



## Oral component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

2009 students displayed careful preparation and, compared to previous years, a good degree of fluency and confidence. Overall this was an excellent year for the Hungarian oral examination.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

#### Section 1 – Conversation

In this section students are in their element as the opportunity to speak about themselves engenders a certain spontaneity, and first person discourse seldom causes problems. All students communicated excellently this year. They demonstrated a clear understanding of the questions asked and responded immediately and confidently.

##### Criterion 1

Students were well prepared and information flowed freely, and there was very good variety in the conversations with the assessors. Students communicated with well-thought-out and carefully structured sentences, and there was a degree of conversational spontaneity and impetus. Pronunciation was generally very good. Most students demonstrated an excellent understanding of the questions asked and they responded readily with excellent pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. The link with the assessors was maintained well. Students were familiar with the correct Hungarian words for various trades and professions, which was a welcome improvement on previous years. Few students needed prompting. Overall, much individual preparation was evident.

Although the vocabulary used was limited in some cases, students were usually able to correct their mistakes appropriately. While in the past there were some recurrent pronunciation problems, including near-missing of the 'r' and rather weak 't's, this year was an exception and students' pronunciation in these areas was generally very good. However, some attention should still be given to 'r' and double consonants.

Intonation was sometimes very level or even ascending, rather than descending at the end of the sentence as should be the case in Hungarian. The stress was not always on the first syllable of the word, which is the cardinal rule of Hungarian spoken language.

##### Content

##### Criterion 2

Students had prepared very well, and the information presented was original and well thought out. Students gave a good range of responses containing lots of valid information about their plans for the future. They stated their opinions and ideas very clearly and were able to elaborate on their responses. The ensuing conversations with the assessors proved pleasant rather than stiff.

As most students had plenty of information about their family, school, recreation and the future, there were, in most cases, good opportunities for them to elaborate on their ideas. The range of information was generally well developed, although some students tended to repeat certain points. The high achievers presented an excellent range of information, opinions and ideas clearly and logically throughout the conversation.

Students did well not to mention their own name or the name of their school or teacher this year, which was pleasing as sometimes students forget that they are not supposed to give these details in the oral examination.

##### Language

##### Criterion 3

Students used an excellent range of vocabulary, even synonyms, accurately and appropriately. Grammar was appropriate to the audience and context of the exam. Greetings were culturally correct and all students addressed the assessors in a polite manner.



Vocabulary and grammar were nearly always as accurate as they should be. The perennial mistake is that students often give the names of the subjects they have studied for Year 12 in English, instead of Hungarian. Each student should be familiar with the correct Hungarian name and pronunciation of his or her subjects.

Although a variety of vocabulary was evident in the case of very able students, grammar generally needed a bit more attention. Often the 't' of the accusative was omitted and/or the case ending was interchanged (*-ba*, *-be* or *-hoz*, *-hez*; for example, somebody *táncházba jár* instead of *táncházhoz jár*). Anglicisms still occurred, but less frequently this year. The much commented upon, perennially used *matematika csinálok* instead of *matematikát tanulok* also occurred.

Grammatical lapses rarely occurred with the accusative 't'; however, some grammatical mistakes are recurring year after year. Use of the plural form with definite or indefinite numerals instead of the singular (*mind a házak* instead of *minden ház*) is often a problem. The numeral expresses multiplicity, therefore there is no need for plural nouns – the language does not tolerate tautologies. This habit of translating in the mind before speaking needs to be discouraged in general, because it can result in Hungarian idioms being translated into incorrect English and vice versa. The two kinds of conjugation in Hungarian, the direct and indirect, are frequently confused (for example, *nem tudok csinálni* instead of *nem tudom csinálni*). This needs considerable attention.

The instrumental *-val*, *-vel* was invariably used by hesitant students instead of using the assimilation with doubling the terminal consonants as in the case of terminal *-z*, *-s*, *-g* and others, resulting in *kézvel* instead of *kézzel* and *szüleimvel* instead of *szüleimmel*, etc.

## Section 2 – Discussion

Students should choose their sub-topic for the Detailed Study carefully. Their knowledge must be sufficient to converse on the topic for eight minutes and they must be able to form and elaborate on opinions and ideas. Students need to practise giving their own opinions, not just facts they have learned. There are many good topics to choose from, including those about historical people, artists, poets and composers. The poor topics for discussions are generally the ones that are 'too easy' such as Easter celebration, Christmas customs and other celebrations (*Farsang* or Carnival). These topics often do not contain enough depth and breadth of information (see Criterion 7), so students are advised to prepare topics that will give them more to say.

