



Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The results of all sections of the 2011 Russian written examination were pleasing. Students performed strongly; they were well prepared and confident. Their well-developed aural and writing skills allowed them to address challenging questions in the Listening and responding section and they made few mistakes.

Students performed well in the Reading and responding section and did not have any major problems in responding to the questions.

Teachers should continue working on improving students' comprehension skills and students' ability to express themselves in writing. For some students, underdeveloped writing skills hindered their ability to express ideas and opinions, thus jeopardising their general performance.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A – Answer in English

Text 1

Most students received full marks for Question 1.

Question 1a.

People they respected most

Question 1b.

- foreigners wrote about it with admiration
- gingerbread is used as a gift in many places for birthdays and weddings

Question 1c.

'Made in accordance with old recipes' means:

- using unsalted dough
- working on a carved wooden board.

Text 2

Question 2

Any two of:

- trees absorb carbon dioxide and emit oxygen necessary for our breathing
- trees absorb moisture from the earth/soil, purify it and emit it into the atmosphere
- trees act like pumps; they raise underground waters and enrich the soil (and thus prevent it from drying)
- soon there will be no trees left.

Most students managed to get full marks for this question.

Text 3

Question 3

Time measured by	Device for measurement
Running sand	Hourglass/sand-glass
Moving shadows	Sunlight
Flowing water	Water clock
Burning rate of candle	Wax candle
Electricity	Modern clock



Text 4

Question 4

Any six of:

- reflected people's happiness
- reflected moral values/evil and good
- passed down from generation to generation
- were common among people around the world
- have been around for a long time
- famous writers wrote tales
- reflected reality
- portrayed human characteristics.

Only some students were able to identify evidence demonstrating the importance of folk tales.

Part B – Answer in Russian

Text 5

Question 5

Professor Alexander Ivanovich's views were (any four of):

- the West has well-developed economic and political systems and democracy
- the East could offer Russia a lot as Russian cultural roots are in the East
- Russia has been closely connected with the East: Byzantine, India, China
- the East represents soul and warm relationships
- the West represents reason and rationalism
- Russia is located between the West and the East, thus it is like a bridge between the West and the East; it has features from both
- Russia should go its own way, taking the best traditions from the West and the East.

Text 6

Question 6

For Russia, any three of:

- friends tell each other everything, they are open and sincere in their friendship
- people go to friends for help and advice
- you can ring friends at any time, even at night, no reason needed
- friends are glad that they are the ones to be asked for help
- friends like to have (to share) time in the kitchen – you are considered to be a friend if you're invited into the kitchen.

For Australia, any three of:

- friends don't discuss personal things
- people go to psychologists for help and advice
- you can ring people only before 10 pm
- people are greeted in the lounge room.

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Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A – Answer in English

Text 7

Question 7a.

Dates	Reasons	Features
1 March	One of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">welcome springpraise fertility gods.	Cherry trees were decorated
1 September	After harvesting crops	Folk festivities and feast
1 January	New calendar introduced	Any one of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">people congratulated each otherhomes were decoratedfireworks.

Most students addressed this question correctly.

Question 7b.

Any three of:

- it was difficult to establish the use of the fir tree in Russia because peasants regarded an oak or a birch tree as sacred
- the orthodox church resisted the Western influence (the habit using the fir tree)
- the fir tree was banned as a religious symbol
- at the beginning of the 20th century, a fir tree was banned as a 'German custom'.

Question 7c.

- Greece
- Germany

A few students were unable to provide the expected answers.

Question 7d.

It can be inferred that the relationship between Russia and Germany in the 19th century was good (warm; for example, the reference to the 'lovely German thing').

Text 8

Question 8a.

Politics – the reasons for the traditional role of men are:

- men feel superior
- women are traditionally modest and reserved
- politics requires a different style of behaviour (opposite to being modest and reserved).

Unlike politics, in business there is no discrimination:

- talent is more important than gender
- hard work is more important than gender
- professionalism is more important than gender
- business competence is more important than gender
- more women are in executive roles.

Question 8b.

Any three of:

- society is realising that women play an important role in business and politics
- women have demonstrated talent in economics for centuries; for example, in performing domestic duties
- women have demonstrated environmental talent for centuries; for example, in the way they keep their houses and family members clean
- women are tolerant and peace-loving
- women represent half of society



- women see the world differently.

Some students found this question challenging.

Question 8c.

In Russia, there are more educated women than men, but in the Russian Parliament, women constitute only 10 per cent of members.

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).

Students addressed the task successfully, correctly structuring their answers in the form of diary entries.

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
- the capacity to use conventions of the text type.

Question 10

This was the most popular question, with half of all students attempting it. Those who did so demonstrated an ability to produce their own point of view and support it with strong arguments.

Question 11

This was the least popular question, only a few wrote the text of a speech, though these students showed a good understanding of register and genre.

Question 12

A few students attempted this question. They correctly structured the answer in the form of an article.

Question 13

This was the second most popular question. Many students attempted imaginative writing quite successfully. They demonstrated a creative approach to the task and performed to the highest standard. Some of them used direct speech to enrich the text.