

Modern Greek (continuers)

2014 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

In 2014, moderation of the school assessment resulted in confirmation of most grades. As all schools had 13 or fewer students, most student work was 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.

## School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

The folio is made up of three different assessment types: interaction, text analysis, and text production. Schools have the choice (as stated in the learning and assessment plan) of requiring students to complete between three and five assessments for their folio, including at least one assessment of each of the above assessment types. Most schools chose to complete five assessment tasks, with the majority consisting of one interaction task, two text analysis tasks, and two text production tasks.

The interaction assessment task must give students an opportunity to interact with others to exchange information, ideas, opinions, or experiences in Modern Greek. Tasks presented allowed 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 approved learning and assessment plan. Teachers are reminded that any changes to the learning and assessment plan should be indicated on the addendum page of the plan.

For the text analysis tasks, students need to analyse sufficient text to show that they can perform at the highest level of the performance standards. Most tasks allowed for this. Teachers should 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 it is recommended students be given the opportunity to address this specific feature in this assessment type.

The text production tasks were generally well executed and there was a good range of tasks presented, addressing a variety of topics.

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 in which the student is interested. The student then presents a written response and an oral presentation in Modern Greek, and a reflective response in English.

The majority of students managed this task very well and achieved to 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.

There was a range of interesting and challenging in-depth study topics presented at moderation this year. Some examples of topics chosen were:

* Ancient Greek theatre
* famous Greek poets
* Parthenon Marbles
* Byzantium
* Greek music and performers
* famous Greeks
* mythology
* Cyprus.

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

The written responses in Modern Greek were, in the majority of cases, of a high standard. They were generally well written and showed evidence of the drafting process.

However, 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.

Most reflective responses met the required word limit and contained reflection on culture, language, and the learning process (IR3 — reflection). The more successful responses included some analysis and evaluation of the texts, as well as the impact they had on the students’ own learning. Students benefitted from careful guidelines in the task description, including suggestions about what they need to address in order to write a good reflective response. Less successful responses typically consisted of a paragraph or two where students reflected on their learning, but then lapsed into a recount of the information from their Modern Greek written response. Annotated examples can be found on the SACE Board website and can be used by teachers and students to ensure that the requirements of the task are fully understood.

Exceeding the word count of 600 words should be avoided, as the additional work cannot be assessed or considered at moderation.

## External Assessment

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 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.

The most competent students possessed a sound working knowledge and mastery of verb 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. They could elaborate on responses and sustain the conversation.

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

A few students had difficulty in responding to a variety of topics. They appeared to understand the questions but needed some prompting with answers, some of which were very simplistic. 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 Greek-speaking Communities’ or ‘The Changing World’ themes. As part of the discussion, students may be asked questions relating to their reflective response.

Most students were able to discuss the texts they had accessed and some were able to analyse them as well. A small number of students brought maps and photos with them to support their discussion.

Those 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 able to maintain and advance the discussion appropriately and effectively. They 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 also had an excellent grasp of the linguistic elements of the language and used a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures effectively.

Students who were not as well prepared found this section very challenging. Teachers are reminded that students need guidance in the preparation for the oral examination so as to be able to respond to the questions and 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 with the use of the 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 necessary vocabulary and grammar to discuss their topic with ease, resulting in an interesting discussion. They were also able to reflect on their learning effectively, comment on the texts they had analysed, and reflect on their own values and beliefs.

Written Examination

Section 1: Listening and Responding

Overall, this section was answered very well. The majority of students 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 all of the protective measures taken for the heatwave and the advice given to pet owners.

Question 2

Students answered well and justified their answer with evidence from the text; however, some had difficulty comparing the tone used by the two speakers, referring to the language used in the text.

Question 3

This was the most challenging question. Some students neglected to identify that the students were going to a museum in Sydney or that they were going to see historical costumes.

Question 4

Students were able to list the cultural activities, but some students had difficulty analysing the strategies used to persuade Dimitri to attend the festival. These included the use of emotive language, guilt, and peer pressure.

Question 5

Students identified the sweet vasilopita but some used the word ‘salty’ instead of ‘savoury’ for the other type. Most understood the significance of the token in the vasilopita but some did not understand the significance of the olive twig.

Section 2: Reading and Responding

Part A

Overall, students demonstrated very good understanding of the content, purpose, and audience of the two texts. However, some responses contained unnecessary recount or repetition and incorrect interpretation of words.

Question 6

1. Students provided a comprehensive explanation of how El Greco’s passion for art developed; however, some omitted the part about the education and exposure to painting that he had in Crete.
2. Students answered well, identifying that El Greco was less successful in Rome because his style was different and he was not accepted by the other painters.
3. Students demonstrated comprehensive understanding of what was significant about the artist’s time in Spain.
4. Students answered well; however, some did not identify that 2014 would be celebrated as ‘The Year of El Greco’.

Question 7

1. Students demonstrated good understanding of what made Maria Callas ‘charming’, although some had difficulty articulating a word describing her face.
2. Students compared El Greco and Maria Callas accurately; however, some omitted the fact that they both changed their name.

Part B

Question 8

The stimulus in Reading and Responding Part B was an advertisement seeking young people for a summer camp program. The students were asked to write an email to a friend, persuading them to apply for the position. 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. Responses were generally relevant, although some included details that were not required by the question.

Most responses included the required details and were in the appropriate text type of an email, organising ideas logically and supporting opinions effectively. The more competent responses were original and used authentic vocabulary, incorporating appropriate language from the stimulus text. 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 should be reminded to use a pseudonym if the response requires a name.

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 either a diary entry, a transcript of a speech, or an article. Most students chose to answer Questions 9 or 11, which required a diary entry or an article.

Very few attempted Question 10, which required students to produce a transcript of a speech.

Question 9

Students were asked to write a diary entry, recounting their ideas about the values of Greek traditions and how they can be maintained in Australia. They were required to refer to their experiences at a wedding or christening they had attended.

Question 10

This question asked students to write a transcript of a speech presented at a school assembly about the benefits of being a volunteer. This was attempted by only a few students, possibly due to limited experience in the area.

Question 11

Students were asked to write an article for a Greek youth magazine about the advantages and disadvantages of young people’s use of technology. This was the question most students chose to respond to.

A range of abilities was observed in this section. Stronger responses showed complex knowledge of vocabulary and appropriate expressions in accurately structured sentences, while weaker responses presented simple ideas and basic vocabulary. Successful responses demonstrated a detailed knowledge of the themes from the subject outline and included the relevant information, presented in a logically organised manner. Most students were able to write close to the required word limit.

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

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

A copy of the approved learning and assessment plan (with any changes noted in the addendum) should be included with the moderation materials. Teachers are required to provide a copy of the task sheets; this assists moderators to quickly work out the description and expectations of the task(s).

Teachers should take care when preparing material for moderation. Samples submitted for moderation that are packaged by assessment type, with student work clearly labelled, make it easy for moderators to identify the materials for each student and assist the moderation process. Heavy plastic folders should not be submitted. The [subject operational information](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/documents/652891/4a030b8d-9ca0-4500-9804-d6ffa01e05ce) provides advice about the packaging materials for moderation.

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