

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The majority of students performed very well in the 2011 Vietnamese oral examination, which assesses students' competence and skills in using spoken Vietnamese. The oral examination has two sections: Conversation and Discussion.

Section 1 – The Conversation, which lasts for approximately seven minutes and consists of a general conversation about school and home life, family, friends, interests and future aspirations, was handled well by most students.

Section 2 – The Discussion lasts for approximately eight minutes. The focus of the Discussion is an exploration of aspects of the language and culture of the Vietnamese-speaking community. It is linked to the sub-topic selected for the Detailed Study, and it is assumed that students will have spent 15 hours of scheduled class time researching the Detailed Study.

The Discussion is not a presentation. It is an exchange or a discussion between the student and the assessors. Students should demonstrate facts, opinions and the reasons for them, and converse on aspects of the Detailed Study in a broad sense. They are encouraged not to rely on just one aspect of the topic or just one text. Students are expected to refer to the texts studied as part of their Detailed Study. They may support the Discussion with, for example photographs, diagrams and maps, but they are not allowed to use dictionaries or notes. Students must remember not to mention the name of their school or the names of their teachers during the oral examination.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

This section was generally very well done. High marks were awarded to students who successfully maintained and advanced the exchange appropriately and effectively. They gave their answers in full sentences, rather than just one-word responses such as *co* or *khong* (yes or no). Students who were not able to display clarity of expression, accuracy of vocabulary and grammar or use relevant information did not score as highly.

During the oral examination, students should use the following expressions in order to display traditional and cultural manners.

- *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, please repeat)
- *Em xin phep duoc noi lai* (I would like to adjust/say/correct)

Section 2 – Discussion

Students have one minute 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 the 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 theme of the Vietnamese-speaking communities. As students are expected to spend 15 hours of class time studying the Detailed Study, they should be able to discuss more than just the one aspect of the sub-topic.

Most students were very well prepared for this section of the examination. Students were not penalised if they failed to mention the texts studied during the one-minute introduction, as these can be asked about during the ensuing discussion.

Some successful sub-topics were:

- *Gia Dinh Viet Nam* (Vietnamese family)
- *Tet Nguyen Dan va mot Vai tuc le ngay Tet* (New Year Festival and New Year customs)
- *Phu nu Viet Nam* (Vietnamese women)

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- *Kinh nghiệm di dân* (Migrants' experiences)
- *Ca dao Tục ngữ và Truyen cổ tích* (Folk song and folk tales)
- *Truyen Kieu* (Vietnamese literature)

Students are reminded that the above sub-topics are examples and that they should not regard the list as the only possible sub-topics.

In several cases, it seemed that students had left their sub-topic choice until the last minute, resulting in poor preparation and a poor performance. There is no need to choose a complex sub-topic; students should choose a sub-topic that is appropriate to their language ability.

The crucial issue for sub-topic selection lies in the student's ability to support a 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 this information to support the perspective presented. Students had to present their stance clearly and be prepared to elaborate on and explain aspects of their sub-topic in relation to wider, related issues.

The 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 brought pictures, maps or diagrams to support their discussion. Students are reminded that if they bring objects such as pictures, maps or diagrams into the examination, the objects must have only minimal Vietnamese writing on them.