

OCR Report to Centres

June 2013

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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CONTENTS

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Dutch (J733)

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course)

Dutch Spoken Language (J033)

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course)

Dutch Written Language (J133)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Content	Page
A801 Listening	1
A802 Speaking	3
A803 Reading	5
A804 Writing	8

A801 Listening

General Comments

This year's examination went well. As always, Exercises 1 and 2 did not cause many problems, because the prompts are straightforward and the answers are multiple-choice. In the course of the examination the exercises become more demanding.

It was good to see that most candidates answered the questions in English as required.

It is worth noting that all topics used for the examination are mentioned in the specification. Reading Dutch newspapers aimed at this age group (14–19) should help candidates preparing for possible topics used in the examination.

Finally, there are still mistakes due to misreading the questions. In the listening test there should be plenty of time to read and reread the questions carefully.

Comments on Individual Questions

Exercise 1 and 2

Most candidates received full marks for these exercises. A few candidates missed a question or two in this part of the examination, eg Q2 ('How does Petra get to her floor?'). The second exercise was done well by most candidates.

Exercise 3

For some candidates the first real hurdle in this year's paper was presented in the third exercise. This was partly due to the fact that it is the first point in the paper where candidates have to think of a word themselves. Some candidates appear to have difficulty expressing themselves in English. In this third exercise the choice of possible answers is still very limited and most candidates managed quite well.

A few candidates were confused by the answer to Q13 (nurse), choosing 'a doctor' instead. Otherwise this exercise did not cause problems, though some candidates struggled with Q16 (culture and art).

Exercise 4

The fourth and fifth exercises were more challenging. This is the point in the examination where candidates are required to listen more carefully to what is being said.

In Exercise 4 the language becomes more colloquial. At this point it is more important for the candidate to listen carefully and give accurate answers. In Q24 for example the answer 'friend' would not suffice. It was important to see that they were going to meet a lot of people (friends, his friends, everyone)

Exercise 5

Some candidates still confuse numbers, giving the answer '54 kilometres per hour' instead of '45'. Generally speaking, numbers and telling the time are areas where candidates could benefit from extra training.

Exercise 6

For the last three exercises proper passive knowledge of the target language is needed.

In Exercise 6 candidates were required to summarise the information they heard. Most candidates did this exercise very well and there were no particular difficulties.

Exercise 7

The matching exercise on 'interesting things around the world' was done very well with no obvious difficult questions.

Exercise 8

The last exercise of this paper was a more challenging interview which required precise listening. Better candidates did not encounter too many problems with the questions, though some candidates found the last question quite difficult, giving the impression they did not know the difference between a blizzard and a thunderstorm

A802 Speaking

General Comments

This year's candidates and their teacher/examiners had prepared well for the speaking examinations. Candidates had prepared their presentations well and examiners were very supportive towards them, which helped them to demonstrate their language skills. It was encouraging to see a trend of candidates incorporating opinions and justifications in their one minute presentation. This is a very good way to guarantee a certain number of marks straight away.

The administration was handled very well. Where the appropriate forms were not available, most teacher/examiners gave details of the candidates on a piece of paper, which was very helpful. Please make sure to mention the name and number of every candidate prior to the test.

Most teacher/examiners this year made sure that the candidates were as close as possible to the microphone. It is a good idea to test the recording prior to the speaking test, so the volume can be adjusted if needed.

Please make sure that the CDs are finalised so they can be used in any other computer or CD-player. Centres are advised to keep the original recordings until the results are issued. Some CDs are damaged in the post, even though they have been wrapped carefully and it makes it much easier to send another copy of the test.

Comments on Individual Questions

Presentation

There was a variety of presentation topics. Many candidates talked about 'Koninginnedag' this year, due to the change of monarch in the Netherlands. Other popular topics were family life and holidays. As always, presentations work best if the candidate feels passionate about the topic. Most teachers/examiners managed to ask questions directly related to the presentation, which is very helpful to the candidate.

It is important to encourage candidates to present an introduction instead of a 'full talk', so it is easier to keep talking about the topic afterwards. Candidates were very good at justifying their opinions or point of views.

