

2017 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
- Vietnamese First Language

The Language oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination has two sections:

- a Presentation (of approximately five minutes)
 - The student will introduce the Presentation in approximately one minute, briefly outlining the issue selected. The student should also alert assessors to any materials they have brought to support the Presentation.
 - The student will then begin the Presentation, which should last no longer than four minutes. A clear stance on the issue selected should be taken and the student should support the ideas in the Presentation with relevant evidence. The student may use the support material to illustrate points. If the Presentation exceeds four minutes the student will be reminded by the assessor that they should conclude.
- a Discussion (of approximately five minutes)
 - Following the Presentation, the student will discuss with the assessors aspects of the chosen issue. The student should be prepared to clarify points presented and expect the Discussion to range beyond the issue selected. This may include reflection on related issues, speculation on further developments or discussion of related and possibly unfamiliar aspects. The student may also be expected to answer general questions on the Detailed Study.
 - Assessors will indicate when the examination is drawing to a close. The student should take leave of the assessors in a culturally appropriate way.

Generally, students' performances were very good. Many showed a very good understanding of the examination requirements 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 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 topic, but I think...', 'I don't know, but I feel...' and 'I am not sure about this question or topic 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 expect
- 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.

Teachers and students should refer to the *VCE Language Study Design* for further information regarding the oral examination.

Students are reminded that:

- dictionaries and electronic communication devices are not allowed in the oral examination
- they should wear neat casual clothes, not school uniform.

Students are required to bring to the oral examination:

- personal identification, consisting of a clear photograph with the student's full name, for example, school ID card, public transport ID card, passport, driver's licence
- a copy of the Student Examination Advice Slip
- any objects such as photographs, diagrams and maps brought to support the Discussion.

2017 VCE Chinese First Language oral examination report

General comments

Most students performed well in all aspects of the 2017 VCE Chinese First Language oral examination, and they had an excellent understanding of the examination procedure and its requirements. Generally, students performed better in their Presentation than in their Discussion. Students presented many new topics, although a number of students gave their presentation in an informative or evaluative style instead of a persuasive style.

A small number of students presented their four-minute Presentation without a proper introduction. The Presentation section should include a one-minute introduction of the Detailed Study and a four-minute presentation. The full structure should include introduction, body and conclusion.

A number of students selected foreign literature that did not meet the requirements of the study design.

A small group of students revealed their own name and school name at the beginning of the examination. Students are reminded not to reveal their own name or the name of their school during the examination.

The following topics worked well in both the Presentation and the Discussion sections of the examination. These topics provided a clear stance and sufficient depth, and there was a range of different perspectives on which students could have commented and elaborated.

- 敢为天下先 (Dare to be the first in the world)
- 用于做时代的异类 (Dare to be different)
- 成功需要标新立异 (Success requires unconventional ideas)
- 自律是成功的基石 (Self-discipline is the cornerstone of success)
- 人因正确面对生死 (Face life and death appropriately)
- 人应不忘初心 (Original intention should not be forgotten)
- 提倡鼓励 (Encouragement should be promoted)
- 机遇是成功的关键 (Opportunity is the key to success)
- 机遇总是给有准备的人 (Opportunity is always given to those who are prepared)
- 原谅他人是大智慧 (Forgiving is a great wisdom)
- 中国现代音乐需要传统文化的滋养 (Chinese modern music needs the nourishment of traditional culture)
- 古人比现代人更有浪漫情怀 (The ancients are more romantic than modern people)
- 应懂得换位思考 (Learn to walk in other people's shoes)

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

Students with high-scoring performances:

- demonstrated thorough research of the Detailed Study topic and an excellent understanding of the aspects chosen and the texts studied
- presented a fluent, well-timed Presentation with excellent pronunciation, intonation and tempo
- demonstrated an excellent control of style and register, using an extensive range of expressions
- presented with a good level of confidence, using appropriate body language and eye contact.

Students with low-scoring performances:

- chose a topic that lacked strong arguments
- did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the topic and the text chosen
- used an incorrect style (informative or evaluative instead of persuasive)
- were unable to deliver the presentation without hesitating frequently
- lacked depth of ideas or opinions and a clear stance
- were either unable to finish the presentation within four minutes or gave a presentation that was well under four minutes
- depended heavily on their notes.

Section 2 – Discussion

Students with high-scoring performances:

- demonstrated thorough research of the Detailed Study topic and an excellent understanding of the aspects chosen and the texts studied
- responded to questions confidently and logically
- demonstrated the ability to defend their own stance with evidence
- demonstrated the ability to take initiative, to advance the exchange and to elaborate
- handled challenging questions ranging beyond the issue.

