2021 VCE Vietnamese First Language written external assessment report

General comments

In Section 1 – Listening and responding, most students attempted all questions and achieved high scores. Some students gave their answers with either insufficient detail or incomplete sentences. A small number of students did not read the questions carefully, resulting in inaccurate responses.

In Section 2 – Reading and responding, a small number of students understood the requirements of the task, applying the characteristics of an article in a persuasive writing style. Excellent Vietnamese language skills was a key factor that contributed to high scores in this section. Responses that did not score well did not show the capacity to identify and synthesise the two reading texts and demonstrated poor language skills.

In Section 3 – Writing in Vietnamese, the most popular questions were Questions 3 and 5. The least-chosen question was Question 7. Generally, students did reasonably well in this section. Common issues were the lack of well-structured, comprehensive and sophisticated ideas and the omission of an introduction, body or conclusion as appropriate to the text types.

Specific information

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1 ‒ Listening and responding

In this section, students were to listen to a text and answer a set of questions in response. In general, students demonstrated adequate preparation. Many students did not read the questions carefully enough to make correct responses. The assessment criteria for this section were the capacity to:

* understand general and specific aspects of texts
* convey information accurately and appropriately.

Many students did well in listening and note-taking skills but confused Question 1b. and Question 1c. In Question 1a., most responses included the sign of nature and birds but not all details on people. Most students could not infer the figurative meaning in Question 1d.: Bếp là biểu tượng cho một nơi ấm cúng, no đủ và mang niềm vui cho cả nhà(The kitchen is a symbol of a warm, cosy, abundant place that brought joy to the whole family).

Question 1a.

* Thời tiết (nature): cái rét bắt đầu đặc quánh lại hoặc lá đỏ cong veo gieo mình xuống mặt đường khô nứt nẻ (the cold started to thicken, or the curving red leaves fell onto the dry, cracked pavements)
* Động vật (animals): chim vội vã tìm nơi trú ẩn (the birds rushed to find shelters)
* Con người (the people): lũ chúng tôi vội vã với những môn thi học kỳ 1 (we the children were in a hurry for the first term exams)
* người lớn tất bật lo toan cho xong công, xong nợ (the adults were too busy with their worries to finish their workload or clear out the debt).

Question 1b.

Possible answers included:

* Gia đình đông con (A big family with many children)
* Cả lũ ùa vào (We all joined her)
* Lũ chúng tôi, đứa nào cũng thi thoảng chạy về phải ngó nghiêng một tí (All of us, the children, sometimes ran back and had bit of a look)
* Gia đình đầm ấm, biết giúp đỡ nhau và hiểu phép tắc lễ nghi (A warm, supportive and respectful family)
* Không thể thu chân tay ngồi nhìn mẹ làm một mình, cả lũ ùa vào, đứa kéo nước, đứa tìm xơ mứơp, đứa xúc cát, đứa khiêng đứa vác, chả mấy chốc, khắp sân la liệt như sắp có cỗ. (We were unable to sit idly and watch mum doing everything by herself. We all joined her: one pulled out the water hoses, one searched for loofah sponge, one shovelled the sand, one carried things. The whole yard soon became full as if there was going to be party.)
* Lũ chúng tôi, đứa nào cũng thi thoảng chạy về phải ngó nghiêng một tí nhưng chẳng ai dám động tay vì còn cúng cụ. (All of us, the children, sometimes ran back and had a bit of a look, but no one dared to touch the food because it would be offered on the alters to the ancestors.)
* Gia đình nghèo khó (không khá giả, đủ ăn, sống chật vật), không đủ ăn hàng ngày nên trẻ con phải chờ dịp Tết mới được ăn ngon. (A poor family. Due to the lack of daily food, the children had to wait for Tet to eat enough delicious food.)
* Mẹ tiễn năm cũ trong căn bếp quen thuộc, cầu mong mọi điều buồn tủi, nghèo khó sẽ qua đi trong căn bếp. (Mum saw off the old year in the familiar kitchen, wishing that all the sadness and poverty would pass in the kitchen.)
* Phải năm nào trời đột nhiên chuyển gió nồm nam, nắng loe lên ấm nóng, chuối chín rùng rục, chúng tôi mừng hớn hở vì được chén còn mẹ thì thắt lòng lo lắng. (One year, it suddenly changed to the south wind and became hot. The bananas were ripe sooner than usual; we were happy to eat them but our mother became worried.)
* Dư vị của bữa cỗ 23 tháng Chạp đã tàn từ lâu trên chiếc lưỡi háu ăn. (The aftertaste of the 23rd December meal had long gone away on the tongue of food lovers.)
* Chắc mẹ chả ước gì đâu, chỉ khấn trời cho chồng con khỏe mạnh, làm ăn khấm khá hơn để không chỉ tết mà ngày nào mẹ cũng được nấu thật nhiều món ngon, chuẩn bị mâm cỗ thật đầy để cúng tổ tiên, để chồng con được ăn no, ăn ngon. (She might not wish for anything else except praying for her husband and children to be healthy, to have better jobs so that not only in the Tet occasion but every day she could cook a lot of delicious dishes, prepare a full tray to offer the ancestors, for her husband and children to enjoy delicious and abundant food.)

