

2017 VCE Indigenous Languages of Victoria: Revival and Reclamation examination report

General comments

Overall, some students produced excellent answers to all questions on the 2017 VCE Indigenous Languages of Victoria: Revival and Reclamation examination, particularly Questions 1–5. Students with high scores answered the essay questions (Question 6 and Question 7) very well, both in terms of quantity and content.

Teachers and students should note two main things:

- Students should read the questions carefully and make sure they answer them all. Some students missed out on marks because instructions to some questions were not carefully followed.
- Students should ensure that their answers to Questions 6 and 7 are as detailed as possible, using examples that clearly illustrate the points that they are hoping to make and writing enough to answer the question fully.

Some students talked about how in language *X* they finish with ‘the letter *-i*’. While this is true of the written form, in most cases with indigenous languages it would be more appropriate for students to refer to sounds rather than letters. Some indigenous languages are written using the Roman alphabet but with each letter or group of letters having only one sound, and each sound having only one corresponding letter or group of letters. This is different from English where the same sound is the first sound in the words ‘ceiling’ and ‘seal’, but they are written with different letters.

A few students misused terminology, using ‘word’ instead of ‘letter’, ‘pronoun’ in place of ‘noun’, or ‘vowel’ in place of ‘word’. Students undertaking this study should understand all these terms.

For Questions 1–5, students could have answered without needing to remember specific linguistic information. On the other hand, Questions 6 and 7 asked for actual examples of the language they are involved in the reclamation of.

Specific information

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1

Question 1a.

the fool	<i>waal</i>	<i>waala</i>	
the hawk	<i>patp</i>	<i>patpa</i>	
the woman	<i>paanth</i>		
the vegetables	<i>may</i>		
the stick	<i>yuk</i>		
grab	<i>katpr</i>		
follow	<i>wakr</i>	<i>wakm</i>	<i>wakirr</i>
chop	<i>rathr</i>	<i>rathirr</i>	
grow	<i>piinthr</i>	<i>piinthirr</i>	
cut	<i>yakr</i>	<i>yakirr</i>	<i>yakm</i>
search for	<i>waathirr</i>	<i>waathm</i>	

Students needed to use the correct spelling to be awarded marks.

Question 1b.

- *-r* non-past/is Ving and will V/present and future
- *-irr* past (perfective)/Ved
- *-m* past imperfective/imperfect/was Ving

Question 1c.

paanth piinthirr

Full marks were given only if students used the correct words and the correct spelling, which has double 'i' followed by a single 'n'. Some students misspelled *pinnthirr* as the word for 'grew'.

Question 1d.

may piinthr

Again, students need to use the correct words and the correct spelling, which has double 'i' followed by a single 'n'. As with Question 1c. it is important that students carefully observe the spellings that different indigenous languages use.

Question 2

1. <u>Peter and his three cousins</u> went to the beach.	<i>thananmarra</i>
2. <u>I</u> went to the beach.	<i>ngatha</i>
3. <u>You and I</u> went to the beach.	<i>ngali</i>
4. <u>Peter and Jack</u> went to the beach.	<i>thanakutha</i>
5. <u>My four sisters and I</u> went to the beach.	<i>ngaliyakuru</i>
6. <u>Peter</u> went to the beach.	<i>thana</i>
7. <u>Alfred, Celia, Peter and I</u> went to the beach.	<i>ngaliyakuru</i>
8. <u>Peter, Pauline, you and I</u> went to the beach.	<i>ngalikuru</i>

9. You and John went to the beach.

nhupalu

10. Pauline went to the beach.

thana

Question 3a.

Malugayi/lamarrayi is used in ergative contexts, when the old man/dog is the subject of a transitive sentence.

Maluga/lamarra is used in absolutive contexts, when the old man/dog is either the subject of an intransitive sentence or the direct object of a transitive sentence.

Question 3b.

warreyi ya'yi maluga

All three words needed to be correctly spelled.

Question 4

In general, Question 4 was well answered. Question 4 dealt with linguistic details from historical sources in one of the languages of Victoria that may not have been worked on by students.

Questions 4f. and 4g. demonstrated a feature not found in English, namely double marking of possessives.

Question 4a.

It is expressed by adding the suffix *-ek*.

Marks were given for simply writing the suffix.

Question 4b.

that my boomerang/my boomerang there

'That is my boomerang' was also accepted.

Question 4c.

- 'your' is shown by adding *-in*
- 'his' is shown by adding *-ook*

Question 4d.

The possessive suffix is marked on the demonstrative; then it moves on to *nyoowa/nyooa*. So 'your boomerang' in Table 2 was *nyoowa gatim-gattimin*, with the suffix meaning 'your' *-in* on the noun 'boomerang'. In Table 3 it was *nyooangin gatim-gattim*, where the suffix has now moved to the word *nyoowa/nyooa* meaning 'that' or 'there'.

Question 4e.

