

2015 VCE Languages oral examination reports – First languages

The following information applies to the oral examination for all Victorian first language studies.

Teachers and students are advised to read this entire report, not just the language-specific section, as it contains general and specific information about the first language oral examination.

The Chief Assessor for each study has provided comments on the quality of student performance for each language and this information can be accessed directly by clicking on the links below.

- Chinese First Language
- Indonesian First Language
- Japanese First Language
- Korean First Language

General comments

The first language oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skill in using spoken language. In the Presentation section, students must present the results of the Detailed Study they undertook in class on a topic of their choice. In the Discussion section, students engage in a discussion with the assessors and elaborate on the results of their Detailed Study.

Generally, student performance was very good in first language oral examinations. Most students were well prepared and presented with confidence. Although most students were very fluent in their language, using good pronunciation and accurate linguistic elements, only a few of them used advanced vocabulary. Most students had a good understanding of the purpose of the examination and they performed to the best of their ability. Students must study Language and Culture through Literature and the Arts for their Detailed Study. Refer to the *VCE First Language Study Design* for further information.

Teachers and students are reminded that the criteria and descriptors are published on the VCAA website. It is important that teachers and students are familiar with the assessment criteria and descriptors and use them as part of their examination preparation. This will assist students to engage effectively in a lively and interesting exchange with the assessors.

The Presentation and Discussion sections are of equal weighting in this examination, and it is important that students be thoroughly prepared for both sections.

The following assessment criteria apply.

Section 1: Presentation

- Criterion 1 – Capacity to present the information appropriately and effectively
- Criterion 2 – Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

Section 2: Discussion

- Criterion 3 – Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively
- Criterion 4 – Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

Students' attention should be drawn to the correct use of cue cards as specified in the study design as a considerable number of students' notes and cue cards did not conform to the required specifications. Cue cards must be no more than 20 cm × 12.5 cm, and notes should be written in point form. Students are advised that assessors may confiscate their notes if they do not conform to the required specifications.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

The key to a high-scoring performance in this section of the examination is thorough preparation. Students should have well-developed ideas and opinions and present them clearly and logically. A thorough understanding of the topic and texts will also help students to achieve at a high standard.

The majority of students were well prepared, fluent and confident within the four-minute presentation, and the topic selection was very broad. The students engaged well with the assessors and timed their presentations well. Many interesting topics were presented and were supported by a large variety of resources.

A small number of students used an informative rather than a persuasive style in their presentation, and a few students presented an evaluative speech. Students must ensure that they adhere to the requirements of the study design, which require a clear stance a chosen issue. The topic selected must also meet the requirements of this examination. The texts selected should be related to the topic, and should be used to support the student's ideas and opinions. Simply telling three stories from the texts is not suitable.

Content

Many students presented relevant but superficial information and ideas, indicating insufficient preparation or an inability to analytically study the material used. It is important to select authentic materials from the Literature and the Arts option in order to demonstrate a good range and depth of information.

Section 2 – Discussion

Some students scored lower for the Discussion section than for the Presentation. Although communication was quite smooth with a good level of engagement, a broader range of ideas and vocabulary was needed to take the discussion to a higher level. Students need to practise the skills required to elaborate on their ideas and opinions.

Students should be aware that the marks awarded for the Discussion section have the same weight as those for the Presentation.

Many students were well prepared to engage in meaningful discussion with the assessors.

Communication

Some students maintained a high level of engagement with assessors, responding readily and covering an impressive range of information. They presented their ideas and views on the topics clearly and confidently, using sophisticated expressions. These students were also able to elaborate further when required.

In general, students showed good control of pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. However, some students responded to questions by repeating the key words and explanations they had used

in their Presentation. In this section, students are expected to add further information, elaborate on their findings, and clarify their opinions and views.

Content

It is important to select appropriate materials from a variety of media, including written texts (such as a short story, essay, article or poem) and visual or audio material (such as films, DVDs, radio interviews, theatre performances and TV series). The study design suggests using a minimum of three texts of different types from Literature and the Arts.

When using films, students are reminded that it is not sufficient to simply follow the plot, but to study the director's intent, social and/or historical background and events portrayed. Students should consider an interesting aspect of the topic that may enrich the content and enliven the discussion.

2015 VCE Chinese First Language oral examination report

General comments

The majority of students demonstrated a good understanding of the requirements of the oral examination and delivered a well-prepared and fluent presentation. Only a small group of students were not able to finish their presentation within the four-minute time limit. A number of students' presentations were too short.

