



Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2011 Greek written examination covered a variety of topics based on the themes prescribed by the VCAA in the *VCE Greek Study Design* (page 13):

- the balance between leisure and study in VCE
- the growing environmental problem of plastic water bottles
- the place of olive oil in traditional cooking and healthy eating
- the famous Greek painter Domenicos Theotocopoulos (El Greco)
- the appropriateness of Nafplion as a travel destination for a school group.

The writing tasks focused on experiences common to young people such as: planning a party, meeting a relative for the first time, professional athletes as role models for young people and the changing role of women in the family.

In general, students successfully identified information related to the context, and demonstrated very good listening and reading comprehension skills. Students were familiar with the format of the examination and the different text types and kinds of writing required. Most students responded in the appropriate language for each section and displayed effective time management, completing all sections of the examination within the specified time.

Students should be prepared to comment not only on the content of the texts but also on their purpose and the type of audience being addressed. Questions on aspects of the language of the text, such as the use of tone and register and the appropriateness of the language for its specific purpose, are also clearly prescribed in the study design.

Students must ensure that they read all instructions carefully. Responses must be clear and legible in both English and Greek. The amount of space given to answer a particular question is a good indication of the length of the anticipated response. Students should always check to see if the question requires an answer in point form or in full sentences.

The sections of the examination that require students to respond in Greek carry a mark for language, and students are expected to write in full sentences in order to demonstrate linguistic accuracy and sequencing of ideas in Greek. Students should also avoid restating the question, as this takes up valuable time and space. All answers must be based on the texts. This is clearly stated in the instructions of every section of the examination. Students should not provide information beyond the scope of the question and they should not include information about a topic if it is not included in the texts.

As noted above, all responses in Greek are assessed on accuracy, range and appropriateness of language. Teachers and students must ensure that they have covered all grammatical structures and concepts indicated in the *VCAA Greek Study Design* (pages 14–17). Attention must be given to the teaching of grammar in order to improve students' ability to write in Greek with accuracy and fluency. Some areas of concern this year were:

- inability to distinguish between certain letters of the Greek alphabet. This is unacceptable at VCE level. A number of students confused the letters δ, θ, ϕ and β . (*δυσμόμαστε* instead of *θυμόμαστε*, *μαφητές* instead of *μαθητές*, *βροντίδα* instead of *φροντίδα*)
- failure to demonstrate the existence of the double consonants ξ and ψ (*γράφω* instead of *γράψω*, *πσώνια* instead of *ψώνια*, *κσέρω* instead of *ξέρω*)
- inability to distinguish the letters ζ and ξ (*ζωή* instead of *ζωή* and *ήζερα* instead of *ήξερα*)
- failure to use accents. Accents are not optional and failure to produce accents constitutes a spelling error; accents in the incorrect position may give a different meaning to a word (*δουλειά* and *δουλεία*)
- incorrect use of the definite and indefinite articles (*η λληνες* instead of *οι Έλληνες*, *ένα κουταλιά* instead of *μία κουταλιά*)
- lack of agreement between noun and adjectives in gender, case and number (*το υπόλοιπος εβδομάδας* instead of *την υπόλοιπη εβδομάδα*, *αγαπημένη ημερολόγιος* instead of *αγαπημένο ημερολόγιο*)
- poor use of the genitive case (*του λάδι* instead of *του λαδιού* and *της γυνάικα* instead of *της γυναίκας*)
- inability to provide a verb in a past tense; few students were able to distinguish between the aorist (simple past) and the imperfect (continuous past)
- inability to conjugate verbs correctly, even regular verbs in the present active indicative
- inability to use the common verbs *πρέπει* and *μου αρέσει/μας αρέσουν*



- use of anglicisms *η φάρμα, η μαρκέτα, τα πάρτις*
- poor use of the dictionary. The context of the text should guide students to choose the appropriate word from the dictionary. This may not necessarily be the first option provided. This year there was some confusion over the meanings of the words *έργα* and *εκθέσεις*.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A: Answer in English

Students responded well to most questions in the first section of the examination. Text 1 questions were answered particularly well. Text 2 referred to the environmental consequences of using plastic water bottles. Some students used their prior knowledge on the subject to discuss aspects of the issue not related to the text, such as its impact on developing countries. Question 2b. required students to refer to two scientific studies mentioned in the text. Some students referred to only one study. Others were unable to understand the results of the study that indicated that the contamination of bottled water was caused by the chemical composition of the plastic bottle.

