



2012

Languages: Greek GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral examination assesses students' ability to communicate in Greek. It is divided into two parts: a seven-minute Conversation and an eight-minute Discussion that comprises a one-minute introduction and a seven-minute discussion of the Detailed Study.

It is important that students are familiar with both the specific requirements of this task and the language that is associated with it, as the examination is an exchange and not a simple question-and-answer session. The assessment for both the Conversation and Discussion parts of the examination is divided into the same three sections: communication, content and language. These sections were assessed according to the following criteria.

Communication

- capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively
- clarity of expression

Content

- relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

Language

- accuracy of vocabulary and grammar
- range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Although the criteria are similar, they assess different skills, allowing students to express themselves in different ways. More details on the criteria can be found on the VCAA website.

The setting of the examination is formal. When preparing students, teachers should simulate the oral examination in class and, where possible, should include two assessors so that students become more familiar with the set-up and expectations of the examination. Teachers should highlight to students the need to use appropriate language and to avoid the use of colloquial terms. Students should use the polite form (second person plural) when addressing one or both assessors and make eye contact with them. This year, it was observed that a small number of students looked down in an effort to recall information they had learned.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Communication

The majority of students were well prepared and communicated effectively with assessors for seven minutes. They maintained the exchange and advanced it with some spontaneity, and also expanded effectively on aspects of their personal world. They needed minimal support and had good repair strategies. Some students need to practise reflecting on their own experience as well as developing good repair strategies.

Most students listened carefully to the questions that were asked and focused on giving clear responses that displayed the correct pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. However, students should pay greater attention to intonation when they use new and unfamiliar vocabulary.

Content

Most students were readily able to answer questions about their personal world, including their home life, family and friends, school, interests and aspirations. They were able to go beyond simple responses and build on the assessors' comments. They discussed more than one topic and developed more than one aspect with some breadth and depth. They elaborated on their statements by giving reasons, examples and evidence, presenting an excellent range of information, opinions and ideas.



Some students needed to be prompted by assessors and were not able to reflect on their own experiences. These students often did not have good repair strategies. Students should avoid lengthy pauses, the use of anglicisms and rote-learned material.

It should be noted that assessors will use what students say as prompts for further conversation. For example, if a student says they went to Greece for a holiday, they should be prepared to discuss it by providing details and explaining their impressions of their trip, and not just give a list of the places that they visited. Students are reminded that if they do not understand the question, they should ask for clarification.

Teachers need to ensure that all students prepare adequately for the conversation. Students may believe that they do not need to prepare because they have to converse on areas that are familiar to them. Assessors observed that a number of students this year were less prepared for the Conversation than the Discussion.

Language

Students controlled simple grammatical structures well. However, their performance in relation to this criterion continues to be the weakest. The more able students displayed an excellent range of vocabulary and used grammatical structures accurately, whereas weaker students had a more limited vocabulary.

As this part of the examination is on familiar topics, students should have a good knowledge of the vocabulary that they will need. For example, some students did not know the Greek form of the word for the career they want to pursue and said *θέλω να γίνω νοσοκομείο* instead of *νοσοκόμα*. The use of *δάσκαλος* instead of *καθηγητής* remains a common error even though students are likely to use the word in this part of the examination.

Some common problems with grammatical and syntactical structures that need to be addressed by teachers are

- errors with the common verbs *πρέπει, χρειάζομαι, προσπαθώ, μαθαίνω, διαβάζω* and *με αρέσει*, especially the active and passive voices
- incorrect stress on words (*τις φιλές μου*)
- lack of agreement between article and gender (*ένα αδελφή, μου αρέσουν τις γλώσσες*)
- lack of agreement between article and noun ending, especially with the plural form of nouns and adjectives (*πολλά αθλητές*)
- lack of agreement between nouns and adjectives (*ελληνική νησί*)
- incorrect use of the nominative case (*είδα ο μπαμπάς*) or of the genitive case (*της φίλων μου*)
- inability to distinguish between continuing past and simple past tense (*έτρεχα* instead of *έτρεξα*)
- incorrect use of words (*εκ μέρων* instead of *εκ μέρους*)
- use of English words (*πήγα holidays*) and anglicisms (*ο μπόσης μου*)
- literally translating words from English to Greek where the meaning is lost in Greek (*από της μαμάς μου της δουλειάς, δεν πάντα βλέπεις*).

Students will develop an enriched vocabulary if, where possible, they speak Greek outside of school, listen to Greek radio, watch Greek television programs and listen to well-modelled Greek from adult native speakers.

