



Oral Component

GENERAL COMMENTS

A very high standard was achieved this year by the majority of students in the oral examination, reflecting the thorough preparation of students. Overall, fluency, pronunciation and accuracy of linguistic elements were of a high standard.

Part 1 – Conversation

Criterion 1: capacity to maintain and advance the exchange

- capacity to link with assessors
- effectiveness of communication and repair strategies
- degree of support necessary to maintain the exchange.

This task required a more natural exchange of ideas as it involved a conversation about the student's personal world, for example, school and home life, family and friends, and interests and aspirations. Students could rehearse ways of establishing a conversation, seeking clarification and even self-correcting as well as learning to maintain a conversation about these topics. Most students picked up verbal and physical clues and had good strategies to link with examiners spontaneously. *Ты*, the familiar form, should not be used to link with assessors.

Criterion 2: relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

- relevance of information and ideas
- range of information and ideas
- capacity to support/elaborate on ideas/opinions with reasons and examples/evidence/new ideas.

Students who had thought about possible questions and answers and how they could develop their responses performed well. They were able to argue their point of view and defend their stance. Students who were fluent yet unprepared often fumbled and did not provide in-depth answers. Students who responded to questions without justifying or elaborating did not allow topics to be fully developed and therefore their conversations remained superficial. Students should not rote-learn material, as those who did this could not regain the thread if interrupted, nor could they rephrase what they had said earlier.

Criterion 3: accuracy of vocabulary and grammar

A list of common mistakes is included below. Students should learn the correct vocabulary and grammar of these commonly used words and expressions.

Ошибка (Mistake)	Как правильно (Correct vocabulary and grammar)
<i>Я их пробую видеть как часто могу</i>	<i>Я стараюсь видеть их как можно чаще</i>
<i>Четыре лет назад</i>	<i>Четыре года назад</i>
<i>Разнонациональный человек</i>	<i>Люди разных национальностей</i>
<i>Говорю по русскому</i>	<i>Говорю по-русски</i>
<i>Обои</i>	<i>Оба</i>
<i>Дружелюбивые</i>	<i>Дружелюбные</i>
<i>Чтобы русского языка немного словить</i>	<i>Чтобы потренироваться в русском языке</i>
<i>Я считаю себя типичным дитём 20 века</i>	<i>Я считаю себя типичным ребёнком 20 века</i>
<i>Спорт помог мне сделать фигуру для моего тела</i>	<i>Спорт помог мне укрепить моё тело</i>
<i>Сколько много вещей</i>	<i>Так много вещей</i>
<i>Госпиталь</i>	<i>Больница</i>
<i>Урист</i>	<i>Юрист</i>
<i>Говорю по этому языку</i>	<i>Говорю на этом языке</i>
<i>Различность</i>	<i>Разница</i>
<i>В Украине</i>	<i>На Украине</i>
<i>На России</i>	<i>В России</i>
<i>Играть в спорт</i>	<i>Заниматься спортом</i>



Criterion 4: range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

- variety of vocabulary and grammar
- appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar to the context, audience and purpose of the task.

Although most students used appropriate vocabulary and grammar, they would do well to try and extend their range beyond simple, everyday language.

Criterion 5: clarity of expression

- pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

This area only became an issue when students were not confident about their vocabulary or sentence structure, which then led to a slow or hesitant delivery.

Part 2 – Discussion of detailed study

Criterion 6: capacity to maintain and advance the exchange

- capacity to link with assessors
- effectiveness of communication and repair strategies
- degree of support necessary to maintain the exchange.

Many students communicated confidently with the examiners. They had a good knowledge of their detailed study and were able to handle unpredictable questions easily, freely expressing and defending their points of view.

The detailed study results depended on good preparation and the prior brainstorming of possible questions. Many students showed that they had practised articulating their answers and linking them smoothly to the resources used for their topic. Again, it should be noted that being well prepared does not mean learning slabs of information. Students who did this were often unable to adapt their answers to specific questions because they had learnt complex vocabulary which they could not adapt to specific questions. In such cases, they needed substantial support from assessors.

