



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

On the whole, students were well prepared for the 2008 Croatian oral examination and demonstrated a high level of proficiency in the language.

Areas of strength included:

- very good preparation
- the capacity to research various resources for additional information
- the ability to create accomplished visual evidence to support ideas
- the capacity to communicate on a variety of subject matter
- extensive vocabulary
- a good grasp of grammar
- generally very good pronunciation, intonation and tempo.

Areas of weakness included:

- insufficient preparation by some students
- occasional inadequate levels of involvement in the examination due to a lack of information about the topic
- incorrect case endings
- inaccurate tenses
- occasional difficulties with pronunciation.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

The Conversation section of the examination assessed students' ability to communicate on a range of general topics such as the students' personal world, their family, home life, friends, school, aspirations, interests, and leisure time. The majority of students demonstrated a high level of proficiency in the language, enabling them to respond accurately and promptly to a variety of questions.

Most students understood the request for information well and were able to present detailed and linguistically adequate responses. A familiarity with common vocabulary and expressions, as well as with grammatical rules, helped students to perform this part of the examination with confidence and linguistic accuracy.

Students who were unsure of what they were being asked sought clarification from assessors. In such instances most students were able to continue well, and expressed their opinion in greater detail. However, some students with limited vocabulary were unable to deliver satisfactory and relevant responses. It is important to remember that good vocabulary is a basis for productive, meaningful communication and therefore students should aim at extending their vocabulary when preparing for the final examination.

Most students easily maintained the verbal exchange with assessors and were able to advance the conversation with minimal support. On the whole, students demonstrated good repair strategies and were quickly able to correct their mistakes. However, students need to be encouraged to expand their responses, to say more rather than less, and not always wait for assessors to prompt them.

The most common mistakes in the Conversation section included cases and tense endings. Occasionally students experienced difficulty with the pronunciation of some words.



Section 2 – Discussion

The majority of students were well prepared for the Discussion part of the examination and were able to engage in conversation about their chosen topic. The quality of most performances was significantly enhanced with carefully prepared visual material, some of which was sourced from the Internet.

There were four subjects studied in detail across the four school centres, ‘Zagreb’, ‘Migration’, ‘Sinjska alka’ and ‘National Parks’.

While teachers maximised the use of resources available, the Internet remains a very popular source of additional information for students. It would be useful if more audio material could be included in the preparation for the discussion, as this would enable students to listen more to native speakers.

Most students interacted well with assessors, moved the conversation forward with their original input and were able to correct their mistakes. A very small number of students were not prepared for the discussion of the Detailed Study. These students lacked basic information about the chosen topic and were not able to engage in a comprehensive exchange of opinions with the assessors. It was also noted that in cases where the topic was not learned well, more grammar and vocabulary mistakes were made.

When choosing the topic for the Detailed Study, teachers should ensure that the topic can be studied from various points of view, including cultural, economic, social, geographic, political, spiritual, etc. Merely giving a report on a chosen topic is not adequate and discussion is required, making reference to the texts studied.

Most students brought in self-made posters containing illustrations of the main points for discussion. Posters were generally made with a great deal of creativity and artistic sense. Such supporting material generally proved to be of great assistance to students as it kept them focused on their topic and provided direction when they presented their responses.

While students generally used an excellent range of vocabulary and sentence structures, it would be helpful if some students were reminded that vocabulary building related to the Detailed Study should be part of their preparation for the examination. A concise introduction of no more than one minute is essential, and it could be learnt by heart. However, the rest of the discussion should be spontaneous, making reference to the texts studied. When students memorised chunks of the discussion and were asked questions, they experienced difficulty conversing with assessors on their chosen topic.

Common mistakes also included occasional inaccurate word usage, errors with cases and tenses, and sporadic struggles with pronunciation.