

RUSSIAN

Paper 9782/01
Speaking

Key messages

- In Part I, candidates need to choose a topic of interest to them and be able to express their opinions in accurate Russian.
- In Part II, candidates need to prepare a topic related to a country where Russian is spoken. In order to do well, candidates should choose a subject which is of interest and about which they can offer evidence of in-depth research and opinion.

General comments

Candidates were very well prepared and demonstrated a wide range of linguistic skills. The chosen topics were well researched and almost all candidates spoke with enthusiasm and obvious interest, occasionally taking the lead in the conversation and achieving a high standard.

Comments on specific Parts

Part I Discussion of article and related themes

Of the four cards, the most popular was 'Family' quickly followed by 'Urban and rural life'. The least popular was 'Medical advances'.

The vast majority of candidates were extremely well prepared and used the preparation time effectively. They offered excellent responses using impressively accurate language with a wide range of lexis and structures. Many had strong opinions, which were expressed with confidence.

The very few weaker candidates lacked detail in their answers and did not show confidence in their range of lexis and structure. Pronunciation and intonation was good to very good for all candidates.

Part II Prepared oral topic

Candidates made full use of the opportunity to choose topics which interested them. They showed great depth of knowledge and a good ability to analyse. There was an impressive range of interesting topics including aspects of the lives and/or ideas of literary, historical or political characters. Some examples include 'Tolstoy's spiritual crisis'; 'Architecture of St Petersburg and Moscow'; 'Daniil Kharms' and 'The life and work of Maleevich'. The very best candidates showed evidence of in-depth research and spoke with genuine interest and enthusiasm.

Language

The language level achieved was sometimes higher in **Part II** than in **Part I**, although many candidates achieved similar marks in both parts.

Almost all candidates displayed an excellent command of Russian and were able to use a wide range of lexis and structure confidently and accurately to express their opinions. Pronunciation and intonation was always of a good or very good standard.

There was occasional difficulty with numerals and some slips in agreement or in the use of dative constructions with *надо* or *можно* or with verbs taking the instrumental, but the vast majority of candidates displayed an admirable knowledge of the language at this level including the specific lexis required for their chosen topics in **Part II**.

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Paper 9782/02 Reading and Listening
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Key messages

- In preparation for this component, candidates should have experience of reading and listening to a wide range of authentic materials related to the topics in the syllabus.
- During the examination, candidates need to focus on conveying the required information in clear language, but there is no need for full sentences.

General comments

Part I: Reading

Text 1: Candidates need to produce answers to questions in Russian which to some degree manipulate the language of the original text. Full sentences are not required.

Text 2: Candidates need to respond in English. Full sentences are not required.

Text 3: Candidates need to translate, into Russian, a short passage which is thematically connected to the preceding two texts. Useful vocabulary can be found in Texts 1 and 2, although it may have to be adapted for the translation passage; for example, verb and case forms may need to be changed.

Part II: Listening

It is advisable to spend about 1 hour on this section. Candidates should be familiar with the individual listening equipment before the examination so that they feel confident.

Text 1: Candidates need to respond in Russian. They should focus on giving only the information required for the answer, rather than full sentences or lengthy sections transcribed from the audio. The information has to be conveyed successfully, so candidates should aim for as high a degree of linguistic accuracy as possible.

Text 2: Candidates need to respond in English. Complete sentences are not required; candidates need only write the information required to answer the questions.

Text 3: Candidates must address all four bullet points in the summary and answer in concise English in order not to exceed the word limit. Complete sentences are not required.

Comments on specific questions

Part I: Reading

TEXT 1: Most candidates obtained a mark of 6 or higher. This text was about the older and younger generations in Russian society.

Question 1

Virtually all candidates identified the role of 55-year-old Russian ladies as looking after their grandchildren. Some answered simply *бабушка*, which was perfectly acceptable.

Question 2

Most candidates identified the contrasting behaviour of parents and grandparents towards children.

Question 3

This required the specific answer that young people sometimes sent their parents to old people's homes, or the more general answer that they showed them a lack of respect.

