

# 2015 VCE Auslan examination report

## Interactive Sign Examination

### General comments

Students performed well in the 2015 Interactive Sign Examination. Students who scored highly were well prepared, able to communicate with confidence and advance the exchange effectively with assessors. Students who chose topics that were relevant to them and their life experiences were among those who achieved high scores.

Students who did not score highly were less well prepared and fingerspelled too many very basic signs.

It is very important for students to be thoroughly familiar with all components of this examination, the assessment criteria and the correct form of address to use when speaking to the assessor at the start and end of the examination. They must remember to sign their student number in Auslan.

The Interactive Sign Examination has two sections – Conversation and discussion, and Presentation and response.

### Section 1 – Conversation and discussion

Students who had prepared and explored the topics thoroughly were able to communicate effectively with assessors, expressing and expanding on their information and ideas. However, students who had not prepared adequately could not elaborate on their responses or expand the conversation. They could only give very limited answers and therefore did not score highly.

Students who relied solely on memorised material found it difficult to continue the conversation when an assessor interacted with them. These students were more likely to give irrelevant responses because they relied solely on their prepared materials in response to any question asked. A conversation is an interaction between two or more people and cannot be learned. Therefore, rote-learned slabs of information are not recommended.

Students should be reminded that they:

- are required to sign their student number as soon as they are seated
- must not sign their name
- must not reveal their own name when describing their family or the names of family members
- should not ask the assessor(s) questions about his or her family
- should not overuse rhetorical questions.

### Section 2 – Presentation and response

Following the informal Conversation and discussion, the student should indicate to the assessor(s) the topic chosen for the Presentation and response from his or her area of interest.

The student may support the Presentation (three minutes) and response (five minutes) with objects such as photographs, diagrams and maps. Notes and cue cards are not permitted. On completion

of the presentation the student should respond to questions raised by assessors. The focus of this discussion is to explore aspects of language and culture.

Students are given three minutes to clearly and briefly introduce the presentation. Some students assumed that they would be allowed to present an extended monologue of their topic and were surprised when an assessor interacted with them.

When selecting the topic, it is advisable to avoid topics covered in the Conversation and discussion section. Many students merely repeated what had already been covered. If the topic studied is related to a theme covered in the Conversation and discussion, then it is important to provide a clearly different focus. Topics needed to be broad enough to allow for a discussion, but not too difficult in content or vocabulary.

Students should have a wide range of information to discuss. Students who devoted adequate time to their topic were able to effectively support and elaborate on their ideas, information and opinions while referring to the topic studied.

Students should choose a topic that they are familiar with or interested in. They must feel comfortable with the topic they choose.

In 2015 there was a significant improvement in the use of classifiers, role shift, colloquialisms and use of space.

When presenting a title of a book or movie, students should be aware that it is not necessary to sign NEXT between each word, e.g. THE (next) RED (next) HOUSE.

A few students brought objects/materials to support their presentation but forgot to use them with the assessor.

## Sign Comprehension and Sign Production Examination

### General comments

Students performed well in the 2015 Auslan Sign Comprehension and Sign Production examination. Students had no problems using the DVD and the computer software.

It is very important that students are instructed to make only **one** recording of their work and ensure that the whole response has been recorded.

Students sitting the Auslan examination need to be familiar with all aspects of the paper. They should make effective use of the 10 minutes of reading/viewing time in order to be fully aware of the requirements of each task. During the reading/viewing time they can access their dictionary if necessary. When reading the task questions, students should carefully refer to both the DVD and the hard copy of the examination paper to ensure that they understand the questions accurately.

Some students failed to provide succinct responses to the questions and instead gave responses that went beyond the required answers. This demonstrated a lack of comprehension skills. Students need to practise effective dictionary skills during the year so that the dictionary becomes a valuable tool in the examination.

Students must:

- practise focusing the camera on themselves. They should be able to see themselves from head to waist and from one shoulder to the other. They must sit up straight while recording and **not** bend forward
- always look into the camera when recording. Where the response is for only one person they need to look into the camera. Where the response is to a group of people they should move

their head from side to side, showing that they are responding to a group rather than an individual

- ensure they have recorded a response
- watch the position of their hands: palm(s) should be facing inward towards the chest. They should check that they can see themselves signing or the signs they are signing
- avoid wearing colourful (florescent) tops. Grey, white, light grey or light blue is acceptable. Hair should be tied back. The assessor should be able to see their facial expression
- use their examination time wisely. The texts are repeated three times. Students should avoid rewinding and forwarding tapes during the examination
- clearly indicate at the start of each draft the number of the draft and its numerical order. Students should avoid using too many drafts; **one** draft is preferable
- sign their student number at the start of each draft and indicate if it is formal or informal
- answer the question but not repeat the resource presented
- check signs in the video resources if they are unsure of signs
- start their answer in an appropriate way, remembering that Auslan is a visual language and if they get stuck or are not sure how to start, it is a good idea to imagine the scene visually.

