

Modern Greek (continuers)

2012 Chief Assessor's Report



Government
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MODERN GREEK (CONTINUERS)

2012 CHIEF ASSESSOR'S REPORT

OVERVIEW

Chief Assessors' reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Moderation of the school assessment resulted in adjustment to some grades for a number of schools. There was a wide variety of standards presented for moderation. It was evident that teachers who had familiarised themselves with the Stage 2 subject outline and school assessment requirements had prepared their students well and based their assessment decisions appropriately on the performance standards.

Assessment Type 1: Folio

The folio is made up of three different assessments: interaction, text analysis, and text production. Schools have the choice of asking students to complete between three and five assessments for their folio, including at least one of each of the above assessments. In 2012, most schools chose to complete five assessment tasks (one interaction task, two text analysis tasks, and two text production tasks).

The interaction should give students an opportunity to interact with others to exchange information, ideas, opinions, or experiences in Modern Greek. Some schools allowed students to give an oral presentation, even though the learning and assessment plan clearly indicated an interaction. Some schools did not follow the assessment description or the assessment conditions indicated on the approved learning and assessment plan. Teachers are reminded to indicate any changes from the approved learning and assessment plan on the addendum.

The text analysis was the assessment type that varied the most. Students need to analyse sufficient text to show that they can perform at the highest level of the performance standards. Teachers must ensure that the assessment design criteria, as outlined in the assessment task sheet and in the learning and assessment plan, have been assessed. Specific feature IR2 (Analysis of the language in texts) would most logically be assessed through a text analysis assessment task, yet some students were not given the opportunity to address this specific feature through a text analysis task. Questions should be designed to give all students the opportunity to perform to the highest possible level of the performance standards.

Grades allocated in the text production tasks were by far the most consistent. A variety of tasks were presented to students and they were designed to meet all levels of the performance standards.

Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study

The in-depth study allows students to demonstrate research into, and personal reflection on, an aspect or aspects of a topic — preferably one that the student is interested in — and then present a written response in Modern Greek, an oral presentation in Modern Greek, and a reflective response in English.

The majority of schools managed this task very well and students achieved a very high standard. The best responses showed clear evidence of research and were elicited using a clear set of guidelines in the task description.

The written responses in Modern Greek were, in the majority of cases, of a high standard and with good choices of topics.

Some examples of topics chosen this year were: Byzantine Empire, Asia Minor Catastrophe, Massacre of Chios, Parthenon Marbles, Turkish Occupation of Greece, Aghia Sophia, Famous Greeks, and Migration.

Tasks should be designed carefully so that students are guided in their research and are able to extract, interpret, and analyse relevant information from various sources. Students need to be supported in designing tasks for the written response and oral which, although based on the same topic, have a different purpose, context, and audience.

The standard of the oral presentations varied. The most effective presentations had a specific focus and did not rely heavily on notes, presenting an interesting and relevant aspect of the research. It was an issue of concern that some students presented a written piece almost identical to their oral presentation.

Most reflective responses met the required word-limit and contained reflection on culture, language, and the learning process. Students would benefit from careful guidelines in the task description, including suggestions about what they need to address to write a good reflective response. Some students wrote a paragraph or two in which they reflected on their learning, but then offered recount of the information from their Modern Greek written response.

The word-limit is very important here, as is the opportunity to address specific feature IR3 (Reflection). If students exceed the word-limit of 600 words, and they have not provided any reflection in the first 600 words, then they may not be able to achieve at the highest levels of the performance standards. This year, many responses were about 800 words long. Teachers need to guide and support their students carefully to ensure that students can achieve at the highest levels.

Assessment Type 3: Examination

Oral Examination

Section 1: Conversation

The oral examination of 10–15 minutes comprises a conversation and a discussion of the student's in-depth study.

In the conversation, students converse with the examiners about their personal world. Topics covered typically include life, family and friends, home, local environment, school, hobbies, interests, aspirations, and travel. Most students performed well in this section, demonstrating thorough preparation and familiarity with the language.

The most successful students provided extensive, relevant responses to the questions asked. They were able to move the conversation forward confidently, displaying a good command of the language and an extensive vocabulary. These students also readily clarified, elaborated on, and justified their opinions and ideas and paid particular attention to pronunciation, intonation, stress, and tempo.

Successful students possessed a sound working knowledge and mastery of all the tenses and were able to use complex structures including passive and subjunctive moods. They were also at ease using the second person plural when addressing examiners and asking for clarification if they did not understand the examiners' questions.

Other students were able to discuss a wide range of topics, but it was evident that they were not fully prepared. Common errors included incorrect article and gender, syntactical errors, adjective noun agreement and verb tense.

A few students did not manage to respond to a variety of topics. They appeared to understand the questions but needed some prompting to elicit answers, and their responses were very simple. They were unable to advance the conversation as their vocabulary was limited and their expression poor. They frequently resorted to Anglicisms and rote-learned material.

Section 2: Discussion

The discussion section of the oral examination relates to the in-depth study where students are required to discuss a topic that they have researched at length — one that relates to an aspect or aspects of a topic associated with the themes 'The Greek-speaking Communities' or 'The Changing World'. As part of the discussion, students may be asked questions relating to their reflective response. This proved quite challenging for a lot of students, as they were not able to transfer the information they had compiled in English for the reflective response into Greek to support their answers. Many simply repeated facts and information.

