



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral component of the Greek examination is divided into two parts: a seven-minute Conversation and an eight-minute Discussion of a Detailed Study. The Discussion includes a one-minute introduction. The assessment for both parts of the oral examination is divided into three sections: communication, content and language. The descriptors for the criteria are published on the VCAA website <www.vcaa.vic.edu.au>. It is important that all teachers and students are familiar with the criteria and use them as part of the examination preparation. Students will then be more confident and more likely to engage in a lively and interesting exchange with the assessors.

In 2008, more students seemed to be familiar with the expectations of the oral examination and the components of the examination criteria used for assessment. The well-prepared students performed well in both sections because they were able to engage effectively with the assessors, expand on their answers and offer interesting ideas and opinions using vocabulary and grammar accurately. Students were well prepared for the Conversation section and were able to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively and expand efficiently on aspects of their personal world.

The Discussion section requires a more objective approach and students cannot rely on pre-learned information. Students needed to be able to use language spontaneously to handle unrehearsed situations. This section tested students' skills in presenting information and exchanging ideas, opinions and information. Most students were well prepared for the Discussion this year; they were able to introduce their topic, present very good information and had a very good understanding of their selected sub-topic. However, for some students the preparation of an effective introduction continues to be problematic. Teachers should allow students to choose a focus of the topic that they are truly interested in so they can be more likely to express ideas and opinions and defend them effectively. A number of students supported their Discussion appropriately with objects such as photographs, diagrams and maps, elaborating and stating why they considered them important. This was often a useful prompt, especially for weaker students. Students must remember that the support material must be free of writing, except for a heading.

Teachers should continue to advise students to use the correct formal register. When addressing one or both assessors students should use the second person plural; for example *θα σας μιλήσω*. The setting of the examination is formal and students need to use appropriate language and avoid the use of colloquial terms.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Communication

Students were well prepared and able to communicate effectively. They were able to hold a conversation for seven minutes, successfully discussing more than one topic and developing more than one aspect of the topic. Their interaction with the assessors was very good, as they were able to respond to and build on comments made by assessors. Students needed minimal support and had good repair strategies.

Students need to listen carefully and concentrate on all words in the question in order to respond and address all the required parts. When students do not understand the question, they should ask for clarification, and not respond with what appears to be a memorised answer. A small number of students who relied heavily on rehearsed responses were thrown off guard when asked questions by assessors. Students must be prepared to respond to unanticipated questions in depth. They should practise responding to questions that are asked in different ways and practise answering unrehearsed questions. Students should also be able to self-correct and develop repair strategies to avoid lengthy pauses.

Most students were able to express their ideas with clarity, paying particular attention to pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. A very small number of students did not pronounce words, especially word endings, clearly.

Content

Students were thoroughly prepared to discuss their personal world and speak fluently about areas such as school, home life, family and friends, interests and future aspirations. Good performances once again clearly reflected students' sound preparation. Well-prepared students were able to add breadth and depth to their conversation and support and elaborate



on their statements. These students presented an excellent range of information, opinions and ideas in highly relevant and logical responses.

Students who were less well prepared in the Conversation section resorted to anglicisms and rote-learned material. It is vital that students come well prepared to elaborate on their responses by giving reasons, examples and evidence. For example, when discussing a part-time job while studying, they should be able to elaborate on their response, such as by referring to the advantages and disadvantages. They should know the vocabulary that they will need to use; for example, when discussing school and subjects and they should not use the English word for their subject names. They should also know the appropriate form of the word for the job they aspire to have in the future; for example, if they want to become a lawyer they should say *δικηγόρος* and not *δικηγόρα*.

Language

Students' performance continues to be the weakest on this criterion. While the more able students displayed an excellent range of vocabulary and grammatical structures that were used accurately, the weaker students had a more limited vocabulary and made some basic grammatical and syntactical errors. Students continued to have problems with *πρέπει*, *χρειάζομαι* and *προσπαθώ*, making errors such as *πρέπεις*, *πρέπω*, *χρειάζει*, *προσπαθαίνω*. This year students made more errors with accents; accents were placed incorrectly (for example, *αδελφος μου*, *αρχιτεχτόνας*), and incorrect articles were used (*ένα κοπέλα*, *μία πρόγραμμα*, *μία σχολείο*). Gender and case, as well as agreement between nouns and adjectives, were also at times incorrect (*πολλά ωραία θάλασσες*, *ένα μεγάλο αδελφή*, *ένα μέρη*, *το βαθμό που χρειάζομαι*). The use of the active and passive voices and verb endings in general also presented a problem (*ξεχάσω* instead of *ξεχνώ*, *θα προσπάθησα* instead of *προσπαθούσα*). Some students also used English words (*να πάω* holidays, *να πάω* university, *πολλά* independence), while others translated expressions from English (*από της μαμάς της πλευρά* – from the mother's side).

