



2008

LOTE: Macedonian GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral examination has two sections, a Conversation (approximately seven minutes) and a Discussion (approximately eight minutes). The examination is designed primarily to assess the students' ability to communicate using spoken Macedonian. This year the overall standard in both sections was pleasing. A range of speaking abilities was noted throughout the examination.

Most students were familiar with the expectations of the oral examination. They were able to engage with the assessors in the Conversation and demonstrated a good level of preparation for the Discussion. However, a small number of students were not fully aware of the expectations for Section 2 – Discussion. It is important that all teachers and students are familiar with the specific requirements of the oral examination as outlined in the *VCE Macedonian Study Design*, page 30.

The best students were thoroughly prepared and performed well in both sections. They were articulate, used appropriate vocabulary and grammar, provided extended, in-depth responses and opinions, and were able to lead the conversation in a direction that was favourable to them. These students used repair strategies successfully, sought clarification from the assessors when they were unsure and needed minimal support.

However, there were a number of students who had not prepared well for the examination. These students found it difficult to carry the conversation forward and to maintain an effective discussion of their topic. They offered a limited range of information and needed frequent support from the assessors. The weaker students made some common grammatical mistakes, such as using the incorrect gender forms. Greater attention could be paid to teaching more grammar, especially adjective, noun and gender consistency. It is also important to reinforce the use of formal greetings and explain the difference between *Ti* and *Vie*, as some students used the informal greeting with the assessors.

Some students had rote-learned the information and recited their responses instead of conversing spontaneously. These students struggled to continue with the discussion if they lost track of their pre-learned material while answering questions from assessors. They were often unable to use repair strategies. It is important for students to know that they might be asked questions for which they have not prepared or which they have not considered. Students need to be aware that what they say will often lead the assessors to ask questions about what they have said, and need to learn strategies that help them direct the flow of the conversation.

Teachers are encouraged to go over the assessment criteria with their students and draw their attention to the fact that they need to meet all of the sections of the criteria. Native speakers should note that their fluency alone will not guarantee them high grades if they have not prepared well and met all of the criteria.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

The Conversation section focuses on the student's personal world; for example, school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations.

The students were examined against the following criteria:

- capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively
- relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas
- accuracy of vocabulary and grammar
- range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar
- clarity of expression.

Generally students performed well in this section. They were able to draw on their own experiences and a good level of preparation was evident. Most students responded readily to the questions and were able to maintain a conversation. They generally had good pronunciation, although some students' pronunciation showed the influence of English.



The most successful students spoke fluently, provided relevant, extensive responses to questions and kept the conversation flowing. They were able to present an excellent range of information about themselves and elaborate on opinions or ideas using accurate language, appropriate sentence structures and sophisticated vocabulary.

Weaker students experienced some problems with pronunciation, were slow to respond to questions, frequently hesitated and often resorted to English words. Their responses contained a limited range of information and they needed frequent support from the assessors. Students who were not well prepared tended to rely on rote-learned material and were not able to link with the assessors. These students struggled to expand on opinions and ideas, displayed a limited range of structures and vocabulary and were unable to advance the conversation.

Most students were able to talk about their family, school and future aspirations but some did not know the names of their subjects in Macedonian. Students should be discouraged from giving monosyllabic answers. They are encouraged to go beyond simple responses and give extended answers that provide interesting information about themselves, keeping in mind that the assessors may ask questions about what they have said. They should be able to justify what they say with some spontaneity. Students need to understand that the conversation is an exchange of ideas and opinions and should try to build on comments made by the assessors.

Section 2 – Discussion

The focus of the Discussion is to explore aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Macedonian is spoken. Students are expected to refer to the texts studied during class. They may support the Discussion with objects such as photographs, diagrams and maps. No cue cards or notes are permitted.

The students were examined against the following criteria:

- capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively
- capacity to present information, ideas and opinions on a chosen topic
- accuracy of vocabulary and grammar
- range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar
- clarity of expression.

It is essential that teachers and students take into account the interests and the ability of the students when selecting the Detailed Study topic and sub-topic. Page 23 of the *VCE Macedonian Study Design* states that ‘One sub-topic may be selected for a whole class or different sub-topics may be selected for individuals or groups of students. In the former case, it will be important to select a sub-topic that is sufficiently broad to accommodate a range of interests and perspectives, so that each student can provide an individual response to the coursework assessment task(s) set, as well as in the Discussion in Section 2 of the Oral Examination’. The choice of resources used to support the Detailed Study is also very important and they should be in Macedonian.

Students need to be able to work on a sub-topic for the Detailed Study that truly interests them, as this will enable them to express and elaborate on ideas and defend their own opinions confidently. Thorough preparation is necessary for a successful result. An introduction, of no more than one minute, is required before the Discussion begins; however, some students had not prepared this. The introduction should refer to the topic of the Detailed Study, including a brief summary of the main focus. If students have chosen to use any supporting material to support their discussion they need to alert the assessors to this during the introduction.

