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Modern Greek (continuers)

2015 Chief Assessor’s Report

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## 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

Assessment Type 1: Folio

The folio comprises three different assessments: interaction, text production, and text analysis. Schools have the choice (as stated in the subject outline) of requiring students to complete between three and five assessments for their folio, including at least one of each of the above assessments. Most schools chose to complete five assessment tasks (one interaction task, two text production tasks, and two text analysis tasks).

The interaction assessment task must give students an opportunity to interact with others to exchange information, ideas, opinions, or experiences in Modern Greek. All schools followed this structure, allowing students the opportunity to exchange information about themselves, their family, their school, and their plans for the future. Most schools followed the assessment description and the assessment conditions indicated on the subject outline. Most interaction tasks provided a specific focus for the conversation, although some were only based on the oral examination conversation sample questions, which did not allow students to demonstrate learning against all the relevant specific features at the highest level.

A variety of text production tasks were presented to students, which were designed to allow achievement at all levels of the performance standards, including the highest achievement.

For text analysis tasks, students need to analyse a range of texts to show that they can perform at the highest level of the performance standards. Most tasks allowed for this. Text analysis tasks need to be designed to allow students to demonstrate understanding and analytical skills, rather than simply copying details from the original text. Task sheets need to contain sufficient direction for students and articulate assessment conditions, task details, assessment design criteria, and 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 by a text analysis assessment task, and students must be given the opportunity to address this specific feature using this assessment type. Questions should be designed to give all students the opportunity to perform at 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. It is recommended that task descriptions include a clear set of guidelines for research and personal reflection.

Topics for the in-depth study should be related to one of the two themes, ‘The Modern Greek-Speaking Communities’ and ‘The Changing World’. There was a wide variety of topics chosen this year. The better responses had a specific focus, which allowed students to demonstrate depth in the treatment of content.

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

The oral presentations varied in standard. The better presentations had a specific focus and did not rely heavily on notes, presenting an interesting and relevant aspect of the research.

The written responses in Modern Greek were generally well written and showed evidence of the drafting process.

Most reflective responses met the required word-limit and contained reflection on culture, language, and the learning process. The more successful responses included some analysis and evaluation of texts accessed, as well as the impact on the students’ own learning. Students would benefit from careful guidelines in the task description, including suggestions about what they need to address in order to write a good reflective response. In some examples, there was a paragraph or two where students reflected on their learning, but then lapsed into a recount of the information they had in their Modern Greek written response.

Word-count is very important here, as is the opportunity to address specific feature IR3 (Reflection). Any additional work beyond the word limit of 600 words will not be assessed or considered at moderation.

## External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination

Oral Examination

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

Section 1: Conversation

In the conversation, students converse with the examiners about their personal world. Topics may include life, family and friends, home, school life, aspirations, interests, hobbies, leisure activities, holidays, and travel.

Most students performed well in this section, demonstrating thorough preparation and familiarity with the language.

The most successful students demonstrated effective use of the language, a high level of grammatical accuracy, an extensive and sophisticated vocabulary, as well as depth of response. They were able to elaborate on their ideas and sustain the conversation.

Less successful students experienced problems with vocabulary and with depth of treatment. It was evident that they did not have adequate vocabulary to enable them to convey thoughts and information or to manipulate language skilfully. Simplistic responses were given with limited elaboration. In some cases, prompting and rephrasing were required by examiners in order to obtain responses.

Incorrect use of the impersonal verbs *πρέπει* and *μου αρέσει* was still common among the less successful students. Other problems included anglicisms in expressions, incorrect gender and noun agreement, and inaccurate genitive and accusative cases. For example, Έχω πάω, πρέπανε να κάνουνε, στο φίλος μου σπίτι.’

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 Modern Greek-speaking Communities’ or ‘The Changing World’ themes. In this section, students are asked to discuss information, opinions, and reflections which are relevant to the focus of their in-depth study.

There were a variety of topics chosen by the students this year. Less successful responses were based on very broad topics, which did not help or support the students. Some topics also did not allow for meaningful discussion with the examiners. Teachers could support their students by creating a guiding question around their topic, which would help the students not only in their research, but also with their discussion. Also, the information provided to the oral examiners on the in-depth study overview must reflect the research done by the students in order to allow for a meaningful discussion. Less successful students were repetitive, lacking depth and evidence of research.

