



2013

Languages: Croatian GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students were generally well prepared for the 2013 Croatian oral examination and demonstrated a high level of competency in the language.

Areas of strength included

- very good preparation
- willingness to research the internet and other sources for additional information
- capacity to locate additional information that suited the student's interest
- ability to discuss a wide range of issues
- extensive vocabulary
- good knowledge of grammar
- proficient choice of supporting visual material
- self-confidence
- pronunciation, intonation and tempo.

Areas of weakness included

- limited ability to advance the exchange due to a lack of information about the topic
- sporadic inability to convey specific meaning due to a lack of relevant vocabulary
- mispronunciation of unfamiliar words
- lack of grammatical agreement between two or more words
- incorrect case endings.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Most students were able to respond accurately to a variety of questions in this section of the examination, which focused on students' personal world such as their family, home life, friends, school, career aspirations, interests, leisure time and Croatian culture.

Students demonstrated very good preparation and understanding of the requirements for this part of the examination by readily responding to questions and even frequently expanding on their responses. The majority of students were able to present an excellent range of information and appeared to enjoy their interaction with assessors. A familiarity with everyday vocabulary and expressions, as well as good knowledge of grammar rules, enabled students to elaborate on their responses with confidence and linguistic accuracy. On the whole, students demonstrated good repair strategies and were able to correct their mistakes quickly.

However, some students with limited vocabulary and a narrow knowledge of grammar rules were unable to elaborate satisfactorily on their responses. It is important to remember that good vocabulary is a basis for productive and meaningful communication and, therefore, students should be encouraged to actively learn and acquire new words throughout the year. Practising speaking the language regularly with a family and/or a community member can assist significantly in building a necessary pool of words. It can also build the students' confidence.

Students should be encouraged to prepare responses to a list of potential questions prior to the examination. This would enable students to engage deeply with assessors and convey their points of view effectively.

Students generally formed their sentences well. Some used complex sentence structures with ease and confidence. Students who experienced difficulties with grammatical concepts expressed themselves in simple syntactic forms.

The most common mistakes involved cases and agreements. Occasionally students' use of some prepositions was influenced by dialect (for example, *na petak, na nedjelju* instead of *u petak, u nedjelju*), or they used it incorrectly (*ići za 5*



dana instead of *ići na 5 dana*). It was also noticed that students frequently used the incorrect adverb *zašto* to express the meaning *zato što*.

Section 2 – Discussion

The majority of students were well prepared for the Discussion section of the examination. Students were able to convey good-quality information about their chosen topic and engage effectively in the exchange with assessors.

Subjects studied in detail this year were Dubrovnik, Plitvice, National Costumes and Croatia – the country of diversities and more than 1000 islands.

A variety of resources were used by teachers in preparation for the Detailed Study: handouts, books and, in particular, items from the internet. Most students also explored the internet on their own either to enhance their understanding of the chosen topic, to complement their presentation with new information or to source material for posters. The use of a poster proved valuable in assisting some students to focus while speaking, because it served as a prompt about what to say next.

Students who were well prepared used effective communication strategies. They interacted well with assessors, moved the conversation forward with their original input and were able to correct their mistakes. A very small number of students were not prepared sufficiently for the discussion of the Detailed Study. These students lacked in-depth information about their chosen topic and were not able to engage in further meaningful exchange with assessors in the allocated time. In such instances they repeated what they had already said and tried to convey that information in a different way.

Students must understand that, in order to optimise the examination outcome, they need to be well prepared for the discussion and study their chosen topic in greater detail. It is not sufficient to simply present their chosen topic. Students must also engage in a discussion with assessors and provide more specific opinions about the topic based on texts they have studied.

It would be useful to remind students to be mindful about how to introduce their topic to assessors as this can inspire assessors to ask particular questions.

Although most students demonstrated high-level language skills, a number of errors occurred due to unfamiliar vocabulary associated with the topics (for example, *zidine su bile nagrađene* instead of *zidine su bile izgrađene*). Increased practice, especially in the school environment, can help eliminate these errors. Students should also be advised that there is no need to memorise in minutiae numbers associated with their topics (for example, ‘The maximum depth of the Adriatic Sea is 1233 metres’).

Aside from occasional inaccurate words, the most common mistakes included errors with cases and agreements, and incorrect word order in complex sentence structures.