Students needed to pay close attention to the listening texts and exercise caution when deciding on a response. All responses should have been based on information provided in the texts and not on the students' prior experience or knowledge of the topic. Students need to familiarise themselves with the questions in this section during the reading time in order to determine the information they are required to extract from the listening passages. They should take advantage of the two readings of the texts to make notes and identify key words in the note-taking space provided. The pause between the readings of the texts should be used to consult a dictionary to determine the meaning of key words.

Text 1

Question 1a.

- Michael has been playing soccer for the school team.
- His mother prevented him from playing soccer to ensure he would do well in his studies.

Question 1b.

- Mr Ioannou is Michael's PE/sports teacher.
- Mr Ioannou coaches the (Panathinaikos) youth team.

Question 1c.

Any two of:

- Michael wants to become a PE teacher
- it may enable him to become a (well known) soccer player
- he will make a lot of money.

Question 1d.

Michael will train twice a week and compete on Saturdays.

Question 1e.

They will discuss this again when Michael completes Year 12 successfully.

Text 2

Question 2a.

Any three of:

- vast numbers of plastic water bottles are produced every year/are collected in garbage collection centres
- many empty plastic bottles pollute the environment
- every plastic bottle remains in the environment for approximately 450 years
- only 10 per cent of empty plastic bottles are recycled.

Question 2b.

Both of:

- over time, harmful chemicals from the plastic contaminate the water within the bottle
- the quality of bottled water is often inferior to tap water.



Questions 2c.

The price of bottled water does not seem to deter consumers.

Question 2d.

Any of:

- to raise public awareness regarding the environmental issue
- to highlight that everyone is responsible for this environmental problem
- a rhetorical question to get the listener's attention.

Part B: Answer in Greek

Part B of the examination required students to demonstrate their aural comprehension skills by responding in Greek. Students were awarded 10 marks for their comprehension of the text and five marks for conveying information in Greek accurately and appropriately.

Students must respond in complete sentences when writing in Greek. Their sentences should communicate their ideas in their own words. Some students answered in point form and copied directly from the spoken text. They did not demonstrate their own ability to communicate fluently in the language and thus were not awarded full marks.

Students should avoid restating the question. They should also use their dictionaries to check the meaning and spelling of key words. The word ελαιόλαδο was clearly given to students in the questions yet a large number of students misspelt it. Some students did not recognise the word for tablespoon in Greek 'κουτάλι της σούπας' and made reference to the need for olive oil to be added to soups.

Text 3

Question 3a.

Olive oil:

- contains no cholesterol/does not cause heart disease
- reduces fever
- is good for the digestive system/stomach and the intestines
- is good for our skin/cures skin conditions.

Question 3b.

All of:

- Greeks traditionally used olive oil in their cooking/many Greeks no longer use olive oil
- for a while, many Greeks showed a preference for other oils and butter
- recently, there has been a return to the use of olive oil.

Question 3c.

