

2018 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

General comments

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.

Students are reminded that they need to be prepared to use language spontaneously and not rely on rehearsed dialogue.

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
- 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
- there may be variation in assessor body language.

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* and the *Assessment Handbook/Advice* for teachers 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 they may wish to use to support the Discussion such as photographs, diagrams, maps or brief speaker's notes. The brief speaker's notes should be in point form and on a small cue card (no more than 20 cm × 12.5 cm).

2018 VCE Chinese First Language oral examination report

General comments

The majority of students had prepared well for all aspects of the 2018 VCE Chinese First Language oral examination. They had an excellent understanding of the requirements of the examination and of VCAA examination procedures. Students also presented many contemporary topics and up-to-date resources. However, a considerable number of students gave their presentation without a clear stance on the issue selected, and a small number of students did not seem to have prepared for the Discussion section adequately.

A small number of students did not give a proper introduction to their four-minute presentation. The Presentation section should consist of a one-minute introduction of the Detailed Study and a four-minute presentation. The full structure of the Presentation should include an introduction, the body and a conclusion.

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 an impressive range of highly relevant information and a highly logical content structure
- demonstrated an excellent control of style and register, using an extensive range of expressions with excellent pronunciation, intonation and tempo
- presented with a high level of confidence, using appropriate body language and eye contact.

Students with low-scoring performances:

- did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the topic and texts chosen
- did not show a good level of preparation
- used an incorrect style
- lacked depth of ideas or opinions and a clear stance
- lacked logic between opinions and the supporting evidence or samples
- lacked historical background knowledge of the topic chosen
- were unable to deliver the speech in one piece, hesitated frequently and left lengthy gaps
- were 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
- demonstrated the ability to take initiative, to advance the exchange and to elaborate
- demonstrated the ability to defend their own stance with evidence
- responded to questions logically and confidently with a range of highly relevant information
- demonstrated the ability to handle challenging questions ranging beyond the chosen issue.

Students with low-scoring performances:

- lacked strong arguments about the chosen topic
- did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the topic and texts chosen
- did not show evidence of preparation
- lacked historical background knowledge of the topic and texts chosen
- gave mini speeches
- contradicted themselves in their responses
- responded without understanding the questions and gave irrelevant answers.

2018 VCE Indonesian First Language oral examination report

General comments

Generally students performed well in Section 1. The majority of students chose a topic about women in society and how women are portrayed in modern Indonesian literature. However, some students talked about current affairs and did not include reference to literary texts. Some of the texts used were not appropriate for the literature component of the examination.

In the oral examination, students are expected to use formal rather than informal Indonesian. Many students used informal language without any attempt to produce formal language. Common mistakes using informal language should be avoided. For example, *enggak/ngak* instead of *tidak*, *seperti yang ada dalam buku* instead of *menurut sumber bacaan yang saya dapat/pelajari atau menurut buku yang saya baca*.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

In this section, students gave a five-minute presentation about a topic of their choice.

Some students brought notes with detailed information to the examination room. It is important for students to be aware of the rules for the Presentation. Students should refer to the requirements for notes in the *VCE Indonesian First Language Study Design* (page 30), which clearly states that students are only allowed to bring in a card of 20 cm x 12.5 cm with notes presented in dot points.

Students are expected to study the material for the Presentation in depth.

Section 2 – Discussion

Students who had prepared well were clearly able to discuss their chosen topic in depth and give their point of view with ease.

Presentations that contain facts only will not automatically result in a good Discussion. Students should choose a topic that will make an in-depth discussion possible.

Students should prepare their topic in formal language and practise prior to the oral examination. They should practise out loud in order to get the correct pronunciation and intonation.

2018 VCE Japanese First Language oral examination report

General comments

A large proportion of students scored highly in the 2018 Japanese First Language oral examination. There was also, however, a significant proportion of students who did not score well. Students and teachers may wish to keep in mind the comments and recommendations that follow to assist with their preparation for the 2019 examination.

Advice to students

- Students should ensure that they prepare adequately. Adequate preparation means that information presented by students will be substantive, well understood, properly analysed and logically presented.
- The examination is conducted within prescribed timelines, which includes time for an introduction, a Presentation and a Discussion. Students should carefully prepare and then rehearse their material to comply with these timelines.
- Both sections of the examination should be rehearsed. Students' Discussion must be based on careful preparation and understanding of the material, a readiness to take opportunities to control the Discussion and an anticipation of the direction the discussion might take.
- If students use cue cards, they should be careful to use them as memory aids only (ideally in dot-point format) rather than as text to be read.
- The oral examination is a formal assessment. Formal Japanese should therefore be used, both in the Presentation and Discussion sections of the assessment. Unless directly quoting, colloquialisms (casual forms) should be avoided.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

Communication

Students who scored highly used effective time management strategies, the tempo and phrasing of their delivery was natural, and they engaged – particularly through eye contact – with the assessors. Where students relied on cue cards, they used the cards as dot-point prompts rather than as a script to be read. Students who did not score well relied on cue cards, often mechanically reading script from them. This resulted in their presentations being either hesitant or too fast and it also inhibited effective engagement with the assessors.

