2024 VCE Hebrew oral external assessment report

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

Section 1: Conversation

What students did well

In the 2024 examination, students:

* engaged in a general conversation about their personal world, for example, school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations. Students effectively supported their responses with relevant details and examples, offering a rich and varied range of ideas. For example, some students described their daily routine, mentioning how they balance schoolwork with spending time with family and playing soccer with friends. Some also shared their future aspirations, such as expressing a strong desire to become a teacher, citing their love for helping others and their positive experiences in school. This demonstrated an ability to communicate naturally about personal experiences and future goals
* provided a range of relevant information, ideas and opinions with an appropriate depth. When discussing their aspirations, some students spoke about their passions, describing their goals and how they’ve been inspired. They also shared personal insights about balancing their studies with hobbies like playing the guitar, highlighting their dedication and time-management skills
* clarified, elaborated on and defended ideas and opinions. When discussing their favourite hobbies, students were able to elaborate by explaining how their passions help them express emotions and stay focused, for example. When asked why they believe their hobbies are important, they defended their views by highlighting things such as fostering creativity and cultural understanding
* demonstrated an excellent level of understanding by responding readily and communicating confidently and carrying the conversation forward with spontaneity. Some students demonstrated this point excellently. For example, when asked about their family traditions, students quickly described how they celebrate holidays and shared personal anecdotes. They carried the conversation forward with spontaneity and seamlessly transitioned between topics, showing their ability to maintain a natural flow of conversation
* responded confidently and were able to advance the conversation, including the use of appropriate repair strategies as needed. Some students used effective repair strategies, such as pausing to gather their thoughts and rephrasing their sentence to clarify their point. This ability to navigate the conversation with ease, even when challenges arose, demonstrated their strong conversational skills
* used appropriate vocabulary. Most students used appropriate vocabulary throughout the conversation, demonstrating a solid grasp of the language. When discussing their hobbies, some students accurately used terms related to sports, such as ‘training’ (אימון), ‘teamwork’ (עבודת צוות) and ‘competition’ (תחרות), while other students employed vocabulary related to travel, such as ‘destination’ (יעד), ‘itinerary’ (מסלול), and ‘adventure’ (הרפתקה). Their ability to select and apply precise vocabulary helped convey their ideas clearly and effectively
* used appropriate grammar and sentence structures. Most students used appropriate grammar and sentence structures, contributing to clear and effective communication. Some students demonstrated the correct use of verb tenses when discussing their past experiences, saying, for example, ‘When I was younger, I played soccer every weekend’, and correctly applied future tense when talking about their aspirations, saying, ‘I will study medicine next year’. Their use of varied sentence structures, including both simple and complex sentences, helped them express ideas more fluently and coherently
* used appropriate expression, including pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. When discussing a memorable event, some students emphasised key words with correct stress, such as ‘incredible’ and ‘unforgettable’, using rising intonation to show excitement. Their tempo was steady, allowing the conversation to flow naturally without rushing. This use of expression enhanced their communication, making it engaging and easy to follow.

Areas for improvement

In preparation for the examination, students could:

