2022 VCE Bengali oral external assessment report

General comments

Students were assessed on their knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination had two sections – a conversation of approximately seven minutes, during which students conversed with the assessors about their personal world, and a discussion of approximately eight minutes.

In both sections, students were assessed in these areas:

* communication (the capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively)
* content (relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas in the conversation and their capacity to present information, ideas and opinions on their chosen subtopic in the discussion)
* language (the accuracy of their vocabulary and grammar, the range and appropriateness of their vocabulary and grammar, and the clarity of their expression).

Students who engaged in high-scoring conversations and discussions:

* demonstrated an excellent level of understanding by responding readily and confidently, used highly effective repair strategies, and carried conversation forward with spontaneity
* presented an excellent range of information, opinions and ideas clearly and logically with highly relevant responses, were able to clarify, elaborate on and defend opinions and ideas very effectively, and demonstrated excellent preparation for the conversation and of their subtopic
* used sophisticated vocabulary and structures accurately and appropriately, and were usually able to self-correct
* used an excellent range of vocabulary, structures and expressions, and consistently used highly appropriate style and register
* had excellent pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

Overall, students in 2022 were well prepared and performed very well in both sections of the oral examination.

Section 1 – Conversation

Assessors engaged with each student in a general conversation about the student’s personal world, for example, school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations.

Students who scored highly in the conversation were ready to talk about themselves, their likes and dislikes, and their aspirations. These students engaged enthusiastically with assessors and were able to support and elaborate on their ideas and opinions, using appropriate Bengali vocabulary.

Content and communication

Students who scored highly talked clearly about different aspects of their lives, studies, hobbies and career goals in an organised way.

These students started with some form of polite greeting, maintained eye contact with the assessors, listened carefully to the questions or comments made during assessment, and responded appropriately to maintain interaction with the assessors.

They were able to express their opinions clearly and support them with appropriate examples. They responded actively to questions asked of them by the assessors, demonstrating a very good level of understanding and an ability to carry the conversation forward. Their answers reflected extensive preparation.

Students whose intonation, tempo and pronunciation were very good scored highly. Instead of talking from prepared texts, they spoke spontaneously and responded well to questions asked.

They used appropriate vocabulary and correct tone in expressing their views and conveying information.

Some students answered very briefly when asked questions, and did not engage with the assessors spontaneously; some needed repeated probing to elicit an answer. These students did not score highly. Students may note that the factual accuracy of the responses is less important than the use of appropriate vocabulary, grammar and sentence structures.

Language

Students who scored highly used suitable sentence structures and appropriate vocabulary. In some cases, if they uttered non-Bengali words, they immediately realised and self-corrected in Bengali.

Students generally pronounced Bengali words well; some students had a slight accent, however it did not hinder the meaning of the ideas and opinions that they were presenting. It should be noted that it is not appropriate to use colloquial language, particularly the less common colloquialisms.

Section 2 – Discussion

Each student gave a one-minute introduction of their subtopic to their assessor, who then engaged the student in a discussion exploring their subtopic. Students also provided assessors with any objects, such as photographs, maps or diagrams, brought to support the discussion. The discussion was an opportunity to explore aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Bengali is spoken, and the students is expected to make reference to the texts studied.

Students discussed their chosen subtopic and their supporting visual material, which had to be related to either the prescribed theme ‘The Bengali-speaking communities’ or the prescribed theme ‘The changing world’. The focus of the discussion was on exploring aspects of the subtopic, including information, opinions and ideas. Students were expected to respond to questions on their subtopic and supporting visual material.

Most students chose a subtopic related to the migrant Bengali-speaking communities in Australia, such as their educational priorities, cultural events and festivals, marriage, employment situations, the preservation of the Bengali culture, and the process of school education and teaching. Most students did some surveys and conducted interviews with members of the Bangladeshi community in Melbourne, and summarised their findings using pie charts and bar graphs. While students’ preparation was adequate and most of the students presented the information and ideas logically and in an interesting manner, it would perhaps be better to have more variety in the subtopics. Students could focus on different aspects of the subtopic in order to hold a wider discussion and have the opportunity to elaborate on a range of information.

Content and communication

The majority of the students chose a subtopic on one aspect of Bangladeshi migrant communities in Australia and their problems and aspirations.

Students who scored highly had prepared well for their discussion subtopic. They spoke without hesitation and used properly framed words and phrases to elaborate on their ideas and opinions on their chosen subtopic.

They maintained eye contact with the assessors, spoke spontaneously and responded to the questions and comments of the assessors with appropriate reasons and examples.

Language

Students who scored highly in the discussion used sophisticated and appropriate vocabulary, and good sentence structures to describe their findings and views. Some notable words used included: স্পর্শকাতর (sensitive), স্মৃতিময় (memorable, full of memories), অন্যান্য সম্প্রদায় (other communities) and সামুদ্রিক মাছ (ocean fish).

High-scoring students used words and phrases that demonstrated their command of the language. Some of them used phrases like ত্যাগ স্বীকার করেছেন (made a sacrifice) with correct intonation, and some used idiomatic phrases such as নাড়ির টান আছে (has a passionate feeling of connection),

Colloquial Bengali phrases such as ধরা খাওয়া, meaning getting deceived or caught unexpectedly, are not very common and should be avoided. Use of regional dialect words, meaning words that are specific to a region, should also be avoided.

More information

Refer to the [VCE Bengali study design](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/bengali/Pages/index.aspx) and [examination criteria and specifications](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/past-examinations/Pages/Bengali.aspx) for full details on this study and how it is assessed.