answered too with good understanding of *уважаю* and *понимаю*. The cognate *агрессию* was well understood in question (f) but some candidates had some difficulty in explaining what was meant by *решительность*. Question (f) was well answered with two marks being available for the idea that he was going to become *more involved in politics away from the world of chess*. Question (g) was a well done question with the majority of candidates understanding *сделал всё, что он хотел*.

Question 6 *Здоровье*

This question was well attempted by the majority of candidates all of whom were prepared to write about some aspect of what constitutes a healthy diet. Candidates endeavoured to answer all of the bullet points and there was much more evidence that candidates are heeding the word limit. Where marks were lost for content was in the second bullet point where candidates did not respond sufficiently to what restaurants they would like to see but talked about the restaurants that are currently to be found in their area. The first bullet point was well answered with a significant number of candidates referring to the *овощей* and *фруктов* mentioned in the stimulus material. The third bullet point was dealt with well by stronger candidates who said that celebrities or school should take more of a role in encouraging young people to think about their health. Candidates who had not exceeded the word limit scored well on the final bullet point about what constitutes *быть здоровым* and there was an impressive range of responses ranging from taking a more active role in sport to ensuring sufficient sleep. Quality of Language marks were encouraging and learner candidates showed good evidence of comprehension of Russian grammar. There was a good attempt to incorporate idiomatic phrases. There was, however, more evidence of phonetic errors than in previous years and this could hinder the Quality of Language mark. All candidates are to be encouraged to improve upon spelling. Common errors included an inability to distinguish between *куда* and *где* or *туда* and *там*. Confusion may arise here as these are the same words in English. Some difficulty was evident in the usage of the possessive pronoun in phrases such as *в вашем районе* and *в моём районе*. Candidates tended not to adapt the forms and demonstrated some weakness in using *ваш, мой* and *свой*.

Advice and Guidance

- Read the questions and rubric carefully
- Use the mark allocations as a clear indicator of what answers will be expected
- Ensure that handwriting is legible
- When responding in Russian make sure that language is manipulated and not copied from the text
- Do not just guess at an answer there must be evidence taken from the text
- Review more common vocabulary items such as numbers, seasons, days and months
- In the longer essay task make sure that all bullet points are addressed equally
- Check the amount of words carefully
- Do not write a word count that is not correct as totals are checked
- Check spellings and correctly matched cases e.g. noun and adjective to agree

6793/15 Prepared Oral Topic Examiner's report

Assessment Principles

This unit is assessed positively under the following criteria: *Quality of Language* (divided into *Accuracy* and *Quality of Language*), *Response* and *Knowledge and Understanding*. Each of these categories is marked out of 20, giving a total mark of 60 for this unit.

Conduct of the test

The candidate should introduce their chosen topic, uninterrupted, for up to 2 minutes. After a maximum of 2 minutes, the teacher/examiner should begin discussion of the topic. 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. At some point during the test, the teacher/examiner must test the candidate on his/her ability to engage in conversation that goes beyond the headings on the oral form, but remains within the chosen topic area. In order to access the entire range of marks for *Response*, the candidate must be given the opportunity to respond to unpredictable questions. If the teacher/examiner does not ask unpredictable questions, the candidate cannot be awarded more than 14 marks out of 20 for *Response*.

The teacher/examiner should discourage the reciting of long passages of pre-learned material. 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.

The majority of centres followed the administration instructions and adhered to the time limits. There is no advantage to the candidate in a test that is longer than 12 minutes. If the test is shorter than 10 minutes, the candidate may not have the opportunity to demonstrate as wide a range of knowledge and understanding of the topic, or as wide a range of vocabulary and structures as possible. They may not, therefore, be able 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 supplied clear recordings of the tests. On occasion background noise or faint recordings made it difficult to hear either the teacher or the candidate, or both.

Performance of Candidates

As in previous years, the overall level of achievement for this unit was high. Most topics were chosen appropriately and reflected the candidate's research into an aspect of Russia or Russian culture. Candidates were able to use their research and knowledge to develop discussion and conversation. The majority of candidates were able to deal very well with unpredictable questions.

As in previous years, topics that had a definite story to tell were generally more successful than topics based on general issues such as 'Social Issues in Russia' or 'Drugs in Russia'. In the latter, candidates tended to rely on general knowledge and anecdotal evidence, rather than demonstrating in-depth research and knowledge specific to Russia.

As a rule, though not exclusively, the most successful topics were historical, literary and geographical in content. Topics that have been popular for several years were submitted very successfully once again. Examples included 'Tchaikovsky', 'Trotsky', 'St Petersburg',

and 'The siege of Leningrad', 'Rasputin', 'Pushkin', 'Putin and The October Revolution. There was a pleasing range of newer or original topics, for which candidates had, on the whole, prepared very well, such as 'Roman Abramovitch', 'The 2008 presidential elections' and 'modern Moscow'.

The factor linking all these topics is that they 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 'very detailed, wide-ranging and well-researched knowledge' and a 'wealth of relevant opinion and evidence' (see criteria for 18-20 marks for *Knowledge and Understanding*). Centres are reminded that the specification states that 'In preparation for this unit, students will need to research their chosen area and undertake extended reading from a variety of sources.'

There is nothing to stop more than one student 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 teacher/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 that 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. If there is any doubt, a good rule would be to include "Russia" or "Russian" in the title.

