

2020 VCE Vietnamese Second Language oral examination report

General comments

2020 was the first year this study was delivered according to the newly accredited *VCE Vietnamese Second Language 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 Vietnamese Second Language examinations webpage of the VCAA website. Students and teachers should also refer to the [series of videos](#) that has been produced to help with preparation for the oral examinations; these are also available on the Vietnamese Second Language examinations webpage of the VCAA website.

Students who scored highly were those who prepared well for both sections of the oral examination: the Conversation and the Discussion. In the Conversation, high-scoring responses showed persistence in the answers given to questions from assessors. Successful students gave extended responses and offered thoughts, ideas and opinions. Memorised responses were evident in conversations that did not score well.

Section 2 consisted of an eight-minute discussion. The focus of the Discussion section was to discuss and explore one of the subtopics related to either of the prescribed themes: ‘Vietnamese-speaking communities’ or ‘The world around us’. These subtopics were engaging, enabling students to showcase the content and language needed to interact with assessors. Students who scored highly were able to support and elaborate on information, ideas and opinions with confidence. Some students found it difficult to discuss and explore their subtopic and its connection to the Vietnamese-speaking community.

It should be noted that during the oral examination:

- students may be asked a variety of questions with 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.

Specific information

Section 1 – Conversation

This section was generally very well done by students. Higher marks were awarded to students who successfully carried the conversation forward by elaborating on their ideas, information and opinions. They gave their answers in full sentences, rather than just one-word responses such as ‘có hoặc không’ (yes or no). Students who were not able to display clarity of expression or accuracy of vocabulary and grammar or who were not able to use relevant information did not score highly. During the oral examination, students could use the following expressions in order to display traditional and cultural manners:

- *Thưa thầy, thưa cô* (Sir/Miss)
- *Dạ-Vâng* (yes/no)

- *Em xin trình bày* (I would like to present)
- *Xin thầy/cô lặp lại* (Sir/Miss, please repeat)
- *Em xin phép được nói lại* (I would like to adjust/say/correct).

Most students dealt with this section of the examination with ease and could confidently converse about their personal world and how they interact with the Vietnamese language and culture as learners. Some students were able to use personal examples in a very lively manner to illustrate their perspectives. They were also able to use sophisticated vocabulary and structures during the Conversation.

Students who did not score well needed some assistance and encouragement in order to carry the exchange forward. Some students appeared to have pre-prepared responses to questions related to the areas of their personal world. Some responses were lengthy or irrelevant to the questions asked. In some cases, inaccurate vocabulary and phrases were used: for example, *rất đẹp hơn* (much beautiful more) or *rất nóng hơn* (much hotter more). The correct version should be *đẹp hơn rất nhiều* (much more beautiful) or *nóng hơn rất nhiều* (much hotter).

Students were well prepared for the Conversation, indicating that they had practised questions and answers to develop their fluency and confidence in carrying on a conversation.

Section 2 – Discussion

The chosen subtopics were related to the two prescribed themes outlined in the study design. As students are expected to spend some hours of class time preparing their topics, they were able to discuss more than just one aspect of the subtopic. Examples of subtopics that offered sufficient depth and scope for discussion and therefore lent themselves well to this section of the oral exam included but were not limited to:

- *Tết Nguyên Đán, chuẩn bị ngày Tết và một vài tục lệ ngày Tết* (Tet Festival, preparations and some New Year customs)
- *Mâm ngũ quả của ba miền* (the five-fruit tray of the three regions)
- *Kinh nghiệm di dân* (the migrant experience)
- *Những câu chuyện thành công* (success stories)
- *Toàn cầu hóa* (globalisation)
- *Môi trường* (environment).

In several cases, it seemed that students had left their choice of subtopic until the last minute, resulting in poor preparation and a poor performance. There is no need to choose a complex subtopic. The important considerations for subtopic selection are the preparation and the student's ability to discuss their chosen subtopic and the supporting visual material that they have brought with them. The focus of the discussion will be on exploring aspects of the subtopic, including information, opinions and ideas. This includes responding to questions on the subtopic itself and the supporting visual material that they have brought with them.

Students had to present their viewpoint clearly and be prepared to elaborate on and explain aspects of their subtopic in relation to wider, related issues. The students who excelled were those who impressed the assessors with their language competence, opinions and responses. Students who did not score well tended to concentrate on recitation of facts or information and had difficulty sustaining the Discussion. They also found this section challenging as some of the topics chosen were clearly beyond their linguistic ability, and consequently the accuracy of expression and fluency of delivery suffered.

Many students used their chosen image to support their discussion. Students are reminded that if they bring a visual object, like a picture, map or diagram into the examination, this visual object must have only minimal Vietnamese writing on it.