



2012 Languages: Auslan GA 3: Interactive sign examination

Interactive Sign Examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The interactive sign examination assesses students' ability to communicate in Auslan. When preparing for this examination, students must familiarise themselves with the specific requirements of this task, as specified in the *VCE Auslan Study Design*, including the grammar and language requirements that are appropriate for students at this level.

Students' performance in the interactive sign examination varied. Thorough preparation was the key to a successful outcome.

Students had a better understanding of the difference between informal and formal language than students in previous years.

At this level, students need to pay particular attention to their hand signals, fingerspelling and content in order to give a more authentic performance. These aspects were handled much better this year than in previous years.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Section 1 – Conversation and Discussion

Students are required to converse about their personal world, including family, schooling, future aspirations, hobbies, interests and work. Students are expected to discuss these topics freely and confidently using a variety of grammatical structures and appropriate vocabulary, as outlined in the *VCE Auslan Study Design*.

The most successful students were able to maintain and advance the exchange effectively and appropriately. These students gave highly relevant responses that they were readily able to clarify and elaborate upon using examples to support their opinions. The signs that were used in their communication were accurate and appropriate to the task. These students were able to use a wide variety of tenses, grammatical structures and vocabulary effectively.

Middle-range students were able to provide a satisfactory range of information and opinions, and demonstrated some ability to clarify their ideas. They sometimes lacked the confidence and ability to advance the conversation, instead relying on rote-learned information and assessors' prompts and questions. These students displayed good control of simple structures and vocabulary. However, they were unable to demonstrate knowledge of more complex structures.

Students who were not adequately prepared experienced difficulty with providing suitable responses and they lacked the ability to communicate their ideas effectively. They used a limited range of grammatical structures and vocabulary, and frequently made language errors.

Section 2 – Presentation and Response

Students are given three minutes to clearly and briefly introduce the Presentation. Some students assumed that they would be allowed to present an extended monologue on their topic and were surprised when assessors interacted with them.

Student could support the Presentation (three minutes) and Response (five minutes) with objects such as photographs, diagrams and maps but notes and cue cards were not permitted.

Students who performed very well in this section had prepared thoroughly and were able to connect well with assessors. They were able to

- communicate their ideas and information well
- present an excellent range of information, opinions and ideas in a logical and clear manner, using reasons and examples to advance to the conversation

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- demonstrate an excellent range of vocabulary and grammar that was appropriate to the context and task.

Students who did not prepare well lacked the skills needed to adequately meet the criteria for this examination.

Students should take note of the following are key points. Students need to

- prepare their notes and speech
- connect with assessors
- stop relying on rote-learned information for the conversation
- be able to advance the conversation when interrupted by assessors
- know basic signs for general conversation (e.g. family members, hobbies and interests, sport)
- clarify or elaborate on opinions and ideas.

The choice of topic seems to be an issue for some students. Topics need to be researched to allow for broad discussion, but not too difficult in content and vocabulary requirements. Some students tended to present an identical topic that was not formal; for example, the weekend. Presentations were often too short, too informal and not based on real topics.

Students should

- choose topics that they are familiar with and that are formal
- avoid topics that are covered in the Conversation section
- use a wide range of information for their discussion
- have a beginning, middle and an end to their Presentation
- ensure their Presentation is three minutes in length
- answer questions
- maintain eye contact with assessors
- use classifiers where appropriate
- use space appropriately.

Students who devoted adequate time to their topic were able to support and elaborate on their ideas, information and opinions effectively while referring to the topic studied.

Students should choose topics that are relevant to them and their life experience. Students who did so performed well.

In 2012, there was an even bigger improvement in the use of

- classifiers
- role shift
- colloquialisms
- space.

There was, however, confusion over when to use formal or informal Auslan as part of the Presentation.

Some topics that worked well were

- sign language – history
- family weddings
- changing fashion
- Auslan
- competition – gymnastics
- work
- different cuisines
- family holidays
- sport
- travel

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- the future.

