2023 VCE Spanish 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 and their interactions with the language and culture as learners. Students who performed well discussed their interactions with the Spanish language, how they learnt it and aspects of the culture they learnt through their VCE studies. They successfully incorporated various aspects of their personal world such as hobbies, activities with friends and family, school, holidays, exchange programs and future plans., demonstrating confidence while interacting with the assessors. They could also identify reasons why they chose to study Spanish and could discuss various aspects of the culture covered during their studies
* provided a range of relevant information, ideas and opinions with an appropriate depth. Students were able to extend their responses by providing details, examples and opinions related to the ideas being discussed, allowing assessors to further explore the students’ areas of interest. Some students were able to express the strong connection they had with Spanish as native speakers living in Australia, giving an in-depth perspective on what it means to them, mirroring both cultures/languages in their everyday lives
* elaborated on, clarified and defended ideas and opinions. Most students were able to elaborate and reflect on the information they provided, making interesting comments that were logically developed
* demonstrated an excellent level of understanding by responding readily and communicating confidently. High-scoring students not only maintained the conversation but advanced it with confidence and spontaneity. They had the capacity to communicate with maturity and insight, and were able to respond to assessors’ questions without hesitation. These students also had the ability to self-correct without jeopardising the flow of the conversation
* responded confidently and used appropriate repair strategies as needed. Students asked for reformulation of questions, particularly when they were faced with challenging or unusual questions from the assessors, demonstrating the ability to advance the conversation with confidence. For example: ‘*No creo haber entendido bien, ¿podría repetir?’* (I don’t think I understood it well, would you mind repeating the question?)
* used appropriate vocabulary. Students’ interactions with assessors showcased an accurate and interesting selection of appropriate vocabulary
* used appropriate grammar and sentence structures. Students who performed well in this section utilised a wide range of grammar, including hypothetical structures, present and imperfect subjunctive tenses, and tenses in the past, present and future
* demonstrated a high standard of preparation for this task. The conversations were interesting in content and had a natural flow.

Areas for improvement

In preparing for this exam, students could:

* ensure adequate preparation for the conversation with relevance, depth and range of information, ideas and opinions. Students who rushed responses or relied on what appeared to be pre-prepared material found that they could not elaborate and extend their responses relevantly due to a lack of thorough preparation. It is important that students familiarise themselves with the different aspects of the conversation by providing a range of relevant and pertinent information
* revise grammar: Students would benefit from revising gender and number agreement. It was also observed that past perfect and past imperfect were used interchangeably by some students; further practice of the difference between these tenses is recommended. Some students used regular and irregular verbs incorrectly when speaking in the past tense. They also had trouble with the use of the indicative mood when subjunctive was appropriate. This was more obvious when students were asked to elaborate on their ideas, evaluate or present opinions, meaning subordinate clauses were needed. Here are some examples of areas that needed attention:
* gender and number agreement: *mis perro es divertida* should be *Mis perros son divertidos* (My dogs are funny); and *es una festival* should be *Es un festival* (It is a festival)
* verb conjugation: *Yo gusta viajar* should be *A mí me gusta viajar* (I like to travel)
* build vocabulary specific to the student’s personal world and their interactions with the language and culture as learners. Some students needed a more extensive vocabulary to be able to express meaning correctly.

Section 2: Discussion

What students did well

In 2023, students:

* clearly introduced the focus of their subtopic, alerting assessors to the image brought to support their discussion of the subtopic. Students were able to talk clearly about their subtopic when questioned by assessors and they used the image as a tool to support their discussion
* demonstrated in-depth knowledge of their subtopic. Students performed well in this area, and they were able to demonstrate that they had researched their chosen subtopic utilising a variety of resources. A wide range of subtopics were used for the discussion, with varying success, from the prescribed theme ‘The Spanish-speaking communities’ and the prescribed theme ‘The world around us’. Students scored higher when they chose a subtopic that they were interested in and that suited their command of the Spanish language. They were able to engage actively with assessors and elaborate on their responses with interesting information, ideas and opinions. These students were able to carry the discussion forward with ease, in a confident and natural manner. Some of the subtopics presented by students included: cultural aspects of the Spanish-speaking world, migration to Australia (for example, the impact of Spanish food in Australian society), festivals (for example, La Tirana in Chile), and the environment (for example, deforestation due to cattle production in Argentina)
* used the image skilfully to support the discussion on the subtopic. Higher-scoring students chose an appropriate image, which helped them steer the conversation to the areas they wanted to discuss and enabled them to skilfully highlight how the image related to the subtopic
* engaged in a discussion using relevant information, ideas and opinions. Higher-scoring students articulated their ideas in a confident manner. They used clear and accurate expression with appropriate sequencing of tenses for their subtopic. Their discussion showcased knowledge of their subtopic via the selection of appropriate and accurate vocabulary
* clarified, elaborated on and defended opinions and ideas. Higher-scoring students were able to use other sources studied to elaborate and clarify in-depth their chosen subtopic. Their opinions were well presented and supported by evidence relevant to their discussion
* communicated effectively with assessors throughout the discussion, including through the use of repair strategies. Students were confident in asking assessors for clarification when presented with a question they thought was unclear. They were quick at using repair strategies, such as rephrasing a sentence to make sure their point and information was clearly understood
* used appropriate vocabulary. Students who did well in their discussion showcased knowledge of their topic via the selection of appropriate and accurate vocabulary
* used appropriate grammar and sentence structures. Higher-scoring students could articulate their ideas in a confident manner. They used clear and accurate expression with appropriate sequencing of tenses for their subtopic
* used appropriate expression, including pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

Areas for improvement

In preparing for this exam, students could:

* choose an appropriate subtopic to suit ability and interests and an image that supports discussion about the selected subtopic. Some students presented a narrow discussion on their subtopic as they only focused on one aspect. For example, focusing only on the story of ‘La Tomatina’ for the subtopic ‘Festivals’ is not sufficient to explore the subtopic in depth. Some students were not able to go beyond this to explore the contributions of this particular festival to the Spanish culture or people. The subtopic must be explored in depth and students need to develop the ability to substantiate opinions and ideas
* express a point of view when asked; for example, when asked about climate change students should not just list facts about the causes of climate change without expressing their own viewpoint or concerns. Some students, because they weren’t invested in their chosen subtopic, were unable to express their opinion on it, or demonstrate a sense of personal responsibility and/or a call to action, making the response less engaging and relatable
* convey information learnt from sources but also express an opinion with an original perspective on the subtopic. Students performed best when researching a topic utilising a variety of resources, rather than relying mostly on personal experience or the image. When students expand their investigation to other resources, they are able not only to form opinion but express themselves with confidence and fluidity
* use the image to support the discussion on the subtopic. Students need to bear in mind that the image is meant to support the discussion on the subtopic, and not be the main area of focus
* avoid relying on what may appear to be pre-learned responses when they cannot respond with spontaneity to address an assessor’s question. Students should avoid long introductions that include a multitude of facts, and instead introduce the subtopic with interesting information and ideas, and engage with assessors to go deeper into the topic
* revise grammar. The correct use of the subjunctive is very important when used to express an opinion or elaborate on an issue. Some students consistently used the subjunctive incorrectly
* practise describing the relevance of the image to the subtopic. Some students, in their introduction, immediately described the image without introducing clearly the context for the chosen image. Students need to keep in mind that it is the quality of the discussion on the subtopic, not the chosen image, that is assessed. Sometimes the image chosen did not present enough complexity to enable students to use it to enrich the discussion on the subtopic. The image should support ideas raised in the discussion rather than be the only source used for their discussion.