2024 Russian oral external assessment report

Refer to the relevant [study design](https://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.

Section 1: Conversation

What students did well

In 2024, students:

* engaged in a general conversation about their personal world, such as their school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations. Most students shared intriguing and compelling accounts of their personal worlds, encompassing hobbies, future occupations or decision-making processes (if undecided), favourite subjects, inspiring teachers, family, friends and pets
* provided a range of relevant information, ideas and opinions with an appropriate level of depth. High-scoring examples include:
* a personal testimony about a teacher who inspired students and used innovative teaching methods
* personal anecdotes about assisting an adult interested in learning Russian, which were shared creatively and added a layer of authenticity to the narrative
* clarified, elaborated on and defended their ideas and opinions. Students who scored highly
* expressed well-reasoned opinions on the potential impacts of AI, digital communication with friends or social media, drawing on complex ideas

vividly described their feelings while on holiday with their family, expressing warmth and appreciation for quality time spent with their parents and dogs (the latter of whom they considered family members) or articulated how much they valued their discussions about world history with family members, describing the lengths they went to in defending their opinions

* demonstrated an excellent level of understanding by responding readily, communicating confidently and carrying the conversation forward with spontaneity. For example, students showed their ability to think aloud and deviate from rehearsed answers. One student reflected, 'Why do I want to be a teacher? Good question. Probably because I have worked in a community centre and enjoyed helping others’
* responded confidently and were able to advance the conversation, including through the use of appropriate repair strategies as needed, for example, asking for clarification ( 'Could you please repeat the question?') or confirming their understanding ( 'You want to hear my opinion, is this right?'). Additionally, students effectively used fillers to gain time, such as 'Let’s see' or 'That’s an interesting question; let me think about it for a second'
* used appropriate vocabulary. High-scoring examples include
* using expressive language and professional terminology to describe artwork, demonstrating their ability to select and use terms that are specific and relevant to the subject matter
* incorporating sophisticated vocabulary to vividly describe their interests, emotions and experiences. This included the use of idiomatic expressions such as лезть на стену (to go up the wall – used to describe frustration) and descriptive adjectives like сногсшибательный (mind-blowing), потрясающий (awesome) and невероятный (unbelievable)
* used appropriate expression, including pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. Emotive language and intonation were used appropriately by most students. They effectively used expressive language to convey emotions and demonstrated an ability to modulate their voices, varying their volume to emphasise key points.

Areas for improvement

In preparation for the examination, students could:

* prepare for the conversation by ensuring adequate relevance, depth and range of information, ideas and opinions. It is beneficial for students to identify and reflect on various aspects of their personal world, such as hobbies, aspirations, family life, friendships, educational experiences and any significant life events or challenges. Students should go beyond surface-level details by offering deep insights into how their experiences have shaped their beliefs, values and aspirations. For example, rather than merely mentioning a hobby, they could describe how it challenges them, what skills it has helped them develop and why it is meaningful to them. When describing a pet, students could add details about its personality, discuss their emotional bond with the pet, reflect on how caring for the pet has influenced their personal growth, share memorable anecdotes and possibly explore the pet’s role in the family or community (for example, as a guide dog)
* practise answering a range of questions to be able to advance the conversation. Students should be ready to adapt their conversation based on the assessor’s interest or follow-up questions. This will show that they are not just reciting prepared material but are genuinely engaging in the conversation. For example, if an assessor shows a particular interest in a student's experiences as a volunteer, the student could expand on specific projects and their personal impact; or when speaking about their part-time job, students might be asked about their study–work balance and how they set priorities
* build confidence through practising interactions in Russian. When preparing for the examination, students would benefit from engaging in conversations with various Russian-speaking people beyond the school setting, such as family, friends or relatives, and ask them to pose challenging questions beyond the typical 'when’, 'why' and 'how' inquiries to include hypothetical scenarios like 'What would you do if ...?', 'Imagine if ...' and 'What would you say to someone who has a different opinion about …?’
* practise using more complex sentence structures and syntax. Students are encouraged to move beyond one- or two-word answers and instead elaborate on the subject matter, demonstrating their ability to construct complex sentences where appropriate. Even a simple response like *'*Idon't know'can be replaced with a more sophisticated alternative like 'If you hadn't asked, I would never have looked at this from that angle. I will definitely think about it.' Students often experienced difficulties with the following structures:
* subjunctive mood, such as Если бы у меня было время, я пойду на спорт instead of Если бы у меня было время, я бы начал заниматься спортом (If I had time, I would start doing sports)
* adverbial participle phrases, such as Мне было скучно, изучая химию instead of Мне было скучно изучать химию/ когда я изучал химию (I was bored studying chemistry / when I was studying chemistry)
* relative clauses with the pronoun который (which), such as ... учатся у людей, которых всё делают сами instead of ... учатся у людей, которые всё делают сами (... learn from people who do everything themselves)
* using calques from English structures, such as Это мне говорит, что ... instead of Это мне говорит о том, что ... (This tells me that…)
* practise using repair strategies to advance the conversation when needed. If a student doesn’t understand a question or statement, they can say, ‘Could you clarify what you mean by …?’ or ‘I'm sorry, I didn't catch that. Could you repeat the last part?’ After being presented with a particular scenario, a student might paraphrase it to confirm their understanding: ‘So, are you saying that …? Is that correct?’ When needing a moment to think, a student might use fillers to avoid long pauses, such as ‘Let me see…’, ‘Well, I think…’ or ‘That’s an interesting point/question…’
* revise grammar, particularly in the following areas:
* the use of nouns, pronouns and adjectives in different cases, for example, в большинстве школа instead of в большинстве школ (in most schools), любит колокольчиков instead of любит колокольчики (loves bluebells), с человеками instead of с людьми (with people), о многих вещей instead of о многих вещах (about many things)
* verbal governance, for example учить русским языком instead of учить русский язык (to learn the Russian language), помог меня instead of помог мне (helped me), гуляем собаку instead of гуляем с собакой (we walk the dog)
* declension of numerals, for example, в двухтысячнотретьем instead of в две тысячи третьем (in 2003), около четыреста сорок instead of около четырёхсот сорока (around 440), семья состоит из три человека instead of семья состоит из трёх человек (the family consists of three people)
* the usage of prepositions, for example, о мне instead of обо мне (about me), о успехах instead of об успехах (about progress/success), догнать до них instead of догнать их (catch up with them), хотят с нас купить instead of хотят у нас купить (want to buy from us) and слышал на новостях instead of слышал в новостях (heard on the news)
* build vocabulary specific to their personal world and their interactions with the language and culture as learners. When expressing emotions and opinions, it's important to consider the style and register appropriate for the context, (an examination), to demonstrate cultural sensitivity. For example, words and phrases such as до фига (loads of), прикольный (cool/funny), тусовка (get-together), обалдевает (blows somebody's mind), пацан(dude) and вкусняшки (yummies) may be suitable in daily colloquial Russian but should be replaced with more formal equivalents in the examination. In addition, the use of the informal 'you’, which also affects verb forms (such as подумай (think about it), смотри (look) and давай (let's)), along with casual greetings such as привет(hi) and пока (bye), is not appropriate when addressing assessors
* accurately select words appropriate for the context. Examples of word-choice errors include Спрашивают вопросы instead of задают вопросы (asking questions), женилась instead of вышла замуж (got married), любим идти на концерты instead of любим ходить на концерты (we love going to concerts), пойду в Европу instead of поеду в Европу (I will go to Europe)
* avoid using anglicisms and calques. Examples include покупать медицинуinstead ofпокупать лекарства(to buy medicine)*,* директор instead ofрежиссёр(film director),маленькие декорацииinstead ofмаленькие украшения(small decorations)*,* экземпляр instead ofпример(example)*,* играть спорт instead ofзаниматься спортом(to play sport),and мне нравится поехать ... instead ofя хотел бы поехать ...(I would like to go ...)
* practise pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. To enhance clarity of expression and avoid misunderstandings, students should focus on pronouncing words clearly (particularly words that sound similar), not swallowing word endings, following native stress patterns and avoiding English influence. Some examples of pronunciation errors include не пОнялаinstead ofне понялА (did not understand)*,* все понЯлиinstead ofвсе пОняли(everybody understood)*,* плюсЫinstead ofплЮсы(pluses)*,* боятся кровИinstead ofкрОви(afraid of blood) andюниверситетыinstead ofуниверситеты(universities).

