

# 2019 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 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 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.

# 2019 VCE Chinese First Language oral examination report

## General comments

Most students performed with confidence and fluency in the 2019 VCE Chinese First Language oral examination. They had prepared well for all aspects of the examination and showed an excellent understanding of its requirements and of VCAA examination procedure.

Students presented on a wide range of contemporary topics, including many literature titles. However, many students gave their presentation without a clear stance on the issue selected, and did not seem to have prepared for the Discussion section adequately.

Most students finished their presentation within the allocated time, although some did not leave enough time for the conclusion. A small number of students presented their speech without providing supporting evidence from the texts studied. Some students referred to texts that did not meet the requirements of the study design.

It is important to remind students that they must not provide personal information, including their name and/or school, to the assessors in the examination room.

## Specific information

### Section 1 – Presentation

Students with high-scoring performances:

- demonstrated thorough research on 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 logically structured content
- demonstrated excellent control of style and register, using an extensive range of expressions with excellent pronunciation, intonation and tempo
- used an extensive range of vocabulary and sentence structures
- presented with a high level of confidence, using appropriate body language, gestures 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 (for example, informative)
- lacked strong arguments about the topic chosen
- did not present a clear stance
- lacked depth of ideas/opinions
- did not show logical connections between their opinions and the supporting evidence/samples

- lacked supporting evidence from the texts studied
- 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 a thorough research of the Detailed Study topic and an excellent understanding of the aspects chosen and the texts studied
- responded to questions with fluency and confidence
- responded to questions logically with a range of highly relevant information
- demonstrated the ability to take the initiative, to advance the exchange and to elaborate
- demonstrated the ability to defend their own stance with evidence
- demonstrated the ability to handle challenging questions ranging beyond the chosen issue.

Students with low-scoring performances:

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

Many topics worked well, allowing students to explore general ideas such as the value of good communication and shared endeavours, or the value of respecting foreign cultures and heritage. Others were too specifically informative to enable students to build an exchange or engage in genuine discussion.

# 2019 VCE Indonesian First Language oral examination report

## General comments

Students generally understood the requirements of the oral examination and showed good preparation. Some students' responses were less focused on the requirements.

It was important that the Detail Study focused on literature and the arts rather than current affairs.

## Section 1 – Conversation

In this section, students had five minutes for their presentation. Not all students used the time appropriately; some presented for less than five minutes.

During the presentation, some students used colloquial language and seemed not to be aware that they should speak in formal Indonesian.

## Section 2 – Discussion

In the discussion, students were expected to elaborate on their topic and refer to the works studied. The nature of discussion means not only giving facts, but also giving their own opinion based on fact and making it possible for discussion to occur. Some students showed in-depth knowledge about the works, and used good language expression and correct grammar.

Students should avoid informal language during the discussion.

# 2019 VCE Japanese First Language oral examination report

## General comments

Most students understood the structure and requirements of the oral examination but, generally, they had not prepared well for it. It is crucial that students prepare adequately for the examination. The content of information presented must be substantive, well understood, properly analysed and logically presented. The format of the Presentation must be thoroughly practised and rehearsed within the allotted timelines. If students adequately prepare for the examination, they will likely be confident at the examination. They will also likely be less prone to nervousness, be able to present and discuss their material in a calm and fluent manner, and establish a productive rapport with the assessors.

## Specific information

### Section 1 – Presentation

#### Communication

Students who scored well displayed excellent communication skills, demonstrated by effective time management strategies and the natural speed, or tempo, of their presentations. These students were clearly well practised in their presentations and were able to deliver them confidently using an appropriate range of language throughout.

Students who scored well were sufficiently confident in their material that they did not require their cue cards. Where students did use cue cards, they did so appropriately; that is, as brief prompts to aid memory and without adversely impacting on establishing rapport and eye contact with the assessors.

It was evident that most students who did not score well had not adequately practised their presentations. They lacked confidence in the material, were hesitant in their delivery and generally were not adept in the management of their time. Their presentation tempos were either too slow or too fast, which are indicators of a lack of preparation and practice. These students generally over-relied on their cue cards, often attempting to read from them verbatim rather than presenting a well-practised and rehearsed piece during which they could establish a rapport with the assessors.

#### Content

It was clear that students who scored well had conducted detailed research on their presentation topics, using a variety of source materials, including set texts. Their knowledge of the subject matter allowed them to present relevant information fluently and logically, to analyse the implications, and to deduce and discuss well-developed opinions and conclusions.

Students who did not score well tended to rely on poorly understood information from a narrow range of source materials, often apparently from a superficial search of internet sites. The resultant

knowledge base did not allow them to prepare for a fluent presentation of relevant material, and their opinions based on the information tended to lack depth and be unorganised.

