

2016 VCE Languages oral examination reports – First languages

The following information applies to the oral examination for all Victorian First language studies.

Teachers and students are advised to read this entire report, not just the language-specific section, as it contains information about the first language oral examination.

The Chief Assessor for each study has provided comments on the quality of student performance for each language and this information can be accessed directly by clicking on the links below.

- Chinese First Language
- Indonesian First Language
- Japanese First Language
- Korean First Language

General comments

The First language oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skill in using spoken language. It has two sections: a Presentation (of approximately five minutes) and a Discussion (of approximately five minutes).

At the beginning of the Presentation, in no more than one minute, students are required to indicate the topic they have studied and briefly explain the topic selected for their Presentation. They then make the four-minute Presentation.

The Presentation is followed by the Discussion, in which students have the opportunity to discuss aspects of the issue they have presented with assessors. Students are expected to be prepared to clarify the stance presented and should expect the discussion to range beyond the issue selected. Assessors may also ask general questions on the chosen Detailed Study.

In the 2016 oral examination, most students seemed to have a good understanding of the examination procedures and appeared confident. The topics chosen were interesting and challenging, and it was evident that students had prepared well for their Presentation.

Students are reminded that they need to be prepared to use language spontaneously in **unrehearsed** situations. Students cannot expect to be able to use memorised chunks of material during the oral examination.

Students are not expected to be 'experts' and be able to answer all questions asked; they are expected to have learnt strategies in order to respond to the type of questions asked. It would be valuable for students to learn phrases such as, 'I have not studied this aspect of the topic, but I think...', 'I don't know, but I feel'...', 'I can discuss....' and 'I am not sure about this question or topic but I know....'

Students are reminded that dictionaries and electronic communication devices are not permitted in the oral examination. Please refer to the specific language study design or the *VCE Exams Navigator* for information on approved materials for the Language oral examination.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

Students need to be aware that the introduction to the Presentation should last for no more than one minute. Students will briefly outline the issue selected and alert assessors to any objects and/or cue cards brought to support their Presentation.

Students are also advised that the Presentation should last for no more than four minutes and that they are expected to manage their Presentation accordingly. The presentation should embody a clear stance on the issue selected, relate clearly to the subtopic chosen for the Detailed Study, and be supported by evidence.

Students are permitted to use materials such as photographs, diagrams, maps and brief speaker's notes to support the Presentation. However, cue cards must be no more than 20 cm × 12.5 cm and notes **must** be written in point form only. Cue cards may be checked by the examination coordinator or the assessors in order to verify the size of the card and the amount of writing it contains.

Some topics chosen by students were not appropriate for the Detailed Study. Topics should enable students to explore and appreciate aspects of language and culture through the texts studied. It was clear that quite a few students did not understand their topics adequately and some were unable to present their opinions and views on their topic. To be successful in the oral examination, students need to show that they have researched their chosen topic, have a clear understanding of the stance they have chosen and be able to talk about the texts that they have studied.

Section 2 – Discussion

In general, most students were confident and communicated well with assessors, demonstrating a good level of preparation. A small number of students displayed a wide range of views and ideas on the topics chosen and presented in-depth opinions.

On the other hand, a small number of students lacked knowledge, understanding and an appreciation of the texts they had studied. These students were lacking in confidence and struggled to maintain the Discussion. Students should be aware that they are expected to know the meanings of key terms associated with their topic and be able to clarify issues when asked. In other cases, students did not deliver their answers with reference to the texts they had studied. Students are advised to prepare for the Discussion by thoroughly researching and developing a sound understanding of the topic.

The assessment criteria and descriptors are published in the *Assessment Handbook* 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.

2016 VCE Chinese First Language oral examination report

General comments

Students performed well in all aspects of the 2016 Chinese First Language oral examination.

The use of brief speaker's notes was good; however, a small group of students were not aware that brief speaker's notes in point form were allowed.

The majority of students had prepared well and had an excellent understanding of the requirements and procedure of the oral examination. However, a considerable number of students delivered their Presentation in an informative instead of a persuasive style.

Some students delivered their Presentation in well under four minutes, which was too brief. Students are reminded that the Presentation is five minutes in duration.

