

2020 VCE French oral examination report

General comments

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

Section 1 – Conversation

In general, students handled the requirements of Section 1 well and demonstrated a good level of understanding in this part of the oral examination. They were well prepared to answer questions on their personal world. However, some students were not as prepared in approaching parts of the conversation about their experience of being a learner of French.

Students who scored highly were able to maintain the conversation with confidence, providing a range of information based not only on their personal world but also on their cultural perspectives of being a French learner. Those students were also prepared to answer a range of questions phrased in a variety of ways.

Some students struggled to expand their answers, responded briefly to questions, used simple vocabulary and were very hesitant.

Students need to ensure that they clarify or elaborate on the information they give to the assessors and should expect to be interrupted, as the assessors will use the information given to ask further questions.

Section 2 – Discussion

Overall, students appeared prepared for this part of the oral examination.

A visual support was introduced to facilitate the discussion, giving the students a focus and a scope for discussion and comparisons. Students who did well used their image as a support to their subtopic and related their discussion to the image. Some students did not use their image as a support to their subtopic, and a few did not refer to it at all.

Students who scored highly chose a subtopic targeted to their own interest, which also offered the opportunity to give opinions. Those students approached their subtopic in an evaluative way and could develop a line of argument, enabling the subtopic to be discussed in depth. Rather than describing their image, they used it as a starting point to express some of their ideas and articulate sophisticated opinions.

Some students' subtopics were too ambitious, narrow or vague. Their subtopics were sometimes purely descriptive and only allowed the students to present factual information rather than engage in a discussion. Less highly performing students appear to have memorised their responses and were thus unable to explore the subtopic from different angles or in a spontaneous way.

The key to a good discussion is to ensure that the image is used as a springboard for channelling thoughts and opinions. Students should avoid just relating facts and simply describing their image.