2020 VCE Vietnamese First Language oral examination report

General comments

The Vietnamese First Language oral examination assesses students’ knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination has two sections: a Presentation of approximately five minutes, during which students outline an issue related to the detailed study of language and culture through Literature and the Arts; and a Discussion of approximately five minutes. Students are reminded that they are expected to be able to present a clear stance on the selected issue and relate this clearly to the subtopic chosen for detailed study, then support their stance with evidence from a range of texts during the Discussion.

Students are reminded that specific detail about each of the two examination sections is outlined in the VCE Vietnamese First Language Study Design.

Students need to be prepared to use language spontaneously and not rely on rehearsed dialogue. Students should not memorise chunks of information or set statements that they expect to be able to use verbatim during the oral examination.

Students are not expected to be ‘experts’. They are expected to have learnt strategies in order to respond to the questions asked. 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 …’. Students need to use strategies to advance the Discussion and continue to engage with assessors.

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.

The assessment criteria and descriptors are published on the VCAA website. It is important that all teachers and students are 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.

Students are reminded to check conditions of the examination in the examination specifications.

In general, students in 2020 understood the requirements of the Vietnamese First Language oral examination and followed them well. They were calm and polite throughout the process of examination. Most of the students were well prepared and presented their topic well. Most students scored more highly in the Presentation than the Discussion. There was a wide range of topics presented, including several new topics that were explored this year. This reflected a growing confidence in students when preparing for their oral examination.

Few students relied heavily on cue cards. There were a small number of students who presented their topic without referring to the chosen text. There were students who recited from memorised preparation, which resulted in their being less interaction with the assessors.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

Students who scored highly generally had a well-researched topic for their presentation. These students demonstrated a thorough preparation from planning to practice. It was clear that these students had conducted deep and detailed research on their topic. In brief, students who scored highly:

* had clearly used a wide range of suitable texts to research/inform their presentation and understood the chosen topic
* had their research analysed and well documented
* had a clear and logical structure for their presentation
* had clear content, expressive and fluent presentation, clear pronunciation and wide range of vocabulary
* had a high level of confidence
* demonstrated good time management skills.

Students who did not adequately research and practise their topic did not score well. These students:

* did not demonstrate a sound knowledge about the topic presented
* did not have a clear outline of the presentation
* did not perform the chosen topic smoothly and lacked details and depth
* had a limited range of vocabulary or inaccurate choice of words
* needed to interact with the assessors more effectively.

Section 2 – Discussion

Students who scored highly in the Discussion section demonstrated their excellence in both preparation and communication skills. They were able to explain, clarify and give evidence to support their presentation and could discuss the presented subtopic beyond the information presented in the first section of the examination. In brief, these students:

* were able to expand on and advance their thoughts
* responded spontaneously and were able to support their responses with relevant information from the texts they had studied
* presented and clarified relevant ideas and information and defended opinions logically and effectively
* were able to maintain the discussion and spoke in a natural and confident manner.

Students who did not score well were unable to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the chosen subtopic. These students:

* were unable to respond to questions
* gave answers that lacked depth or supporting details
* repeated information from their Presentation.

Students are encouraged to explore the subtopic from different angles and should refer to a range of texts to help develop their ideas and opinions on the subtopic. Also, students should use cue cards sparingly, as these are intended to support the Presentation only. They should be carefully selected to add value to the subtopic rather than being used as a subtopic in themselves.