

VCE 2020 Chinese Second Language oral examination report

General comments

2020 was the first year this study was delivered according to the newly accredited *VCE Chinese Second Language Study Design 2020–2024* and examination specifications. It is important that students and teachers familiarise themselves with the [specifications for oral examinations](#), available on the VCE Chinese Second Language examinations webpage of the VCAA website. Students and teachers should also refer to the [series of videos](#) that has been produced to help with preparation for the oral examinations; these are also available on the Chinese Second Language examinations study webpage of the VCAA website.

It should be noted that during the oral examination:

- students may be asked a variety of questions of 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.

The majority of students used their knowledge and skills to exchange information and opinions, demonstrating a good understanding of the requirements of the revised study design and oral examination specifications. Most students were familiar with the procedure of the examination and were able to address the assessment criteria to various degrees in their exchanges with the assessors.

Students are reminded to use appropriate vocabulary and expression. For example, it is not acceptable to say 看林丹打球让我大跌眼镜 ('Watching Lin Dan's games makes my glasses drop') and 对篮球没感兴趣 (meaning 'I haven't felt interested in basketball').

Other areas where students did not do so well related to the relevance and depth of content, clarity of expression and effective communication.

Section 1 – Conversation

Most students dealt with this section with ease. They were able to converse on subtopics related to their personal world and their interaction with the Chinese-speaking communities as learners. Students who scored highly were able to respond to questions with spontaneity and use relevant and interesting examples to support their responses. These students generally engaged enthusiastically in the conversation and used a wide range of vocabulary and structures appropriately, reflecting strong communicative competence.

Following are some areas where improvement is needed.

- Some students were not able to adapt to the assessors' questions because they seemed to come with memorised answers and lengthy responses that included many additional pieces of information not relevant to the original question.
- Some students were passive participants in the conversations. They could not carry the conversation forward with spontaneity and had difficulty in elaborating their responses.

- The newly accredited study design requires learners to be able to discuss their interactions with the Chinese-speaking communities in this part of the examination. Some students had not prepared well for this aspect of the conversation.
- Some students focused too much on using idioms and did not respond to questions properly.

Section 2 – Discussion

In this section, students were required to discuss with the assessors a chosen subtopic related to either of the prescribed themes, 'The Chinese Speaking Communities' or 'The World Around Us'. It was very pleasing to see students choose a wide range of various subtopics.

Students who did well in this section showed that they thoroughly understood their subtopic and had great control of the language to inform, explain, elaborate and defend their own opinions with evidence. Their expression was fluent, clear, natural and had a good tempo. They also used their image appropriately to support their discussion.

Some students chose subtopics that did not offer much scope for discussion. It is important to select a subtopic, from one of the two prescribed themes, that is sufficiently broad to accommodate a range of interests and perspectives so that each student can effectively clarify, explain and defend a range of opinions, ideas and information relevant to the subtopic.

Students should also select an image that adequately enables them to use that image to support a discussion about their selected subtopic. Students are reminded that it is the quality of the discussion that is being assessed, not the image.

Pronunciation sometimes affected the communication between students and assessors, for example:

旅 (not 鲁), 景点 (not 经典), 健康.

Students are encouraged to practise the key words related to their subtopic as well as key words related to conducting a discussion more generally, and make sure that they pronounce these words as accurately as possible.