



2012

Languages: Serbian GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students were familiar with the expectations of the oral examination. They were able to engage with assessors in the Conversation and demonstrated a good level of preparation for the Discussion. However, a small number of students was not fully aware of the expectations for the Discussion. It is important that all teachers and students are familiar with the specific requirements of the oral examination, as outlined in the *VCE Serbian Study Design*.

Areas of strength included

- clear pronunciation
- appropriate choice of relevant details when answering questions
- creativity in supporting their reasoning
- capacity to research the topic and provide additional breadth of information
- extensive use of vocabulary and expressions
- capacity to communicate on a variety of topics
- in-depth understanding of the topics studied
- effective repair strategies.

Areas of weakness included

- limited range of ideas and opinions
- inability to justify opinions
- lack of in-depth research on the selected topics
- tendency to rely on rote-learned language, anglicisms and answers
- narrow range and use of structures and vocabulary
- limited range of information, often indicated by repetition
- incorrect case endings.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

The Conversation focuses on the student's personal world, which includes family, school and home lives, interests, leisure time and aspirations.

Generally, students were well prepared for the oral examination. This was particularly evident when discussing their personal experiences and aspirations. They talked confidently about themselves and their families. Some students mentioned travelling back to their parents' or their own places of birth. They also presented strong opinions about aspirations and plans for the future.

Popular topics related to pastimes included sport, internet communication with relatives, leisure activities and work. Many students were able to express their views using correct grammar and appropriate vocabulary. However, a few students used some English expressions or translated phrases literally, which often resulted in incorrect usage.

Most students responded readily to questions and were able to maintain a conversation. They used good repair strategies and were able to correct themselves quickly. However, to improve, students need to be proactive and expand on their responses rather than wait for assessors' questions.

The most common errors in the Conversation section included cases and tense endings. Pronunciation was generally good, although some students' pronunciation showed the influence of English. This area should be given due consideration when preparing for the examination.

Students are advised that this is not a presentation, but an interactive conversation. A simple phrase showing agreement or reassurance is often all that is needed; for example, *A da* (Oh, yes), *Da naravno* (Yes, of course), *Da, međutim ja mislim da ...* (Yes, however I think ...). Such similar language, conversation fillers and connectives need to be practised



throughout the study. This kind of language enhances the flow of the conversation and contributes greatly to students' performance.

Section 2 – Discussion

The focus of the Discussion is on exploring aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Serbian is spoken. Throughout the discussion, students are expected to refer to the texts that they studied for their Detailed Study.

Many students engaged in a meaningful discussion with the assessors for the required amount of time (seven minutes) and it was pleasing that some students had prepared enough information for a much longer discussion. Some students put a great deal of effort into finding relevant data and creating a discussion that was of very high quality in all areas, including vocabulary, precision of data, register and ability to engage with the assessors. These students carried the discussion forward with original input and provided highly relevant, in-depth responses.

However, when discussing historical events, some weaker students simply recited a sequence of events and were not able to offer their own opinions. They relied on rote-learned material and it was sometimes challenging for students to carry forward the discussion as prompting by assessors was often needed.

It is recommended that students focus on the main ideas that they wish to discuss; they need to provide opinions and well-thought-out arguments. Topics based on factual information (biographies, historical events, etc.) are not always suitable for discussion as they do not always lend themselves, for instance, to generating opinions or elaborating on information.

Most students used a very good range of vocabulary, and sentence structures and expressions with both simple and complex grammatical structures. Students should pay further attention to the following categories as grammatical mistakes were made in these areas.

- agreement
- cases
- sentence structure
- word formation
- tenses

Students are encouraged to prepare concluding statements. At the end of the examination, assessors often ask if there is anything else the student would like to say. This gives students the opportunity to discuss areas that may not have been raised and to provide an appropriate conclusion/ending to the Detailed Study section of the examination. By doing so, this provides students with further opportunity to show confidence as well as their ability to use the language at a high standard.