Russian B

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 27	28 - 45	46 - 59	60 - 73	74 - 87	88 - 100

Overall grade boundaries

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 23	24 - 42	43 - 56	57 - 72	73 - 86	87 - 100

Higher level and standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms

There was confusion in some centres about the content of this component. A number of centres submitted an analysis of a literary piece of work rather than a presentation prepared from a photograph linked to one of the options studied.

However, most centres were exemplary in their choice of options, choice of caption and support offered to candidates. There were no issues with forms or with IB procedures.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

An excellent range was on offer this year; Russian customs and traditions were the most popular option, with health and fitness coming a close second. Some centres chose challenging captions which gave good direction to candidates. Rather descriptive captions or those that did not pose a

suitable question were less successfully handled by candidates, e.g. New Year (or at SL, Industrial Progress). Some centres selected the same pictures for many candidates. In such cases the resulting ideas, vocabulary and expressions used were repetitive.

A few photographs did not comply with IB requirements but their number was limited.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Productive skills

Most candidates managed to deliver a good description of a photograph, however, a number of them just mentioned a list of objects they could see. There was no creative interpretation of the images and many failed to demonstrate their linguistic skills.

A number of candidates were disadvantaged by a poor choice of photograph and/or caption. However there were some outstanding, insightful descriptions where candidates excelled in analysing the issues (e.g. smoking, migration, sports, healthy way of life) and linking it with their everyday experience.

Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills

The candidate's performance relies on the teacher's skill in asking suitable questions and supporting the candidate in exploring the topic further. Generally, by asking the right type of questions most teachers managed to demonstrate the linguistic proficiency of their candidates and their ability to discuss more advanced and complex themes. However, some candidates were prevented from accessing the higher marks as they were asked closed, rather banal or unexciting questions that were not always connected with the option presented.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Photographs for this assessment task should be chosen very carefully in order that candidates can fully reflect on the culture(s) studied and stimulate discussion after the presentation.

- Encourage candidates to see issues beyond the photograph and comment on what can be inferred, so they may be able to talk about relevant personal experiences on the given option.

- Avoid asking closed questions. Set the candidate a challenge e.g.: what if... and how it will affect... to what extent... etc

Further comments

Ensure that the task lasts the required length of time, i.e. in total, 8-10 minutes only. Some orals received were twice the permitted length. Also, ensure that the ratio of teacher versus candidate time is appropriate.

Higher level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms

An encouraging number of centres managed to adhere to the deadlines for this component and ensured the correct paperwork was filled in. The delivery was organized efficiently and addressed to the relevant examiner. Practically all centres followed IB procedures and instructions appropriately. There were practically no issues with handling paperwork or following the instructions.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Although at this level the IB does not provide a guide as to the word count of the original source, clearly the use of a short poem is inappropriate and candidates who did this struggled to produce a reflective piece of work of suitable length.

On the other hand a number of candidates used novels by Tolstoy and Goncharov. In fact, the majority of the written assignments were based on a wide range of Russian classics and a small number on modern literature. In some cases the original sources were of not the best literary quality.

The purpose of the written assignment is to provide the candidate with the chance to reflect upon a piece of literature, and develop further understanding. Some candidates produced just a summary of the text or retold the story in their own words with no mention of any personal views on the issues and themes raised.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Language

An exceptionally high standard of Russian was demonstrated by candidates, where the use of sophisticated vocabulary and advanced grammatical structures was evident.

Criterion B: Content

A number of candidates chose to produce an alternative ending to the story or write a missing chapter. The problem with this choice is that candidates very often lost connection with the original text or explored only one idea and this did not always demonstrate their appreciation of the work.

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Criterion C: Format

Many candidates went to the trouble of exploring particular stylistic devices of their given or chosen era; some completed individual research on writing a letter/diary on behalf of the Russian aristocracy by studying work from the archives or published private correspondence.

Many candidates who chose to write a different ending emulated and imitated the writer's style and the choice of vocabulary. Diaries and private correspondence set in the corresponding era proved to be a very popular choice.

Criterion D: Rationale

A superb analysis of potential aims was provided in many cases with a detailed and thorough explanation of the chosen format, language and analysis.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Encourage candidates to produce a piece of creative writing with the required degree of reflection, rather than a traditional essay.

Standard level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms

Overall most centres managed to adhere to the deadline for this component and ensured the correct paperwork was completed. The delivery was organized efficiently and addressed to the relevant examiner. Practically all centres followed IB procedures and instructions appropriately, bar some issues that were reported straight away and most of them were rectified in the course of the marking period.

