2023 VCE Romanian oral external assessment report

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

Section 1: Conversation

What students did well

In 2023 students:

* engaged in a general conversation about their personal world, for example, school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations
* provided a range of relevant information, ideas and opinions with an appropriate depth. Overall, students presented interesting information and ideas. Some students spoke about different aspects of the Romanian culture, such as their favourite Romanian dish, and explained why that particular dish has a special significance to them
* clarified, elaborated on and defended ideas and opinions. Some students described their personal experiences when travelling overseas, compared them to what is generally known about those cultures, and presented very strong arguments to support their opinions
* demonstrated an excellent level of understanding by responding readily and communicating confidently and carrying the conversation forward with spontaneity. Most students understood the questions asked in the conversation section. For example, some students were asked what subjects they study at school, and why they selected those subjects. The students responded confidently to this question and demonstrated an excellent level of understanding of Romanian language related to common aspects of school life
* responded confidently and were able to advance the conversation, including the use of appropriate repair strategies as needed. Most students were able to respond promptly to the questions that they were asked during the oral exam. Some students did not understand the question and politely asked the assessors to repeat the question (Puteți vă rog să repetați întrebarea? / Could you please repeat the question?)
* used appropriate vocabulary. Most students used vocabulary appropriate to the topic of the conversation, such as vreau să studiez (I want to study); a fost o experiență interesantă (it was an interesting experience). Some students used Romanian expressions such as să pun burta pe carte (begin to study), se duce, nici n-o mai vezi (it vanishes, you can’t see it) and sophisticated vocabulary such as veșnic (eternal), preludiu (prelude), mitologie (mythology)
* used appropriate grammar and sentence structures. Most students demonstrated a very good grasp of grammar: grammatical errors made did not impede the understanding of the ideas. Many students followed grammatical rules specific to the Romanian language, such as using the adjective after the noun in părinții mei (my parents), o comunitate dezvoltată (a developed community). Many students used the correct structure of affirmative and interrogative sentences. Most students used coordinated sentences to construct their arguments; some students constructed complex sentences and used various subordinate structures and sentences
* used appropriate expression, including pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. Most students spoke clearly, at a natural tempo, and used the correct intonation, pronunciation and word stress. High-scoring students used sentence stress correctly and varied their intonation to emphasize certain ideas.

Areas for improvement

Students should:

* ensure adequate preparation for the conversation with relevance, depth and range of information, ideas and opinions. Students should be able to elaborate on their ideas rather than just respond to questions asked by assessors. For example, if students are asked to speak about a place they have visited recently, students generally could mention the place and list one or two activities they enjoyed. To add depth to the conversation, students could perhaps describe the place, elaborate on rather than list their favourite activities, describe how they felt being there and why, compare this place with other travelling destinations, and sum up this mini answer with a conclusion
* practise answering a range of questions to be able to advance the conversation. Students should think of possible topics and subtopics that could be part of the conversation and should practise regularly to develop the ability to maintain a conversation, and also to bring interesting examples or information to support opinions and ideas
* build confidence through practising interactions in the language assessed
* practise using more complex sentence structures and syntax
* practise using repair strategies to advance the conversation when needed. Students must be prepared to respond spontaneously to unexpected questions. When asked about a topic they are less familiar with, students should be prepared to use some general phrases to move the conversation forward. Examples of such phrases could be: ‘I don’t remember many details about that trip, but I think …’ (Nu-mi amintesc multe detalii despre acea călătorie, dar cred …)
* revise grammar. Most frequent errors were disagreement between masculine/feminine nouns and adjectives, for example using o pisică mic instead of o pisică mică (a small cat), primul ligă instead of prima ligă (first league); incorrect use of indefinite articles, for example using o câine instead of un câine (a dog); and incorrect verb conjugation, for example am trebuit instead of mi-a trebuit (I needed), să împărțesc instead of să împart (to divide or share)
* build vocabulary specific to the student’s personal world
* practise pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. There are multiple learning resources such as online dictionaries and grammar books that students can access to support them with studying Romanian. In addition, students should practise listening to the Romanian language spoken spontaneously, in a natural manner, on a different range of topics. Students therefore should listen to authentic Romanian media channels, radio, television and podcasts to develop their listening skills. Furthermore, students should engage regularly in real-life conversations with members of the Romanian community, to practice spoken interactions with different types of interlocutors on a wide variety of topics.

