



Oral Component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral examination is composed of two parts, a Conversation and a Discussion. Most students were well-prepared for the oral assessment and some showed an outstanding ability to use a variety of vocabulary and to speak in depth.

Students should ensure that they show cultural respect by using appropriate greetings, making proper use of register, and using standard language during their assessment. Some students' presentations were marred by inappropriate conduct such as crossing legs, answering 'yep' rather than '네|예' (yes) and so on. The use of English words should be avoided as much as possible; however, these were commonly heard when discussing students' school subjects. Students are advised to translate the subjects into Korean as much as possible. Generally, however, students showed an improvement in oral language competence compared to last year.

Students should answer all questions clearly and in a loud voice. Some students mumbled the ends of sentences, making it difficult for assessors to understand their meaning. If the assessors' questions are not clear enough or are too difficult to understand, students are allowed to ask for the question to be repeated. In such cases, students are not penalised. Oral assessment is designed to test language competence rather than factual knowledge, so if answers are made up it is of no concern.

The interaction between assessors and students is very important. Students should answer in full sentences and elaborate on their comments. For example, if the question is 'Do you like movies?', a good response could be 'Yes, I do. I like comedy very much. However, I haven't watched any for a while because I have been busy studying.' This is a much better response than simply answering, 'Yes, I do.'

If they need time to think before answering, students should be aware that a short pause will not have a negative effect on their marks. However, frequent and long pauses may do so. Moreover, students should not forget to make eye contact with assessors from time to time while presenting.

Some hints for students when attending the oral examination include the following.

- Students should not interact with other students who have already completed their assessment. This could increase nerves and lead to incorrect information being conveyed. Students may not necessarily be asked the same questions or have the same assessors.
- Students, like the assessors, should arrive at the examination centre well prepared and before the starting time.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

In general, the majority of students were very competent and responded intelligently to the questions asked. They used a range of vocabulary and clear pronunciation, even when responding to challenging questions.

In the Conversation, general questions on topics such as family, hobbies, school life, pets and food were asked to examine students' language competence. Almost all students responded very well in this section. In cases where students receive similar questions from assessors, they should not be concerned or irritated, but should answer all questions with equal thought.

It is good strategy for students to pause briefly to consider unexpected questions. However, in order to sustain conversation, pauses longer than five seconds and/or frequent hesitations should be minimised. Also, if students do not hear a question or are not sure what it means, they should ask politely '다시 한번 말씀해 주시겠습니까?' ('Could you repeat the question, please?') to reduce the risk of answering incorrectly. They should try to answer whenever possible rather than avoid questions.



Section 2 – Discussion

Students are given one minute to present an introduction to their topic in the second session of the oral examination. Students are asked to identify resources used and briefly introduce the focus of their sub-topic. Students should be able to refer to, compare, contrast and analyse the texts studied, and to present their ideas thoughtfully. This year, students referred to a wide range of texts, such as diaries, novels, movies, poems and interviews, to enrich their opinions and ideas.

A few students showed extraordinary ability and used a wide range of vocabulary and appropriate grammar. However, a number of students relied on memorising their content and experienced difficulties meeting the requirements for depth of content and exchange of opinions and ideas. Although most students performed very well, some students did not prepare well enough for the Discussion.

Students should not be too concerned if questions appear difficult and unexpected, as this will not prevent them from obtaining a very high mark. Students are offered opportunities to extend themselves in this way, and marks are calculated by grading the general response to all questions. In order to obtain high marks, students are required to have excellent presentation skills (including tone, intonation and stress), to draw on information from the various texts studied, and to demonstrate the ability to use contrasts and comparisons.

Written Component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The majority of students performed well. The written component of the examination aims to test students' language competence, including text comprehension and writing skills, using appropriate vocabulary and grammar in conjunction with cultural understanding. Cultural understanding is assessed through the discussion of a variety of texts and different levels of questions.

Part A of each section should be answered in English and Part B in Korean. If a student responds in the wrong language, they will not receive any credit. Students must answer in full sentences (완전한 문장) in Part B when asked. 'Full sentences' means finishing with -(이)다, -(이)예요, or -입니다. Some answers, such as -때문에 and -때문임(명사형), were not accepted as correct because they are not full sentences.

All answers should be based on the texts provided in the examination. Some students responded with information that was not contained in the texts – responses which are not based on the texts are not given credit.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A: Answer in English

Almost all students received credit for Questions 1, 2 and 3. In Question 3, students were able to give the answer of eight in words or figures.