As last year, quite a few candidates expressed opinions and justifications in their 1-minute presentation. This is an excellent technique as it ensures marks for communication can be accessed straight away.

Teachers/examiners need to be careful not to use closed questions to which the candidate can only answer with 'ja' or 'nee' (ie, *Voetballen je vrienden ook?*). If such questions are asked, it is good technique to follow up with questions like *'hoe vind je dat?'*

General Conversation

At the start of this part of the examination the teacher/examiner presents the candidate with a choice of three topics and the candidate can select one topic to talk about. The topics in this part of the examination open up the conversation quite easily. It is important, however, to make sure that the topics for the General Conversation do not overlap with the Presentation topic. Most teacher/examiners were able to hold a conversation that sounded natural, which very often brings out the best in candidates.

Every topic was chosen by some candidates. The questions given should provide examiners with some ideas of what can be asked. To receive full marks it is important for candidates to produce longer sentences and show they can take the initiative in the conversation. It is therefore very helpful if the teacher/examiner continues from the comments the candidate has made by asking '*Waarom? Vertel eens?*' etc.

The best conversations were those in which the examiner found a topic that was close to the candidate's heart. Many examiners used the questions in the back of the Teacher Instructions booklet as a starting point and picked up more personal information as soon as possible to make the candidate talk. This technique worked very well and meant that the candidate had the potential to access the higher mark bands.

Conclusion

Most teacher-examiners had familiarised themselves with the Teacher's Instructions. This meant the speaking tests ran smoothly in the majority of cases. Many thanks for the good work of many teacher/examiners and the excellent preparation of the candidates.

A803 Reading

General Comments

The GCSE Reading Examination consists of 8 exercises with Dutch texts and mainly English questions. Exercise 2 is a matching exercise with icons and statements in Dutch, while the final exercise requires candidates to complete sentences briefly in Dutch.

Most candidates did very well in the multiple-choice and matching exercises. Candidates need to have a good look at the examples. In Exercise 2, a few candidates selected the crossed out icon that had been used in the example.

The majority of candidates answered correctly in English many of the open-ended questions in Exercises 5 and 7. At times texts as well as questions were not read carefully enough. Short answers are required, as shown in the examples. Some candidates write far more and in doing so produce an answer that is often not clear enough to gain marks. The dotted line is long enough for the required brief answers. Candidates should not write additional material above or below those lines. A few candidates gave Dutch answers, which do not gain marks. Some candidates could not express themselves well enough in English to answer all questions correctly.

Quite a few candidates did not always tick a box in the matching exercises, and in the last two exercises some candidates did not answer all the questions.

Candidates appeared to have enough time to answer all the questions. If some did not answer all the questions in the last exercise, this was probably due to the level of difficulty.

Comments on Individual Questions

Exercise 1

This exercise was done well. A few candidates were not familiar with the Dutch word for knife (A) in Q2 and ticked the spoon (C). Some did not know the word *koelkast* (fridge) (B) in Q5 and said they would keep their opened carton in (A) or (C).

Exercise 2

Most candidates received full marks. The cat icon (J) was the spare icon in this exercise, but it was sometimes wrongly used in Q6 (F) when Peter walks in the mountains and Q12 (H) when Greetje buys a pair of jeans. This *broek* in Q12 also caused some confusion with reading a *boek* in Q9 (B). There were very few mistakes in the other questions.

Exercise 3

This text was longer than the previous ones and was followed by multiple-choice questions in English. The exercise was generally well done. Q14 needed very careful reading of the text. In line two it states that Meta gets up at half past seven (B). Similarly Q15 sometimes caused confusion: porridge (B) for breakfast was correct, but the apple (A) was not. Qs16-18 were well done.

