



Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students were well prepared and confident for the 2013 Russian written examination. In the Listening and Responding section of the examination, students' well-developed aural and written skills enabled them to identify specific details and descriptive language in order to answer the questions well. Students also performed well in the Reading and Responding section of the examination. They did not have any major problems in addressing the questions.

Students should practise writing in a variety of genres to improve their ability to express themselves coherently. For some students, underdeveloped writing skills prevented them from expressing their ideas and opinions clearly, particularly in Section 3.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A – Answer in English

Text 1

Most students received full marks for the questions on Text 1.

Question 1

Because (all of)

- one man was rich but in poor health
- another man was in good health but was poor
- the third man was rich and in good health but his wife was not such a good wife
- the happy man was so poor that he did not have a shirt.

Text 2

Most students received full marks for the questions on Text 2.

Question 2a.

- The women must be between the ages of 18 and 25.
- The women are supposed to have good knowledge of English, history, geography and social sciences.

No mark was awarded for 'knowledge of Spanish' because, while an advantage, it was not necessary.

Question 2b.

Because Venezuela is a Spanish-speaking country.

Question 2c.

Any three of

- the process of beauty pageant training for girls is a thing of national importance in Venezuela
- Venezuela is one of the most prestigious countries to provide such training, except for the USA, Argentina and Mexico
- a specially trained team from Venezuela includes different professionals such as hairdressers, choreographers and doctors
- part of the prize for winning the Miss Russia contest is to train for Miss Universe in Venezuela
- the beauties are treated like exotic plants
- it takes about two years for a girl to prepare for a competition.

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Text 3

Question 3a.

Any four of

- cheerful/merry/optimistic/emotional
- open
- waste money/wasteful/spendthrifts/irrational
- disorganised
- live by the rule ‘tomorrow will be better than yesterday’.

Question 3b.

Either of

- Fedya demonstrated the knowledge
- Fedya is guaranteed to achieve a top mark.

Not all students answered this question correctly.

Part B – Answer in Russian

Text 4

Question 4a.

In the past they stayed on the space station. In the future they will be staying in small, space hotel accommodation.

Not all students received full marks for this question.

Question 4b.

Because

- it is expensive
- it is challenging/difficult
- it is dangerous
- not all will enjoy it.

Most students received full marks for this question by noting why space tourism is not for everyone.

Question 4c.

Tourists may have a better understanding of the value of life and beauty on our planet.

Nearly all students addressed this challenging question.

Text 5

Question 5

Any five of

- other countries’ bands participate
- new album to be launched
- huge crowd of fans
- famous singers, such as Praskovya, arrived
- journalist covering the festival
- famous Russian rock bands participate in the festival
- Egor Solovyov, the most popular musician, is there.

Some students did not answer this question correctly and did not provide all requested examples indicating the popularity of the Siberian Rock Festival.

Text 6

Question 6

Any four of

- in Ancient Russia, the Slavs loved this drink

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- it was consumed by all the levels of society in Ancient Russia
- thousands of years have passed but nowadays it's still consumed by levels of society who prefer kvass to imported wines and other popular soft drinks
- in former times there were more than a dozen varieties of kvass
- kvass is used in many proverbs
- kvass is not expensive
- kvass is easily produced at home and commercially
- kvass can quench one's thirst.

Most students answered this question correctly and achieved full marks. Students demonstrated knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary, which helped them to understand the historical information in the text.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A – Answer in English

Text 7

Question 7

Any three of

- she sent an email with the words ‘don’t panic’
- she told her ‘pack your things’
- she sent an article for her with advice
- she advised ‘use sunscreen and stay in the shade’
- the information she sent is trustworthy as it was published in a scientific journal.

Although this question was quite challenging, most students did well.

Text 8

Question 8a.

Old Arbat has

- a historical and literary past – artists, composers and authors such as Pushkin and Chekov lived there
- a pedestrian mall
- a tourist street – kiosks and tents that sell souvenirs
- mansions and old buildings of former aristocrats representing the architecture of a past era
- rich culture and sub-culture.

This question appeared to be quite challenging for students. Some were not able to identify what Old Arbat had of interest that was not offered by New Arbat.

Question 8b.

People feel free there because they can (three of)

- see artists who can paint portraits right there
- hear songs or poetry (others’ or their own)
- discuss politics
- dance and sing
- recite their own poems.

Students were required to mention the fact that people feel ‘free’. Responses to this question were the least successful.

Part B – Answer in Russian

The criteria to assess students’ performance in this section are

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

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Students were asked to write an email to a friend, evaluating the observations made in this text about the internet and its influence on teenagers. Suggested answers included

- not all sites are safe
- computer games affect children's communication with parents and friends
- Russian language suffers because SMS communication uses a different style, including symbols
- students don't use language to express their emotions; they use symbols such as smiley faces.

Parents should

- control the time their children spend on computers
- ensure that the time spent on computers is reduced
- check that sites used by their children are safe
- communicate actively with their children; for example, play interactive games, read books, watch TV cartoons and play musical instruments with their children.

Most students addressed the task successfully, correctly structuring their answers in the form of an email response.

However, students should work on

- accuracy
- sentence structure
- variety of vocabulary.

Section 3 – Writing in Russian

The criteria to assess students' performance in this section are

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

Question 10

Students were asked to write an article for a travel magazine describing the most exciting aspects of a trip to a national park. This was one of the most popular questions. Those who attempted this question demonstrated an ability to produce an interesting account of the chronological events.

Suggested points

- why the national park is famous
- flora and fauna
- what animals were seen
- how they got there
- what they remembered
- interesting people that they met

Typical mistakes included anglicisms, such as '*Родители взяли меня в Россию*' and incorrect use of words, such as '*Чудо про лес, что он может себя расти*'.

Question 11

This question asked students to write a journal entry reflecting on an incident that highlighted the importance of friendship. This was one of the most popular questions. Students generally managed the task well.

Suggested points

- proverb 'a friend in need is a friend indeed'
- scenario of a difficult situation
- some friends did not lend a hand, only one friend stayed to help
- the importance of choosing the right people as friends

Question 12

Students were asked to write a formal letter to persuade the Minister for Education to introduce more physical education activities into the school day. Students who attempted this topic produced a well-argued opinion with considerable depth. The formal letter writing conventions were observed.

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Suggested points that could have been included

- kids are overwhelmed with classwork and homework
- nowadays we don't see kids playing on streets and in community playgrounds
- kids spend so much time at computers that they become obese.

Recommendations

- introduce more physical education sessions at school, mostly outdoor activities rather than indoor ones
- sport is really important for a student's development

Question 13

For this question, students had to write an imaginative piece about becoming part of a movie. This was the least popular question. Students who attempted this question demonstrated their ability to produce a correctly structured response in the form of an imaginative story and showed good understanding of register and style.