

2020 VCE Spanish oral examination report

General comments

2020 was the first year this study was delivered according to the newly accredited *VCE Spanish Study Design 2020–2024* and examination specifications. It is important that students and teachers familiarise themselves with the [specifications for oral examinations](#), available on the VCE Spanish examinations webpage of the VCAA website. Students and teachers are also reminded that a [series of videos](#) has been produced to help with preparation for the oral examinations; these are also available on the VCE Spanish examinations webpage of the VCAA website.

Students who scored highly were those who prepared well for both sections of the oral examination: Section 1 – Conversation and Section 2 – Discussion.

The first section consisted of a conversation between the student and two assessors about the student's personal world and their interactions with the Spanish language and culture. Students maintained a conversation on relevant subtopics from the prescribed themes: 'The individual' and 'The Spanish-speaking communities'. Students were well prepared for this section of the examination and were able to adequately respond to the assessors' questions. Students were asked about their experiences as learners of the Spanish language and culture. Some students spoke about their interactions with the Spanish-speaking community; others mentioned cultural activities, their experiences using their Spanish language skills, and engaging with Spanish and Latin American food, music, reading and art.

The second section consisted of a discussion based on students' chosen subtopic and the supporting visual material. They had chosen their subtopic from the prescribed themes: 'The Spanish-speaking communities' or 'The world around us'.

Students explored aspects of the subtopics, including information, opinions and ideas, and responded to questions on their subtopic and the supporting visual material.

It should be noted that during the oral examination:

- students may be asked a variety of questions of 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.

Section 1 – Conversation

Most students were able to recognise when they had made a mistake and used appropriate repair strategies. Common speaking errors included:

- *la tema* instead of *El tema*, *un clínica* instead of *una clínica* (lack of agreement between article and noun)
- *quiero voy a Chile* instead of *Quiero ir a Chile* (verb conjugation)
- *cuando yo vivo en USA* instead of *cuando viva en USA* (lack of subjunctive)

- some confusion in the use of *Ser y Estar* (e.g. *Estoy divertido* instead of *soy divertido*).

It is important for students to practise conversation and not only talk about their personal world but also their interaction with the Spanish language and culture: for example, What relevance does speaking Spanish have in your life? What aspect of the Hispano–American culture do you relate to?

It is recommended that students make the most of practising Spanish, either within their families, community or social environment.

Section 2 – Discussion

To satisfy the assessment criteria, students should be able to not only provide information about the subtopic they have studied but also elaborate on information and defend their ideas and opinions. For example, some students talked about a particular festival and described it. However, when prompted with questions about the cultural or economic importance of the event, they had very little to add. Many Spanish festivals have a long tradition and religious connotations, so there is much more to discuss if more careful preparation is undertaken.

Students are encouraged to explore subtopics that contain a variety of aspects to talk about so that they can provide an insight that transcends mere factual descriptions. Topics that would lend themselves to exploration in this way could include, but are not limited to, Hispanic migrants' contribution to the Australian community and their cultural legacy, such as music, dance and gastronomy. Students are reminded that their subtopic for this section is to be selected from one of the two prescribed themes: 'The Spanish-speaking communities' or 'The world around us'.

Choice of a subtopic should also include the selection of an image that is suitable to support the discussion of the subtopic. Images that included rich information provided more opportunity for students to be able to offer a greater depth and range of information, ideas, opinions and reflections about the subtopic.