Some students displayed a limited range of structures and vocabulary. Their answers were too short and they were unable to expand on information beyond a simple, short signing sequence, despite questions being simple and open.

Students need to be reminded

- to sign their student number in Auslan
- not sign their name/surname or the name of their school
- not to ask assessors' questions about their family
- not to overuse rhetorical questions
- to familiarise themselves with all components of the examination
- to use the correct form of address when signing with assessors at the start of the examination and when leaving at the end of the examination.

Sign formation was often wrong in one or more aspects; for example, hand shape and orientation.

Suggestions for teachers include

- instruct students on how to use 'enumeration' correctly when listing family members (phonologically incorrect use of movement)
- teach students common fingerspelled words, such as 'so', 'do', 'but', 'too' and 'it', as these are part of the Auslan vocabulary
- instruct students on the correct fingerspelling orientation
- instruct students to interact only with assessors who are performing the examination.

Students had difficulties with

- reading and understanding assessors' questions
- read-back in fingerspelling
- connecting with assessors
- clarifying or elaborating on opinions and ideas, and some needed frequent support from assessors
- a range of structure and vocabulary
- the use of classifiers in general
- the overuse of nodding
- the use of space when signing a variety of numbers.

List of common signs

This is only a sample of words that students should know; there are many others.

Topics	Signs
general word	with/movement, far movement, have – handshake/movement, hour – wrong way, looking – wrong way
conversation	how are you, all good, excuse me, born, bad luck/unfortunately, none of your business, cat, pet, dog, weather, transport, come here, food, drink, animals
feelings	tired, hungry, sick, emotions, happy, sad
listening skills	oh, yeh yeh, really, never, enough, funny
linking sign words	so, and, but, or, sudden, also, if, just in case, know what, that, then, anyway/doesn't matter, next, finish, moving on
verbs	tell, ask, travel, looking, teach, show, go want/don't want, need, like/don't like, give, take, arrive, study, work, play, ring, SMS/contact, get paid, wages, cook, talk, see, provide, presentation, tell, sign, fingerspell, hear/listen, email, MSN, webcam, Skype, think, need, write

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Topics	Signs
family	family, home, live (all three ways should be known), age, animals, pets, family members (mum/dad/sister/brother etc.), old, grand..., half..., step..., in-laws, adopted, separated, divorced, married, single, de facto, relationship, alone, dead, grow up, graduate
hobbies	hobby, game, different, sport, interest, keen on, mad about, like, hate, alright, excellent, expensive, experience, sell, profit, favourite, popular, all different, see/have a look, have not seen, skills, really, often, frequency, regularly, easy/hard (difficult)
sport	different, explain more, football, skateboard, barrack, team, against, one-eyed, draw, favourite, none, other, like/hate, biased, referee/ref, umpire, grand final, AFL, soccer, basketball, netball, swimming, cycling, cricket, Olympics, deaf Olympics, against, match, competition, tournament, beat, win, lose, score, passes
news	news, communication, conversation, happen, terrible/horrible, if/pretend, use, holiday, occur/happen, TV, newspaper, radio, social media, Twitter, internet, Facebook, iPad, iPhone
future aspiration	gap year, married, plan, future, break/rest, do what, apprentice, work, hairdresser, part-time job, interview, learn course, university, move out, aim/achieve, study, travel, save money, buy a car, look for a job, move house, future, past, career, appointment, TAFE, overseas, marry, pregnant, children, babies, rent
holiday/travel	fly, drive, cycle, travel by boat, train, tram, accommodation, hotel/motel, passport, camp, hike, backpack, travel around/touring/explore/look around, developing countries, culture, food/clothes, religion, continents, countries, fun, interesting, scary, directions, shop/buy, sick, allergy, volunteer
short phase – formal	depends on topic, history, pick topic, and why, what have, learn where, start how, quality good, information, move where, www, have, how old, topic, look after how, describe topic (e.g. surfboard), all the same or different, expensive, materials/equipment, what does that mean, cost/where, try topic yourself, topic/style (e.g. quality, light or heavy surfboard)
short phase – informal	hello/hi, how are you, nervous, ok/alright, lift/how here, travel bus, arrive how, easy/hard find, holiday now/good, parent work what, family big, Auslan learn why, find hard/easy, future plan what, weather cold/warm outside, weekend do what, this weekend what, exam last finish what, no worries, how did you arrive, exams soon, that topic/why choose, football/team new, Auslan involve why, Auslan/find hard, school finish/do
tense/timeline	recently, this week, long time, not sure for long time, last week/next week/last year/next year, finish, ready, now, soon, later, after
others	problem, best, brilliant/excellent
non-manual features	question markers, nod/shake, stress, pluralisation, active listening – interjection or utter..., depicting signs – SASSes, indicating signs – spatial verb, not only facial expression but full body too, rhetorical questions (i.e. start to go home, why, I'm not well), conditions sentence (e.g. rain tomorrow, cancel picnic)
colloquial signs	that's right, oh I see, finally, pub, good riddance, ash, dropped jaw, wrong mind, deeply embarrassed, feel small, very common – V hand shape, wind over my mind, exaggerated, not for a while, close shave, keep on going/still, poor little thing, awesome/outstanding, pa, yeh yeh, finish school, penny drop, fast work, go fast – like smoke, laugh – mouth floor – used too much, add too/exaggerate, hopeless/idiot, phew, still/keep going/ continue, poor-poor, outstanding
compounds	embarrassed, trial, good idea, look after, lucky, bad/luck, blonde, parents, see finish, not seen, touch finish



