



**2012**

**Languages: Turkish GA 3: Examination**

## **Oral component**

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The 2012 Turkish oral examination had two sections: Section 1 – Conversation and Section 2 – Discussion. The *VCE Turkish Study Design* details the format of the examination and provides a summary of the requirements of the Detailed Study (page 22).

Overall, most students were able to display confidence in communicating their ideas and advancing the conversation in Section 1 – Conversation. The section goes for seven minutes and it requires students to have a conversation about their personal world. High-performing students responded to assessors' comments and questions without any hesitation and were able to maintain the flow of the conversation despite minor errors.

Exceptional performances in Section 1 – Conversation did not always mean that students spoke with no errors at all. Some of these students still made minor errors in pronunciation, vocabulary or language but they were quick to self-correct and continue to advance the conversation with confidence, still achieving excellent results. These students demonstrated that they were able to converse in Turkish while presenting an excellent range of information, opinions and ideas clearly and logically. Many students gave highly relevant responses and used an excellent range of vocabulary, sentence structures and colloquial expressions appropriate to Turkish culture and traditions.

Low-scoring students showed a lack of determination or ability to continue the exchange or respond to the assessors' questions. There were also a number of students who relied too heavily on formulaic expressions or assessors to lead and maintain the conversation. Some areas and topics students found difficult were when talking about their future aspirations and career paths where a number of students frequently felt the need to switch back to English due to specialised range of vocabulary and language expressions.

Section 2 involves an eight-minute discussion of the student's selected Detailed Study topic. The main factors that contributed to students' success were the 15 hours of detailed study in class and thorough preparation. Students who were able to show their ability to discuss a range of highly relevant issues and present an excellent range of information, ideas and opinions on the topic scored highly. Students needed to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately, accurately and effectively using excellent discussion strategies.

Although students are not penalised for their selection of Detailed Study topics for Section 2 – Discussion, they do need to be aware that some topics do not lead to broad discussion. The selection of some topics may make it difficult for students to support and elaborate on information, ideas and opinions, providing reasons, examples, evidence and/or new ideas.

General advice about the examination procedures, rules and regulations should be understood by students and can be accessed by the *VCE Exams Navigator*, published annually. Students need to be given their advice slips well in advance and this needs to be checked with individual students in class. Students need to know the examination venue and exact time and arrive at the examination venue at least half an hour before the time given on the advice slip.

Students are not permitted to bring in any notes, note cards, scripts or other documents containing sentences or paragraphs of notes. They may bring photographs, posters, diagrams, graphs and maps to support the discussion (*VCE Exams Navigator 2012*).

### **SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

#### **Section 1 – Conversation**

This section was assessed on three criteria: Communication, Content and Language.

##### **Communication**

Criterion 1: Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively

- capacity to link with the assessors
- effectiveness of communication and repair strategies
- degree of support necessary to maintain the exchange



Criterion 5: Clarity of expression

- pronunciation, intonation, stress, tempo

After they enter the examination room, students are asked to read their student number aloud in English. They are then reminded that they will need to use Turkish only for the rest of the examination.

In this section, most students were confident and able to introduce new information and ideas related to their personal world, including school and home life, family and friends, hobbies and interests, and future aspirations. The order in which these topics were discussed could not be predicted. Therefore, students should not prepare scripts or formulaic expressions that will disrupt the flow of conversation.

Although most students were able to display excellent communication skills, a few students were not able to advance the conversation and responded only when prompted. To achieve highly for this criterion, students need to carry the conversation forward and be active in their participation.

## Content

Criterion 2: Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions, and ideas

- relevance of information/ideas
- capacity of support/elaborate ideas/opinions with reasons/examples/evidence/new ideas

Some students were not able to offer reasons for their future aspirations and these students often found it difficult to use the Turkish equivalents of the subjects they studied at school. Most students used an adequate range of appropriate vocabulary to discuss family, personal interests and hobbies. Some students could not advance the conversation or provided limited information, or responded with irrelevant information when they did.

Students are advised to vary their use of vocabulary, expressions and structures as well as prepare to discuss the conversation topics in further detail with examples and evidence. Students need to demonstrate that they can support and defend their opinions and ideas by providing relevant examples.

## Language

Criterion 3: Accuracy and range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Criterion 4: Range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

- variety of vocabulary and grammar
- appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar to the context, audience and purpose of the task

Students with strong language skills demonstrated an excellent range of accurate vocabulary and sentence structures as well as culturally appropriate Turkish expressions. They were able to self-correct and use the appropriate style and register. Some students also used English words such as 'disadvantages' and 'association' when providing details. Students who used these words often without correcting themselves were penalised.