All of:

- only small amounts of olive oil are required in cooking
- olive oil should be added at the end, once the food has been cooked
- olive oil should be stored in a cool/dark place.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A: Answer in English

This section of the examination assessed students' capacity to understand and convey general and specific aspects of the written text. A number of questions related directly to a specific aspect of the text, while other questions were global. The order of the questions generally corresponded to the order in which the information was presented in the text. However, it should not be assumed that this will always be the case. Some questions required a response that related to the text as a whole (Questions 4a. and 4f.). Students should be prepared to comment not only on the content of a text, but also on the purpose of the text and the type of audience it is addressing. Both these, and questions on aspects of the language of the text, such as the use of tone and register and the appropriateness of the language for its specific purpose, should be expected as they are clearly prescribed in the Study Design. Most students were able to draw appropriate information from the Greek reading text successfully. Students should have read the questions carefully before answering, to avoid making careless mistakes. Question 4a. clearly stated that the painter was known by two names and asked why this was the case. A number of students gave both names but did not explain why these names were used. When responding to questions that require a number of points, students needed to provide examples that were different



from each other in order to be awarded a separate mark. Question 4b., for example, required students to list the major influences on El Greco's work. Some students replied 'Italian masters such as Michelangelo, Raphael and Titian'; however, this did not constitute three different points. Students are reminded that all answers must be based on the information provided in the text and not on prior knowledge. It was evident that some students had seen a recent movie based on the life of the painter and referred to information outside the requirements of the text.

Text 4

Question 4a.

Four of:

- Domenicos Theotocopoulos was the painter's true Greek name
- Domenicos Theotocopoulos signed his paintings in Greek with his Greek name
- the Italians called him 'El Greco' (which means 'The Greek')
- El Greco was a Greek living/working abroad and was identified by his nationality
- loyalty to his homeland/pride in his background.

Question 4b.

- Byzantine art/icons
- Italian painters
- Spain/artistic centre of Toledo

Question 4c.

- portraits of the rich
- religious themes

Question 4d.

- elongated bodies
- unique use of light/shadow
- unusual expression on the faces of his subjects
- ability to capture the feelings of the people he painted

Question 4e.

- research the work of El Greco/access books and information on El Greco
- attend exhibitions of El Greco's artwork
- attend conferences on El Greco's work

Question 4f.

Four of:

- many of El Greco's paintings are found in museums around the world/in monasteries and churches in Spain
- 400 years after his death he is still considered a great painter
- the establishment of the Domenicos Theotocopoulos Centre in Crete
- conferences on the painter and/or exhibitions of his work are still held
- the language used to describe his talent and/or his art; for example, most famous, leading, unique style, etc.

Part B: Answer in Greek

This task required students to write a paragraph in Greek explaining why a school group might choose Nafplion as an ideal destination for an excursion. Most students performed well in this task. They were able to successfully identify five reasons provided in the travel brochure that would make Nafplion suitable for a school excursion. The more capable students understood the purpose of the task and did not merely copy from the given text. These students demonstrated their own ability to process information and manipulate language to convey information accurately and effectively in Greek.

Part B carried a language mark and students needed to demonstrate their own ability to write effectively in Greek. Students were required to respond in full sentences, as stated in the instructions for this section, and to organise and link ideas in sentences and within a paragraph. Answers given in point form did not allow students to demonstrate their ability in the language and were not awarded full marks.



Text 5

Question 5

Any five of:

- Nafplion is an old city with old traditional buildings/cobblestone squares/old churches for students to experience
- Nafplion has many important historical buildings such as the Palamidi and Bourtzi Castles and Greece's first parliament house/first capital city of the modern Greek state
- Nafplion is set in a beautiful landscape with majestic mountains, a splendid coastline and an impressive natural harbour
- Nafplion offers inexpensive/a variety of accommodation for students
- Nafplion offers a great choice of traditional taverns and restaurants to experience Greek cuisine
- Nafplion is close to many important archaeological sites
- Nafplion is the most beautiful city in Greece
- Nafplion is only two hours from Athens.

Section 3 – Writing in Greek

This section assessed the students' ability to express ideas through the creation of original text in Greek using the following criteria:

- relevance, breadth and depth
- appropriateness of structure and sequence
- accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar.

Students who performed well in this section of the examination incorporated wide-ranging and relevant information in their responses. Their ideas were well sequenced and logically integrated into a framework of well-linked sentences and paragraphs. They clearly demonstrated the characteristics of the style of writing requested (personal, evaluative, persuasive, informative or imaginative) and they included at least four aspects appropriate to the text type. High-scoring students were also skilled in manipulating language. They used a wide range of vocabulary and they made accurate use of complex linguistic structures within the required task.