It was evident that the most successful students had chosen their topic wisely and had researched at length. They demonstrated a sound knowledge and appreciation of their topic and were skilled in expressing and elaborating their views. They had an excellent grasp of the linguistic elements of the language, using idiomatic expressions, a high level of grammatical accuracy, depth of response, and higher-order thinking. They justified their opinions effectively and responded appropriately to various styles of questioning including informational, open, comparative, and reflective.

A large number of students were not adequately prepared and thus found this section quite challenging. Choice of topic was poor or inadequate so they were not able to discuss or respond to the questions in sufficient depth, or elaborate or sustain the discussion. Many of their responses were repetitive and quite superficial.

The problems that the students encountered with the use of the language were similar to those they encountered in the conversation. The stronger responses were clear, thorough, and relevant, and ideas were communicated effectively with originality and creativity. Less successful students exhibited the same difficulties that they had in the conversation section, using simple language, short sentences, and well-rehearsed patterns.

Written Examination

Section 1: Listening and Responding

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

Overall this section was answered well. In better responses, students demonstrated a thorough understanding of the spoken texts and deduced meaning from content-based and analytical/evaluative questioning. They also supported their answers with textual evidence or justified their answers by referring to specific words or references made in the text.

Most students were able to identify general and specific information in the texts. However, many alluded to the specifics by making general statements and not supporting these with evidence as required (e.g. Question 3).

The weaker responses were from students who translated parts of the text without demonstrating the ability to interpret or evaluate information. These responses also lacked evidence from the text to support the answers. Many students also simply wrote their response in Greek in quotations, without further explanation.

It was evident from Question 1 that many students had not been adequately taught about formal and informal register use or the linguistic features that support this; for example, use of second-person plural, and the use of the title *κύριε*, *κυρία*.

***Text 1***

1(a) This was answered quite well, with the majority of the students identifying all reasons.

1(b) The majority of students failed to identify formal and informal register. Many used the term ‘polite’, but they were not able to explain or support their answer.

***Text 2***

2(a) This question was generally answered correctly, demonstrating good understanding of the content of the text.

2(b) Again, this section was well answered and the stronger students identified the expressions ‘leave it all up to me’ and ‘no time to waste’.

***Text 3***

3(a) This question was answered well overall. Only a few students did not give both concerns and only identified the money problems.

3(b) Again, this question was answered well. A few students confused the movie night with theatre.

3(c) This was probably the weakest of the three parts to this text. Most students described Akis’ actions but failed to identify character traits.

***Text 4***

4 This question was generally answered well. However, quite a few students focused on the challenges and identified only one benefit — ‘choosing subjects’ was the most common benefit.

***Text 5***

5 This was answered quite well, although there were a few students who omitted to include the fact that Monica was non-Greek and incorrectly included, as a reason for her receiving the award, her desire to study Greek at university.

Section 2: Reading and Responding

**Part A**

This proved to be the most challenging section of the examination paper. The two texts in this section, while completely different in complexity of language, style, and format, were linked. Overall, students demonstrated a good understanding of the content, purpose, and comparison of the two texts. There were, however, some responses which indicated that students had limited understanding of the texts in general.

***Text 6***

Most students found this text difficult due to the complexity of the language. Many misunderstood the term *διαμέρισμα* and it was evident that some students did not know the meaning of the word ‘benefactor’. However, most students were able to identify the positive characteristics of the benefactors and used evidence from the text to support their answers. Most could identify three reasons to visit Epirus — but very few mentioned the cultural legacy as a reason for tourists wanting to visit Epirus.

***Text 7***

7(a) Most students were able to identify the text types, but many only discussed the degree of formality of the language as a difference. Very few mentioned tone or referred to punctuation or structure to support their answer.

7(b) Many students articulated separately the features of the two texts, rather than connecting what they have in common.

7(c) Very few students received full marks for this question. They failed to explain what set Bulgaris apart from the other benefactors — the fact that he only helped his village by building a school there, while the other benefactors helped all of Greece.

