



## Oral component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

The Greek oral examination has two parts: a Conversation (approximately seven minutes) and a Discussion (a one-minute introduction and approximately seven minutes of discussion on the Detailed Study.) The assessment for both parts of the oral is divided into three sections: communication, content and language. The descriptors for the criteria are published on the VCAA website, so it is important that all students practise using the criteria in class so that they can address any weak areas prior to the examination.

In 2006 students appeared to be more familiar than in the past with the expectations of the oral examination and the components of the examination criteria used for assessment. The well-prepared students performed well in both sections because they were able to link effectively with the assessors, expand on their answers and offer interesting ideas and opinions using accurate vocabulary and grammar. Most students were well prepared for the Conversation section and were able to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively. However, there was a small number of students this year who did not appear to have devoted appropriate time to prepare for the Conversation. These students were not able to expand efficiently on aspects of their personal world and relied on assessors to prompt them.

The students' performance overall has improved in the Discussion section; however, the preparation of an effective introduction continues to be problematic. This section requires a more objective approach and students cannot rely on pre-learned information. Students need to be able to use language spontaneously to handle unrehearsed situations. A number of students supported their discussion appropriately with objects such as photographs, diagrams and maps, elaborating and stating why they considered them important. This was especially a useful prompt for weaker students. The support material was free of writing, except for a heading, as is required.

It should be noted that teachers should advise students to use the correct formal register. When addressing one or both assessors students should use the second person plural, as for example *θα σας μιλήσω*.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

#### Section 1 – Conversation

##### Communication

The topic for the general conversation was 'the student's personal world'. Most students were able to talk fluently about areas such as school, home life, family and friends, interests and future aspirations. They were able to hold a conversation for seven minutes, effectively discuss more than one topic and develop more than one aspect of the topic. Their interaction with the assessors was very good, as they were able to respond to and build on comments made by assessors. Most students expressed their ideas with clarity, paying particular attention to pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. A very small number of students did not express words, especially word endings, clearly.

A few students tended to rely on rote-learned passages and rattle these off without a pause, making it difficult for the assessors to interrupt without being rude. Others did not seem to take this section seriously, believing that they could respond readily on such familiar topics. These students were often not ready to respond to unanticipated questions in depth.

##### Content

Well-prepared students were able to add breadth and depth to their conversation and support and elaborate on their statements. These students presented an excellent range of information, opinions and ideas in highly relevant and logical responses. A few students were less well prepared in the Conversation section and found it difficult to extend beyond the obvious, to follow up with more detail, or to reflect on their own experience. For example, when talking about a part-time job it is important for students to be able to describe the job and the tasks that they do, talk about why they enjoy it, etc. Students should know the vocabulary that they will need to use, including the Greek names for subjects studied at school. They should also know the appropriate form of words; for example, if they want to become an accountant they should say *λογιστής* and not *λογιστικός*.

It is important to listen carefully and concentrate on all words in the assessors' questions in order to respond and address all the required parts. When students do not understand the question, they should ask for clarification, and not



respond with what appears to be a memorised answer. They should be able to self-correct and use repair strategies to avoid lengthy pauses. It is vital that students come well prepared to elaborate on their responses, giving reasons, examples and evidence. Students should not give shallow responses. At school they should practise responding to questions that are asked in different ways and practise answering unrehearsed questions without resorting to prepared answers.

### Language

This was the weakest criterion in the Conversation section. While many students accurately used an excellent range of vocabulary and grammatical structures, others had a limited vocabulary and made some basic grammatical and syntactical errors. Students continued to have problems with *πρέπει*, *χρειάζομαι* and *δίνω*, making such errors as saying *πρέπω*, *χρειάζω*, *δώνω*. Accents were placed incorrectly, *λογίστικα*, *μαθήτης* and incorrect articles were used *το ομάδα*, *ένα δουλειά*, *μία αγορά*. Gender and case, as well as agreement between nouns and adjectives, were also at times incorrect: *οι δύσκολοι δρόμοι την φίλια*, *λίγος νευρικός*, *τρία αδελφές*, *μερικές σπίτια*. Active and passive voice and verb endings in general also presented a problem. Some students used English words and phrases *πήγα στο park να πάω next month* while others translated expressions from English *με το σχολείο τις ομάδες* (with the school teams) and *για την κηδεία της μητέρας μου τον πατέρα* (for the funeral of my mother's father). This should be avoided.