All five questions in this section of the examination were attempted. The personal journal entry (Question 6) and the evaluative report (Question 7) were the most popular choices. Overall, students displayed a good knowledge of the different characteristics of the text type and of the style of writing in which they chose to write. It should be noted that a number of responses lacked structure and displayed limited elaboration of ideas. Rather than merely listing a number of relevant ideas, students should focus on expanding, explaining and supporting the ideas within their responses.

When selecting a topic, students should have chosen one that was familiar to them and one that required the kind of writing and text type that suited them best. Students needed to establish the tone and register of the task from the outset and should have kept in mind the audience for whom they were writing. They should have ensured that they did not digress from the topic or include pre-learned material that was unrelated to the task. Ideas should have been developed coherently and grouped into separate paragraphs that were linked effectively. It was therefore essential that students set aside time to plan their responses and time to proofread them at the end.

Question 6

This task required students to write a personal journal entry in which they presented their impressions of a relative they had met for the first time. This was a popular choice among students and was completed with varying degrees of success. Most students observed the conventions, content and style appropriate to a personal journal entry. They established in the reader's mind a sense of person and personality for the writer. They employed an informal and familiar register by using the first or second person, and they used reflective writing to express the feelings that their chosen relative evoked within them. Some students, however, merely provided a physical description of their relative and then went on to list an itinerary of places to visit and things to do in Melbourne. These students demonstrated a tendency to include pre-learned material that did not relate directly to the task.

Question 7

In this report, students were expected to evaluate whether or not the role of women had truly changed in the home. This was another popular choice among students and generally was answered well. Most students who attempted this question displayed the appropriate conventions of the text type and were able to adopt the required evaluative approach and formal register to successfully discuss their ideas in a logical, unbiased manner. Many students produced objective evidence to support their ideas.



As this topic was familiar to some students from their Detailed Study, there was a tendency for some to incorporate pre-learned material in their responses. A number of responses provided a rather superficial treatment of the topic and a predictable development of ideas. The majority of students who attempted this question demonstrated a good range of vocabulary and use of language appropriate for the purpose of the task.

Question 8

In this newspaper article, students were required to persuade their readers that professional athletes should be good role models for young people. This task was linguistically challenging and was attempted by a small number of students. The task nevertheless produced some good responses; most included at least three convincing arguments. The more capable students exhibited good writing skills, the appropriate formal register for the task and the appropriate conventions of the text type. They employed persuasive techniques that were appropriate to their target audience and at times used direct speech and questions to intensify their relationship with the reader. A few students included pre-learned material from other topics covered at school, such as the Olympic Games, without processing and manipulating this content to suit the prescribed task.

Question 9

Students were asked to write the script for a speech to be delivered at a school assembly, which would inform other students of the things young people need to take into consideration when planning a party. Many students were able to convey information clearly and comprehensively. Most adopted an objective style and a formal register, while some preferred an informal, friendly approach to connect with their audience. The majority of students included appropriate examples of things to be considered such as security, entertainment and catering needs. Most responses demonstrated a good understanding of the conventions of the text type, a good range of vocabulary and language appropriate to the purpose of the task.

Question 10

This imaginative story required students to develop a narrative inspired by the picture provided. Some students demonstrated skilful use of narrative writing techniques. They created a strong sense of context and used a range of techniques to create the desired atmosphere or emotions. They used descriptive language after careful selection of appropriate and effective adjectives and adverbs. In good responses, ideas were expressed clearly within well-structured sentences and paragraphs. A number of students who attempted this question provided plots that lacked creativity and originality. They demonstrated little development of plot and poor descriptions of setting and characters. A poor range of vocabulary and understanding of language structures often contributed to a weaker storyline. Some responses made little or no reference to what was depicted in the picture, while a few included pre-learned information that was not related to the topic in any way.