

# 2016 VCE Yiddish written examination report

## General comments

The standard of student responses in the 2016 Yiddish written examination was, in general, excellent. A high level of competence was evident, with very good comprehension skills shown. Students were able to express their ideas and responses effectively in Yiddish, drawing on a broad vocabulary and utilising idiomatic language effectively.

Grammar was the major area where students could improve. Errors were made with basic grammatical conventions, such as using the incorrect auxiliary verb in the past tense (that is, using the verb '*hobn*' where it should be '*zayn*') and producing inconsistencies between the article and adjectival endings. Some mistakes were also made with respect to the position of the verb in the sentence, with students neglecting to place the verb as the second component of the sentence.

Students are advised to memorise and practise basic grammar conventions and syntactical structures when preparing for the examination. They are also advised to consult their dictionary during the examination to determine correct past participles and the appropriate gender of nouns.

## 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 Part A – Answer in English

In this section, students were assessed on their ability to understand general and specific aspects of texts, and on their ability to identify and analyse information and to convey this accurately and appropriately in English. Responses for this section were generally correct, demonstrating that students had excellent comprehension of spoken texts, very good identification of information and the ability to convey this clearly. Accurate responses were given for all questions, although Question 2b. was not answered comprehensively – simple, literal responses were provided, rather than in-depth analysis.

### Text 1

#### Question 1a.

The purpose of the message is to convey:

- the bad news that the Melbourne concert has sold out
- the good news that the grandmother has managed to get tickets to the Adelaide concert
- that the grandmother has organised that the aunt will pick up the girls at the airport.

**Question 1b.**

These words tell us that there is a close relationship between the granddaughter and the grandmother, and that the grandmother understands the importance of the event to her granddaughter.

**Text 2**

**Question 2a.**

Both:

- 1932 – Palestine, first Maccabi Games
- 2015 – first Maccabi Games in Germany, in Berlin.

**Question 2b.**

- '*Mir zenen do*' literally means 'we are here' and is a symbol of triumph.
- Jews are in Germany, even after the events of World War II.
- There were motorcyclists from Palestine then and Israel now; they still exist.
- People were barred from the Olympics in 1936.
- So, this is a sporting triumph over Nazism.

**Text 3**

**Question 3a.**

Father: to honour the father's/grandfather's memory and to commemorate the 625 soldiers who died on the Kokoda Trail.

Son: an adventure and to share the experience with his father.

**Question 3b.**

They carried out the wounded soldiers and fed them.

**Question 3c.**

The speaker thought it was a difficult and emotional journey because:

- of his history
- of his father's history
- it bonded father and son
- the track was/is difficult
- some of the information was/is confronting
- of the length of the journey
- many had died there
- some were the same age as the speaker
- of important links with Australian Jewish history.

## **Part B – Answer in Yiddish**

In Part B, students were assessed on how well they understood general and specific aspects of texts. They needed to identify and analyse information and convey the information accurately and appropriately in Yiddish. This part of the examination was mostly completed very well. Both general and specific aspects of the text were clearly understood, information was identified and analysed effectively, and the information was conveyed both accurately and appropriately in Yiddish. However, students are advised to ensure that they provide all relevant information required. Some students provided incomplete responses for Questions 5b. and 6b., either not providing sufficient detail or omitting some relevant aspects.

**Text 4**

**Question 4**

Answers could have included:

- the nature of the project – planting a garden with the prep class
- the project involves teaching the children about plants and planting and demonstrating this
- the project involves teaching the children about the Aboriginal history of the area through a story
- the project has been well planned and prepared.

**Text 5**

**Question 5a.**

Answers could have included:

- '*Di naye diete is gornisht nay*', or 'the new diet is not new at all', means that the 'new' discovery actually relates to very old knowledge
- the diet appeared 5000 years ago in the Middle East
- people ate a lot of dates and fruit and other foods of the day.

**Question 5b.**

Answers could have included:

- dates remove cholesterol from the arteries
- dates decrease one's appetite, which brings about loss of weight, which makes one healthier.

**Text 6**

**Question 6a.**

Answers could have included:

- Jews
- historians
- archaeologists
- teachers
- theologians
- rabbis
- travel agents
- tour operators.

**Question 6b.**

Answers could have included:

- one synagogue used to be a church but is now again a synagogue
- ritual baths have been found, one of which is located in Trastevere and is now a swimming pool
- there were Jewish communities throughout Italy in ancient times
- there were Jews who were forcibly converted in the 15th and 16th centuries
- some Italians discovered that they had a Jewish background and have begun to live a Jewish life
- they have had a *Shabbes* meal
- they had a Jewish cultural festival.

