



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The majority of students performed well in the 2006 oral examination, which is designed primarily to assess the students' competence and skills using spoken Vietnamese.

The oral examination has two sections, a Conversation and a Discussion. Topics covered in the Conversation, which is approximately seven minutes long, include family, school, leisure, work and future aspirations.

Section 2, the Discussion, goes for approximately eight minutes and is linked to the sub-topic selected for the Detailed Study. It is therefore expected that students will have spent 15 hours of scheduled class time preparing their sub-topic for the Discussion. Students needed to present a clear stance on an issue and support that stance with evidence from the texts studied. The evidence may be justified with photographs, diagrams and maps.

Students should be advised that they will not be asked for, and must not tell, the name of their school or the names of their teachers. If an assessor meets his/her own students, he/she must swap with another assessor so that the assessment is fair and consistent with VCAA rules.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Students were generally very well prepared for this section. High marks were allocated to those who could successfully maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively with the assessors. Answers needed to be in full sentences, not just one word, yes or no responses. Lower marks were awarded if there was a lack of clear expression, accurate vocabulary and grammar, or relevant information.

Some traditional and cultural manners should be taken into account, such as:

- *Chao thay, chao co* (good morning/afternoon teacher)
- *Thua Thay, thua co* (sir/miss)
- *Da, Vang* (yes/no)
- *Em xin trinh bay* (I would like to display/present)
- *Xin Thay/co lap lai* (sir/miss, repeat please)
- *Theo y em thi* (in my opinion...)
- *Em xin phep duoc noi lai* (I would like to adjust/say/correct)
- *Em da xong* (I finish my...).

Section 2 – Discussion

Students have one minute in which to introduce their sub-topic at the beginning of the Discussion. Therefore, assessors do not need to know beforehand what sub-topic has been selected for Detailed Study or the texts the students have studied. The sub-topic may relate to any of the topics listed in the study design under the Vietnamese Speaking Community theme, and the 15 hours of study spent on the Detailed Study should allow students to discuss more than just the one aspect of the sub-topic. Most students were well prepared for this section of the examination

Some successful sub-topics were:

- *Tet Nguyen Dan va mot Vai tuc le ngay Tet* (New Year festival and some New Year customs)
- *Gia Dinh Viet Nam* (the Vietnamese family)
- *Cuoi hoi* (marriage)
- *Phu nu Viet Nam* (Vietnamese women)
- migrants' experiences.

In several cases it seemed that students had left their sub-topic choice until the last minute, resulting in poor preparation and a lack of teacher consent or comment. Controversial topics such as 'youth problems' and 'social issues' are difficult and, as they do not belong to any cultural topics, they should be avoided. Students should choose a sub-topic that is appropriate to their language ability; there is no need to choose a complex sub-topic.



The crucial issue for sub-topic selection lies in the students' ability to support their stance with reference to the texts studied. The emphasis is not on assessing how much detail the students can recall about the text learnt, but on how well they can use it to support the stance presented. Students had to demonstrate the skills needed to present their stance clearly and be prepared to elaborate on and explain aspects of their presentation on wider, related issues.

Students who excelled were those who impressed the assessors with original thoughts or a depth of traditional and cultural responses in the discussion. Students with weaker responses tended to concentrate on relating facts or information and had difficulty sustaining the discussion.

Many students used pictures, maps, diagrams or other materials to support their discussion. Students have become familiar with new tasks and their success can be attributed to their own efforts and also to the effort and assistance given by their teachers.

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The written component of the examination is designed to assess students' knowledge and skill in dealing with spoken and written texts, and in expressing ideas through the creation of original texts in Vietnamese.

All the themes and topics of Units 1–4 of the *Vietnamese VCE Study Design* were included in the three sections of the examination paper. Section 1 covered topics such as Vietnamese families (the Vietnamese 'gia pha'), new life styles for the young in Australia and Vietnamese women. Section 2 dealt with the environment (global warming and its effect on humans) and Vietnamese New Year customs (the story of *Cây Neu*). The content was wrapped in two informative articles. Section 3 required students to express their ideas through the creation of an original text in Vietnamese and there were five tasks to choose from.

Students who achieved good results responded to all parts in English or Vietnamese as appropriate, using logical sequencing, appropriate structures and correct tone markers, grammar and syntax rules.

Most students understood all aspects of the task and performed well. However, some students used information from outside the texts provided, which is not acceptable. Other students gave their responses in note form when the question had specifically asked for an explanation and/or full sentences. Accuracy of information was another serious problem, and there were still some students who responded in the incorrect language. A few students did not answer any question in Section 3.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

The Listening and responding section was divided into two parts. Part A included seven questions that had to be answered in English. Part B had five questions based on a conversation about Vietnamese women, and the students were required to answer in Vietnamese. They needed to refer to the text in their responses, not give an answer based on their own deductions or prior knowledge.

