

# 2021 VCE Macedonian oral external assessment report

## General comments

The Macedonian oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination has two sections – a conversation of approximately seven minutes, during which students converse with the assessors about their personal world, and a discussion of approximately eight minutes.

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.

Students are reminded that they must be prepared to use language spontaneously in unrehearsed situations. Students are not expected to be 'experts'; they are expected to have learnt strategies in order to respond to unexpected questions. 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 will be assessed in both the conversation and the discussion in communication, content and language. The criteria 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. Although there are similarities between the assessment criteria for the conversation and discussion sections of the examination, the criteria assess two very different aspects of performance. Students who are well prepared are generally able to demonstrate their abilities and proficiency in the language.

## Section 1 – Conversation

Section 1 consists of a general conversation about the student's personal world, for example, school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations. It is an organic conversation about the student's personal world. These examples provide students with a basis for preparing a range of interesting and engaging ideas about their personal world, so that they can engage in a spontaneous discussion with the assessors about things that interest them.

Most students were well prepared for this part of the examination. They were able to answer all questions from the assessors. Few students asked assessors to repeat a question or did not understand a question, needing it to be rephrased and asked again. Some students made grammatical errors (e.g. incorrect use of noun gender) and demonstrated limited vocabulary. However, most showed a very good understanding of vocabulary in familiar contexts and were therefore able to converse about their family, pets and activities outside of school (e.g. Macedonian dance group, playing soccer and video games). Students emphasised the importance of maintaining their identity through learning the Macedonian language and spoke of their

relationships with grandparents, cooking, travel and future study plans. They were confident and able to engage with the assessors. Note that the examples given here are not a prescriptive list of possible subtopics.

## Section 2 – Discussion

Following the conversation, the student indicates to the assessor(s) the subtopic chosen for detailed study and, in no more than one minute, briefly introduces the main focus of their subtopic, alerting assessors to any objects brought to support the discussion. Suitable objects include photographs, maps or diagrams, and should include no text or very little text. The support material must have minimal writing, which includes only a heading, name or title.

The one-minute introduction should give assessors an indication of the area of discussion. The purpose is for students to briefly introduce their chosen subtopic; it is not an opportunity for students to list all their information or texts.

The focus of the discussion is to explore aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Macedonian is spoken, with the student being expected to make reference to the texts studied.

Students should choose an engaging subtopic that motivates them to become familiar with the content and vocabulary needed, and to elaborate on information, ideas and opinions. It is important that students and teachers select materials for the detailed study carefully so that students are exposed to a variety of views. The type of texts used by students should vary in complexity and be in Macedonian so that students can become aware of key vocabulary related to their subtopic. Students should be able to draw on the texts they have studied and make links between the texts to support, expand on and explore opinions and ideas on the subtopic and different aspects of the texts. Students should be able to relate this to the Macedonian-speaking community.

Most students appeared well prepared to discuss their chosen subtopic. Preparation is key for this part of the examination. An abundant understanding of the content with a solid grasp of language elements pertaining to the subtopic enable the discussion to flow freely.

Most students were able to elaborate on their answers to questions and compare various sources. Some students demonstrated excellent language skills and scored highly in evaluating and giving opinions on different aspects of their subtopic. These students analysed the sources for their subtopic, such as novels, documentary films and poems. Some students also demonstrated extensive research of their own. Most students' knowledge of the subtopics was very impressive and showed a passion and love for their Macedonian identity, history and language.

While most students understood the questions, some students demonstrated limited knowledge about the content and were unable to elaborate beyond the learnt material. There were errors relating to the gender of nouns (for example, еден жена [one woman] and мало куќа [small house] must follow the adjective/number and noun agreement) and errors in the verb tense when describing the historic past with минато определено свршено време (past definite perfect tense), e.g. Имаше едно дете кое беше само во шумата во зима и му беше многу студено (There was a little boy who was alone in the forest in winter and he was very cold). Some students appeared to have not prepared thoroughly and showed limited understanding of language elements such as 'cause and effect' relationships and logical chain of events. There was a lack of sophisticated vocabulary and use of grammatical elements.

It is highly recommended that students study and reference a variety of sources in Macedonian, including sources that are not text-based, such as videos.