Exercise 4

The two Dutch texts were about boys born in Suriname and living in the Netherlands. There are six statements in English. Candidates need to tick one of three boxes per question. If the

statement refers to Ruud they should tick the first box, for Leo the next box and the last box for Both. This is shown clearly in the example. Candidates first need to read the two texts carefully, and then again for each question. Candidates sometimes picked the wrong name. The answer to Q19 is Both, but Ruud was sometimes ticked. Qs20-23 received occasional wrong answers too. However, Q24 appeared to be more difficult than the others. The correct answer is Both. In fact there were candidates who did not tick a Both box at all.

Exercise 5

This exercise consists of a Dutch text about an adventure in icy waters, with open-ended questions in English. Brief answers are required. Many answers were unnecessarily long and sometimes the extra words made the answer invalid. Some candidates struggled to find correct English answers, while a few wrote in Dutch.

Q25 caused few problems.

Q26 appeared to be more difficult. The correct answer was *Monday*, but some candidates answered *8 hours* which appeared much later in the text. Some candidates answered the question was *Why?* rather than *When?*

Q27 only needed *6* or *six*. A number of candidates mentioned 6 crew and 45 passengers, which was incorrect. It is possible some candidates did not understand the English question.

Q28 was often answered correctly with *ice*. Quite a few candidates gave much longer answers which were not always correct.

Q29 Many candidates gave the correct answer with *high tide / water*.

Q30 Most candidates knew that *the boat took the passengers back to the island*. However it was not the *lifeboat*. Some candidates gave the same answer as in Q29, which was not allowed.

Q31 The answer to this question was in the final paragraph. The director was happy because there were *no complaints*. Some candidates thought the director was happy because of the adventure.

Exercise 6

The Dutch text was about a girl who works with horses and there were six multiple-choice questions in English. Most candidates did well, but quite a few did not answer all questions correctly.

Q32 Many candidates gave the correct answer *Daphne trains horses* (C). Occasionally (A) was chosen.

Q33 appeared to be more difficult as *height* (A) was not always ticked, while Q34 (B) received quite a few wrong answers too.

Q35 (C) also seemed hard.

Qs36 and 37 caused fewer problems.

Exercise 7

This exercise used a Dutch text about journalism students learning to interview people. It was again longer and more challenging. Candidates had to give short answers to open-ended questions in English, as shown in the example. Many candidates responded well, while some struggled with the English answers. The last four questions received many very long answers. In Q38 many candidates gave the correct answer *because of his interesting life / story*. Some gave a double answer and added that he was a well-known Dutchman, which made the answer incorrect.

Q39 appeared to be difficult. Many candidates did not know that '*bij het lokaal*' means *outside the classroom*, and not in the classroom.

Q40 The key word in this question was *finish* the conversation or interview. Many candidates managed to convey this message. '*Interview the writer*' did not score.

Q41 Most candidates answered this question correctly in that the strict teacher rang *the bell*.

Q42 A lot of candidates used many words in which to state *by talking a lot*. Lifting the whole sentence and translating it did not show real understanding and did not score. Some candidates thought that the writer asked lots of questions, which was incorrect.

Q43 Again a translation of the complete sentence did not work. It was important to state that *they know something about him that he had forgotten*. That the students all had lists and had prepared well was incorrect.

Q.44 Telling the last student off was *up to the teacher*. Some students translated the last sentence, which did not give a clear enough answer. A number of candidates thought that the writer did not tell the student off because he was charming or made a good start. Others thought that it was because the camera was rolling.

Exercise 8

This final exercise consisted of a Dutch text and statements. Candidates were asked to put a Dutch word (or words) in the gaps in the statements. The words were not necessarily in the text. This exercise was challenging for many candidates. Some attempted only a few of the questions or tried to insert random words from the text. Others answered many of the questions correctly.

Q45 This question needed a final verb such as *zeilen* or *varen*. This was not easy for some. Some candidates picked a phrase from the text, but this was incorrect.

Q46 The verb *wachten* was needed here. Some candidates tried to find alternative activities such as swimming or taking photographs, but these did not score.

Q47 The word *die* needed to be followed here by a noun such as *middag* or *dag*. A few had crossed out *die* and put an intensifier such as *heel* before *erg leuk*. This was not allowed.