In cases where the candidate makes no reference to a relevant topic area and cannot, therefore, be awarded any marks for *Knowledge and Understanding*, then neither can any marks be awarded for *Quality of Language* nor *Response*.

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 teacher/examiner should be familiar with the requirements and assessment grids for this unit. It may well help the candidate with his/her preparation of the topic to be familiar with them, too.

The title of the topic, as it is written on the oral form, must be carefully considered.

The candidates should write on the oral form subheadings that will serve both to prompt their memory, and indicate to the examiner the direction of their research, so as to allow them to develop the conversation based on the material prepared by the candidates. 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 unpredicted questions have been asked in order to award a higher mark for *Response*.

It is imperative that the test be conducted correctly if the candidate is to have every opportunity to be awarded marks from the entire mark ranges. Note that the teacher/examiner, as mentioned before, **must** test the candidate's ability to discuss unpredictable areas of their topic, if the candidate is to be awarded more than 14 marks out of 20 for *Response*.

The same category also assesses 'spontaneous discourse'. In fairness to the candidate, therefore, the reciting of long pre-learned passages and the use of scripted questions and answers should be avoided. While it is expected that candidates will prepare the language they plan to use in the test, a number of candidates relied too much, or almost exclusively, on a clearly pre-prepared sequence of questions and answers and were, therefore, unable to access the higher ranges of the marks for *Response*.

The teacher/examiner should give the candidate every chance to demonstrate the full extent of their knowledge by asking appropriate, open-ended questions that encourage the candidate to volunteer as much information as possible.

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. Unit 3 and Unit 4.1 tests should always be recorded on separate tapes, as they may be sent to different examiners.

6794/16 Oral Discussion of Issue Examiner's report

Assessment principles

This unit is assessed positively under the following criteria: *Quality of Language* (divided into *Accuracy* and *Quality of Language*), *Response* and *Justification and Debate*. Under *Justification and Debate*, up to 5 of the 20 marks are awarded specifically for the grasp of the initial issue. Each of these categories is marked out of 20, giving a total mark of 60 for this unit.

Conduct of the Test

The candidate should begin by introducing his or her chosen issue, uninterrupted, for up to one minute. He or she should indicate a clear stance on the issue. The teacher/examiner should then initiate debate on this issue. Debate of this initial issue should last a further four minutes. After this, at least two further issues, chosen by the teacher/examiner, should be debated. The test should last 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 for a test that is too long. 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 an 'excellent grasp of the initial issue'. They should state their stance on this issue on the Oral 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 held strong opinions about 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 'I believe that drugs should be legalized', 'I am in favour of the ban on smoking in public places', 'The death penalty is wrong', 'Cloning is unnecessary', and 'University tuition fees should be abolished'.

Many candidates demonstrated an impressive range of relevant vocabulary and the ability to debate at a high level. The majority of teacher examiners conducted this unit sympathetically, encouraging candidates to give their best performance.

Some teacher/examiners, unfortunately, jeopardized their candidates' chances of obtaining the full range of marks by failing to observe the time limits, by failing to introduce further issues for debate, or by introducing topics and asking questions which did not allow candidates to demonstrate their ability to debate and to defend a point of view. Some teacher/examiners tended to ask questions more appropriate for the AS, or even GCSE, level.

Advice and Guidance

Both the candidate and the examiner must be aware that this unit is based on the discussion of issues, in order that candidates may demonstrate the ability to sustain an argument and to justify and defend a point of view. Some candidates were disadvantaged by an incorrect selection of their initial issue that did not provide an opportunity for debate. Many candidates lost marks due to the incorrect conduct of this test, as, due to inappropriate questioning, they were 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 talk too much.

The candidate should indicate a stance on their chosen issue. Based on this year's experience, it may be helpful to candidates to begin their introduction using words such as 'I believe that ...' or 'I think that ...' so that their opinion is immediately clear.

As previously mentioned, candidates should research their chosen issue carefully, including, where appropriate, facts and figures to substantiate their point of view. As mentioned before, in order to access the highest marks for *Justification and Debate* they must demonstrate an 'excellent grasp of the initial issue'.

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 demonstrate a 'very high incidence of spontaneous discourse'. This they cannot do by regurgitating pre-learned answers.

After debate of the initial issue, the candidate must be presented with truly unpredictable issues. It is immediately obvious to the Edexcel examiner who assesses the test when candidates know in advance and have prepared sequences of questions and answers for the 'unpredictable areas'. In these cases, the extent to which candidates have met the requirements of the mark grids for *Response* and *Justification and Debate* must be considered. With this in mind, it is important that the teacher/examiner chooses the subsequent issues for discussion, rather than giving the candidate a free choice.

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.

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. 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. Unit 3 and Unit 4.1 tests should always be recorded on separate tapes, as they may be sent to different examiners.

6795/01 Topics and Texts Examiner's report

Assessment Principles

Forty-five marks were allocated to each question. The questions were assessed according to the grids in the current edition of the Specification; K/U 30, O/D 9, QL 6.