The majority of students this year were well prepared for the Discussion. High-scoring students demonstrated an excellent knowledge of their topic, referring to resources that consisted of different text types. They knew their texts very well and spoke fluently, elaborating on their ideas and opinions. These students carried the discussion forward with some original input and provided highly relevant, in-depth responses. They used highly appropriate vocabulary, a range of grammatical structures and displayed accurate pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

In contrast, a small number of students did not appear to have been aware of the expectations required for this section of the examination. These students did not indicate that they had chosen a sub-topic for detailed study and were not prepared for the Discussion. They offered a very limited range of information and demonstrated weaknesses in using and referring to the texts studied in class. These students needed a lot of support from the assessors and found it difficult to clarify or elaborate on ideas and opinions. They used a very limited range of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Some students relied heavily on rote-learned material and presented the same information for their Detailed Study. When these students were asked questions, they were completely thrown and unable to continue or effectively



participate in the discussion. Students need to be able to field spontaneous questions and responses more comfortably, perhaps through less rote learning and more spontaneous discussion. It is important to choose suitable topics that are not too difficult for students, and find texts that they can understand, so that they will have some ideas to articulate if the assessors move away from the anticipated questions.

Students are encouraged to prepare concluding statements. Assessors often ask at the end of the Discussion if there is anything else the student would like to say. This gives students the opportunity to cover areas that they have concentrated on which may not have been raised during the Discussion.

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall, students' performances in the written examination were pleasing. There are three sections in the written examination and most students attempted all of them. Students need to work steadily through each section, watching the time closely to ensure that there is sufficient time to complete all parts. A small number of students did not complete the entire examination.

Every year some students lose marks because they respond in the wrong language. Students must remember that Part A of Sections 1 and 2 should be answered in English and Part B of Sections 1 and 2 in Macedonian. As stated on the paper, responses in the wrong language will not score any marks. Teachers are advised to draw their students' attention to this issue.

It is important for teachers to stress the importance of reading the questions very carefully and highlighting key words. It is also recommended that teachers expose students to a wide range of text types in the course of their teaching programs so that they are better prepared for the examination.

Students need to be aware that illegible handwriting may affect their result if the assessors cannot read what they have written.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A – Answer in English

In this section students are required to listen to texts and respond to set questions. Usually the number of marks for a question indicates the number of points or responses that are required. It is important that students practise note-taking skills and ensure that they are focused when listening to the texts. They should also read the questions carefully; breaking them down and highlighting the key information which they need to identify during the playing of the texts. Students need to make sure that their final response is given in the space provided for the answer, as no credit is given for answers in the note-taking column.

Overall, the students did quite well in this section and they demonstrated a good level of understanding of the information provided in the listening passages.

Text 1

Question 1

Most students answered this question correctly.

Question 1a.

He climbed Mount Everest and placed the Macedonian flag on its peak.

Question 1b.

Alpinists from six different countries will climb the highest mountain in the world at the same time and fly the flags of all of these countries.

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Text 2

Question 2a.

Sunday lunch when they were little

Question 2b.

Any five of:

- lunch was always on time
- they always had meat
- Mum would pass Dad the plates
- they would finish with something sweet
- Mum and Dad would always drink their coffee outside
- the father always read *Nova Makedonija* with his coffee
- the children would go out to play
- they would have a regular afternoon nap.

Question 2c.

- The house was silent because they had an afternoon nap.
- The house was so silent 'you could hear a fly passing by'.

Text 3

Question 3a.

Any three of:

- more seats
- VIP box
- commercial area
- parking area.

Question 3b.

- a fence will be erected in front of the northern stand
- Macedonia can host its matches on its own ground

Question 3c.

Athletics track

Question 3d.

- The company has been in business for 60 years.
- The company will probably finish the stadium earlier than expected.
- The company will build a top-class European stadium.

Part B – Answer in Macedonian

In this section students are usually required to provide a full sentence response or a sequence of connected sentences in Macedonian. This is an opportunity for them to show the assessors how they are able to use the Macedonian language when responding to questions. They should try to use the best vocabulary, correct spelling and accurate sentence structures to express their answers in Macedonian.

Text 4

Question 4a.

In the summary students were expected to refer to the following points:

- English in Grade 1, compulsory ICT and an increased number of sessions in Physical and Health Education for primary schools
- the introduction of Business Management as a new subject for secondary schools.

Question 4b.

Political Parties

- wanted history of religion, rather than religious education studies

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Religious Communities

- Religion would bring a greater knowledge and tolerance of others
- it leads to the reduction of deviant behaviour

Sociologists

- Religion would divide the students

Text 5

Question 5a.

Any two of:

- she is a lecturer in architecture/architect
- she has been working on the research project 'Migration and Architecture'.

Question 5b.

