



## Oral component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students were well prepared for the 2008 examination, and accordingly their performance resulted in very pleasing marks. This year, native speakers were also well prepared.

#### Section 1 – Conversation

Students were well prepared for this part of the examination. Overall, the conversations proceeded smoothly and required minimal support from the assessors. Responses of some students, although relevant, were not always spontaneous and fluent. Less proficient students used relatively limited expressive vocabulary and showed occasional difficulty in communication. Their most frequent errors were in the use of tenses, gender and personal pronouns.

Highly proficient students showed excellent communication skills, expanding conversations with original ideas and topics. Occasional mistakes were usually immediately self-corrected. The vocabulary of these students was more extensive and accurately used.

#### Section 2 – Discussion

Although this year the sub-topics were similar to last year, students chose a wide variety of topics exploring many aspects of their sub-topics. The wide range of topics made it easier for students to select topics suitable for their individual interests and language ability. Seldom did two students choose the same topic or the same resources.

Highly proficient students cited three or more sources, as suggested in the *Hebrew VCE Study Design*. They also knew their topic well. They conducted the discussion fluently and used the information in the sources to support their opinions and expand on their ideas.

In general, students researched their topic well and expressed a substantial volume of information. Less proficient students found it difficult to develop their own opinion from the acquired information. They were also more hesitant and slow in finding suitable words to express themselves.

## Written component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Students' comprehension of the spoken and written texts was very good. Students attempted all questions in the written examination. Some answers, however, were merely a translation of a whole paragraph and some included information not provided in the text. No credit was given for using information not included in a text. It was apparent that students need further practice analysing texts and extracting the relevant and accurate information. Students should also be taught to carefully read the instructions and the questions before responding to them.

In general, when students responded in Hebrew the vocabulary they used was satisfactory. Their language skills, particularly grammar and sentence structure, were not always adequate, and some slipped into anglicisms. Several students used words and expressions that were inappropriate to the idea they were trying to convey.

The vocabulary of the proficient students was quite extensive and appropriately used.

Students performed well in both sections, but the marks obtained in Part B were somewhat lower than in Part A. The mark was often adversely affected by grammatical and lexical mistakes.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

#### Section 1 – Listening and responding

##### Part A – Answer in English

Students comprehended the three texts they listened to well. Those who accurately extracted and conveyed information scored full marks. In this part of the examination the marks were the highest.

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## Text 1

### Question 1a.

Any two of:

- Iben Gabirol is a central and easily accessible street
- the longest street
- an attractive street/main street.

### Question 1b.

Any three of:

- known Israeli entertainers
- known Jewish actors from around the world
- known Jewish singers from around the world
- those who will be chosen by the public.

### Question 1c.

Any two of:

- it will attract tourists
- it will promote/support Jewish entertainers
- it will enhance the city's beauty.

Most students inferred only one point.

## Text 2

### Question 2a.

- They constructed a special type of aeroplane.
- It can fly very low and between buildings.
- It may be used as an ambulance and not be held up by traffic jams.

## Text 3

### Question 3a.

- Ora had served as an Israeli ambassador to China for four years.
- During this time she developed friendly relationships with members of the Chinese government.

### Question 3b.

- the flower exhibition at the Olympics

### Question 3c.

- beauty
- nobility
- modesty
- a flower that grows everywhere in Israel

### Question 3d.

Any three of:

- an ancient tree that has been growing in Israel for thousands of years
- religious significance
- mentioned in the Bible
- bears excellent fruit that produces oil.

## Section 1 – Listening and responding

### Part B – Answer in Hebrew

The standard of the Hebrew responses in this part of the examination was higher than last year. Answers given in the wrong language did not earn any marks.



**Text 4**

**Question 4a.**

- I have booked you and me into the National Bicycle Race.
- We will meet in two weeks in Sodom.
- I have booked the ...km course. (Students could chose one of the three courses mentioned in the text)

**Question 4b.**

Any one of:

- to make it possible for riders with different skills and experience to participate
- will attract more participants knowing they will compete with riders of a similar level.

**Text 5**

**Question 5a.**

Both of:

- reducing the pollution caused by non-degradable materials
- to raise the awareness of students about the importance of environmental protection now and for future generations

Many students identified only one point.

**Question 5b.**

- Initially she was sceptical about the young students' capability to successfully carry out such a project.
- At the end of the interview she was full of praise and admiration. Her initial scepticism changed to admiration.

**Question 5c.**

Any two of:

- improvement of the environment in the area
- donated the money for other environmental projects
- the possibility of students in other schools adopting a similar scheme.

## Section 2 – Reading and responding

### Part A – Answer in English

Most students understood the texts well and analysed and identified the relevant information. Nevertheless, it was apparent that some students did not understand or misread some of the questions and were unable to identify the specific information needed to answer Questions 6b. and 7a. In Question 7d., where students were asked to compare the Nobel Prize to the Prize for Peace and Harmony, many used details that were not from the text.