Candidates' Responses

The examiners observed profound differences in the level of preparation by individual candidates once again this year. While some answers displayed an impressive knowledge and understanding of the chosen area of study and were a joy to read, others were unfortunately based on scanty and frequently out-of-date general knowledge. This year saw an increase in answers which had little or nothing to do with the question set. It should be noted that such essays can only be awarded minimal marks, and wholly irrelevant material scores 0 in every category, including language. The reproduction of old notes and essays without tailoring the material to fit the question on this year's paper continued to be in evidence, though many candidates clearly demonstrated the ability to recast pre-learned material in a sensible and creative fashion. Too many candidates still ignore one part of the question, thereby losing marks. It is essential to answer fully both parts of the question either in two distinctive parts or by integrating both parts of the question into one answer. Candidates who only touch on one of the two parts will not score highly, however good their answer to the other part of the question may be. Many candidates seemed prepared to support their argument with quotations, though these were not always relevant, accurate or properly integrated into the candidates' discourse. The accuracy of spelling and the clarity of handwriting sometimes left much to be desired. Some of the work was surprisingly ungrammatical, even when written by obvious native speakers. The majority of answers to Q1(a), Q1(b) and Q2(b) were very largely anecdotal with little evidence of serious study. Answers to Q2(a) were generally slightly more successful. It should be noted that statistics should be credible and that preferably a relevant source should be quoted. Answers to these questions accounted for around 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 question by far was Q6(a). Answers on Pushkin (Q6a and Q6b) accounted for approximately a third of all responses. The next most popular sets of questions were Gogol, Chekhov, the Siege of Leningrad and Baranskaya.

Q1(a) Responses varied widely in quality, though, for the most part, this question was tackled poorly. Most candidates made general remarks about what the government ought to do to combat unemployment rather than discuss the measures already in place. Many answers lacked statistics, credible or otherwise. There were few answers which dealt adequately with the second part of the question. A surprising number of candidates suggested that young people in Russia did not fear unemployment because their parents would continue to support them financially, come what may.

Q1(b) Some candidates did not have a clear idea of what is meant by "social problems" and simply chose to describe some of the material improvements to society brought about by Ex-President Putin. Some listed a range of social problems, but failed to provide appropriate statistics or even mention whether the situation was improving or getting worse. The majority of candidates thought that generally people were more optimistic about the future, mainly due to the legacy of the Putin years, though not all were equally certain.

Q2(a) The majority of candidates were able to offer at least satisfactory answers to the first part of the question, though few displayed the same level of achievement when attempting the second. Many candidates without statistics simply waffled about the chosen area in general without focusing on the specific demands of the question.

Q2(b) There were few good answers to this question. Some candidates failed to understand the concept “cultural life” and wrote an essay which might have applied to more or less any city or region. A tiny minority of responses displayed a thorough knowledge of cultural events and institutions in the broadest sense. Usually the second part of the question was poorly addressed.

Q3(a) There were few answers to this question. A few were outstanding, displaying a sound knowledge of the events of the siege and their effects on the city and its population by 1944. The less well prepared simply provided common-sense generalisations true of any besieged city in times of war.

Q3(b) This question provoked a range of response. Most candidates did well in the first part of their answer, providing a detailed account of the problems encountered by the citizens of Leningrad. Many candidates also wrote measured and substantiated answers to the second part of the question and few ignored it altogether.

Q4(a) There were very few answers to this question, none of them properly addressing the first part. The second part of the question was more successfully dealt with on the whole. Candidates were generally able to mention a few of Eisenstein’s technical devices.

Q4(b) There was only one answer to this question. It contained little detail about Tsarism and referred to part of one film only.

Q5(a) There were very few answers to this question. These displayed minimal or no evidence of the candidates having read the poems, although they did contain information about the poet’s own life. There was one answer which contained good quotations from two poems and a reasonable assessment of the poet’s worth.

Q5(b) There were also very few answers to this question, but the majority of them were pleasing to read as they contained appropriate quotation, sensible analysis of the text and good background knowledge of the historical and cultural context of the poem. Generally speaking, both parts of the question were answered in a balanced way.

Q6(a) This question produced the entire range of response in terms of the display of textual knowledge, the ability to analyse and to write in Russian. The majority of candidates displayed a thorough knowledge of the text and many could quote well from it, offering incisive, insightful answers. Most candidates tackled the first part of the question more successfully than the second, and a few failed to address the second part at all. There was a predictable lack of consensus as to whether the countess plays a role in the story up to the very end. Individual interpretations of the text are to be welcomed, provided appropriate justification can be supplied.

Q6(b) This question was much less popular than Q6(a) and generally it was not well answered. Few candidates did more than simply retell the story without defining madness or offer a pre-learned character study of Germann. The second part of the question was rarely adequately handled. Sometimes it became a discussion on the treatment of the supernatural or it was simply ignored altogether.

Q7(a) This question produced a wide range of response with some good answers from

those who had actually seen the play. Regrettably, few were able to quote from the text. Surprisingly, some found it hard to offer an opinion as to whether they were sorry for the women, though a good number did so convincingly, offering different degrees of support for the two characters concerned.

Q7(b) Slightly less popular than Q7(a), this question provided a range of answers of varying quality. Some candidates displayed a solid knowledge of characters and their corrupt nature and practices, while others wandered off the point, delivering more of a history essay about the society of the time or an account of the background to the writing of the play. On the whole, quotation was scarcely in evidence, and few mentioned the importance of the final scenes for the interpretation of the play.

