2021 VCE Chinese First Language oral external assessment report

General comments

The Chinese First Language oral examination assesses students’ knowledge and skills in using spoken language. It is important that students and teachers familiarise themselves with the specifications for oral examinations, available on the [VCE Chinese First Language webpage](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/past-examinations/Pages/Chinese-First-Language.aspx). The examination has two sections: a presentation of up to five minutes (which includes a short introduction of no more than one minute) and a discussion of approximately five minutes.

It should be noted that during the oral examination:

* students may be asked a variety of questions with 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.

Details of the assessment criteria and descriptors are published on the VCAA website. It is important that all teachers and students be 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. Although there are similarities between the assessment criteria for the presentation and discussion sections of the examination, the criteria assess two very different aspects of performance. Students who are well prepared are generally able to demonstrate their abilities and proficiency in the language.

Overall, the majority of students came to the oral examination well prepared despite the year’s difficult circumstances. Students demonstrated excellent understanding of the requirements and procedure of the oral examination. There was a noticeable improvement in terms of student performance in Section 2. Most students were able to clarify ideas and opinions using the evidence studied from the texts. There was a very small number of students who came to the oral examination unprepared and were unable to communicate with the assessors effectively. A small group of students did not bring their examination slip and photo ID. Generally there was good use of speaker’s notes.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

Following a short introduction of no more than one minute, the student will present on a subtopic selected from the subtopic ‘Language and culture through Literature and the Arts’, using supporting objects and/or cue cards if they wish. The presentation should last no longer than four minutes. The presentation should include a clear stance on the issue selected, relate clearly to the subtopic chosen for detailed study and be supported by evidence. The student will be expected to refer to texts studied.

The majority of students performed very well in Section 1. Students demonstrated sound understanding of the subtopics and texts chosen and were able to deliver a fluent presentation in four minutes. Students maintained a clear stance by using appropriate evidence from the texts studied to support their viewpoints. However, there was a small number of students who presented an informative speech rather than articulating a clear stance on an issue related to their chosen subtopic.

Students are encouraged to choose subtopics suited to their age group, interest and capacity for a stance to be developed.

Presentations that scored highly:

* demonstrated thorough research of the detailed study subtopic
* demonstrated an excellent understanding of the aspects chosen and the texts studied
* were fluent, logical and well timed, with an impressive range of highly relevant information
* used an extensive range of expressions with excellent pronunciation, intonation and tempo
* used an extensive range of vocabulary and sentence structures
* demonstrated a high level of confidence, good use of gestures and eye contact.

Presentations that did not score well:

* did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the subtopic and the texts chosen
* did not demonstrate a clear stance
* did not include sufficient supporting evidence
* did not show an adequate level of preparation
* included many long pauses and frequent hesitations
* lacked coherence and logic.

Section 2 – Discussion

Following the presentation, the student will discuss aspects of the selected issue with the assessors and should be prepared to clarify the points presented.

It is important to note that a discussion is an exchange of views for the purpose of exploring a subject or deciding an issue. During the discussion, the student is expected to discuss aspects of the nominated issue with the assessors, but the discussion may go beyond the issue selected. The student should be prepared to discuss unfamiliar issues.

Many students did not handle Section 2 as well as Section 1. A number of students memorised scripts for this section and therefore found it difficult to elaborate on their opinions and ideas.

Discussions that scored highly:

* demonstrated thorough research of the detailed study subtopic
* demonstrated an excellent understanding of the aspects chosen and the texts studied
* responded to questions confidently and fluently
* responded to questions logically with a range of highly relevant information
* demonstrated the ability to defend their own stance with evidence
* demonstrated the ability to take initiative, advance the exchange and elaborate
* demonstrated strong adaptability
* demonstrated the ability to handle challenging questions ranging beyond the issue selected.

Discussions that did not score highly:

* lacked a full understanding of the subtopic chosen
* lacked understanding of basic concepts/definitions
* did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the texts chosen
* lacked sufficient background knowledge of the subtopic and texts chosen
* were unable to defend their arguments
* were unable to defend their own stance
* appeared to be rote-learnt speeches
* presented irrelevant answers
* presented contradicting responses
* responded without logic
* did not show evidence of adequate preparation.