



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 be familiar with the specific requirements of the oral examination, as outlined in the *VCE Macedonian Study Design*, page 30.

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. Generally, they 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.

Other students often needed to be prompted by assessors and waited to be asked questions. They found it difficult to carry the conversation forward due to weak oral language skills or a lack of preparedness. Some students did not understand questions and gave incorrect responses. These students did not have the ability to ask for clarification. A bigger focus on listening for details is necessary.

The main grammatical errors included the incorrect use of tenses, prepositions and inappropriate vocabulary. Students need to be exposed to the language and require more practice. Anglicisms were evident at times.

Stronger students gave in-depth explanations, and expressed their views and opinions with appropriate vocabulary. Exposure to more descriptive language would be of great value to students, enabling them to talk in greater detail about the personalities and qualities of friends.

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 must be encouraged to give more than a monosyllabic answer. They are



encouraged to go beyond simple responses and give extended answers that provide interesting information about themselves, keeping in mind that the assessors might probe 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 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 must be in Macedonian.

The sub-topic selected for the Detailed Study should interest the students 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. Some students did not prepare this. The introduction should refer to the sub-topic of the Detailed Study, and include its 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. Students are encouraged to provide input when topics for Detailed Study are chosen and work collaboratively with their teacher.

This year the majority of students were well prepared for the Discussion. High-scoring students demonstrated an excellent knowledge of their chosen 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 appropriate vocabulary, a range of grammatical structures and displayed accurate pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

Some students relied heavily on rote-learned material and presented the same information for their Detailed Study as for the Conversation. The Conversation focuses on the student’s world, while the Discussion focuses on the language and culture of the language through texts studied. 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. Insufficiently prepared students relied on assessor questions and often needed prompting. Students should practise leading a discussion as a part of their examination preparation.

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 have not been raised during the Discussion and provide an appropriate conclusion/ending. By doing this, students show confidence as well as their ability to use the language at a high standard.