Question 4

This presented few problems.

Question 5

Most candidates gained at least 1 of the 2 marks available. A few candidates misunderstood *беда* as being the answer to the question, but the majority successfully retrieved *концлагерях* and *очереди за хлебом* as the experiences which young people knew little about.

Question 6

This was the most demanding question on this text, but virtually all candidates gained 1-3 marks. The most difficult element proved to be reference to young Russians frequently marrying foreigners (*и даже поднимают тост на их свадьбах с иностранцами*), but most understood the idea that older people were often surprised to hear younger Russians telling political jokes (*анекдоты*) and travelling abroad (*об их отдыхе в экзотических странах*).

TEXT 2: most candidates scored a high mark on this text, which gave advice on gifts to buy for friends and relatives.

Question 7

This presented few problems, but reference to both children and adults was required in order to gain both marks.

Question 8

This was generally well done. A number of candidates did not appear to understand the less common verb: *понаблюдайте* (observe).

Question 9

Most candidates correctly interpreted *подарочный сертификат* (gift voucher). A small number answered 'favourite magazine', being distracted by *любимый магазин*.

Question 10

This was answered correctly by virtually all.

Question 11

This was answered correctly by most. There were some simple effective renderings of *не задумываются о покупке подходящего подарка достаточно глубоко*, such as 'do not think enough about buying a suitable present'.

Question 12

Some candidates missed the essential idea that it was presents which *joked* about age (*шутливых подарках*) that should be avoided.

Question 13

Candidates produced many acceptable alternatives to translate *комментариями*.

Question 14

This question was answered correctly by virtually all candidates.

TEXT 3: the standard of translation this year was very high, with several candidates obtaining full marks.

The most challenging sections of the translation proved to be:

'as': some candidates misinterpreted this as *когда/между тем, как*. In the context this could only be *помому, что/так как*

'They want the children to have...': It was pleasing to note that many candidates knew the subjunctive construction: *они хотели, чтобы у детей было...*

'everything...': Sometimes the *что* was omitted from *всё, что...*

'older people': Many acceptable renderings were produced.

'each other': *друг другу* was almost universally known by candidates, but was not always produced in the correct case form.

'on special occasions like': The simplest rendering was probably *на такие праздники, как*, but many candidates gained credit for acceptable synonyms including *специальные* even though these may not have been completely accurate or idiomatic.

'inspiring': Some candidates were unable to find *вдохновляющее* in the second text.

Part II: Listening

TEXT 1: most candidates obtained a high score on this text about the merits of single sex education.

Questions 16-18

Candidates generally gained full marks for understanding that single sex education was only an experiment within some specialised schools, and that it particularly favoured children with health, academic or behavioural problems.

Questions 19-21

Most candidates understood the idea that boys and girls develop differently (*по-разному*) and that it was considered better to explain a topic in detail (*подробно*) and offer examples to girls, whereas it was advisable to let boys attempt the task first.

Question 22

Most candidates gained 1 or 2 marks for understanding that single sex classes made it easier to maintain discipline (*поддерживать порядок*), and that candidates were not afraid to give an incorrect answer or ask questions. Although it was true that girls' work output increased and it was therefore possible to cover more material, this did not answer the question as to how the atmosphere had changed (*Как изменилась атмосфера...*). This is an example of the importance of reading and analysing the question carefully.

TEXT 2: This text, featuring an interview with a famous actor, proved the most challenging of the listening tasks.

Questions 23-24

All candidates gained at least 1 of the 3 available marks for understanding that Boyarsky likes to fulfil his duty (*долг*), and felt pride (*гордость*) and envy (*зависть*) when watching war films. Candidates with a good knowledge of abstract nouns were clearly at an advantage where this question was concerned.

Questions 25-26

These posed few problems. Candidates produced a range of acceptable renderings for *любимая женщина* and *самые дорогие эмоции*.

