

# 2021 VCE Croatian oral external assessment report

## General comments

The Croatian oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination has two sections – a conversation of approximately 7 minutes, during which students converse with the assessors about their personal world, and a discussion of approximately 8 minutes.

It should be noted that during the oral examination:

- students may be asked a variety of questions of varying levels of difficulty. Questions may also be asked in a different order from the one students anticipate
- assessors may interrupt students to ask questions during either section of the examination; this should be regarded as a normal process in a discussion
- assessors may also repeat or rephrase questions
- normal variation in assessor body language is acceptable.

Students are reminded that they must be prepared to use language spontaneously in unrehearsed situations. Students are not expected to be 'experts'; they are expected to have learnt strategies in order to respond to unexpected questions. It would be valuable for students to learn phrases such as, 'I have not studied this aspect of the topic, but I think ...', 'I don't know, but I feel ...' and 'I am not sure about this question, but I know ...'.

Students will be assessed in both the conversation and the discussion in communication, content and language. The criteria are published on the VCAA website. It is important that all teachers and students be familiar with the criteria and descriptors, and that students use them as part of their examination preparation. This will help students to engage in a lively and interesting exchange with assessors. Although there are similarities between the assessment criteria for the conversation and discussion sections of the examination, the criteria assess two very different aspects of performance. Students who are well prepared are generally able to demonstrate their abilities and proficiency in the language.

## Section 1 – Conversation

Section 1 consists of a general conversation about the student's personal world, for example, school and home life, family, friends, interests and aspirations. It is an organic conversation about the student's personal world. These examples provide students with a basis for preparing a range of interesting and engaging ideas about their personal world, so that they can engage in a spontaneous discussion with the assessors about things that interest them.

Overall, the students were well prepared and received mid-range to high marks. They spoke confidently and used vocabulary specific to their education, future aspirations and their family's history.

## Section 2 – Discussion

Following the conversation, the student indicates to the assessors the subtopic chosen for detailed study and, in no more than one minute, briefly introduces the main focus of their subtopic, alerting assessors to any objects brought to support the discussion. Suitable objects include photographs, maps or diagrams, and should include no text or very little text. The support material must have minimal writing, which includes only a heading, name or title.

The one-minute introduction should give assessors an indication of the area of discussion. The purpose is for students to briefly introduce their chosen subtopic; it is not an opportunity for students to list all their information or texts.

The focus of the discussion is to explore aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Croatian is spoken, with students being expected to make reference to the texts studied.

The choice of subtopic for the detailed study is very important. It should be an engaging topic that motivates students to become familiar with the content and vocabulary needed, and to elaborate on information, ideas and opinions. It is important that students and teachers select materials for the detailed study carefully so that students are exposed to a variety of views. The type of texts used by students should vary in complexity and be in Croatian so that students can become aware of key vocabulary related to their subtopic. Students should be able to draw on the texts they have studied and make links between the texts to support, expand on and explore opinions and ideas on the subtopic and different aspects of the texts. Students should be able to relate this to the Croatian-speaking community.

Overall, the students were well prepared and received mid-range to high marks. For example, they used vocabulary that was specific to the subtopic, knew the meaning of the words that were specific to the subtopic, explained the past and the development of the subtopic, and could put the subject of the subtopic into a larger cultural and social context.

Students who did not score well had the following elements in common:

- obvious lack of preparation
- lack of subtopic-specific vocabulary
- inability to clarify, elaborate on and defend opinions and ideas (e.g. why is this important, how does this relate to Croatia and Croatian people?)
- grammatical errors, especially in noun cases: locative, accusative, genitive.

The best-prepared students were able to answer higher-order questions about, for example, the significance of a festival to the local area in which it is held, the criteria for participation in that festival and how that festival compares to one they know.

It is recommended that students learn and use the specific vocabulary about their subtopic. For example, if a student chooses Alka as their subtopic, they should be able to name the days, clothes and equipment relevant to this subtopic.

Students should also learn about the wider importance of the event/city/topic, the history, the meaning of words (e.g. Spancirfest) and implications for economic/cultural/demographic aspects of Croatia.