



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2009 Greek oral examination was divided into two parts: a seven-minute Conversation and an eight-minute Discussion, which comprises of a one-minute introduction and a seven-minute discussion of the Detailed Study. 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 reflect on them as part of their examination preparation. This will help students engage effectively in a lively and interesting exchange with the assessors.

Although the Conversation and the Discussion criteria are similar, they assess two very different aspects of performance. In the Conversation section, students need to speak and interact with assessors in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner about their personal world. Most 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 is designed to test the students' skills in presenting information and exchanging ideas, opinions and information. It should also be highlighted that students who already speak Greek fluently must come prepared for both parts of the examination. The Detailed Study requires a more objective approach so that the language used is less predictable. Students cannot simply rely on pre-learned information. 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. It must be stressed, however, that the support material must be free of all but minimal writing such as headings. Material with more than minimal writing was removed prior to students entering the examination room.

Students need to be able to use language spontaneously to handle unrehearsed situations. Students should be allowed 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. Sometimes a topic to which students can relate at a personal level may enable them to be more familiar with the content and vocabulary needed and thus be more skilled to support and elaborate on information, ideas and opinions.

Teachers are advised to give students written instructions and explanations about the oral examination in Greek so that students become familiar with the terminology and vocabulary required.

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

Most students were well prepared and able to hold a conversation for seven minutes, successfully discussing more than one topic and developing more than one aspect of the topic. They were able to go beyond simple responses and build on the assessors' comments by expressing opinions. They needed minimal support and had good repair strategies.

It is important that students listen carefully to all words in the questions in order to respond and address all the required parts. If they do not understand the question, they should ask for clarification, and not respond with what appears to be a memorised answer. Students need to develop good repair strategies, be able to self-correct and avoid lengthy pauses. It is important that students practise responding to questions that are asked in different ways and practise answering unrehearsed questions.

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 use the correct pronunciation and intonation.



Content

Most students were well prepared and able to speak effectively and fluently about areas such as home life, family and friends, school, interests and future aspirations. They were able to add breadth and depth to the conversation and support and elaborate on their statements with an excellent range of information, opinions and ideas.

It is vital that students be well prepared to elaborate on their responses by giving reasons, examples and evidence and that they do not resort to anglicisms and rote-learned material. For example, when discussing a trip to Greece they should not just state the names of the places they visited, but be willing to express their ideas, opinions and impressions.

Students should come well-prepared with a good knowledge of the vocabulary they will need, as this part of the examination is on familiar topics relating to their personal world. This remains a problematic area for some students. For example, some students did not know the Greek words for their school subjects or the career path they aspire to; instead of saying *διατητής ποδοσφαίρου* they said *διευθυντής ποδοσφαίρου*. The use of *σπουδάζω* instead of *μελετάω* was a common error, even though it is a word that students are likely to use in this part of the examination.

Some students had rote-learned a few sentences on each area but were not able to expand on their responses. These students repeated the same phrases when referring to their family/siblings, for example, *μαζί δεν κάνουμε και χώρια δεν μπορούμε*. Rote learning should be avoided because the natural flow of the conversation may be hindered if the student cannot build on these phrases in their exchange with the assessors.

Language

All students had good control of simple grammatical structures; however, student performance on this criterion continues to be the weakest. Students need to take every opportunity to practise speaking Greek outside school and listen to well-modelled Greek from adult native speakers where possible.

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 such as:

- problems with *πρέπει*, *χρειάζομαι*, *προσπαθώ* and *με αρέσει*, making errors such as *πρέπεις*, *πρέπω*, *πρέπονν*, *χρειάζει*, *προσπαθαίνω*, *αρέσω*
- errors with accents and accents were placed incorrectly (for example, *αδέλφος μου*, *αδέρφη*, *αρχιτεχτόνας*, *ανθρωπούς*, *ένας θεϊός*)
- incorrect articles were used (*ένα κοπέλα*, *μία πρόγραμμα*, *μία σχολείο*, *ένα από τις δασκάλες μου*)
- 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*, *αυτό τη μέρα*, *ωραίο θάλασσα*)
- the use of the active and passive voices and verb endings in general (*ξεχάσω* instead of *ξεχνώ*, *θα προσπάθησα* instead of *προσπαθούσα*). Students were unable to use the past tense correctly, using *θέλω να μαθαίνω* instead of *θέλω να μάθω*, *θέλω να ταξιδεύω*, and instead of *θέλω να ταξιδέψω*, *ζύπνησε* instead of *ζυπνούσε*
- the ability to distinguish between aorist and imperfect tenses (this was more common in 2009)
- 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

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.

