

### Oral component

Overall, a very high standard was achieved reflecting thorough preparation by students for the oral examination.

#### Section 1 – Conversation

- How well did students handle general conversation about their personal world?
- How well were students able to fulfil the criteria in the general conversation?

##### Criterion 1 Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively

The overall performance of the students indicated thorough preparation. Some gave extended responses willingly and gave interesting detail leading to new areas of conversation. Many elaborated effectively about family, school etc. Overall, students were well prepared to converse on a variety of topics and expand on their contributions.

However, some students clearly demonstrated ‘learning by rote’. When the latter was encountered the student’s conversation was stilted, and it lacked the ability to deal with unpredictable responses from the assessors. Students who were able to make the conversation flow had few problems with either the content or range of the general topics.

Less successful students had difficulties in paraphrasing when they could not think of the appropriate word. A few showed a lack of preparation when they made a statement but could not follow up. Some students used the familiar form of address with assessors instead of the formal form of address.

##### Criterion 2 Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

This was well handled by most students; however, some were not able to advance the conversation, giving only very short answers. Consequently they did not manage to give in-depth responses.

##### Criterion 3 Accuracy of vocabulary and grammar

The grammar was quite good and the vocabulary used was generally accurate.

##### Criterion 4 Range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar was better than the range. Not many students managed to use a wide range of words. This was most likely due to their overall inability to develop a conversation rather than their lack of knowledge of the language.

##### Criterion 5 Clarity of expression

Some students’ pronunciation and intonation made it difficult for them to be understood.

#### Section 2 – Discussion

- How well did students handle general conversation in the discussion?
- How well were students able to fulfil the criteria in the discussion?

##### Criterion 1 Capacity to maintenance and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively

This includes a brief introduction to the discussion, as stated clearly in Support Paper 8. Students who did not introduce their Detailed Study correctly and only vaguely referred to reading ‘some articles in class which our teacher gave us’ often had the greatest difficulty. In the discussion, many students were well able to handle unpredictable questions and have sufficient knowledge at their fingertips to maintain an even flow of discussion for eight minutes, and most performed well.

Some students had prepared a report on the topic and were disappointed when they were interrupted by the assessor. Students must be reminded that Section 2 is a Discussion, not an oral presentation or monologue. The time of ‘not more than one minute’, which is allowed for students to introduce their sub-topic and give their resources and the main focus of their discussion, is, unfortunately, being interpreted by some students to give a rapid fire start to their ‘discussion’. Some students gave a long and complex introduction instead of briefly introducing the focus of their sub-topic. Others did not introduce the focus of their sub-topic.

##### Criterion 2 Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

Students are required to refer to their texts. If students were not able to provide relevant information about their topic and support it by making reference to appropriate sources, the quality of responses was affected. Students must note that Criterion 2 includes the relevance, breadth and depth of opinions and ideas, as well as the breadth and depth of information. Students should be able to support their ideas/opinions with reasons, examples or evidence from the texts studied.

Those students who had prepared a wide range of texts on their topic, preparing extra texts in addition to those studied in class, were usually able to express a much wider range of opinions and ideas. Many students had difficulty in comparing the relevance and interest of their different sources. Some were not able to answer questions involving comparison of texts, choosing instead to tell the assessors more of what they had learned at home or school about their topic.

Criterion 2 was the most difficult aspect of the task for most students, and some were not able to express any opinions on their topic.

### **Criterion 3 Accuracy of vocabulary and grammar**

The vocabulary and grammar used by most students was generally accurate.

### **Criterion 4 Range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar**

The vocabulary and grammar used was generally appropriate; however, the range was limited.

### **Criterion 5 Clarity of expression**

Some students' intonation and pronunciation could have been better. In Section 2, Criteria 1 and 2 were the main criteria which distinguished the quality of students.

Many students need more practice in answering questions such as 'What is your opinion about ...? What do you think about ...?' Students should be encouraged to give more than one short response to such questions as well as to questions, where relevant, about their chosen texts.

