2022 VCE Spanish oral external assessment report

General comments

Students were assessed on their knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination had two sections: a conversation of approximately seven minutes and a discussion of approximately eight minutes.

In both sections, students were assessed in:

* content and communication (relevance, depth and range of information, ideas and opinions; capacity to elaborate and reflect on information, ideas and opinions; capacity to interact with assessors; and effective communication)
* language (appropriateness of vocabulary, grammar and sentence structures; and clarity of expression, including pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo).

Overall, the students were generally well prepared and familiar with the assessment process. Many were able to maintain a fluent conversation based on their own experiences, including their personal world and their interactions with the Spanish-speaking communities.

At the beginning of the examination students read their student number, introduced the subtopic for their discussion and presented their image. This was the initial introduction before proceeding with the first part of the examination, the conversation.

Specific information

Section 1 – Conversation

This section was a general conversation between the student and the two assessors about the student’s personal world and their interactions with the Spanish language and culture as learners. Students were able to support their personal reflections by referring to any of the relevant subtopics studied in class from the prescribed themes ‘The individual’ and ‘The Spanish-speaking communities’.

Students who engaged in higher-scoring conversations:

* demonstrated an excellent level of understanding by responding readily and communicating confidently
* carried the conversation forward with spontaneity
* provided an excellent range of information, ideas and opinions clearly and logically with highly relevant responses
* clarified, elaborated on and defended information, ideas and opinions very effectively
* used sophisticated vocabulary and structures accurately and appropriately
* used language naturally
* used excellent pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

Students were asked questions about their personal world such as school life, leisure activities, family, career plans, travelling and so on. Assessors asked a variety of questions to allow students to demonstrate their ability to maintain a conversation in Spanish. Students were well prepared for this section of the examination and were able to adequately respond to the assessors’ questions. The assessors linked these subtopics to the Spanish-speaking world by asking students about their experiences as learners of the Spanish language and culture. Students spoke about participating in cultural activities such as festivals, family parties and so on. Students seemed to enjoy their experiences using their Spanish language skills, and engaging with Spanish and Latin American food, music, reading and art.

Content and communication

Students who scored highly were able to carry the conversation with confidence and accuracy. Most students had the capacity to give an interesting account of an experience in their lives with some flair and broad vocabulary relevant to their topic. Students were able to make connection with their own experiences as learners of the Spanish language and culture. Some students spoke about their interactions with the Spanish-speaking community; others mentioned cultural activities such as festivals, dancing classes, singing groups, family parties and so on. Students who scored highly were able to express interesting opinions with supporting evidence and examples. They were also able to elaborate on their responses and ideas beyond the assessors’ questions. Many students used humour as a tool to make the conversation more entertaining and engaging. They had effective repair strategies and could readily self-correct errors in their communication.

Students who did not score well were unable to develop their responses beyond the factual and expressed very few opinions.

Language

Some students made a number of basic grammatical errors with verb tenses (present, future, past, subjunctive), adjectives and definite article–noun agreement.

Some students did well in terms of clarity of expression, using appropriate intonation, accurate pronunciation, stress and tempo.

Section 2 – Discussion

Students discussed their chosen subtopic and their supporting visual material, which had to be related to either the prescribed theme ‘The Spanish-speaking communities’ or the prescribed theme ‘The world around us’. The focus of the discussion was on exploring aspects of the subtopic, including information, opinions and ideas. Students were expected to respond to questions on their subtopic and supporting visual material.

Students who engaged in higher-scoring discussions:

* provided an excellent range and depth of information, ideas and opinions with an original perspective on the subtopic
* elaborated on complex information and defended ideas and opinions clearly and logically with highly relevant responses
* used the image skilfully to support the discussion on the subtopic
* communicated information, ideas and opinions very confidently and carried the discussion forward with spontaneity.

Content and communication

It is important for students to state clearly what the focus of their subtopic is so that the assessors are aware of what aspects of the subtopic the student has explored.

The specifications require the student to explore aspects of the subtopic, including information, opinions and ideas. It is important to carefully consider the choice of subtopic and supporting image when preparing for this section of the examination. Images that included rich information provided more opportunity for students to offer a greater depth and range of information, ideas, opinions and reflections about the subtopic. While the quality of the visual stimulus was not assessed, students who selected images that were easy to share with the assessors found it easier to communicate their ideas.

The subtopics chosen for discussion included festivals (mainly *La Tomatina*), culinary contributions of Hispanic migrants, the environment, Marta’s plan and migrants’ experiences of identity crisis.

Students who scored highly were able to elaborate on the implications of the information presented with attention to a variety of themes and arguments within the parameters of their subtopic. These students showed an ability to advance the conversation fluently and show greater discursive complexity, with appropriate use of the necessary register in this type of exam.

Students who did not score well heavily relied on the visual image and treated the subtopic in a superficial way. Often, they had insufficient information and ideas for the eight minutes specified for this section. This caused reiterations and recurring errors, such as inappropriate use of linguistic registers, failure to agree on gender and number, confusion of verb tenses, little lexical variety, and the absence of the subjunctive mood and modal variety.

Language

* Students who scored highly were able to elaborate on the implications of the information presented with attention to a variety of sentence structures, a level of sophistication in their vocabulary and clear intonation and pronunciation. These students showed an ability to advance the conversation fluently and demonstrated greater linguistic complexity, with appropriate use of the necessary register in this type of exam.
* 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* (the topic), *la problema* instead of *el problema* (definite article–noun agreement; the problem)
* incorrect use of vocabulary, for example: *en genero* instead of *en general (*in general)
* incorrect use of *ser y estar* (to be), for example, *estoy divertido* instead of *soy divertido* (I’m funny).

More information

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