Question 1

Every day, the parents love and care for Lan, and give Lan food, clothes and pocket money. They also send Lan to school and pick Lan up. When Lan is sick, Lan feels their love even more because they worry so much: Dad takes the day off and Mum stays awake the whole night to look after Lan.

Question 2

To fill our names in on the family register (annuals, records or extended family tree).

Question 3

Wherever they live or whatever they do in the future, they will remember their origin and acknowledge their identity.

Question 4

Prior to the trip:

- Lan's grandpa is old

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- he calls Lan's parents, Lan's uncle and Lan's aunt in Australia, America and Canada respectively to take their family to Vietnam at the same time.

While in Vietnam:

- reuniting their extended family
- registering the overseas-born grandchildren into the family register.

Students needed to mention at least three of the four points above.

Question 5

At least one of:

- to have a healthy lifestyle
- to change the children's eating habits and daily activities.

Question 6

Any two of the following better food habits:

- eat more vegetables and fruit
- reduce oily and sugary food
- eat Vietnamese food (more nutritious)
- eat less fat (or take-away) food
- do not buy unhealthy snacks (such as chips, lollies or cakes).

Any two of the following sports:

- football
- volleyball
- basketball
- swimming.

Question 7

The benefits are:

- more exercise
- learning to take responsibility for tasks.

Question 8

- modest (coy/sweet/gentle)
- capable (responsible/courageous/brave/strong)

Question 9

- Their slim figures are in tight dresses with two flaps of the garment being free.
- In this dress, their gestures are softer, their speech is sweeter, their smiles are more charming and their movements are more graceful.

Question 10

- They are more capable in peacetime.
- In wartime, the men were away to fight and women had to deal with all chores such as working on farms, trading goods and bringing up children.
- In peacetime, the husbands were at home but women voluntarily undertook all tasks to spare their husbands so that they could study for exams. It was illustrated in the proverb 'Under the moonlight, the husband reads books beside his wife as she weaves.'

Students should have compared 'more capable in peacetime' first, then given evidence from the text to illustrate to receive full credit.

Question 11

An example of a possible answer is: At night there was no electricity. Life was poor and difficult then. The husband read books (studied) under the moonlight. The wife was weaving next to him (working). Perhaps she tried to catch up on unfinished work. Perhaps she tried to be beside her husband to encourage him while he was studying. The husband



and wife shared the night and the moonlight together. On one hand, they must have been very happy, but on the other hand, the wife seemed to take on more tasks or, in other words, to sacrifice for her husband to study for a better future.

Most students did not explain clearly or just paraphrased the folk poem. Most students provided only one meaning instead of both the literal and figurative meanings.

Question 12

Students could have responded that Tan was serious, joking or both. For full marks, they needed to give evidence from the text to explain their decision.

He was serious because:

- the girl participated in the Tet festival in her traditional dress (modest)
- the girl undertook a task as a bread roll seller (capable)
- the girl voluntarily did it as a fund-raiser (heroine).

He was joking (or using extravagant language) because a 'heroine' is:

- a woman of heroic character
- a daring/noble/outstanding/wonderful/marvellous/excellent/intrepid character.

He was half serious and half joking because:

- of all the points raised above
- the girl replied 'Oh dear!' (*mãng yêu*), which means she believed that he was half joking.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

The Reading and responding section was also divided into two parts. In Part A there was seven questions taken from a text about the environment, and students had to answer in English. Part B consisted of three questions raised from a folk story about the 'Cay Neu', and students were required to answer in Vietnamese.

Question 13

Any of the following types of titles were appropriate:

- Planet in the balance
- Scientist gives a stern warning
- Insurance company warns about global warming
- Scientists join environmentalists in calling for change.

The title needed to refer to the environment, a possible increase in disasters, man-made environmental problems or the giant insurance company issuing a warning.

Question 14

- billions of humans/overpopulation
- need for increased food production/use of land
- larger houses/increased number of houses
- increased use of energy (heating and lighting) and other resources (roads)

Some students did not refer to the text but based their answers on their memories or prior knowledge. Students need to base their responses on the text given.

Question 15

- eating less meat/eating meat occasionally
- becoming vegetarian/eating no meat

Question 16

- issuing warnings about the effect of humans on the planet
- joining with environmentalists to call for change

Question 17

- Big houses use up more land.

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- Big houses use more energy (heating and lighting), more services and require more roads.

Question 18

Any four of the following:

- houses are bigger
- fewer people live in each house
- more houses are being built
- more land/services/roads are being built
- more energy/resources are being used.

Question 19

Contribution of individuals:

- eat differently
- reduce the number of houses/reduce the size of the houses
- reuse
- recycle.

The role of the government:

- to have concrete plans/strategies
- to listen to scientists and their warnings.