The students who chose an appropriate topic and researched their sub-topic thoroughly, were able to elaborate in the discussion. Good sub-topics which led to an interesting discussion included: 'Children before and after the Revolution of 1917'; for example, child labour, and the influence of television/Internet on youth. Some less successful topics included biographies, as it is hard to have a diversity of opinions on a biography. Where a topic was very technical, some students struggled to communicate their ideas and opinions clearly. Suggested sub-topics for the Detailed Study, are listed in the *Revised VCE Russian Study design*, page 44. The choice of sub-topic should relate closely to the student's interest and capabilities.

## **Written component**

Overall, a high standard was achieved by most students, reflecting thorough preparation for the written examination.

## **Section 1 – Listening and responding**

### **Part A**

#### **Answer in English**

#### **Question 1**

Describe the relationship between John and his teacher:

- very caring/respectful/(very) good/warm/synonyms.

Give your reasons:

- he writes her a very cordial birthday card (not letter)
- he praises her/is full of compliments/beautiful
- he doesn't want to disappoint her by making mistakes.

#### **Question 2**

**a.**

Describe the type of food offered at this restaurant:

- low fat/calories/dishes.

**b.**

What is recommended for dessert and why?

- Pineapple.

Because it aids:

- quick/good/better digestion
- elimination of fats out of the body/metabolism.

#### **Question 3**

**a.**

What three items in the flat would be useful for a successful party?

- piano
- electric guitar (left by previous tenant), stereo or other furniture mentioned in text.

**b.**

What evidence is there to suggest that a new tenant could move into the flat without extra expense?

- it is furnished.

**c.**

Which four electrical appliances in the kitchen are associated with food preparation?

Any four items below were accepted:

- electric stove/oven
- electric kettle

- toaster
- electric juicer
- fridge.

**d.**

Where is the flat located?

- near the centre of the city/5 minutes walk from the petrol station.

**e.**

Give three reasons why the renter did not accept this flat.

- \$150 per month/too expensive
- no TV
- bond/deposit is too much.

## **Part B**

### **Answer in Russian**

#### **Question 4**

**a.**

What two things, in particular, do Katya's parents forbid her to do?

She is forbidden to:

- talk long over the phone
- watch films about love.

**b.**

Summarise the advice given by Katya's uncle.

Katya should:

- be persistent and try to speak with parents again
- explain she is no longer a child
- explain to parents her need to relax/balance (young people need leisure activities, e.g. go to the cinema, discos).

#### **Question 5**

**a.**

People would stop littering if:

- they thought about the consequences/future influences.

**b.**

According to the text, how long do aluminium cans take to decompose?

- 300 years or more.

**c.**

Why does litter increase in summer?

Summer sees an increase in littering because:

- people spend more time in the open air/on the streets.

**d.**

Give any two examples from the text, of rubbish which remains on the ground for many years.

(Answers below respond to English question).

- aluminium and steel cans
- plastic bottles
- cigarette/butts.

(Answers below respond to Russian question – for how long?)

- cigarette/butts: 3–4 years
- tram tickets: 2–4 weeks.

This section was very well done by most students. However, where there are two parts to a question, e.g. Question 1. 'Describe ... give reasons...', students must be sure to answer both parts of the question. Similarly in Question 2b, 'What is recommended for dessert and why?' Some students made no attempt to answer some questions in Part A of Section 2.

No marks were given to the students who answered Part B in English. Students who highlighted the words 'answer in RUSSIAN' on their examination paper were not tempted to forget this instruction.

In Question 4b, students were asked to *summarise* advice given to Katya, but many chose instead to write out the whole speech of Katya's uncle. Nearly all students showed they understood numbers well. In Question 5, the topic on pollution was well understood.

