



2013

Languages oral: Serbian GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students were familiar with the expectations of the oral examination. They were able to engage with assessors in the Conversation and demonstrated a good level of preparation for the Discussion. However, a small number of students were not fully aware of the expectations for Section 2. It is important that teachers and students are familiar with the specific requirements of the oral examination, as outlined in the *VCE Serbian Study Design*.

Areas of strength included

- very good preparation
- good intonation and pronunciation
- appropriate choice of relevant details
- capacity to research the topic and provide additional information
- an in-depth understanding of the topic
- effective repair strategies.

Areas of weakness included

- lack of structure in presentation
- a limited range of ideas and opinions
- a lack of in-depth research of the selected topics
- a narrow range of structures and vocabulary
- a limited range of information
- repetition
- incorrect case endings.

Suggestions for improvement

- Students should use several resources for the Detailed Study – it will give them an opportunity to develop skills to compare, discuss and evaluate.
- Students need to use read, listen, write and speak as much as possible (use websites, Serbian info portals, YouTube).
- Students should work on topics that appeal to them.
- The chosen topic for the Detailed Study should not be too broad.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

The Conversation part of the examination assessed the students' ability to communicate on a range of topics relating to students' personal worlds: family, home life, friends, school, career aspirations, interests and leisure time.

A familiarity with everyday vocabulary and expressions, as well as with grammar rules, helped students to perform with confidence and linguistic accuracy in this section.

The majority of students were able to maintain the exchange with assessors easily and carry the conversation forward with minimal support. Most students demonstrated good repair strategies and were able to correct their mistakes quickly. However, students need to be encouraged to elaborate on their responses and should not always wait for assessors to ask questions, as this gives the impression that they are not well prepared.

Students who were unsure of what they were asked sought clarification from assessors. In most instances students were able to continue well and expressed their opinions in a good amount of detail. However, some students with limited vocabulary were unable to deliver satisfactory and relevant responses. It is important to remember that preparation is the basis for productive and meaningful communication, and students should aim to extend their vocabulary while preparing for the oral exam.



The key to performing well in this section of the examination is good preparation. Students are encouraged to use the Serbian language whenever they can. They can listen to radio and television programs in Serbian to gain exposure to the language. Students can also engage with friends and family members to practise their language skills.

The main grammatical errors included incorrect use of tenses, incorrect cases and prepositions. With prepositions it was obvious that the influence of English was present and the students translated literally from English. For example, 'I was born in 1996', where *in* is translated as *y*, which is inappropriate in Serbian and in this context there is no preposition to be used.

Students are advised that this is not a monologue but an interactive conversation and they should be prepared to elaborate on anything that may arise from their topic. A simple phrase showing agreement or reassurance is often all that is needed; for example, *A da* (Oh, yes), *Da naravno*, (Yes, of course), *Da, medjutim ja mislim da ...* (Yes, however I think ...). Such language and conversation fillers need to be practised throughout the study. This kind of language enhances the flow of the conversation and contributes greatly to the student's performance.

Section 2 – Discussion

The focus of the Discussion is to explore aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Serbian is spoken. Students are expected to refer to the texts they have studied for their Detailed Study.

The main topics chosen were Serbian tourist attractions and the role of women in society – past and present. The sub-topics selected were destinations such as Belgrade, Novi Sad, Nis, Fruska Gora and Sarganska Osmica, and famous Serbian women such as Mileva Maric, Mina Karadzic, Milunka Savic, Kneginja Ljubica and Nadezda Petrovic.

The majority of students introduced their topics for discussion and stated where they obtained their resources, citing, for example, the internet, films, magazines, talking to parents or teachers, DVDs and books. However, it also was evident that some of them relied only on their personal experience and the internet, which limited their presentation.

The chosen topic for the Detailed Study should not be too broad. A few students lacked focus – their presentations were not well structured and they struggled to find the appropriate vocabulary to convey their thoughts. It is important to remember that merely giving a report on a chosen topic is not adequate; the Detailed Study needs to prepare students for a discussion, not a recitation. While students generally used an excellent range of vocabulary and had good sentence structures, students are reminded that building vocabulary related to the Detailed Study should be a part of their preparation for the oral examination.

Most students were well prepared. High-scoring students demonstrated an excellent knowledge of their chosen topic, referring to resources that consisted of different text types. They knew their texts very well and spoke fluently, elaborating on their ideas and opinions. These students carried the discussion forward with some original input and provided highly relevant, in-depth responses. They used appropriate vocabulary, a range of grammatical structures and accurate pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

The weaker students struggled with the presentation of their topics, their discussions lacked structure and consistency, and they needed assessors to guide them through the discussion.

Students are encouraged to prepare concluding statements. At the end of the examination, assessors may ask if there is anything else the student would like to say. This gives students the opportunity to discuss areas that have not been raised and to provide an appropriate conclusion.