2021 VCE Italian oral external assessment report

General comments

The 2021 Italian oral examination assessed the VCE Italian Study Design 2020–2024 and examination specifications. It is important that students and teachers familiarise themselves with the specifications for oral examinations, available on the VCE Italian examinations webpage of the VCAA website. Students and teachers are also reminded that a [series of videos](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/past-examinations/Pages/RevisedSecondLanguageOralExaminationVideos.aspx) has been produced to help with preparation for the oral examinations.

It should be noted that during the oral examination:

* students may be asked a variety of questions of varying levels of difficulty. Questions may also be asked in a different order from the one that students anticipate
* assessors may interrupt students to ask questions during either section of the examination; this should be regarded as a normal process in a discussion
* assessors may also repeat or rephrase questions
* normal variation in assessor body language is acceptable.

Students in the 2021 VCE Italian oral examination were generally well prepared. Many students participated enthusiastically in the conversation, spoke readily about their chosen subtopic and image in the discussion, and generally interacted well with the examiners.

Students who scored highly displayed thorough familiarity with both their general conversation and their chosen subtopic and generally did not rely on pre-prepared, memorised responses. They spoke with considerable breadth and depth of information, engaged readily in the conversation, and showcased a wide variety of relevant and appropriate grammatical structures throughout the exchanges with the assessors.

Specific information

Section 1 – Conversation

Section 1 of the examination involves a general conversation between the student and the two assessors about the student’s personal world and their interactions with the Italian language and culture as learners. It is an organic conversation about the student’s personal world.

Students who scored highly were able to interact effectively with assessors and confidently carry the conversation forward because they were thoroughly prepared. They responded readily to questions and gave in-depth answers to open-ended questions. In their exchange they were able to identify key aspects of their personal world, including their interactions with the language and Italian culture as learners of the language. These students were in control of language structures and were able to communicate confidently using accurate intonation, pronunciation and tempo. They went beyond the simple structures and demonstrated knowledge of the expected language requirements as stipulated in the study design. In order to perform successfully and ensure an authentic exchange, it is important that students avoid simply memorising information. Students who scored less well could not effectively use the verb piacere; showed an inaccurate use of agreements, including incorrect auxiliary verbs; failed to conjugate verbs; and were inaccurate in their use of numbers in Italian.

Section 2 – Discussion

Following the conversation, the student discusses their chosen subtopic and the supporting visual material that they have brought with them.

The specifications require the student to explore aspects of the subtopic, including information, opinions and ideas. It is important to carefully consider the choice of subtopic and supporting image when preparing for this section of the examination. Images that included rich information provided more opportunity for students to be able to offer a greater depth and range of information, ideas, opinions and reflections about the subtopic. While the quality of the visual stimulus was not assessed, students who selected images that were easy to share with the assessors found it easier to communicate their ideas.

Students are reminded that it is not the image that is being assessed – it is the quality of the discussion. Students should therefore select an image that can adequately be integrated into a discussion about their selected subtopic.

In the 2021 Italian oral examination, students presented a wide range of subtopics for discussion. Students are reminded that the subtopic and supporting visual material must be related to either one of the prescribed themes, ‘The Italian-speaking communities’ or ‘The world around us’. Furthermore, the visual stimulus presented must be a single image that supports an aspect of their discussion. Students who scored highly were able to effectively explore their subtopic, offering depth in their responses and a diverse range of perspectives on their subtopic. They were well prepared, confident and could effectively maintain the discussion with their assessors for the entire eight minutes. They communicated clearly with authentic pronunciation, using vocabulary and grammatical structures that were appropriate for the subtopic. In preparation for this section of the examination it is important that students master the correct Italian terminology as applicable. It must also be remembered that the discussion is not a monologue and therefore students must be prepared to interact with the assessors.