Q8(a) For the most part, answers to this question were pleasing with interesting observations and personal responses, sometimes supported with appropriate quotation. A minority of candidates confused the names of characters and had a sketchy recall of the events of the text. While a few largely ignored the second part of the question, some provided an interesting personal response. There was no consensus as to whether Vladimir is weak or not. Most were able to back up their view with reference to the text and / or with appropriate quotation from it.

Q8(b) Though this question was less popular than Q8(a), most answers were interesting and well thought out. Some candidates were less successful when dealing with the second part of the question, however. Sometimes they wandered off the point, providing a description of their own feelings about first love rather than an analysis of the different kinds of love illustrated in the text.

Q9(a) Most candidates could give at least a reasonable account of the character of Elena, and the majority did so with a pleasing stock of appropriate quotations to substantiate their arguments. Almost all candidates attempted to answer the second part of the question, expressing differing views as to whether she is a good person or not. The best candidates made use of the text to support the conclusion that she is neither wholly bad nor good.

Q9(b) On the whole, candidates failed to cast a sufficiently wide net when answering this question. Rather than focusing on specific instances of conflict, their presentation on stage, the background to their appearance within the play and their intrinsic nature, candidates tended to resort to character studies of a small number of individuals, usually without discussing their interaction to any significant degree. Predictably, most chose Vanya's failed attempt on the life of Serebryakov as the most dramatic moment, though few justified their choice or alluded to dramatic techniques.

Q10(a) The answers to this question were generally satisfactory or good, most containing appropriate quotation. Answers discussed Mariya's own feeble attempts at extricating herself from her predicament and those of Kuz'ma, her valiant and devoted husband. Candidates offered a range of opinion as to the hopelessness of Mariya's situation.

Q10(b) There were very few answers to this question, and none of them showed much indication of serious textual study.

Q11(a) This question resulted in a number of excellent responses, showing a detailed knowledge of the text with few factual inaccuracies. The second part of the question was generally well handled with candidates divided as to the degree of selfishness displayed by Dima, even in the context of the late-Soviet male. Many also expressed their affinity with the plight of his overburdened wife.

Q11(b) This question attracted fewer responses, and, on the whole, was less well done than Q11(a). A surprising number of candidates were clearly unsure as to when the text was written and thus had difficulty linking it with the correct historical context. Some appeared to know a great deal about the lot of late-Soviet women, yet clearly had little knowledge of the text, its characters and events. The second half of the question was sometimes neglected, with many failing to mention the diary form of the text and the fact that the main time-frame occurs over seven consecutive days.

Q12(a) There were few answers to this question, but almost all were at least satisfactory. They displayed a solid knowledge of the text and a strong ability on the part of some candidates to support their arguments with appropriate quotation. Opinion as to whether women positively or negatively influence Simeonov's life and happiness was divided.

Q12(b) This question was surprisingly more popular than Q12(a). Answers varied in quality, but usually were well informed, and it was pleasing to note the candidates' use of technical terms for the analysis of literary style. In some answers, more could often have been said with regard to part two, but few candidates neglected this altogether.

Advice and Guidance

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

- candidates should answer two questions only
- answers should be written in separate halves of the answer booklet
- candidates should indicate clearly which questions they are answering
- 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 most 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 abbreviated forms.

6795/02 Coursework Examiner's report

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 all scripts are moderated by Edexcel. New assessment grids were introduced for summer 2004 to reflect changes in assessment objective weightings in this Specification (pages 12-13 in the Notice to Centres - Changes to MFL specification - Issue 1 - June 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 Module 5 Paper 2 is 135 marks.

Candidates' Responses

As in previous years, there were many pieces of coursework which were a delight to moderate.

These offered:

- very good presentation with carefully structured plans and detailed bibliographies, albeit in some cases totally reliant on the Internet;
- 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 main, in some cases, the sole basis for most candidates' research. Candidates chose topics relating to contemporary themes, the economy, sociological and ecological issues, historical events and literature. Essays covered social problems such as alcoholism, drugs, the Nord-Ost occupation and the Beslan siege, President Putin/Medvedev, Chechnya, changes after 1991 and problems facing Russian youth (orphans, homelessness). Other categories included tourism, the economy and ecology. Religion and the Army also appeared, and there were also excellent essays written on literary themes. Chekhov, Pushkin, Dostoyevsky and Akhmatova were very popular choices for many candidates. A number of candidates are opting for creative writing often in the format of a diary. In most cases essays of this kind were stimulating to read and very informative.

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 judgment needed for the highest K/U 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 especially with reference to Russian coursework.

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, if they do not offer any element of personal judgement, they cannot command the highest marks in this section.** Please note that candidates are likely to score under 17/30 for **Knowledge and Understanding** if they do not display the 'beginnings of independent judgment'.

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 *Health*, *Russian Traditions* and *The Mafia* 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 encyclopaedias. In the few instances where 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 and should help them with both the choice of title and 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 focused and structured the plan, the more convincing the final product. The plans which tended to be the most effective were those that gave headings and brief (i.e. maximum 10 words) reasons for each heading. The essays which carefully followed such plans tended to secure 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 or so detailed to the point that nothing more was gained from reading the essay. 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 focused 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, solely in many cases, but candidates are urged to record **specific sources**, not just generic web sites. When candidates append printouts of material from websites, this is both interesting and helpful. However, only the relevant pages to the essay need be sent.

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. There were instances of ungrammatical titles which did not create a favourable initial impression.