Q48 The correct answer was *actiefoto's*. A noun was necessary here and the verb *fotograferen* was incorrect, as were random words from the text, such as *uitdaging* and *belangrijk*.

Q49 The text needed an adjective such as *boring*, or *not nice*. Many candidates did well.

Q50 Quite a few candidates knew the correct Dutch answer meaning attractive, pretty, or beautiful. Words taken from the text such as *gek*, *duidelijk* again, *hoopvol* or even *zitten* were incorrect.

A804 Writing

General Comments

The examination was generally well done. This year many candidates appeared to have chosen their two questions more carefully, rather than going for the first two.

Good answers were characterised by neatly answered bullet points, giving a fully relevant and detailed response with fully developed points of view and justifications, as well as using a variety of sentence constructions and verb tenses. Opinions have to be varied; using the word *leuk* (nice) three or four times does not make for a high Communication mark.

Most candidates were very expressive and wrote each essay for a different purpose, such as an article for a newspaper, a blog, a letter or a dialogue.

Although candidates are allowed to use their own ideas, the answer has to be within the topic area such as Home and local area in Q1. In both Qs 1 and 5 many candidates went off task and did not write about the required topic. Qs 3 and 4 were answered very well within the topic range.

The writing paper instructs very clearly to write two essays only. It might be useful if invigilators could point this out before the start of the examination, as some candidates are not familiar with the paper. There are still quite a few candidates who write three or more essays.

Length of essays: Candidates are asked to write 150 words. The lined page consists of 27 lines which is between 5 and 6 words per line. Many candidates write many more words. Extra words are not considered for the Quality of Language marks. Generally the better work is done early on in the essay, but this is not always the case. So candidates who write their best work on an additional page may well be at a disadvantage. Additional pages should only be necessary when a candidate has made a mistake and rewrites an essay.

Vocabulary: Candidates need to be careful when they look up words in the dictionary. For instance if they look up the Dutch for favourite subject, they should select the adjective rather than the noun, so that the chosen word is *lievelingsvak*, not *gunstelingvak*. Many candidates wrote about the subject they love or hate in Q5, which worked well.

There were a number of very young candidates who wrote adequate essays with simple language and simple opinions. Older candidates tend to write a more mature essay with more points of view together with good justifications.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

Candidates were asked to write about their time at home during the school holidays. However, many candidates wrote about going abroad for their holiday. This may be a truthful account of their holiday, but the answer has to be within the topic area e.g. Home and local area. As a result many candidates lost marks for Communication. The Quality of Language marks were good, as candidates used a variety of sentences constructions, idioms and verb tenses.

Question 2

In the topic area of Health and sport candidates were asked to write about their local doctor's or dental surgery. A relatively small number of candidates selected this topic. Those who did

usually produced good essays with all the required elements. A few wrote about Health and sport, with no mention of a doctor or dentist, which meant reduced Communication marks.

Question 3

Writing about eating out or at home was this year's topic under the Leisure and entertainment heading.

There were many interesting essays about all kind of restaurants and food, as well as home cooking, with plenty of opinions and the required variety of language structures and tenses. Candidates who write a blog or dialogue usually give plenty of opinions and points of view, but sometimes in recommending a place there is a tendency not to use a variety of tenses.

Question 4

In the topic Travel and the wider world, the task was to write about visiting another country. This was a popular topic and candidates wrote well about past and future holidays, with plenty of reasons why their chosen countries were so fantastic, often with a variety of vocabulary, tenses and sentence structures.

When writing a blog or a travel agent's advertisement, candidates gave a variety of points of view and justifications, but this kind of writing does not always allow for a great a variety of clauses and tenses.

Question 5

For the final topic area of Education and work, candidates were asked to write about working in a school. As in Q1, candidates did not always stick to the task. Most of them interpreted working in a school as studying at school. After writing about favourite subjects, candidates were given the opportunity by bullet points 3 and 5 to write about working in a school, but many wrote about different experiences. Those candidates could not be awarded full marks for Communication. There were, of course, some very good and imaginative essays, when, for instance, candidates wrote about their time as a teacher at their own old school.

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