A small group of students used references that did not meet the requirements of the study design. Students are reminded that short articles or documentaries are not appropriate references for this examination. Students are strongly encouraged to consult the study design for information about texts.

A very small group of students attended the examination without having completed any preparation.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

Students with high-scoring performances:

- demonstrated a thorough preparation of the Detailed Study topic, with excellent control of style and register
- fluently delivered a well-structured speech, including an introduction, body and conclusion
- had well-developed ideas and opinions, and a clear stance
- used a good range of references to support ideas and opinions logically
- demonstrated a good range of vocabulary and a well-controlled speaking speed
- demonstrated excellent pronunciation, intonation and tempo
- timed the presentation well
- maintained good eye contact with assessors.

The following topics from the 2016 exam worked well.

- 改革造就民族辉煌 (Reform contributes to national brilliance)
- 思想独立是中华民族崛起的根本 (Independence of thought is the foundation of the rising of China)
- 天灾也能兴邦 (Natural disasters can also bring prosperity)
- 果断是成功的有利因素 (Decisiveness is a favourable factor for success)

- 口才是战无不胜的利剑 (Eloquence is an invincible sword)
- 不要让命运为贪婪买单 (Don't let greed control your life)
- 人要有水的品格 (It is important for people to have water element personality traits)
- 人生需要旅行 (People need to travel)
- 兴趣是学有所成的基石 (Interest is the cornerstone of successful learning)
- 工匠精神助人成功 (The artisan spirit will help people succeed)
- 要学会释怀 (Learn to let go)
- 完美主义值得推崇 (Perfectionism deserves to be promoted)
- 良好家风是子女成才的必备前提 (Good family tradition is the foundation for children's success)
- 大器者方晚成 (Great talents mature slowly)
- 肯走曲线者为智者 (Those who are willing to take the indirect road are wise)

Low-scoring performances:

- used the incorrect style
- lacked depth, suggesting a poor level of research
- lacked logic between opinions and supporting evidence
- consisted of a rote-learned presentation
- failed to achieve the minimum time
- showed little evidence of preparation.

Section 2 – Discussion

Students with high-scoring performances:

- demonstrated an excellent understanding of the topic and resources
- demonstrated thorough preparation
- gave relevant, logical responses
- used a wide range of references
- expressed ideas and opinions with evidence
- elaborated on the topics
- maintained a high level of engagement with assessors
- maintained their own stance
- advanced the Discussion.

Students with low-scoring performances:

- lacked an understanding of the topic and resources chosen
- lacked preparation
- repeated elements of a prepared speech
- failed to clarify opinions and ideas
- were unable to maintain the Discussion
- included answers that were not related to the question
- included lengthy pauses.

2016 VCE Indonesian First Language oral examination report

General comments

Students' knowledge of and language skills in Indonesian spoken language were assessed in the 2016 oral examination. Students chose their own topics relating to language and culture through literature and the arts and studied their topics in detail.

Students can check the requirements of the Detailed Study in the *VCE Indonesian First Language Study Design*.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

The majority of students presented their topic well and used novels and poems as references. However, some students presented their topic without any references, and their topic related to social issues happening in Indonesia rather than literature and the arts. Students are reminded that visual materials may be brought in to support the examination. Some students were able to show a deep understanding of the topic presented, while other students' knowledge was very superficial.

Section 2 – Discussion

In the Discussion section, students should be able to discuss their presentation in depth. Students are reminded of the expectation to speak in formal language as some students did not do so and this negatively affected their results. Students are expected to study their topic thoroughly. A purely informative presentation will not result in a good discussion.

In choosing their topics it is suggested that students study literary texts and look carefully at the issues that arise in their reading. Students should have several sources, rehearse carefully beforehand to gain fluency and ensure they use formal language.

2016 VCE Japanese First Language oral examination report

General comments

Some students displayed a good balance between Section 1 and Section 2. Overall, more practice was required for the Discussion section.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

Criterion 1: Communication

Many students' Presentations were completed within the allocated time, but some were longer or shorter than required. Most students maintained excellent eye contact with the assessors. High-scoring students tended not to utilise cue cards and focused more on advanced communication strategies such as eye contact, which indicated adequate preparation for the examination. Low-scoring students struggled to recall their Presentation and relied heavily on cue cards.