Sign Comprehension and Sign Production Examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall, students performed well in the Auslan Sign Comprehension and Sign Production Examination in 2012.

Students had no problems using the DVD and computer software.

Students must practise during the year to do only one recording of their work and ensure that the whole response has been recorded.

Some students lacked the ability to provide succinct responses to the questions, instead giving responses that went beyond what was required. This weakened their responses and demonstrated a lack of comprehension skills. Student **must** use the information given in the resources to respond to the task.

Students need to

- read the task carefully
- answer the task
- use the resources to answer the task
- understand key terms, such as 'explain', 'compare' and 'understand'
- look into the camera and maintain eye contact with assessors
- avoid repeating signs
- stop signing their name – they must sign only their student number
- structure their response with a beginning, a middle and an end
- avoid making cultural mistakes and using slang
- avoid using English grammar
- avoid linguistic errors.

In preparation for this examination, students must do the following.

- Use the 10 minutes of reading/viewing time. During the reading time, they can access their dictionary if necessary.
- Practise focusing the camera on themselves. Students should be able to see themselves from head to waist and from one shoulder to the other. They must sit up straight while recording and should not bend forward.
- Always look into the camera when recording. When the response is for only one person, students need to look into the camera. When responding to a group of people, students should move their head from side to side, showing that they are responding to a group rather than an individual.
- Ensure that they have recorded a response. They must check all files to see that they have recorded themselves.
- Watch the position of their hands – palms should be facing inward, towards the student's chest. Can students' see themselves signing or the signs that they are signing?
- Avoid wearing colourful (florescent colours) tops – grey, white, light grey or light blue are acceptable. Hair should be tied back. Assessors should be able to see students' facial expressions.
- Use their time wisely during the examination. The texts are repeated for students three times.
- Clearly indicate their student number and draft number at the start of each draft.
- Sign their student number at the start of each draft.
- Answer the task, but do not repeat the resource that is presented. When reading the tasks, students should carefully refer to the both the DVD and the hard copy of the examination paper to ensure that they have accurately understood the task.
- Check the signs in the resources on the video if they are unsure of the signs.
- Start their answer in an appropriate way. Remember, Auslan is a visual language; if you get stuck or you are not sure how to start, just imagine the scene visually.

