

LOTE: Serbian GA 2: Oral examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall, students performed very well and showed proficiency and an excellent command of the Serbian language. Most demonstrated a clear understanding of the assessment requirements though some needed more guidance and support, showing that they had not spent enough time on preparation for the examination. Some students chose the same topic. Students should rehearse in class before the examination and understand fully their choice of topic. More successful students adopted good communication strategies such as turn taking, body language, eye contact and intonation. Some of them used initiative by asking questions and inviting comments. The most common problems occurred with case endings and the sporadic interference of English.

General conversation

Students were generally able to deal confidently and spontaneously with the content of this conversation and to develop one of the five designated areas: family, school, leisure, work and future aspirations. They communicated competently and effectively in a culturally appropriate manner showing a high level of linguistic ability to expand on the topic.

Some students, struggled to develop and influence the conversation. They showed weaknesses in their spoken language through a narrow range of vocabulary, use of Anglicisms and incorrect case endings, especially when discussing their school, work and future aspirations.

Report and discussion

A high percentage of students were very well prepared, supporting their reports with well-chosen illustrations, photographs and books (even though students are not judged on that). Although most students were able to select and introduce the topic and to develop the content of the report, some had difficulty in such areas as raising issues, expressing ideas and opinions, or in directing the discussion. Few followed the normal form of introduction, development of two or three points and conclusion. Among the most successful topics were New Zealand, Toulouse-Lautrec, Trip to China and Marie Antoinette. Chosen topics did not need to be complex or contentious but had to reflect student interest and individual preparation.

Situational role-play

Most students adopted language, register and negotiating techniques appropriate for the role and were able to perform this task without much difficulty. The most successful ones took every opportunity to participate in moving the action forward and they proved to be highly capable in developing and influencing the content of the conversation. Some students failed to understand the importance of convincing and persuading and they were confused about their role in terms of addressing assessors formally.

All parts of the task

Most students were competent in all aspects of communication, showing high levels of proficiency in Serbian and using culturally appropriate behavior. The most capable ones used accurate pronunciation and non-verbal communication and acted spontaneously in the role-play.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Paper 1 – Processing spoken information

Most students did not use the full range of available information or used some information from outside the given sources.

Most students used an appropriate discourse form. However, some wrote about the problem in question, only occasionally addressing the person asking for advice. Many students had problems with appropriate use of paragraphs.

Students were generally able to express ideas in their own words. English words were not used at all, although some students invented words. Many students had problems with punctuation, which may be due to transferring English rules to Serbian, and others used too many colloquialisms.

Students demonstrated a range of language abilities with no one displaying very limited skills. All were able to respond to the tasks to some degree. The following suggestions are made:

- students need to read tasks carefully and pay attention to detail
- for Part A, students should avoid simply providing as many details as possible
- tasks are given for both genders but students can choose a gender for their response as using both genders throughout the text makes the writing less readable and is very difficult to maintain in Serbian.

Paper 2 – Reorganising information

Most students employed a medium-range vocabulary, often replacing unknown words with those from other languages, such as English, or with constructed words. Some had difficulty with the newspaper article, using informal language and omitting headings and introductions. High-scoring students used a wider range of vocabulary and sentence structures, expressing ideas in their own words rather than using those in the text.

Paper 3 – Discussing a theme

(completed by interstate students)

Students in general, demonstrated a very good understanding and appreciation of the themes with some references to the texts. Their depth and maturity in dealing with the issues raised in the themes ‘The Battle of Kosovo’ and ‘Vule Stefanovic Karadzic’ and knowledge of these themes was very good, although there was less depth and maturity in dealing with the theme ‘School days’.

Students demonstrated a good knowledge of the facts, but some weaknesses in identifying relevant information and conveying main points was evident and this aspect can be improved.

Students applied their knowledge of language structure well. The structure and length of the essays, speeches, articles, reviews were very good. Ideas and information were well organised and sequenced appropriately for the purpose of the task.

Most students accurately used a large variety of language structures, vocabulary, and displayed a good knowledge of syntax and grammar. Very few used inaccurate structures and poor vocabulary.

Several students produced work of a very high standard. A small number of students were awarded ‘no evidence’ marks because they mistakenly wrote the task in Serbian rather than in English and several did not attempt the task on Paper 3.

In general, most students used Serbian accurately and creatively and demonstrated a thorough understanding of the tasks.