



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral examination has two sections: the Conversation (approximately seven minutes) and the Discussion (approximately eight minutes). The examination is designed to assess the students' ability to communicate by using spoken Serbian. The overall standard in both sections was pleasing. A range of speaking abilities was noted throughout the examination.

Most students were familiar with the requirements of the oral examination. They were able to engage with the assessors in the Conversation and demonstrated a good level of preparation in the Discussion. However, a small number of students were not fully aware of the requirements for Section 2 – Discussion. To maximise the students' chances of success, it is essential that all teachers and students be familiar with the specific requirements of the oral examination as outlined in the *VCE Serbian Study Design*.

Areas of strength included:

- very good preparation
- excellent vocabulary
- very good grasp of grammar
- very good pronunciation, intonation and tempo
- evidence of research using various resources for additional information
- the ability to support their ideas with well-presented visual evidence
- the capacity to communicate on a variety of subject matters.

Areas of weakness included:

- insufficient preparation
- incorrect gender forms
- incorrect case endings
- inaccurate third person present tense form
- occasional tendency to recite information rather than engage in a discussion on the student's chosen Detailed Study topic.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

The Conversation section focuses on the student's personal world; for example, school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations.

Students were assessed against the following criteria:

- capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively
- relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas
- accuracy of vocabulary and grammar
- range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar
- clarity of expression.

Generally, students performed well in this section. They were able to draw on their own experiences and a good level of preparation was evident. Most students responded readily to the questions and were able to maintain a conversation. Their pronunciation was good, although some students' pronunciation showed the influence of English.

The most successful students spoke fluently, provided relevant, extensive responses to questions and kept the conversation flowing. They were able to present an excellent range of information about themselves and elaborate on opinions or ideas using accurate language, appropriate sentence structures and sophisticated vocabulary.

Weaker students often needed to be prompted by assessors and waited to be asked questions. They found it difficult to carry the conversation forward as a result of either weak oral language skills or a lack of preparation. Some students did



not understand questions and gave incorrect responses. Students are encouraged to seek clarification when questions are not understood. Students are also asked to listen carefully before responding to assessors' questions.

The main grammatical errors included the incorrect use of tenses, prepositions and inappropriate vocabulary. Students need to be exposed further to the language and require more practice. Anglicisms were evident but not as much as in previous years. Stronger students gave in-depth explanations, and expressed their views and opinions with appropriate vocabulary. Further exposure to descriptive language would be of great value to students, enabling them to talk in greater detail about their personal world.

The less successful students experienced some problems with pronunciation. They were slow to respond to questions, frequently hesitated and often resorted to using English words. Their responses contained a limited range of information and they needed frequent support from the assessors. Students who were not well prepared tended to rely on rote-learned material and were not able to link with the assessors. These students struggled to expand on ideas and opinions, displayed a limited range of structures and vocabulary and were unable to advance the conversation.

Most students were able to talk about their family, school and future aspirations but some did not know the names of their subjects in Serbian. Students must be encouraged to give more than a monosyllabic answer. They are encouraged to go beyond simple responses and give extended answers that provide interesting information about themselves, keeping in mind that assessors might ask questions about what they have said. Students need to understand that the conversation is a spontaneous exchange of ideas and opinions and should try to build on comments made by the assessors.

Section 2 – Discussion

The focus of the Discussion is to explore aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Serbian is spoken. Students are expected to refer to the texts they have studied. They may support the Discussion with objects such as photographs, diagrams and maps. If students bring materials to support their discussion they need to alert the assessors to this during their introduction. Cue cards and notes are not permitted.

The students were examined against the following criteria:

- capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively
- capacity to present information, ideas and opinions on a chosen topic
- accuracy of vocabulary and grammar
- range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar
- clarity of expression.

It is essential that teachers and students take into account the interests and abilities of students when selecting the sub-topic for the Detailed Study. The *VCE Serbian Study Design* states that 'One sub-topic may be selected for a whole class or different sub-topics may be selected for individuals or groups of students. In the former case, it will be important to select a sub-topic that is sufficiently broad to accommodate a range of interests and perspectives, so that each student can provide an individual response to the coursework assessment task(s) set, as well as in the Discussion in Section 2 of the Oral Examination'. The choice of resources used to support the Detailed Study is also very important and these resources must be in Serbian. Students are encouraged to provide input when topics for the Detailed Study are chosen and work collaboratively with their teacher.

The sub-topic selected for the Detailed Study should interest the students, as this will enable them to express and elaborate on ideas and defend their own opinions confidently. Thorough preparation is essential for success.

The majority of students were well prepared for the Discussion. High-scoring students demonstrated excellent knowledge of their chosen topic, referring to resources that consisted of different text types. They knew their texts very well and spoke fluently, elaborating on their ideas and opinions. These students carried the discussion forward with some original input and provided highly relevant, in-depth responses. They used appropriate vocabulary, a range of grammatical structures and displayed accurate pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

Weaker students relied heavily on rote-learned material. Students need to be able respond spontaneously to questions. It is important to choose topics that are not too difficult, and find texts that students can understand so that they will have some ideas to articulate if the assessors move away from anticipated questions. Insufficiently prepared students relied on assessors' questions and often needed prompting. Students should practise leading the discussion.

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Students are encouraged to prepare concluding statements. At the end of the Discussion, assessors often ask if there is anything else the student would like to say. This gives students the opportunity to cover areas that have not been raised during the Discussion and to provide an appropriate conclusion. By doing this, students can show confidence as well as their ability to fully discuss the topic.