



## **Oral component**

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The standard of language varied in the 2013 Yiddish oral examinations. Some students were exceptionally well prepared and expressed themselves fluently without needing to be prompted by assessors. Some students self-corrected readily, which showed a good mastery of sentence construction and grammar. Others responded well to assessors' prompts. All students demonstrated good preparation and an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in conversation.

### **SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

#### **Section 1 – Conversation**

Most students gained high marks in this section, particularly in criteria 1, 2 and 5, showing excellent understanding by responding readily and confidently. They used effective repair strategies and carried the conversation forward with some spontaneity, demonstrating excellent pronunciation, intonation and tempo. Students scored lower on criteria 3, 4 and 9, which focused on language skills, range and accuracy, grammar and fluency, indicating room for improvement.

#### **Section 2 – Discussion**

The strongest responses occurred when students extended beyond a narrow set of requirements and resources and offered some deep insights and learning through which they could demonstrate the breadth of their capacity to converse in the second language. The stronger students self-corrected and demonstrated a level of preparation and practice in conversation that was lacking in the weaker discussions. Weaker responses were characterised by a lack of fluency, grammatical errors and a narrow scope of discussion limited to a few sources. Weaker students struggled with both syntax and vocabulary and sometimes appeared to be transferring English sentence construction rather than demonstrating a capacity to 'think in the second language'.

Students should be encouraged to use a broad and diverse range of source material in order to familiarise themselves more thoroughly with the language. They should also be encouraged to practise conversation among themselves and to listen to Yiddish through a range of media – radio, films, music and native speakers – and to engage actively with the language across these contexts.

Some typical weaknesses of second-language learning could become a focus for improvement – grammatical structures, correct word order, expansion of vocabulary and developing a repertoire of idiomatic expressions.

The aim of learning a language is to be able to express oneself in a way that other people can understand. Students did this with varying degrees of success. The strongest students demonstrated a keen ear for the cadence and idioms of Yiddish, while weaker students relied on translating and transferring from English to Yiddish. All students demonstrated an ability to make themselves understood.