2022 VCE Russian oral external assessment report

General comments

Students were assessed on their knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination had two sections – a conversation of approximately seven minutes, during which students conversed with the assessors about their personal world, and a discussion of approximately eight minutes.

In both sections, students were assessed in these areas:

* communication (the capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively)
* content (relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas in the conversation and their capacity to present information, ideas and opinions on their chosen subtopic in the discussion)
* language (the accuracy of their vocabulary and grammar, the range and appropriateness of their vocabulary and grammar, and the clarity of their expression).

Students who engaged in higher-scoring conversations and discussions:

* demonstrated an excellent level of understanding by responding readily and confidently, used highly effective repair strategies, and carried conversation forward with spontaneity
* presented an excellent range of information, opinions and ideas clearly and logically with highly relevant responses, were able to clarify, elaborate on and defend opinions and ideas very effectively, and demonstrated excellent preparation for the conversation and of their subtopic
* used sophisticated vocabulary and structures accurately and appropriately, and were usually able to self-correct
* used an excellent range of vocabulary, structures and expressions, and consistently used highly appropriate style and register
* had excellent pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

In 2022 most students demonstrated very thorough preparation and scored highly in both sections.

Section 1 – Conversation

Assessors engaged with each student in a general conversation about the student’s personal world, for example, school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations. Students are expected to prepare a range of interesting and engaging ideas, so that they can interact with assessors in an engaging and spontaneous conversation.

Communication

Students showed the ability to interact effectively with assessors, using repair-strategy phrases such as ‘Could you repeat your question, please?’, ‘You probably know that … ’ and ‘You may not agree with me but I think … ’ where necessary.

Conversations that did not score well included short, factual answers, often requiring assessors’ support or prompting to elicit greater detail. During the oral examination, students are expected to advance the conversation flow spontaneously and without additional support. Students should, therefore, be prepared to extrapolate on subtopics, for example by commencing with facts about their school life and then graduating to a comparison of Australian and Russian systems of education or the problems that young people experience in schools; or starting by talking about their favourite book and then describing the main character and how they influenced the student. Although rehearsed responses are easily identified, preparation in relevant areas is encouraged. Students will then be able to navigate to their strengths or areas of familiarity, where they can confidently elaborate on their responses by providing opinions, comparisons and examples.

It should be noted that assessors may interrupt students to ask questions during either section of the examination. It is a normal practice that aims to elicit unrehearsed language. Assessors may also repeat or rephrase their questions.

Students are reminded that they must be prepared to use language spontaneously in unrehearsed situations. 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 have never thought about this question but I can say that …’ or ‘I am not sure how to answer this question, but I know …’.

Content

Students demonstrated a capacity to present a range of information, ideas and opinions when talking about their personal world. They were able to elaborate and reflect on ideas in different subtopics of the conversation such as Russian traditions in family life, friendship and education, and compare these ideas with those in Australia. They were able to support their opinions by giving interesting examples from their own life or referringto a Russian proverb. They could describe their favourite books and movies and reflecton their thoughts about future professions and problems facing young people in the modern world. Students who scored highly showed the capacity to elaborate and analyse, answering such questions as, ‘What is the difference between laziness and procrastination?’, ‘Is figure skating a sport or an art?’; and to think creatively, responding to ‘What would you do if … ? / What would happen if … ? / What would you tell if … ?’.

Language

The conversations that scored highly demonstrated sophisticated sentence structures, a broad range of vocabulary and accurate grammar. Among strong points this year there was usage of sophisticated vocabulary and structures such as мои предпочтения (my preferences) and будучи еще юной (being so young) and expressions such as в здоровом теле здоровый дух (there is a healthy mind in a healthy spirit), and the ability to structure the answer using linking words such as прежде всего (first of all), далее (furthermore), кроме того (besides) and безусловно (undoubtedly).

Responses that did not score highly were often restricted to simple sentence structures with a limited range of vocabulary and expression.