Section 2 – Discussion

Communication

Most students used the one-minute introduction to their benefit. They concisely stated the topic and sub-topic of the Detailed Study and steered assessors in the direction of areas they could discuss with confidence and strength. A wide range of texts was used: interviews, articles, short stories, films, poems, songs and pictures.

Teachers and students should refer to the *VCE Greek Study Design* for information regarding the oral examination. Teachers and students should also 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).

References to the texts studied may be made during the discussion **after** students have indicated (in no more than one minute) their chosen sub-topic and introduced the main focus of their sub-topic.

Some students did not introduce the topic appropriately in the one-minute timeslot. They simply named their topic and then began retelling the content of the texts studied, which they had pre-learned, instead of discussing the texts and giving ideas and opinions. These students had not formulated their own opinions on the sub-topic. At times the topics did not suit the linguistic ability of the students; they were not able to pronounce all the words correctly, carry the discussion forward or deal with a variety questions, nor did they demonstrate good repair strategies when in difficulty. Practising a wide range of impromptu answers to a variety of likely and less likely questions helps students to improve their performance and avoid pre-learned material.

In the seven-minute discussion that followed the introduction, students demonstrated a sound knowledge and appreciation of their chosen topic. Most students spoke confidently and 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.

If students bring photos and images as support material, they must be prepared to discuss them in some depth and not merely describe the image.

The criterion 'Clarity of expression' was addressed well by most students. Even the weaker students had good pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.



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 from which they can draw in their discussion. 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). Topics, when they are above the linguistic capability of students, are not dealt with successfully, as students find it difficult to recall specific information and then process it in their response. In these cases students should attempt to find a personal angle that could make the discussion more interesting. Sometimes very factual texts, or texts that are too short or too simple, may not allow students to develop and express ideas and opinions, and breadth and depth may be lacking in the discussion.

This year it was obvious that many students had enjoyed their Detailed Study and spoke enthusiastically about their sub-topic. Only a small number of students showed little active interest in the topic and relied on rote-learned passages that retold the plot of the texts studied. Students should be aware that pre-prepared responses hinder them from pursuing a meaningful discussion. Students should be able to link their texts to their sub-topic, as well as see common themes in the material to make the discussion more interesting. They should try to analyse and think for themselves and be prepared to give some original opinions rather than just repeat ideas from texts or discuss the topic broadly. At times students referred to resources without appreciating the ideas they contained and were not able to develop their own opinions and ideas. For example, when referring to a film or a short story they should not simply give a summary of the plot, but be prepared to comment on the text effectively. When students are preparing for the oral examination they may find it useful to make notes summarising the sources and write down how their chosen texts relate to one another, rather than seeing them in isolation.

Appropriate topics enabled students to display an excellent knowledge of their topic and elaborate on ideas and opinions with reasons, examples and evidence. Choice of sub-topic is very important and should reflect the interests and abilities of the class, as well as those of the individual student. Some topics are ideal for competent students but can be too difficult and challenging for weaker students. The topics chosen must cater effectively for all students' linguistic ability. Teachers, with some exceptions, seemed to expose students to similar topics from previous years. They should allow students, where possible, to select their own specific focus of the topic and resources so that they can understand it fully and have an empathy for it. Students will then be more likely to engage in an active and interesting exchange with the assessors, expressing their opinions and generating ideas by expanding on the topic.

It is important to note that the success of the topic depends upon appropriate and adequate preparation in class and the student's interest in it, as well as their willingness to prepare thoroughly for the oral examination.

Language

As a considerable amount of time has been spent on the Detailed Study, students should have mastered the vocabulary associated with their chosen sub-topic. They should be able to use the correct words and genders and express ideas and opinions accurately and appropriately using a variety of vocabulary, structures and expressions.

