



2012

Languages: Spanish GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral component of the Spanish examination consists of two sections. The Conversation (seven minutes) focuses on the student's personal world; for example, their school and home life, family and friends, and interests and aspirations. The Discussion (eight minutes) focuses on aspects of the language and culture of the Spanish-speaking world through a Detailed Study.

During the course of the year, students must spend 15 hours of class time analysing and discussing a range of texts that relate to their topic for the Detailed Study. The topics are selected in conjunction with their teachers according to the specifications in the *VCE Spanish Study Design*. Each student is required to prepare a Detailed Study on a chosen topic.

Some of the topics students studied this year were

- Art and Entertainment as a Social Expression
- Illegal Migration from Latin American Countries to the United States
- Hispanic Food and its Cultural Connections
- Latin American Housing
- Colonial Cities of Latin America.

The majority of students demonstrated an understanding of the requirements of the examination. Most students observed the appropriate greeting conventions when interacting with assessors. However, some students introduced themselves by name, including their surname. This is not required and students should be reminded to avoid disclosing any personal information, including the name of their school.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

The overall performance in this section was generally good, and students were very well prepared and able to maintain a good conversation, not a monologue. Their ideas were original, interesting and not repetitive. The selection of appropriate language was very good.

Students who met the expected criterion for this section of the examination conversed fluently, discussing and commenting on issues that came up in the course of the conversation. They presented ideas, information and opinions while maintaining the flow of the conversation. They also talked about their family members and gave information about their leisure activities. In addition, students mentioned the subjects that they studied at school, and elaborated on why those subjects were chosen, what aspects were more relevant to further studies or aspirations and so on.

It was noticeable that teachers had helped students to prepare for the oral examination and had emphasised the importance of maintaining the conversation and an exchange of ideas. This was clearly demonstrated through students' capacity to connect with assessors. The conversations were natural. Students were answering questions rather than bringing to the examination a very well-prepared speech.

Students articulated their ideas with good and precise vocabulary that suited the topic. They used proper grammatical structures and a good range of vocabulary.

It was observed that students used very polite and appropriate language. Even though formal protocols are not enforced during the Conversation (use of formal register with assessors), students were very diligent in maintaining the use of correct and formal language. There was no use of inappropriate or coarse language during the examination.

Many students used accurate vocabulary and grammatical structures, and very little English interference was noted. Most students generally used conjugated verbs properly; however, when the subjunctive mood was required, many students used it incorrectly. It is advisable to study verbs, moods and tenses during the academic year.



Students are required to advance the conversation and connect with assessors. In order to demonstrate their ability to meet the criteria, students should expand the conversation with comments and descriptions. For example, rather than just giving the number of people in their family, students could explain who the members of their family are and what each of them does. Assessors will often prompt students with phrases such as ‘Could you elaborate on...’, ‘Tell us about...’ or ‘Comment on...’ to remind students that the ability to communicate with appropriate content and the correct use of language should be demonstrated in this section.

Students should always keep in mind that preparation is the key to this task. Students are advised to prepare a variety of topics related to their personal world. It is recommended that they practise conversing on such topics in class with teachers and with other students.

Section 2 – Discussion

The main focus of this section is to discuss and explore aspects studied during the 15 hours spent on the Detailed Study. At the beginning of this section, students have one minute in which to indicate to assessors the sub-topic chosen. Students should briefly introduce the main focus of their sub-topic during that minute. They may also state the various texts that they have studied in detail (for example, articles, poems, songs, plays, films and so on) but this is not essential.

It is recommended that students use at least two different text types when students are preparing for the Detailed Study as this should lead to more breadth and depth of information. Careful attention should be paid to the requirements and advice stated in the *VCE Spanish Study Design*. This part of the examination consists of a discussion and, therefore, it is important to remind students that they must be prepared to express ideas and opinions about the texts analysed, and not simply tell assessors the content of the text. Students need to demonstrate an understanding of the deeper level of the studied texts.

Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively

Students must ensure that they comment on their sub-topic rather than simply tell assessors the content of the texts that were studied. This may involve explaining how the issues in the text portrayed the topic that they are discussing. Assessors are interested in students’ opinions and ideas about the texts that were studied.

Many students discussed their texts in detail, presented various points of view and demonstrated that they had analysed the texts in depth. Students’ ideas and opinions often made the discussions interesting and fruitful.

This year, teachers and students showed dedication in their preparations for the Discussion and the Detailed Study. The vast majority of students were capable of communicating effectively in this section of the examination. The communication about the Detailed Study was fluent and rich, and it was easy for students to demonstrate their understanding of the subject by responding to questions in a confident manner.

Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

There was an overall improvement in students’ preparation and ability to hold a discussion. Overall, the majority of students demonstrated that they had spent time and effort preparing for this task and they therefore generally achieved good results. Many students had chosen interesting texts. They expressed their points of view in depth and were able to support their opinions with evidence from the texts that they studied. Some students had prepared their topics very well, and discussed and presented relevant information and ideas. This year, only a few students were poorly prepared and simply told assessors the content of the texts they had studied. These students were not able to discuss the texts in depth, or present opinions or analytical arguments.

It was clear that some students were enthusiastic, and wanted to show that they were well prepared and had worked very hard to deliver good content. It was very rewarding to see that the content of most Detailed Studies helped students to gather the knowledge required to present the variety and analysis of information required.

Clarity of expression

Most students were capable of demonstrating the use of a good range and variety of vocabulary and the use of proper grammatical structure. This year, students’ good preparation in relation to the Detailed Study was also apparent in the high-quality vocabulary and language used.

It was clearly evident that students were very confident in using the language to communicate their understanding and knowledge of the topics learnt in class.