



2011 Languages: Serbian GA 3: Written examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral examination has two sections: the Conversation (approximately seven minutes) and the Discussion (approximately eight minutes). The examination is designed to assess students' ability to communicate by using spoken Serbian.

This year the overall standard in both sections was pleasing. Most students were familiar with the requirements of the examination. They were able to engage with the assessors in the Conversation and demonstrated a good level of preparation in the Discussion. However, a small number of students were not fully aware of the requirements for Section 2 – Discussion. To maximise the students' chances of success, it is essential that all teachers and students be familiar with the detailed requirements of the oral examination as outlined in the *VCE Serbian Study Design*.

Areas of strength included:

- understanding of the topics presented
- excellent range of information
- accurate grammar, structures and expressions
- thorough preparation
- evidence of research using various resources for additional information
- the ability to support ideas with well-presented visual evidence
- the capacity to communicate on a variety of subject matters.

Areas of weakness included:

- limited ability to advance the exchange
- limited range of information provided
- the need for support from assessors
- limited range of structures and vocabulary
- incorrect case endings
- insufficient preparation
- occasional tendency to recite information rather than engage in a discussion on the chosen Detailed Study topic.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

The Conversation section focuses on the student's personal world, which includes family, school and home life, interests, leisure time and aspirations. Generally, students performed well in this section. They were able to draw on their own experiences and a good level of preparation was evident. Most students responded readily to the questions and were able to maintain a conversation.

Students were assessed against the following criteria:

- capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively
- relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas
- accuracy of vocabulary and grammar
- range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar
- clarity of expression.

Students are encouraged to seek clarification when questions are not understood. Students are also asked to listen carefully before responding to assessors' questions.

It is important that students know the difference between formal and informal settings, and the appropriate language to use in each. During the conversation section, students used a wide range of vocabulary and in most cases the grammar was correct. Some students used a narrow range of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Most students were able to advance the conversation with minimal support from the assessors. Students are encouraged to participate and practise



more in group and pair work to develop better speaking and listening skills. Students should be further encouraged to use the language for a variety of purposes. Their pronunciation was good, although some students' pronunciation showed the influence of English.

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. They may support the Discussion with objects with minimal language such as photographs, diagrams and maps.

The students were assessed against the following criteria:

- capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively
- capacity to present information, ideas and opinions on a chosen topic
- accuracy of vocabulary and grammar
- range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar
- clarity of expression.

Most students were well prepared for this section of the examination and were able to convey high-quality information about their chosen Detailed Study. Topics presented included Serbian history and Serbian literature, each of which was sufficiently broad to accommodate a large number of sub-topics.

It is essential that teachers and students take into account the interests and abilities of students when selecting the sub-topic for the Detailed Study as this will enable students to express and elaborate on ideas and defend their own opinions confidently. The choice of resources used to support the Detailed Study is also very important. These resources must be in Serbian to enable students to practise the language. Students are encouraged to provide input when topics for the Detailed Study are chosen and to work collaboratively with their teacher.

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

Weaker students relied heavily on rote-learned material. Students need to be able to respond to questions spontaneously. It is important to choose Detailed Study topics carefully, and to find texts that students can understand so that they will have some ideas to articulate should the assessors move away from anticipated questions. Insufficiently prepared students relied too much on assessors' questions and often needed prompting. Students were generally enthusiastic about their topic and were able to utilise suitable information for the Discussion. Advice from the *VCE Serbian Study Design* states that it is suggested that a range of at least three different kinds of text are selected. These might include aural and visual as well as written texts. It was evident that the more successful students had referred to a broad range of resources in preparation for the Detailed Study, including handouts, books, DVDs and Internet resources in the language. Students who drew their knowledge only from one source struggled to explain their points of view.