

# 2021 VCE Bosnian oral external assessment report

## General comments

The Bosnian oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination has two sections – a conversation of approximately 7 minutes, during which students converse with the assessors about their personal world, and a discussion of approximately 8 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 topic, 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, 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 conversation with the assessors about things that interest them.

Some students presented their personal world in a very inspiring way, providing interesting details and showing great passion in pursuing their interests or emotions when talking about their own family. The conversation was lively and occasionally spontaneous.

Conversations that scored highly presented a good range of relevant information and advanced well. These students listened carefully to the questions posed by the assessors and were able to elaborate by giving appropriate examples, and using sophisticated vocabulary and structures, such as modal constructions. However, some students lacked depth, presenting a limited range of information in their answers.

Students of all levels demonstrated very good pronunciation, intonation and stress.

## Section 2 – Discussion

Following the conversation, the student indicates to the assessors the subtopic chosen for detailed study and, in no more than one minute, briefly introduces the focus of their subtopic, alerting assessors to any objects brought to support the discussion. Suitable objects include photographs, maps or diagrams, and should include very little or no 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 standard Bosnian language and culture of communities in which Bosnian is spoken, with the student being expected to make reference to the texts studied.

The choice of subtopic for the detailed study is very important. It should be an engaging topic that motivates students 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 Bosnian 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 speaking the standard Bosnian language.

Students who had prepared well were able to provide, explain and expand on their opinions, moving the discussion forward confidently. They offered extra information and insights to clarify or elaborate on their ideas and opinions and had the vocabulary to do this effectively.

Some students did not prepare their subtopic sufficiently and were unable to expand their answers beyond basic vocabulary and structures in response to questions from the assessors. Some used rote-learned answers or anglicisms such as *nemam memorija* instead of *ne sjećam se* (I do not recall).

Discussions that scored highly used a broad range of vocabulary, such as *pun neizvjesnosti* (full of uncertainty); expressed opinions, such as *ko nije posjetio samostan nije bio u Fojnici* (whoever did not visit the monastery was not in Fojnica); and showed competence in structuring sentences accurately and appropriately.

Students are reminded that practising how to use pronouns, especially enclitics and cases, will help with the accuracy of vocabulary and grammar.