

Oral component

Overall, performance in the Oral Component of the LOTE Examination showed a smooth transition to the revised VCE Ukrainian course. Students performed well in both sections, displaying in almost all cases an ability to communicate at well above the basic level. Conversations and discussions with a few students were at a surprisingly high level of language sophistication, and several showed an excellent command of communicative strategies and an equally good command of Ukrainian vocabulary and grammar.

Section 1 – Conversation

Conversation about the student's school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations presented the 2002 cohort of students with very few problems. Excellent preparation was in evidence.

Criterion 1 (capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively) attracted the most uniformly high scores in the examination. Students readily maintained and advanced the conversation by taking up cues offered by examiners, responding amply to questions, and providing material capable of conversational development. There were no cases of students unwilling or unable to move the conversation along.

Students understood Criterion 2 (relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas). They offered specific information where appropriate, while staying close to the issues raised in the conversation. There were no cases of students artificially introducing prepared material.

For Criterion 3 (accuracy of vocabulary and grammar) a wider range of performance was observed. In the conversation, as well as in the discussion, a number of students displayed an excellent grasp of the rules of grammar and made appropriate use of a wide vocabulary. Many were competent in both vocabulary and grammar, but made mistakes that reflected uncertainty about rules (case endings, especially after prepositions), as well as interference from English or, less frequently in 2002 than in some previous years, Russian.

As in the case of Criterion 3, Criterion 4 (range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar) reflected a spread of skills and competences from acceptable to excellent. The students who performed best showed a good command of vocabulary, grammar and an ability to use a wide range of vocabulary and grammar.

For clarity of expression (Criterion 5) examiners observed a high standard of performance. Pronunciation ranged from fair to excellent, students' utterances were normally paced, and all students were able to make themselves understood without difficulty.

Section 2 – Discussion

Students' performances in this section were commendable. Nevertheless, examiners felt that the texts to which students referred when discussing their sub-topic might have been made easier by teachers. Many students addressed the difficult general issue of the relationship between social realities and literary texts (sometimes films). Most of the works mentioned and discussed were nineteenth-century classics – works that refer to a society remote from the experience of the students, and known to only a few through extensive historical and literary reading. It was clearly difficult for some students to develop personal responses to, and opinions about, such works. Students might consider the advantages of a broader historical topic and generic range of texts for their sub-topic. Overall, this section offered more challenges to students than Section 1.

Criterion 1 Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively

Generally, students were able to maintain a communicative exchange quite efficiently. In some cases, however, students who found it difficult to engage with examiners' more unpredictable contributions took refuge in prepared statements, regardless of their appropriateness.

Criterion 2 Capacity to present information, ideas and opinions on a chosen topic

The intrinsic remoteness of the subject matter for some students was most evident here. Those who had prepared a literary classic as their sub-topic were insufficiently experienced readers of literature to be able to confidently discuss a range of aspects. On the other hand, there were those who were able to demonstrate to advantage a breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas about their sub-topic.

Criteria 3, 4 and 5 Accuracy of vocabulary and grammar/ Range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar/Clarity of expression

The pattern of performance established in Section 1 was confirmed in Section 2. Most students could make examiners understand what they had to say, but there were marked differences in how well they could say it.

Written component

The 2002 written examination indicated a successful implementation of the new syllabus. Most students attempted to answer all the questions in Sections 1 and 2, analysed and interpreted them well, and provided appropriately detailed and concise answers to the points raised in the task. Students who achieved high marks fully addressed the terms used in the questions such as 'list', 'describe', 'identify', and 'give reasons'. Many successful answers in Section 3 were

evident of high-quality learning and careful preparation. Most students were quite familiar with the required text type and wrote at length and with great dexterity on their chosen topic.

However, students are advised to read the instructions for each section and question carefully and to write their answers in the language asked for.

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Many students listened to and read the questions carefully, interpreted and planned their answers to include sufficient relevant information, and consequently achieved good marks. The most common errors included responding to only part of the information at the exclusion of the whole, and providing ambiguous, imprecise, and generalised statements. Some answers were too brief and incomplete.

A small number of students did not demonstrate an adequate range of vocabulary and this made it difficult for them to understand the texts and to express themselves successfully.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A

Responses in this part ranged from excellent to poor. Many students showed a good understanding of comparison and contrast, of similarity and difference between the texts, of the complex use of words within the given forms of writing, and the ability to discuss these and include the required information in their responses. However, some responses were too brief or not in the language stated in the instructions.

Part B

Many students responded both effectively and appropriately to the text. A few, however, did not base their answers on the format of the question. Some vocabulary difficulties, grammatical errors, anglicisms, and lack of familiarity with the vocative case were obvious in a number of responses.

Section 3 – Writing in Ukrainian (completed by interstate students)

Most responses were of a high standard. All four questions were effectively attempted with appropriate linguistic skill and the ability to discuss the chosen topic. A few students had difficulties with the basic grammatical structures, particularly with the extensive system of inflections of nouns and adjectives.