2024 VCE Chinese Second Language Advanced oral external assessment report

Refer to the relevant [study design](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/Pages/languages.aspx) and [examination criteria and specifications](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/past-examinations/Pages/Languages-index.aspx) for full details on this study and how it is assessed.

Section 1: Conversation

What students did well

In 2024, students:

* provided detailed and in-depth responses to the assessors’ questions. Students offered comprehensive and thoughtful answers about their personal lives and their interaction with language and culture as learners. They moved beyond superficial responses containing merely factual information and provided answers with clear reasoning and detailed examples. For example, students connected hobbies (such as painting or playing sports) to life skills like creativity and teamwork, and then linked these experiences further to their future goals (such as pursuing architecture or medical studies)
* demonstrated authentic engagement. Students provided content that was both reflective and grounded in their personal experiences and cultural insights. They connected their answers to real-life examples effectively, such as explaining how participating in Chinese traditional festivals deepened their appreciation of cultural identity
* exhibited strong intercultural understanding. Students showcased their ability to compare and reflect on Chinese and other cultures, such as different education systems and lifestyles between China and Australia. Some students were able to relate their personal observations to the broader social and cultural context through higher-order thinking skills. For example, some students discussed differences in holiday traditions and reflected on their impacts on people's lives
* demonstrated outstanding adaptability and confidence when responding to unfamiliar or unexpected questions from assessors. Students incorporated relevant examples while reorganising and reshaping their knowledge to deliver coherent and contextually appropriate answers. This ability to engage effectively in unscripted interactions showcased their comprehensive understanding of subtopics. Students’ quick and logical thinking under examination conditions highlighted their critical thinking and effective communication skills, which are essential for success in this subject and beyond
* maintained effective interactions with assessors. Students established strong eye contact and actively listened to prompts and responded appropriately. Their use of repair strategies, such as rephrasing or seeking clarification, helped to address misunderstandings and maintain a smooth and natural conversational flow. Moreover, their clear pronunciation and appropriate tone ensured their responses were easy to follow
* showcased advanced language proficiency. Students used a variety of grammar structures, precise vocabulary and appropriate expressions to articulate their ideas with clarity and sophistication, occasionally enhancing their responses with well-chosen idioms. Logical flow was achieved through transitions like 因此 (therefore) and 然而 (however), while topic-specific terms such as 文化自信 (cultural confidence) reflected their ability to address complex topics effectively. These linguistic strategies enriched students’ responses.

Areas for improvement

Students are advised to:

* ensure their responses remain directly relevant to the questions posed. Students demonstrated commendable efforts in their preparation; however, overly relying on memorised content occasionally led to answers that lacked depth, went off-topic or lost logical flow. For example, when discussing opinions about participating in volunteer work, completely using answers prepared for part-time job discussions caused students to stray slightly off-topic. As a result, students missed valuable opportunities to address the question directly and showcase their oral skills. Students need to maintain focus and tailor responses to the specific prompts
* elaborate on their responses by offering detailed explanations and personal insights. To demonstrate in-depth thinking and a unique individual perspective, students need to apply their knowledge and essential thinking skills, such as relating, analysing and critiquing. This approach adds depth to their answers, making them more impactful
* practise sustaining a natural conversational flow. Some students hesitated or provided disjointed responses, particularly when faced with follow-up questions. To maintain logical progression in their responses, students need to avoid abrupt shifts in subtopics or the inclusion of irrelevant pre-learned phrases
* use idioms and formal expressions only when they are contextually relevant and well-integrated into the subtopic. While idiomatic expressions and quotes from ancient philosophers or literature can enrich responses, their overuse or misuse can detract from clarity and coherence. Students are advised to prioritise appropriateness and relevance in their choice of expressions
* use internet slang or colloquial terms with careful consideration of their appropriateness. While fashionable expressions, such as 集美 (commonly used to refer to close friends, especially among women), may be acceptable in informal settings, it is crucial to assess the audience and context before including them in responses. Careful selection and proper usage of such terms are essential to ensure the responses remain clear and interesting yet appropriate
* moderate their speaking pace and incorporate varied intonation to maintain the listener's engagement. Speaking too quickly or monotonously can diminish the overall impact of responses. Utilise appropriate pauses and emphasis to enhance expressiveness.