Students who had done extensive research generally performed very well. Books, encyclopaedias and the Internet can all be used. Some students also relied on their own experiences and customs. Teachers and students should choose topics about which they can find a lot of information. Depending entirely on stories from their parents and grandparents and their own experiences is not advisable. Film and media may also be used as references for students.

### Criterion 6 and 10

Students used excellent pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo and carried the discussion forward well. Most students spoke clearly with original input about their chosen topics. They linked well with the assessors and they were generally able to answer any questions put to them.

Students need to be aware that they should be able to provide the names of specific resources used to research their topic and should be able to extend the discussion to relevant points beyond the boundaries of the sub-topic chosen. This year all students stated their resources, which included the Internet, books and encyclopaedias.

### Content

#### Criterion 7

All students were excellently prepared. There was a very good range of topics, including 'Hungarian cuisine', historical personages such as Mátyás király, Hunyadi a törökverő, Kőrösi Csoma Sándor (linguist-explorer), Petőfi Sándor, Rákóczi and Szent István and well-known Hungarian artists such as the pianist-composer Liszt Ferenc, Puskás Ferenc (soccer player). Several students presented 'Hungarian traditional celebrations' as their chosen topic, while another topic was the carnival time before Lent called '*Busójárás*' or Easter.

Historical topics and those about famous Hungarians' lives and works had the virtue of producing a livelier exchange between students and assessors, and often a surprising degree of psychological comment and original input, albeit using simpler vocabulary. Students in both types of discussion had solid and detailed information to offer. They had often sought out interesting stories and anecdotal evidence. The *Luca Napi Szokások* and *Busójárás* were well-researched and interesting topics.



### Language

#### Criterion 8 and 9

A range of accurate vocabulary and grammar was used. Students' research was evident through their excellent vocabulary such as *elhunytt* and *leendő*. This year there were no students whose poor vocabulary pointed to a lack of research and preparation.

The grammatical structures used varied from elaborately complex or compound to simple. Verbal prefixes were often haphazardly used; for example, plurals were misapplied (*vannak egy pár*) and the 't' of the accusative was often missing. Word order is flexible in Hungarian; however, a lot of subject/predicate beginnings to sentences tend to give a monotonous flow.

*Bírok, bírhatja* was used instead of *tudok bírni*, which is used in a purely physical context; for example, a weight is too heavy to carry *nem bírom ezt a nehéz kosarat vinni*. The English expression 'it takes more time' is not *használják több időt*, but rather *sok időt vesz igénybe* or *sok időt tölt el azzal*.

Vocabulary varied. Some students had obviously translated from English, resulting in some quaint expressions such as *királyos* instead of *királyi* and *gazdag* where a plain *sok* would be better. Some modifying suffixes were not known, for example, verbs from nouns. Instead of *csináltam tenisz*, the simple *teniszezni* would do, keeping in mind that lots of such transformations exist in the language. Abstract nouns are easily formed from common nouns, for example, *-ség* (*fejedelmet elvenni* instead of *fejedelemséget*).

Some common grammatical errors are outlined below.

- *Kicsi* and *kis* were usually confused. *Kis* is used as an adjective (for example, *kis család, kis baba*, etc.), whereas *kicsi* is usually used as an adverb (for example, *Kicsit késtem*). However, it can be used as an adjective if it is not immediately preceding the noun (for example, *Kicsi a házuk*), or more in terms of tiny (for example, *Kicsi volt a kis cica amikor megtaláltam*).
- *Nem együtt* sounds odd – students should use *Külön*.
- *Pár* governs the singular (for example, *pár haverral*) not *haverokkal*.
- *Gondoskodni* means 'take cares (of)' or 'provides (for)' 'look after', 'take charge (of)', not *gondolkodni* ('think about/of'), which was the sense of some students' sentences.
- Correct expressions were sometimes elaborated on when it was not needed; for example, *egyórási időként* should be *óránként* – the 'egy' is implied.
- *Mind* was often confused with *minden*, which is 'everything' or 'anything'. It governs the singular (for example, *minden diák átment a vizsgán, minden üzlet be volt zárva*). *Mind* governs the plural (for example, *a diákok mind jól vizsgáztak*). *Az üzletek – kivétel nélkül – mind be voltak csukva*.
- Comparisons caused some problems, but they are simple when using *olyan mint*; for example, *A helyzet olyan rossz mint egy harmadik világban*.