2021 VCE Dutch written external assessment report

General comments

Most students were familiar with the format of the examination, answered all the questions and could express their thoughts in Dutch. Students had a good understanding of Dutch grammar and vocabulary, although there were various common spelling and syntactical errors.

It is important for students to engage with the Dutch language over the year, including reading, and watching and listening to books, news, films and radio. This will familiarise them with correct spelling, word order, idioms and vocabulary, to name a few benefits. Students are also encouraged to write and converse in Dutch throughout the year, be it with friends, family or each other.

As part of their exam preparation, students should try to complete a number of [past Dutch written examinations](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/past-examinations/Pages/Dutch.aspx), to familiarise themselves with the format and expectations of VCE examinations. Students are also encouraged to ensure they leave enough time during the examination to check their responses. There was some evidence of students running out of time towards to the end of the examination or misunderstanding certain questions.

Below are some common language errors that came up frequently:

* gender confusion, with the definite articles de (the) and het (the) being applied incorrectly
* inauthentic phrases (e.g. Ik had leuk to mean ‘I had fun’, instead of Ik vermaakte mij)
* confusion between en (and) and een (a/one)
* conjugation errors, especially in the first person (e.g. Ik loopt for ‘I walk’, instead of Ik loop)
* issues with word order (e.g. Ik toen zag for ‘I then saw’, instead of Ik zag toen)
* confusion between pronouns and possessive adjectives (e.g. jouw for ‘you’, instead of jou)
* spelling errors of various kinds, especially in terms of double consonants/vowels (e.g. julie instead of jullie for ‘you’ plural) and words ending in -e (e.g. een donker kamer instead of een donkere kamer for ‘a dark room’)
* weak grasp of tenses, as evidenced by overuse of present tense or errors in conjugation and word order when using future and past tenses.

Specific information

Note: This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1: Listening and responding

Part A

Most students did well in this section, in which the responses are in English. The longer text referred to in Question 3 did challenge some students, demonstrating the importance of listening closely for the details that are relevant to the question.

Question 1

Four ways to celebrate Koningsdag are:

* buy and sell trash and treasure at the market
* wear your best orange clothes
* go to the open-air party with friends
* toast the king with an Oranjebitter / orange drink.

Question 2

* Almost any shape can be 3D printed.
* Every house can have a different shape.
* The houses are comfortable to live in.
* The houses meet the current building regulations.
* 3D-printed houses are environmentally friendly.

Question 3

Three specific groups of people who may benefit from cow-hugging are:

* lonely people
* office workers
* farmers.

Particular benefits for each group are:

* lonely people – promotes relaxation / a feeling of togetherness
* office workers – stimulates creativity and insight / increases productivity
* farmers – cows produce more milk.

Part B

Many students did well in this section, where responses were required in Dutch, but some had difficulties. Though Text 4 was short, some students had difficulty identifying the correct responses for Question 4. Text 5 was in an informal register, and some students had trouble determining the relevant pieces of information from the casual conversation to answer Question 5.

Question 4

The restaurant guarantees an unforgettable visual and culinary experiences because it:

* ligt aan de oever van de pittoreske Maas (lies on the bank of the picturesque Maas)
* heeft een ongeëvenaard uitzicht van de bovenste verdieping van een wolkenkrabber (has an unparalleled view from the top floor of a skyscraper)
* geeft verrassende wendingen aan Hollandse gerechten (gives surprising twists to Dutch recipes)
* verzekerd een luxe diner / van een met vijf sterren bekroonde chef-kok (guarantees a luxury meal / from a 5-star-awarded head chef).

Question 5

Evidence from the text that Matthijs had a negative camping experience includes:

* rilde van de kou (shivering from the cold)
* er is niets te doen / saai (there’s nothing to do / boring)
* op de grond slapen is ongemakkelijk (sleeping on the ground is uncomfortable)
* het eten is onappetijtelijk (the food is unappetising)
* tent wordt overdag warm (tent gets hot during the day).

Question 6a.

One of the most significant reasons for the return of wolves in the Netherlands and a further explanation of this are:

* Conventie van Bern / afspraak binnen de Europese Unie (EU) (Bern Convention / agreement within the European Union (EU))
* uitbreiding van natuurgebieden en bescherming van wolven (expansion of nature reserves and protection of wolves).

Question 6b.

Examples from the text of how farmers and bushwalkers can learn to live with wolves include:

Boeren (Farmers):

* zet nachts vee op stal (put livestock in stables at night)
* plaats een schrikdraadraster (install electric fences).

Boswandelaars (Bushwalkers):

* blijf kalm (stay calm)
* behoud afstand (maintain distance)
* geniet van het speciale moment (enjoy the special moment).

