2020 VCE Chinese Language, Culture and Society oral examination report

Specific information

In the 2020 Chinese Language, Culture and Society oral examination, students showed a range of knowledge and skills in using spoken Chinese language. Students who scored well were able to elaborate with meaningful content in both sections of the examination. The examination is entirely in Chinese, and students are expected to understand the instructions including ‘请用英文读一下你的准考证号’ (please read your examination slip number in English).

In the Conversation, the characteristics of top performances included a natural and effective communication style, spontaneous responses, clear pronunciation and the ability to self-correct. When providing extensive content, students are expected to ensure that responses are relevant to the questions asked.

In the Discussion, students are expected to understand basic instructions, question patterns and relevant vocabulary such as ‘请说一说’ (please describe), ‘介绍一下’ (introduce), ‘什么’ (what), ‘为什么’ (why), ‘哪’ (where), ‘谢谢’ (thank you) and ‘再见’ (goodbye). Most students were aware of the requirements of the oral examination and came prepared to provide a two-minute description of an item they brought to the examination, such as a picture, a cartoon or an artefact. Teachers are reminded that the item must be related to the prescribed topics of the Chinese Language strand for Unit 3 (leisure, lifestyles, entertainment) and Unit 4 (youth issues, world of work). It is recommended that students familiarise themselves with the details of their visual stimulus and prepare relevant Chinese vocabulary for it.

Students are also encouraged to further practise their listening and responding skills, and familiarise themselves with the prescribed vocabulary in the study design.

Section 1 – Conversation

The Conversation included topics about the student’s personal world, including family and friends, home and school life, interests and aspirations. The majority of students discussed more than one topic and displayed some breadth and depth in their responses.

Students who scored well demonstrated their ability to provide effective responses to the questions. They maintained a natural flow to the Conversation and used appropriate phrases to ask for clarifications. They demonstrated thorough preparation by expressing opinions, giving reasons, examples and evidence. Some of the students who scored highly included interesting details about themselves. Most students attempted to use a variety of sentence patterns and grammatical structures, and some were able to accurately and appropriately convey their preferences and reasoning for things through the clear use of simple grammatical structures.

Students who do not understand a question are encouraged to ask the assessors for clarification rather than pause for long periods. Students who did not score well provided irrelevant or memorised responses that did not address the questions asked.

Section 2 – Discussion

The content of this section needed to be within the prescribed topics of the Chinese Language strand for Unit 3 (leisure, lifestyles, entertainment) and Unit 4 (youth issues, world of work), with a related visual stimulus.

Most students were able to understand the instructions from the assessors to move from Section 1 to Section 2, ‘请介绍一下你带来的图片/东西’ (please introduce the picture/artefact that you have brought), and to start their two-minute description with confidence. Students are encouraged to rehearse their description before the examination to ensure that it is kept to two minutes.

Most students brought images as the visual stimulus for Section 2. Most images were informative, providing enough content for discussion. The chosen visual stimulus was expected to provide adequate opportunity to support the second section of the examination, which lasts for eight minutes.

High-scoring performances were recognised for their structured two-minute description and the students’ ability to conduct a spontaneous discussion according to the visual stimulus of their choice. Some further demonstrated the students’ ability to address details, summarise information and make logical links between ideas. Most were able to describe the factual information presented in their images. The strategic use of various language structures, as well as the avoidance of redundancy, contributed to a successful performance.