Many students presented an informative speech instead of a persuasive speech by telling three historical stories. Topics such as 侠客行 (the journey of a knight) lacked an argument and did not meet the requirements of the examination.

A few students used references that were not written in Chinese; this is also not suitable for this examination.

Many new topics were presented in the 2015 exam; for example, 我的父母 (My parents), 甄嬛传 (Empresses in the Palace), 平凡的世界 (Ordinary World), 马云传 (A Biography of Ma Yun), 暖春 (A Warm Spring) and a large range of resources was used by students to support their stance.

A small group of students used many literary expressions; for example, quotes from 诗经 (the Classic of Poetry), 礼记 (Book of Rites), 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals), 史记 (Records of the Grand Historian), which often caused their intended meaning to be unclear.

The key to a high score in this examination is to complete thorough preparation of the Detailed Study topic. High-scoring students had completed an extensive study of the topic they chose for the Detailed Study. These students were confident, demonstrating excellent linguistic skills and excellent understanding of all requirements of this assessment task. They gave a well-timed presentation with excellent pronunciation and intonation, they were able to make smooth exchanges with the assessors and sometimes to advance the Discussion and they were readily able to clarify, elaborate on and defend their opinions and ideas.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

High-scoring students:

- fluently gave a well-structured presentation, including an introduction, body and conclusion
- demonstrated well-developed ideas and opinions and a clear stance
- used a good range of references to support ideas and opinions
- completed the Presentation within the time required.

Low-scoring students:

- used the incorrect style
- delivered presentations that lacked depth, suggesting insufficient research
- did not present for four minutes
- showed little evidence of preparation.

The following topics used by students worked well under exam conditions.

- 君子立于危墙之下 (A great man always stands firm in the face of danger)
- 人应有追求完美的精神 (Man should pursue perfection)
- 无为是中国处事精神的精髓 (Inaction is the essence of the Chinese way of acting)
- 君子爱财要取之有道 (Money should be pursued in the correct manner)
- 回归节俭 (Return to the habit of saving)
- 年轻人应积极创业 (Young people should be encouraged to be entrepreneurs)
- 表面繁荣不是真正的繁荣 (Superficial wealth is not true wealth)
- 适时的放弃是人生智慧 (Giving up at the right time is a life wisdom)
- 人应顺其自然 (People should learn to let nature take its course)
- 勿以善小而不为 (Do a good deed, no matter how small it could be)
- 过度怀旧是一种病 (Yearning for the past is an illness)
- 看脸难识真面目 (Don't judge a book by its cover/It is hard to judge someone by their appearance)
- 眼见未必为实 (Seeing is not believing)
- 中国传统家教需要传承 (Chinese traditional family discipline needs to be promoted)
- 女性为中国文坛做出不可忽视的贡献 (The contribution made by female writers to Chinese literacy should not be ignored)

Section 2 – Discussion

High-scoring students:

- advanced the Discussion
- used relevant and logical responses
- used a wide range of references
- expressed ideas and opinions with evidence
- elaborated on the topic
- maintained a high level of engagement.

Low-scoring students:

- paused for lengthy periods of time
- repeated elements of a prepared speech
- failed to clarify opinions and ideas
- were unable to maintain the Discussion.

2015 VCE Indonesian First Language oral examination report

General comments

The 2015 Indonesian First Language oral examination assessed students' knowledge and language skills using spoken Indonesian.

For further information regarding the Detailed Study and the criteria for the oral examination, refer to the *VCE Indonesian First Language Study Design*.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

Students are expected to study in detail a topic relating to language and culture through literature and the arts. Students should be well prepared for the oral examination.

Students may support their presentation with objects such as photographs, diagrams, maps and brief speaker's notes. Students should be aware that notes on cue cards should be written in point form on one side of a cue card only. Refer to the *VCE Exams Navigator* for further information.

Students who supported their issues with resources such as books, films, electronic media and interviews were well prepared and had a broad knowledge of the topic they presented.

Section 2 – Discussion

It is important that students have thorough knowledge of their content and do not repeat issues. Some students demonstrated good preparation and performed very well. Some were able to recite very good poems and participate in lengthy discussions about their findings.

Some students used informal language in the Discussion, and others gave a presentation without issues, which did not create a deep discussion. It is important that students be specific and have issues to discuss related to their Detailed Study. The discussion with the assessors focuses on aspects of the nominated issue.

2015 VCE Japanese First Language oral examination report

General comments

Overall, some students achieved a good balance of high scores in both Section 1 and Section 2 of the 2015 Japanese First Language oral examination. However, many students found the Discussion section challenging. High-scoring students were well prepared and engaged well with assessors.

