2022 VCE Chinese First Language oral external assessment report

General comments

The VCE Chinese First Language oral examination assesses students’ knowledge and skills in using spoken language.

The examination had two sections: a presentation of approximately three minutes and a discussion of approximately seven minutes.

Students were assessed on:

* their capacity to present the information appropriately and effectively
* the information, opinions and ideas they presented (related to one of the subtopics drawn from one of the prescribed topics ‘Literature and the arts’, ‘Stories from the past’ and ‘Youth issues’)
* their capacity to maintain and advance an exchange appropriately and effectively
* the relevance, breadth and depth of information, ideas and opinions they presented.

Details of the assessment criteria and performance descriptors are published on the VCAA website. It is important that all teachers and students are familiar with the criteria and descriptors and that students use them as part of their examination preparation. This will help students engage in a lively and meaningful exchange with assessors. Although there are similarities between the assessment criteria for the presentation and discussion sections of the examination, the criteria assess two very different aspects of performance. Students who are well prepared are generally able to demonstrate their abilities and proficiency in the language.

In 2022, most students settled smoothly into the new study design and came to the oral examination reasonably well prepared. Most students demonstrated excellent understanding of the requirements and procedures of the oral examination, while a very small number of students were not clear about how the oral examination was to be conducted. The procedure of the oral examination is stated in the oral examination specifications and the revised First Language Oral examination video, both available on the [VCAA website](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/past-examinations/Pages/Chinese-First-Language.aspx).

While images were not compulsory, a number of students chose to bring images to their oral examination. Only a small number of students used the images to support their presentations and discussions in an effective manner. Students should reconsider bringing in an image at all if they barely refer to it to support their presentation and/or discussion.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

Students presented for three minutes on an issue related to the subtopic that they had selected for their extended study of language and culture, drawn from one of the prescribed topics found under the theme ‘Tradition and change in Chinese-speaking communities’. The prescribed topics were ‘Literature and the arts’, ‘Stories from the past’ and ‘Youth issues’.

Students who scored highly:

* communicated information, ideas and opinions very effectively
* were highly engaged with the assessors and effectively used appropriate style and register
* used sophisticated vocabulary and grammatical structures accurately and appropriately
* had excellent pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo
* presented an extensive range of highly relevant information, ideas and opinions related to the subtopic
* effectively elaborated and reflected on information, ideas and opinions presented on the issue
* presented a very clear stance on an issue related to the chosen subtopic
* effectively used evidence from the texts studied to support their stance.

The vast majority of presentations were based on selected subtopics related to Chinese language and culture, drawn from one of the prescribed topics of ‘Literature and the arts’, ‘Stories from the past’ or ‘Youth issues’ under the theme ‘Tradition and change in Chinese-speaking communities’. Students presented a very wide range and variety of subtopics in their oral examination. The majority of students demonstrated a clear stance and were able to use evidence from the texts studied to support their own ideas and opinions effectively. They generally delivered a fluent presentation in three minutes. However, some students’ stance in their presentations was not clear enough, or their arguments were limited to merely providing basic information from the texts studied without the necessary analysis. Some students prepared a one-minute introduction, which is no longer required for the oral examination. Some other students did not prepare any texts for their presentations, the relationship between their selected texts and selected subtopics was not clear enough, or lacked depth to carry the presentation forward.

Criterion 1

Students who scored highly for Criterion 1:

* communicated information, ideas and opinions very effectively
* engaged with the assessors and effectively used appropriate style and register
* used sophisticated vocabulary and grammatical structures accurately and appropriately
* had excellent pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

Students are reminded to:

* make effective use of both verbal and non-verbal languages (such as advanced language expressions, intonation, tempo, facial expressions, hand gestures) in a natural manner. For example, in 2022, many students incorporated advanced expressions, such as 成语、俗语（four-character phrases/idioms and proverbs) in their presentations, which was commendable. However, students need to strengthen their understanding of the meaning, as well as the context in which we use these advanced expressions, in order to make their presentations smooth and natural
* avoid speaking too fast or too slowly; the pace should contribute to the effectiveness of the delivery of the message
* avoid using language features that might cause ambiguity, confusion or misunderstanding. For example, in an oral presentation, it is likely to cause barriers in the understanding of assessors if a student presents a big paragraph of obscure and uncommonly seen 文言文 （Classical Chinese / literary language used in ancient China）without an explanation. Other examples that might cause misunderstanding include: the use of 同音词（homonyms), overly complex literary language, metaphor or analogy without clear details and context.