Question 27

This was quite challenging even for the strongest candidates. Only 2 of 5 possible ideas needed to be retrieved to gain both marks, however. *Всё гораздо проще*, and the idiom *там не до высоких чувств* (there's no time for lofty feelings) were not always fully understood. The rest of the stimulus contained some less common verbs such as *успеваешь*, *действуешь* and *спасти*.

Question 28

Most candidates recognised the adjective *добрый*, but the comparative 'kinder' (*добрее*) was required in the answer.

Question 29

Мужество (courage or bravery) was known by relatively few candidates. Some may have deduced its meaning from the context.

Question 30

This posed few problems.

TEXT 3: Summary

This question, though challenging in parts, was well done by the majority of candidates, most of whom scored at least 6 of the 10 marks available. It should be borne in mind that full sentences are not required and that credit cannot be given for any work beyond the first natural break after 100 words. Most candidates kept within the word limit this year.

Most candidates gained maximum credit (3 marks) for the first bullet point concerning California's role in assisting Russia to make technological progress.

For the second bullet point about Russia's economic prospects, most candidates gained 2 marks for understanding that the Russian President had a clear vision (*ясная идея*) of Russia's future and the diversification of its economy. Many included the point about the huge potential for economic growth (*огромный потенциал для экономического роста*). Fewer candidates included the point about the need for both sides to work as partners in an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding (*в атмосфере доверия и взаимного понимания*).

For the third bullet point, all but a few candidates correctly noted the figures and date (650 billion cubic metres of gas produced annually, possibly reaching 1 trillion by 2030).

For the final bullet point about the importance of gas to Russia, most candidates correctly wrote that in the near future there is no real alternative to gas. Those who had not already exceeded the word limit generally gained credit for the point that Russia must produce enough gas to supply Russian consumers and maintain and increase Russia's presence on the world market.

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Paper 9782/03 Writing and Usage
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Key messages

For Part I, candidates should:

- spend some time reading all the titles, thinking carefully about each topic and what is being asked in the title
- think about whether they have something to say in response and consider whether they possess vocabulary in the topic area
- use their plan to construct a real argument with an introduction, discussion and a conclusion
- keep the essay title in mind throughout and check whether the points made are relevant, taking care to avoid repetition
- write in paragraphs, making a clear, relevant point in each one
- try to use a variety of language and demonstrate linguistic ability, writing complex sentences when appropriate, but without losing the thread of the argument
- remember to try to interest and/or persuade the reader.

For Part II, candidates should:

- be familiar with the format of the tests: this will help candidates to be aware of the type of knowledge required
- prepare by engaging in intelligent, careful reading of texts in the target language, and paying attention to personal linguistic development in terms of structures
- read each question carefully and make sure they understand the sense of the sentence
- avoid leaving any questions unanswered
- use their experience of and 'feel for' the language as well as their knowledge when deciding the correct answer (e.g. ask themselves 'Have I heard or seen a similar sentence?')
- proofread their answers carefully.

General comments

Candidates had clearly been well-prepared for the examination. The paper is in two parts and lasts for 2 hours and 15 minutes in total. Candidates are advised to spend about 1 hour 30 minutes on Part I (Discursive Essay) and about 45 minutes on Part II (Usage). 40 marks are available for Part I, in which candidates write one essay of 250-350 words in Russian, and 20 marks for Part II, in which candidates complete exercises which test their knowledge of Russian vocabulary and structure.

Nearly all the candidates completed all sections of the paper, and nearly all followed the instruction to write in dark blue or black ink. A very small number used a highlighter pen, though the rubric expressly forbids this.

Comments on specific questions

Part I: Discursive essay

Candidates write one essay from a choice of five titles. It is suggested that candidates write 250–350 words in Russian, but where candidates exceeded the upper limit, the entire essay was assessed. It is unlikely that an essay shorter than 250 words will include sufficient content and range of vocabulary and structure to access the entire range of marks available. A maximum of 24 marks out of 40 are awarded for the accuracy and linguistic range of the essay, and a maximum of 16 marks out of 40 for the development and organisation of ideas.