Criterion 2: Content

The majority of students provided information from a variety of resources. Students who performed well provided well-researched and in-depth information and ideas effectively, using logical structures. They provided opinions, using resources as evidence and to support their opinions. However, low-scoring students did not use logical structures or quote from their resources. Students are reminded that the resources should be used to support their opinions as well as elaborate on their ideas. Students are also reminded that they should refer to the *VCE Japanese First Language Study Design* for a list of prescribed topics and suggested subtopics when selecting their Detailed Study.

When prompted, students should be able to provide detailed information regarding internet resources, including the names of internet sites used for their research.

Section 2 – Discussion

Criterion 3: Communication

Some students used anglicisms when there were appropriate Japanese words that could have been used. Though the number of katakana words has been increasing in daily life, students should be careful to use such words only when appropriate, such as when a Japanese word does not exist or is not commonly used for what is being described. Students are advised to refer to an up-to-date dictionary of Japanese loan words to ensure that they are using the correct katakana word in the appropriate manner. Similarly, some students used informal expressions in their examinations. Students are reminded that the oral examination is a formal assessment and casual expressions are not accepted. It is recommended that students practise formal expressions before the examination.

Students engaged well with assessors and used a wide range of appropriate vocabulary from their in-depth research. Low-scoring students used inappropriate words and answered questions without expanding on their answers. Some hesitated to answer questions. Students should practise for the examination thoroughly and be prepared to answer a range of different types of questions.

Criterion 4: Content

High-scoring students were well prepared and used in-depth information with evidence to support their opinions and ideas. Students were expected to analyse the issue studied and to be able to present views about the Detailed Study in their responses. Some low-scoring students struggled to express well-substantiated analytical views and tended towards general opinions. To develop the content studied, it is recommended that students present depth in their research. For example, they should include particular examples to explain why certain events or problems occurred in order to clarify or support their analysis.

The majority of students used various resources; however, more investigation was needed to discuss points raised.

2016 VCE Korean First Language oral examination report

Section 1 – Presentation

Overall, students were well prepared and performed well in their presentations.

Communication

Most students did not bring a cue card, but those who did bring a cue card did not rely on it during their presentation. There were some outstanding presentations in which students displayed their excellent communication skills. Those students were highly engaged with the audience and used eye contact and body language effectively. Their speech was made with strong voice projection, stress and intonation. They also tended to speak slightly slower compared to other students.

Students are reminded to make eye contact with the assessors in a natural way.

Content

The most popular topic chosen by students for their Detailed Study in 2016 was 정 (affection). Students presented various subtopics, such as 가족의 정 (family love), 이웃의 정 (neighbourhood friendships) and 우정 (friendships). Students introduced their studied material from Korean literature and films in relation to their chosen subtopic.

High-scoring students presented a well-structured introduction, giving relevant and necessary information on their Detailed Study. Those students then presented analytical information by comparing and contrasting some interesting points from their studied texts. In contrast, lower-scoring students seemed to spend most of their time presenting the plot of their studied material. It is important that students demonstrate their analytical skills.

Section 2 – Discussion

Communication

Unclear pronunciation for particular sounds was an issue during the Discussion in 2016. In particular, ㄴ (n) and ㄹ (l) sounds seemed to be problematic. For example, 분당의 아픔 was pronounced as 분당의 아픔 and 많은 사람들이 was pronounced as 마느 사라드니. It is important for students to make an effort with their pronunciation.

Some students frequently self-corrected their errors in an inappropriate way. Those students often repeated 다시 시작하겠습니다 (I will start again) or 그 게 아니고 ... 다시 말씀드리면 (I don't mean that ... let me say it again). Self-correcting an error is one of the communication strategies; however, a lack of preparation can be suspected when self-correction is frequently repeated.

Content

In this category, high-scoring students who prepared their Detailed Study thoroughly were able to produce a prompt response in a confident manner. Those students skilfully elaborated their responses by referring to relevant evidence from the studied texts.

High-scoring students expressed their personal opinions by referring to the evidence found in the texts for home, work and the broader community. In contrast, lower-scoring students seemed to partially repeat the information already provided during their presentation. Those students often provided only short answers and were commonly unable to expand on their responses in depth.