## Section 2 – Discussion

### Communication

Most students used the one-minute introduction to their benefit, concisely stating the topic and sub-topic of their Detailed Study and the names of the texts studied. They gave a brief elaboration while focusing on the issues, steering assessors towards aspects of their chosen sub-topic that they could discuss with confidence. Students should not list all the resources used in their class but should only mention those that they themselves concentrated on.

In the seven-minute discussion that followed the introduction, strong students demonstrated a sound knowledge and appreciation of the chosen topic. These students were skilled in expressing and elaborating on ideas and opinions, and supported them with appropriate evidence from the specific texts studied. They used a wide range of vocabulary and complex sentence structures and had a high degree of interaction with the assessors. They were able to advance the discussion with interesting comments and at times were even able to lead the discussion. They spoke confidently and fluently with very good pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

Some students did not introduce the topic and the resources appropriately in the one-minute time slot. They simply named their topic (for example, 'My topic is friendship') and then began retelling the content of the texts studied, which they had pre-learned, instead of discussing the texts and giving ideas and opinions. Other students talked for too long in the introduction and assessors had to stop them politely and ask them questions on their topic and the resources they used.

At times the topics did not suit the linguistic ability of the students and these students were not able to carry the discussion forward or deal with a variety of questions, nor did they have good repair strategies when in difficulty. More practice is needed in class to address the questions more directly and to respond more effectively to a wider range of questions.

The criterion 'clarity of expression' was addressed well by most students. Even the weaker students had good pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo.

### Content

The choice of the sub-topic is very important and should reflect the interests and abilities of the class, as well as those of the individual student. Students are expected to have dedicated 15 hours of class time to the Detailed Study and to have been exposed to a variety of resources from which they can draw in their discussion. Good sub-topics 'should enable the student to explore and compare aspects of the language and culture of the Greek-speaking community through a range of oral and written texts in Greek related to the selected sub-topic' (*Greek VCE Study Design*, page 24). Informative/historical topics, when they are above the linguistic capability of students, are generally not dealt with successfully, as students find it difficult to recall specific information and then process it in their response. In these cases the students should attempt to find a personal angle that could make the discussion more interesting. Sometimes very factual texts may not allow students to develop and express ideas and opinions.

Students should be able to link their texts to their sub-topic, as well as be able to see common themes in the material to make the discussion more interesting. They should try to analyse and think for themselves and be prepared to give some original opinions rather than just repeat ideas from texts or discuss the topic broadly. At times students referred to



resources without appreciating the ideas they contained and were not able to develop their own opinions and ideas. For example, when referring to a film or a short story they should not simply give a summary of the plot, but be prepared to comment on the text effectively. Others alleged that they had studied a number of texts, but could not recall them or were unable to demonstrate adequate knowledge of these texts by showing the links between the topics and the texts or the different issues relating to their chosen sub-topic. When students are preparing for the orals they may find it useful to make notes summarising the sources and write down how their chosen texts relate to one another, rather than seeing them in isolation.

Some topics were not broad enough to accommodate a range of interests and perspectives and did not cater well for individual responses. Other topics were beyond the language skills of students and thus students were not able to offer a range of information, ideas and opinions and to elaborate or defend them. Appropriate topics enabled students to display an excellent knowledge of their topic and an ability to elaborate on ideas and opinions with reasons/examples/evidence. It is important that a greater variety of topics and resources is chosen, which will cater more effectively for the abilities and interests of different students.

Some good sub-topics this year were:

- family relationships/problems
- the Greek family: the role of men and women within it
- Greek–Australian identity
- migration
- the Greek revolution
- Greek music.