Many students spoke in an appropriate manner using a wide range of vocabulary and complex sentence structures in their interaction with the assessors. However, as in the Conversation section, the performance in this criterion was weakest, with similar types of grammatical and syntactical errors. Students should understand the grammar required to be able to use the appropriate words in their correct form for their chosen sub-topic. They should not make mistakes like *με αρέσει αυτήν την ιστορία, πολιτισμική ταυτότητα, φιλία σπουδαίο ανάγκη*. They should know the genders of the key words, learn to use a variety of adjectives correctly and not make mistakes such as *οι πρώτες μετανάστες, είναι για κανέναν τραγουδιστή, στην παλιά γεννή*. They should master syntactical structures that will be necessary to discuss the sub-topic. Mistakes like *δύο τρία καλοί φίλοι, ήτανε μαύρο χώρο. Μεταξύ τους Αυστραλών* would have been avoided if adequate preparation had taken place.



Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2008 students generally displayed very good comprehension skills and an ability to successfully identify the required information from the texts, particularly the listening texts. All questions on the examination were attempted by virtually all students who demonstrated good time management. Most questions were answered adequately by the majority of students.

Students appeared to be familiar with the format of the examination and nearly all students were able to respond in the appropriate language for each section. No marks were awarded to answers in the wrong language.

Students must ensure that they read all instructions carefully. The amount of space given to answer a question is a good indication of the length of the anticipated answer. The number of marks allocated to each question usually corresponds to the number of points the answer needs to include. Students should always check if the question requires them to present their answer in point form or in full sentences. They should also avoid restating the question, as this takes up valuable time and space and does not allow enough scope to complete the requirements of the task. All answers must be based on the texts; this is clearly stated in the instructions of every section of the examination. Students should not provide information beyond the scope of the question and they should not include prior knowledge of the topic if it is not included in the texts.

Students should be prepared to comment not only on the content of a text, but also on the purpose of the text and the type of audience it is addressing. Also, questions on aspects of the language of the text, such as the use of tone and register, and the appropriateness of the language for its specific purpose, should be expected. All of these types of questions are clearly prescribed in the *VCE Greek Study Design*.

In contrast to the good comprehension skills demonstrated by students, their writing skills in Greek were very disappointing. Student responses in Greek often reflected a poor understanding of basic grammatical rules. In some instances, students' use of Greek was incomprehensible. In order to be understood and receive the allocated marks, answers must be coherent and legible. This is also the case for the English responses on the paper.

Teachers have been very successful in preparing their students for the format of the examination, the different topics set out in the study design, and the different text types and kinds of writing required. There is now an obvious need for teachers to focus on language learning itself. Emphasis must be given to the teaching of grammar in order to improve students' ability to write in Greek with accuracy and fluency. Some areas of concern were:

- inability to distinguish between the Greek and Roman scripts, which is unacceptable for Year 12 students (*νουνά* instead of *βουνά*, *άσπρα* instead of *άσπρα*, *σουνλάκι* instead of *σουβλάκι*, *έχω* instead of *έζω*)
- inability to distinguish between certain letters of the Greek alphabet, such as *δ, θ, φ* and *β*, (*θορά* instead of *φορά*, *δέλω* instead of *θέλω*)
- failure to demonstrate the existence of the double consonants *ξ* and *ψ* (*κσανά* instead of *ξανά*, *πσώνια* instead of *ψώνια*)
- failure to use accents
- incorrect use of the definite and indefinite articles
- incorrect use of the gender of articles, nouns and adjectives (*η δρόμι* instead of *οι δρόμοι*, *οι φίλυ* instead of *η φίλη*)
- poor use of the genitive case (*η γυναίκα τον Γιώργο* instead of *η γυναίκα του Γιώργου*, *τους Έλληνες η επανάσταση* instead of *η επανάσταση των Ελλήνων*)
- lack of agreement between nouns and adjectives in gender, number and case (*άλλο γλώσσας* instead of *άλλη γλώσσα*, *το ελληνικό γλώσσα* instead of *η ελληνική γλώσσα*)
- lack of agreement in number between the subject and the verb of a sentence (*οι μαθητές δεν ζέρει* instead of *οι μαθητές δεν ζέρουν*, *οι γονείς θέλει* instead of *οι γονείς θέλουν*)
- inability to conjugate verbs correctly, even regular verbs in the present active indicative
- incorrect use of the middle/passive voice (*φόβησε* instead of *φοβήθηκε*, *πάντρεψε* instead of *παντρεύτηκε*)
- inability to use the common verbs *πρέπει* and *μου αρέσει/μας αρέσουν*
- use of anglicisms *το τελεβίσιο*, *η μαρκέτα*



SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A – Answer in English

Students displayed very good listening comprehension skills this year and overall their responses in English demonstrated a good understanding of the information provided in the listening passages. A few students misread some questions and provided information beyond the scope of the task. Examination questions often require quite specific responses and students must exercise caution when deciding on a response. They also need to check their responses to ensure that the question has been answered.