Common areas of difficulty included:

- the conjugation of irregular verbs like *содержать*, *хотеть* and *сказать*;
- *-овать* and *-евать* verbs in the present tense;
- the future of *есть* ;
- the declension of feminine soft sign nouns;

- the declension of время ;
- the declension of adjectives;
- agreements of adjectives with masculine, feminine and neuter nouns;
- the use of the accusative and 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 formation of the past tense with the past participle and past tense of the verb быть ie я готовил(а) был(а)
- misspellings of common words ie читаю (считаю), еще (ещё)

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 invested 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 K/U when candidates:

- were too factual in their treatment;
- did not firmly link their essay to Russia; essays on present day countries such as the Ukraine or any other former USSR republics are not specific to Russia, unless from an historical perspective ie pre-1991;
- 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;
- did not cover two distinct content areas for the two pieces of coursework.

Conversely there was a tendency on the part of centres in some cases to be too severe when marking the **Quality of Language** element. A wide range of lexis and structures together with a high level of accuracy ought to warrant the highest marks in this section.

6796/01 Listening and Writing Examiner's report

Q1, the comprehension section, was marked out of a total of 15 for communication only. Phonetic transcriptions, misspellings and grammatical errors were only taken into account if they seriously impeded communication. The summary was marked out of 20. Out of this total up to 15 marks could be awarded for communication of the main ideas and 5 marks for quality of continuous English (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling)

Candidate performance

Overall performance in this paper was slightly better than last year, the mean being approximately 1 mark higher. The subject matter was found to be accessible to most candidates who appeared to have covered the key vocabulary and concepts required for a discussion of charity as one of the subtopics in the specification at A2. The paper was completed by almost all candidates who were given the opportunity to demonstrate their skill at retrieving information, drawing inferences from the stimulus, and producing an effective summary of the heard material in continuous English. Again this year, timing was rarely a problem for candidates, many of whom wrote an initial draft for Q2 before producing a much more concise final answer. Some candidates wrote a detailed draft answer, and then crossed out material in order to stay within the word limit. This approach was generally less satisfactory, as candidates sometimes removed key content from their final response.

Question 1

This question was tackled successfully by most candidates, the vast majority of whom scored at least 11 marks out of the 15 available.

- a) This was intended to be a relatively straightforward opening question. However, some candidates gained no marks for stating that there were still over 6 months left before the end of the year of charity, and many others gained only 1 mark for simply answering '6 months'.
- б) This question too posed problems for candidates who may not have thought through the question and stimulus carefully. It was not enough to say that the press was (greatly) interested in the project. The key element assessed was that press interest was growing (**интерес прессы растёт**)
- в) There were two distinct elements assessed in this question: the idea that more organisations would take part in the project and that more people would learn about it. Some candidates omitted the second element and gained only one mark.
- г) The vast majority of candidates obtained both marks for this question. **Важнейший фактор** presented few problems. Because of the potential ambiguity of the superlative, a wide range of renderings were accepted such as **очень** or **самый важный**. Occasionally, candidates omitted **общественной** and/or **экономической жизни**, though only one adjective was required for the second mark.
- д) There were several instances of comparatives and superlatives in the first few questions and in this question it was essential to convey the idea that businessmen were spending **more** money each year on charity. Answers which stated that they were spending a lot (**много** or **очень много**) did not gain credit, though 1 mark could be gained by referring to **каждый год**. Sometimes candidates lost marks by failing to include **благотворительность** in their answer. This was essential, as the question simply asks what is said about businessmen.
- е) Most candidates gained both marks for answering that one could contribute to charity either by donating money or giving up one's (free) time. Some apparently non-native

speaker candidates impressed examiners by using the instrumental alone (**деньгами**) to answer the first element.

ж) Again, most candidates answered this question correctly either with a verbal construction such as «**когда они сами участвуют**», or by using the instrumental «**участием в ней**». Some candidates' spelling of **участвовать**, however, was too poor to gain credit.

з) This final question worth 3 marks was intended to challenge the most able candidates. The question was so worded as to encourage candidates to preface their response with **Нет**. However, many were able to gain all 3 marks by clearly stating that Vitaly believed people have a right to donate publicly or privately (anonymously) to charity. Answers prefaced with: **И да и нет** usually gained 2 marks for showing that the two methods of donating were acceptable to Vitaly. However, they could not gain the third mark, as the question clearly asks whether he believes people should donate to charity **only** anonymously. This highlights the point that to be sure of gaining maximum credit, candidates should ensure they answer the precise question asked.

Advice and guidance to candidates for the comprehension

Read the questions carefully before attempting to answer.

Bear in mind that some of the questions in this section require inferential or deductive answers, but such must be rooted in the stimulus - they are not guesswork.

Use the mark allocation space allowed in the question paper as a guide to how much detail is required for each answer.

Write your answers in clear handwriting. Make an effort to write accurate Russian, as this will increase the likelihood of gaining marks.

Question 2

As in previous years, a small proportion of candidates regrettably scored no marks, as they wrote their summaries in Russian. Although the need to use continuous English and to write no more than 100 words is referred to in the rubric in bold type, it appears that some candidates sitting the paper had had little or no training in examination technique. Centres might help these candidates by reminding them to read the rubric carefully at the start of the examination.