Students with low-scoring performances:

- did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the topic and the text chosen
- lacked historical background knowledge of the topic
- lacked depth of ideas or opinions and a clear stance
- were unable to make links between opinions and supporting evidence or examples
- demonstrated rote-learning, including giving mini speeches
- contradicted themselves in their responses.

2017 VCE Indonesian First Language oral examination report

General comments

Generally, student performance was very good in the 2017 Indonesian First Language oral examination. Most students were well prepared and presented with confidence. They used good pronunciation and accurate linguistic elements, and some used advanced vocabulary. Most students were well prepared and performed to the best of their ability.

However, a few students lacked preparation. The most common errors included not using the correct formal Indonesian during the examination. However, some students had good fluency and used advanced vocabulary successfully.

Section 1 – Presentation

All students presented their topic related to language and culture through literature and arts. The students chose various topics, including literature and social issues that have appeared in Indonesia recently. Students used novels, poems and popular articles to support their topic. Most of the students were well prepared; however, some students brought lengthy notes for their presentation. Students should refer to the requirements about notes in the *VCE Indonesian First Language Study Design* (page 30).

Many students were able to communicate well with assessors.

Section 2 – Discussion

In the Discussion students should be able to discuss aspects of their nominated issue in depth. Students were expected to study their topic thoroughly.

When choosing their topic students should have relevant literature references and look carefully at issues that arise in their preparation of their topic. Students' spoken language ability required improvement. Students were expected to speak in formal language, but some students were not aware of the requirement to use formal Indonesian language and had difficulty using it. Problems included repetitive ideas, a lack of deep understanding of the source material and paraphrasing rather than discussing the source material. Students should expect to take the Discussion beyond the immediate issue selected. Rather than waiting for the assessor to ask them questions, students should elaborate on their understanding of the questions and materials.

2017 VCE Japanese First Language oral examination report

General comments

Confidence was the hallmark of students who achieved high scores in the 2017 Japanese First Language oral examination. Confidence is crucial if students are to ably present and discuss material in oral examinations. They can only be confident with adequate preparation, practice and rehearsal.

Adequate preparation means that the content of the information presented by students must be substantive, well understood, properly analysed and logically presented. If students take the required time and effort, under the guidance of their teachers, they will find that their confidence and oral communication skills are enhanced.

Advice to students

- Where students use cue cards in their Presentation, they should be careful to use them as memory aids only, rather than text to be read verbatim.
- Students should keep in mind that appropriate formal Japanese is required in the discussion of their presentations; unless quoting, colloquialisms should be avoided.
- Students should remember that the assessable Discussion period does not end until indicated by the assessor.

Specific information Section 1 – Presentation

Communication

Students who achieved high scores displayed excellent communication skills, which were reflected in effective time management strategies and the excellent tempo of their Presentations. These students were clearly well practised in their Presentations and were able to deliver them confidently. Where these students used cue cards they tended to do so appropriately as brief prompts to aid memory.

Students who achieved low scores generally did not manage the timing of their Presentations well. The tempo was either too slow or too fast, which suggested a lack of practice and preparation. These students generally over-relied on their cue cards, often attempting to read from them verbatim, rather than presenting a well-practised and well-rehearsed piece.

Content

Students who achieved high scores had conducted detailed research on their Presentation topics, using a variety of source materials, including set texts. Their knowledge of the Presentation topic allowed them to present relevant information fluently and logically, to analyse the implications and to deduce well-developed opinions and conclusions.

Students who achieved low scores tended to rely on poorly understood information from a narrow range of source materials, often from internet sites. The resultant shallow knowledge base did not allow them to prepare for a fluent presentation of relevant material, and their opinions tended to be unorganised and lacking in depth.

Section 2 – Discussion

Communication

Students who achieved high scores discussed their topics in appropriate conversational, but nevertheless formal, Japanese. They were able to maintain an excellent tempo during the entire Discussion while engaging with the assessor, even when unexpected issues were raised.

In the discussion of their presentation, the use of Japanese by students who achieved low scores was problematic. Their language tended to be stilted, colloquial and informal. The required effort was often not maintained for the duration of the Discussion.

Content

The depth of research and understanding of the content of some students' Presentation material underpinned their ability to discuss an appropriate range of issues. These students were often able to refer to their research materials to support or illustrate the points being made.

Lack of preparation was evident from some students. The lack of a thorough understanding of the Presentation material seemed to undermine students' confidence, impede the fluidity of the Discussion and did not allow them to link the points being made to their research material.