Question 1c.

Possible answers included:

* Mẹ bắt đầu chuẩn bị cho Tết bằng việc lôi từ trên gác bếp ra và cọ rửa đến sáng bóng những chiếc nồi cả năm mới dùng đến một lần. (Mum started preparing for Tet by pulling out the pots and saucepans, which were only used once a year, from the kitchen shelves and scoured them out until they became shiny.)
* Mẹ động viên tinh thần, an ủi các con khi chúng háo hức mong Tết về. (Mum reassured the children when they were too excited to wait for the arrival of Tet.)
* Mẹ chắt chiu, vay mượn để có tiền lo cho một cái Tết đầy đủ cho cả nhà. (Mum saved every amount of money or borrowedto ensure that the family had a fulfilling Tet.)
* Mẹ mua sắm rất nhiều thực phẩm đặc biệt cho Tết như gấc đỏ, bó lá dong, miến, mộc nhĩ, nấm hương, gạo nếp, đỗ xanh. (Mum shopped for special food for Tet, such as red momordica fruit, phrynium leaves wrapped tightly, vermicelli, black mushrooms, shiitake mushrooms, glutinous rice, green beans.)
* Mẹ mua cành đào với nụ hồng chúm chím, nụ non xanh mướt. (Mum bought peach branches with pink buds opened slightly, young lush green buds.)
* Mẹ kiểm tra lại kỹ cửa, thùng thạp xem có hở chỗ nào, chuột có thể cắn mất thứ gì hay không.

(Mum carefully checked the doors and the crates to see if there were any openings, the rats might come in and bite them).

* Mẹ nấu các món ăn đặc biệt cho Tết như ninh xương hầm măng, nấu đông, kho cá, bánh chưng, chả nướng, nem rán, chân giò, mọc. (Mum cooked special food for Tet: simmered the bones, stewed bamboo shoots, made pork jelly or stewed fish, made banh chung grilled rolls, fried spring rolls, stewed pork shank.)

Question 1d.

Possible answers included:

* Nghĩa đen: Phần lớn sinh hoạt của Tết đều bắt đầu từ căn bếp, nơi có mẹ tất bật chuẩn bị và nấu nướng những món ăn ngon cho một dịp Tết. (Literal meaning: The majority of Tet activities started from the kitchen where Mum was busy preparing and cooking delicious food for Tet.)
* Nghĩa bóng: Bếp là biểu tượng cho một nơi ấm cúng, no đủ, mang đến niềm vui cho cả nhà. (Figurative meaning: The kitchen is a symbol of a warm, cosy, abundant place that brought joy to the whole family.)

Section 2 ‒ Reading and responding

The assessment criteria for this section were:

* the capacity to identify and synthesise relevant information and ideas from the texts
* appropriateness of structure and sequence
* accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar (including punctuation and, where relevant, script).