The relevant forms and paper work were supplied, however centres need to take care to ensure that texts/original sources are attached to the candidates' work and are of good quality, legible and the word count is recorded on form 2/BWA.

Other issues included the lack of a rationale or candidates typing the assignment – it must be hand written.

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The range and suitability of the work submitted

Most centres followed the IB instructions, however a small number of them linked the texts to the options and not to the core.

The most popular core topic was Communication and media, followed closely by Global issues. Texts that contained statistics and several opinions on the matter lent themselves to easier analysis and the reference to the sources was more easily tracked.

Candidates offered interesting interpretations of issues raised by their original sources. The most popular formats/types of texts produced were diaries, private correspondence between characters, a letter to officials, a newspaper article.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Language

Overall the standards of language proficiency were high and in some cases exemplary.

Criterion B: Content

This proved to be a more difficult criterion to assess. A number of assignments clearly had a structure and organization of ideas, however the use of the source texts was minimal. In some cases candidates relied too heavily on sources and included numerous quotes but did not provide an analysis of the issues. However these were in the minority and a number of candidates made good use of sources.

Criterion C: Format

This was where many candidates struggled or were not consistent in keeping to the chosen format. However, there were many examples where candidates knew who their audience was and handled their chosen text type confidently and convincingly.

Criterion D: Rationale

Performance here was particularly pleasing as most candidates identified their audience, format, choice of language etc. and explained the reasons for doing so.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Choose source texts with sufficient data that can be analysed, or with different opinions that can be compared and synthesized.

- Encourage candidates to opt for an interesting handling of the topic.

Further comments

Some centres allowed their candidates to choose their own source texts. The guidelines state that the written assignment must be the choice of the candidate *in consultation with the teacher*, based on the three sources *selected by the teacher*. (See page 34 of the *Language B guide*)

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 31	32 - 38	39 - 46	47 - 53	54 - 60

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Although the majority of candidates achieved good or excellent marks, a number of weaker candidates experienced problems with the short answer questions, particularly, selecting the relevant details from texts B, C and E, matching the headings with the paragraphs in text B and True/False with justification questions. The gap-filling exercise in text C appeared confusing for some candidates. The matching and open-ended exercises (text D) demonstrated, in some cases, a poor understanding of the text or a limited vocabulary. There were some problems in finding the right meaning from the multiple choice questions in general, demonstrating a lack of understanding of the ideas expressed in this text. Fewer problems were found in texts A and E.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Most candidates performed very well and achieved good or excellent marks, demonstrating a good understanding of the texts, especially texts A, B, C and E. The general level of competence of candidates was high. The majority of candidates showed good or excellent knowledge of grammar, syntax and an excellent or good vocabulary range demonstrating competence in text handling – the tasks relating to both intensive and extensive reading. They also showed good attention to detail as well as generally excellent understanding of the ideas expressed in the texts, especially in literary text D.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Many candidates achieved full or high marks for responses to texts A, B and E.

Text A did not pose any difficulties and most candidates achieved maximum points. Questions 2-7, looking for a detail in the text, presented a problem only for a very few candidates.

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Text B also did not present many problems, although some candidates found it hard matching the headings with the paragraphs – questions 8-11.

Text C was more difficult to handle. The True/False exercise was problematic for a small number of candidates. The MCQs (20 and 21) were problematic for candidates who did not fully understand the text. The same applied to the gap-filling exercise – questions 23-25.

Text D, a short story written by a modern writer, caused more problems, possibly showing that the text was not carefully read, understood too literally or required more sophisticated vocabulary. The latter was revealed in the MCQs, 26-28 and 30-31. Many candidates encountered some difficulties with the matching exercise, questions 32-35, as well as with the short answer question 40, which tested the general understanding of the text, and proved to be hard for weaker candidates.

Text E was well interpreted. MCQs, short answer questions and looking for detail did not present any problem apart from question 49, where weaker candidates failed.

Paper 1 did not present any great difficulties for candidates, which was fully reflected in a high percentage of excellent and good marks.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Practise more question and answer techniques required for each specific task.

- Train candidates to read instructions and understand the task according to the *Language B guide*, the format of answers and the exact meaning of the terms used in their tasks – word, phrase, expression etc. in order to perform the task correctly.

- Practise reading and comprehension of short texts within given time frames, similar to examination conditions.

- Practise rephrasing exercises substituting given words with synonyms, which helps the candidate to be more flexible when dealing with vocabulary.

