

2025 VCE Sinhala oral external assessment report

Refer to the [Sinhala study design](#) and [examination criteria and specifications](#) for full details on this study and how it is assessed.

Section 1: Conversation

What students did well

In the 2025 examination, students:

- engaged in a general conversation about their personal world, such as family, friends and pets; what they usually do when family gets together; likes and dislikes; school life and the subjects they study; hobbies and interests; plans for future study; and other goals and future aspirations. Many students were able to speak about aspects of Sinhala language and culture in Australian society from a personal perspective, and some students extended their response to incorporate that into a community perspective
- provided a range of relevant information, ideas and opinions with an appropriate depth. Many students confidently answered questions about their personal world and provided interesting, detailed and extended responses. They were able to answer questions on why they have chosen Sinhala as a subject; what their families do to keep Sinhala language and culture alive; how they can pass on Sinhala language and culture to future generations; and how Australia is supporting Sinhala language and culture
- clarified, elaborated on and defended ideas and opinions. In high-scoring conversations, students were able to defend their ideas and opinions in an excellent manner when asked why they have chosen certain subjects to study; whether learning Sinhala has influenced their sense of cultural identity; what challenges they have faced in a multicultural Australia; and how Australia's multicultural society influences Sinhala culture
- demonstrated an excellent level of understanding by responding readily, communicating confidently and carrying the conversation forward with spontaneity
- were able to advance the conversation, including through the use of appropriate repair strategies as needed, such as සමාවෙන්න (excuse me) and මම කියන්න අමතක වුනා (I forgot to mention). Students rarely needed to correct themselves; most responded and carried the conversation confidently
- used appropriate vocabulary. Many students used vocabulary appropriately when providing information, presenting ideas and expressing opinions within the conversation. In high-scoring conversations, students used an excellent range of vocabulary and sophisticated language. Sinhala terms and phrases used by some students in relevant contexts included ගහයි පොත්තයි වගේ (like tree and bark)
- used appropriate grammar and sentence structures. Most students used grammatical structures accurately and appropriately, and used appropriate style and register consistently

- used appropriate expression, including pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. Most students demonstrated clear pronunciation and intonation. In high-scoring conversations, students changed their tone appropriately, conveyed suitable emotions, and used facial expressions corresponding to the context to engage the assessors.

Areas for improvement

In preparation for the examination, students could:

- ensure adequate preparation for the conversation with relevance, depth and range of information, ideas and opinions. Some responses were brief, containing only a few words or one sentence, and the conversation relied on assessors asking questions to move it forward. Students should be prepared to elaborate on aspects of their personal world – such as their school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations – and offer ideas and opinions rather than recite facts. In cases where students are unable to provide information about a certain topic (e.g. family), they could instead provide information on other aspects of their personal world (e.g. school, extracurricular activities, leisure and future aspirations)
- avoid using proverbs in the conversation where these are not suitable or appropriate
- practise answering a range of questions to be able to advance the conversation. Students should be prepared to respond to different levels of questions across a variety of topics that relate to their personal world and their interactions with the Sinhala language and culture. Most students would benefit from practising how they describe their cultural identity; it is recommended that students respond to this topic by referencing their identity as Sri Lankan Australians (or other), focusing on their experience of both cultures
- build confidence through practising interactions in Sinhala. It is important that students practise in the lead-up to the examination so they can carry out the conversation confidently
- practise using more complex sentence structures and syntax. Many students used correct but very simple sentence structures. Occasionally students shifted to formal rather than informal language mid-conversation, which may have indicated rote learning. Students could consider incorporating phrases such as ඊට අමතරව (apart from that), ඒ විතරක් නෙමෙයි (not only that) or නව දුරටත් (furthermore)
- revise grammar, especially the use of correct verb tenses; for example, මම හිතුවා (I thought) and මම හිතනවා (I think)
- build vocabulary specific to the student's personal world, and their interactions with the language and culture as learners
- practise pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. This helps to present the conversation in a natural manner rather than as a memorised speech.

Section 2: Discussion

What students did well

In the 2025 examination, students:

- clearly introduced the focus of their subtopic from a community and/or global perspective, alerting assessors to the image they had brought to support the discussion of one or more of the prescribed topics studied in class, which related to the concepts of Identity, Legacy, Responsibility or Sustainability. Subtopics included the effect of immigration on Australian society, the influence of traditional Sri Lankan music on modern music, gender roles in present-day society, the preservation of Sinhala language and

culture, the global importance of environmental protection, and the importance of celebrating Sri Lankan New Year in Australia

- demonstrated in-depth knowledge of their subtopic. Most students were able to answer questions relating to their subtopic's background, history, content and relevance to today's society
- used the image to support the discussion on the subtopic. All students made an effort to explain why the particular image had been chosen and how it related to the subtopic
- engaged in a discussion using relevant information, ideas and opinions. In mid- to high-scoring discussions, students carried out the discussion using relevant information about the subtopic, explaining why they believed it was important and what their opinion was about it; and indicating ideas, solutions and proposals
- clarified, elaborated on and defended opinions and ideas. In high-scoring discussions, students were able to clarify and elaborate on certain aspects of the chosen subtopic. They defended their point of view when asked about community and/or global importance, and why (or why not) the subtopic was important to future generations
- communicated effectively with assessors throughout the discussion in most instances
- used appropriate vocabulary. Most students used vocabulary appropriate to the subtopic. English words were used rarely
- used appropriate grammar and sentence structures in most instances
- used appropriate expression, including pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. Most students performed well, using clear pronunciation and intonation. In high-scoring discussions, students used appropriate stress and tempo.

Areas for improvement

In preparation for the examination, students could:

- choose an appropriate subtopic to suit their ability and interests, and ensure that it is clearly linked to the concepts of Identity, Legacy, Responsibility or Sustainability. Students should choose subtopics that can be presented from a community or global perspective and avoid subtopics that require focus on a personal perspective. In the introduction to the discussion, students should indicate what aspects of the subtopic will be discussed
- prepare for a discussion about a subtopic related to one or more of the prescribed topics studied in class, and use the supporting visual material to explore the subtopic in sufficient depth. Visual material should be chosen carefully so it can be linked to the subtopic. When researching a subtopic, students are recommended to divide the subtopic into manageable subcategories and sections; this assists with finding sufficient information during the research process and delivering different aspects of the subtopic during the discussion
- provide a broad range of relevant information, ideas and opinions. Students should conduct research using a range of articles, books and other sources to get an overview of current knowledge and identify different perspectives
- use the image to support the discussion on the subtopic. Students should explain the image, rather than simply describing the image in detail, and connect it to different aspects of the chosen subtopic. Students need to keep in mind the specifications for the visual material (i.e. that it must consist of one image rather than a collage and not be hand- or digitally drawn). Most images did not adhere to the specific requirements in the revised curriculum, such as the requirement that they should not contain writing, apart from brief headings and labels
- practise pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. Students are recommended to listen to and imitate native speakers; use shadowing techniques (i.e. repeating what you hear); and focus on stressing key words in sentences. These techniques will help students avoid continuing the discussion in a monotone.