**Part B**

The stimulus was an advertisement/program inviting people to a student festival. Students were asked to write an article for a local paper reviewing the festival, commenting on what impressed them the most and suggesting ways the festival could be improved upon next year. They were required to demonstrate their capacity to understand general and specific aspects of the text and their ability to convey information accurately and appropriately.

While the majority of the students used the formal register to write the article, many omitted to include a title, and the non-use of paragraphing by a great number of students was of concern.

Most students were able to convey relevant information. A number of students expanded on their material using dot points, while others borrowed heavily and simply rewrote large sections of the text.

The more successful students created interest with the use of high-level language and expressions, originality, and creativity, and they wrote in the style of a professional review. They were also able to expand on what captured their interest at the festival by elaborating on an item and engaging the reader. Similarly, good and authentic suggestions were made as to how the festival could be improved, such as becoming a two-day event, charging cheaper prices, providing more student activities, and improving the venue.

The less successful students were very simplistic in their ideas and had borrowed large excerpts from the texts. Their highlights of the festival were also simplistic (food or sweets) and many failed to give suggestions for improvement the following year. Less successful responses also showed poor expression and little or no elaboration of ideas.

*Section 3: Writing in Modern Greek*

Three choices were provided this year and students were required to write 250–300 words in Modern Greek on one of the three questions. Each question required a different text type and style of writing. Students were required to produce a reflection (Question 9), an email (Question 10), or a narrative (Question 11). The majority of students chose Question 10 (email), several chose Question 11, and only two students chose Question 9.

***Question 9***

Having been given a voucher for a one-day outdoor adventure, students had to write a reflection in which they evaluated the adventure and how the experience might help them in the future.

***Question 10***

Students had to write an email to a cousin in Greece who was doing a school assignment on how teenagers spend their leisure time in different parts of the world. The cousin had asked about the life of teenagers in the student’s city.

Most students chose this question and were able to manage the requirements of the task quite well. The most successful students wrote appropriately and effectively in relation to the audience, context, and purpose of the task. Students were able to write creatively using correct linguistic structures and features to achieve interest. Their ideas and information successfully engaged the reader. They were able to identify a large and varied number of activities teenagers involved themselves in their city and successfully and accurately portray them (e.g. leisure activities, sport, music, work, household chores, school activities, theatre, dance).

The less successful students conveyed very simple ideas and focused on only one or two activities. There was much repetition and, in many cases, the salutation and closing paragraphs of the email with irrelevant information took up the majority of the email. Many students turned the task into a personal email focusing on what they personally spent their time doing and their own personal interests, rather than talking about teenagers in general.

***Question 11***

Students had to write a narrative using the following line:

‘Just as I entered the house, my mother shouted, “This is your first and last time that …” ’

The students who chose this question displayed excellent linguistic skills, used sophisticated vocabulary, and wrote creatively, engaging the audience. Many idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms were used and the students sequenced and structured ideas and information effectively and coherently.

**General Observations for Section 3**

A range of abilities was observed in this section. The stronger students were able to organise their information logically and in a sequential manner, were original and able to use authentic vocabulary, and displayed cultural appropriateness. Weaker responses presented simple ideas and basic vocabulary.

Common language mistakes included incorrect articles, incorrect verb tenses, non-agreement of adjectives and nouns, incorrect use of cases, and incorrect choice of words from dictionaries. For example:

οι έφηβοι στην Αυστραλία τους αρέσουν

για την ζωή τους νέους

ελεύθερο χρόνο είναι πολύ διαφορετικό

τους αρέσουν να πάνε με οι φίλοι τους

ο κλίμας είναι ζεστός

πολλούς νέους.

In order to be successful in this section, candidates should practise the type of task and familiarise themselves with a range of topics and text types. Students should also be encouraged to read the questions very carefully to avoid misinterpreting the instructions.

## Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks should be evident on all student school assessment work.

Changes to the learning and assessment plan should be indicated on the addendum page of the learning and assessment plan.

## General Comments

In 2015, 40 students undertook the oral and written examinations. Moderation of the school assessment resulted in confirmation of most grades. 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.

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