As reported last year, most centres have obviously trained their own candidates to work within the 100-word limit in this section, and it was gratifying to be able to award 13-15 marks for the summary to a substantial number of candidates. A majority of candidates demonstrated satisfactory to good summary skills by retrieving half or more of the essential details. As in previous years, however, many failed to be concise and it must be repeated that no credit can be given for any work beyond the first natural break after the 100 word limit has been reached. It was not uncommon for this to occur during the third or fourth bullet.

There were five bullet points, each worth a maximum of three marks, though many alternative ways of expressing the ideas targeted were recognised and four or five alternative elements of information were credited for all bullets (see mark scheme).

Quality of English (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling)

The standard of English was generally high. Most candidates followed the rubric and wrote their answers in continuous English. It should be noted that where note form is used the maximum GPS mark is 1. Virtually all those whose native language appeared to be English scored 4-5 marks while candidates whose native language appeared not to be English rarely fell below 2-3 marks. Most commonly misspelled words were **autumn** and **annually**, though in general, the lexis presented fewer problems than in previous years. Candidates were not penalised for writing **health care** as one word, as this variant appears to be gaining wide acceptance. Again, the greatest difficulty for native Russian speakers was appropriate use of articles and occasionally verb forms. Candidates who struck out words and phrases to reduce their word count sometimes created incomplete sentences which lost credit for this assessment category as well as potentially for content in the summary.

Summary

- **How much Russians contribute to charity**

Most candidates scored the maximum 3 marks here, though too often they included every possible detail and used up to half of the permitted word count in the process. The amount of **one and a half billion dollars** was not accurately retrieved by almost half of candidates. Many confused billion with **million**, others thought that only **half** a billion dollars were contributed, while others used **milliard** which is not acceptable current English usage. A few lost a mark for omitting a clear reference to the money being spent on charity. Many candidates gained a mark for including the point about the importance of people helping each other.

- **Who does the most for charity**

It should be remembered that all the points included in the summary must be intelligible without reference to the bullets. A number of candidates lost the first mark for simply stating: 'It's too soon to say', without reference to who does the most for charity. Not as many as expected included the reference to the competition which would decide this. Perhaps they felt that this was not directly relevant to the bullet. The point about many people doing charitable work without anyone knowing was generally well understood and included in the summary.

- **In which fields charity is most needed**

This was quite a compact section which allowed candidates to acquire maximum credit in very few words. Most listed the three key areas where charity was deemed to be needed most as health care, education and the social sector. The majority of candidates wrote **health sphere** for the latter. Though clearly not idiomatic English, this was tolerated. A smaller number of candidates gained their marks for correctly listing the people most in need of charity: the sick, elderly and youth.

- Studying charity in schools

This proved to be a testing section, as candidates had to understand precisely how Vitaly felt schools should inform students about charity. Most realised that he did not advocate introducing charity as a curriculum subject, but rather as a series of lessons about how to do good. Vagueness was penalised here, and key words like **series** or **several (lessons)** were insisted upon. Many renderings of **как делать добро** were accepted, but 'make good things' did not gain credit. Less commonly retrieved were the points about how

charity lessons in school would encourage students to study or work in this field, and that specialist teachers were needed. In many cases this may have been because candidates realised they had already written enough to gain maximum credit for this bullet and were saving words for the final bullet.

- **What the organisers hope will happen after the Year of Charity ends**

This bullet was the least well done, and many of those who showed understanding of the stimulus failed to gain credit, as they had already exceeded the word limit. Candidates who attempted this bullet generally understood Vitaly's hope that unsolved problems would be better understood, though surprisingly fewer added 'so that they could be solved later'. No doubt weaker candidates were confused by the subjunctive: **чтобы их решили потом**. Most candidates retrieved the idea about the Year of Charity becoming a tradition (**традицией**), but many misinterpreted (**повторяться**) **каждые несколько лет** as 'to be repeated every year' or 'every other year'.

Advice and Guidance to candidates for the summary:

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 for word economy.

Avoid abbreviations which are not compatible with continuous English.

Relate all points made 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. Examiners are instructed to count the number of words used by all candidates.

If necessary, go back through your work, crossing out redundant material, but ensure that what remains is continuous English. An initial draft in note form might be useful.

Advice to centres:

Ensure that candidates are given opportunities to develop summarising skills.

6796/02 Reading and Writing Examiner's report

There was no change to the allocation of marks from 2007. Two questions are set. Question 1 requires responses in Russian to a stimulus text; candidates are required to manipulate the language. Two marks are awarded for inference questions. Eight marks in total are awarded for Content and seven for Quality of Language. A sliding scale is employed so that candidates cannot score full marks for quality of language alongside low score for content. Question 2 is a transfer of meaning task with 30 assessable elements including some items that should be taken from the stimulus piece.

The content of the paper seemed to be accessible to candidates across the ability range and there was very little evidence of candidates not having sufficient time to complete the paper. The topic gave candidates a chance to show their grasp of vocabulary relating to the theme of Russia's environmental assets. Candidates showed good ability to understand the text and there was evidence of good preparation for the task with less copied responses which elicit no marks. There was a particular need to pay attention to non-manipulated answers in shorter responses. Careful reading of the text led candidates clearly to the correct section.

Question 2 was straightforward with discreet differentiation to allow candidates across the ability range to achieve some success. Candidates who did not appreciate the nature of the transfer of meaning task scored less well as they tried to paraphrase and moved too far from the original and intended meaning.

