



## Oral Component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral examination consists of a seven-minute Conversation followed by a one-minute introduction of the student's Detailed Study and a seven-minute Discussion on the Detailed Study. The criteria for assessing the Conversation and the Discussion are essentially the same, but the tasks are different.

The Conversation section is based on very familiar topics designed to test the student's ability to speak Russian in a linguistically and culturally appropriate way. Most students were well prepared for the Conversation section, had excellent linguistic skills and were able to carry the conversation forward. A very small number of students struggled to respond to some questions, although they did comprehend them. This was due to their limited ability to speak Russian fluently.

The Discussion tests the student's skills in presenting and exchanging ideas, opinions and information. The majority of students demonstrated a profound knowledge of the Detailed Study. They actively elaborated on their answers, and readily and confidently expressing their views at an excellent linguistic level.

Teachers must explain the differences between the two forms of greeting – *Бби и Тби* – as some students used only the informal greeting. Teachers should also examine the marking criteria with their students and draw their attention to the fact that native fluency will not help them attain high grades if they have not met other criteria.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

#### Section 1 – Conversation

##### Criterion 1: capacity to maintain and advance the exchange

- capacity to link with assessors
- effectiveness of communication and repair strategies
- degree of support necessary to maintain the exchange

This task required a more natural exchange of ideas as it involved a conversation about the student's personal world; for example, school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations. Some students answered the questions when prompted but were not able to advance the conversation. Students should practise ways of carrying a conversation forward and employing adequate repair strategies with minimum support.

##### Criterion 2: relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

- relevance of information and ideas
- range of information and ideas
- capacity to support/elaborate on ideas/opinions with reasons and examples/evidence/new ideas

Some students appeared to take for granted their ability to speak Russian and were unable to elaborate on and defend their opinions and ideas. They should go through a range of possible topics and questions while preparing for the examination so they are able to respond to assessors' questions clearly and logically. Students are expected to answer the specific question asked rather than provide irrelevant information.

##### Criterion 3: accuracy of vocabulary and grammar

Overall, students expressed themselves using accurate and appropriate vocabulary and grammar for the context. Most students conveyed their meaning using the correct style and register, and were able to self correct when necessary. Some students relied on rote-learned language, made common mistakes and used anglicisms, such as *играю в спорт, делаю предметы, пользую компьютер*.

##### Criterion 4: range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

- variety of vocabulary and grammar
- appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar to the context, audience and purpose of the task



On the whole, students used sophisticated vocabulary and appropriate sentence structures that enabled them to make comparisons and comments, though some responded using basic language.

**Criterion 5: clarity of expression**

- pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo

Many students used English intonation patterns when speaking Russian; for instance, using rising or lowering intonation at the end of affirmative sentences. Students experienced minor problems with pronunciation, stress and tempo.

**Section 2 – Discussion**

It is important that teachers and students take into account the ability and interests of the students when selecting a Detailed Study and sub-topic. The sub-topic needs to relate to Russian-speaking communities, contain an issue which can be discussed with assessors and also allow students to express opinions.

Each year a number of students discuss the hardship of young children in rural Russia before the October Revolution. These students often rely on the same limited number of resources that prevent them from expressing a good range of ideas and opinions. They could have more to say if they had researched the topic thoroughly. Individual approach and involvement would be of great benefit.

Some of the general areas chosen by students this year were:

- Жизнь крестьянских детей до революции в России.
- Жизнь и творчество русских поэтов и писателей.
- Октябрьская революция.
- Последние дни жизни царя Николая Второго.
- Политические деятели советского периода.

When preparing for the Discussion students should:

- clearly identify the similarities or differences of opinion presented in resources chosen for the sub-topic
- select a topic that has varied resources and which allow for various views
- not simplify content to a degree where it cannot be presented in depth
- study a few texts in depth rather than many superficially
- focus on the topic and brainstorm issues that can be raised and discussed with supporting evidence.

**Criterion 6: capacity to maintain and advance the exchange**

- capacity to link with assessors
- effectiveness of communication and repair strategies
- degree of support necessary to maintain the exchange

The topics and texts chosen for discussion were appropriate to the students' language level. A number of students skilfully presented their pre-learnt material and successfully engaged in a free discussion with the assessors. Some students relied heavily on rote-learned material and were unable to effectively participate in the discussion. Students should learn varied introductory phrases which would help them to establish links with assessors.

**Criterion 7: capacity to present information, ideas and opinions on a chosen topic**

- capacity to support/elaborate on ideas/opinions with reasons/examples/evidence/new ideas

Generally, students confidently presented their list of resources in their introductory statement, which was carefully prepared in advance by most of the students. Their specific focus was clearly articulated.

