



2013 Languages: Greek GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students performed well in the 2013 Greek oral examination. It was evident that most students had prepared thoroughly and were familiar with the specific requirements of the examination and the language associated with it.

The examination was divided into two parts: a seven-minute Conversation and an eight-minute Discussion, which comprised a one-minute introduction and a seven-minute discussion of the Detailed Study. In both the Conversation and the Discussion sections of the examination, students were assessed according to the following criteria.

- capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively
- relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas
- accuracy of vocabulary and grammar
- range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar
- clarity of expression

Detailed descriptions of each criterion can be found in the *VCE Languages – Second Language Assessment Handbook 2005–2016*, available on the VCAA website. Although the criteria appear to be similar in the Conversation and Discussion sections, they assess different skills, allowing students to express themselves in different ways.

Students are reminded that the examination is an exchange, not a simple question-and-answer session, and that the setting is formal. When preparing students, teachers should simulate the oral examination and, where possible, should include two assessors so that students become more familiar with the set-up and expectations of the exam. The need to use appropriate language and avoid colloquial terms should be highlighted for students. Students should use the polite form (second person plural) when addressing assessors and should ensure that they make eye contact with them.

Teachers and students should refer to the *VCE Exams Navigator*, which clearly states what can be brought to the oral examination. Objects containing minimal language such as photographs, diagrams and maps may be brought to support the Discussion. Notes and cue cards are not permitted. This year, a number of students brought supporting material that contained writing in English. In addition, students should be advised that chewing gum during the oral examination is inappropriate as it may affect the student's clarity of expression.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

During the seven-minute Conversation, most students maintained and advanced the exchange with some spontaneity and expanded effectively on aspects of their personal world. They communicated well with assessors, needed minimal support and had good repair strategies. Weaker students did not have good repair strategies and were not able to reflect on their own experiences. These students needed to be prompted by assessors as they were not able to advance the conversation.

It was clear that the majority of students had prepared well and practised effectively for questions about their personal worlds, including areas such as home life, family and friends, school, interests and future aspirations. 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.

Weaker students presented a limited range of information and had difficulty clarifying or elaborating on opinions and ideas. Students who do not understand a question should ask for clarification rather than pause for long periods. They should not resort to rote-learned material when in difficulty and should attempt to interact with assessors. It is important that students prepare adequately for the conversation, as some students seemed to believe that they could respond effectively in this section without preparation as they are required to converse on familiar areas.

All students controlled simple grammatical structures well. However, their performance was weak in language criterion 3 – accuracy of vocabulary and grammar, and criterion 4 – range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar. Students should have a good knowledge of the vocabulary they will need as this part of the examination is on familiar topics. However, some students could not list all the subjects that they were studying or the career path they wanted to follow.



While able students displayed an excellent range of vocabulary and used grammatical structures accurately, weaker students had a more limited vocabulary and at times relied on anglicisms (*το κάρο, το σίτι*) or used English words (*πήγα holidays*) to carry the conversation forward.

Common problems with grammatical and syntactical structures that need to be addressed include

- incorrect stress of words (*τις Αυστραλες φίλες, διάσπορα, άνθρωποι*)
- lack of agreement between article and noun (*ένα ώρα, ένα οικογένεια, τα αριθμοί, την Σάββατο, το δουλειά μου*)
- lack of agreement between nouns and adjectives, especially with the plural form (*πολλά μαθητές, μερικές παιδιά*)
- errors with the common verbs *πρέπει, χρειάζομαι, προσπαθώ, μαθαίνω, διαβάζω* and *μου αρέσει*, especially the active and passive voices
- incorrect use of the nominative case (*οι συγγραφές*)
- incorrect use of the genitive case (*της συμμαθητών μου*)
- inability to distinguish between continuing past and simple past tense, *έπαιζα* instead of *έπαιξα*
- incorrect syntactical structures at times due to translating expressions from English (*δεν πάντα πέζεις ποδόσφαιρο, με αρέσει τη Σαντορίνη*)
- confusing words that sounded similar (*πολιτική* with *πολιτισμός*).