Things to avoid include:

- producing too many drafts. Usually the first draft is the best. Those who do more than two drafts seem to leave out information each time a draft is completed. It would be preferable for students to focus more on preparing the first draft, making sure they have all the right points before recording themselves. Teachers should practise examination preparation with students during the year. The use of past examinations is recommended
- writing out whole responses in English rather than organising the response in Auslan. Students need to keep short reminder lists
- being confused about the difference between formal and informal signs
- signing very short responses. Students should aim to produce a response in the time allocated in the *VCE Auslan Study Design*
- overusing signs that are culturally inappropriate
- using few current Auslan fillers
- voicing or mouthing English words during responses
- not structuring a response well
- having problems with clearly defined hand shapes and incorrect movements. Some vocabulary was signed incorrectly (e.g. dream, your for you're, man, typing/typist, want)
- using signed English signs such as mother (using the 'three' hand shape)
- using incorrect role-shifting and inappropriate body shifts
- using too many classifiers in some formal presentations, which were more appropriate for informal signing
- not using eye-gaze and anaphoric indexing correctly
- not sequencing their ideas or information, and repeating ideas in their responses.

## Specific information

### Section I: Watching and responding to informal signed texts

Factors that led to low scores included:

- taking on the wrong role-play and continuing to be themselves
- ignoring the question asked
- not using the information on the DVD
- producing a statement and failing to engage the audience
- not producing an appropriate informal introduction as required; instead beginning with a formal introduction
- failing to have the correct structure
  - greeting/opening
  - body of discussion
  - closure of discussion/parting/arranging another meeting, etc.

### Task – Informal

#### Possible answers

Reasons to visit a national park

- it is good to get some fresh air after all the studying for exams
- there are lots of national parks within easy access either by car or by train
- they are easy to find because they are well signposted, so you shouldn't get lost
- there is something interesting for everyone; for example, you can experience Aboriginal cultural heritage
- amazing scenery – mountains to beaches
- can learn about Australian wildlife, birds, eagles, cockatoos, some are rare, and native plants
- animals – wombats, kangaroos, possums
- don't need a gym – you can jog, walk, climb, swim and ride a bike all in the fresh air for free
- we could camp overnight. There are lots of good campsites with water and toilets or very private ones in the bush
- national parks keep our environment healthy, plants hold soil together, plants convert carbon dioxide and pollution to oxygen for us to breathe
- support national parks – let's get healthy

Reasons for shopping

- haven't shopped for ages because of schoolwork
- now free – having time for myself makes me feel good
- we deserve to spoil ourselves after all the hard work at school
- shopping is a social experience to be shared with friends
- might meet others there, too
- malls have lots of free entertainment, great bands and great cheap food
- good place to hang out
- burn calories walking around
- sales on now
- pre-Christmas markdowns
- sure to find a bargain and save money
- better than shopping online because you can see and touch what you are buying, and not just look at pictures
- try it on for fit – running shoes may not fit properly
- supports local community, not overseas merchants

- lots of different shops in malls – sports shoes, surfing, camping. Music as well as clothes, so there is something for everyone
- please everyone, let's go to the mall

## **Section II: Watching and responding to formal signed texts**

A similar pattern to the informal responses was noted, although students generally understood the nature of formal discourse. Most students set up the introduction, main body and closure satisfactorily. The majority of students failed to extract, classify or reorganise the information. They should be reminded to read the questions carefully. Some students had difficulty observing the appropriate cultural way to structure the response.

### **Task 2 – Formal**

#### **Possible answers**

- welcome students
- very exciting tour to New Caledonia
- eight-day trip
- will learn about another culture and language
- will be away from home but well supervised by teachers, staff from the travel agency and an interpreter

#### Travel and accommodation

- how do you get there? Fly international airlines
- how much? All costs included, only need pocket money for souvenirs, total cost \$2000
- where do you stay? Stay at good, well-known hotels in shared rooms (two per room)
- hotels have swimming pools for relaxation
- food: breakfast at hotel, dinner at local restaurants to try local food but lots of international food too; for example, Chinese food, pizza
- great mixture of work and play
- 14 participants

#### Activities include:

- orientation to Noumea and its culture
- learning about Melanesian culture
- watching French films
- language and cultural lessons at the French school
- visits to the sea aquarium – lots of different fish, turtles, etc.
- swimming and snorkelling
- local dance shows
- walking around the island
- coconut tree climbing
- coconut grating
- basket weaving
- visiting local markets