The majority of candidates wrote a plan for the essay. An essay plan is of great help in writing a well-organised and coherently argued essay. In addition, a plan allows the candidate to note down examples, vocabulary and structures which s/he may wish to include in the essay. The essay plan is not assessed. Many candidates wrote the essay on alternate lines of the page, allowing corrections or additions to the essay to be made neatly. Candidates would be well-advised to use paragraphs carefully in order to structure their work. In a surprisingly large number of cases the presentation of the work was rather messy and the standard of handwriting poor. Particular difficulty came with the handwritten versions of the letters л, ч, м, я and к. A small but significant number of candidates did not use capital letters to begin all their sentences, or when spelling proper nouns. As in previous years the declension of проблема was often confused.

Accuracy and linguistic range is assessed out of 24 marks and the essay does not have to be grammatically without fault to be awarded full marks in this category. In order to access the highest marks here, candidates should aim to include a very wide range of vocabulary appropriate to the title they have chosen, in addition to demonstrating their ability to use a range of complex sentence patterns and structures appropriately and accurately.

Up to 16 marks are awarded for the development and organisation of the ideas in the essay. Here, in order to access the highest marks, candidates must present an answer to the title which demonstrates that they have understood the question, considered its implications and prepared a well-planned and thoughtful response illustrated with appropriate examples. Examples from anywhere in the world may be used.

In order to be able to access the full range of marks available for this essay, candidates would be well-advised to choose a title about which they have clear ideas and views. They need to consider the question from different angles and to draw a clear conclusion. Examples should be incorporated into the essay and used to support strands of the argument. It is very possible that the candidate will have, at the initial planning stage, more material than can be used in an essay of this length. The skill, naturally, comes in selecting the arguments and examples to be used to address the question and the most successful answers reflected the candidates' ability to do just this. Less successful were those essays in which candidates appeared to write everything they knew about the topic, thus losing sight of the question.

Question 1

- (a) Candidates who answered this question were able to offer a good range of reasons to support the view that the train is or is not the transport of the future, using pertinent examples and often referring to environmental factors and the need for speed when travelling. Well-balanced essays considered the pros and cons of all three types of transport mentioned in the title.
- (b) This title provoked some thoughtful discussion and candidates used interesting examples taken from the news and other experience in their responses. The better answers considered the pros and cons of custodial sentences and came to a strong conclusion, whether in agreement with the statement in the essay title or not.
- (c) The issue of whether or not to study at university is clearly one about which the candidates who chose to answer this title have strong opinions. In general candidates were able to find many reasons for and against a university education. Many chose to use as examples figures such as Richard Branson or Mark Zuckerberg who have famously succeeded without having gained a university degree, or used examples of professions which do not require a university education. The better essays considered both sides of the argument and balanced such examples with the benefits, academic and social, of studying at university.
- (d) The candidates who chose this title were able to draw on a range of examples when discussing the issue at hand and were able to use a wide range of topic-specific vocabulary. The general consensus was that, although technology can be harmful, its influence is generally more positive than negative.
- (e) This was the most popular title. A few candidates did not fully address the assertion that terrorism is the most serious threat of the 21st century, but the majority weighed up terrorism against other issues (such as the global economic crisis, the environment or poverty) before drawing a conclusion. Candidates who answered this question were generally able to use a wide range of topic-specific vocabulary and to use relevant examples, including 9/11 and the terrorist attacks in London.

Part II: Usage

Exercise 1

The five questions in this section tested the candidates' knowledge of verb conjugations. Any acceptable correct version of the verb given in brackets in the context of the given sentence was allowed. Verb conjugations were generally well known, with many candidates scoring full marks on this section.

Exercise 2

There were many candidates who were able to manipulate the language as required in this section and this exercise proved to be a good test of knowledge of the structure of Russian. Candidates were usually able to use "который" and compound conjunctions successfully.

Exercise 3

As for the previous two exercises in Part II, many candidates scored full marks or almost full marks for Exercise 3. The use of the genitive singular was the question most often missed. In preparing for this type of test, candidates should revise thoroughly both the declensions of nouns and adjectives, and the cases which follow different prepositions in Russian.