Any three of:

- according to the guest, some of the cities in the 1950s were socially empty cities, and there was no developed structure for urban life
- the architecture of the buildings originated from the English tradition
- these cities today have characteristics of southern European architecture and are very lively cities
- migrants' houses have different architecture and bilingual inhabitants.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

This section of the examination is designed primarily to assess the students' knowledge and skills in analysing and responding to information from written Macedonian texts. It can be challenging for some students as they are required to read three different texts containing a lot of information and to respond to them within an allocated time frame. The passages can contain complex vocabulary and students are encouraged to use dictionaries. Students should carefully read the passages during the reading time and look closely at the questions before and during the reading, so that they know what information needs to be found from a particular paragraph or from the passage as a whole.

Teachers and students need to be aware that the skills required for this section need much practise and should make sure that adequate activities are undertaken in their teaching and learning programs. In order to be well prepared for this section students are encouraged to read extensively in a wide range of texts in Macedonian.

Generally, students performed well in this section. Many students found Question 6b. quite challenging. The question required students to complete a table about rice production in Macedonia. Some students misread the question and answered it in Macedonian while others wrote the information in the wrong section. No marks were given for these answers.

Part A – Answer in English

In this part, students are required to demonstrate an understanding of Macedonian written texts. Students were required to read two texts and extract, evaluate, compare and contrast aspects of both texts.

Text 6

Question 6a.

White gold

- white is colour of rice
- gold is a valuable metal



Question 6b.

Problems with the current year's rice production	Any three of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no government protection/financial backing • late sowing • late rainfall • growers' dissatisfaction with sale price and production.
The Rice Institute's contribution to rice production	Any three of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new strains of rice • protective measures • the demands government's finance and protection • tradition of 70 years.
Other existing conditions in support of the Rice Industry	Any three of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant crop/in demand • one of rare crops not imported • rice by-products used as cattle fodder (cattle food) • it gives stable and high profits • it is a quality consumer product.

Text 7

Question 7a.

- folk dancing
- bicycle race
- rice tasting/sampling rice dishes

Question 7b.

Text 6, any three of:

- letter to the editor
- to inform and ask for government funds
- persuasive
- connected text with longer sentences.

Text 7, any three of:

- program/timetable
- to celebrate the 'white gold' by an informative order of events
- short sentences, point form
- to invite people.

Part B – Answer in Macedonian

In this part of the examination students are expected to demonstrate their understanding of a written text by responding in Macedonian to information provided in the text.

Text 8

Question 8

Students were given a newspaper article about a party that gets out of control. They were required to respond to the newspaper article in a personal letter of 150–200 words to a close friend addressing aspects of the case and the psychologist's advice.

Most students were familiar with the format of an informal letter and did well in this question. The most successful students wrote well-structured letters, manipulated language authentically and displayed extensive knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structure. They demonstrated depth in the treatment of the task through the development of relevant information and ideas relating to the text.

Some students wrote letters of adequate structure and content but their responses contained grammatical mistakes and their spelling was poor. A few students did not understand the task and their letters did not respond to the question asked. A very small number of students did not respond to this task at all.



Section 3 – Writing in Macedonian

This section was designed to assess the students' ability to express ideas through the creation of an original text in Macedonian. Students were required to write a response of 200–250 words on one of four topics. This year the most popular topic was Question 9, followed by Questions 10 and 12, which had an almost even spread of responses. The least popular topic was Question 11.

Students are expected to be familiar with the kinds of writing and different text types specified in the *VCE Macedonian Study Design*. Lists of different kinds of writing and text types are given on page 13. Pages 50–51 give the main characteristics of the different kinds of writing and page 52 gives the main characteristics of common text types. Students should know these characteristics well so that they can fulfil the requirements of the writing tasks.

The criteria used to assess responses in this section were:

- relevance and depth of treatment of ideas, information, or opinions
- accuracy and range of vocabulary and sentence structures
- the capacity to structure and sequence response and capacity to use conventions of the text type.

Question 9

Students were required to write a text for a speech on water shortage. The better responses:

- had a salutation
- highlighted why water shortage is a problem
- provided ideas or examples of how to combat the problem
- used a range of vocabulary
- followed the correct structure, layout, register and style
- ended the speech with an encouraging tone, perhaps suggesting that any little bit of effort counts.

Question 10

Students were required to write an imaginative story about a journey they had just returned from, bringing with them a special treasure. The better responses:

- demonstrated imagination and skills in creating an appropriate atmosphere
- included descriptions of emotions, people and places
- used a wide range of vocabulary, and sequenced and structured ideas coherently and effectively.

Question 11

Students were required to write an evaluative review of a film they have recently seen. A very small number of students attempted this question, perhaps indicating unfamiliarity with the characteristics of the 'review' text type.

The better responses:

- provided ideas that were well organised in sentences and paragraphs that linked well
- successfully evaluated aspects of the film
- made appropriate recommendations.

Question 12

Students were required to write an informative piece about their tour throughout Macedonia. The better responses:

- conveyed the information clearly and comprehensively
- used facts, examples, explanations and references
- chose language and structures that clearly conveyed the message and sequenced the information logically.