A limited number of students had insufficient information, which hindered their ability to discuss two sides of the issue. Other students were very well read on their sub-topic and discussed a wide range of areas. The results for this section depend on a good analysis of texts and reflection about issues that could be discussed, incorporating the student's opinions with reasons/examples/evidence/new ideas.

Brainstorming possible questions is important. This allows the student not only to respond with specific answers based on a single resource but also to incorporate similar or contrary issues from other resources.



Students still need more practice in comparing and juxtaposing information from various sources, and answering questions such as:

- Почему Вы выбрали именно эту тему для изучения? Чем она Вас привлекла? Что вызвало Ваш интерес?
- Что Вы знали об этой теме до того, как познакомились с Вашими источниками? Как изменилось Ваше мнение (если изменилось) после работы над источниками?
- Как эти источники дополняют друг друга?
- Какой источник дал Вам самую ценную информацию? Обоснуйте.
- После детального изучения источников, к какому выводу Вы пришли и почему?

**Criterion 8: accuracy of vocabulary and grammar**

Although introductory statements were well presented and grammatically correct, a number of students made occasional mistakes and used incorrect language structures while responding and making comparisons.

Teachers should familiarise students with the key points of previous years' Assessment Reports to avoid some fundamental mistakes. A few of the more common mistakes are given below.

<i>Ошибка (Mistake)</i>	<i>Как правильно (Correct vocabulary and grammar)</i>
<i>Художникам было жалко детей, и они хотели им помочь</i>	<i>Художникам было жалко детей, и они хотели им помочь</i>
<i>Дети были замороженные</i>	<i>Дети замерзли</i>

**Criterion 9: range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar**

- variety of vocabulary and grammar
- appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar to the context, audience and purpose of the task

Most students used a very good range of vocabulary, sentence structures and expressions with both simple and complex grammatical structure. A few grammatical mistakes were made.

**Criterion 10: clarity of expression**

The majority of students were thoroughly prepared for this section and did not experience significant problems with pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. In cases when they had to use challenging words such as newly-coined words, terminology, borrowed words, etc. they had made an effort to practise the correct pronunciation and stress. Only some students struggled with intonation and tempo.

**Written component**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Overall, a high standard was achieved by the majority of students, reflecting thorough preparation for the written examination.

Some students failed to make contrasting analyses correctly. When the task requires this kind of analysis, students are expected to provide contrasting ideas. For example, arguments **for** genetic modifications could include benefits to human health, while arguments **against** genetic modifications could include negative impact on human health

Quite a number of students struggled to identify the text type and its features though there were clear prompts in the task. Teachers must emphasise the conventions of different text types. For example, the newspaper article had a headline, a by-line, a picture (a map) and was formatted accordingly; however, many students still failed to recognise it. Another common error was an inability to identify characteristic features of an advertisement, such as a catchy name, direct address to the audience, etc. Students should also be taught to recognise emotive/coloured words and homophones.



## SPECIFIC INFORMATION

### Section 1: Listening and Responding

#### Part A – Answer in English

##### Question 1a.

- They needed to protect themselves on the narrow paths.
- To do this, they carried armour (sword and shield) on their left.

Most students gained at least one mark for this question.

##### Question 1b.

Ships bumped into each other/many ships caused chaos.

##### Question 1c.

English conservatism prevented them from conforming.

##### Question 2a.

Students in Russian schools have significantly greater workloads because they are capable of absorbing information.

##### Question 2b.

Russia	Australia
Three of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prepares children better for secondary school</li> <li>• competitive</li> <li>• expects children to conform to standards</li> <li>• heavy study load</li> <li>• sponges.</li> </ul>	Three of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• allows children to live longer in a carefree childhood</li> <li>• non-competitive</li> <li>• views each child as unique</li> <li>• more relaxed</li> <li>• torches.</li> </ul>

Most students were unable to identify three correct answers.

##### Question 2c.

Two of:

- psychological trauma
- lack of confidence
- discouragement.

This question proved the most difficult for many students.

##### Question 2d.

- in Australia
- in a radio studio

Not all students realised that this was a two-part question and many just gave one answer.

##### Question 3a.

For	Against
Three of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plants develop new characteristics: disease-free/drought-resistant</li> <li>• beneficial to human health</li> <li>• solve problems of hunger</li> <li>• productivity will rise.</li> </ul>	Three of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unknown long-term effects</li> <li>• may change ecological balance</li> <li>• negative impact on human health</li> <li>• impact on future generations.</li> </ul>

Despite the text being challenging for listening comprehension, quite a number of students listed all the arguments for and against the genetic modification of plants.