Section 2: Reading and responding

Part A

Question 7

Overall, students did well at identifying the relevant information in Text 7. Examples from the text that explain how the village of Baarle is both divided and united are as follows.

Divided:

* split in half by border between two countries
* mix of Dutch and Belgian inhabitants/nationalities
* both Dutch and Belgian councils/mayors.

United:

* one carnival organised together
* everybody enjoys the local pancakes.

Question 8

In general, many students identified a broad range of the relevant conflicting views presented in this text. Some responses did not identify enough points to score full marks, while others listed only positive or only negative views – a mix of both was required. The following points from the text outline Marloes van Dijk’s conflicting views about wind turbines.

Support:

* votes based on parties’ commitment to combating climate change
* supports wind/solar/renewable energy in general.

Opposition:

* against wind turbines in her own backyard / too close
* fears effects on health due to noise (sleeplessness and stress)
* eyesore / interrupted view
* depreciation of property prices.

Part B

Question 9

Overall, most students were confident in writing a formal letter for a job application. Many students included the appropriate textual elements for the style of writing required, and most wrote in an appropriately formal register and used the correct formal mode of address (u/uw rather than je/jouw). A significant number of students did not demonstrate any awareness of the requirements of writing a formal letter, such as including the receiver’s address at the top of the page, opening with Beste mw. Alaoui (‘Dear Ms Alaoui’) or similar and signing off with Met vriendelijke groet (‘Kind regards’) or similar.

While most students included enough of the relevant points in their responses to score well, not as many expanded on the points in any great depth. Often just one line was used to address a criterion. Stronger responses went into more depth on particular criteria or provided relevant personal examples, even if this meant covering fewer of the criteria overall.

There were various common spelling and grammatical errors in the responses to this question. Specific examples of these are provided in the general comments at the start of this report.

Relevant points that students could have included in their response are:

* formele brief stijl (formal letter style)
* combinatie van wel en niet aan voorwaarden voldoen (combination of meeting and not meeting the requirements)
* kan onmiddelijk starten (can start immediately)
* ervaring in kaashandel, markt, horeca of kleinhandel (experience in cheese-selling, market, hospitality or retail)
* twee tot drie dagen in de week beschikbaar (available two to three days per week)
* middelbare scholier (high-school student)
* geïnteresseerd in bijbaantje of carrière op de markt (interested in part-time job or career at the market)
* betrouwbaarheid (reliability)
* uithoudingsvermogen (stamina)
* klantenservice / omgang met mensen (customer service / interaction with people)
* bekwaamheid in rekenen (proficiency in arithmetic).

Section 3: Writing in Dutch

Students generally produced a piece of writing in Dutch that was of a good standard in this section, employing appropriate registers, styles and demonstrating a good understanding of the grammar and vocabulary required to complete the task. Generally, students who were more confident in applying a wide range of grammar and vocabulary, and who demonstrated some flair in responding to the question prompts, scored especially well. Some students had significant issues with spelling mistakes, grammatical errors and a limited vocabulary when writing in Dutch.

Question 10

The majority of students who attempted this question were able to produce an informal email to a friend, using a familiar tone and employing persuasive language and examples. High-scoring responses employed a wide-ranging vocabulary, a variety of appropriate tenses, some authentic Dutch idioms, and elaborate examples.

Common issues included numerous spelling and grammatical errors in many responses. Specific examples are provided in the general comments at the start of this report. Some students did not demonstrate that their response was an email, while others wrote in a formal register that did not match the requirements of the task. Students are encouraged to practise writing in Dutch about a range of topics throughout the year to develop their ability to respond to a prompt on any subject in the exam.

Relevant points that students could have included in their response are:

* email style
* Dutch is a fun language
* more meaningful experience of a country
* able to communicate with the locals
* easier to make friends
* improves confidence to travel
* able to read the local news, magazines, literature
* expands worldview to speak multiple languages.

Question 11

Some students who chose this question crafted an interesting short story, but many had difficulty doing so in Dutch. Devising an imaginative, entertaining story in a short amount of time is quite a challenge, and it requires a structured approach and an interesting plot. High-scoring responses included a plot that was easy to follow, incorporated some kind of twist or climax, employed appropriate vocabulary related to the task and ended with an appropriate conclusion.

The most common issues with less strong responses were that the story lacked cohesion and clarity, with the plot difficult to follow. Some stories were unsuitable for children, which was an explicit requirement of the question. There were many spelling and grammatical errors in most of the responses to this question. See the general comments at the start of this report for specific examples.

Some points that students could have included in their response are:

* short-story style
* suitable for children
* imaginative
* creative vocabulary
* plot twist or climax
* unexpected development
* developed plot arc
* has a conclusion.