

2020 VCE Croatian oral examination report

General comments

The Croatian oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination has two sections – a Conversation of approximately 7 minutes, during which students converse with the assessors about their personal world, and a Discussion of approximately 8 minutes.

Following the Conversation, the student will indicate to the assessor(s) the subtopic chosen for detailed study and, in no more than one minute, briefly introduce the main focus of their subtopic, alerting assessors to any objects brought to support the discussion. Suitable objects include photographs, maps or diagrams and should include no text or very little text. The support material must have minimal writing, which includes only a heading, name or title.

The one-minute introduction should give assessors an indication of the area of discussion. The purpose is for students to briefly introduce their chosen subtopic; it is not an opportunity for students to list all their information or texts.

The focus of the Discussion is to explore aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Croatian is spoken, with the student being expected to make reference to texts studied.

The choice of subtopic for the Detailed Study is very important. It should be an engaging topic that motivates students to become familiar with the content and vocabulary needed, and thus be more skilled to support and elaborate on information, ideas and opinions. It is important that students and teachers select materials for the Detailed Study carefully so that students are exposed to a variety of views. The type of texts used by students should vary in complexity and be in Croatian so that students can become aware of key vocabulary related to their subtopic. Students are reminded that they must be prepared to use language spontaneously in unrehearsed situations. Students should be able to draw on the texts they have studied and make links between the texts to support, expand on and explore opinions and ideas on the subtopic and different aspects of the texts. Students should be able to relate this to the Croatian-speaking community.

Students are not expected to be 'experts'; they are expected to have learnt strategies in order to respond to unexpected questions. It would be valuable for students to learn phrases such as, 'I have not studied this aspect of the topic, but I think ...', 'I don't know, but I feel ...' and 'I am not sure about this question but I know ...'.

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.

Three criteria are used in assessing both the Conversation and the Discussion: communication, content and language. Details of the assessment criteria and descriptors are published on the VCAA website. It is important that all teachers and students are 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 Conversation 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.

In the 2020 VCE Croatian oral examination, some students' performances were of a high standard, while a small number showed insufficient preparation and a lack of knowledge of the subtopics and the language.

Section 1 – Conversation

All students who took part in the examination did well in this section. Students who demonstrated a rich vocabulary, good knowledge of grammar, excellent preparation and an ability to carry the conversation forward achieved high marks. Students who did not score as well:

- used basic vocabulary
- lacked vocabulary for basic conversation, such as school subjects, hobbies and personal interests
- made mistakes related to cases: for example, *Moja mama je dovezla ja*, *Ja sam bila u Hrvatska* (My mum drove me here, I have been in Croatia)
- used repetitive sentence structures: for example, *Moj tata voli* (My dad likes), *Ja učim* (I study), *Moja sestra ide* (My sister is going), *Ja mislim* (I think)
- demonstrated a lack of understanding that pronouns, nouns and adjectives must agree in gender and number: for example, *Moj mama je rekao ...* instead of *Moja mama je rekla ...*
- used the incorrect prepositions before days, months and years: for example, *U 1765. godine, na ponedjeljak*.

Section 2 – Discussion

The Detailed Study forms the basis of the discussion in this section of the examination and involves exploring and comparing aspects of the language and culture of the Croatian-speaking community through a range of oral and written texts related to the selected subtopic.

A few students did not have the relevant vocabulary specific to their subtopic or had only superficial knowledge of their subtopic, so it was difficult for them to carry the discussion forward. It is advisable that students refer to a range of texts during the Detailed Study so they are able to both respond to general questions and present more detailed information on the subtopic. Students need to learn subtopic-specific vocabulary and how to construct sentences using this vocabulary to convey information, ideas and opinions effectively. It is important that students are aware of the depth of information required to move beyond superficial questions and answers to explore aspects of their subtopic more effectively. It is also important for students to be aware of the duration of the discussion so they can prepare sufficient information to enable them to sustain a discussion.

Where a student has focused on a very specific aspect of the subtopic used for the Detailed Study, they should make the assessors aware of this in the one-minute introduction and during the discussion.