* ensure adequate preparation for the conversation with relevance, depth and range of information, ideas and opinions. To improve, students should focus on providing more relevant and detailed responses, expanding their range of topics and using complex sentence structures. They should practise elaborating on ideas and defending opinions with clear reasoning to ensure a more engaging and dynamic conversation
* practise answering a range of questions to be able to advance the conversation. To improve their ability to advance the conversation, students should practise responding to a variety of questions, as well as focusing on expanding their answers with relevant details and examples. They should also work on handling unexpected questions calmly, asking for clarification when needed and using transition phrases to naturally shift or extend topics, ensuring a smooth conversational flow
* build confidence through practising interactions in the language assessed. Students should build confidence by regularly practising interactions in Hebrew. Engaging in conversational activities, such as role-playing or speaking with peers or a Hebrew speaker, will help them become more comfortable and fluent, enabling them to communicate more naturally during the exam
* practise using more complex sentence structures and syntax. Students should focus on practising more complex sentence structures and syntax to enhance their communication skills. Incorporating a mix of simple and complex sentences will allow for more detailed and sophisticated responses. Regular practice in constructing longer, multi-part sentences will help improve fluency and enable students to convey their thoughts more effectively in a range of conversational contexts
* practise using repair strategies to advance the conversation when needed. Students should practise using repair strategies to maintain the flow of conversation, such as rephrasing, asking for clarification or pausing to gather their thoughts. These techniques will help them recover from mistakes or misunderstandings and confidently advance the discussion
* revise grammar. Students should focus on revising grammar to improve accuracy in their responses. Emphasis should be placed on correct verb conjugations, noun–adjective agreements and the proper use of tenses to ensure clear and effective communication. For example, instead of saying, ‘אתמול אני הולך לפארק’ (‘Yesterday, I go to the park’), they should say, ‘אתמול הלכתי לפארק’ (‘Yesterday, I went to the park’). Regular practice with different tenses and grammatical rules will help improve overall communication
* build vocabulary specific to the student’s personal world and their interactions with the language and culture as learners. Students should work on building vocabulary related to their personal experiences and interactions with Hebrew language and culture. Expanding topic-specific vocabulary will help them communicate more effectively and authentically, allowing for richer and more meaningful conversations
* practise pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. Students should practise pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo to enhance clarity and natural flow in their speech. Focusing on these elements will improve their ability to convey meaning accurately and engage more effectively in conversations. For example, when discussing their hobbies, a student might say, ‘I enjoy playing soccer’, with proper stress on ‘playing’ and a natural rise and fall in intonation to show enthusiasm. Practising the correct tempo will help avoid speaking too quickly or too slowly, ensuring the listener can follow the conversation easily. This attention to pronunciation, stress and tempo will make their speech sound more fluent and confident.

Section 2: Discussion

What students did well

In the 2024 examination, students:

* clearly introduced the focus of their subtopic, alerting assessors to any objects brought to support the discussion of the subtopic. Students introduced the focus of their subtopic well, effectively setting the context for the discussion. Some also brought relevant objects, such as photos or artifacts, to support their subtopic, which helped engage the assessors and enrich their responses
* demonstrated in-depth knowledge of their subtopic. Most students demonstrated in-depth knowledge of their subtopic by providing detailed information and insightful perspectives. They were able to elaborate on key points, support their ideas with relevant examples and respond confidently to follow-up questions, showcasing a thorough understanding of their chosen topic
* used the image to support the discussion on the subtopic. Some students effectively used images to support their discussion on the subtopic. For example, some students brought family photos to illustrate cultural traditions, using it as a visual aid to provide context and add depth to their explanation. This helped engage the assessors and enhance the overall presentation
* engaged in a discussion using relevant information, ideas and opinions. Most students engaged in the discussion by presenting relevant information, ideas and opinions. They provided thoughtful responses, elaborating on their points and offering personal insights, which contributed to a meaningful and dynamic exchange of ideas
* clarified, elaborated on and defended opinions and ideas. Most students effectively clarified, elaborated on and defended their opinions and ideas. When discussing a favourite book, students could explain why they admired the character/protagonist and discuss how the character’s journey inspired them.
* communicated effectively with assessors throughout the discussion. Most students demonstrated this point well by maintaining good eye contact, responding promptly to questions and using appropriate language to convey their ideas clearly. This helped create a smooth and engaging dialogue
* used appropriate vocabulary. Most students used appropriate vocabulary when discussing famous people. For example, when students talked about their admiration for a well-known athlete, they could use terms like ‘achievement’, ‘dedication’, and ‘inspiration’ to describe their success. They could also use words such as ‘role model’ and ‘legacy’ to explain why this person had such a positive influence on them
* used appropriate grammar and sentence structures
* used appropriate expression, including pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