**Text 6**

**Question 6a.**

- anti-Semitic regime
- lost her husband and was left to raise two small children
- lost her job and could not get another, and had no money

**Question 6b.**

Any two of:

- because they were very poor she had no opportunities when she was young
- she had to help her mother on the farm
- as she had to take care of her own family and children, she could not have started her academic studies earlier.

Some students used information that was not in the text.

**Question 6c.**

- because she successfully completed her first degree
- she was able to get a voluntary research position
- doing research propelled her to do her second degree

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## Question 6d.

Any two of:

- the excellent attitude of the university lecturers and fellow students
- the support and the encouragement of her family, her children and grandchildren
- her determination to keep up with the family tradition.

Only some students identified all three points.

## Text 7

### Question 7a.

- the recognition of the Holocaust and the need for understanding between people/peaceful coexistence of nations
- the recognition of the important work of Yad Vashem

Some students translated the paragraph instead of extracting the relevant points.

### Question 7b.

- to commemorate the Holocaust victims and heroes
- to research all aspects of the Holocaust
- to award the title of 'The Righteous of the Nations'

### Question 7c.

Any two of:

- Jerusalem is the capital of Israel
- Jerusalem is the heart and soul of the Jewish nation
- it is a sacred city and the Jews who perished in the Holocaust died as martyrs to the Holy Name
- it is a popular tourist destination
- it is a city visited by Heads of State.

### Question 7d.

- both are renowned prestigious prizes
- the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded in Oslo by the Nobel Prize Committee
- the Harmony and Reconciliation Prize is awarded by the Prince of Spain

Many students found this question challenging and were unable to compare the two prizes using only the information provided in the text.

## Part B – Answer in Hebrew

### Question 8

Students had to write a critical review for the school magazine convincing readers that graffiti is either vandalism or an art form. In their responses students had to discuss points raised in the provided text.

Highly proficient responses were logically written, addressed the points raised in the text and used the information to support their point of view. Some students reviewed the subject well, but did not follow up with persuasive arguments to convince the reader one way or another. A few students used sophisticated expressions which did little to convince the reader and were irrelevant to the subject. For a written text to effectively persuade the reader, it has to rely on logical presentation rather than on big words.

Some less proficient responses were poorly structured and left the reader wondering what the writer's view actually was. Students should be aware that when they are asked to write a critical review of a subject it is not sufficient to summarise the provided information but that they are expected to review the topic and to express their own opinions.

Points to be discussed in the answer:

- what is graffiti?
- the history of graffiti
- the damage to property and cost caused by graffiti
- the legal view on graffiti



- the attitude of various people to graffiti
- does graffiti have artistic value?
- what is your opinion, as a writer, on the subject?
- how you, as a writer, propose to deal with the problem
- is there a resolution to the problem of graffiti?

### Section 3 – Writing in Hebrew

In this section students had to write an original text of 200–250 words in Hebrew on one of the four given topics. Not all students adhered to the word limit. Some students did not use the text type specified for their chosen topic. The overall standard of the texts was adequate and some pieces were outstanding. Some responses barely satisfied the first marking criterion of relevance and depth of treatment.

Highly proficient students developed their topic in a coherent manner and maintained the reader's interest. However, other less proficient responses were not structured well and contained numerous grammatical and syntactic errors. It has been disappointing to note that some students have not as yet mastered the use of Hebrew letters. For example, some students confused the letters *gimmel* and *zain* and did not use the correct form of letters (like *mem*, *pei* and *tzadik*) at the end of a word.

#### Question 9

This was the most popular question.

Students were required to write an article to the local paper comparing the benefit of two projects, a Senior Citizens Club and a Sports Centre, and then recommend the preferred one.

It is interesting to note that many students expressed the opinion that the contribution of the older residents should be recognised and that they deserved to have a Senior Citizens Club. Nevertheless, the majority of students recommended building a Sports Centre, arguing that it would have a dual purpose and also serve the senior citizens.

#### Question 10

The task was to write the text of a speech to be delivered at a cousin's surprise birthday party. The better texts started with the speaker introducing themselves and followed with anecdotes and humorous stories about the cousin, which were quite pleasant to read. Some texts showed inappropriate use of language, which detracted from the quality of the response. Some responses were of less than 100 words and well below the word limit.

#### Question 11

Students were required to write an informative report on the subject of climate change.

The responses indicated students' considerable knowledge of environmental problems in general and of climate change in particular. Many students structured the report by dividing it into three parts, the effect of climate change on the soil, water and the atmosphere, and dealing with each one separately. Some responses were too long. This was caused by students repeating a statement or idea several times.

#### Question 12

Students were required to write an imaginative story describing a week in the life of a school teacher in the year 2040.

This was the least popular question.