

2020 VCE Macedonian oral examination report

General comments

The Macedonian oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination has two sections – a Presentation of approximately five minutes, during which students outline an issue related to the detailed study of language and culture through Literature and the Arts, and a Discussion of approximately five minutes. Students are reminded that they are expected to be able to present a clear stance on the issue selected and relate this clearly to the subtopic chosen for detailed study, then support their stance with evidence from a range of texts during the Discussion.

Students are reminded that specific details about each of the two examination sections are outlined in the VCE Macedonian Study Design.

Students need to be prepared to use language spontaneously and not rely on rehearsed dialogue. Students should not memorise chunks of information or set statements that they expect to be able to use verbatim during the oral examination.

Students are not expected to be 'experts'. They are expected to have learnt strategies in order to respond to the questions asked. It would be valuable for students to learn phrases such as, 'I have not studied this aspect of the subtopic, but I think ...', 'I don't know, but I feel ...' and 'I am not sure about this question, but I know ...' Students need to use strategies to advance the Discussion and continue to engage with assessors.

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 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.

The assessment criteria and descriptors are published on the VCAA website. It is important that all teachers and students be familiar with the criteria and descriptors, and that students use them as part of their examination preparation. This will help students to engage in a lively and interesting exchange with assessors.

Students are reminded to check conditions of the examination in the examination specifications.

Section 1 – Conversation

Students were well prepared for this section and most were able to carry the conversation forward without much support. They conversed about subtopics relevant to their personal world and were able to provide an excellent range of information, opinions and ideas, which they delivered clearly and logically using highly relevant responses. These students were able to clarify, elaborate on and defend opinions and ideas very effectively, using an excellent range of vocabulary, structures and expressions.

There were some students who needed support and prompting throughout the conversation and did not explain, describe or give opinions. Interference from English in pronunciation (e.g. intonation, stress), expression and vocabulary was evident in many conversations. Some students used incorrect grammar throughout their conversation, including tense (e.g. минато неопределено време / перфект – present perfect / present perfect continuous), point of view (first, second or third person), singular and plural, gender and number in nouns. Short responses without sufficient elaboration, hesitation and pauses were seen in the lower scoring conversations.

Those who scored highly could respond to higher order questions. Some students, however, did not understand the question at times. Sentence structure was generally good, but often students reverted to English syntax. Some students were able to clearly state opinions and give examples to defend their opinions. When describing the benefits of studying the Macedonian language and what identity means to them as learners of Macedonian, most students were able to use clear expression. Some students used direct translations from English inappropriately, but not many. Where this occurred, it appeared that vocabulary had not been grasped or practised sufficiently.

Section 2 – Discussion

High-scoring discussions were well prepared and thought through. A deep understanding and analysis of the selected subtopic were evident in some responses. The language expressions were robust, with accurate grammar and vocabulary. Students were able to engage with assessors and provide their opinions on aspects of the subtopic. Highly sophisticated phrases and expressions were used with a high degree of fluency by some students.

High-scoring responses used the one-minute introduction well to indicate the scope of their subtopic and were able to provide detailed responses with many examples to defend their opinions. These students were able to refer to texts studied to support their ideas without relying on rote-learned information. Students who relied on rote-learned information found it difficult to respond to some of the questions asked. In some cases, students gave responses in which the information was vast, yet some basic information highly relevant to the stated subtopic had not been grasped.

High-scoring students were able to use an excellent range of vocabulary and grammar to discuss their subtopic with assessors and show a deep understanding of the subtopic. Lower scoring discussions appeared to have a lack of preparation. Most students could relate their subtopic to current times and compare situations from the past with the present where this was relevant to their subtopic.