Specific information Section 1 – Presentation

Criterion 1: Communication

Most students managed the allocated time well; however, some students either rushed through or ran out of time. Some high-scoring students engaged well with assessors, using effective communication strategies such as eye contact and appropriate self-correction techniques. Cue cards containing notes written in point form were also used well by most students. However, many students avoided looking at the cards when they presented, and this resulted in significant pauses and hesitations. Students are encouraged to practise their presentation thoroughly prior to the examination.

Criterion 2: Content

High-scoring students showed the effective use of resources by presenting complex logical structures to accurately and successfully convey meaning. On the other hand, low-scoring students needed to further develop the effective use of resources to assist them to develop and justify their ideas, opinions and attitudes. It was apparent that the majority of students used only the internet to access resources, rather than using other resources such as written texts. While internet resources are useful, they should not be used to the exclusion of other resources. This needs to be emphasised to students before they begin their Detailed Study.

Many students did not quote their references in their presentations. Associated with this was a tendency for some students to mention only bare factual material without properly understanding the context. This is due to the narrow learning resource base used by many students. Students are encouraged to find and use content-rich resources, which will assist with both the Presentation and Discussion of the chosen topic.

Section 2 – Discussion

Criterion 3: Communication

As in Section 1, in this section high-scoring students engaged well with assessors, using effective communication strategies. They demonstrated good preparation of the topics. However, some students were slow to respond due to a lack of depth in their research. It is recommended that students be encouraged to read more widely and understand their resources more deeply. This, as well as further preparation for the Discussion section in general, will also help to overcome a

tendency by some students to use overly casual expressions such as 「なので」 「っていうか」, which was often used. Students should prepare for communication in their own words but use formal style expressions only.

Criterion 4: Content

It was clear that high-scoring students had prepared well for the examination. They expressed their responses effectively and gave references to quotations, they analysed their views about their topics and they utilised a variety of resources to discuss issues related to those topics. Low-scoring students, however, generally had not prepared well. These students were unable to effectively engage with assessors in the discussion of their topic and their conversations did not flow well. Lack of preparation and narrow and shallow reading were evident where many students repeated what had already been said in their conversations with assessors.

2015 VCE Korean First Language oral examination report

Section 1 – Presentation

Students prepared their Presentation well and delivered it in the given time.

Criterion 1 – Capacity to present the information appropriately and effectively

For this criterion, students' ability to present the information effectively was assessed in three areas: accuracy, variety and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar; clarity of expression (pronunciation, intonation, stress, tempo); and capacity to engage with audience. Students who scored highly demonstrated excellent communication skills, including:

- using an extensive range of vocabulary and expression
- speaking clearly and confidently
- maintaining a high level of engagement with assessors
- self-correcting errors when necessary.

Criterion 2 – Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

For this criterion, the content of students' presentation was assessed in terms of relevance and range of information, opinion and ideas; and the capacity to support/elaborate information with reasons/examples/evidence. Students who scored highly prepared their Presentation with an impressive range of relevant information. Their Presentations included different aspects of interesting points from their chosen subtopics. These students were able to present highly detailed information and ideas supported by reasons and examples from texts studied. It was evident from their well-developed analysis on the chosen subtopic that they had thoroughly prepared for the Detailed Study.

Some students failed to introduce their chosen subtopic clearly and their Presentation was vague and unfocused.

Section 2 – Discussion

Students successfully participated in the Discussion with assessors. Focusing on their Detailed Study students were able to:

- define words, phrases and key concepts
- define expressions mentioned in the Presentation
- compare and contrast characters, backgrounds and themes
- analyse an author's intention
- comment on their personal interpretation and views.

Criterion 3 – Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively

Students who scored highly demonstrated excellent communication skills by producing responses readily in a confident manner. These students maintained a high level of engagement with assessors and also contributed to carrying the Discussion forward. In contrast, other students were slow to respond and hesitated frequently. They often made false starts and produced significantly shorter responses.

Criterion 4 – Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

Students who scored highly produced impressive responses by commenting on related ideas on their chosen subtopic and the texts studied. They were able to clarify the information presented and also defend their ideas by including reasons or examples. However, other students commonly displayed gaps in the preparation of the Detailed Study and were often unable to defend their ideas and opinions.

Students are reminded not to spend too much time on a synopsis of each text studied. It is more important to provide relevant analysis between texts in relation to the chosen subtopic for the Detailed Study.