In Question 6, some students could not distinguish between the English words, dowry and layette, and chose the less appropriate word when translating приданое. The same translating problem occurred with the word выставка. The dictionary meanings were given as exhibition, show, display. All these meanings were accepted, but the most appropriate was exhibition, not 'expodition' (one of many invented words).

Students need to learn how to more effectively use a dictionary. Students who used a dictionary to look up Russian words, often chose the meaning which was not appropriate for the text. Some did not bother to use a dictionary, and when they did not know the English meaning of a word, they simply wrote it in Russian, eg ананас, for pineapple. Other students invented words which do not exist in English, such as 'electric teapot, electronic cooking slab'.

Students should be very careful if they make notes in the 'notes column' on their paper. Errors occurred, for example, when some students wrote correct information in English in the 'notes column', but omitted some essential facts when they re-wrote the answers in Russian.

## Section 2 – Reading and responding

### Part A

#### Answer in English

#### Question 6

a.

Summarise, in two sentences, the content of the girl's Valentine letter:

The girl writes in her letter:

- he needs to prove he loves her
- he must marry her
- she needs a bigger dowry from her mother.

b.

How did the library obtain this letter?

- by buying it from a British family.

c.

According to the texts, when did the story of St Valentine's Day originate?

- in 1477 or 500 years ago.

d.

Who discovered the letter?

- a new worker/employee/librarian in the archives of the library.

e.

Where was it possible for the public to view the letter for the first time?

- at the exhibition of English literature/in March 1777/dedicated to the millennium of English literature.

#### Question 7

a.

Describe the sort of bristles that dentists recommend:

- modern synthetic/artificial materials.

b.

In the text what evidence suggests that dentists do not encourage the use of the electric toothbrush?

- they say it is only for lazy people.

c.

Summarise, in two or three sentences, the three key characteristics involved in the manufacture of toothbrushes:

- hardness/level of softness
- kind of bristles
- shape/design of toothbrush/handle.

d.

Identify the three recommendations made by dentists about effective teeth cleaning:

- at least twice per day

- at least 2 minutes duration
- preferably after each meal.

e.

In two sentences discuss dentists' opinions about the use of chewing gum. Support your answer with evidence from the text:

- they recommend chewing gum, because it helps to produce saliva
- to help remove the remains of food
- to clean the surface of the teeth.

f.

According to the text, how can you differentiate between the different sorts of toothpaste?

- taste
- colour
- action/effect on the teeth.

## **Part B**

### **Criteria**

**Understand general and specific aspects of a text by identifying, analysing and responding to information**

**Convey information coherently (structure, accuracy and variety of vocabulary and sentence structure) and appropriately (relevance, use of conventions of the text type)**

The text for Question 8 was a letter and there were questions in the text which needed responses.

The first criterion was well handled by most students. However, for the second criterion, many students found it difficult to demonstrate a range and variety of vocabulary and sentence structure. Most students were able to complete the task within the given number of words. Students who highlighted the questions in the text which needed responses were less likely to forget to include the responses in their letter.

Less successful students demonstrated inadequate grammar skills to complete the task. The more common errors included direct Russian translations (e.g. to have a shower), verb conjugations; especially of verbs in – oba (e.g. to plan, to recommend, to organise, to train), spelling and correct form of cases.

## **Section 3 – Writing in Russian**

### **Criteria**

**Relevance and depth of treatment of ideas, information, or opinions**

**Accuracy and range of vocabulary and sentence structures**

**Capacity to structure and sequence response and use conventions of the text type**

The better pieces of writing flowed easily, showed imagination and included elements of good story-telling skills.

Some pieces were well over the word limit. Students need to be reminded that their writing should be within the specified word limit. They should spend time planning their work to improve the structure and checking for careless spelling and punctuation errors, rather than writing over the word limit. Less successful students were not able to develop complex sentences and relied mainly on simple sentences to communicate their ideas.

Students need to be aware of the conventions of different text types. For example the characteristics of an article (Question 12) are different from those of a letter (Question 11).