2020 VCE Romanian oral examination report

General information

The oral examination assesses students’ knowledge and skills in using spoken Romanian. 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 Romanian 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 Romanian 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 Romanian-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.

Overall, students performed well in the 2020 Romanian oral examination.

Section 1 – Conversation

The majority of students were able to engage in conversations with the assessors and could communicate ideas and opinions effectively. Most students demonstrated a very good level of understanding and presented a very good range of information, using a range of sophisticated vocabulary and structures accurately and appropriately.

Some students were able to demonstrate an excellent level of understanding and could engage in conversations that clarify, elaborate on and defend opinions and ideas very effectively. They were able to defend an opinion or idea using relevant examples and appropriate terminology. These students were able to carry the conversation forward with spontaneity and added depth by linking ideas and giving relevant examples. They had excellent pronunciation and intonation, and demonstrated a sophisticated level of grammar and vocabulary.

Some students were able to present a good range of relevant information but struggled to develop ideas or present opinions on familiar topics. Common errors included lack of agreement between subject and predicate, such as *oameni zice* or *toți are nevoie* instead of *oamenii zic* or *toți au nevoie*,andlack of agreement between nouns and numeral adjectives, such as *două frați* or *două copii* instead of *doi frați* or *doi copii.* Another very common error was the incorrect use of subjunctives such as *să desenează* or *să pictează* instead of *să deseneze* or *să picteze.* Some students had good repair strategies, and some were able to correct themselves.

Section 2 – Discussion

All students were able to introduce their subtopics and state the resources used.

Students who communicated readily and confidently, with minimal hesitation, scored highly. Some students demonstrated a very good level of preparation but presented only factual information. High-scoring students were able to go beyond simply relating facts and expressed opinions that they were able to defend and clarify.

Some students presented sufficient information that was generally relevant, but they lacked the ability to elaborate upon their answers. These students generally demonstrated good understanding of grammar and vocabulary. However, some students’ responses contained ambiguous constructions and incorrect grammar structures. The most frequent errors were similar to those in Section 1, such as lack of agreement. The use of anglicisms and translations from English also affected comprehension, as Romanian has a slightly different sentence structure.

Some students communicated well but with some hesitation, or presented sufficient information that was generally relevant because of students’ inability to elaborate upon their answers. These students generally demonstrated a good understanding of grammar and vocabulary. However, their responses often contained ambiguous constructions and incorrect grammar structures. The most frequent errors, as in Section 1, involved lack of agreement. The use of anglicisms and translations from English also affected comprehension, as Romanian has a slightly different sentence structure.

Some students presented detailed responses in the discussion section, supported with examples and opinions.

Many students interviewed Romanian-speaking members of the community and were able to use the information gained from these interactions to explain aspects of their subtopic. Students who scored highly demonstrated excellent preparation, being able to integrate effective and appropriate use of idiomatic expressions (for example, *spălat pe creier, megaloman, pentru a-și lărgi orizonturile, a trecut granița fraudulos*) and accurate language, with exemplary pronunciation and intonation. Although the use of idiom is not a requirement, the use of idiomatic expressions can demonstrate a student’s deeper understanding of the language and greater interaction with the Romanian community.