2017 VCE Korean First Language oral examination report

General comments

The students were well prepared for the 2017 Korean First Language oral examination.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

In the beginning of the Presentation, students gave good introductions that focused on their chosen subtopic for the Detailed Study and stated the importance of their chosen subtopic in Korean society. Students who scored highly displayed a thorough preparation of their chosen subtopic. These students produced authentic presentations that were supported by well-developed ideas and views. They also displayed their analytical skills by comparing and contrasting highly relevant information extracted from their studied texts.

Students who scored highly displayed evidence of thorough preparation by producing a consistent speech in a confident manner. These students used well-controlled intonation, tone and stress in order to maximise the level of engagement with the audience. They also commonly showed effective use of body language, such as posture, body movement, eye contact and facial expression. However, some students seemed not to be aware of the importance of clear pronunciation. These students often made errors in their speech; for example, 수난이래 (*soonanire*) was pronounced as 수난이대 (*soonanide*), 비도덕한 (*bidodeokhan*) was pronounced as 부도더한 (*boododeohan*).

Most students did not use supporting objects or cue cards. Students who brought a cue card conformed to the required specifications for its size and format. However, some students tended to rely heavily on their cue card during the Presentation.

A wide range of subtopics was presented, such as 청소년들의 성장 (Growing up of youth), 전쟁의 비극 (Tragedy of war) and 전쟁의 참화를 극복하는 의지 (Willpower to overcome the devastation of war).

Section 2 – Discussion

Students participated in the Discussion by responding with information, ideas and opinions. When students were dissatisfied with their own responses, they were able to correct themselves immediately by saying, 그 게 아니고, 그 질문에 다시 말씀드리겠습니다 ('I was wrong, I will answer the question again') or 제가 잘못 생각했습니다. 다시 말씀드려도 될까요? ('I made a mistake. Can I start again, please?'). Some students provided spontaneous responses and at the same time maintained a high level of engagement with the assessors. In contrast, other students commonly

displayed a lack of vocabulary and often repeated themselves. As a result, the discussion became shallow or did not flow well as frequent hesitations and pauses were made.

During the Discussion, students who had prepared well for their Detailed Study displayed their analytical skills on their chosen texts. Those students also tended to expect the topic of the discussion to be extended into broader areas relating to their subtopic. They confidently carried the Discussion forward with relevant information by making reference to their studied texts when needed. These students were also able to convey their personal views, supported by convincing reasons.

2017 VCE Vietnamese First Language oral examination report

General comments

This was the first year of the VCE Vietnamese First Language oral examination and students performed well in all aspects.

Students' use of cue cards was good, although a small group of students were not aware that the presentation notes should be written in bullet-point format. Some students attended the oral examination without having undertaken any preparation.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

The majority of students presented their topic well and used novels, short stories and poems as references. At the beginning of the Presentation, students are required to introduce the topic they have studied in no more than one minute, after which they give a four-minute presentation. Most students presented well, were articulate, and used images and objects to support their presentation.

Many students seemed to have a good understanding of the examination procedures and presented their topic confidently. However, students are reminded that they need to be prepared to express and present naturally using language skills in unrehearsed situations. Students cannot expect to be allowed to use memorised chunks of material or to read the content from their cue cards. Students are also advised to present their topic within the permissible time and maintain engagement with assessors.

The majority of students provided relevant information from a variety of resources, but a very small group of students used references that did not meet the requirements of the study design. Students who scored highly delivered a fluent and well-structured presentation using sophisticated language and expressions.

Section 2 – Discussion

Students who scored highly engaged in a confident manner with the assessors and produced highly relevant responses and in-depth opinions. However, some students' performances showed a lack of content preparation and also lacked a thorough understanding of their chosen topic, which led to their expressions being fragmented and irrelevant. Students who did not score well were able to produce relevant information that was sufficient to maintain the Discussion, but they showed a lack of logic between opinions, a lack of supporting evidence and a poor level of research.

Some students who scored highly demonstrated that they had thoroughly prepared their topic, and they could also expand on their responses and advance the Discussion. They used a broad range

of sophisticated vocabulary and grammar, and they displayed a very good control of language. Students who did not score highly had not prepared their topic well, lacked knowledge and confidence and struggled to maintain the Discussion. These students often provided simple answers and were unable to expand their responses in depth. Students are advised to prepare for the Discussion by researching thoroughly and developing a sound understanding of the topic.

In general, students were well prepared and demonstrated a good level of language skills and highly appropriate vocabulary. Students are advised to invest more time in preparing for the oral examination. Appropriate resources are needed and frequent practice will enable students to present ideas and opinions, allowing them to interact with the assessors during the Discussion.