



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The majority of students performed well in both sections of the 2008 Ukrainian oral examination, but only a few students reached an excellent standard.

This year the quality of responses to the Conversation section was of a slightly higher standard than in the Discussion section. Some students showed a higher level of preparation for the Conversation than for the Discussion. Overall the majority of students enthusiastically engaged in real dialogue with assessors and were able to present their ideas and opinions well in both sections.

There were no instances where students did not understand assessors' questions or comments. All students demonstrated a very good knowledge of Ukrainian customs, including greetings, forms of address and civilities.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Communication

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

On the whole, the majority of performances did contain some accentual and phonetic deviations from standard literary Ukrainian 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, the unity, fluency, and coherence of presentation in both parts of the examination were generally of high quality. The depth and range of information in the majority of performances was very good. In almost all performances students gave some original input and introduced complex and original ideas and views, which were highly relevant to the context. In the best performances the emphasis was placed on the originality of views and perceptions, and on the expression and substantiation of those views, while avoiding irrelevant generalisations. Only a few students lacked initiative and tended to follow a rehearsed script. It appeared that they were constrained by limited knowledge of some aspects of the topic.

Language

Accuracy in vocabulary and grammar was generally good. A few students consistently used a wide range of highly appropriate vocabulary and very complex grammatical constructions and forms. These students demonstrated a very 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 systematically made the same mistake throughout the examination: they repeated an error in case endings or tense, and used prepositions in conjunction with nouns where these were not required, since the meaning was conveyed by the case of nouns.

Section 1 – Conversation

In this section the majority of students demonstrated very effective communication skills. 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 appropriately and demonstrated highly effective repair strategies. A small number of students had some difficulty maintaining the exchange and carrying the conversation forward; they relied to some degree on anglicisms and rote-learned language.

Section 2 – Discussion

The topic used for the Discussion in 2008 was 'Ukraine's Orange Revolution'. Students demonstrated an excellent ability to discuss a variety of aspects of Ukraine's Orange Revolution in depth. These included the political and socio-economic reasons for the demonstration at Independence Square in Ukraine and various developments since the

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Revolution such as the implementation of the principles of democracy, changes in the market economy, the ethnic-territorial divisions and unifications during and after the Revolution, and the change of national identity. In general, the majority of students presented a wide range of information from a number of sources, and the ability to successfully and confidently defend their opinions and ideas. In a small number of discussions the quality of the content presented was only of mediocre standard. In some instances students had depended on texts they had studied and on learned versions of interpretation. This made it difficult for them to carry the discussion forward if they were asked questions outside these interpretations.

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 the interviews with the participants of the demonstrations.

Teachers and students should refer to the *VCE Ukrainian Study Design* for more information on the oral examination.