Students are still

- producing too many drafts – the first draft is usually the best



- overusing signs that are culturally inappropriate
- using few current Auslan fillers
- voicing or mouthing English words
- not structuring their response well
- using incorrect role-shifting and inappropriate body shifts
- using too many classifiers in some formal presentations – these were more appropriate for informal signing
- not using eye gaze and anaphoric indexing correctly
- not sequencing their ideas or information and continuing to repeat the same ideas in their responses.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section I: Watching and responding to informal signed texts

(the use of the term informal signed texts here refers to spontaneous communication, namely that which is not normally recorded)

Description of the task

Section I is designed primarily to assess the student's knowledge and skill in analysing and responding to information from informal signed texts. It is related to one or more of the prescribed themes.

The student observes an informal signed discourse. This signed discourse is a recorded performance. The duration of this signed discourse is 5–7 minutes. The student has an opportunity to observe this performance three times. There is a 2-minute pause between each performance, during which the student is able to take notes.

The student is expected to respond in Auslan to a set task, for example, responding to a message or an announcement. The length of the response is to be 2 to 3 minutes.

The tasks are available to the student on DVD in Auslan and written in English in the task book.

Again, students

- took on the wrong role-play – they continued being themselves
- ignored the question
- did not use the information on the DVD
- produced a statement and failed to engage the audience
- did not produce an appropriate informal introduction as required, but began with a formal introduction
- failed to have the correct structure
 - greeting/opening
 - body of discussion
 - closure of discussion/parting/arranging another meeting, etc.

Task 1 – Informal

Informal Task

You meet a friend who has attended a talk on being a volunteer at the next Deaf Games, which is being held in the city, 100 km from where you live.

Your friend explains the roles of a volunteer. Excited, you go home and try to convince your parents to allow you to volunteer with your friend at the Deaf Games.

Your response should be between 2 and 3 minutes in length.

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Volunteers are needed for many different jobs; for example,

- driving 12-seater buses
- packing information packs
- catering support
- data entry
- dealing with the media
- giving information to visitors and competitors about events, times and venues

Advantages to the volunteer could include

- practising Auslan
- giving something back to the deaf community and learning more about it to help your studies
- attending a great, exciting event
- getting active and learning something new
- helping people and building real experience
- learning to be competent and confident in a number of situations
- meeting new people
- learning to work as part of a team
- training is given
- skills development
- more opportunities in Auslan – improving fingerspelling/signing skills, on-the-spot opportunities to sign with different people

Personality

- enthusiastic
- helpful

Commitment

- work in 5-hour blocks (e.g. morning, afternoon or evening)
- work supervised by a coordinator
- can stay with families to travel daily with your friend

Deaf Games: 100 km away

Benefits

- gain experience
- boost confidence
- free training
- coordinator to look after volunteers
- free lunches

Criteria

Students must have a clear understanding of the criteria on which they are being assessed for this task.

When judging performance in this section, assessors will take into account the extent to which the student demonstrates the following.

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Informal task

Criteria	Explanation
1. The capacity to understand and respond to general and/or specific aspects of informal signed texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying and analysing information effectively for the context, audience and purpose of the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes all main points on informal DVD (where, who, what involved) and uses them to present ideas • registered to correct person (audience) • answers questions/tasks • uses appropriate informal language (register and context)
2. The capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comparing/contrasting/summarising/evaluating • observing cultural conventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contrasts two or more different views • uses the information fully to present ideas (not listing or straight description of video) to answer question • correctly uses cultural conventions (e.g. introduction, opening, closing) • corrects mistakes • behaviours • aromatics
3. Relevance, breadth and depth of treatment of information, opinions, comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality of content in relation to task(s) set • observation of cultural/discourse conventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate discourse structure (e.g. conversation, lecture, argument) • deep not surface treatment of ideas • really interesting ideas included that are relevant and linked •
4. Accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammatical structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accuracy of vocabulary and grammatical structures • variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • correct and appropriate use of vocabulary and linguistic structure • use of metaphor/idiom • language flows, easy to follow (clear) • wide range of vocabulary and structure • visual appropriateness • use of fingerspelling grammar and emotions, facial expression • no use of English structure instead of Auslan
5. The capacity to extract, classify and reorganise information from a range of informal signed texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective structuring and sequencing of ideas for the context, audience and purpose of task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coherent/interesting, accurate deaf signing – work as a whole • understood/linked



Section II: Watching and responding to formal signed texts

(the use of the term formal here refers to a communicative act prepared prior to presentation)

Description

Section II is designed primarily to assess the student's knowledge and skill in analysing and responding to information from formally signed texts.