Section 2: Discussion

What students did well

In 2024, students:

* demonstrated remarkable breadth and versatility by engaging with subtopics that spanned Chinese-speaking communities and extended to global contexts. Students explored a diverse range of subtopics, from ancient traditions and events, such as 南通蓝印花布 (Nantong blue calico) and 崖山之战 (the Battle of Yashan), to contemporary phenomena and figures, including网红经济 (the influencer economy) and 燃灯校长张桂梅 (Principal Zhang Guimei). Their selected subtopics encompassed various fields such as technology, arts, entertainment and social media, featuring examples like 比亚迪 (BYD), 黑神话-悟空 (Black Myth: Wukong) and 富春山居图 (Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains). Students’ selected subtopics that showed their expansive interests and intellectual engagement
* showcased a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of various perspectives on their chosen subtopics. Through thorough research and advanced thinking skills such as analysis, comparison, critique and creativity, students presented unique perspectives and insights. For instance, some students explored historical periods through the lens of a renowned individual's experiences. They provided nuanced reflections on the cultural and societal contexts of those times. Others showcased creativity by drawing comparisons between literary figures and contemporary society to deliver thought-provoking insights that bridged the past and present
* demonstrated the ability to connect their personal experiences and positive emotions to the discussion subtopics. Students’ subtopic selections often reflected a genuine passion and interest. During the discussion, students brought enthusiasm and vibrancy to their responses and enhanced the authenticity and relatability of their responses. For example, some students introduced traditional foods, iconic buildings or cultural phenomena unique to their hometowns, offering an insider viewpoint enriched with depth and distinctive content
* displayed a rich vocabulary and a strong command of grammar. Students employed diverse sentence structures and vivid vocabulary to enhance the expressiveness of their responses. By appropriately drawing on a wide range of references and citing classical or well-known sources, they effectively articulated their thoughts and perspectives. With their ability to flexibly employ a variety of expressions, they adjusted their language to suit different contexts. This adaptability and linguistic creativity enabled them to convey ideas with clarity and precision
* showed increased awareness of using their chosen image to support their responses at various points of the discussion
* spoke with clear pronunciation, steady pacing and expressive intonation. This allowed students to share their ideas confidently and leave a positive impression on assessors.

Areas for improvement

Students are advised to:

* choose subtopics that align with their interests and language proficiency while demonstrating depth and originality. Students need to carefully balance between being too broad or overly narrow. While some students demonstrated their specific stance for or against the subtopic they chose, it is important to recognise that assessors will focus on the depth and breadth of the discussion rather than merely evaluating the stance itself. Students are not required to develop a particular stance on their chosen subtopic. Similarly, when discussing significant literary figures or philosophers, students are encouraged to move beyond basic facts and provide thoughtful analyses of works or ideas to show a comprehensive understanding of the chosen subtopic
* focus on directly addressing the questions posed by assessors. Students need to avoid including irrelevant details or relying excessively on pre-prepared responses that may not align with the specific question. Active listening and thoughtful engagement with the subtopic will help to ensure relevance and clarity
* move away from the outdated approach of presenting three key aspects of their research subtopic, as this structure is no longer part of the VCE study design. Instead, students should aim for a more holistic and integrated discussion that demonstrates a nuanced understanding of the subtopic. Assessors are required to explore a variety of perspectives, so students should be prepared to respond to questions from different angles with flexibility and insight
* avoid treating their answers as a mini-speech. The oral assessment is meant to be conversational, with responses flowing naturally to maintain a genuine tone rather than sounding rehearsed. Students are reminded to use quotes, such as classical poetry or idiomatic expressions, only when they naturally enhance the discussion. Overusing or misusing such elements can make the communication feel forced and less authentic
* carefully select images that effectively support their discussion subtopics. They need to meet VCE requirements: a single image, no larger than A3 size. The chosen image should be directly relevant and easy to connect to the subtopic. Students are encouraged to develop a comprehensive understanding of their selected image, including its details and its relevance to the subtopic. This deeper understanding will enable them to confidently address related questions and use the image as an effective aid in their discussion.