- Study more texts of different genres and analyse them in detail in order to improve performance in text D.

- Pay attention to candidates' writing skills (punctuation, paragraphs, capital letters, hand writing).

- Pay attention to those candidates who produce phonetic writing. They normally have an excellent vocabulary and fluency, but are penalised as they make numerous spelling errors.

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Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 20	21 - 26	27 - 33	34 - 39	40 - 45

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Most candidates achieved good marks in this component. Some problematic areas were mainly linked to a partial comprehension of the texts, limited vocabulary and a lack of skills in dealing with specific exercises, e.g. True/False exercises, looking for detail or matching exercises. The easiest was text A, the most difficult text C, but some candidates had problems with text B.

Despite the fact that they were a few low results, most candidates handled the paper well. They showed sufficient knowledge of grammar, syntax and a good vocabulary range to demonstrate relevant competence. More marks were gained in the short answer questions and the MCQs. Many candidates understood the tasks well and gave appropriate answers.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Most candidates performed very well and had good or excellent marks, demonstrating a good understanding of the texts, especially, A, B and D. The general level of competence of candidates was high. The majority of candidates showed good or excellent knowledge of grammar, syntax and an excellent or good vocabulary range demonstrating competence in text handling, the tasks relating to both intensive and extensive reading. They also showed good attention to detail as well as generally excellent understanding of the ideas expressed in the texts.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Text A was the easiest and many candidates achieved maximum marks, in fact, questions 1-7 presented very few difficulties for the majority of candidates.

Text B confused some weaker candidates especially questions 9-11 due to limited understanding of the text or simply lack of concentration. Although the general level of candidate performance was good, vocabulary short questions, 14, 15 and 16 presented a few difficulties to some candidates who could not find in the text equivalents of required words, although both words are of Latin origin and sound similar in European languages.

Some weaker candidates struggled with questions 20-23 in **Text C** as they required a deep understanding of the text. The matching exercise, questions 24-27, were not a problem for the majority of candidates with a good vocabulary. Short answer question 28 did not pose much difficulty,

although some candidates, instead of finding two separate facts found only one and then rephrased it. This showed that they did not read the text carefully. Questions 29 and 30 were generally easy for the majority, but some candidates were still not able to find the nouns, substituted by pronouns in the text.

Question 31 in **Text D** did not present any problems. Questions 32-34 proved difficult for very few candidates who misunderstood the text. Short answer questions 35 and 36 were generally less problematic, although some candidates simply guessed and could not provide the correct answers.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Practice more question and answer techniques required for each specific task.

- Train candidates to read instructions and understand the task according to the *Language B guide*, the format of answers and the exact meaning of the terms used in their tasks – word, phrase, expression etc. in order to perform the task correctly.

- Practice reading and comprehension of short texts within given time frames, similar to examination conditions.

- Practice rephrasing exercises substituting given words with synonyms, which helps the candidate to be more flexible when dealing with vocabulary.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 14	15 - 20	21 - 27	28 - 33	34 - 40	41 - 45

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Paper 2 is more demanding but nevertheless, the majority of candidates were awarded high marks for criterion B and criterion C of Section A, although some of them lost marks in criterion A in both Sections A and B, having made numerous grammar and spelling mistakes.

Numerous candidates failed to produce the required format in their response (speech, diary entry, brochure etc.), and wrote a short essay instead of a specific text type demanded in the question. These candidates lost marks, even when the content was of a high standard. Some of them followed only partially the Paper 2 requirements, e.g. they welcomed the audience but did not conclude their speech, they wrote an entry to the blog with the date, but did not use any other specific blog devices, or they selected the wrong pronoun addressing the interviewee etc.

Weaker candidates simply took the opportunity to express common or prepared in advance ideas about general health, ecology or hobbies, with no connection to the required theme. A few candidates

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wrote fewer than the required minimum of 250 and 150 words in both sections which resulted in lower marks.   Generally the register was appropriate to the task but some candidates used colloquialisms, slang or a too informal style in topics where it was not appropriate.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

There was a high proportion of excellent responses which were creative and imaginative, well-phrased and fluent; the language was idiomatic, the content sophisticated and coherent. The majority of candidates showed excellent or very good competence in idiomatic language and were able to express rather sophisticated ideas.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Section A:

Topic 1, a blog entry about attitudes to tattoos attracted 25% of candidates and the majority followed the proposed format with the address, data or other devices, and demonstrated a rich vocabulary and a very mature attitude to human cultural differences in general. Some of them discussed psychological aspects, which made their conclusions more considered.