## **Section 2 – Discussion**

### **Communication**

Students who scored well discussed their presentations in appropriate conversational, but nevertheless formal, Japanese. They were able to maintain a natural tempo during the whole of their Discussion while engaging with the assessors, even when unexpected issues were raised.

The use of Japanese in discussion of their presentations by students who did not score well was problematic, such as *'pashiri'* and too much extended sound of *'te'*. The language tended to be stilted, colloquial and informal and, often, read directly – and inappropriately – from cue cards.

### **Content**

The depth of research and understanding of the content of their presentation material underpinned the confidence of students who scored well to discuss an appropriate range of issues. They were often able to refer to their research source materials to support or illustrate the points being made.

Inadequate preparation was evident from students who did not score well. The lack of a thorough understanding of the presentation material undermined students' confidence, impeded the fluidity of their discussion and did not allow them to anchor the points being made to their source material.

# 2019 VCE Korean First Language oral examination report

## General comments

Overall, students were aware of the structure and the requirements of the oral examination. The information presented by students was properly analysed and logically presented. However, a small number of students did not present a clear stance on the topic selected or did not give an appropriate outline of the topic.

## Specific information

### Section 1 – Presentation

#### Communication

Students who achieved high scores demonstrated exceptional communication skills, reflected in effective time management strategies, and employed an excellent pace during their Presentations. These students were able to accurately state their explored topic using an advanced and impressive range of vocabulary. Moreover, they engaged with assessors with great confidence.

Some student performances were hindered by frequent hesitations and pauses, indicating a lack of preparation and practice. Some students relied too heavily on their cue cards, often attempting to read directly from their notes. Where students use cue cards, they should do so as brief prompts to aid memory rather than reading them verbatim.

#### Content

Students who achieved high scores showed deep knowledge of the Presentation topic based on the use of substantial and high-quality resources. Their knowledge allowed them to deliver relevant information in an eloquent and logical manner, to analyse the implications and to convey well-developed opinions and conclusions.

Students who achieved low scores demonstrated a lack of preparation. The quality of their ideas and opinions was often superficial, and they were unable to elaborate on or make effective use of the texts presented.

### Section 2 – Discussion

#### Communication

Students usually provided a great deal of information to answer but not all of it addressed the question. They need to practise responding to a wide scope of questions in a variety of ways about the topic.



Students who achieved high scores were able to link the texts studied to their topic, analysing resources and elaborating on the topics chosen rather than simply recounting information from their resources. They were in control of their topic, delivering their responses clearly and incorporating original ideas and opinions.

Students who achieved low scores had not completed adequate investigation into their topic and could not expand on or fully discuss the answers to the questions they were asked. It was noted that many students responded in an unsuitable manner by repeating the information given during their presentation.

### **Content**

Students who scored highly could manage relevant vocabulary linked with their chosen topics. They were often able to refer to their research materials to support or elucidate the points being made and demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of their topic.

Lack of preparation was evident from some students. Although many students spoke well on their topics, many Discussions lacked depth and evidence. This meant these students had insufficient capacity to elaborate on information, which often obstructed the flow of the Discussion.

# 2019 VCE Vietnamese First Language oral examination report

## General comments

Overall, the majority of students showed a clear understanding of the procedures and requirements of the oral examination. Most cue cards were prepared and used in accordance with the specifications published in the study design.

Generally, students showed confidence and had prepared their presentation very well. There was variety in the topics presented, yet difference in the difficulty levels of the presented topics – some were very simple and others were more difficult and required in-depth research. Most students performed better in the Presentation section than in the Discussion. A small number of students attended the oral examination with little or no evidence of preparation or revision and did not use the cue cards effectively.

## Specific information

### Section 1 – Presentation

Students who achieved high scores were well prepared for the examination in all areas, including:

- having completed thorough research on the presented topic and having prepared well for the Presentation
- the sequence of ideas was logical and cohesive, with a broad range of information and precise vocabulary
- being able to give their own thoughts on the topic
- expressions with excellent intonation and pronunciation
- being confident, calm and able to maintain a good level of engagement with assessors
- time-management skills.

On the other hand, students who had not adequately prepared their oral Presentation did not score highly. Many of them did not fully use the four minutes of the Presentation. They demonstrated:

- little or no knowledge about the topic
- a shallow presentation of the topic
- an unclear structure without evidence nor details to support their ideas
- a need to read directly from cue cards and did not make eye contact with assessors.

### Section 2 – Discussion

Most students who achieved high scores for the Discussion used cue cards effectively when presenting their topic. These students demonstrated excellent knowledge of the chosen topic, and showed the ability to analyse questions and answered them readily with insightful details. They

could carry the Discussion forward, showed confidence when responding to questions and demonstrated excellent pronunciation, intonation and tempo.

Students who did not score well could not answer most of the questions or their answers did not directly address the questions. In many cases, the answers were simply a repeat of the ideas given in the Presentation section.

Students should prepare thoroughly for the examination in order to achieve a high score.