In general, many students could not produce strong persuasive writing because of the choice of vocabulary. Many did not use an opening statement about the topic, or used one that was not strong or clear enough to attract attention. Many did not correctly apply the characteristics of article writing.

Question 2

A high-scoring response would have included many of the following pieces of information.

Vua Quang Trung là anh hùng dân tộc vì có những phẩm chất sau. (King Quang Trung is a national hero because of the following qualities).

* Thể chất hơn người (Extraordinary health)
* Ông Nguyễn Huệ … là một người có sức khỏe tuyệt trần (Mr Nguyen Hue… was a man of extraordinary health)
* Lại có mưu trí quyền biến, mẹo mực như thần (And he had an exceptionally clever and resourceful mind as well, even being tactful as a god)
* Khả năng quân sự phi thường (Extraordinary military talent)
* Lấy võ lược mà dựng nghiệp (Built a military career)
* Vua Quang Trung đại thắng quân Thanh (King Quan Trung defeated Qing troops)
* Sự độ lượng (Generosity)
* Ngài có độ lượng, rất am hiểu việc trị nước, biết trọng những người hiền tài văn học (He was generous and knowledgeable in governance, respected virtuous and talented scholars)
* Khả năng xây dựng và bồi đắp lòng tự tôn dân tộc của người dân (Ability to build up people’s pride in themselves)
* Nhà vua muốn rằng người Việt nam thì phải dùng tiếng Việt nam để gây thành cái tinh thần của nước nhà, và cái văn chương đặc biệt, không phải đi vay mượn tiếng mượn chữ của nước Tàu. (The king wanted that Vietnamese people should use the Vietnamese language to build up the country’s spirit, as well as special literature so that they did not need to borrow the writing system from China.)
* Có những biện pháp tích cực và hiệu quả để cai trị đất nước (Introduced the effective and positive measures to govern the country)
* Áp dụng những biện pháp ổn định kinh tế và trị an, nhất là sau khi tờ Chiếu Khuyến Nông được ban bố và thi hành triệt để (Applied the measures to stabilise the economy and security especially after the Agriculture Promotion Royal Proclamation was issued and rigorously carried out)
* Là người thành thực và sáng suốt, biết thừa nhận vấn đề thực tại và đưa ra giải pháp (Is an honest and clear-sighted person. He acknowledged the current problem and found a solution)
* Thành thực và sáng suốt biết chừng nào! Không dối mình, dối người, … [nhà vua] nhận rõ cái cảnh binh lửa liên miên mấy mươi năm nay đã khiến cho cỏ hoang phủ lên ruộng vườn, cảnh đói kém tràn lan nơi nơi (How honest and clear-sighted! No deceit to oneself or others … [the king] acknowledged clearly that the continuous fighting for the last tens of years had enabled the weed to cover the fields; hunger prevailed everywhere)
* Là người công bằng (Is a person who treats everyone fair)
* Công bằng biết chừng nào! Bao nhiêu năm ta mong mỏi tìm ra đất sống cho người lương thiện, kẻ đổ mồ hôi trên luống cày phải có bát cơm vun… Người thực sự làm ruộng không nai lưng trả thuế thay cho bọn lười biếng bỏ đất hoang (How fair! I have been hoping to find a land for honest, law-binding people; the ones who sweat over furrows must have full bowls of steamed rice… People who actually cultivate and toil on the fields do not have to pay tax instead of the lazy ones who leave land uncultivated).
* Là người dũng cảm, dám hành động để dẹp bỏ bất công (Is a brave person who dares to take action against unfairness)
* Các triều trước cứ ngập ngừng, do dự, che giấu yếu đuối bằng những chữ ‘tại vì’, ‘tuy nhiên’. Bây giờ, không. Dứt khoát san bằng sự bất công ấy đi! Không khoan nhượng được nữa (The previous dynasties were indecisive, hesitated and hid their cowardness by such words as ‘because’, ‘but’, ‘however’. Now, not. Definitely do not compromise that impartiality. No more compromise)
* Là người sống có lý có tình (Is a reasonable and considerate person)
* Không thiếu điều gì trong bài chiếu cả! Lại thêm những lời khuyên răn vừa nhân ái vừa rắn rỏi ở đoạn kết! Có lý có tình biết bao (There was nothing short in the proclamation! Additionally, there were benevolent and firm admonishments at the end! How reasonable and considerate).