Question 1: question (а) required candidates to manipulate the very beginning of the text and this was successfully done. There were some good responses that talked about **европейцы**.

Question (б) was well handled by stronger candidates. Weaker candidates were less sure of the difference between **запасы** and **дефицит**.

Question (в) was a definition question that was well handled by stronger candidates who gave full definitions of **полвека**. There were some very impressive responses that gave details about what exactly a century constitutes. Weaker candidates failed to recognise **пол** and gave random definitions that did not answer the task in any way.

Question (г) was done well with stronger candidates appreciating that half of the Russian production of oil is exported. Weaker candidates linked the question **сколько** with the incorrect **350 миллионов тонн** without reading the whole passage.

Question (д) was well understood though weaker candidates lost out by failing to manipulate sufficiently. There was a grammatical weakness evident in a large number of candidates failing to distinguish between **свой** and **её**.

Question (е) required some manipulation by candidates who lost out by copying directly from the text. Weaker students confused the meaning of **развитые**, **развивающиеся** and **промышленные страны**

Quality of Language marks were high for candidates who showed real ability to manipulate the Russian answers to demonstrate competency in producing the language.

Candidates scored lower marks for quality when they simply copied from the text. There was a higher incidence of phonetic spellings which had some effect on quality of language marks

at this level. The lack of accuracy in spelling was the overriding issue in this paper. Candidates are to be encouraged to actively learn accurate spellings.

Question 2: (Transfer of Meaning) this task was straightforward and was well handled by the majority of candidates. Candidates used the stimulus passage appropriately most of the time though there were occasions when it was not well used. Candidates could show good knowledge of vocabulary based on the theme of environment.

Candidates should bear in mind that there is still some need to manipulate the language and not necessarily keep the case set in the stimulus e.g. *развитых странах*.

Candidates should also not over paraphrase and check that words such as *мировых, постоянно, такую, это, огромное* are not missed out. These words are vital to the nature of the task.

Some candidates failed to spell *Россия* correctly in Russian.

В Сибири presented a level of difficulty to a range of candidates who offered a range of spellings and quite often the incorrect *Сербии* and *в Сибирске*.

Vocabulary problems arose with *подсчитали, богатство, цены, преимущество*.

Words that were commonly misspelled were *экономисты, большинство, ресурсы, район, лучшие, использовать*.

Grammatical errors most commonly seen: non-usage of instrumental case after *с*, use of the passive in communicating: resources are to be found, difficulty with third person plural form of *искать (ищут)*, formation of third person plural *интересуются* and the dative form *самой большой стране*.

Some weaker candidates found it difficult to communicate "the riches of the area", sometimes thinking that it means "rich people", or just not being able to spell the Russian equivalent.

In question 2 there was much more evidence of inaccuracy of spelling with many more phonetically correct answers. Candidates should ensure thorough checking of work to make sure obvious spelling mistakes are corrected and that all items are included in the transfer.

Advice and Guidance

- Read all rubric carefully
- Check how many marks are allocated to each question
- Make sure that no answer is a straight lift from the stimulus passage
- Make sure that any definition answers fully what is to be defined
- In the transfer of meaning task make sure that unusual vocabulary is located in the stimulus passage
- Ensure that the transfer of meaning passage is not too far removed from the original
- Check that all small linking type words have been included
- Check verbs endings carefully especially third person plural forms
- Check spellings carefully. Look at ways of transferring passive voice meanings

6796/03 writing and Registers Examiner's report

The timing and format of the paper, the requirement to answer one question from a choice of nine and the assessment criteria for this paper were identical to previous years.

The questions placed demands on candidates comparable with previous years.

The candidate is required to answer one question from a choice of nine. The questions are divided into three sections: Creative Writing, Discursive Essays and Task Based Assignments (TBAs). For questions from the first two sections, Creative Writing and Discursive Essays, candidates are required to write 160-180 words in Russian, and for TBAs, to write 140-160 words in Russian.

The paper tests the candidate's ability to produce an extended piece of writing in response to a target language prompt. The candidate has a choice of registers in which to write and the ability to write in the chosen register (e.g. a letter for the TBAs or dialogue for question 3) forms part of the assessment.

The total mark for the paper is 40.

The candidate's writing is assessed for Content (Creative Writing and Discursive Essays) or Response to the Task (TBAs) - 20 marks of 40, Accuracy of the Target Language (5 marks out of 40), Range and Appropriateness of Language (10 marks out of 40) and Manipulation of Language (5 marks out of 40).

The overall performance of candidates was similar to previous years. As in previous years a significant number of answers, especially in response to questions 1 to 7, were too long, despite the word limit being clearly indicated on the paper.

The format of the question paper has been identical for several years now, and thus is familiar to centres. Many candidates are clearly being well prepared to answer a particular type of question.

General Comments

A significant number of candidates exceeded the word limit, especially in answer to questions 1 to 7. Candidates should be aware that the number of words in each essay is counted, even if the candidate has declared a word count. The work is marked to the first sense-break or full stop after the word limit. The marks of a significant number of candidates were adversely affected by writing an over-long essay, as this often meant that the work lacked a conclusion or satisfactory organisation and development.

Many candidates were able to write in an appropriate register, especially in the Discursive Essays and TBAs. In the Discursive Essays in particular, many candidates used an impressive range of appropriate lexis.