Question 20

	The first harvest	The second harvest	The third harvest
The devil's demands	whatever grew above ground	the roots and top parts	everything: roots, stems and leaves
Crops planted by the farmers according to the Lord Buddha's advice	sweet potatoes	sugar cane	corn

Question 21

One more time the poor farmers sought Lord Buddha's advice. The Lord Buddha told them to secure the devil's agreement to agree to use a plot of land no larger than saffron's shadow. The trick was that the saffron was hoisted on top of a pole. As it went up and up, its shadow grew bigger and bigger and pushed the devil further and further away until he fell into the sea and disappeared.

Question 22

Either of the following explanations was accepted.

- The devil represents bad people. His life teaches us 'what goes around what comes around' (*Ở hiền gặp lành, ở ác gặp ác*), or 'He who sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind' (*Gieo gió gặt bão*).
- The majority of Vietnamese people believe in the Lord Buddha so they always seek for advice and help from the Lord Buddha when needed.

Section 3 – Writing in Vietnamese

In Section 3 students needed to choose one of five topics and answer in 250–300 words in Vietnamese. The topics were:

- write an informative report to be published in a Vietnamese newspaper about the success of Vietnamese people in Australia
- you are travelling in Vietnam. Write a journal entry describing some of the most memorable events of your trip
- imagine that you have won a million dollars in a television contest. Write a letter to your closest friend telling him or her how you intend to spend the money
- write an article for your school newsletter persuading other Vietnamese students who were born and grew up in Australia to maintain important Vietnamese traditions and moral values
- write the script for a speech for a class presentation on the Vietnamese proverb, 'The more time you spend sharpening a piece of iron, the sooner you will have a needle'. In your speech, evaluate how true this idea is in relation to your studies and everyday life.

The length and kind of writing for the task were taken into account when marking students' writing. Students are expected to be familiar with five kinds of writing listed in the study design (informative, imaginative, personal,



persuasive and evaluative). They should be able to produce these types of writing in response to examination questions within 250 to 300 words.

Many students chose Questions 24 and 25. These were personal and imaginative writing, and the text types (a journal and a letter) were handled well by students.

Question 23

The report should have had:

- an objective style
- facts, examples, explanations, statistical information, quotations and reference as evidence.

The main points the informative report needed to cover included:

- why/when/how the Vietnamese people arrived in Australia
- where they are living in Australia
- their significant achievements as groups as well as individuals
- the names of some Vietnamese who are successful in Australia, including a description of their success or their impact on both the Vietnamese and Australian communities.

Question 24

Responses to this topic should have created a sense of the writer's personality. It should have:

- established a relationship between the writer and his/her diary
- usually employed first and/or second person
- used a subjective, informal, familiar style
- emphasised ideas, opinions, feelings and impressions rather than factual and objective information
- perhaps used contracted language, such as is used in informal speech.

The main points the journal entry needed to cover included:

- time, place and persons
- a strong sense of context and situation
- what the most memorable events were
- how the writer was feeling.

Question 25

The imaginative writing should have aimed to manipulate the reader's response by creating a desired impression or response through its visual and/or emotional appeal. It should have included:

- letter form (date, name of receiver, introduction, body, conclusion, signature)
- a strong sense of context and situation
- a description of place, emotion, atmosphere
- selection of language/parts of speech.

The main points the letter needed to include were:

- when, where and how the money would be spent (to buy gifts for family and friends, to travel, to give charity, etc.)
- how the writer planned to spend money both immediately and for the future.

Question 26

The article needed to stimulate in Vietnamese students a strong feeling or pride in being Vietnamese and give reasons for maintaining Vietnamese traditions and moral values. It should have:

- used persuasive techniques appropriate for young people
- well-chosen words – persuasive words and vocabulary technique were important.

The main points that the persuasive article needed to include were:

- introduction to some specific Vietnamese traditions and moral values
- reasons for promoting the maintenance of Vietnamese traditions and moral values.

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Question 27

Through the logical presentation and discussion of examples and evidence, the script for the speech should have aimed to reach a conclusion about whether practice and patience will lead us to succeed at the end. It should have:

- presented appropriate examples to explain the meaning of the proverb, reasons/points of view to encourage students to be persistent (never give up) and to spend more time practising for their studies and jobs
- used an objective style, appealing mainly to reason, not emotion, and creating an impression of balance and impartiality, at the same time, including a subjective style and justifying the proverb
- included expressions of cause, consequence, opposition and concession.

The main points the persuasive speech needed to include were:

- explanation of the concrete meaning of the proverb, that is 'The more time you spend sharpening a piece of iron, the sooner you will have a needle'
- explanation of the meaning of the proverb, that is 'Patience, effort and practice will lead us to succeed at the end' and examples
- comments on how true this idea is
- evaluation of the ideas with supporting evidence, discussion
- a reasonable conclusion about how true this idea is in relation to studies and everyday life.