Section 3 – Writing in Vietnamese

In this section, students were expected to demonstrate two writing styles: evaluative and imaginative.

A small number of students responded well to the chosen topics. They were able to demonstrate excellent Vietnamese language skills, effective structuring and competent vocabulary and grammar skills. Most student responses were adequate in terms of content but these responses lacked effective use of language that was appropriate to the text types and/or writing styles.

Possible content for suitable answers are given below.

Question 3

Students were required to write a speech to students evaluating the pros and cons of volunteer work.

Pros

* Support students’ learning and wellbeing
* Provide students with a way to explore possible career options, help others, connect with people in the community, access opportunities for future employment
* Help to develop self-understanding, independence, confidence, empathy, social skills, cooperation, morality, leadership skills, and critical and creative thinking skills
* Volunteering can make a positive change in students’ lives
* Students develop skills that they can apply in education and in everyday life

Cons

* Volunteer positions are often undervalued
* Possibility of students’ health and learning being affected
* Insufficient resources for volunteering

Students who chose this question responded well to the topic. Most could write about their personal experiences, and the benefits and challenges of volunteering.

Question 4

Students were required to write a blog addressed to the blog followers / public evaluating how the internet has affected learning.

Positive changes

* Make learning more enjoyable, convenient and collaborative; expanding the boundaries of the classroom; encouraging self-paced learning
* Providing faster ways of communicating, for example, instant messaging or social networking platforms
* To change the way we work, entertain, shop and meet with digital devices such as smartwatches and tablets or with applications such as Facebook or Twitter (e.g. to shop online)
* To have a quick impact on people’s thoughts (e.g. through social media)
* To bring family members / relatives / friends closer (e.g. parents can stay in touch with their children overseas)

Negative changes

* Social media can lead to psychological and physical problems such as eye strain, back and neck problems or depression.
* The overuse of digital devices can have a significant impact on the development of children and adolescents (e.g. communication skills or difficulty focusing on important tasks).
* Being addicted leads to complete immersion in the electronic devices and this can damage the relationships with people around you.

A common error for this topic was evaluating technology in general instead of choosing one aspect of technology to evaluate. Students need to read all parts of the question properly and to plan their answer.

Question 5

Students were required to write a report addressed to students / young people evaluating how working part-time can affect study.

Pros

* Gain useful knowledge and independence
* Build good work habits and good attitude
* Improve students’ self-esteem
* Develop organisational skills, including time-management skills
* Gain confidence in communicating and interacting with others
* Expand the opportunities for a future career

Cons

* Academic performance decreases if students cannot balance studying and working
* Possibility of failure to complete the learning course
* Possibility to drop out of school to work

This was the most popular chosen topic because it was close to students. However, many students did not know how to write a report and there was persuasive tone at the conclusion, like ‘you should’ or advice not to do this or that.

Question 6

Students were required to write a personal letter in an imaginative style to a friend describing life on another planet. The response ideally included the following.

Introduction

* Describe the curious thrill when arriving on the planet

Body

* Describe the place/landscape on the planet, the pleasant surprise, homesickness, hope or fears of seeing so many other people already living there
* The settlement/integration into the new life with advantages and disadvantages at the beginning

Conclusion

* Thoughts, feelings and experience about life on another planet

Question 7

Students were required to write an imaginative short story about the village pictured.

Most students who chose this question went off-topic. Instead of writing an imaginary story in the future, students wrote about what the village looked like in the past. Most students’ short-story writing did not have a plot, develop the story, and include a complication and resolution.

Imaginative writing can include numerous perspectives, and can focus on any number of possible changes, which could have ranged from the pragmatic to entirely fictional.