Areas for improvement

In preparation for the examination, students could:

* choose an appropriate subtopic to suit ability and interests. Choosing a subtopic they are passionate about and within their comfort zone will help them feel more confident and engaged during the discussion, as well as allow them to express their ideas more clearly and in greater depth
* prepare with an appropriate number of quality sources, for example, a combination of aural and visual, as well as written texts, to explore the subtopic in sufficient depth. Using a variety of sources will allow them to explore the subtopic in greater depth, provide different perspectives and help to support their ideas more effectively during the discussion. This approach will also make the conversation more engaging and well-rounded
* make reference to the sources or texts studied for the detailed study. By integrating these sources into their discussion, they can demonstrate a deeper understanding of the subtopic, support their opinions with relevant examples and show how their research has informed their views. This will strengthen their responses and add credibility to their arguments
* avoid listing facts without expressing a point of view, or presenting general knowledge as research. Students should focus on offering their own analysis or interpretation of the information, using the facts to support their personal opinions and ideas. This approach will demonstrate critical thinking and ensure a more engaging and insightful discussion
* convey information learnt from sources but also express an opinion with an original perspective on the subtopic. By combining factual knowledge with personal insights, students can demonstrate a deeper understanding and engage the assessor in a more thoughtful and unique discussion. This approach will showcase their ability to analyse information critically and contribute meaningfully to the conversation
* use the image to support the discussion on the subtopic. By referring to specific details in the image, students can illustrate their points, provide visual context and strengthen their arguments. For example, when discussing a cultural tradition, a student could point to an image of a celebration, explaining its significance and connecting it to their personal experience or broader cultural themes. This use of visual aids enhances the depth and relevance of the discussion
* avoid relying on pre-learnt responses that do not address an assessor’s questions. Students should listen carefully to the question and tailor their response accordingly, ensuring it is relevant and specific to the topic at hand. This will demonstrate their ability to think on their feet, engage with the conversation and provide thoughtful, spontaneous answers
* practise using repair strategies. Students should practise using repair strategies to handle any misunderstandings or moments of hesitation during the conversation. Techniques such as rephrasing, asking for clarification or pausing to gather their thoughts can help them maintain the flow of the discussion and ensure clear communication. Practising these strategies will increase confidence and improve their ability to respond effectively to unexpected challenges during the exam
* revise grammar. This will help improve clarity and accuracy in their responses. For example, when discussing someone’s achievements, a student might say, ‘האדם הזה נתן השראה להרבהאנשים עם עבודתו’ (This person has inspired many people with their work), instead of ‘האדם הזהנותן השראה להרבה אנשים עם עבודתו’ (This person inspire many people with their work). Using the correct verb tense ensures the message is clear and grammatically correct, which improves overall communication. Regular practice with different sentence structures and tenses will help avoid common mistakes and enhance fluency

build vocabulary specific to the subtopic selected for the detailed study. For example, if choosing inventions as a subtopic, a student could use terms like ‘innovation’ (חדשנות), ‘prototype’ (אב-טיפוס), ‘patent’ (פטנט), ‘breakthrough’ (פריצת דרך), and ‘impact’ (השפעה) when discussing technological advancements. These words will help students express their thoughts more precisely when describing the process of creating inventions, their significance and how they change society. Practising this specialised vocabulary would allow a student to speak confidently and clearly about inventions during their discussion

* practise pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. This will help them to communicate more effectively. For example, when discussing an invention, a student could say, ‘The invention of the telephone revolutionised communication’ (המצאת הטלפון שינתה את התקשורת), with correct stress on ‘invention’ (המצאת) and ‘telephone’ ('לפון) to highlight key ideas. Using rising intonation for questions, such as, ‘How did this invention change the world?’, and maintaining a steady tempo ensures the message is clear and engaging. Practising these elements will help students sound more natural and confident in their responses.