

LOTE: Croatian GA 2: Oral examination

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Part 1 – General conversation

Most students handled the conversation with confidence. They provided a wide range of responses to topics such as family, school, hobbies and plans for the future.

Part 2 – Report and discussion

Many students prepared excellent reports which included an introduction, body and conclusion. Students chose a variety of topics as the result of their interests and availability of the required research material. Well-prepared students provided a lot of factual information, were able to develop the discussion, and showed good research skills. This year's topics were not that different from previous years: music, cake making, film, actors and sports personalities, travelling to Croatia and birthday parties.

Part 3 – Situational role-play

Students showed initiative and an excellent capacity to develop the content of the role-play. They adopted good communicative strategies such as eye contact, voice intonation and movement of the hands.

Areas of **strength** displayed by students:

- changing quickly from one topic to another during the general conversation
- giving complex answers
- showing the ability to choose a wide range of topics
- keeping to the time limit
- conveying information and having an opinion during discussion.

Areas of **weakness** displayed by students included:

- Croatian endings added to English words
- using English words instead of Croatian
- literal translations from English to Croatian.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Paper 1 – Processing spoken information

Part A – Tasks on the two spoken passages

Most students selected nearly all the relevant information. There were some who did not read the directions on the paper and answered Part A in the wrong language, i.e. they answered either all in Croatian or all in English in the opposite sections.

There was a common error made by many students with the Croatian words for 'giant slalom'. This error, evident in at least half of the students, points to inadequate or ineffective use of dictionaries.

Part B – Tasks drawing on both passages

Many students completed this section well and used relevant information from Part A. Some did not complete the task well because they selected irrelevant information, e.g. Janica's appearance, instead of relevant information such as her sporting achievements. There were many students who provided information from one tape only and not from both texts and therefore, did not complete the task well.

Most students showed familiarity with the 'magazine article' and the conventions of the discourse form were well handled. However, since many selected inappropriate/irrelevant information or omitted information; linking of ideas was not well handled.

Many students also had problems with sequencing and tended to jump from point to point. There was still a large number who signed their articles with their own names instead of assumed names.

Most students used appropriate and effective vocabulary, complex grammatical structures and had good control of syntax. Those who did not do well had errors in their vocabulary, and tended to use more simple, repetitive grammatical structures. There were also errors in spelling, case endings, omission of letters at the end of words, incorrect word order and foreign words from English and Serbian in particular. Many students when expressing their own ideas, used foreign expressions inappropriately. There was little or no direct plagiarism from the tapes.

Some students wrote in pencil which made it difficult for the assessors to read the responses.

Paper 2 – Reorganising information

Part A – Writing in Croatian

Overall students' capacity to deal with the chosen topic was of an average standard, although there was a full range of marks, from excellent to below average. Students tended to jump from point to point, using few examples to support their opinions and generally did not present their arguments well. They failed to plan their answers and to show a logical structure. There was also a marked lack of creativity in much of the writing.

Most students showed a clear understanding of the conventions of the discourse forms required to complete the task. However, there were many responses which had the outward appearance of the discourse form conventions, but the internal structure of their writing was weak because of failure to plan.

Many students had difficulties with the sequencing of ideas and appeared simply to write as much as possible without paying attention to the quality of their writing.

More successful students had good clarity of expression and accuracy of language use. Students opted to write in simple sentences rather than complex sentence structures. Some of those who wrote complex sentences, had such complex constructions that they were unclear and difficult to understand.

Most students used a variety of vocabulary and appropriate sentence structure; however, there were a problem with appropriate grammar and syntax. There were some who used inappropriate vocabulary. Others wrote diary entries as if they were actually writing in their own diaries instead of for a wider audience. Some students used inappropriate vocabulary in emotional responses to the editors of a magazine.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Question 1

'Letter to the editor' – Students did not present a clear and well constructed argument to support their viewpoint and made overly emotional responses.

Question 2

Creative writing 'personal diary' – Very little creative writing was observed. Students either wrote about the machine and little on travelling or tended to jump from place to place and do a lot of travelling with very few descriptions of what they saw and felt, almost as if it were more important to list as many places as possible, rather than describe and give details.

Question 3 and 4

Students gave more complex responses, presented their arguments well and supported them with examples. They demonstrated good control of linguistic elements.

Part B: Reorganising written information

Most students were able to select relevant information, however, they did not use it effectively. Some did not fully understand the text and although they felt that the preservation of rare species was necessary, they thought of the area as a special park or a zoo. Students should use a dictionary to check the meaning of any unfamiliar vocabulary.

Although most students understood the requirements of the task they were not able to structure their responses effectively. Linking of the related ideas was poor. Students need to plan their responses better and use more logical sequences. Learning the vocative of '*urednik*' and becoming more familiar with the formal register is required.

Less successful students relied heavily on the given vocabulary and were unable to present ideas in their own words. Others who had good linguistic control, wrote highly emotive, well-written arguments but failed to use the information from the given texts. Some did not understand the gist of the problem and directed their anger and complaints at the editor of the magazine.

Linguistic elements are crucial, so students need to use correct grammar and syntax.

Paper 3 – Discussing a theme

(completed by interstate students)

Overall, students seemed to show understanding of the resources studied; however, their appreciation of the resources extended to retelling events, rather than discussing the meanings and themes. Most students did not complete this section successfully. They demonstrated a superficial depth of treatment of specific themes, i.e. story retelling and the ideas discussed were often very patchy. Many chose inappropriate resources, or inappropriate examples from the resources to support their viewpoint. (Alternatively, some noted two resources; the content of one resource was relevant and detailed while the other resource was irrelevant and inappropriate).

Most students completed this section well and nearly all conventions of the discourse form were observed. Those students who were not as successful had errors in spelling, omitted word endings had difficulty with syntax, and used foreign words, especially English and Serbian.

Overall, discussing a theme was not well handled this year because:

- students chose inappropriate resources, or inappropriate examples from the resources to support their point of view
- the depth of treatment and appreciation of the works was only superficial and showed that students did not plan their answers before writing.