

2020 VCE Hungarian oral examination report

General comments

The Hungarian 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.

Following the Conversation, the student will indicate to the assessor(s) the subtopic chosen for detailed study and, in no more than one minute, briefly introduce 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 Hungarian is spoken, with the student 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 subtopic that motivates students to become familiar with the content and vocabulary needed, and thus be more skilled to support and 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 Hungarian so that students can become aware of key vocabulary related to their subtopic. Students are reminded that they must be prepared to use language spontaneously in unrehearsed situations. 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 Hungarian-speaking community.

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 subtopic, but I think ...', 'I don't know, but I feel ...' and 'I am not sure about this question but I know ...'

It should be noted that during the oral examination:

- students may be asked a variety of questions with 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.

Three criteria are used in assessing both the Conversation and the Discussion: communication, content and language. Details of the assessment criteria and descriptors 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

Most students prepared well for this section and communicated with fluency, spontaneity and confidence with the assessors. They used well-thought out and carefully structured sentences and were able to elaborate on their ideas and opinions. Students who scored highly presented an excellent range of information, opinions and ideas clearly and logically.

Overall, pronunciation was good; however, a common error was the near missing of the 'Rs' and rather weak 'Ts'. In some cases, the 'T' and 'R' sounds were either weak or 'swallowed' altogether.

There was a tendency in some cases towards a level of upward intonation of the voice at the end of an indicative sentence, rather than the descending mode used in the Hungarian language, both in words and in indicative sentences. Stress was not always on the first syllable of the word, which is a fundamental rule of the Hungarian language.

Vocabulary was well used and accurate, and students who scored highly were able to use a good range of vocabulary appropriate to the context. Greetings were culturally correct, and students were able to address assessors in a polite manner. Errors included omission of the accusative 't', using the plural with numerals instead of the singular (*mind a hidak* instead of *minden hid*), confusion over direct and indirect conjugation (*nem tudom játszani* instead of *nem tudok játszani*), confusion between the indicative and imperative forms (*mutatják* with *mutassák* and *meglássák* instead of *meglátják*) and wrong usage of case endings *-ba*, *-be* and *-hoz*, *-hez*.

Students should avoid using literal translation and anglicisms. The most common error was *magyart csinálok* instead of *magyarból érettségizem*.

Students often gave the names of their subjects in English, but they should know their correct Hungarian name and pronunciation.

The instrumental *-val*, *-vel* was used by some students instead of using the assimilation with doubling the final consonants such as *-z*, *-s*, *-g* and others: for example, *kézvel* instead of *kézzel* or *szüleimvel* instead of *szüleimmel*. The use of singular nouns following definite or indefinite numerals was often incorrect (e.g. *minden tárgyakat*).

Section 2 – Discussion

Students are reminded that they will be expected to discuss their detailed study in this section of the oral examination. The Detailed Study should be based on a subtopic related to one or more of the selected prescribed topics listed in the table on page 13 of the VCE Hungarian Study Design.

Generally, students had prepared well for their subtopic. They expressed their ideas and opinions clearly, with excellent pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. They engaged with the assessors and presented interesting stories and anecdotal evidence. They communicated effectively and with clarity despite grammatical errors and a limited but well-selected vocabulary.

They were generally able to answer the assessors' questions but did not always expand on their responses.

The grammatical and syntactical errors that occurred in the Conversation also occurred in the Discussion, such as anglicisms (*influenzált engem* instead of *hatott rám*, *dezertált* instead of *disidált*). Verbal prefixes were often used haphazardly, and not enough attention was given to correct case endings and idiomatic expressions.

Examples of incorrect literal translations are:

- *királyos* instead of *királyi*, or *gazdag* when a plain 'sok' would be better
- *pár* governs the singular (e.g. *pár haverral* not *haverokkal*)
- *gondoskodni* means take care (of) whereas *gondolkodni* means think (about)
- *egyórás időként* should be *óránként* – the 'egy' is implied
- *mind*, which governs the plural, was often confused with *minden*, which governs the singular and means 'everything' or 'anything'.

Some students did not realise that the noun is always in the singular in definite or indefinite numerical adjectives: for example, *egy barát*, *két barát*, *több barát*, *egy regény*, *négy regény*, *számos regény*.

Word order is flexible in Hungarian, so it is advisable to mix word order in sentences instead of using only subject/predicate structures.