

2020 VCE Punjabi oral examination report

General comments

The Punjabi oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination has two sections – a Conversation of approximately 7 minutes, during which students converse with the assessors about their personal world, and a Discussion of approximately 8 minutes.

Following the Conversation, the student will indicate to the assessor(s) the subtopic chosen for detailed study and, in no more than one minute, briefly introduce the main focus of their subtopic, alerting assessors to any objects brought to support the discussion. Suitable objects include photographs, maps or diagrams and should include no text or very little text. The support material must have minimal writing, which includes only a heading, name or title.

The one-minute introduction should give assessors an indication of the area of discussion. The purpose is for students to briefly introduce their chosen subtopic; it is not an opportunity for students to list all their information or texts.

The focus of the Discussion is to explore aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Punjabi is spoken, with the student being expected to make reference to the texts studied.

The choice of subtopic for the Detailed Study is very important. It should be an engaging subtopic that motivates students to become familiar with the content and vocabulary needed, and thus be more skilled to support and elaborate on information, ideas and opinions. It is important that students and teachers select materials for the Detailed Study carefully so that students are exposed to a variety of views. The type of texts used by students should vary in complexity and be in Punjabi so that students can become aware of key vocabulary related to their subtopic. Students are reminded that they must be prepared to use language spontaneously in unrehearsed situations. Students should be able to draw on the texts they have studied and make links between the texts to support, expand on and explore opinions and ideas on the subtopic and different aspects of the texts. Students should be able to relate this to the Punjabi-speaking community.

Students are not expected to be 'experts'; they are expected to have learnt strategies in order to respond to unexpected questions. It would be valuable for students to learn phrases such as, 'I have not studied this aspect of the subtopic, but I think ...', 'I don't know, but I feel ...' and 'I am not sure about this question but I know ...'

It should be noted that during the oral examination:

- students may be asked a variety of questions with 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.

Three criteria are used in assessing both the Conversation and the Discussion: communication, content and language. Details of the assessment criteria and descriptors are published on the VCAA website. It is important that all teachers and students be familiar with the criteria and descriptors and that students use them as part of their examination preparation. This will help students to engage in a lively and interesting

exchange with assessors. Although there are similarities between the assessment criteria for the Conversation and Discussion sections of the examination, the criteria assess two very different aspects of performance. Students who are well prepared are generally able to demonstrate their abilities and proficiency in the language.

Students generally performed well in both components of the 2020 Punjabi oral examination. Many students were able to engage in very good conversation with the assessors and responded to questions with confidence. They used a wide range of vocabulary, including traditional words, idioms, expressions and sayings during their conversation with the assessors.

Students greeted the assessors appropriately in Punjabi before the conversations on their personal world and the subtopic of their detailed study. A few students required some support to continue their conversations.

Section 1 – Conversation

Students presented a wide range of ideas, information and opinions as they talked about a range of aspects relevant to their personal world. Many students carried the conversation forward with confidence and fluency. Students who prepared well expressed their ideas and opinions confidently, and were able to clarify, elaborate on and defend their point of view.

Some students used English and Hindi words to interact with the assessors, which they should avoid doing. A few students used appropriate repair strategies to rectify their mistakes.

A handful of students experienced difficulty when interrupted for further clarifications or deeper understanding. Students should develop strategies and appropriate vocabulary for dealing with interruptions, unexpected questions or questions they find more challenging.

Students who were not well prepared presented a limited range of information and often provided brief answers.

In general, students demonstrated excellent pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency during their conversation.

Section 2 – Discussion

In this section, students talked about the subtopic they had explored for the Detailed Study. A few students brought posters or photos to support their discussion of the subtopic. Students who scored highly were able to use these objects together with information from a range of texts they had studied to express their ideas and opinions relevant to the subtopic. A very wide range of subtopics was discussed in this section of the examination, with students being able to discuss aspects of the language and culture of the Punjabi-speaking community that were relevant to their subtopic. It is important to select a subtopic that is sufficiently broad to accommodate a range of interests and perspectives, so that each student can provide an individual response during the examination.

Some students did not prepare well for this section of the examination and sought support from the assessors to continue their conversation. Students are advised to prepare well; in addition to having a broad knowledge of their subtopic based on their study of a range of oral and written texts, they should also be able to offer opinions, ideas and information that they are able to clarify, defend and explain during the discussion. They should try to maintain their conversation in Punjabi with minimal use of slang words.