Criterion 7: capacity to present information, ideas and opinions on a chosen topic

- capacity to support/elaborate on ideas/opinions with reasons/examples /evidence/new ideas.

Students were required to introduce their topic and present their resources and the main focus of their discussion in ‘not more than one minute’. There were still many students who presented resources inadequately or provided such a long list of resources that they exceeded the time limit. They do not need to mention many of these resources in their introduction but they must indicate clearly the focus of their topic so that the examiners are guided to lead the discussion appropriately. The introductory statement should be carefully prepared in advance.

An introduction which just stated resources as ‘the Internet’ did not provide the examiners with sufficient information.

Проблемы молодежи в России после перестройки (проблемы наркотиков, курения и проституции). Источник: интернет.

However, an introduction which listed resources well could have elaborated more on the sub-topic:

Жизнь детей в России в дореволюционный период. (Под-тема: “Дети-сироты, дети-беспризорники”).

Источники: А.П.Чехов “Спать хочется”, В.Г.Короленко “Дети подземелья”; Н.А.Некрасов “Плач детей”; картины русских художников (“У дверей школы” Н.И.Богданова-Бельского; “Тройка” Перова; худ. фильм “Республика ШКИД”).

This criterion also demands that students refer to their sources/texts. Many students gave reasons for their opinions, citing original texts or verses, while others incorporated Russian sayings or proverbs appropriately. If students were not able to give information relevant to their topic and back it up with the appropriate reference to their sources, their responses were graded accordingly.

Students must note that this criterion includes **incorporating opinions with reasons/examples/evidence/new ideas**. Students who had read very widely on their topic, reading extra texts in addition to those studied in class, were usually able to express a much wider range of opinions and ideas. However, many students were unable to compare their sources or comment on a source’s significance to their chosen sub-topic



Criterion 8: accuracy of vocabulary and grammar

As the introduction is prepared beforehand, examiners expect that it will contain the correct vocabulary and grammar. Other mistakes occurred with words used in the presentation or the sub-topic and showed that students needed more practice in presenting their responses. A number of common mistakes were:

Ошибка (Mistake)	Как правильно (Correct vocabulary and grammar)
<i>Они повернулись к марихуане</i>	<i>Они стали употреблять марихуану</i>
<i>Пытались окружать в любви</i>	<i>Пытались окружать любовью</i>
<i>Проходил сквозь город</i>	<i>Проходил по городу</i>
<i>Не сажалась покушать</i>	<i>Не садилась покушать или поесть</i>
<i>За нём никто не заботится</i>	<i>О нём никто не заботится</i>
<i>Дочка от хозяина</i>	<i>Дочка хозяйина</i>
<i>Отдавать на работу к бояринам</i>	<i>Отдавать на работу к мастерам или к хозяевам</i>
<i>Насиловают</i>	<i>насилуют</i>

Criterion 9: range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

- variety of vocabulary and grammar
- appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar to the context, audience and purpose of the task.

Most students used a very good range of vocabulary, structures and expressions and skilfully used both simple and complex grammatical constructions. Where students had chosen historical themes, they used complex and extensive vocabulary, incorporating knowledge of phraseological usage and expressions. Some examples used with this theme were: *нравственные ценности, диктатура пролетариата, бесчеловечное отношение к людям, философия гуманности и прощения, человеческие судьбы, социальные проблемы, принцип изображения, государственные проблемы, прогрессивные взгляды, глобальность и актуальность проблем, противоречивость личности.*

Students are expected to give more than one short sentence in response to questions, especially, where relevant, to questions about the authors of their chosen texts.

Criterion 10: clarity of expression

If students attempted very complex themes which they did not fully understand, they could not answer questions effectively as they often lacked the terminology needed to connect answers to their theme or to their sources. Page 44 of the Russian Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design lists suggested sub-topics for the detailed study, and indicates that the choice of topic should be closely related to the student's interests and capabilities.

