



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students were generally well prepared for Section 1 – Conversation; however, the same cannot be said for Section 2 – Discussion. In Section 1, many students communicated well, listened attentively and were careful in the way they responded to questions. Some showed initiative in linking with assessors to advance the conversation, expanding on their ideas as well as providing other related information. These students also generally contributed to a lively and interesting conversation.

Students who were well prepared for Section 2 showed confidence in their presentation, were more articulate and able to expand on their ideas. They were able to expand on answers and demonstrated excellent knowledge of the content related to their topic. They showed confidence in discussing their opinions and did not focus too much on facts and details. Whenever they felt unsure, they asked for clarification.

A significant number of students appeared not to have spent adequate time and effort in preparing for the oral component of the examination. Students who memorised chunks of information had enormous difficulty venturing outside their parameters and simply agreed to suggestions or ideas presented by the assessors, which led to a limited and superficial discussion.

Students are encouraged to practise and perfect their presentation prior to the examination.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Communication

The first part of the oral examination requires students to interact with assessors in a seven-minute conversation that covers the students' personal world including school and family life, their hobbies, interests and future aspirations. Most students were well prepared and conversed very well on all topics. The majority of students answered questions confidently and provided extended responses, demonstrating a good range of vocabulary and cultural content. Some students gave the impression that they had prepared for a range of possible questions and responses, while those with lesser language skills attempted to dominate the conversation by giving memorised information. The majority of the students were able to extend the conversation by bringing up new, but related, topics.

Weaker students offered simple responses, often resorting to English. They were unable to understand or respond to some basic questions. A danger with relying heavily on pre-learned responses is that students are thrown off-guard when an assessor asks an unexpected question. Some students were eager to return to their rote-learning immediately after an assessor's redirection.

Students should be trained to listen carefully to the questions asked by assessors and not to simply respond on the basis of hearing a familiar word or phrase. Students should also be taught to pause, allowing assessors to ask further questions. It is important to link with assessors in order to carry the conversation forward, but not to the point where an assessor would find it difficult to get a word in.

Students should be able to explain and elaborate on their statements, for example, if a student says '*Ailece Türkiye'ye hiç gitmedik!*', they should anticipate that an assessor may ask a question seeking clarification and students should be able to respond with an explanation.

Students should be able to use anecdotes from real life stories in order to expand on the conversation and maintain the interest of the assessors. Students should also remember that eye contact and culturally appropriate gestures and fillers contribute to the flow of the conversation.

Content

Most students were able to speak about their family, hobbies, school and the subjects they had studied, however, as in previous years, a few students did not know the Turkish lexicon of their subjects. A few students did not know appropriate kinship words. When talking about their family, students should not just list names, ages and facts about the



members of their family. Talking about individual attributes, relationships within the family and the things they do with their family, gives a better picture of their life the people around them.

Some students find it difficult talking about future plans and how their selected studies would help them in their future careers. When asked to talk about their hobbies and leisure activities they should be able to explain how they became interested in that activity, and what prompted their interest in a particular hobby, etc.

Language

Better prepared students used an excellent range of vocabulary and their speech was clear. They used the correct style and register and a variety of sentence structures with appropriate stress and intonation. They successfully used a range of conjunctions, word endings, conjugations and pronouns. It is vital that students are well versed in the use of polite forms, are comfortable speaking to assessors and address them in the polite form ('*siz*' instead of '*sen*'). Weaker students did not have the necessary range of vocabulary to adequately engage in the conversation and made frequent grammatical errors.

Word order was sometimes a problem, with some students using English sentence structures.

Students used some words inappropriately and at times used anglicisms such as '*business*', '*soccer*', '*yuniversitiye gitmek istiyorum*' instead of '*üniversiteye*', etc. Some idiomatic expressions were incorrectly used, such as '*Arkadaş yaptım*' instead of '*arkadaş edindim*'. Some students displayed a lack of understanding of definite/indefinite distinction, and said '*yemeği yedim*' instead of '*yemek yedim*'. Other examples of incorrect language use included '*ressamci olucam*', instead of '*ressam olacağım*'.

Section 2 – Discussion

The Discussion part of the examination consists of a one-minute introduction and a seven-minute discussion on the selected Detailed Study topic. Teachers should carefully guide their students in selecting their sub-topic for their Detailed Study to ensure it meets the requirements of the *VCE Turkish Study Design*. Students need to study the topic in depth, acquire specific vocabulary and be able to express their opinions and ideas enthusiastically. The topic should promote discussion and the resources used should be in Turkish not in English. The sub-topic should address a question or issue that allows the student to make a judgment and formulate ideas and opinions. Resources should suit the student's language capacity and be appropriate for the topic selected. Teachers should facilitate the selection of a range of sub-topics and issues instead of limiting it to one for the whole class.

Communication

Students who were well prepared for the Detailed Study were able to talk about the resources they studied, give a good synopsis and explain connections between the texts. They were able to use the one-minute introduction time effectively without excessively using the materials brought to the examination room. Those students spoke about their topic with enthusiasm, often adding that they found the topic interesting. They demonstrated a high level of capacity to link with the assessors. They responded with enthusiasm to questions asked, using effective communication and repair strategies, and were able to carry the discussion forward. They offered their own ideas and opinions and sought the opinion of the assessors, sometimes agreeing with, and at other times challenging the views presented to them.

