



Interactive Sign Examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students performed well in the 2010 interactive sign examination. Students who were well prepared were able to communicate with confidence and advance the exchange effectively with the assessors. Students finger-spelled well, showed a good understanding of the difference between formal and informal language, and observed the rules of conversational discourse. It was evident that the procedural DVD was used in preparing students for the exam. Conversely, students who were less well prepared found the task more difficult and there was some confusion with noun/verb pairs, for example: car/drive, and with choosing correct signing for some English words.

It is important that students are familiar with both the specific requirements of this task and the language associated with it. Students should familiarise themselves with the *VCE Auslan Study Design* for the grammar and language requirements appropriate for this level. Students should be able to use the set grammar as stipulated in the study design in order to effectively meet the criteria for this assessment.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Section 1 – Conversation and Discussion

Students were required to converse about their personal world (including family, schooling, future aspirations, hobbies, interests and work).

Students who performed very well in this section were thoroughly prepared and able to link well with the assessors. They needed minimal support to communicate their ideas and information related to their personal world. They presented an excellent range of information, opinions and ideas in a logical and clear manner, using reasons and examples to advance the conversation. These students were also able to demonstrate an excellent range of vocabulary and grammar that was appropriate to the context and task.

However, some students had not prepared well and therefore lacked the skills needed to adequately meet the criteria for this examination. These students were not able to link with the assessor and relied on rote-learned information for their conversation. They could not advance the conversation when interrupted by the assessor. Some students displayed a limited range of structures and vocabulary, did not know basic signs for general conversation (for example, family, hobbies and sport) and were unable to respond correctly to simple questions. These students experienced difficulty clarifying or elaborating on opinions and ideas and needed frequent support from the assessor. Some students were unable to expand on information beyond a simple short signing sequence.

Students need to be reminded that they:

- must sign their student number in Auslan as soon as they are seated
- must not sign their name or the name of their school
- must not reveal their name when describing their family or the names of family members, the school they attend or their teachers' names
- should not ask the assessor questions about his or her family
- should not overuse rhetorical questions
- need to familiarise themselves with all components of the examination and the examination criteria used for assessment
- must use the correct form of address when signing with the assessor at the start and end of the exam
- ensure sign formation is correct; for example, hand shape and orientation.

Teachers need to teach students:

- how to use 'enumeration' correctly when listing family members (there was some phonologically incorrect use of movement)
- common finger-spelled words such as so, do, but, too, it, etc., as this is part of the Auslan vocabulary
- to interact only with the assessor performing the exam, rather than the second assessor
- the correct finger-spelling orientation.



Students who did not perform well:

- had problems in reading/understanding the assessor's question 'What-do?'. They also had problems understanding the finger-spelled sign for 'do' and asked several times for it to be repeated
- had difficulty signing 'age' numbers – most were not clearly defined
- had difficulty understanding the assessors' finger-spelling orientation
- had problems with read-back in finger spelling
- had problems linking with the assessor
- lacked preparation
- had difficulty clarifying or elaborating on opinions and ideas and needed frequent support from the assessor
- had a limited range of structure and vocabulary
- displayed a limited use of classifiers
- overused nodding
- didn't use space appropriately when signing a variety of numbers.

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 of their topic and were surprised when the assessor interacted with them.

Students may support their Presentation (three minutes) and Response (five minutes) with objects such as photographs, diagrams and maps. Notes and cue cards are not permitted. Some students brought objects/materials to support their presentation but forgot to use them during the examination. Students need to be able to cross-link their resources in order to give some depth to the discussion.

The choice of topic for some students seemed to be an issue. Topics need to be researched to allow for broad discussion, but should not be too difficult in content and vocabulary requirements. Presentations were often too short, informal and were not real topics. Students who devoted adequate time to their topic were able to effectively support and elaborate on their ideas, information and opinions while referring to the topic studied.

Students who performed well chose topics that were relevant to them and their life experiences. Topics that worked well included:

- The Great Wall of China
- Family Weddings
- Changing Fashion
- Japanese Language
- Geisha girls
- Competition – gymnastics
- Work.

Students should:

- choose topics they are familiar with
- choose formal topics
- avoid topics 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
- be prepared to answer questions on their topic
- maintain eye contact with the assessor
- use classifiers where appropriate
- use space appropriately.

The 2010 examination saw a big improvement in the use of classifiers, role shift, colloquialisms and the use of space. Students showed a good awareness of when to use formal or informal Auslan.

When presenting the title of a book or movie, students should be aware that it is not necessary to sign 'next' between each word, for example, the (next) red (next) house.



Sign Comprehension and Sign Production Examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall, students performed well in the 2010 Auslan Sign Comprehension and Sign Production Examination.

Students must do only one recording of their work and must ensure that the whole response has been recorded. They must make effective use of the 10 minutes of reading time in order to be fully aware of the requirements of each task. During reading time they can access their dictionary if necessary. When reading the task questions, students should carefully refer to both the DVD and the hard copy of the exam paper and ensure that they have accurately understood the questions. Students had no problems using the DVD and the computer software.

Some students lacked the ability to provide succinct responses to the questions, instead giving responses that went beyond the required answers. This weakened their responses and demonstrated a lack of comprehension skills.

Students need to practise effective dictionary skills during the year so that the dictionary becomes a valuable tool in the examination.