Topic 2 attracted the same percentage (25%) of candidates who produced a speech about Russian multi-generational families. They demonstrated a good knowledge of Russian everyday life, compared with a Western one and made some attempt to give a proper explanation of social issues, which provoked different attitudes to this rather archaic phenomenon.

Topic 3 was even more popular with a third of candidates choosing it. They discussed the Russian tradition of using alternative medicine and some were able to demonstrate their deep insight into Russian life and a rather mature approach to the topic in general. In contrast, a few candidates limited themselves to describing a banal routine of treating a cold with no discussion of the Russian mentality or social issues. Practically all candidates followed the correct format of a diary entry using proper devices.

Fewer candidates (11.5%) opted for **Topic 4**, a challenging task, to suggest good deals for the Day of Spontaneous Kindness. Some candidates discussed not only their personal experience, but put forth some interesting arguments regarding the importance of helping humans and animals. Some of them respected the format, but others wrote a short essay and hence lost marks.

Topic 5 was also quite challenging and attracted only 6.5% of candidates, who produced convincing texts in the format of an interview, demonstrating their business and technical awareness, as well as extremely good vocabulary, the use of idioms and metaphors. Here colloquialisms were admissible, and a few interviews were of a true professional standard, and obtained the highest marks.

Section B:

Section B was based on a stimulus discussing the human experience and mistakes. The majority of candidates showed excellent or good performance in criterion A, and were able to demonstrate maturity of thought, good reasoning and a coherent argument. In contrast, weaker candidates did not

understand the question and wrote a short essay not of general character, but discussing a particular case from their own life instead. In this case the vocabulary and ideas were repetitive, the conclusion was either missing or echoed already expressed ideas. Such responses lost marks in criterion B.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Remind candidates to select the topic carefully but not to use material prepared in advance, as it often does not match exactly the requirements of the topic.

- Remind candidates to follow strictly the format and its requirements, teach them how to write a letter, a diary entry or a leaflet or a speech, i.e. to use proper devices prescribed by a particular genre.

- Where appropriate, teach candidates to write a title, a heading paragraph and a conclusion.

- Practise writing the prescribed minimum number of words for both sections within a fixed time.

- Practice writing essays based on given stimulus in all core topics.

- Improve written skills, especially orthography and punctuation.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

As at higher level, candidates were penalised for not following the requirements of the task, producing responses not related to the topic. A few candidates wrote essays containing fewer than the required minimum number of words, which resulted in a lower mark in criterion A. Comments recorded for higher level concerning spelling mistakes, poor punctuation and grammar and inappropriate register apply equally here.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

There were some very good essays displaying a good level of creativity, maturity of thought and written skills. Candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge of art, local history or even some

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technical knowledge. There was a high proportion of excellent work. The candidates who achieved excellent and good marks were able to master the language fluently and use good register combined with good language accuracy. Presentation was generally good showing a logical sequence of arguments and coherent content. The best candidates were able to express their personal views and opinions.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

All five topics were selected. **Topic 1** was selected by 23% of candidates who wrote about the importance of keeping your native language when going abroad. The format of an essay was respected by all candidates.

Topic 2 attracted a third of candidates who expressed their attitude towards school uniform. Some of the essays were of a high intellectual standard; they discussed psychological aspects of human nature, social issues and the behaviour of young people. The format of the speech was generally followed.

Topic 3 was popular among a quarter of the candidates. The best of them followed the proposed format and were able not only to express their own ideas but to use their knowledge of medicine, physiology, diet etc. Weaker candidates used the opportunity to discuss irrelevant and topics prepared in advance on sport, sport, hobbies, food etc.

Topic 4 attracted 16% of candidates. However, as for higher level, some candidates ignored the format of a booklet and gave a rather general description of a music concert or their hobbies.

Topic 5 was challenging and only 7% opted for it. Some candidates demonstrated their science and technical awareness, as well as extremely good terminology.

Some of the responses were interesting, well-phrased and fluent; they also demonstrated an excellent knowledge of studying and learning techniques.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates should be reminded to select the topic carefully and to follow the format and the requirements.

- While generally candidates have a good understanding of the requirements of the format, practise in presentation skills and the use of appropriate devices prescribed by a particular genre would also be beneficial.

- Candidates should also be instructed to write the required minimum number of 250 words ending with a proper conclusion.

- More grammar and spelling exercises would be beneficial for the candidates. In some cases punctuation was totally ignored which distorted the general meaning.

- Some candidates should pay more attention to their handwriting. Examiners cannot mark what cannot be read.