2022 VCE Karen oral external assessment report

General comments

Students were assessed on their knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination had two sections – a conversation of approximately 7 minutes, during which students conversed with the assessors about their personal world, and a discussion of approximately 8 minutes.

In both sections, students were assessed in these areas:

* communication (the capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively)
* content (relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas in the conversation)
* language (the accuracy of their vocabulary and grammar, range and appropriateness of their vocabulary and grammar, and the clarity of their expression).

Students who engaged in higher-scoring conversations and discussions:

* demonstrated an excellent level of understanding by responding readily and confidently, used highly effective repair strategies, and carried conversation forward with spontaneity
* presented an excellent range of information, opinions and ideas clearly and logically with highly relevant responses, were able to clarify, elaborate on and defend opinions and ideas very effectively, and demonstrated excellent preparation for the conversation and of their subtopic
* used sophisticated vocabulary and structures accurately and appropriately, and were usually able to self-correct
* used an excellent range of vocabulary, structures and expressions, and consistently used highly appropriate style and register
* had excellent pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

The VCE oral assessment is designed to assess students on their oral communication skills. There were two sections, which are designed to test the students’ communication and discussion skills, and also the depth of their knowledge of Karen language.

In 2022, most of the students conversed well. They showcased their language skills and communicated effectively, both in understanding and speaking with confidence. There were some grammatical errors, poor choice of words and lack of fluency made by students; however, overall performance was good. Students are encouraged to practise their speaking both at school and home. Reading Karen books and talking to native speakers will also assist in improving their oral communication skills.

Section 1 – Conversation

Assessors engaged with each student in a general conversation about the student’s personal world, for example, school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations.

Some students required prompts and support from the assessors to be able to engage in the conversation. Their listening and comprehension skills were good, but they had difficulty articulating what they wanted to say due to limited language skills. They could respond to basic questions but were then unable to expand on the information they were trying to express.

Areas for improvements include:

* becoming familiar and comfortable with words that are often used in different subtopics of the conversation
* practising repair strategies
* using lead-in statements that responded directly to the assessors.

In this section, students were able to talk about a wide range of topics related to their personal world. Most students performed well and were able to engage effectively with assessors. They could speak naturally when responding to questions and give in-depth information without delay when talking about their family, cultural background, studies, future dreams, thoughts and feelings.

Areas for improvements include:

* preparing for more elaboration of any points they were discussing with the assessors
* practising conversing about a wide range of possible subtopics that reaches beyond the above suggested examples.

Some students demonstrated excellent conversation skills. They could anticipate well and engaged with the assessors. They used proper vocabulary and excellent word choice throughout the conversation in a very polite manner. These students were able to speak the language like a native speaker.

Section 2 – Discussion

Each student gave a one-minute introduction of their subtopic to their assessor, who then engaged the assessor in a discussion exploring their subtopic. Students also provided assessors with any objects, such as photographs, maps or diagrams, brought to support the discussion. Students are expected to make reference to the texts studied for this section of the oral examination. The discussion was an opportunity to explore aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Karen is spoken.

In this section, students were assessed according to these criteria:

* capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively
* capacity to present information, ideas and opinions on a chosen subtopic
* accuracy of vocabulary and grammar
* range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar
* clarity of expression.

Some students performed well in the discussion. They had prepared thoroughly for the subtopic they wanted to discuss. These students demonstrated a sound knowledge about their subtopic and responded readily and confidently. They were able to present an excellent range of information, ideas and opinions. They had the capacity to explain their chosen subtopic using the appropriate words; they displayed a high standard of vocabulary, terms and terminology with correct grammar and appropriate expression.

Students are encouraged to study for a subtopic that is of interest to them and become familiar with related terms and terminology needed. When encountering difficulty in answering a question due to lack of information or getting stuck, it is best to use repair strategies and be honest about not knowing the information required.

This section was more challenging for students because it involved study and research. Students needed to learn subject-specific terminology, which may have included jargon, technical words and also terms and terminology based on the specific subtopic.

Some students introduced their subtopic well, however, then found it challenging when it came to discussing the information, ideas and opinions in detail. Some students could not find the right vocabulary or terminology required, while others provided very limited information to carry the discussion further. These students did not have sufficient language skills to communicate with the assessors effectively when they ran out of information about their subtopic. They had difficulty clarifying and elaborating on their opinions and ideas.

More information

Refer to the [VCE Karen Study Design](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/karen/Pages/index.aspx) and [examination criteria and specifications](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/past-examinations/Pages/Karen.aspx) for full details on this study and how it is assessed.