Section 2: Discussion

What students did well

In 2024, students:

* clearly introduced the focus of their subtopic, describing the relevance of any objects they had brought to support their discussion. Students often used effective techniques to engage assessors: they presented a problem and asked rhetorical and clarifying questions to draw attention to their chosen topics. They successfully explained the reasons behind their choices, introduced supporting materials brought in to aid the discussion and described a good range of sources used. The chosen subtopics were mostly suitable for the discussion and included important historical or contemporary figures and events, as well as themes related to art, music, education, and current ecological and sociological issues. Some examples of topics that sparked interesting discussions include:
* Является ли современное искусство искусством? (Is contemporary art truly art?)
* Феминизм: Нужно ли бороться за права женщин в XXI веке? (Feminism: is it necessary to fight for women's rights in the 21st century?)
* Гендерные роли в современном мире (Gender roles in the modern world)
* Человеческая деятельность: создаем или уничтожаем? (Human activity: are we creating or destroying?)
* Быстрая мода: как она влияет на окружающую среду? (Fast fashion: how does it impact the environment?)
* Окно Овертона: миф или реальность? (The Overton Window: myth or reality?)
* Владимир Высоцкий: главный бунтарь советской эстрады (Vladimir Vysotsky: the main rebel of Soviet music)
* demonstrated in-depth knowledge of their subtopic. High-scoring discussions included a comprehensive range of information, including relevant statistics, professional opinions from various experts and multiple perspectives on the issue. They covered the historical background, current trends and potential future implications (where relevant), showing a thorough understanding of the topic and its complexities
* used an image to support the discussion on the subtopic. Photos of paintings, events and costumes, as well as graphs and diagrams, were used effectively to enhance discussions. For example, a photo of a contemporary art installation was used to engage assessors in considering its artistic merit, focusing the discussion on the definition of art
* engaged in discussions using relevant information, ideas and opinions; clarified, elaborated on and defended their opinions and ideas. In high-scoring discussions students expressed a variety of views and justified the student’s opinions with reference to examples and supporting evidence from experts and relevant data
* communicated effectively with assessors throughout the discussion. Students maintained eye contact, actively listened and responded thoughtfully to follow-up questions. They adjusted their language for clarity, self-correcting when needed, and regularly checked with assessors that they had understood the question, ensuring a smooth and engaging exchange
* used appropriate vocabulary. A significant number of students demonstrated fluent usage of specific topic-related vocabulary. For example, terms like золотое сечение (the golden ratio) were used when discussing visual harmony and balance in an architectural project, фермерские хитрости (farming tips) was used in a discussion about agriculture, and феминитивы (feminine-gendered terms) were referred to in a discussion on gendered language
* used appropriate grammar and sentence structures
* used appropriate expression, including pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. As a general observation, clear pronunciation, and appropriate intonation, stress and tempo were strengths in this section of the examination.

Areas for improvement

In preparation for the examination, students could:

* choose an appropriate subtopic to suit their ability and interests. Students should avoid topics that are too broad, too general or lack potential for discussion, as they often become narrative in nature and limit opportunities for students to demonstrate their critical thinking, express their opinions and showcase their persuasive skills. Examples of such topics include
* История русских блинов (The history of Russian pancakes)
* Традиции и обычаи: праздники (Traditions and customs: holidays)
* Интересные случаи на рыбалке (Interesting stories from fishing)
* Как курение влияет на здоровье человека (How smoking affects human health)
* ЗОЖ – Здоровый образ жизни (Healthy lifestyles)
* prepare with an appropriate number of quality sources, such as a combination of aural, visual and written texts, to explore the subtopic in sufficient depth. Relying on a single source or general knowledge for the presentation of a subtopic was insufficient, as it limited students’ ability to analyse various types of information and points of view and to compare and contrast ideas and sources (where appropriate)
* convey information learnt from sources but also express an opinion with an original perspective on the subtopic. Rehearsed answers often did not address assessors' questions, highlighting the need for students to form their own opinions and be prepared to articulate them effectively
* practise using repair strategies
* revise grammar, particularly in the following areas:
* choice of prepositions and/or endings for various cases, such as последствия к планете instead of последствия для планеты (consequences for the planet), не из-за деньги instead of не из-за денег (not because of money)
* choice and declension of numerals, such as oт обоих аварий instead of от обеих аварий (from both accidents), около двести instead of около двухсот (around two hundred)
* choice of correct verb or adverb, such as вкласть деньги instead of вложить деньги (to invest money) and тоже instead of также (as well)
* calques, such as научную работу на разные камни instead of о различных камнях / посвящённую изучению различных камней (research on various rocks), думать за себя instead of думать самостоятельно (to think for yourself/independently)
* build vocabulary specific to the subtopic selected for the detailed study. Word-choice errors were common in Section 2, including:
* пожертвие instead of пожертвование (donation)
* угладить instead of сгладить (to alleviate)
* художество instead of творчество (artistic work)
* содержать традиции instead of поддерживать традиции (to uphold/maintain traditions)
* Унизить количество жертв instead of занизить количество жертв (to under-report the number of victims)
* повысил время instead of увеличил время (increased the time)
* насильство instead of насилие (violence).