Students must practise their listening comprehension skills by picking out key points from various aural sources. During the examination they should spend at least part of their 15 minutes of reading time familiarising themselves with the questions in order to determine the information they will be required to extract from the listening passages. The pause between the readings of the texts should be used to consult the dictionary to determine the meaning of key words only. Effective use of the note-taking space on the paper is also useful. Students should ensure, however, that their final response is given in the space provided for the answer. No credit is given for answers outside of this space.

Text 1

Question 1

Both of:

- she is stressed/final exams are approaching
- needs advice to organise herself.

Question 2

Both of:

- note her queries
- seek the teacher's assistance at school.

Question 3

Any two of:

- take frequent breaks
- exercise/go for a walk or run
- adequate sleep.

Text 2

Question 4

Both of:

- it shows how Greek people perceived Maria Callas
- it indicates how Maria Callas influenced Greek music.

Question 5

Three of:

- books
- recordings
- Greek newspaper articles
- personal interviews with friends/relatives/colleagues.

Question 6

Both of:

- she was also a great actor
- a successful combination of music and drama.

Question 7

She had a sound knowledge of ancient Greek theatre.

Question 8

She was very talented/God-like.



Part B – Answer in Greek

In this part of the examination students were required to demonstrate their capacity to understand aspects of a Greek listening text by responding in Greek. Ten marks were awarded for the comprehension of the text and five marks for conveying information accurately and appropriately in Greek.

Students should be guided by the number of points indicated in each question as to the length/detail of response required. Marks for specific questions are not included in Part B. Most students this year showed a sound understanding of the content of the text.

Students must ensure that they respond in complete sentences when requested. Their sentences should communicate their ideas in their own words. Some students answered in point form, removing extracts directly from the spoken text. They did not demonstrate their own ability to communicate fluently in the language and thus were not awarded full marks.

Text 3

Question 9

He was scared because the road was narrow/steep.

Question 10

Three of:

- by bus
- by walking/on foot
- by donkey.

Question 11

Two of:

- there was a great volcanic eruption
- half of the island was destroyed
- this left huge rocks jutting out of the sea.

Question 12

Three of:

- the town's central streets are made of marble
- the houses are white
- the houses are built into the cliffs
- the famous sunset.

Section 2 – Reading and Responding

Part A – Answer in English

Most students were able to successfully draw appropriate information from the Greek reading text. Section 2, Part A carried 20 marks based on one text. A number of questions related directly to the content of the text while other questions were deductive.

Once again the number of points allocated to each question corresponded to the number of points that were expected to be included in the response. In Question 13 most students were able to identify the three population trends in Greece after World War II. Some students did not include the point of Athens becoming the major destination of internal migration which was clearly indicated in the text. Question 14 required students to complete a table on a comparison between city and country housing. While most students were able to do this successfully, a few were unable to enter their answers in the correct place. When completing tables, students must ensure that they have understood what type of information is required under each heading. Question 15 was generally handled well but some students misread the question and instead of discussing aspects of city life that contributed to people's isolation, they provided information about housing in the city and the country which related to the previous question. A number of students experienced difficulty with Question 16 which required them to name two distinct groups mentioned in the text and give one difference between them. Nevertheless, the more competent students were able to clearly identify the two groups and describe a difference.

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In order to prepare for this section of the examination students should read extensively in Greek, including a wide range of texts in different text types. They should also practise identifying, rephrasing and summarising the main points and ideas in the texts.

Before attempting the questions students should take the time to read over the text a few times. It is not necessary to know the meaning of all unknown words. Students should try to understand the gist of the passage. Students are also reminded that all answers must be based on the information provided in the text and not on prior knowledge.

Text 4

Question 13

All of:

- country people moved to foreign countries and
- many moved to main cities of Greece/Athens
- Athens grew from a small town to a big city.

Question 14

Four of:

Country Housing	City Housing
Traditional/individual houses	Apartments
Made of stone	Made of concrete
With a garden/yard	Modern facilities

Question 15

All of:

- a lack of open space
- no parks/gardens
- people no longer meet each other on footpaths
- children cannot play outside/children stay in their room in front of the computer/television.

Question 16

Groups

- Holiday makers
- Pensioners

Difference:

Pensioners return permanently/holiday makers return temporarily.

Question 17

Five of:

- simple life
- close to nature
- free time for gardening
- closer contact with people
- relaxation
- psychological rejuvenation.

Question 18

One of:

- they return to their place of origin
- they return to their traditional way of life.