In terms of grammar, some students relied heavily on individual words and had difficulty structuring their sentences accurately. Students who were able to display excellent use of vocabulary and grammar did so with the appropriate context and register. Students need further practice in using appropriate vocabulary and grammar for a range of contexts as these are crucial language skills that are necessary for good communication.

In general, students confused verb tenses and case endings in the Turkish language. For example, errors such as *okul-u gittim* instead of *okul-a gittim*. Some students had difficulty using grammatically suitable words when completing their sentences. These included words such as, *üçüsü* for *üçü* (three of them) and *kuzeyisi* for *kuzeyi* (northern).

## Section 2 – Discussion

Criterion 7: Capacity to present information, ideas and opinions on a chosen Detailed Study topic

- capacity to support and to elaborate on information, ideas and opinions with reasons, examples, evidence and/or new ideas

Section 2 – Discussion is eight minute long and includes discussion of a Detailed Study topic studied for 15 hours in (see page 22 of the *VCE Turkish Study Design* for further details).



At the beginning of this section, the assessors indicate that the second part of the examination is starting. They then ask students to introduce their Detailed Study topic in one minute and after that their selection of resources. In this section, the three areas of assessment – Communication, Content and Language – are the same as those in Section 1.

## **Communication**

In Section 2 – Discussion, successful students responded readily and confidently to assessors' questions, advancing the exchange with original ideas, opinions and information. Students who had prepared well introduced their topics and resources effectively. Most students connected successfully with assessors, using eye contact and appropriate body language, and also good pronunciation, intonation and stress. It was important for students to maintain this connection throughout the discussion.

Successful students were also able to carry the discussion forward with original input and effective communication strategies. This included repair strategies, where students corrected their errors when supporting their ideas, opinions and information, as well as pronunciation or intonation of words and sentence tempo based on the sound system of the Turkish language..

Students who carried the discussion forward with confidence were also able to provide a breadth and depth of ideas and information during the discussion. Their discussions were informed by their chosen topic. These students discussed ideas on the issues related to the topic in general and did not limit their discussion and information to issues a narrow aspect of the topic.

To score highly in Section 2 – Discussion, students needed to demonstrate a high level of communication skills, and this depended on the student's level of familiarity with the topic. Students who struggled to continue the discussion had either not prepared to discuss the topic in detail or did not have the capacity and the level of language skills and knowledge required to communicate ideas and information in Turkish. These students were reluctant to respond to discussion points raised or comments made by assessors.

## **Content**

Students not only needed to demonstrate adequate preparation to present ideas, opinions and information on their chosen topic but also the capacity to support and elaborate on these with specific reasons, examples and evidence. They needed to bring new ideas to the discussion rather than simply elaborate on and support the ideas raised by the assessors during the discussion.

Many students did not select appropriate topics. This indicated a lack of preparation. Students need to spend 15 hours of class time on their Detailed Study and they should confirm their subtopics and topics with teachers when preparing for the examination. Some students prepared a presentation rather than a discussion and experienced some distress when they were prompted to discuss the issues related to the topic.

The Detailed Study topic should have been studied in depth to allow students to cover many aspects of the topic. Students should choose topics or subtopics that they feel comfortable with and be confident to discuss issues related to such topics.

Some topics led to broad, elaborated discussions where students were presented a wide range of information and ideas and supported them very well.

Some students were able to present information, ideas and opinions on their chosen topic but were not able to elaborate on it or provide the reasons, examples and evidence required. This is why it is important for students to practise providing examples, reasons and evidence on a range of issues related to the topic studied. Structured class discussions and formal debates where students have specific roles and responsibilities and take time to research and prepare as a group may also assist.

## **Language**

Students who used a range of vocabulary and structures relevant to their chosen topic were able to present their views and ideas with confidence and accuracy. Some students struggled with more the detailed and specialised vocabulary and language needed to discuss their chosen topic. These students made frequent language errors.

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Vocabulary errors indicated a habit of unintentionally changing sounds and morphemes in English words to create sub-lexical forms such as ‘enterest’, which stems from the word *enteresan* in Turkish (borrowed from French) and ‘interesting’ in English. The influence of English was evident in grammar as well as the syntactic use of Turkish. For example, using the predicate/verb in the middle as in English rather than at the end where it should be in Turkish word order.

Some students prepared well and used a high level of information, but due to their low language competency in Turkish could not express facts and opinions easily. Further attention should be paid to training students to use particular repair strategies when speaking in Turkish. Error analyses and providing a checklist of common errors in Turkish may assist student language learning.