



2009

LOTE: Italian GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skill in using spoken language. Section 1 of the examination focuses on conversation between the student and the assessors. It consists of a general conversation about the student's personal world and lasts approximately seven minutes. Section 2 – Discussion is approximately eight minutes duration. The student commences this section of the examination by giving a one-minute introduction of their Detailed Study topic.

Students who had thoroughly prepared for this examination were more successful in satisfying all of the assessment criteria than those who had not. Well-prepared students were generally confident and at ease during the examination. However, students who were less well prepared lacked confidence and experienced difficulty meeting all of the set examination criteria.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Section 1 – Conversation

Students who performed competently in this section of the examination displayed confidence and thorough preparation. These students demonstrated an excellent understanding of the questions posed to them by the assessors. They responded readily and competently and were able to advance the conversation with minimal support from the assessors. Their communication was natural and free flowing.

Students who achieved excellent scores in this part of the examination were able to give a range of information and ideas which they were able to discuss in depth and support with appropriate examples and evidence. These students were also able to give varying opinions on topics discussed. To prepare for the Conversation section of the examination effectively, students should ensure that they discuss and elaborate on a wide range of topics within the theme of the student's personal world; for example, school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations. High-achieving students were able to use an excellent range of vocabulary structures and expressions accurately and appropriately. They also displayed competence in the use of more complex tense structures. These students displayed the ability to self-correct errors and they consistently used appropriate style and register.

In contrast, students who experienced difficulty in this section of the examination were slow to respond to the assessors' questions and had a very limited ability to advance the conversation. These students often hesitated and had a number of false starts. The conversation was often shallow, consisting of few ideas, opinions or examples. Furthermore, some of these students had significant problems with pronunciation, stress and intonation.

Some students did not appear to have prepared adequately as their conversation lacked depth and substance. Given that the topic for the conversation focuses on the student's personal world, students should ensure that they prepare adequately for this section of the examination. It was disappointing to note that some students lacked basic vocabulary skills and had to rely on English words and anglicisms to sustain the conversation. Others relied on rote-learned responses and were unable to respond and continue when interrupted. Students are advised to not memorise their responses as the examination calls for a more spontaneous and free-flowing conversation with the assessors.

Section 2 – Discussion

This section of the examination required students to discuss an aspect of their Detailed Study. Students were required to use the texts studied to present information, ideas and opinions about their chosen topic.

This year, high-scoring students demonstrated a readiness to link with the assessors when giving their responses. They provided an excellent range of information, ideas and opinions clearly and logically. They were able to elaborate and carry the discussion forward by introducing new ideas, opinions and examples related to their Detailed Study topic. These students were able to qualify and support their answers by making references to the texts they had studied in class. The discussion flowed naturally with authentic pronunciation, stress and tempo. Students were able to enhance their discussion by using varied and more complex language structures appropriately and accurately. Students presented a wide range of topics with many varied resources. Those who prepared well had an in-depth understanding of the reference materials studied and were able to draw upon a wide range of resources in support of their argument. It was



also noted that these students had researched a variety of resources that enabled them to extend their topic effectively. These resources included articles, interviews, films and extracts from novels.

In contrast, students who experienced difficulty in the Discussion section offered a limited range of information which they were unable to elaborate on. Many of these students presented resources which lacked depth and content. As a consequence they were unable to effectively draw upon their texts to advance the discussion, displaying minimal ability to interact with and relying on extensive support from the assessors. Furthermore, their performance was hindered by weak language skills, which included poor pronunciation, stress and tempo. A limited range of language structures and vocabulary prevented students from advancing the discussion successfully. Many of these students displayed a lack of basic accuracy in language use, for example, lack of knowledge of noun, article and adjective agreements, auxiliary verb agreements, verb conjugation, tense use and sequence.

Advice for teachers and students

When preparing for this examination it is imperative that students are familiar with all exam specifications. Students must be prepared to converse freely and confidently with the assessors. They must demonstrate the ability to offer a wide range of opinions with supporting evidence. Basic responses are not appropriate at this level as they hinder and prevent the communication from advancing successfully. A vital part of students' preparation should include a thorough investigation of the topics set for the examination so that they are readily able to respond in depth to the assessors' questions.

Included in this preparation should be extensive revision of the linguistic requirements of the study as stated in the *VCE Italian Study Design* (Grammar, pages 14–16). It is important that all students are aware of these requirements.

In order to maximise student performance in this examination, it is strongly recommended that topics presented for the Detailed Study have sufficient depth and substance so that themes can be extensively explored. It is also important that resources are updated when possible. Attention needs to be paid to the selection of texts and reference materials in order to ensure that students have sufficient content, vocabulary and ideas to draw upon in their examination. As an example, a picture, cartoon, poem or slogan may not provide students with adequate scope for elaboration. These texts may prevent students from being able to extract supporting evidence for their ideas and opinions. Likewise, resources in English may not assist students as they do not provide them with appropriate vocabulary to draw upon.