- Table 2: *-ek* 'my', *-in* 'your', *-ook* 'his'
- Table 3: *-ngek* 'my', *-ngin* 'your', *-nyook* 'his'

When added to a final consonant, the forms are as in Table 2; when added to a final vowel, the forms are as in Table 3 (although the final *-a* of *nyoowa* is dropped).

Question 4f.

In Jatjalli the possessor has to be marked with a suffix, similar to in English, so 'dog's' will be *gal-a*, or 'dog-possessor'. The item possessed also has to be marked with the suffix meaning 'his', such as *bergoo* + *-ook*, which literally means 'the dog's his tail'.

There is no 'the' or 'a' in Jatjalli.

Question 4g.

As with the answer to Question 4f, the possessor had to be marked with a suffix, similar to in English, so 'boy's' will be *goolgoon-a* 'boy-possessor'. The item possessed also had to be marked with the suffix meaning 'his', such as *lahr + ngook*, which literally means 'the boy's his camp'.

Question 4h.

walmengek

Question 4i.

- *gal* 'dog'
- *gimba* 'here'
- *goomboon* '(is) lying down'
- *walmengek* 'behind me'

This was the same grammatical structure as the 'my boomerang' in Table 2 – in this case, literally 'this/here dog is lying at my behind.'

Question 4j.

- *walmengin*: behind you
- *walmenyook*: behind him

Question 5

In general, Question 5 was reasonably well answered, but some students missed out on marks due to lack of care. For example, some students who otherwise answered this question well missed Question 5b. It is important to read and answer all the questions carefully.

Question 5a.

borrowing

Question 5b.

the sounds 'b', 'p' and 'f'

A few students seem to have misunderstood this question, interpreting it as 'What does the Warlpiri pronunciation of p sound like?'

Question 5c.

Warlpiri does not have the letters 'b' and 'f'. The closest sound to 'b' and 'f' in Warlpiri is 'p' and hence this is the sound employed.

Question 5d.

with 'j'

Question 5e.

the sounds 'j' and 'sh'

Question 5f.

only 3 vowels: 'a', 'i' and 'u'

Question 5g.

Different vowels in English, such as the 'e' sound in 'seven' and the 'i' sound in 'Kimby', are realised with the single sound 'i' in Warlpiri.

Question 5h.

In Warlpiri a final vowel sound is needed. For example, 'canteen' is expressed in Warlpiri as *kantini*, with an extra 'i' on the end, the same sound as the vowel before it. Similarly, 'bullock' is expressed as *puluku*.

This part of Question 5 was answered well by some students, but others did not respond well.

Question 5i.

dropping of the initial 's' when there are two consonants at the beginning of the word

Section 2

Question 6

In general, Question 6 was answered well. It was worth a total of 20 marks and consequently students should have taken time to provide detailed information, which might have included anecdotal evidence of community usage and specific examples of language use, not just generalisations.

To get a high score for Question 6, students needed to pay close attention to the instructions. There needed to be concrete examples and, as appropriate, actual examples of the language should have been included as part of the overall greater detail required in these questions.

Question 6a.

Students were expected to discuss three or more points that they had chosen to illustrate and also include concrete examples. For example, if discussing the sounds and pronunciation of the language, they may have pointed out that the target language has sounds not found in English, such as initial *ng-*. When talking about spelling, they could have pointed out that initial consonants like 'b' and 'p' might be alternative ways of spelling the same sound – a word *batja* might be spelled as *patja*, *badja*, etc. If exemplifying the construction of new words, they could have given examples of that.

Question 6b.

Answers could have included:

- clear reference to specific examples of historical records of language/languages
- some understanding of the limited nature of such records
- a demonstration of how such records aid in the reclamation of the target language
- the impact of multiple spellings of Aboriginal words in different sources
- inconsistencies between different sources
- inconsistencies between different records made within the same source
- that historical records may be the model and point of reference for what is correct in language reclamation contexts.

Question 6c.

In Question 6c., reasons for language reclamation may have included things like identity.

Question 7a.

Students were expected to describe two or more written items (for example, printed book and app) and also talk about the content that each resource might have (for example, the app might be a bilingual dictionary and the printed book might be a story in language or in language and English). Students were also expected to describe the advantages for language reclamation of resources being both in language and English versus being in language alone. Furthermore, they were required to describe the protocols and processes of community involvement in the production of the resources, and finally discuss how knowledge of other languages informs this.

Question 7b.

In Question 7b., students needed to use examples from the historical sources and describe how these would be used to decide what other materials would form the basis of their language reclamation items. This question also asked them to identify particular features of language – for example, grammar or vocabulary – that a particular resource would be concentrating on demonstrating. For example, if a booklet is to help students learn kinship terms then it might have pictures of mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, etc., whereas if it were designed to help learn the tenses of verbs (past, present, future) then it would need to be done in a different way.

Question 7c.

In Question 7c., students needed to refer to particular traditional stories, the knowledge of the target community in the target language and/or traditional stories written down by Europeans in the 19th century. They then described the advantages and benefits of using these for language reclamation and how they would go about doing that, for example, by translating those stories into the revived language.