



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The work of the 2007 VCE students of Yiddish was of a very high standard as exhibited in their oral and written examinations. Some students struggled with certain grammatical constructions and with vocabulary with which they should be more familiar.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Students performed very well in the Conversation section, particularly when dealing with the topics that were close to them, such as family, favourite pastimes, plans for the future and reasons for studying Yiddish. Although they made some mistakes, students were able to continue with their answers without hesitation. Most students were readily forthcoming with information and were able to use the prepared material to answer the questions put to them by the assessors. They were obviously at ease.

Section 2 – Discussion

The sub-topic chosen this year was appropriate and dealt with the migration of Jews to the United States and to Australia. However, it would have been beneficial for students to explore the experience of their own family members who themselves had been migrants to Australia.

Students should avoid preparing monologues on their selected sub-topic as they sometimes find it difficult when questioned more broadly or deeply on a sub-topic. Their conversation requires more flexibility. A lot of practice is required to enable the students to respond readily to unexpected questions.

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Once again students found the paper fair and the audio tapes clear and entertaining. Responses showed that students understood the Listening and responding texts well. All students attempted all questions and responded very adequately to most questions. However, some students seemed to struggle when responding to probing and more abstract questions, where a little more thinking and creativity were required; for example with Questions 2c., 4c., 6c. and 7d.

Students should be guided by the number of marks allocated to questions. The number of marks often represents the number of points required in the answer.

Students did very well on the writing tasks in which they were required to respond in Yiddish: Section 2, Part B and Section 3. This is always the most challenging part of the paper as it calls on students to express themselves freely in the LOTE. To improve their marks in Part B of Section 2, students must structure their writing logically and must adhere to the instructions given.

Question 8 asked students to put together a plan of action. The response needed to be detailed. The more ideas and constructive and effective suggestions it contained and the more logical the structure, the more likely students were to score well.

The same advice applies to the responses to Section 3. All responses required a logical essay sequence to be followed, such as an introduction, a middle section and a conclusion, and the topic had to be explored fully.

The language used is of utmost importance in order to score well in the written examination. Students were rewarded for using idiomatic language and correct vocabulary. There were some weaknesses in some language structures, which require serious emphasis and focus during students' learning. The word order in Yiddish is very different from English and very idiomatic. It needs to be studied using many examples and much repetition. Errors such as misusing an auxiliary verb in the past tense are not acceptable, and students must review and commit to memory the list with the auxiliary 'to be'.



SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A – Respond in English

Text 1

Question 1a.

- Columbia University
- He will talk about/give lectures on the famous Yiddish writer Avron Rayzn.

Question 1b.

Any two of:

- he loved nature
- he loved humanity
- he described the beauty of life and nature in his poems and short stories.

Question 1c.

Either of:

- writing about the hardships of life for Jewish migrants
- the power of Jews in the old home.

Question 1d.

- briefly/concisely
- the audience will enjoy the lectures

Question 1e.

A radio interview

Text 2

Question 2a.

Both of:

- he does not want an argument with his mother and father
- Uri loves Jean.

Question 2b.

Any two of:

- Jean has earrings everywhere
- Jean has tattoos everywhere
- Jean is much older than Uri.

Question 2c.

Any three of:

- his poor report
- he wants to shock/frighten his father
- he wants to 'save himself' from his father's anger
- he wants his father to see things in perspective.

Question 2d.

He wants his father to calm down and call him when it is safe to come home.

Text 3

Question 3a.

Any of:

- prior to Chanuka
- in December
- in the month of Kislev.

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Question 3b.

All of:

- parents/families who need children's books
- older people wanting religious items such as candelabras
- collectors or original works of art.

Part B – Respond in Yiddish

Text 4

Question 4a.

Either of:

- the parents are returning from a trip
- the parents are to arrive on their wedding anniversary.

Question 4b.

- Esther wants to celebrate; Leah wants to take it easy and she wants the parents to rest.
- Esther wants wine, music, candles, flowers and a big meal; Leah wants to welcome them with a snack.

Question 4c.

Leah is older and more mature. Esther is more impetuous. Esther calls Leah a tyrant. It is Leah who does all the work.

Question 4d.

Leah accepts Esther's idea, but the food will be bought.

Text 5

Question 5

- Until now, there have been seven accepted wonders of the world.
- No one has ever dared to add to the list.
- The UN has recently established a commission to investigate naming an eighth wonder of the world reflecting the achievements of the 20th and 21st centuries.
- The students, as members of the technological age, are being asked to offer their suggestions for an eighth wonder of the world.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A – Answer in English

Text 6

Question 6a.

Acceptable responses included:

- A Waste of Time
- A Frustrating Journey
- A Fruitless Trip.

Question 6b.

Serenz	Munkacz
No Jewish inhabitants	Some Jewish inhabitants
Rich, modern, small	Beautiful, lively
No synagogue	Two small synagogues

Question 6c.

Any two of:

- the writer is visiting her grandparents' places of birth
- the writer is looking for her ancestors' graves
- the writer is interested in visiting the synagogues
- the writer is looking to find a Jewish community in these towns
- the writer speaks Yiddish with the surviving Jews of Munkacz.

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Question 6d.

Any two of:

- one cemetery was found by accident behind the Christian one; the other, in Munkacz, was easy to find
- one has dozens of Jewish headstones in it; the other had none
- one contained no graves of ancestors; in the other, there might have been some.

Text 7

Question 7a.

The story tells how Solomon came to be given wisdom in the first place.

Question 7b.

The counsellor rates silver and gold, then pearls and precious stones, then the King's daughter as a stepping stone to power/to having everything.

Question 7c.

The story of the wise counsellor was brought in as a parallel to the story of Solomon.

Question 7d.

Any two of:

- it is better to ask for wisdom and understanding than for riches
- it is better to ask for wisdom than to take revenge
- wisdom can bring you everything you want in the world.

Question 7e.

Any of:

- a fable
- an allegory
- a midrash
- a folktale.

Part B – Respond in Yiddish

Text 8

Question 8

A formal letter was required for Question 8. Students needed to include appropriate conventions and the outline of the text type needed to be followed. Polite forms of address needed to be used.

The plan of action needed to be practical and cater for the people included in the letter in very specific ways.

Section 3 – Writing in Yiddish

Question 9

Students were asked to write the text of a personal speech addressing other students on the topic 'In a multicultural society, it is important to speak more than one language'.

Question 10

Question 10 asked students to write an informative article for their local newspaper on their plans for the next twelve months as a Young Australian of the Year.

Question 11

For Question 11, students had to write an evaluative report for the Parents' Association at their school on the advantages and disadvantages of taking a 'gap year' after Year 12 before beginning further studies.

Question 12

Students were given the scenario that they were walking on a beach during the summer holidays when a bottle washed up at their feet. The bottle contained a photograph and a letter. Students were asked to write an imaginative story about the person in the photograph.