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Paper 9782/04 Topics and Texts

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- read the question with care and think about what they are asked to do
- plan their answer and organise their material with close attention to the question
- take care to include analysis and argument, and avoid simply retelling the story.

General comments

Paper 4 is divided into two sections carrying equal marks. Part I requires an answer of between 250 and 400 words in Russian to one question. 20 marks are available for content, while 10 are available for language. Part II requires an answer of between 450 and 600 words in English to one question. 25 marks are available for content, while 5 are available for structure.

The standard of content knowledge in the answers was almost exclusively high. Almost all candidates appeared to have studied their chosen works in great detail and to have acquired an in-depth knowledge and understanding of them. There was more evidence of independent judgement this year and less reliance on notes for padding. It is important to note that candidates who are able to select appropriate material from their stock of knowledge and adapt this to the question will always be the most successful. The best answers once again managed to exclude irrelevant information. Weaker answers contained irrelevant information which, though interesting and accurate, did not add weight to the candidate's argument. Many good essays contained numerous quotations which supported the points being made. Other candidates would have gained higher marks had they been able to quote accurately and integrate the quotations selected into their own discourse. The language of the answers in both English and Russian varied from outstanding to satisfactory. There were only a few short answers this year, but it is worth remembering that in order to access the higher range of marks, candidates should aim to write to the upper recommended word limit. Teachers should encourage candidates to write a plan, as this generally results in a more organised and successful response.

Comments on specific questions

Part I: Cultural Topics

Question 1

- A** All candidates displayed sound knowledge of the works selected. The best answers provided sufficient character analysis of the fathers and step-fathers and the nature of their relationships with their children. Stronger candidates provided plenty of detailed comparison between the selected works. Some answers were unbalanced in that they discussed one work in greater detail than the other. Some impressive answers contained perceptive detail and appropriate quotation.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 2

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 3

- A** The answers to this question were often very solid, with candidates well able to support their arguments with accurate and appropriate quotation. The first part of the question was almost always well done, though the second part was occasionally neglected. While some candidates made a convincing case that the genres are effective, few provided detail as to why they were appropriate for what the writers and director wished to convey.
- B** This question was slightly less well answered, though it nevertheless produced a range of achievement. While most candidates were able to quote detail from their selected works, not all were able to relate what they knew about them to the degree of enthusiasm about the Revolution depicted. Most candidates were able to argue for either Blok or Eisenstein being the greatest advocate of the Revolution, though some arguments required further development. It was, of course, acceptable to say that no author or director stands out, provided justification for this could be found.

Question 4

- A** Answers to this question were generally sound with candidates well able to show how the character and politics of Stalin influence the lives of the characters in the chosen works, though a few experienced difficulty in doing this with relation to Matrena in *Matrenin dvor*. The second part of the question was sometimes not addressed to the same successful degree. The best answers focused equally on both parts.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 5

- A** The answers to this question were imbalanced in that insufficient detail and comment were provided about the Grekova text. While the first part of the question was reasonably discussed, the second part was not given sufficient attention.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Part II: Literary Texts

Question 6

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment
- B** This question attracted the most answers and produced the biggest range of achievement. All answers displayed good to excellent knowledge and understanding of the text, though several candidates did not discuss the poet's vacillating attitude to the tsars and autocracy in terms of the events depicted over the *entire* text. Use of supporting quotation was generally impressive. Many candidates expressed themselves with great skill and precision.
- C** About a third of candidates answered this question. Once again, there was a range of achievement with a few answers being really excellent in terms of knowledge and understanding. These made for very pleasant reading. While some argued that it was indeed the technical brilliance of the poet which the reader mostly admires, concentrating on Pushkin's use of a range of poetic techniques, others extended the discussion to cover his treatment of themes and characters. Both approaches worked well.

Question 7

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 8

- A There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 9

- A There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 10

- A There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 11

- A There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 12

- A There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 13

- A There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C There were too few answers to make a general comment.