Students also need to take more care with stress as many common words were mispronounced.

Some of the topics chosen by students this year were:

- *Интеллигенция и революция 1917 года в России*
- *Мир глазами деятелей искусств (usually plural) – картина Ретина «Бурлаки на Волге»*
- *Наркомания – это преступление или болезнь?*
- *Дружба в лирике Пушкина*
- *Проблемы молодёжи в России – курение и наркомания*
- *Как Октябрьская революция повлияла на мир и Австралию*
- *Детский труд в России прошлой и настоящей*
- *Влияние цыган на русскую и европейскую культуру*
- *Человек и природа в творчестве Айвазовского*
- *Гражданская война 1918-1920 годов в России*
- *Как революция 1917 года повлияла на жизнь детей*
- *Распространение СПИДа и марихуаны в России*
- *Жизнь бедных детей до революции в России*
- *Беспорядочность в России прошлой и настоящей*
- *Личность царя Николая II*
- *Штурм Зимнего Дворца. Первые дни революции*
- *Почему солдаты и матросы переходили на сторону большевиков*
- *Проблемы службы в армии в России*
- *Большевитская пропаганда и органы печати до революции*



Below is some advice on how teachers can help to improve students' performances. When preparing for the oral examination students should:

- clearly identify the similarities or differences in opinion presented in their resources on their sub-topic
- select visual aids to support their side of the discussion better
- select a topic that facilitates easy acquisition of various forms of resources
- explain the various opinions presented in their resources in class and thus invite any further opinions and questions on their topic from others in the class
- practise the discussion with a wide range of individuals in order to enhance the capacity to communicate with different people
- practise delivering information in different ways
- practise responding to questions not directly linked to their topic.

In addition, many students still need more practice in answering questions such as:

- *Что общего в последних двух источниках, которые вы изучали?*
- *Что нового добавил этот источник к вашему пониманию темы?*
- *Чем отличаются эти два (три) источника?*
- *Какой источник дал вам самую ценную информацию? Обоснуйте.*
- *К каким выводам вы пришли в процессе работы над этим (этими) источником (источниками)?*
- *Как эти источники дополняют друг друга?*
- *Чем различаются эти источники?*

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall a high standard was achieved by the majority of students, reflecting thorough preparation for the written examination. However, there were more students than usual who either did not attempt some questions, or answered incorrectly. Unfortunately, the handwriting of many students, in both English and Russian, was illegible. Students must realise that they are disadvantaging themselves if the assessors are not able to read their answers.

Section 1: Listening and Responding

Part A: Answer in English

Question 1a

The message was aimed:

- at young people who use mobile phones while driving a car
- because young people who drive while talking on mobile phones or sending text messages are more prone to accidents.

Not all students realised that this was a two part question and only gave the answer to the question 'To whom is this message aimed at?', neglecting to answer the second part 'And for what reason?'.

Question 1b

The government introduced heavy fines and education programs for the population.

Question 2

The emotional situations where stimuli for smoking occurred were:

- in times of stress when waiting for exam results
- when students want to assert their independence.

Social pressure was exerted when students:

- were in the company of friends who smoke
- wanted to smoke to have the feeling of belonging, so as not to be different or be an outsider.

Question 2b

From what Volodya said about his parents, we know that:

- his parents have been smokers for 20 years

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- they worry about their health and his health
- they do not want him to smoke, they begged him not to start.

Question 3

The reasons for testing cosmetics on animals were that products can cause:

- allergies
- skin irritations
- cancer.

Question 3b

Manufacturers believe the testing on animals is:

- harmless
- painless/not painful.

Question 3c

The speaker's main messages are:

- that testing cosmetics on animals is cruel/inhumane/wrong
- there is a need to change the situation by buying cosmetics not tested on animals.

This question was difficult for some students.

