

Oral component

The overall performance of students was very high. Some students' successful strategies were linking ideas, informing assessors of the next idea, making comments, making a request, asking to clarify meaning, contrasting and comparing.

Most students were well prepared. However, a few students were uncertain about the meaning of some words they used and were not familiar with the names of school subjects. Generally, students had no problems with pronunciation.

The time allocation for each section of the examination was appropriate, although for many students the conversation took only about 6 minutes and the discussion took about 9 minutes.

Nervousness is a problem for many students. Although at times this can be cultural it can be eased by more practice in Khmer, talking at a deeper level with other adults and be reduced by good preparation.

Section 1 – Conversation

Students displayed a very good standard of the language. The range of techniques included clarification, correction, confirmation, and expansion of information.

As the conversation is based on a less formal level of language and includes more personal topics, students were quite confident in elaborating and expanding on information.

Given the many overseas students who enrol in Khmer Unit 3 and 4, conversation on Australian places of interest and cultural events was quite limited.

Section 2 – Discussion

The topics undertaken for the discussion were diverse. Topics of the student's own choice or interest seemed to work better in the discussion. Students who were confident about the topic of the presentation could present ideas and arguments very well.

Some presentations were very short and a few were too long, especially when the topic was on Cambodian Independence. Generally, the discussion section worked well. There were, however, some occasions where the presentation appeared to have been learnt by heart.

When preparing students for discussion of the Detailed Study, teachers should pay particular attention to Criterion 2 (relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas).

As the discussion requires a more formal level of language, teachers should stress the importance of the accuracy of vocabulary and the range of appropriateness of vocabulary to their students. In most cases, the language use for the reports was appropriate and relevant to the topic introduced.

Few students knew the terminology used within the Khmer honorific system. This occurred mainly in the presentation of the topic on Cambodian Independence. Other terminology referring to 'royalty', 'for example', 'letter', 'photo', 'to go', was also unknown.

Students confused the meaning of certain words such as *barijaak* and *jaak louk*. The word *baraing*, a colloquial for 'white person', was used by some students.

Some successful topics for the presentation were 'women's issues', 'the Khmer education system' and topics relating to Khmer art, culture and literature.

Many students came equipped with materials for their presentation, most of which were used appropriately to illustrate given information and for clearer demonstration of ideas and points of discussion.

Pronunciation was rarely a problem although one issue that stood out was the use of English words in the middle of a sentence.

Written component

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A

Students performed very well in Section 1 (Listening and responding) where they listened to four texts and answered questions in English. The standard of performance on Texts 3 and 4 was very high. Overall, student performance on all four texts was good although a few did not express their answers well in English.

Part B

Students listened to two texts and answered questions in Khmer. They performed extremely well and their best results came from this part of the written examination. However, some students did not express their answers well in Khmer, and spelling and sentence structures were the main reasons.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A

Students read two texts and answered questions in English. Overall, they did not perform as well in this part as they did in other parts of this section. A number of students had difficulty in understanding the texts and as a result were not able to select the relevant information and convey it accurately and appropriately. Grammar and English sentence structures

also caused problems for some students. This contributed to lower marks for every question they answered, even though they understood the questions well. However, a number of students answered the questions very well.

Part B

Students read one text and wrote a response in Khmer. There was a relatively wide range of ability among the students, who generally showed a good standard. A number of papers were of a very high standard but some students did not complete this question.

Most students managed the requirements of the text type well. The observations about grammar, spelling, and sentence structures made elsewhere in this report also apply to this part. Organisation of information was also a problem for some students.

Section 3 – Writing in Khmer

(completed by interstate students)

Question 12 was the most popular question and Question 10 the least popular. Overall performance was very good.

In most responses the requirements of the text type were observed. Weaknesses were generally related to spelling, grammar, and organisation of ideas. Some students wrote very long sentences with repeated and vague ideas. The major mistake students made in Question 12 was misinterpreting the word 'yuvnarI'. They included young married women in their discussion. However, a number of students answered the question very well.