Students must:

- attend the practice session for this exam. It is extremely important to attend as it allows students the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the equipment
- practise focusing the camera on themselves. They should be able to see themselves from head to waist and from one shoulder to the other. Students must sit up straight while recording and should not bend forward
- always look into the camera when recording. Where the response is for only one person, they need to look into the camera. Where they are responding to a group of people they 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 both DVDs to see that they have recorded themselves
- watch the position of their hands. The palms should be facing inward towards the student's chest. They should check whether they can see themselves signing and the signs they are signing
- avoid wearing colourful (fluorescent colours) tops; grey, white, light grey or light blue is acceptable. Hair should be tied back. The assessor should be able to see the student's facial expressions
- use their exam time wisely
- clearly indicate their student number and the draft number at the start of each draft
- avoid too many drafts
- answer the question but not repeat the resource presented
- check signs in the resources on the DVD if they are unsure of signs
- start their answer in an appropriate way, remembering that Auslan is a visual language. If students are stuck or are unsure how to start, they should imagine the scene visually.

Students are still:

- producing too many drafts. Usually the first draft is the best. Students who do more than two drafts often seem to leave out information each time a draft is completed. Perhaps they should focus more on preparing the first draft, making sure they have all the right points before recording themselves. Teachers must provide some exam preparation for students during the year using past exams
- confused about the difference between formal and informal signing
- signing very short responses. Students should aim to produce a response in the time allocated in the study design
- overusing signs which are culturally inappropriate
- using few current Auslan fillers
- voicing or mouthing English words during their responses rather than culturally deaf mouthing
- not structuring their responses well
- having problems with clearly defined hand shapes and incorrect movements; some vocabulary was signed incorrectly (for example, dream, 'your' for 'you're', man, typing/typist, want, etc.)
- using signed English signs, for example, (using the 'three' hand shape for mother)
- using incorrect role-shifting and inappropriate body shifts
- using too many classifiers in the formal presentation which were more appropriate for informal signing
- not using eye contact and anaphoric indexing correctly



- not sequencing their ideas or information and repeating the same ideas in their responses.

Students need to:

- read the question carefully
- ensure that they answer the question asked
- use the resources to answer the question
- understand key terms like 'explain', 'compare' and 'understand'
- look into the camera and maintain eye contact
- avoid repeating signs too often
- sign only their student number
- structure their response, ensuring there is a beginning, middle and an end
- avoid making cultural mistakes
- avoid using English grammar
- avoid linguistic errors.

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 students' knowledge and skill in analysing and responding to information from informal signed texts. It is related to one or more of the prescribed themes.

Students observed an informal signed discourse, which was a DVD-recorded performance. The signed discourse was between five and seven minutes in length and was repeated three times. There was a two-minute pause between each performance, during which students could take notes.

Students were expected to respond in Auslan to a set task; for example, responding to a message or an announcement. The length of the response should have been two to three minutes. The task was available on a DVD in Auslan and written in English.

Some students:

- took on the incorrect role in the role play, instead just acting as 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
- did not give an appropriate greeting/opening, body of discussion, closure of discussion/parting/arranging another meeting, etc.



Task 1 – Informal

The following is possible information that could have been included in answers for Task 1. The key ideas included costs, technology, payments, value for money, safety and warranty.

New car	Second-hand car
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • smells great • technology includes GPS, Bluetooth, mp3 music and movies • costs \$20,000 • has airbags and electronic stability control (ESC) • comes with a five-year warranty • the loan needs to be paid off monthly for 3–4 years • insurance is expensive • test drive for one hour • the odometer is at 0 km • you don't know the history of old cars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hot red colour • there is the possibility of a discount • has had one lady owner – a good service history and is well looked-after • six months warranty • insurance is cheap • can enjoy your social life as there is no monthly payment • old cars lose nothing in value compared to new cars which depreciate quickly • can be serviced anywhere cheaply • there is no possibility of a manufacturer's recall – new cars may be recalled due to defects • can drive away now • all-day test drive

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 students' knowledge and skill in analysing and responding to information from formally signed texts.

Students watched a pre-recorded formal signed discourse that was between three and five minutes in length. Students were required to produce a response in Auslan to the signed text. The task specified a purpose, context and audience. The length of the response should have been approximately three to four minutes.

Some students used an informal pattern response rather than formal, although students generally understood the nature of formal discourse and more students set up the introduction, main body and closure.

Some students failed to extract, classify or reorganise the information, with only a minority of students completing the task effectively.

Students are reminded to read the question carefully. Many students ignored the question by failing to analyse the information on the DVD and identify the task appropriately. This also resulted in confusion over the context and audience. Many students took on the wrong role in the 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 also showed a lack of ability to structure the task correctly. They should have commenced with a formal greeting or opening, followed by the main body of discussion and concluding with a closure to the discussion and an appropriate informal parting.

It was disappointing to note that many students were unable to accurately extract and then use the ideas presented on the DVD. The less successful students simply reiterated small sections of the DVD.



Accuracy and use of vocabulary and grammar

The standard of student responses fell in areas such as clearly defined hand shapes, incorrect movements, and correct signing of some vocabulary. Some students included a few signed English signs. When role shifting, students' body shifts were inappropriate and exaggerated.

Too many classifiers were used in some formal presentations; these are more appropriate for informal signing. Some students did not use 'referents' in space or anaphoric pronouns, especially in the informal task. Students may have missed the simultaneous use of eye contact and anaphoric indexing.

Task 2 – Formal

The following are possible answers for Task 2.

- Recent expansion of access to the Internet by young people, including Twitter and You Tube.
- Accessing the Internet is easy – iPhone, Internet café, laptop, etc.
- Increased use has many positives but there are also dangers.
- Users need to be aware that people they meet over the Internet are strangers.
- Never give your password, name, age, address, school name or photo; you would never do that to someone you met on the street.
- Your behaviour is important too: be polite, don't bully, be mindful of the language you use.
- If you are worried about something you see on the Internet, tell an adult you trust.
- Parents should install Internet protection and place the computer somewhere in the house where they can see the sites their children visit.