

2020 VCE Polish oral examination report

General comments

The Polish oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination has two sections – a Conversation of approximately 7 minutes, during which students converse with the assessors about their personal world, and a Discussion of approximately 8 minutes.

Following the Conversation, the student will indicate to the assessor(s) the subtopic chosen for detailed study and, in no more than one minute, briefly introduce the main focus of their subtopic, alerting assessors to any objects brought to support the discussion. Suitable objects include photographs, maps or diagrams and should include no text or very little text. The support material must have minimal writing, which includes only a heading, name or title.

The one-minute introduction should give assessors an indication of the area of discussion. The purpose is for students to briefly introduce their chosen subtopic; it is not an opportunity for students to list all their information or texts.

The focus of the Discussion is to explore aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Polish is spoken, with the student being expected to make reference to the texts studied.

The choice of subtopic for the Detailed Study is very important. It should be an engaging topic that motivates students to become familiar with the content and vocabulary needed, and thus be more skilled to support and elaborate on information, ideas and opinions. It is important that students and teachers select materials for the Detailed Study carefully so that students are exposed to a variety of views. The type of texts used by students should vary in complexity and be in Polish so that students can become aware of key vocabulary related to their subtopic. Students are reminded that they must be prepared to use language spontaneously in unrehearsed situations. Students should be able to draw on the texts they have studied and make links between the texts to support, expand on and explore opinions and ideas on the subtopic and different aspects of the texts. Students should be able to relate this to the Polish-speaking community.

Students are not expected to be 'experts'; they are expected to have learnt strategies in order to respond to unexpected questions. It would be valuable for students to learn phrases such as, 'I have not studied this aspect of the topic, but I think ...', 'I don't know, but I feel ...' and 'I am not sure about this question but I know ...'

It should be noted that during the oral examination:

- students may be asked a variety of questions with 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.

Three criteria are used in assessing both the Conversation and the Discussion: communication, content and language. Details of the assessment criteria and descriptors are published on the VCAA website. It is important that all teachers and students be familiar with the criteria and descriptors, and that students use them as part of their examination preparation.

This will help students to engage in a lively and interesting exchange with assessors. Although there are similarities between the assessment criteria for the Conversation and Discussion sections of the examination, the criteria assess two very different aspects of performance. Students who are well prepared are generally able to demonstrate their abilities and proficiency in the language.

Section 1 – Conversation

All students were able to engage appropriately and confidently in general conversation about their personal world. Students were able to provide highly relevant information and manage subtopic changes well.

Students who scored highly were able to extend the conversation effortlessly and use correct grammatical structures and a wide range of vocabulary. Their speaking was characterised by excellent pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. Other high-level conversation skills included using the appropriate register when addressing assessors, self-correcting when mistakes were made and seeking clarification.

The most problematic areas were lack of gender agreement between nouns and adjectives (e.g. *ta budynka* or *dziewczyny mieszkali*) and incorrect endings in the declension of nouns (e.g. *w tym samym domie, restauracje i sklepów* or *brzegiem Morze Bałtyckie*). Students should ensure that they do not use direct translation from English (e.g. *szczególny diet*).

Section 2 – Discussion

Many students showed a genuine interest in their chosen subtopic and were well prepared, having used a variety of texts to support the discussion. Information presented was logically sequenced, and students generally used a wide range of culturally appropriate expressions relevant to the subtopic. Many students used a visual prompt, such as a poster, effectively and used this to support their discussion of the subtopic. The majority of students demonstrated a very good understanding of their subtopic and were eager to answer questions to show their knowledge. However, students should ensure they have prepared adequate content to fill the allocated time frame.

Students who scored highly were able to express their own opinions on the selected subtopic. They could explore aspects of the language and culture of Polish-speaking communities in depth and follow a logical structure. These students used relevant and effective word choices and used information from texts they had studied to explain and defend the opinions they expressed.

Some students were unable to expand on the discussion as their speech was clearly rehearsed and did not flow naturally (e.g. relaying facts instead of providing unique viewpoints).