Criterion 2

Students who scored highly for Criterion 2:

* presented an extensive range of highly relevant information, ideas and opinions on the subtopic
* effectively elaborated and reflected on information, ideas and opinions presented on the issue
* presented a very clear stance on an issue related to the chosen subtopic
* effectively used evidence from the texts studied to support their stance.

Students are reminded to:

* avoid choosing inappropriate subtopics (such as religion, politics or other potentially controversial areas)
* choose a subtopic that contains practical and real-life meanings. It should provide the assessors with enough space to have further discussions. For example, a presentation based on 中国青年人应该追求良好的道德 (young people in China should pursue good morals) is potentially too limited and provides assessors with little opportunity to ask challenging questions to which students can then demonstrate their capability of defending their own stance in the discussion.

Section 2 – Discussion

Following the presentation, each student discussed aspects of their selected issue with the assessors and clarified the points they presented.

Students who scored highly:

* communicated information, ideas and opinions very effectively
* were highly engaged with the assessors and effectively used appropriate style and register
* used sophisticated vocabulary and grammatical structures accurately and appropriately
* had excellent pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo
* provided an extensive range of highly relevant and original information, ideas and opinions on the issue selected
* clarified, elaborated on or defended ideas and opinions related to the issue selected very effectively
* responded effectively to general questions on the broad subtopic beyond the issue selected, including unfamiliar issues related to the subtopic
* made excellent use of evidence from the texts studied to support their discussion.

It should be noted that during the discussions:

* students may be asked a variety of questions with varying levels of difficulty. Questions may also be asked in a different order from what the students might anticipate
* students may be asked questions on the author’s/director’s/composer’s/artist’s intent, as well as the relationship between the context in which the text was produced, the text itself, the author and the audience
* assessors may interrupt students to ask questions during the discussion; this should be regarded as a normal process in a discussion
* normal variation in assessors’ body language is acceptable.

Many students demonstrated their ability to engage the assessors in an effective conversation thoroughly. They could defend their stance by using evidence from the texts studied. However, a number of students found the extended discussion challenging as their preparation for the discussion was not comprehensive enough.

Criterion 3

Students who scored highly for Criterion 3:

* communicated information, ideas and opinions very effectively
* were highly engaged with the assessors and effectively used appropriate style and register
* used sophisticated vocabulary and grammatical structures accurately and appropriately
* had excellent pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

Students are reminded to:

* adopt language appropriate to the context of oral examination, rather than being too casual or too informal (e.g., 瞎扯淡 (to babble))
* put effort into structuring their language to convey their thoughts and opinions. An example of a thorough and comprehensive preparation for the discussion session can include a list of questions that might be asked by the assessors (e.g., what areas from my presentation might attract the assessors’ interest for further discussion; what areas are worthy to be further discussed with the assessors?). This can help students respond to the assessors’ questions in a more meaningful and formal manner, rather than the answers being scattered loosely and casually.

Criterion 4

Students who scored highly for Criterion 4:

* provided an extensive range of highly relevant and original information, ideas and opinions on the issue selected
* clarified, elaborated on or defended ideas and opinions related to the issue selected very effectively
* responded effectively to general questions on the broad subtopic beyond the issue selected, including unfamiliar issues related to the subtopic
* made excellent use of evidence from the texts studied to support their discussion.

Students are reminded to:

* get straight to the point when answering the assessors’ questions and make sure their answers are highly relevant to addressing assessors’ questions
* be able to link their answers back to the issue selected, as well as supporting and defending their contention and stance
* be proactive and take initiative to elaborate on their answers by providing a wider range of information in more depth and in a logical manner
* be familiar enough with the texts they have studied and the concepts they bring into the discussions with the assessors.

More information

Refer to the [VCE Chinese First Language study design](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/past-examinations/Pages/Chinese-First-Language.aspx) and [examination criteria and specifications](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/past-examinations/Pages/Chinese-First-Language.aspx) for full detail on this study and how it is assessed.