



## Oral component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral component of the Spanish examination consisted of two sections. The first section was a seven-minute conversation about the students' personal world: their school and home life, family and friends, and interests and aspirations. The second section was an eight-minute discussion focused on aspects of the language and culture of the Spanish-speaking world. In order to prepare for this discussion, during the year students were required to spend 15 hours of class time analysing and discussing a range of texts. The students selected topics and sub-topics in conjunction with their teachers, and according to the *VCE Spanish Study Design*. This Detailed Study offers students the chance to focus on any one of a wide range of topics.

The topics students studied this year included:

- ecology and tourism
- art and entertainment
- Spanish culture through the eyes of painters and their work; for example, Picasso and Dali
- global warming
- sports in Latin America
- human rights and social problems
- Hispanic icons and their social meaning.

The majority of students demonstrated an understanding of the requirements of the examination. Most students observed the appropriate greeting conventions when interacting with the assessors. However, some students introduced themselves by name, including their surname. This is not required. Students should not disclose their own names or the name of their school.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

#### Section 1 – Conversation

Most students were comfortable talking about their personal world: family and friends, leisure and pastimes, school subjects, future aspirations, travel and work (where applicable). However, when helping the students to prepare for their oral exam, teachers should emphasise the importance of maintaining a conversation. This means that students need to maintain an appropriate exchange of ideas in order to demonstrate their capacity to connect with the assessors. They also need to answer the questions, rather than delivering a well-prepared speech about themselves to the assessors. Students should ask for clarification if they don't understand a question. There were instances where students provided a response that did not answer the question they were asked.

The overall performance in this section was good, and it was pleasing to see how well prepared some students were. 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 communication. They also talked about their family members and their occupations, and provided information about their leisure-time activities. In addition, students mentioned the subjects they studied at school and elaborated on why they had chosen those subjects and what aspects of them were relevant to their further studies or aspirations.

Many students used accurate vocabulary and grammatical structures and assessors noted very little English interference. Most students conjugated verbs accurately; however, when the subjunctive mood was required, many students used it incorrectly. Students should be advised to practise the use of verbs, moods and tenses during the academic year.

Students are required to advance the conversation and link with the assessors. In order to demonstrate their ability to meet this criterion, students should expand the conversation with comments and descriptions rather than, for example, just giving the number of people in their family. Assessors prompted some students with phrases such as 'Could you elaborate on ...', 'Tell us ...', or 'Comment on ...' so that students were able to demonstrate their ability to communicate with appropriate content and the correct use of language.



Students should keep in mind that preparation is the key to performing well in this section. Students are advised to prepare a variety of topics related to their personal world. They should practise conversing on such topics in class with teachers and other students.

## Section 2 – Discussion

The focus of this section was to discuss and explore aspects of a sub-topic studied during the 15 hours spent on the Detailed Study. At the beginning of this section, students had one minute to indicate to assessors their chosen sub-topic. Students should have briefly introduced the focus of their sub-topic and directed assessors to their preferred areas of discussion. In the one-minute introduction students are not required to mention the resources they used, but they may do so if they wish.

Teachers should have ensured that students used at least two different text types, and students should have paid careful attention to the requirements given in the *VCE Spanish Study Design*. This part of the examination consisted of a discussion; therefore it was important that students were prepared to express ideas and opinions about the texts they had analysed. Students needed to demonstrate that they understood the studied text or texts at a deeper level.

### Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively

Students needed to ensure they commented on their sub-topic rather than simply retelling the material they had studied. Commenting on their sub-topic may have involved, for example, explaining how the issues in the film or novel portrayed the topic they were discussing. The assessors were interested in the student's opinions and ideas about the texts studied.

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

Overall, the majority of students demonstrated that they had spent time and effort preparing for the examination and they 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 studied. However, a few students were poorly prepared and were not able to discuss the texts in depth, present opinions or present analytical arguments.

### Clarity of expression

Most students demonstrated the use of a good range and variety of vocabulary and proper grammatical structures. However, some students occasionally used an inappropriate style and register. It is vital to emphasise that it was not appropriate for students to use vulgar or coarse language during the exam. Students who used inappropriate language did not comply with the criteria of the proper use of register and style. The poor selection of language reduced their chances of a high mark. In addition, students were expected to comply with the cultural formalities of the language, such as the use of *usted* when addressing the assessors.

Teachers and students are advised to access and discuss the criteria for oral assessment. These can be found on the VCAA website on the Spanish study page. The oral criteria for assessment are set out in detail in the *Assessment Handbook* (November, 2010) pp 16–21.