Section 2 – Discussion

Communication

Teachers and students should note that, 'Following the Conversation the student will indicate to the assessor(s) the sub-topic chosen for detailed study and, in no more than one minute, briefly introduce the main focus of their sub-topic, alerting assessors to any objects brought to the support the discussion' (*VCE Greek Study Design*, page 31).

Most students used this time well, stating the focus of the sub-topic, and highlighting the issues and perspectives that they wanted to explore, steering assessors towards areas that they could discuss with confidence. Some students simply named their topic and then began retelling the content of the texts studied, which they had pre-learned, and were surprised when the assessors interrupted them politely for the discussion to begin.

The majority of students spoke confidently during the seven-minute discussion, demonstrating a sound knowledge and appreciation of their chosen sub-topic. They were skilled in expressing and elaborating on ideas and opinions, supporting them with appropriate evidence from the specific texts studied. They used a wide range of vocabulary and complex sentence structures, and had a high degree of interaction with the assessors. They were able to advance the discussion with interesting comments and, at times, were even able to lead the discussion.



A few students brought visual material to support their chosen sub-topic. This was a useful prompt, especially for weaker students, enabling a stimulating discussion and expression of worthwhile ideas and opinions. Only a few students displayed a limited ability to advance the discussion with their own opinions on the sub-topic. These students were able to present only a satisfactory range of information.

The criterion 'clarity of expression' was addressed well by most students. Even the weaker students displayed good pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo in this part of the oral examination.

Content

Students are expected to have dedicated 15 hours of class time to the detailed study and to have been exposed to a variety of resources that they could draw from during the Discussion.

It was apparent this year that many students had enjoyed their detailed study as they were able to speak enthusiastically about their sub-topic. Only a small number of students showed little active interest in their chosen sub-topic and relied on rote-learned material that retold the content of the texts studied. These students needed a great deal of support from assessors as they were not able to respond to questions that they had not anticipated.

Sub-topics

Good sub-topics 'should enable the student to explore and compare aspects of the language and culture of the Greek-speaking community through a range of oral and written texts in Greek related to the selected sub-topic' (*VCE Greek Study Design*, page 24).

Sub-topics should reflect the interests of students and cater effectively for their linguistic ability. While some sub-topics are ideal for competent students as they enable them to display an excellent knowledge of the content, and to elaborate on ideas and opinions with reasons, examples and evidence, the same sub-topics can be too difficult and challenging for weaker students.

While some teachers continue to recommend the same sub-topics, others had approached them differently this year. For example, the sub-topic of 'friendship' was linked to that of the effects of technology on teenage relationships.

Resources

The choice of resources is very important as they should cater for students' language abilities and interests. When planning the detailed study, teachers should attempt to incorporate resources of different standards that cater for the abilities of students in their class, even if they choose the same sub-topic for all students. Students are more likely to engage actively with assessors if they understand the resources. Interviews, articles, short stories, films, poems, songs, pictures etc. can all be used successfully. However, they need to contain material of sufficient depth to allow a discussion on several aspects of the topic, and provide students with the opportunity to express ideas and opinions, and not merely give information.

It should be noted that there is little benefit in studying a large number of texts superficially. Students then tend to merely list them in the Discussion, and do not support and elaborate on the information, ideas and opinions with reasons, examples, evidence and/or new ideas.

When preparing for the oral examination, students may find it useful to make notes, summarising the resources and contrasting the themes/issues raised in them. They should also develop their own opinions on the texts and be prepared to give some original input that they can justify, rather than just repeat ideas from texts or discuss the topic broadly. Students should also practise a wide range of impromptu answers to a variety of likely and less likely questions, as it will help them improve their performance.

Language

Students should have mastered the specific vocabulary and syntactical structures that are associated with their chosen sub-topic. This year, most students used a very good range of vocabulary and the correct grammatical structures. However, at times, when the sub-topics were above the linguistic ability of some students, assessors noted that these students were unable to deal with the variety of questions asked as they had not mastered the range of vocabulary that was required to carry the discussion forward. These students were also unable to demonstrate good repair strategies when in difficulty.

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As in the Conversation section, student performance relating to this criterion was weakest, with the following similar types of grammatical and syntactical errors.

- mistakes in expression (*το αρέσω το έργο αυτό*)
- incorrect genders (*το αντίσταση*)
- incorrect use of adjectives, such as *διάφορες* and *διάφορα*
- lack of agreement between nouns and adjectives (*καλή σχέσεις*)