



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skill in using spoken Tamil and has two sections. Section 1 involves a conversation between the student and the assessors about aspects of the student's personal world; for example, school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations. In Section 2, students indicate the sub-topic they have chosen for Detailed Study, briefly introduce the main focus of their sub-topic and alert assessors to any objects they have brought to support the Discussion. The focus of the Discussion is to explore aspects of the language and culture of Tamil-speaking communities.

The standard of students' preparation was higher than in previous years. This year a substantial number of students were extremely well prepared. They listened carefully to assessors' questions, responded promptly and demonstrated clarity of understanding, confidence and fluency. These students showed keen understanding of assessors' questions and were able to self-correct errors. Their pronunciation, rhythm and intonation were excellent, and they were able to converse spontaneously.

Many students were fluent in spoken Tamil and used the acceptable standard dialect forms of many Tamil-speaking countries. The majority of the students were at ease with the newly hybridised transitional form of Tamil and were no longer restricted to older regional or national forms of the language. According to the aims of the *VCE Tamil Study Design*, the language to be studied and assessed is the modern standard version of Tamil. Some variations may surface in different social situations and are acceptable provided they occur in the appropriate context. Please refer to the study design for information regarding the oral examination.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

During the Conversation, students were expected to converse with assessors about aspects of their personal world, including topics such as school and home life, family, friends, education and aspirations. Most students were able to link with assessors effectively and demonstrated good communication skills and repair strategies. It was evident that they enjoyed the conversation and were confident. They kept the conversation relevant, provided a variety of culturally appropriate ideas and information, and supported their opinions with suitable examples. Students used a good range of relevant vocabulary. The pace at which students responded and the accuracy of their responses were excellent.

Most students used correct grammar and demonstrated a good command of style and register. These students were able to use appropriate Tamil words and not resort to English words, even in the case of the word 'car', for example. This is strong evidence of thorough practice in preparation. Some students were able to link very well with the assessors and provide amusing anecdotes that made the conversation interesting.

However, some students had difficulty in answering assessors' questions. It is strongly recommended that students be advised to expect some unanticipated questions. Sound preparation will emphasise the development of the students' ability to spontaneously use language in unexpected and impromptu situations. If this is done, the students will be able to communicate as active and independent users of language.

Section 2 – Discussion

In this part of the examination, students introduce their sub-topic and state the focus of their Detailed Study. They advise assessors of any materials they have brought to support the discussion. It was evident that most students had prepared their introduction carefully and these students presented their introductions very effectively. Almost all students showed a high degree of interaction with assessors. They had a good capacity to maintain and advance the exchange of ideas. Students' explorations of their sub-topics in the Discussion were interesting, relating to mainstream subjects, current issues, personal experiences and interests. Most students were able to offer original input and demonstrate their capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively, relating their topics to their culture and life. Many students provided relevant information with very interesting facts and opinions. Capable students used a wide range of vocabulary, sentence structures and expressions in forms appropriate to their topics.

Most students supported their discussions appropriately with photographs, diagrams or maps.

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Unfortunately, it became obvious that several students who had done very well in the conversation simply reproduced a memorised speech in the discussion. When assessors asked them questions, interrupting the flow of the memorised text, these students were disconcerted and had difficulty returning to their topic. A few students started their topic with 'Vanakkam', the usually appropriate greeting, which was inappropriate in this context வணக்கம், நான் இப்போது பேச எடுத்துக்கொண்ட விடயம்... Students and teachers should be aware that, although the criteria for the conversation and discussion appear almost identical, they assess different skills. The Discussion is an exchange, not a presentation or a speech, about the sub-topic selected.

A few students could not complete their sentences without using English words. It is important that students do not use English words where there are equivalent Tamil words available.