



2012 Languages: Chinese Second Language Advanced GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral examination consists of approximately seven minutes of conversation, a one-minute introduction to the Detailed Study and seven minutes of discussion of the Detailed Study. Teachers and students are advised to follow the instructions and recommendations provided in the *VCE Chinese Second Language Advanced Study Design*.

The assessment criteria for the oral examination, Section 1 – Conversation, are

- capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively
- clarity of expression
- relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas
- accuracy of vocabulary and grammar
- range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar.

The criteria for Section 2 – Discussion are identical to those for Section 1 – Conversation, with the exception of the third dot point, which is

- capacity to present information, ideas and opinions on a chosen topic.

Overall, a wide range of abilities was demonstrated in the 2012 Chinese Second Language oral examination. Most students seemed adequately prepared for both the Conversation and Discussion, although many did not appear confident.

Most students were willing to engage with the assessors during both sections of the examination. Some students were nervous at the beginning of the oral examination but were able to overcome this as the examination progressed. Students should speak clearly at an adequate speed in order to demonstrate their abilities. This also demonstrates preparation and confidence.

Students listened carefully to assessors' questions and responded adequately to the topics raised, although a few had difficulty in expanding or elaborating on their answers when asked to explain further. Capable students were able to handle complex questions and gave interesting and extended responses. The less successful students tended to give a brief opinion, with irrelevant or insufficient supporting information, or used inappropriate expressions. However, most students used their initiative and were prepared to give examples to support their points. Students who are performing well can expect to be challenged by more difficult questions related to the sub-topic, and students should be prepared for this.

Some students' language in response to assessor's questions was too casual. Students are reminded that slang, dialect and vulgar language is not appropriate in this formal assessment situation.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Students are expected to interact with assessors in talking about aspects of their personal world, including family and friends, school and home life, interests and aspirations.

Communication: Demonstrated capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively **Clarity of expression**

Student performance was the highest on this criterion. Most students had prepared thoroughly and performed well. It is important that students give appropriate and adequate answers to questions and ask for clarification when they are unsure.

Outstanding students had obviously anticipated the type of questions that might be asked and had prepared appropriate and detailed responses. However, some students occasionally used English words in their conversation, for example, the names of their school subjects and activities. Students are reminded that they should not state their name or the name of their school.



There was a tendency for some students to try to give a great deal of information using rote-learned answers. For example, in discussing the advantages and disadvantages of coeducational and single-sex schools, or the generation gap between the student and their parents, some students gave vague responses and could not give examples to elaborate on their arguments. Students' responses did not always fit the questions asked.

Content: Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

Student performance on this criterion was slightly lower than for the communication criterion. Students' capacity to support or elaborate on information, ideas and opinions with reasons, examples and evidence is crucial to performing well in the examination.

In this section, students who respond only with simplistic answers do not demonstrate their abilities. Students should avoid generalisations and stereotypes. It is important to present a good range of information, ideas and opinions clearly and logically. Most students were well prepared in terms of organising information, providing alternative phrasing and justifying statements spontaneously in unrehearsed situations without resorting to rote-learned material.

Students need to refer to recently published resources if they wish to analyse current aspects of topics.

Language: Accuracy of vocabulary and grammar

Range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Generally, students' vocabulary and grammar was quite good. Stronger students knew how to use idioms and alternative vocabulary appropriately in their conversation; however, a few students used idioms or proverbs inappropriately. Plentiful use of idioms and proverbs does not imply high standards if other elements do not meet the standards expected.

The most capable students provided extended answers and opinions through naturally flowing conversation. Phrase misuse was an issue for students; for example, '是个' 热情青年' ——好动, 精力充沛, 坐不住, ~~~ ; 是个 '顽强勇敢' 的孩子——买玩具, 闹到底。

Section 2 – Discussion

Most students introduced their topic appropriately and presented a general introduction about the aspects of their sub-topic. It is recommended that students outline their topic and aspects clearly and logically.

Some students had not prepared at all for this section. A few students' did not follow the requirements for topics being related to Chinese culture and language. It is suggested that students avoid complex political topics that are beyond their linguistic level and difficult to analyse.

Students should not bring all their references material into the examination. Objects can be used to support the discussion but should serve a real purpose and be limited in size. Refer to the *VCE Exams Navigator 2013* for information regarding materials that can be brought to the examination.

The choice of topic and sub-topic to suit students' interests and levels is crucial. Some students chose difficult or obscure topics to demonstrate their unique content, but were not able to analyse and organise it at the appropriate level.

Several students seemed to be using the format for a persuasive presentation instead of a discussion. Other students appeared to have an issue with time management and had difficulties allocating their time effectively. At times they were able to complete one aspect, while other aspects were not sufficiently expressed.

Communication: Demonstrated capacity to maintain and advance the exchange effectively and appropriately
Clarity of expression

Most students understood the questions and responded according to their research. While some students appeared not to understand assessors' questions, some were able to ask for clarification. This is a crucial repair strategy.

Some students tended to recite content instead of engaging in a discussion. These students struggled to respond to unexpected questions. Students are expected to give their opinions on the topic and support their arguments with relevant information.

2012 Assessment Report



Content: Capacity to present information, ideas and opinions on a chosen topic

The average performance level on this criterion was better than for the other criteria. There was a clear distinction between the more capable and the less capable students. Students who performed well had carefully considered their topic and sub-topic and had anticipated a range of questions. Using resources such as books, movies and documentaries would further support students' study and preparation. The less successful students appeared not to have practised structures or prepared the content in depth. They needed to elaborate more on their research, rather than just piece together information during the discussion. Inadequately prepared students seemed to have little to talk about.

Only a few students were unable to answer the questions related to the topic they had chosen. Students need to understand that the discussion should be an analysis of their chosen texts rather than just an introduction to a broad topic. Students should focus on their particular sub-topic. Students also need to cover both breadth and depth while respecting the seven-minute time limit.

Popular topics included: Chinese tea, Chinese jade, Chinese local food, Historical figures, Festivals, Celebrations and Tourist destinations in China.

Language: Accuracy of vocabulary and grammar

Range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Students who performed well showed in-depth knowledge of the topic, explained their thoughts and opinions logically and convincingly, and offered possible solutions to the issues they presented. However, some students gave only general information that relied on limited experiences.

Students should be aware that assessors will often follow up on students' initial responses with further questions. Therefore rote-learned passages will not help them to cope with alternative questions.