Content

Overall, the quality of the content of the presentations was good. For students who scored highly, it was evident that they had conducted detailed research to prepare their Presentation topics. This

allowed them to organise relevant information logically, analyse the implications, deduce well-developed conclusions and present and discuss fluently. On the other hand, students who did not score well tended to rely on poorly researched and understood information and this affected their ability to deliver their presentation logically or fluently.

Section 2 – Discussion

Communication

Students who scored highly were able to confidently deliver their presentations in a natural, engaging and appropriately conversational (but nevertheless formal) manner, while proactively engaging with the assessors. The presentations of students who did not score well tended to be stilted, colloquial and too informal, sometimes using expressions inappropriate in an examination context, such as ~てか and ですよね.

Content

The depth of research and understanding of the presentation material underpinned the confidence of students who scored highly. They were able to refer to their understanding of the presentation material in order to support or illustrate the points being made. Students who did not score well demonstrated a lack of preparation and understanding of the presentation material and this impeded the continuity and fluidity of their discussion.

2018 VCE Korean First Language oral examination report

General comments

Overall, students were aware of the structure and requirements of the oral examination. Many students were able to demonstrate knowledge and skills on the required areas of study in an appropriate manner. However, students who did not have a thorough understanding of the examination requirements did not present their content logically and their content had not been properly analysed.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

Communication

Students who achieved high scores demonstrated excellent communication skills, reflected in effective time management strategies and the excellent tempo of their presentations. These students were highly engaged with assessors and gave their presentations confidently. They were able to accurately deliver their researched topic using a sophisticated and extensive range of vocabulary.

Students who achieved low scores generally presented with frequent hesitations and pauses, indicating a lack of practice and preparation. Some students over-relied on their cue cards, often attempting to read directly from their notes. Where students use cue cards, they should aim to do so as brief prompts to aid memory rather than text to be read verbatim.

Content

Students who achieved high scores had conducted meticulous research on their presentation topics. Their knowledge of the topic allowed them to present relevant information fluently and logically, to analyse the texts and to give well-developed opinions and conclusions.

Students who achieved low scores demonstrated a lack of preparation and relied on a limited amount of information from a narrow range of source materials. This caused them to have a low capacity to elaborate on information with reasons, original ideas or opinions.

Section 2 – Discussion

Communication

Students should remember that appropriate formal Korean is required in the Discussion and they should be prepared to respond to a range of different questions about their topic.

Students who achieved high scores were able to link the texts studied to their topic, providing more than just a recall of information. They carried the Discussion forward, delivering their responses in a confident manner and including ideas and opinions that were expressed clearly and effectively. They were able to maintain an excellent tempo throughout the Discussion, even when unexpected issues were raised.

Students who achieved low scores had not completed sufficient research into their topic and could not expand on or fully discuss the answers to the questions they were asked.

Content

Students are required to develop a thorough understanding of their topic through research or a variety of substantial texts. This will allow students to develop an understanding of content and language to a much deeper level.

Some students had completed a depth of research on their topic and had a good understanding of their topic. These students were able to discuss an impressive range of matters. These students were often able to refer to their research materials to support or clarify the points being made and develop an opinion about an issue that allowed real insight into the culture of Korean-speaking communities.

It was evident that some students had not prepared adequately. The lack of a thorough understanding of the Presentation topic seemed to weaken students' confidence and obstruct the fluidity of the Discussion, and did not allow them to link the points being made to their Detailed Study topic.

2018 VCE Vietnamese First Language oral examination report

General comments

Generally, students performed well in the oral examination. Most students performed better in the Presentation section than in the Discussion section. A small number of students attended the oral examination with little or no preparation. Cue cards were well prepared and used correctly, except for a small number of students who relied on them too heavily.

Some students selected Presentation topics that did not relate to tradition and change in Vietnamese-speaking communities, which is the required theme.

Advice to students

- Students should not expect to rely solely on rehearsed dialogue. Students should expect the Discussion to range widely over the issue selected.
- Cue cards are permitted as described in the study design.
- An excellent presentation can be achieved with thorough research, planning and practice.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

Students who achieved high scores had completed thorough preparation of their chosen subtopic. They delivered a clearly structured and in-depth topic with coherent expression and a broad range of vocabulary. They also demonstrated excellent control of both the language and register and had good time management skills.

Students who had not adequately prepared did not achieve high scores. Their Presentations were unstructured and lacked sufficient detail. In most of these cases, students read the material from their cue cards and there was little interaction with the assessors. Many students finished their Presentation well short of the allocated time.

Section 2 – Discussion

Students who achieved high scores discussed their topics with the assessors, giving well-prepared supporting details and speaking confidently. They could expand on their opinions and advance the exchange, respond to the questions spontaneously and maintain the Discussion naturally with appropriate vocabulary.

Students who received low scores were unable to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of their topic. Their responses were simply a repeat of their memorised material for the Presentation. This memorised material was also not necessarily relevant to the questions being discussed.