### Language

Many students spoke in an appropriate manner using a wide range of vocabulary and complex sentence structures. However, as in the Conversation section, the performance in this criterion was weakest, with similar types of grammatical and syntactical errors. Students should be familiar with the vocabulary required to discuss their sub-topic and should not make mistakes such as *λίγες μετανάστες* when discussing the sub-topic of migration, and *θα έπαιζε τη μουσική του* instead of *παίζει τη μουσική του* when discussing Greek music. They should understand the grammar required and use the appropriate words in their correct form with ease, so that an interesting discussion can take place. They should know the genders of the key words, learn to use a variety of adjectives correctly and not make mistakes such as *ελληνικά παιδιά*. They should master syntactical structures that may be necessary to discuss the sub-topic. Mistakes like *θέμα λεπτομέρεια μελέτη, ξέρω τον Γιάννη πιο πολλά από τους άλλους* could have been avoided if adequate preparation had taken place.

Some students had a more limited vocabulary and grammatical range and were not able to use more complex syntactical structures. Those students should have been advised to select more appropriate topics that would have catered for their linguistic abilities. Students were more successful when they were interested in the topic and the topic was within their capability, as they then had their own opinions and ideas on the topic and had a good range of vocabulary and structures to respond appropriately.

## Written component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2006 Greek written examination covered a variety of topics based on the themes prescribed by the VCAA in the *Greek VCE Study Design*, page 13, such as:

- contemporary issues – the place of mobile phones in contemporary life
- Greek cultural heritage – the economic and cultural importance of the city of Thessaloniki
- the migrant experience – the return of Greek–Australian migrants to Greece
- lifestyles – travel to the Meteora monasteries
- historical people and events – the Greek national anthem
- the world of work – work experience
- relationships – family relationships
- the school experience – student travel to Greece.

Students this year appeared to be more familiar with the format of the examination and nearly all responded in the appropriate language for each section. No marks were awarded for answers in the wrong language. There were no



questions which could not be answered adequately by at least a number of students and the majority of students displayed effective time management, completing all sections of the examination within the specified time.

Students must ensure that they read all instructions carefully. The amount of space given to answer a particular question is a good indication of the length of the anticipated answer. The number of marks allocated to each question usually corresponds to the number of points needed in the answer. Students should always check to see if the question requires an answer in point form or in full sentences. They should also avoid restating the question, as this takes up valuable time and space and does not allow enough scope to complete the requirements of the task. All answers must be based on the texts. Students should not provide information beyond the scope of the question and they should not include prior knowledge of the topic in their responses if it is not included in the texts.

Students should be prepared to comment not only on the content of the texts but also on their purpose and the type of audience being addressed. Questions on aspects of the language of the text, such as the use of tone and register and the appropriateness of the language for its specific purpose, are also clearly prescribed in the Study Design.

In general, students successfully identified information related to the context, and demonstrated very good listening and reading comprehension skills. However, in contrast to students' good comprehension skills, their responses in Greek often showed a poor understanding of the grammatical rules that govern the Greek language. Students' use of Greek was often poor and in some instances incomprehensible. In order to receive the allocated marks, answers must be coherent and legible. This is also the case for the English responses on the paper.

Teachers need to give more emphasis to the teaching of grammar in order to improve students' ability to write in Greek with accuracy and fluency. Some areas of concern were:

- an inability to distinguish between certain letters of the alphabet such as  $\delta$ ,  $\theta$  and  $\beta$  (*βιαβάζω* instead of *διαβάζω* and *να θω* instead of *να δω*);  $\zeta$ ,  $\xi$  and  $\chi$  (*δεν χέρω* instead of *δεν ξέρω* and *ζωή* instead of *ζωή*); and  $\xi$  and  $\psi$  (*ξάρι* instead of *ψάρι*)
- failure to demonstrate the existence of the double consonants  $\xi$  and  $\psi$  (*έγραπσε* instead of *έγραψε* and *άκσιος* instead of *άξιος*)
- failure to use accents
- incorrect use of the definite and indefinite articles
- incorrect use of the gender of articles, nouns and adjectives (*η άνθρωπη* instead of *οι άνθρωποι*, *οι γυναίκα* instead of *η γυναίκα* and *η πιο ωραίο πράγμα* instead of *το πιο ωραίο πράγμα*)
- poor use of the genitive case
- lack of agreement between nouns and adjectives in gender, number and case
- lack of agreement in number between the subject and verb
- inability to conjugate verbs, even regular verbs in the present active indicative
- incorrect use of the passive voice
- inability to use the common verbs *πρέπει* and *μου αρέσει* / *μας αρέσουν*
- use of anglicisms such as *το μπόζι*, *η μαρκέτα* and *στο τελεβίζιο*
- inaccurate use of vocabulary (*πατρικά* instead of *πατριωτικά* and *πολιτική* instead of *πολιτισμός*).