Most students used the one-minute introduction appropriately. They concisely stated the topic and sub-topic of the Detailed Study and steered assessors towards areas they could discuss with confidence and strength.

However, 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. 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 of questions, nor did they demonstrate good repair strategies when in difficulty.

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.

A wide range of texts was used: interviews, articles, short stories, films, poems, songs and pictures. Texts must always be appropriate for the student and the topic studied. Students are more likely to be inspired to take an active and appropriate part in the discussion if they understand the resources and have empathy for the material studied. Students should have in-depth knowledge of the texts they study and have a variety of things to say about them; they should not just retell content/plot. Students must be able to reflect on the topics, to express their own opinions and be prepared to discuss and justify information.

Practising a wide range of impromptu answers to a variety of likely and less likely questions helps students improve their performance and avoid pre-learned material.

Some students brought photos and images as support material, which had no writing on them, and were able to discuss and elaborate in some depth and not merely describe the images.

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

Content

Many students had obviously enjoyed their Detailed Study and spoke 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 passages that retold the plot of the texts studied. Students should be aware that pre-prepared responses hinder them from pursuing a meaningful discussion. Sub-topics which were beyond the linguistic capability of students were not dealt with successfully as students found it difficult to recall specific information and then process it in their response.

Students should be able to link their texts to their sub-topic and connect common themes in the material in order to make the discussion more interesting. When preparing for the oral examination students may find it useful to make notes, summarising the sources and writing down how their chosen texts relate to one another, rather than seeing them in isolation. 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 an article they should not simply give a summary, but should be prepared to express ideas and opinions about the 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 on 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).

Sub-topics should reflect the interests and abilities of the class, as well as those of individual students, in order to enable students to display an excellent knowledge of the content and to elaborate on ideas and opinions with reasons, examples and evidence. The sub-topics chosen must cater effectively for all students' linguistic ability. Some sub-topics are ideal for competent students but can be too difficult and challenging for weaker students.

Some of the popular topics from previous years were presented from a different angle this year, which enabled students to be more engaged and improved their performance. For example, the topic of 'Friendship' was explored as 'The philosophy of friendship', which allowed for a more in-depth discussion and development of opinions. In addition, new topics such as 'The life and contribution of Miki Theodoraki/Melina Merkouri/Aliki Vougiouklaki' included interesting resources.

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, and should be avoided. Other topics did not



lend themselves to a Detailed Study discussion because similar ideas had been discussed in the Conversation and texts were limited in content.

Language

Students should have spent at least 15 hours in class on the Detailed Study and should be able to use a range of sophisticated vocabulary and grammatical structures, indicating that they have mastered the vocabulary associated with their chosen sub-topic.

Most students had good knowledge of the vocabulary required, were able to use the correct grammatical structures and presented an excellent range of information, ideas and opinions. Some used an excellent range of vocabulary such as *συναρπαστική ιστορία, τα πλεονεκτήματα είναι*, and complex sentence structures such as *ανέδειξε τον πολιτισμό της Ελλάδας σ'όλο τον κόσμο*.

However, as in the Conversation section, student performance on this criterion was weakest, with the following similar types of grammatical and syntactical errors:

- students should not make mistakes like *με αρέσει αυτήν την ιστορία* when they know that they are likely to refer to the story they have read as one of their resources
- students should know the vocabulary needed for their sub-topic and not make mistakes such as:
 - **Μετανάστευση-** *μετανάστες δεν είναι εύκολο, τα μετανάστες, το τόπος, μακριά το ταξίδι, αυστραλέζους, θρησκευτικό άνθρωποι, πολιτισμική ταυτότητα*
 - **Ο ρόλος της γυναίκας-** *η ελληνική γυναίκα, δουλεύονταν, νοικοκυρινές δουλειές, να γίνουν νοικοκυρά, να διάλεξε, ανέπαντρη/ανάπαντρη (γυναίκα), μια άντρα, - δούλενε με κότας, πάντρεψε (αντί για παντρεύτηκε), φοβούσε μην τον χάσει*
 - **Φιλία-** *καλό άνθρωπο, φοβάνε, ο Ελληνόπουλο, φιλία σπουδαίο ανάγκη*
- students 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 τραγουδιστής, στην παλιά γεννή*
- students should master syntactical structures that will be necessary to discuss the sub-topic
- mistakes such as *τρία καλοί φίλοι, ήτανε μαύρο χώρο, μεταξύ τους Αυστραλών* would have been avoided if students were adequately prepared.