Students should endeavour to speak Greek outside the classroom when possible, listen to Greek radio programs and watch Greek television. Listening to well-modelled Greek spoken by adult native speakers may also have a very positive effect on students' language development.

Criterion 5 – clarity of expression was addressed well. Most students listened carefully to the questions asked and focused on giving clear responses that displayed correct pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

Section 2 – Discussion

Most students used the one-minute introduction very effectively to indicate the sub-topic chosen for the Detailed Study and to briefly introduce the main focus, alerting assessors to objects brought to the support the discussion. Most students highlighted the issues and perspectives they wanted to explore, steering assessors towards areas they could discuss with confidence. However, some students simply named their topic and began retelling the content of the texts studied. These students were surprised when the assessors interrupted them. Students must allow for a dialogue to take place between them and the assessors.

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 texts studied. They were able to anticipate questions and provide assessors with the opportunity to ask questions in order to develop an effective discussion. At times they were able to advance the exchange with interesting comments, and some were able to lead the discussion.

Few students brought visual material to support the chosen sub-topic. However, visual material proved to be a useful prompt, especially for weaker students, enabling a stimulating discussion and the expression of worthwhile ideas and opinions. Only a few students needed support and displayed a limited ability to advance the discussion with opinions on the sub-topic. These students used basic repair strategies and were only able to present a basic range of information.

It was evident that many students had enjoyed their Detailed Study as they were able to speak enthusiastically about their sub-topic. It was clear that in the 15 hours of class time devoted to the Detailed Study they had been exposed to a variety of resources from which they could draw in the discussion. They were able to support and elaborate on information, ideas and opinions with reasons, examples, evidence and/or new ideas.

Only a small number of students showed little active interest in their chosen sub-topic, relied on rote-learned material or presented irrelevant information. These students needed a great deal of support from assessors as they were not able to defend opinions and ideas or respond to questions they had not anticipated.

The choice of sub-topics and resources is very important and should cater for the students' language ability as well as their interests. When planning the Detailed Study, teachers should ensure that sub-topics '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). When the class studies the same



sub-topic, teachers could attempt to incorporate resources of different levels of difficulty that cater for the abilities of the students in their class. Students are more likely to engage with assessors actively if they understand the resources. While some resources 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, they can be too difficult and challenging for weaker students. 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 to give students the opportunity to express ideas and opinions and not merely give a synopsis of the text.

When preparing for the oral examination in class, students may find it useful to make notes, summarising the sources and contrasting the themes/issues raised in them. They should also develop their own opinions on the texts and be prepared to defend them effectively and clearly. Students should also practise a wide range of impromptu answers to a variety of likely and less likely questions as it helps to improve their performance.

As in the Conversation section, student performance on the language criteria was the weakest. Students should be able to use the specific vocabulary and syntactical structures associated with their chosen sub-topic. Many students used a very good range of vocabulary, and complex and correct grammatical structures, and were able to self-correct when needed.

The following types of grammatical and syntactical errors related to criterion 3 – accuracy of vocabulary and grammar, and criterion 4 – range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar, were evident and should be addressed.

- not knowing the genders of the key words *ο περιβάλλον, ο οξυγόνο, της Πάσχα*
- lack of agreement between article and noun (*ένα ταινία, στο Αμερική*)
- mistakes with the use of the correct adjectives such *διαφορές* and *διάφορα* or words in general such as *στην τελεία* instead of *στο τέλος*
- mistakes with verbs (*καταλαβούσα, έχει παντρέψει* instead *έχει παντρευτεί*)
- lack of agreement between nouns and adjectives (*υγιεινό ζωή, μερικές μετανάστες, αρχαίες άνθρωποι, πολλούς δουλειές*)
- incorrect use of grammar (*το μήνυμα το τραγούδι*)

Criterion 5 – clarity of expression was addressed very well by most students. Weaker students also had good pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.