Students who had chosen their topics wisely and had researched them at length stood out from the rest of the student cohort. They were thoroughly prepared and were able to maintain and advance the discussion appropriately and effectively. They maintained the discussion and used the texts and resources studied to support their ideas and opinions. They demonstrated a sound knowledge and appreciation of their topic and were skilled in expressing and elaborating on ideas and opinions. They had also mastered the linguistic elements of the language and effectively used an excellent range of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Unprepared students found this section very challenging. Several had not been guided sufficiently and they struggled to respond to the questions and were unable to reflect on their own learning. Some found it difficult to talk about texts they had accessed as part of the research process.

The problems that students encountered in using language were similar to those they encountered in the conversation. The stronger responses were clear and thorough with a depth of information. These students had the appropriate vocabulary and

grammar required to discuss their topic with ease resulting in an interesting discussion. They were also able to reflect effectively on their learning.

Written Examination

Section 1: Listening and Responding

Overall, students answered this section very well. The majority were able to identify the information in the texts and respond appropriately.

This year there were five unrelated texts of varying lengths and types. For all texts, the questions and answers were in English.

Question 1: This question was answered very well and the majority of students were able to identify the audience as students wishing to study economics at university. Some confused the word for 'resume' with 'biography' but most students covered all required points.

Question 2 (a): Most students answered well but some omitted the 'Greek language skills' and found it difficult to translate the Greek word for 'backgammon'.

Question 2 (b): Most students identified all the required information but some did not mention the interviews and the booklet.

Question 3: Most students identified the three ways Vaso conveyed her enthusiasm but some did not address how she tried to convince Alexandro to go to the formal.

Question 4 (a): Students generally answered this part of the question well.

Question 4 (b): There was some confusion about dates and with the word for 'work' interpreted as that for 'film'.

Question 5 (a): Answered well, using a range of words to describe the caller.

Question 5 (b): While most students identified most of the points from the text, some did not relate their answer to the hotel being 'environmentally conscious'.

Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part A

This section proved the most challenging for students again this year.

Question 6 (a): Not all students identified the 'cost of the stadium' as the issue.

Question 6 (b): Although students referred to 'unemployment being a bad thing' they did not supply enough information.

Question 6 (c): Many students recounted information from the text without addressing 'how effectively' the case was presented.

Question 7 (a): There was some misinterpretation of the content of the text, although most students identified the ideas of culture, dance, and song.

Question 7 (b): Students identified song and dance but some found it difficult to include further detail.

Question 7 (c): Students were able to identify whose contribution was most significant but some found it challenging to include evidence from the text.

Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part B

Question 8: The stimulus in the examination was an announcement in a school newsletter outlining two significant changes to the students' daily routine. Students were required to demonstrate their capacity to understand general and specific aspects of the text, and their ability to convey information accurately and appropriately. Their task was to write an email to the Student Representative Council, to express support for or concerns regarding the changes outlined in the text.

Students demonstrated a wide range of abilities in this section. The more successful responses addressed the issues raised by the author, and presented information using the conventions of an email. These responses were organised and original, and used authentic vocabulary. Students were able to defend their ideas and views clearly and in a balanced and well-presented manner.

The more successful responses observed the word-limit, included students' own ideas, and supported the ideas with evidence. The grammar needed for a successful response included correct articles and adjective noun agreement, appropriate verb tenses, accurate spelling, and appropriate choice of vocabulary.

Students are reminded not to include personal details in any answer, for example, they should not include their real name in a sign-off to a letter.

Section 3: Writing in Modern Greek

Students were required to write 250 to 300 words in Modern Greek in response to one of the three questions set. Each question required a different text type and style of writing. Most students chose to answer questions 9 (a diary entry) or 11 (the text of a talk to a class).

A wide range of abilities was observed in this section. Higher achieving responses showed complex vocabulary and expressions, while less successful responses presented simple ideas and basic vocabulary.

Question 9: Students were asked to write a diary entry, in which they recounted an argument with a parent about taking a gap year, and reflected on their emotions. Many students expressed their ideas well, structured sentences correctly, and wrote in a logical sequence. The better responses clearly described emotions and included all the features of the text type.

Question 10: This question asked students to write a story incorporating the saying 'better late than never'. No students attempted this question, possibly due to lack of confidence in producing this text type or because the question contained little structure and would have required students to design a narrative under pressure.

Question 11: Students were asked to write the text of a talk about why good nutrition and exercise are essential for healthy living. Most students who attempted this question had very strong language skills and were able to present their ideas logically, using persuasive vocabulary.

Common language mistakes included incorrect articles, verb tenses, especially past perfective and past imperfective non-agreement of adjectives and nouns, incorrect use of cases, especially accusative and incorrect choice of words (from dictionaries).

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

Teachers should provide a copy of the approved learning and assessment plan (with any changes noted in the addendum) when they submit student work for moderation. A copy of each task should be provided. Most student work had the task attached to their work, but others did not, so in these instances it was difficult for the moderators to work out the description and expectations of the task(s).

Teachers are advised to be mindful of how students' work is presented; each student's work should be separate, with tasks for the two assessment types in, for example, a cardboard or manila folder. Heavy plastic folders are cumbersome. Simple packaging is the most effective.

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