Common errors included:

* calques: *изучаю физики* instead of изучаю физику (study physics); *делаю предметы в школе* instead of изучаю предметы в школе (do subjects at school)
* structures: *я смотрела ее танцевать* instead of я смотрела, как она танцует (I saw her dancing)
* anglicisms: *паблика* instead of общество (public/society); *с лимитами* instead of с ограничениями (with limits); *поехать в сити* instead of поехать в центр города (to go to the city); *важная контрибьюция* instead of важный вклад (important contribution)
* word formation: *парадоксный* instead of парадоксальный (paradoxical); *создавание* instead of создание (creation); *смотрение кино* instead of просмотр кино (watching movies); *ностальгильные чувства* instead of ностальгические чувства (nostalgic feelings)
* wrong choice of vocabulary: *самоуверенный* instead of уверенный в себе (self-confident); *с детских времен* instead of с детских лет (since childhood); *мне пришло в идею* instead of мне пришло в голову (it came to my head)
* verbal agreement: *учить детям сказки* instead of учить детей сказкам (to teach fairy tales to kids); *интересоваться с языком* instead of интересоваться языком (to be interested in a language); *говорить по-японскому* instead of говорить по-японски (to speak Japanese)
* verbs of motion: *начал идти в спортзал* instead of начал ходить в спортзал (started to attend the gym); *иногда еду* instead of иногда иду (sometimes I go)
* noun and adjective declination: *в маленьком квартире* instead of в маленькой квартире (in a small apartment); *после два года* instead of после двух лет (after two years).

Section 2 – Discussion

Each student gave a one-minute introduction of their subtopic to their assessor, who then engaged the student in a discussion exploring their subtopic. Students also provided assessors with any objects, such as photographs, maps or diagrams, brought to support the discussion. The discussion was an opportunity to explore aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Russian is spoken.

Communication

Overall, students did well in terms of capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively. They were able to maintain contact with the assessors using such phrases as: Возможно, вы согласитесь, что ... (You will probably agree that …); Как вы знаете ... (As you know …); Существует такое мнение, что .... (There is an opinion that …); Это очень интересный вопрос (This is a very interesting question).

Areas for improvements: some students were not consistent in using forms of personal pronouns Вы (you;formal) and Ты (you; informal) while addressing the assessors.

Content

It is highly recommended that the students use resources in preparation for the subtopic. These can be different types of texts including articles, interviews, blogs, movies or literature. It is very important that materials for the detailed study are selected carefully so that students are exposed to a variety of opinions about the selected subtopic. The materials should be in Russian so that students can use key vocabulary related to their subtopic. To score highly, students are expected to analyse the information they studied and make links between the texts to support, expand on and explore opinions and ideas on the subtopic.

The choice of subtopic is very important. The subtopic title should include a prompt for discussion and not just a statement of a historical event, a famous figure or a specific food. For example, Являются ли современные компьютерные игры искусством (Can modern computer games be an art) is a prompt for discussion, but Современные компьютерные игры (Modern computer games) is just a statement.

Successful subtopics chosen by students this year included, but were not limited to, controversial Russian public figures (current or past), historical events, musical traditions of a certain folk of Russia, technology and art. For example, Владимир Красно Солнышко – тиран или реформатор (Vladimir Krasno Solnyshko – tyrant or reformer).

Giving examples from the range of texts used in their research as well as supporting their answers with visual materials helped students to elaborate and engage in a deeper discussion.

Some subtopics, such as Моя первая рыбалка (My first fishing trip) and Русские блины (Russian pancakes), were too narrow and not conducive to discussion, so did not provide an opportunity for students to elaborate on ideas and opinions.

Language

In the discussion section of the examination, students generally used a broader range of vocabulary and more complicated sentence structures, for example:

* expressions: смотреть через призму времен (to look through a prism of time)
* participles: Человек, интересующийся историей (a person interested in history)
* constructions with adverbial participle: Изучив данные источники, я пришёл к выводу (having studied those resources I came to the conclusion …).

Common lexical and grammatical errors included:

* anglicisms: *сделали ресёч* instead of провели исследование (conducted a research),
* word choice: *играть значение* instead of иметь значение (to matter); *иметь роль* instead of играть роль (to play a role); *физикальный ущерб* instead of физический ущерб (physical damage)
* inappropriate style: using informal form ты (you) to assessors; using low-colloquial words such as шибко, ихний, сейчашний instead of очень, их, современный (very, their, modern)
* cases endings: *узнали о свой народ* instead of узнали о своём народе (they learned about their folk); *разница между фильмов* instead of разница между фильмами (the difference between movies); *помочь художников* instead of помочь художникам (to help painters)
* verbal government: *тема, на которую я буду разговаривать* instead of тема, о которой я буду говорить (the topic I am going to talk about); *касается ко всем языкам* instead of касается всех языков (applies to all the languages).

In general, clarity of expression, including pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo, was the strong point in students’ discussions.

More information

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