2020 VCE Italian oral examination report

General comments

2020 was the first year this study was delivered according to the newly accredited *VCE Italian Study Design 2020–2024* and examination specifications. It is important that students and teachers familiarise themselves with the [specifications for oral examinations](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/past-examinations/Pages/Italian.aspx), available on the VCE Italian examinations webpage of the VCAA website. Students and teachers are also reminded that a [series of videos](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/past-examinations/Pages/RevisedSecondLanguageOralExaminationVideos.aspx) has been produced to help with preparation for the oral examinations; these are also available on the VCE Italian examinations webpage of the VCAA website.

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.

Section 1 – Conversation

In general, students handled the requirements of Section 1 well. They understood that at the start of the examination they needed to indicate their chosen subtopic and the supporting visual material for Section 2 of the examination. Teachers are reminded that students are no longer required to provide a one-minute introduction.

Students who scored well demonstrated the ability to communicate and interact effectively with the assessors. In their responses, they confidently and relevantly referred to aspects of Italian culture studied through the themes of ‘The Individual’ and ‘The Italian-speaking communities’. Furthermore, they were able to reflect on themselves as learners of Italian. High-scoring students communicated in a spontaneous and natural manner, using an excellent and accurate range of grammar and vocabulary. They listened attentively to the questions and provided relevant and detailed responses. The exchange was executed in a spontaneous manner with excellent intonation stress and tempo.

In contrast, students who were less prepared relied on basic questions and responses, listening only for key vocabulary rather than comprehending the actual specifics of the questions posed. This prevented the students from providing relevant and detailed responses. Students are encouraged to be prepared to respond to a variety of questions related to the topics prescribed in the oral examination specifications. They need to be aware that there are no prescribed questions and that the conversation develops in response to input from both the student and assessors. It is also important that students master grammatical concepts in order to perform successfully in this examination.

Section 2 – Discussion

All students presented an image in support of their subtopic discussion. Students who performed well were able to effectively and relevantly link their image to the topic being discussed. They demonstrated an ability to elaborate and reflect on different aspects of their topic. They provided a depth of information and opinions, and communicated using highly relevant vocabulary and a broad range of grammar. These exchanges were informative and conducted in a confident and natural manner.

Students are reminded that it is not the image that is being assessed – it is the quality of the discussion. Students should therefore select an image that adequately enables them to integrate that image into a discussion about their selected subtopic. The specifications require the student to explore aspects of the subtopic, including information, opinions and ideas. Some of the less highly performing students appeared to rely on memorised responses and tended to provide superficial answers to questions about their subtopic. This in turn prevented them from demonstrating their understanding of the subtopic and their linguistic skills. It is important to carefully consider the choice of subtopic and supporting image when preparing for this section of the examination.