



2004

LOTE: Portuguese GA 3: Examination

Oral Component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students' performances ranged from outstanding to those who struggled to maintain the exchange; hence there is much room for improvement. Some students were quite nervous, while others appeared to be relaxed and confident.

Students must be aware of the assessment criteria and that the conversation is an exchange and not a question/answer session. They must be able to seek clarification and to express their ideas and opinions.

Most students handled the conversation well and were able to understand the questions asked.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

The best students used a wide range of vocabulary and were able to switch from one tense to another without difficulty. These students were able to respond to and build on questions from the assessors. Weaker students struggled and their responses were mediocre and, at times, minimal. They frequently used anglicisms and incorrect verb forms or genders. Students at this level should be able to converse in basic tenses, such as the present, past and future.

Section 2 – Discussion

The choice of topic and sub-topic for the detailed study is important. If students do not have an interest in their topic it is hard for them to advance the discussion, or to express opinions and ideas. There were a range of different topics, but the most popular topics were about tourism. Some students had prepared a city of their choice from a Portuguese speaking country and some brought materials such as photographs, maps and posters to support their presentation.

The sub-topic chosen should suit the linguistic ability of the student, and should lend itself to discussion and the expression of opinions and ideas. If the sub-topic is poor, the assessment criteria 'relevance, breath and depth of information' may be difficult to satisfy.

In the detailed study, the students should:

- discuss and express opinions and ideas and justify them
- use a variety of vocabulary and sentence structures
- use the language spontaneously
- develop repair strategies
- engage in the discussion and make references to the texts studied.

Some students had memorised their information and found it hard to discuss or maintain the flow of the discussion when interrupted. Many students were able to handle the questions well because they had sufficient knowledge of the content. However, some students were not well prepared and found it difficult to discuss specific aspects of the sub-topic. These students were not able to clearly express their opinions or ideas on the material studied.

Teachers should design tasks and select appropriate materials for the detailed study that encourage students to discuss the topic with ease. Students need to be discouraged from rote-learning their presentation.

Written Examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

In general, the students responded to questions accurately and appropriately, however some students did not finish all of the questions. The examination paper gave the opportunity for students with different levels of understanding of Portuguese to perform to the best of their ability. Most students performed well.



SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Listening and Responding

Most of the students were able to understand and respond appropriately, and demonstrated good skills in listening and responding. However, some students were not able to pick up the main points and/or present their ideas clearly.

To improve their performance in the listening and responding section, students should:

- practise listening exercises
- listen to different texts in various text types
- practise picking out key points
- learn how to respond in full sentences
- listen to spoken Portuguese in films or on the news
- learn how to take notes while listening to texts
- pick up the key words in the question in order to respond accurately
- acquire a range of vocabulary from the topics and themes in the Portuguese Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design.

Reading and Responding

Most students were able to select and reorganise the relevant information. However, some students had difficulty selecting the correct information from the text and did not answer some questions well due to their limited vocabulary and a lack of practise translating into English.

To improve their performance in the reading and responding section, students should:

- pay more attention to the key words and translate them well
- read carefully and look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary
- make sure they understand the questions before answering them.

To help students to prepare for the reading and responding section, teachers should:

- use a diverse range of texts and activities in the curriculum to help improve the students' ability and skills in the language
- pay more attention to providing translations and key words on various topics according to Study Design specifications
- give the students opportunities to increase their vocabulary by using a variety of texts and text types
- help students to practise using complex language structures
- revise the more complex grammatical structures needed for students at the VCE level to perform well in the exam.

Writing in Portuguese

Students could choose between a variety of topics and could write in a personal, imaginative, informal or evaluative style. The most popular choice was the imaginative topic, followed by the evaluative.

Most students wrote clearly and gave their opinions and ideas; however, more breadth and depth in terms of content was often needed.

When attempting the writing section, students should:

- choose a topic they enjoy
- read each paragraph to make sure that the piece develops logically and makes sense
- use the dictionary to look up unfamiliar words
- check their spelling
- proofread before handing their paper in.

Teachers should encourage students to proofread their work and look for errors such as a lack of tense agreement, a lack of subjects or verbs in phrases, the omission of articles and prepositions or a failure to pluralise.