



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students performed very well in the 2005 oral examination. Nine students undertook the examination, which was the largest cohort since the inception of the study in 1998. Most students presented in a calm, relaxed manner with little evidence of nerves that hindered their performance. Students were well prepared, confident and comfortable with the format, pace and direction of both the Conversation and Discussion.

Pronunciation was accurate, with clear diphthongs, crisp consonants and good tempo and intonation. The standard of expression, vocabulary, fluency and the other criteria by which performance is measured was very high.

Discussion topics were well researched and prepared. The vocabulary range was rich, and responses to questions were carefully considered. Although there were a few minor cases of grammatical errors, such as case errors and anglicisms, these did not detract from the overall delivery and intended meaning. The issue of grammatical errors such as these can only be overcome by speaking Armenian in a variety of contexts.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

As in past years, topics covered in the Conversation included personal background, current studies, family structure, career aspirations, hobbies, part-time work, future plans and other issues emanating from these topics. Some students also commented on their family's migration experience. The subject matter was rich and varied, with students discussing topics from unusual hobbies to vocational studies outside the normal school day. All students engaged with the assessors confidently. There were very few false starts and appropriate self-correction techniques were used when necessary. There was evidence of good preparation and students had little hesitation in extending their answers appropriately.

Sentence structure, pronunciation, register and expression were very good, and assessors expressed satisfaction with the depth, breadth and complexity of the conversation, especially in response to open questions.

Section 2 – Discussion

The Armenian Genocide, the Hayastan All Armenian Fund and the relationship between Armenia and the Diaspora were popular topics for the Detailed Study. The assessors again felt that the students were very well prepared and had mastered their chosen sub-topics well. Follow-up questions were answered accurately without hesitation or unnatural pauses. This allowed for a free flowing discussion in which students demonstrated their capacity to engage the assessors by providing appropriate and interesting responses and also showed an ability to influence the direction of the discussion. Most students expressed a wish to visit Armenia to witness first hand the sites, culture and landmarks they often had learnt about only through books, the stories of their elders and the media.

Students carried out this task successfully. This was demonstrated by conversing with the assessors with comfortable body language, good expression and correct sentence structures. Students were able to respond to unrehearsed questions from assessors, demonstrating an affinity with the topic area and mastery of most of the detailed subject matter. Even probing questions were handled with appropriate style and register and no unnatural pauses.