



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The majority of performances in both sections of the 2006 Ukrainian oral examination, the Conversation and the Discussion, were very good. Only a few students reached an excellent standard, but, on the other hand, only a very small minority performed poorly, which was pleasing.

The quality of responses in the Conversation was of a higher standard than the Discussion, and the majority of students exhibited a higher level of preparation for the Conversation than the Discussion. Thus, while most students engaged enthusiastically in dialogue with assessors and eagerly presented their ideas and opinions in both sections, some showed more confidence in using the language in the freer context of the Conversation. There were no instances where students did not understand an assessor's question or the meaning of what the assessor had said. Throughout the examination, all students were polite and maintained a very positive outlook and atmosphere in the examination room. They demonstrated a very good knowledge of Ukrainian customs, including greetings, forms of address, and civilities.

Communication

In both sections, the majority of students demonstrated a high capacity to link with the assessors and the ability to advance the exchange and move the conversation forward without frequent support from the assessors. One or two students had exceptionally good clarity of expression and were skilled in using correct Ukrainian phonetics, stress and intonation. These students confidently used a variety of effective communicative strategies.

On the whole, the majority of students did show some accentual and phonetic deviations from standard literary Ukrainian, usually due to the influence of English and the home dialect. Most performances, however, were relatively well paced, with few pauses.

Content

The organisation and development of ideas, and the unity, fluency and coherence of presentation in both sections of the examination were generally of a high quality. The depth and range of information presented by the majority of students was very good. Most students gave some original input and introduced complex and original ideas and views that were highly relevant to the context. In the very best performances, students showed originality of views and perceptions, and expressed and substantiated those views precisely, while avoiding irrelevant generalisations. In a few isolated instances, students lacked initiative and tended to follow a prepared script. Evidently they were constrained by a somewhat limited knowledge of some aspects of the topic.

Language

In the majority of performances students' accuracy in vocabulary and grammar was generally very good, and, in one or two cases, it was exceptional. All of the more confident students consistently used a wide range of highly appropriate vocabulary and complex grammatical constructions and forms. These students demonstrated a good knowledge of the stylistic aspects of the Ukrainian language. Other students used a middle register suitable for most communicative situations. A small number of students repeatedly made the same error throughout the examination; for example, an error in case endings or tense, or using prepositions in conjunction with nouns where these were not required, since the meaning was conveyed by the case of nouns. It is evident that the Detailed Study should focus more on the morphological aspect of the Ukrainian language and that students should be encouraged to learn the rules of morphology more thoroughly.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Section 1 – Conversation

In this section, the majority of the students demonstrated very effective communication skills and a good knowledge of prescribed topics of the Conversation. They engaged in a dialogue with the assessors and provided highly relevant and informed responses to questions about personal interests, favourite school subjects, plans for the future, and family issues and traditions. These students were generally very successful in clarifying and elaborating on their ideas and opinions. They used a wide range of vocabulary and expressions and highly effective repair strategies. A small number of students had some difficulty in maintaining the exchange and carrying the conversation forward, and they relied to some degree on anglicisms and rote-learned language.



Section 2 – Discussion

The topic for the Discussion in 2006 was ‘Ukraine’s Orange Revolution: reasons and consequences’. This topic is sufficiently broad to accommodate a wide range of views and perspectives, and proved to be highly successful for the majority of students. Students demonstrated an excellent ability to discuss in depth a great variety of aspects of Ukraine’s Orange revolution. These included the political and socioeconomic reasons for the demonstration at Independence Square in Ukraine, two years since the Revolution: the implementation of the principles of democracy, pluralism and of market economy, the ethnic-territorial divisions and unifications during and after the Revolution, and the change of national identity. A few of the very best students also made highly relevant comments on the changes in the image of Ukraine as a consequence of the revolution, the electoral democracy and the significance and the meaning of the Orange Revolution for people of Ukrainian background outside Ukraine (including comments on personal experiences of the event).

The sources selected for the Detailed Study enabled students to develop a good understanding of historical, political and cultural issues that the Orange Revolution brought to light. The sources included newspaper articles, documentaries, music, short films, electronic texts and interviews with the participants of the demonstrations.

In general, almost all students presented a wide range of information from a number of sources and were able to successfully and confidently defend their personal opinions and original ideas. In a small number of discussions, the quality of the content presented was of a mediocre standard only as the students had not been very thorough in their preparation. In these very few instances, students depended on texts they had studied and on learned interpretations. As a result, these lacked spontaneity in carrying the discussion forward if asked more wide-ranging questions.

A small number of students used support materials in 2006, and those who did so used them appropriately.