2021 VCE Chinese Language, Culture and Society oral external assessment report

Specific information

In the 2021 Chinese Language, Culture and Society oral examination, students showed a range of knowledge and skills in using spoken Chinese language. Students who scored highly were able to elaborate with meaningful content in both sections of the examination. The examination is entirely in Chinese, and students are expected to understand the instructions including ‘请用英文读一下你的学生考号’ (please read your examination slip number in English) and ‘请开始你的演讲’ (please start your presentation) for the start of the second section.

In the conversation section, students are expected to understand basic instructions, question patterns and relevant vocabulary such as ‘请说一说’ (please describe), ‘介绍一下’ (introduce), ‘什么’ (what), ‘为什么’ (why), ‘哪’ (where) and ‘谢谢’ (thank you). The characteristics of conversations that scored highly included a natural and effective communication style, spontaneous responses, clear pronunciation and the ability to self-correct. When providing extensive content, students are expected to ensure that responses are relevant to the questions asked. Students are encouraged to learn relevant vocabulary for describing their personal world, including introduction of self, family, friends and school life based on their own experiences.

In the discussion section, most students were aware of the requirements of the oral examination and came prepared to provide a two-minute description of an item they brought to the examination, such as a poster (with no text on it), cartoon or other artefact. It is expected that students can provide enough information about the stimulus to demonstrate their knowledge and language skills. It is recommended that students familiarise themselves with the details of their visual stimulus and prepare relevant Chinese vocabulary to enable them to describe those details. However, some students did not prepare a presentation before the examination and their chosen items were not relevant to the prescribed topics of the Chinese Language strand for Unit 3 (leisure, lifestyles, entertainment in China) and Unit 4 (youth issues and the world of work in China).

Students are also encouraged to further practise their listening and responding skills and familiarise themselves with the prescribed vocabulary in the study design. It would also be useful for the students to practise self-correction techniques and useful phrases.

Section 1 – Conversation

In 2021, student topics covered the student’s personal world, including family and friends, home and school life, interests and hobbies, and future aspirations. The majority of students discussed most topics and displayed some breadth and depth in their responses. Most students were able to provide details about their family and friends, and some interesting facts about their hobbies and aspirations, while others were encouraged to include more content in their expressions, especially on topics around their interests and future plans.

Conversations that scored highly demonstrated the student’s ability to provide relevant responses to questions. They maintained a natural flow to the conversation and used appropriate phrases to ask for clarifications to keep the communication moving forward. They demonstrated thorough preparation by giving facts, expressing opinions, and providing reasons, examples and evidence. Some students who scored highly included interesting details about themselves. Most students attempted to use a variety of sentence patterns and grammatical structures, and some were able to convey their preferences and reasoning accurately and appropriately through the clear use of simple grammatical structures.

Students who do not understand a question are encouraged to ask the assessors for clarification rather than pause for long periods. Conversations that did not score well included irrelevant or memorised responses that did not address the questions asked.

Section 2 – Discussion

The content of this section needed to be within the prescribed topics of the Chinese Language strand for Unit 3 (leisure, lifestyles, entertainment) and Unit 4 (youth issues, world of work), with a related visual stimulus.

Most students were able to understand the instructions from the assessors to move from Section 1 to Section 2, ‘请介绍一下你带来的图片/东西’ (please introduce the picture/artefact that you have brought) or ‘请开始你的演讲’ (please start your presentation), and start their two-minute descriptive presentation. However, some students did not appear to understand the structure of the examination and were hesitant to start their speech. Students who did not prepare a presentation were affected. Students are encouraged to rehearse their speech before the examination and learn enough vocabulary to present and describe their stimulus in the following discussion.

Most students brought images as the visual stimulus for Section 2. Most images were informative, providing enough content for presentation and discussion, while some needed further clarification on their choice of topic. The chosen visual stimulus was expected to provide adequate opportunity to support the second section of the examination, which includes six minutes of follow-up discussion.

Discussions that scored highly were structured two-minute descriptive presentations that demonstrated the student’s ability to conduct a spontaneous discussion according to the visual stimulus of their choice. Some further demonstrated their ability to address details, summarise information and make logical links between ideas based on the visual stimulus. Most were able to describe the factual information presented in their images. Students showed their creative ideas in preparing the presentation. Some examples of topics that were well suited to this section of the examination included, but were not limited to ‘中国孩子们的体育运动’ (sports activities among Chinese children), ‘逛夜市的中国人’ (Chinese people in the night markets), ‘中国的追星族’ (Chinese idol fans), ‘爱喝茶的中国人’ (tea-drinking Chinese) and so on. The strategic use of various language structures, as well as the avoidance of repetition and redundancy, contributed to a successful discussion.