

LOTE: Korean Second Language GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Despite 2001 being the implementation year of the Revised VCE, generally speaking, students responded positively to the requirements as outlined in the new study design. They handled Section 1 more confidently than Section 2. Some residual tendencies carried over from 'the oral' became apparent in students' responses for Section 1. It is important that students prepare for 'open-ended' questions that require more spontaneous and meaningful answers than just simple yes/no answers. Students are expected to take the initiative in moving forward the oral exchange with assessors by applying various strategies such as adding extra information, asking assessors to reiterate a question when its meaning is unclear, or re-directing the course of conversation when appropriate. Most students found the discussion based on their Detailed Study sub-topic challenging. This was a new element and a significant number of students were not sufficiently prepared for this section.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Most students satisfactorily managed the conversation on topics taken from 'The Personal World', but their insufficient knowledge of vocabulary and grammar hampered their performance. Unlike the old CAT with the five prescribed topic areas, students are required to respond to questions on a variety of areas within 'The Personal World', as stated in the study design, for example, 'school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations'. This means that students must have a wider range of vocabulary and grammar than previously required. It is also important for students to develop communication skills such as using appropriate response words or gap-fillers in order to avoid a prolonged pause, asking assessors to repeat the question, and adding extra information to broaden the topic perspective.

Section 2 – Discussion

Students must give a brief introductory outline on their sub-topics in no more than one minute before proceeding to discuss their specific study. Most students were not sufficiently prepared for this section to enable them to perform well. The study design states that the purpose of the Detailed Study is to enable students to explore and compare aspects of the language and culture of the Korean-speaking community through a range of oral and written texts related to the selected sub-topic (study design p. 24). Texts may be selected from a range of oral and written resources, and should provide scope for students to explore the selected sub-topic in depth. This means that they should be able to compare and contrast aspects of life, to identify and comment on culturally specific aspects, and to present an opinion (Unit 4 Outcome 2). Few students were able to demonstrate these skills. In some cases, the choice of sub-topic either required vocabulary and grammar beyond the student's range, or the study of the texts was too superficial to allow them to understand different aspects of the sub-topic and to identify issue/s involved. As a result, even those students who were able to respond well to content-related questions could not discuss their own sub-topic in sufficient depth. The sub-topic must be selected with care and be 'sufficiently broad to accommodate a range of interests and perspectives, so that each student can provide an individual response ...'. In order for student to explore their sub-topic in sufficient depth to meet relevant outcomes, it is suggested that a range of at least three different kinds of text are selected. These might include aural and visual, as well as written texts (study design pp. 24–25).

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Written component

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A

In Part A, questions are phrased in English and students are required to answer in English. Students performed well when responding to short texts that required one- or two-word answers. However, in responding to a longer text to extract specific details, students frequently gave ambiguous answers. Students need more listening practice in Korean and learn to only extract relevant information.

Part B

In Part B, questions are given in both English and Korean requiring responses in Korean. Where a paragraph answer was needed, some students did not meet the required word limit. Mistakes in spelling and grammar were fairly common. Students need more practice in this type of task.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Students are required to demonstrate their ability to understand the content of written texts, analyse and then respond appropriately. It is important for students to understand the gist of the whole text as well as to identify specific details.

Part A

In Part A, questions are given in English and students are required to respond in English. Most students performed well; however, some students were unable to complete the task due to lack of time.

Part B

Students found this part the most challenging. Several skills are required to perform well such as efficient time management, good reading skills, structuring and sequencing the response in a cohesive manner, and writing approximately 350 *cha* in the specified text type. Students must read the question carefully in order to understand the purpose, context and audience of the task.

Section 3 – Writing in Korean

Overall, results indicated that students were sufficiently prepared for this section of the examination. However, a small number of students were unable to complete the task, and some wrote only an introduction. This suggests that students need to practise writing a 'worthwhile' piece in a given text type within a limited timeframe. They will benefit from revising the main characteristics of different kinds of writing (study design p. 52) and realising how these fit in with the text types listed for productive use in the examination (study design p. 13).