Section 2: Discussion

What students did well

In 2023 students:

* clearly introduced the focus of the subtopic chosen for their detailed study in less than one minute, alerting assessors to any objects brought to support the discussion of the subtopic. All students presented their subtopic and made reference to texts studied. Some students chose to bring images while others chose to bring authentic objects directly related to the subtopic
* demonstrated in-depth knowledge of their subtopic. Students who chose to talk about historical or contemporary personalities, such as Queen Mary of Romania, Vlad Țepeș/Vlad the Impaler or Gheorghe Hagi, covered a wide range of information. Their discussion started with references to the childhood of their chosen personality and how those early years influenced their personality. Students who scored highly elaborated on a variety of historical, social or cultural aspects that were representative at the time and to which their chosen personality contributed
* used the image to support the discussion on the subtopic. For example, a student chose as a subtopic Romania under Communism and the Romanian Revolution of 1989, and brought as support object a Romanian flag that was used in the revolution, explaining that the flag had motivated the student to learn more about these historical events
* engaged in a discussion using relevant information, ideas and opinions
* clarified, elaborated on and defended opinions and ideas. For example one student explained what role Queen Mary of Romania played at the Paris Peace Conference with regards to the recognition of the Romanian borders in 1919, and presented a personal opinion on the significance of this event
* communicated effectively with assessors throughout the discussion. For example, when students were asked to clarify certain aspects of their subtopic that were not detailed in their resources, some students used adequate repair strategies such as: ‘Nu am foarte multe informații despre acest subiect, dar pot să vă dau mai multe detalii despre …’ (I don’t have a lot of information about this topic, but I can give you more details about …)
* used appropriate vocabulary. Some students used certain phrases to communicate information factually and also figuratively. For example, students spoke about Vlad the Impaler who executed criminals by impaling them (students used the Romanian expression Vlad i-a tras în țeapă (Vlad impaled them). Students who scored highly used the same expression but also figuratively (slang in Romanian) when explaining how Vlad won battles strategically by tricking his enemies: Vlad le-a tras țeapă (Vlad tricked them).
* used appropriate grammar and sentence structures
* used appropriate expression, including pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

Areas for improvement

Students should:

* avoid listing facts without expressing a point of view, or presenting general knowledge as research. Some students simply narrated important events from the lives of personalities they chose as subtopic of the discussion without explaining how these events support a particular argument or the subtopic overall
* convey information learnt from sources but also express an opinion with an original perspective on the subtopic. Students who chose a personality for their subtopic could present, as a conclusion, their views on how their chosen personality is a role model for youth in general, or for them in particular
* revise grammar. Students are advised to use a wide variety of tenses and grammatical structures in the discussion rather than rely on simple present/past and coordinated sentences. Students could, for example, use conditional subordinates and tenses when expressing personal opinions: Dacă Vlad Țepeș ar fi avut o alianță cu Moldova … (Had Vlad the Impaler had an alliance with Moldova …). Common grammatical errors included the incorrect use of subjunctives să conformă instead of să se conformeze (to conform with), să ajutat instead of să ajute (to help), să merge instead of să meargă (to go), să iubește instead of să iubească (to love); disagreement between nouns and adjectives, for example, țară puternici instead of țară puternică (strong country), țară totalitar instead of țară totalitară (totalitarian country); incorrect use of plural of nouns, such as limbe instead of limbi (languages); and incorrect use of indefinite articles, e.g. un barcă instead of o barcă (a boat)
* build vocabulary specific to the subtopic selected for the detailed study. Students should consult materials produced by Romanian native speakers. If reading/listening to information in English, students should build a vocabulary bank in Romanian for this, so they can use it in the discussion
* practise pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. Students should ensure they do not ‘adapt’ English words to Romanian: they should use a dictionary to learn the correct pronunciation and stress of words, and how to use words in the correct context, for example the plural or tense forms of a new word.