Students who memorised passages from their texts were not able to hold a meaningful discussion with the assessors when asked a question as they could not move beyond pre-learned material. Students are expected to study and analyse their texts during class and out of school time in sufficient time prior to the examination. When students prepare hastily, they can not utilise information from the texts and their capacity to have a genuine discussion or provide opinions is limited.

Topics selected for the Detailed Study should be broad enough to allow a thorough in-depth discussion and still be narrow enough to enable students to effectively grasp and advance ideas. The focus of the sub-topic should be quite specific. Topics that do not allow for opinions to be stated tend to be handled superficially on a factual level. When the expression of viewpoints and ideas is limited, the student's chance of meeting the criterion that assesses relevance, breadth and depth of information is similarly compromised. Students need to understand the topic well and be able to give examples from the texts studied.

Content

Some students chose topics such as a historical monument or a tourism destination, and concentrated on presenting factual information. In this instance, it is possible that students will forget memorised information and struggle to continue without the assessor's interjection. When topics such as these are selected, teachers should make sure an in-



depth study to analyse and evaluate other related issues is completed. For example, when talking about a historical place, a student should also be able to reflect upon the significance and possible influences on people now and in historical times.

It is important that students demonstrate an excellent knowledge of their topic and resources in the Discussion. They should be able to discuss the content in depth, elaborate on ideas and opinions, and support their comments with relevant evidence. Students should ensure that they are adequately prepared to communicate effectively with assessors. They should require minimum support and be able to link with and build on comments made by the assessors. Well-prepared students outlined their sub-topic within the required one-minute limit, clearly stating the sub-topic they had studied.

A wide range of texts should be used for the Detailed Study, including films, poems, short stories, songs, articles from magazines and newspapers, etc. The texts should all be in Turkish. Students in the same class are encouraged to work on a range of resources rather than the whole class using the same three resources.

Some students brought materials to aid their presentation of the topic, such as a diagram, a photograph and a small artefact. Teachers and students should ensure familiarity with the allowable dimensions of artefacts as large and bulky items such as instruments and utensils are inappropriate.

The following topics were most frequently studied: a Turkish city/town or region, a historical site/monument/building, a soccer team, sport cars, cuisine, community issues, etc. Topics should be dealt with in some detail to meet the requirements of the study design and information presented should contain points to facilitate discussion.

Language

As with the Conversation, well-prepared students used an excellent range of vocabulary in the Discussion. They were able to use accurate, appropriate and sophisticated language structures. They spoke using appropriate style and register and were able to self-correct when prompted by the assessors. Weaker students used basic language, making simple errors that included incorrect verb forms (subject-verb agreement and incorrect use of tenses and passive voice), word order and incorrect endings (especially accusative, dative and adjective endings). Once again, those students who studied their topic as prescribed in the study design were able to build topic-related lexicon and were able to use them confidently.

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The majority of students who sat for the written examination made a very good attempt at each section of the paper. They responded to questions in each section effectively and provided well thought-out responses. All questions on the examination were answered adequately and the majority of students completed all sections of the examination within the specified word limits.

Most students appeared to be familiar with the format of the examination and nearly all students were able to respond in the appropriate language for each section. Some students failed to read, understand and follow the instructions and wrote their responses either in the wrong language or in both languages. Students need to be made aware that responses written in the wrong language cannot be assessed.

Some students were able to take appropriate notes during the listening and responding part of the examination but carelessly omitted these notes in their responses to questions. Students are encouraged to allow sufficient time to complete responses as marks are not awarded to notes.

It is disappointing to see that students at this level are still making very basic mistakes, such as not being able to understand the different meaning and usage of the endings such as *'okulda kaldı'* and *'okul da kaldı'* as well as other incorrect verb endings that do not conform with the vowel harmony. Many students also repeatedly made verb ending errors when writing in Turkish, which is considered a very serious mistake at Unit 4 level. They should develop the habit of continually checking through their writing so that it becomes natural for them to do so during an examination.

It is important that students pay attention to the marks indicated, the lines provided and the number of points requested in a question. All of these details should assist students in knowing how much (or how little) to write in their answers. If

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two marks are given, two points are required. If too many responses are given they are assessed in the order they are written. Any responses given beyond the specified number are not considered.

Students and teachers are to be encouraged to do practise exams using past examination papers and analyse their responses using the assessment criteria provided. Students practising the 2008 Turkish examination should note that questions were given in both Turkish and English in Section 2, Part A of the paper instead of English alone. In 2008, students were not penalised for answering these questions in the incorrect language. However, in normal circumstances, students should note that they will be given **zero** for writing their answer in the incorrect language. Teachers must emphasise to students the importance of carefully reading the instructions at the beginning of each section before writing their answer.

Most students responded very well to questions asked in the Reading and responding section. Some attempted to extract statements or answers directly from the texts provided instead of trying to understand the question and extract relevant information and formulate their own response. Students should not provide information beyond the scope of the question and they should not include prior knowledge of the topic if it is not included in the texts.

Most students selected the most familiar text types in Section 3 – Writing in Turkish. The writing tasks were generally within the correct word range and there was evidence that the more capable students attempted to check over their responses in order to eliminate careless errors and grammatical inaccuracies.

Teachers should prepare their students by providing a great variety of text types but concentrate particularly on the asterisked text types in the *VCE Turkish Study Design*. Conventions of these text types need to be taught over the two years of the VCE program.