Mistakes resulting from poor handwriting were in evidence, as in previous years. In particular, many candidates had problems forming the handwritten lower-case letters л, м and т, and confused the handwritten б/в and г/д.

Surprisingly, very few candidates wrote a plan for their answer, though they would be well-advised to do so. Where candidates did write a plan, their answer was usually well structured and balanced. Planned answers tended to avoid repetition and to include a strong conclusion, in addition to being more likely to observe the word limit.

Standards of grammatical accuracy varied widely. Many candidates used case endings, adjective agreement etc. competently, as is expected of candidates at this level, but a significant number made many errors in even basic forms. Forms of common words such as люди, проблема and все caused problems. On occasion, such errors led to a breakdown in communication.

Section A Creative Writing

In this section, when assessing the mark for Content, the skills rewarded include the ability to:

- respond relevantly to the question
- respond imaginatively
- organise and develop ideas
- write clearly
- think independently

(Edexcel specification p. 41)

Question 1

This was a very popular question. Nearly all the candidates who answered this question observed the instruction to relate “what happened next”, though many responses were too long. There were a number of very imaginative responses, ranging from winning a prize to running away from the police or smuggling drugs.

Question 2

Those who chose this question generally wrote very creative and imaginative responses, although, surprisingly, there were a fair number of rather pedestrian replies. Many candidates conveyed the feel of a newspaper article well, though a significant number exceeded the word limit.

A few candidates deviated from the title, discussing job seeking in general.

Question 3

The majority of candidates who answered this question wrote a convincing and imaginative dialogue, using appropriate forms of address, diminutives and colloquial language. The level of range of lexis and manipulation of language, therefore, was usually good or very good in answers to this question. However, as in previous years, and despite very clear indication on the question paper that they are required, a number of candidates ignored the requirement to include stage directions, as a result of which their marks were adversely affected.

Section B Discursive Essays

In this section, when assessing the mark for Content, the skills rewarded include the ability to:

- respond relevantly to the question
- respond imaginatively
- organise and develop ideas
- write clearly
- think independently

(Edexcel specification p. 41)

Question 4

This question produced some rather heated and very well argued responses. The best answers made some valid and strong comparisons and came to a logical conclusion, though many answers were too long. Several candidates started off with one strong viewpoint and ended up contradicting themselves when drawing to a conclusion.

Question 5

This question appeared to baffle some candidates, who misunderstood the concept of home teaching. However, many of those who chose to answer this question wrote well-balanced responses, including intelligent and considered views on the advantages and disadvantages of different types of schooling.

Question 6

This was a popular question. The best answers weighed up the disadvantages with the numerous advantages of using computers, although some seemed blinded by the glories of the computer age and seemed unable to conceive of any drawbacks or risks. Most agreed that life without computers was inconceivable, though a number of candidates argued convincingly that, in the absence of technology, life would go on.

Question 7

Relatively few candidates answered Q7. Candidates generally held strong opinions about beauty contests, but they often did not present balanced arguments, arguing strongly in favour or against, rather than considering the pros and cons.

Section C Task-Based Assignments

In this section, when assessing the mark for Response, the skills rewarded include the ability to:

- respond relevantly to the task
- interpret data
- evaluate and solve problems
- organise and develop ideas
- write clearly
- think independently

(Edexcel specification p. 42)

Question 8

This question provoked some very interesting and well-structured responses. Candidates generally wrote in an appropriate register, using the “Вы” form of address and using an appropriate beginning and ending to the email. As in previous years, where the candidate wrote an address and/or date at the top of the letter, this was not included in the word count. With few exceptions, candidates observed the word limit. Some candidates discussed climate change in general without really addressing the role large cities play in contributing to this change. Most candidates were comfortable with the first two bullet points, but less so with the last one, which required suggestions about how the school might contribute to the project. Varied suggestions were put forward about how the school could contribute, including some very imaginative ones. The majority of candidates who chose to answer this question were clearly comfortable with the topic of the environment and were able to use a wide (often impressive) range of vocabulary to discuss environmental issues.

Question 9

This was the more popular of the two TBAs and it produced some very good answers indeed. Candidates generally wrote in an appropriate register, using the “Вы” form of address and used an appropriate beginning and ending for the letter. As for question 8, and as in previous years, where the candidate wrote an address and/or date at the top of the letter, this was not included in the word count. Candidates were generally aware of the need not just to refer to the information given, but to develop it in their response, and most did so competently. In particular, there were some very creative film resumés. The task of asking for assistance with accommodation and a visa was not always well dealt with, with many candidates struggling to find the right vocabulary and turn of phrase to convey their needs. The least successful answers did little more than translate the bullet points, missing the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to “evaluate and solve problems” and to “think independently” (see above). Many made good use of words and phrases from the text, adapting them successfully to use in their replies.

Statistics

Unit 1 Listening and Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	33	28	24	20	16
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 2 Reading and Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	80	54	49	44	39	34
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

Unit 3 Prepared Oral Topic

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	46	40	35	30	25
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 4.1 Oral Discussion of Issues

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	46	40	35	30	25
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 5.1 Topics and Texts

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	90	58	50	42	35	28
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 5.2 Coursework

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	135	78	67	57	47	37
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 6 Listening and Writing, Reading and Writing & Writing in Registers

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	69	61	53	46	39
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

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