Part B – Answer in Greek

This part of the examination assessed students' capacity to understand general and specific aspects of the text and their capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately in Greek. Most students provided the correct information to adequately complete the question. Many students, however, merely listed all the different things George did in Crete



without attempting to describe how George was trying to persuade Costas to apply to participate in the program 'Paedia Omogenon', as was stated in the question.

In Part B students are required to answer in full sentences. They should take advantage of the fact that the questions in this section are given in both Greek and English and should avoid copying directly from the text or restating the question. Part B carries a language mark and students need to demonstrate their own ability to write effectively in Greek.

Text 5

Question 19

Five of:

- by using words such as 'you must apply' or 'it will be an unforgettable experience'
- by telling him that he will meet other teenagers of Greek background
- by informing him that he will be attending Greek language classes to improve his Greek
- by telling him that he will be forced to speak Greek at all times
- he will get a better understanding of what it is to be a Greek of the Diaspora
- he will improve his knowledge of Greek culture
- by telling him that he will make new friends.

Section 3 – Writing in Greek

This section assessed the students' ability to express ideas through the creation of original text in Greek using the following criteria:

- relevance, breadth and depth
- appropriateness of structure and sequence
- accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar.

Students were required to write 200–300 words in Greek on one of the five topics. Each topic represented a different text type and style of writing (personal, informative, evaluative, imaginative and persuasive). All five questions were attempted by students, although there was a clear preference for the informal writing task. This year students on the whole displayed a good knowledge of the different characteristics of the text type and style of writing they chose to write in. Students must remember that text types marked with an asterisk in the study design are those which they may be expected to produce in the examination.

Of the three criteria in this section, students did not perform as well against 'accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar'. When selecting a topic, students should choose one that is familiar to them and one that requires the kind of writing and text type that suits them best. The selected topic should be one for which they have a good range of vocabulary and one in which they are able to express themselves with accuracy.

Students must establish the tone and register of the task from the onset and must always keep in mind the audience for whom they are writing. They should ensure that they do not digress from the topic or include pre-learned material that is unrelated to the task. Ideas should be developed coherently and grouped into separate paragraphs which link effectively between them. It is therefore essential that students set aside time to plan their response and time to proofread it at the end.

Question 20

This question required students to write an informal letter to their cousin in Greece and provide a personal account of what they saw and experienced at the recent Melbourne Greek Festival. Students were also expected to explain why their experience was memorable.

This was by far the most popular choice among students and was completed with varying degrees of success. Most students observed the conventions, content and style appropriate to informal letter writing. These students adopted the correct register and tone by establishing a relationship or an intimacy with the reader. Some students were able to capture and express the atmosphere of the festival successfully; however, many stated the obvious and gave a list of things they saw and did, providing very little breadth and depth of content.



Question 21

In this informative report students were required to identify an important event in Greek history and provide appropriate and relevant information on their chosen event. Students were also expected to explain the significance of the event for Greece.

This question produced a number of very good responses. Most students who attempted this question were able to adopt the required informative approach and display the appropriate conventions of a report. The majority of students who attempted this question also demonstrated a good range of vocabulary and language appropriate to the purpose and the audience of the task.

Question 22

In this speech students were expected to evaluate in depth at least three aspects of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

This question was attempted by a small number of students. The majority of these students were able to provide appropriate facts and ideas and go on to discuss and evaluate these in a logical and objective manner. The text type, the script of a speech, was handled well by most students who provided the correct addresses and closing statements and the appropriate register.

Question 23

In this imaginative story students were expected to develop a plot/context/situation as a result of finding out a secret.

Only a few students handled this topic competently. These students were skilled in the devices of storytelling; they created an appropriate time, place and atmosphere and their ideas were well-organised in sentences and paragraphs that linked well. Most responses, however, to this question were predictable and lacking in creativity and originality. Many demonstrated a lack of imagination, little development of plot and poor descriptions of setting and characters. A poor range of vocabulary and understanding of language structures often contributed to a weaker storyline.

Question 24

This task required students to write a newspaper article in an attempt to persuade those entering VCE to include Greek in their subject choices. Students were expected to present at least two or three arguments at some depth rather than just list reasons for studying the subject without elaborating.

This question was the second most popular choice amongst students and was generally answered well. Capable students exhibited very good writing skills in this topic. Students were able to draw from their experiences and successfully relay these to a student audience. They were also able to put forward some convincing arguments. Many students provided ideas that were well organised in sentences and paragraphs that linked well. The text type, a newspaper article, was well handled by the majority of students.