## Section 2 – Reading and responding

### Part A – Answer in English

Part A required students to compare, contrast, summarise and evaluate texts. It assessed how well students understood general and specific aspects of texts, and how students conveyed the information appropriately.

This part of the examination was completed very well, with students demonstrating very good comprehension and analysis along with the ability to convey information clearly and appropriately.

#### Text 7

##### Question 7a.

Answers could have included:

- the charity box has been stolen from the synagogue, so there is a need to replace it
- the box will be suspended close to the ceiling to avoid repetition of the theft and to place it outside the reach of thieves
- the box will also be out of reach for those who want to donate money
- to give access to the box for those who want to donate money, a ladder also needs to be built
- people may get hurt, so the ladder needs to be secured.

##### Question 7b.

The wise men were not very wise; they did not think through the solution, which in the end caused more issues than it solved.

Also, the placement of the box would make it harder for the donors and just as easy for thieves to remove the money because the thieves would also be able to use the ladder, not just the donors.

#### Text 8

##### Question 8a.

- Hannukah – lights, Maccabees, the miracle of the oil
- Diwali – Called the festival of lights, the most important festival in India, it is joyful, it is a fight against wrongs, Hindi festival
- Loi Krathong – traditional lights on banana leaves floating down the river, making a wish, Thai festival.

##### Question 8b.

Answers could have included:

- light reflects the good in the world
- justice conquers injustice
- heroism appears in tough times
- we, as people who belong to different traditions, have much in common; therefore this encourages us to be tolerant of one another.

## Part B – Answer in Yiddish

#### Text 9

##### Question 9

Students may have included the following in their response:

- arguing in favour or against the proposal (persuasive)
- convenience versus inconvenience
- the importance of knowing our past and of preserving artefacts, sites and relics

- the ethical question of destroying people's homes.

In the case of ritual baths that were uncovered, possible agreement can be reached between researchers and homeowners to preserve the bath with certain stipulations.

In this section, students were assessed on their ability to demonstrate an understanding of the stimulus text, and write text appropriate and relevant to context, purpose and audience. This required students to structure and sequence information and ideas, and to manipulate language structures and vocabulary in Yiddish. Students were assessed on how well they completed these interrelated tasks.

The complex requirements of this task were handled well. Ideas and information were generally organised logically, and students responded effectively to the text. However, in general, the task could have been answered more comprehensively, with more depth of response. For the most part, responses manipulated Yiddish authentically and creatively to meet the requirements of the task. Broad knowledge and understanding of vocabulary and sentence structures was evident.

## **Section 3 – Writing in Yiddish**

Section 3 required students to write approximately 250 words in Yiddish on one of three topics.

Responses were assessed on how well students demonstrated an in-depth treatment of information, ideas and/or opinions, and their appropriateness and relevance to context, purpose and audience; and how well students structured and sequenced information and ideas, and manipulated language structures and vocabulary in Yiddish.

Responses were generally of a high standard, with students demonstrating breadth in the expression and some depth in the development of information, ideas and opinions relevant to the task. The responses were written in an appropriate genre and were relevant to the task and the selected topic. Yiddish was utilised with a good level of authenticity and some creativity. A very good knowledge and understanding of vocabulary, tense, mood and syntax was evident in the responses.

### **Question 10**

Students were asked to, as an exchange student, write the script of a personal talk about their home town, to be presented at a school assembly.

The response could have been written as a personalised account of where the student comes from (now) or where the student was born. As the talk was to be given at a school assembly, it needed to be interesting enough to maintain the students' attention and may have begun with background that allowed the students to understand the social and/or historical roots of the town. (The expression 'home town' also allowed students to write on a large city such as Sydney or Melbourne.)

### **Question 11**

Question 11 asked students to imagine that, on a flight to Sydney, they found themselves sitting next to a famous person they had admired for a long time. Students were required to write an informative script of a play for a television show based on this encounter.

This question allowed students to write about a famous person of their choice. They were not expected to write a full play, but rather a significant scene. Responses could be set out as a script with alternating lines of dialogue.

**Question 12**

Students were asked to write an article for publication in the school magazine, evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of having a part-time job. The target audience of the article was future Year 12 students.

Students were expected to write about the advantages and the disadvantages of having a part-time job and include a conclusion. Students could have argued, for example, that even though a part-time job may take some hours from study, its advantages in learning about how to take responsibility and interact with people from all walks of life may outweigh the disadvantages of having a few hours less each week to spend on specific studies.