Question 3d

This question, involving a response to the actual language, proved the most difficult for many students. There was a variety of acceptable answers including:

- question and answer style
- inviting agreement
- engaging the audience
- employing a critical/firm tone towards manufacturers
- empathy with animals
- emotive, vivid language
- the use of statistics.

Part B: Answer in Russian

Question 4

Correct responses to the question 'What does Tatiana think about the film?' included:

- she finds the film amazing with technically original/brilliant camera work
- her knowledge of Russian history gives her much pleasure and understanding of the film
- she loves the film for its fluid movement through the historical rooms, and for its beauty.

Question 5a

Most students decided that Sasha's mother was not very determined to prevent Sasha from going overseas. However, they were not able to give their own reasons, instead giving the arguments that Sasha gives, which was the answer to Question 5b. A few students gave a good answer of, 'If Sasha's mother was really determined to prevent Sasha from going overseas, she would not have told him to stay with friends in Moscow. Mother did not really put up much of a struggle against her son's arguments. She made statements, but did not defend her statements.'

Question 5b

The arguments which Sasha gave to convince his mother to agree to his travel plans included:

- he can postpone going to university
- he has already convinced his father
- he will have a job and money
- he has found cheap accommodation
- some of his friends have also deferred going to university
- he will phone his mother each evening on his mobile
- he is already mature, 18 years old.



Question 5c

Sasha wants to go to Russia to practise his Russian.

Section 2: Reading and Responding

Part A: Answer in English

Question 6a

This article is written for travellers from countries where attitudes to smiling may be different.

The reason for writing the article was to educate travellers, to foster understanding regarding social differences to smiling, or to convince visitors that the absence of smiling does not mean that Russians are inhospitable.

Question 6b

It is usually culturally inappropriate for Russians to smile:

- on the street with strangers
- in conducting business
- when communicating with public servants/in the public service.

Question 6c

All titles which were relevant were awarded a mark.

Question 6d

Any of the following responses were accepted as types of language used in the proverb:

- common
- vulgar
- colloquial
- rude
- comical
- rhyming.

Question 6e

Russians smile when humour is involved.

When answering questions 6a-e, some students forgot that their answers must use only information from the text.

Question 7a

The number of miners rescued on 25 October was 33, and 11 were rescued on 28 October.

Question 7b

This event took place in a coal mine.

Students who were distracted by other words gave a variety of incorrect answers, such as:

- in an eastern mine
- in the southern part of Russia
- in a fresh water mine
- in a western mine.

Question 7c

It was necessary for the miners to keep moving as:

- they would be trapped by the rising water level in the mine
- there was less and less air/oxygen to breathe and they would suffocate.

Question 7d

The rescuers were optimistic that they would find all the trapped miners alive, therefore they gave the name 'Tunnel of Hope' to one of the tunnels.



Question 7e

Because of Petrov's presence, the miners and their families felt:

- safe/secure and reassured
- confident and motivated by Petrov
- grateful for his support and courage/bravery.

Question 7f

Write three sentences describing the mining background of Mr Petrov.

- Mr Petrov had spent 25 years in the mining industry
- By dint of his personality and ability, he worked his way up from an ordinary miner to become a mine director
- He was a very conscientious, hands-on director, as evidenced by the fact that on his first day as director of this mine, he actually wanted to see for himself the working conditions of his miners.

It was surprising that a few students made no attempt to answer some questions in Section 2 Part A. Judging by the standard of English in some answers, one could assume that these students lacked the English language skills necessary to understand all the English questions. Teachers need to give students with weak English comprehension and weak English writing skills a lot of practise in class. Poor English skills meant that some students were not able to answer the questions clearly and accurately.

Students need to be trained to use dictionaries effectively. It was obvious that many students who needed a dictionary to look up Russian words did not have access to one. On the other hand, some students did not bother to use a dictionary. When they did not know the English meaning of a word, they simply wrote it in Russian (for example, *vostochnaya*). Other students invented words which do not exist in English (for example, water mine).

