2023 VCE Serbian oral external assessment report

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

Section 1: Conversation

What students did well

In 2023, students:

* engaged in a general conversation about their personal world, such as school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations. They confidently talked about their interest and aspirations, focusing mainly on their future plans, and were able to elaborate on why they were choosing those pathways. For example: choosing a career in the health profession (nursing) because they want to help the people in need and those who are the most vulnerable, in addition to the fact that there’s a shortage in this field and they will be highly likely to gain sustainable employment.
* provided a range of relevant information, ideas and opinions with an appropriate depth. When talking about living overseas for some extended period of time, students were able to provide details about their experiences and views on the lifestyle in comparison with the lifestyle in Australia, such as schooling, socialising and cultural differences, and how it helped them view life from different angles and be more appreciative of what they have in Australia and opportunities available for them.
* clarified, elaborated on and defended ideas and opinions. Students showed the ability to interact effectively with assessors, using repair-strategy phrases where necessary, such as ‘Could you repeat your question, please?’, ‘You probably know that …’ and ‘You may not agree with me but I think …’
* used appropriate vocabulary. Students who did well used descriptive language (e.g. adjectives and nouns in their correct form) and authentic expressions (as used by native speakers) accurately. These students had a significant bank of vocabulary they could manipulate and use in grammatically correct structures.
* used appropriate grammar and sentence structures. The conversations that scored highly demonstrated sophisticated sentence structures, a broad range of vocabulary and grammar that was correct in tense, mood and aspect. Among the strong points was the usage of sophisticated vocabulary and structures such as будући да сам још млада (‘being so young’) and expressions such as у здравом телу здрав дух (‘healthy mind in a healthy body’), and the ability to structure the answer using linking words such as пре свега (‘first of all’) and осим тога (‘besides’).
* used appropriate expression, including pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. Students demonstrated that being well prepared led to flawless intonation, stress and pronunciation. The more students practise, the better the outcomes. Well-prepared students were able to clarify, elaborate on and extend the conversation when needed with an excellent range of vocabulary and content. They responded readily and spontaneously, without requiring prompting from the assessors, and adopted effective repair strategies to enable a smooth flow of the conversation.

Areas for improvement

In preparing for this exam, students could:

* practise answering a range of questions to be able to advance the conversation. Better understanding of the language will help students to converse without needing a lot of support from assessors. Students are advised to use lead-in statements that respond directly to the assessors’ questions and to expand on the conversation instead of waiting for the assessors’ next question.
* build confidence through practising interactions in the language assessed. It was evident that students who had prepared thoroughly, regardless of their language abilities, performed well and with confidence, as they had built and used their knowledge and language skills over a period of time.
* practise using repair strategies to advance the conversation when needed, such as correcting themselves after a mistake. Students should also avoid lapsing into English when unsure of the expression in Serbian, saying, for example: Желела бих да студирам на Monash University (instead of Желела бих да студирам на Монаш универзитету), or family law (instead of породично право)
* build vocabulary specific to the student’s personal world and their interactions with the language and culture as learners. Students should be familiar and comfortable with words that are often used in conversation on different topics such as aspirations, hobbies and family life.
* practise pronunciation, intonation and stress and tempo. Students need to practise speaking in the Serbian language and listening more to authentic Serbian speech, such as on radio and TV.

Section 2: Discussion

What students did well

In 2023, students:

* clearly introduced the focus of their subtopic chosen for their detailed study in less than one minute, alerting assessors to any objects brought to support the discussion of the subtopic. The majority of students commenced their discussion by introducing the topics and their chosen subtopics and what resources they used in preparation for the examination. It was noted that the range of resources accessed and used contributed to in-depth discussions.
* demonstrated in-depth knowledge of their subtopic. The chosen subtopics (e.g. famous artists, poets, historical figures, scientists, Serbian traditional costumes) were appropriate, as they allowed for detailed research and ability to demonstrate and present a great deal of information supported by visuals, such as paintings, examples from movies and newspaper articles.
* used the image to support the discussion on the subtopic. Students who used visuals to support their subtopics performed extremely well. These helped them with their confidence, made the presentation and discussion more vivid and dynamic, and improved the structured delivery of the content. At the same time, it gave assessors more opportunities to ask questions and build on the discussion.
* engaged in a discussion on the subtopics using relevant information, ideas and opinions. An example was the ‘Traditions and folk dance and costumes associated with the dance’. This subtopic was presented with abundant information which enabled high-scoring students, to present a range of examples and to offer an opinion.
* clarified, elaborated on and defended opinions and ideas. Most students’ knowledge was exemplary and was demonstrated through interesting facts, examples and viewpoints.
* used appropriate vocabulary. Specific vocabulary, relevant to the subtopic, was used effectively by the students, demonstrating an understanding of terminology associated with the subtopic, such as the names of the traditional costumes, inventions, and types of paintings.
* used appropriate grammar and sentence structures. Students used correct tenses when presenting their topics, as well as adjectives to describe the photographs presented.

Areas for improvement

In preparing for this exam, students could:

* choose an appropriate subtopic to suit ability and interests. Choosing a subtopic that involves complex language terminology can be challenging for students who have limited language skills. For example, choosing a scientist and trying to talk about their inventions without being able to describe, explain or elaborate on the subtopic can impact the students’ performance and confidence.
* prepare with an appropriate number of quality sources, for example a combination of aural and visual, as well as written texts, to explore the subtopic in sufficient depth. Students should approach their chosen subtopic from different angles which will allow them to gather more relevant information and to interpret the subtopic in their own words, rather than try to memorise unfamiliar vocabulary.
* avoid relying on pre-learned responses that do not address an assessor’s question. Rote-learned content is challenging to manipulate and does not allow for a meaningful discussion and elaboration with the assessors, leaving students needing to rely on assessors’ support and questions.
* revise grammar and build vocabulary specific to the subtopic selected for the detailed study. Common lexical inaccuracies and grammatical errors included:
* conjugation errors
* limited knowledge of Serbian idioms and expressions, which led to incorrect anglicisms
* inappropriate style: using informal form ти (‘you’) to address assessors; e.g. извини instead of извините, знаш instead of знате, (‘excuse me’ or ‘you know’), and using inappropriate colloquial words instead of the standard language taking into consideration that it’s a formal setting, e.g. нe контам instead of нe разумем (‘I don’t understand’)
* case endings: сазнали о свој народ instead of сазнали о својем народу (‘they learned about their folk’)
* literal translation of sentence structure from English: тема, ја ћу да причам о је, instead of тема, о којој ћу да причам (‘the topic I am going to talk about’)
* grammatical errors, such as the incorrect plural forms of nouns and disagreement between nouns and adjectives.