2022 VCE Portuguese 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 seven minutes, during which students conversed with the assessors about their personal world, and a discussion of approximately eight 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 and their capacity to present information, ideas and opinions on their chosen subtopic in the discussion)
* language (the accuracy of their vocabulary and grammar, the 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 the 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.

In 2022, most of the students who presented for the oral examination were native speakers. They showed a good level of confidence and were relaxed throughout both sections of examination. Some students, however, were a bit nervous and this affected their performance.

Students need to be aware that in both sections of the examination they should attempt to use repair strategies to maintain the exchange. They should also avoid memorising a speech for the discussion. They should be aware that there are no prescribed questions, and they could be asked questions of varying levels of difficulty that cannot be responded to with rote-learned answers.

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, friends, interests and aspirations.

In 2022 students who scored highly performed well in this first part of the examination. Some students engaged in an excellent conversation about their personal world and their interactions with the Portuguese language and culture as learners. They demonstrated thorough knowledge of the subject matter and were able to discuss it readily with the assessors. Students who did not score well lacked sufficient content knowledge and vocabulary skills and were unable to provide detailed information or respond to the assessors’ questions effectively. Students are advised to have strategies in place to deal with a possible scenario in which they do not know or have forgotten the answer.

Communication

Students who scored highly showed a very good level of understanding and were able to communicate well and effectively with assessors. They had the ability to carry the conversation forward with confidence. Students who did not score well generally responded with short answers and waited for the assessors’ questions to continue with the conversation.

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.

Content

Students who scored highly demonstrated a very good level of preparation. They were able to present detailed information, state their ideas and opinions and confidently expand on them with relevant responses. Students who did not score well were not able to expand on their opinions and responded mainly with short answers.

Areas for improvements include:

* choosing topics that they are familiar with or that have a meaning for them
* 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.

Language

Students who scored highly spoke with accurate vocabulary and grammar; they had very good control of different grammatical structures and were able to self-correct if needed. Those who did not score well had limited control of simple vocabulary and structures. Most grammatical errors involved verb conjugations, subject/verb agreements, and use of pronouns and prepositions, whereas most vocabulary errors related to false friends.

Students who scored highly showed a good range of vocabulary structures and expressions. Some students were able to use sophisticated vocabulary as well as complex grammar structures; however, students who did not score well used very basic vocabulary and poor sentence structure.

Areas for improvements include:

* expanding vocabulary
* being careful with verb forms, prepositions and pronouns: for example, ‘eu ir’ instead of ‘eu vou’ (I will go).

Overall, most students had a high level of pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

Students should note the following language issues:

* verb forms (using present instead of the past): ‘Vou no ano passado’ instead of ‘fui no ano passado’ (I went last year)
* correct use of the verb ‘ser estar’ (to be) and ‘ter’ (to have): ‘Eu tenho 17’ instead of ‘Eu sou 17’ (I’m 17).

Section 2 – Discussion

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

Students discussed their chosen subtopic and their supporting visual material, which had to be related to either the prescribed theme ‘The Portuguese-speaking communities’ or the prescribed theme ‘The changing world’. In 2022, students who scored highly performed as well in this second part as they did in the first. Some students made an excellent presentation, demonstrated good knowledge of the subtopic, and were able to respond and carry the discussion forward with the assessors with some original input and confidence. Students who did not score well did not have sufficient information on their subtopic and were not able to provide in-depth ideas and information, discuss the topic with the assessors or answer questions.

Students should choose subtopics that interest them and suit their control of language and grammatical structures.

Communication

Generally, confident students were able to express their opinions and ideas during the discussion. Students who scored highly successfully carried the discussion forward, whereas students who did not score well were unable to defend their ideas and opinions. especially because they lacked effective repair strategies. They discussed their topic at a superficial level, and waited for the assessors’ next question to carry the discussion forward.

Some students seemed unable to deal with questions they did not have an answer for. Students are encouraged to have repair strategies in place, in order to deal with a possible scenario in which they do not know or have forgotten an answer.

Areas for improvements include

* expanding vocabulary
* practicing repair strategies.

Content

Students who scored highly were able to elaborate on their topic, extend their ideas and provide opinions that showed some depth of information. Students who did not score well were not able to discuss their topic in depth, either because they did not have the linguistic capacity or sufficient knowledge of the topic.

The most significant issue observed across all students was that they memorised information about the topic and sometimes appeared lost when assessors interrupted them, or simply were unable to engage with the assessors.

Areas for improvements include:

* choosing topics that students are comfortable with
* expanding vocabulary
* practising repair strategies
* using the right verbs, for example ‘Eu sou’ (I am) instead of ‘Eu tenho’ (I have).

Language

Students who scored highly spoke with accurate vocabulary and grammar. They were able to describe their findings and defend their ideas and opinions on their chosen subtopic using well-structured sentences. Those who did not score well made grammar and vocabulary errors. Most grammatical errors involved verb conjugations, subject/verb agreements, and use of pronouns and prepositions, whereas most vocabulary errors related to ‘false friends’.

Overall, most students had a high level of pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

Areas for improvements include:

* expanding vocabulary
* being careful when use verbs forms (present, past, future tense) and prepositions.

Students who scored highly showed a good range of vocabulary structures and expressions. Some students were able to use sophisticated vocabulary as well as complex grammar structures; however, students who did not score well used very basic vocabulary and poor sentence structure.

Students should note the following language issues.

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| --- | --- |
| Incorrect use | Correct use |
| Esta foto está em | Esta foto foi tirada em ou é em (This photo was taken in or is it in) |
| O cantor ‘estar’ no concerto no ano passado | O cantor estava/esteve no concerto no ano passado (The singer was at the concert last year) |

More information

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