Part B: Answer in Russian

Criteria which were taken into account when judging performance in this section were the student's ability to:

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

There were five questions in the text which needed responses, and the conventions of letter writing were demonstrated in the text for Question 8.

The first criterion was handled well by most students. However, for the second criterion many students found it difficult to demonstrate a range and variety of vocabulary and sentence structures. Students who highlighted the questions in the text which needed responses were less likely to forget one of the questions.

Common errors this year included:

- no date, or an impossible date; for example, a date two days after the first letter was written
- the city for the address. Several students wrote 'Kursk', whereas the city had to be in Australia
- an incorrect form of address, using the polite form
- substantially exceeding the word limit.

Good letters also contained a question or two.

Advice to teachers to improve students' capabilities.

Much more time needs to be given to the teaching of formal Russian grammar to weaker students. Grammatical errors that were common to Section 2 Part B and Section 3 included:

- direct Russian translations, for example 'to have a shower'
- incorrect verb conjugations, especially of verbs in *-oba*, for example, *планировать, рекомендовать, организовать, тренировать*
- failure to use the exam paper where appropriate to correctly copy phrases and conventions appropriate for the answer, for example, the conventions of letter writing
- plurals of Russian words being invented; the plural of *кафе* is not *кафейс*
- the incorrect form of the genitive case being used after *нет, много*
- the use of *должен*
- verbs followed by prepositions; *скупать по*



- cases following words such as *уз-за*. The correct forms of all cases need to be revised, as sometimes case endings were completely ignored
- spelling errors; rules need to be revised, especially following the letters *з, к, х, ж, ш* and *щ*
- the invention of new words by joining together two words, for example, *уменя*. This was a very common error
- inserting hyphens where they do not exist
- punctuation
- incorrect conjugations for common verb such as 'to go' and 'to travel'
- the misspelling of basic commonly used words, for example, *сейчас*, written as *шас*.

No marks were given to the students who answered this section in English. Students who highlighted the words 'answer in RUSSIAN' on their examination paper were not tempted to forget this instruction. Students should be very careful if they make notes in English in the notes column on the examination paper when answers are required to be written in Russian. Errors occurred when some students wrote correct information in English in the notes column, but omitted some essential facts when they re-wrote the answers in Russian.

Section 3: Writing in Russian

Criteria which were taken into account when judging performance in this section were:

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

Advice to teachers to improve students' capabilities.

The better pieces of writing flowed easily, showed good imagination and had elements of good storytelling skills.

Students should be advised to keep to the word limit; some weak students wrote pieces well over the limit. They should be advised to spend time planning their work to make it better structured and check for spelling and punctuation errors. On the other hand, some students wrote below the word limit, thus making it difficult to meet all the criteria at the highest level.

Weaker students relied mainly on simple sentences rather than using more complex sentence structures.

Teachers must emphasise the conventions of the text type and direct students to study the relevant passages in the Russian Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design.

Question 9

Many responses to the short story were actually informative rather than imaginative, or else contained elements of imaginative writing only in the last half of the response. The good short stories developed the idea of a change in personality and/or the physical appearance of the dog.

Question 10

The personal profile was a popular choice. Some responses, however, were written like a shopping list of names of the artist's major works without any relevance to their character and personality. A good profile included:

- a description of the person
- his/her character
- early training and influences
- an explanation of motivation
- what critics say about the artist
- contributions to the profession/society/wider community.

Question 11

It was expected that a good persuasive article would contain several appeals to contemporaries, yet some students neglected to do this. In addition, some students omitted an appropriate introduction and conclusion to the report. The best persuasive responses had a variety of ideas, not just the basic everyday suggestions to save water. The well-structured articles had ideas relating to water use in personal, domestic, park, educational, rural and industrial settings. They also had a title, a signature and explanations of why there is a water problem and why it is important that measures are introduced to solve this problem.