The most challenging question was Question 7, 'Name two typical Korean styles of conversation used by the interviewer', as it challenged students' ability to interpret from a cultural perspective. The possible answers included:

- addressing Mrs Kim Younghee as grandmother (할머니)
- wishing for longevity and health (건강하게 오래 사세요)
- the honorific speech form (존댓말).

Most students were able to answer the rest of the questions.

Part B: Answer in Korean

Almost all students answered correctly, although not always in full sentences as requested. Some students used noun phrases or clauses, which was incorrect. Students were able to gain marks in all other aspects of Part B.



Section 2 – Reading and responding

This section is designed to test students' understanding of general and specific aspects of texts. Students were required to demonstrate their ability to understand the content of written texts by comparing two texts appropriately.

Part A: Answer in English

Some students responded with information beyond the scope of the text, although the exam paper stated clearly 'All answers must be based on the texts'. Question 19, for example, asked students to give the differences between Korean school life and Australian school life. If an answer is 'exams every week' in one country, the comparative answer should be 'exams every three months' in the other country because those answers were stated in the text. Students who gave answers such as 'frequent exams' or 'very often' did not receive full marks because the answer was ambiguous.

Similarly, Text 4 stated that students have dinner at the school canteen. However, Text 5 did not mention that students have dinner at home, which many students assumed, therefore this was an incorrect response.

Part B: Answer in Korean

The key task for students in this section was to show their comprehension skills and their ability to summarise the text in full sentences. Therefore, students should have paraphrased, not simply cut and paste from the text.

When a question specifies the number of sentences, students should answer in that number of full sentences, regardless of length. It should be a paragraph, not dot-point sentences. Therefore, if a question was worth three marks, students who wrote two sentences were only eligible to receive two marks; those who wrote three sentences were eligible for the full three marks. Even if students showed a good comprehension of the text, they could not receive full marks.

Section 3 – Writing in Korean

In Section 3, students had to select one of five tasks requiring personal, informative, persuasive, evaluative or imaginative writing. They had to write 500–650 *cha* in Korean. Student performance was assessed on the range of sentence structures, depth and breadth of vocabulary, information, ideas and opinions, and relevance to the topic.

Some students exceeded the word limit. Although structure and content are more important than the length of writing, excess words are not counted in the assessment; consequently, the writing was regarded as an incomplete piece. Students are advised to organise their writing within the length before they commence so that the conclusion is not excluded from the marking.

In addition, the type of writing and the target audience are important. For instance, Question 25 required the text of a speech and the target audience was students and teachers. Responses needed to be in an appropriate style for this task. Students should also consider the format and register of the article. The target audience for Question 24 was a friend, therefore students did not have to use the honorific form (존대말).

Students should differentiate between the spoken form and the written form. Although a speech requires spoken form, a common mistake among students was to use slang in their writing. Slang should not be used in formal writing or in the written text of a spoken form, except within direct quotations such as in a dialogue or conversation. Students should also be aware of the different formats in Korean and English texts; for example, the date in letter writing is written after the conclusion in Korean, although in English it is written at the beginning of the letter.

Students should not identify their name and school in their writing in any situation. When students need to write a name or school in writing, they should make it up.

The most popular questions in 2006 were Questions 24 and 25.

Question 22

Question 22 asked students to write a personal profile. The response could include things such as their abilities, educational background, capacity to contribute to the company and so on.

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Question 23

For Question 23 students had to write an article for a school newsletter about the Korean New Year (설날). Informative writing should include useful and relevant information, such as clothes, food, games and traditions.

Question 24

Question 24 was a persuasive writing task, asking students to write an informal letter to a friend to persuade them to volunteer for a school activity. Students were asked to develop an argument on the positive side but may have also included points on the negative side as necessary.

Question 25

Question 25 was an evaluative writing task, in the form of a speech, on the pros and cons of the school uniform. Students who pointed out positive and negative aspects of school uniforms using the right format for speeches (including the respect form, 존대말, and the spoken form) achieved good marks.

Question 26

Question 26 asked students to write an imaginative story. The key task in writing an imaginative piece is for it to be interesting to the audience. However, interesting does not necessarily mean funny; it could also be sad or scary, for example. It needed to be well-structured, with paragraphs and the feature the elements of a good story, such as a climax.