The student watches a prerecorded formal signed discourse. The duration of the signed discourse is 3 to 5 minutes. The student is required to produce a response in Auslan to the signed text. The task specifies a purpose, context and audience. The length of the response is approximately 3–4 minutes.

Responses had a similar pattern to the informal responses, although students generally understood the nature of formal discourse and set up the introduction, main body and closure well.

Students need to practise extracting, classifying or reorganising in order to complete the task effectively. Students also need to read the questions correctly. Many took on the wrong role-play.

Capacity to convey information

- Students often produced a statement and failed to engage in a discussion.
- Students had difficulty observing the appropriate cultural way to structure the response.
- Students need to structure the task correctly.

Accuracy and use of vocabulary and grammar

- Hand shapes were not clearly defined and incorrect movements were made. Some vocabulary was signed incorrectly.
- Some students included a few signed English signs.
- Body shifts were too exaggerated and inappropriate.
- Too many classifiers were used in some formal presentations – these are more appropriate for informal signing.
- Students did not use 'referents' in space or anaphoric pronouns.
- Students may have missed the simultaneous use of eye gaze and anaphoric indexing.

Task 2 – Formal

There are many experienced professional companies to help the school, parents and students

- select an appropriate notebook
- train teachers and students
- give advice to parents
- provide insurance against the loss of and damage to students' notebook.

Presentation at school

- convince – laptop, tablet or both
- access for tablet (i.e. wireless laptop, stylus pen)

A tablet or notebook was the best choice for students.

- natural form of recording information including drawing and writing
- good for note taking – helps recording of information
- tablet PCs with touch technology are more personal, allowing handwritten notes, therefore students are more involved
- allows greater interaction between student and teacher and other students, encouraging learning
- research shows that students using tablets are more active in the learning process
- helps teachers to understand how students learn
- increases the range of educational experiences offered to students

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Notebook

- clear typing
- glare
- more software
- memory stronger unlimited

Criteria

Students must have a clear understanding of the criteria by which they are being assessed for this task.

When judging performance in this section, assessors take into account the extent to which the student demonstrates the following.

Formal task

Criteria	Explanation
1. The capacity to understand and respond to general and/or specific aspects of formal signed texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying and analysing information effectively for the context, audience and purpose of task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes all main points on formal DVD (where, who, what involved) and uses them to present ideas • restructured to correct person (audience) • answers questions/tasks • uses appropriate formal language (register and context)
2. The capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comparing/contrasting/summarising/evaluating • observation of cultural/discourse conventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contrasts two or more different views • uses the information fully to present ideas (not listing or straight description of video) to answer question • correct use of cultural conventions (e.g. introduction, opening, closing) • correction of mistakes • behaviours • pragmatics
3. Relevance, breadth and depth of treatment of information, opinions, comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality of content in relation to task(s) set • observation of cultural/discourse conventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate discourse structure (e.g. conversation, lecture, argument) • deep not surface treatment of ideas • really interesting ideas included – relevant and linked •
4. Accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammatical structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accuracy of vocabulary and grammatical structures • variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • correct and appropriate use of vocabulary, linguistic structure • use of metaphor/idiom • language flows, easy to follow (clear) • wide range of vocabulary and structure • visual appropriateness • use of fingerspelling grammar and emotions, facial expression • no use of English structure instead of Auslan

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Criteria	Explanation
5. The capacity to extract, classify and reorganise information from a range of formal signed texts <ul style="list-style-type: none">• effective structuring and sequencing of ideas for the context, audience and purpose of task	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• coherent/interesting, accurate deaf signing – work as a whole• understood/linked