**Question 3b**

Two of:

- the speaker is objective/unbiased/non-committal/impartial
- the speaker presents both sides of the argument/a balanced view
- the language is neutral, non-emotive, without coloured, emotive words
- the speaker could be in favour of genetic modification.

**Part B – Answer in Russian**

**Question 4**

You would expect to read or hear read aloud a book or script, to play quiet games, to have conversations and to eat. These activities are traditionally those of polite, intelligent, well-educated people.

Most of the students answered the question correctly.

**Question 5a.**

Any four of:

- when you have no time to do something yourself
- when you don't have the equipment to do a certain job
- to do some renovation
- to fix up a tap
- to install lights
- to move furniture
- to walk a dog
- to do shopping
- to wash windows.

Nearly all students addressed the question correctly.

**Question 5b.**

Because it has a catchy name, it is easy to access, it relates to everyone's everyday experience and offers all services in one place. It covers all kinds of people and uses direct address to the audience and it promises help.

**Section 2: Reading and Responding**

**Part A – Answer in English**

**Question 6a.**

- opened: hunting parade
- closed: dinner, feast

**Question 6b.**

The hunt:

- illustrated political and diplomatic etiquette
- demonstrated magnificence and greatness/strength and power.

**Question 6c.**

Two of:

- physical strength
- quick reactions
- zeal
- dexterity.

The overwhelming majority of students answered correctly.

**Question 6d.**

- There were strict rules.
- Everyone knew their place.
- There was no place for accidental happenings/the scenarios were thoroughly prepared.

# 2006 Assessment Report



- Special events were held throughout the whole process.

## Question 7a.

Three of:

- real lost world
- not a single being
- scientists were particularly impressed
- there was no trace of civilisation/ nothing indicated the existence of people
- a true 'Garden of Eden'
- planet full of mysteries.

## Question 7b.

Four of:

- the number/variety of new plants and animals discovered
- finding species thought to be extinct
- there is more to be uncovered in this valley
- one month was not enough to complete the task
- animals were not afraid of humans
- there is no trace of civilisation
- the existence of 'lost worlds'.

## Question 7c.

The text is a newspaper article. Features include:

- headline
- by-line
- newspaper format
- single column
- picture/map.

Surprisingly, a significant number of students either did not attempt this question or answered it incorrectly.

## Part B – Answer in Russian

The criteria used when assessing performance in this section were the students' ability to:

- understand general and specific aspects of a text by identifying, analysing and responding to information
- convey information coherently (structure, sequence, accuracy and variety of vocabulary and sentence structure) and appropriately (relevance, use of conventions of the text type).

The first criterion was handled well by most students; however, some students found it difficult to demonstrate a range and variety of vocabulary and sentence structures for the second criterion. Most students were familiar with the format for a formal letter. Students need to read the task carefully, as some students just focused on their hobbies and interests rather than addressing the question asked.

Common errors this year included:

- using an informal tone and not addressing the letter properly
- omitting some aspects of a formal letter, such as greeting, address, date, etc.
- not recognising the purpose of the letter.

## Section 3: Writing in Russian

The criteria used to assess performance in this section were:

- relevance and depth of treatment of ideas, information, or opinions
- accuracy and range of vocabulary and sentence structures
- the capacity to structure and sequence responses
- the capacity to use conventions of the text type.

Teachers must emphasise the conventions of different kinds of writing and text types as described in the relevant passages of the *Russian VCE Study Design*. Students should be advised to read and underline the requirements of the

# 2006 Assessment Report



task (word length, kind of writing, discourse and content to be addressed) so that they can plan their writing accordingly. Planning not only applies to the structure and tone of the piece as a whole, but also to the structure of individual sentences. Weaker students should choose topics that lend themselves to simpler sentences.

## **Question 9**

The students who chose Question 9 demonstrated an ability to provide relevant information and explored interesting ideas. Very few students were not able to meet the requirements of the task.

## **Question 10**

Question 10 proved to be a successful option for a number of students. They demonstrated an ability to plan a persuasive piece of writing, supporting their arguments with a range of facts, experts' opinions and statistics. The conventions of this text type (an article for a school magazine) were skilfully used. Quite a few students suggested a broad spectrum of ideas to solve the problem of global warming.

## **Question 11**

Very few students chose Question 11. The attempts to provide an evaluative analysis were generally not very successful. Students failed to demonstrate a deep knowledge of the life of a famous Russian artist. The structure and sequence of ideas in some cases were not adequate. Also, some students did not show an ability to use conventions of this particular text type (a speech).

## **Question 12**

Question 12 was the most popular option. Most of the students showed the imagination that is required for a story and carefully planned their writing. They produced a range of interesting ideas, describing the challenges their friend would face after turning into a gigantic insect.