## SPECIFIC INFORMATION

### Section 1 – Listening and responding

#### Part A: Answer in English

This part of the examination was handled quite well by students. Responses in English demonstrated a good understanding of the information provided in the listening passages. Students seemed to find the questions on Text 2 more challenging, especially Question 6. Nevertheless, more capable students scored full marks in this part.

Students must practise their listening comprehension skills by picking out key points from various oral sources. During the examination they should spend at least part of their 15 minutes of reading time familiarising themselves with the questions in order to determine the information they will be required to extract from the listening passages. The pause between the readings of the texts can be effectively used to consult the dictionary to determine the meaning of key words. Effective use of the note-taking space on the paper is also helpful. Students should ensure, however, that their final response is given in the space provided for the answer. No credit will be given for answers outside of this space.

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## Text 1

### Question 1

He was trying to solve a problem.

### Question 2

- They have managed without one until now.
- Mobile phones are costly.

### Question 3

All of:

- they are needed in emergencies
- the mother can borrow it when Andonis is not using it
- he will pay the bills as he has a job
- his mother will always know where he is.

### Question 4

It will be discussed by the family later.

## Text 2

### Question 5

One of:

- the coastal position of the city
- the location enabled the city to trade with other countries.

### Question 6

It was:

- a centre for trade
- a centre for Greek culture.

### Questions 7

Two of:

- monuments throughout the city
- the city's continuing economic growth
- the annual Thessaloniki International Trade Exhibition.

### Question 8

Both of:

- it is instrumental in beginning a successful career
- it provides a large audience.

## Part B: Answer in Greek

In this part of the examination students were required to demonstrate their capacity to understand aspects of a Greek listening text by responding in Greek. Ten marks were available for demonstrating comprehension of the text and five for conveying information accurately and appropriately in Greek.

Most students showed a sound understanding of the content of the text. Students must ensure that they respond in sentences when requested. Their sentences should communicate their ideas in their own words.

## Text 3

### Question 9

One of:

- because he had conducted a research study on migrants returning to Greece
- because he is a well known sociologist.

### Question 10

The group that migrated to Australia after the war.

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## Question 11

Four of:

- they had to get used to living in a new country
- they had to work hard
- they had to make money
- they had families
- they had to educate their children.

## Question 12

Two of:

- Greek migrants returned to Greece on a trial basis/extended visits
- some renovated their family homes
- others purchased new properties
- they continued to be in contact with relatives and friends in Greece.

## Question 13

Two of:

- they came to a place that they knew
- they speak the language well
- life is happy and comfortable.

## Section 2 – Reading and Responding

### Part A: Answer in English

In order to prepare for this section of the examination students should read extensively in Greek including a wide range of texts in different text types; they should practise identifying and summarising the main points and ideas in texts.

Most students were able to successfully complete the activities related to the comprehension of the Greek reading text in this part of the paper. Before attempting the questions students should take the time to read over the text a few times. It is not necessary to know the meaning of all unknown words; students should try to understand the gist of a passage. Students are also reminded that all answers must be based on the information provided in the text and not on prior knowledge.

### Text 4

#### Question 14

Enormous rocks jutting out of the vast plain of Thessaly.

#### Question 15

The term means hanging and the monasteries seem to be hanging between heaven and earth.

#### Question 16

All of:

- natural beauty
- religion
- art.

#### Question 17

Two of:

- the isolation of the landscape
- a tranquil life
- to be closer to God.

#### Question 18

Temporary ladders and, later, nets were used to raise building materials.

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## Question 19

Four of:

- tourists
- pilgrims
- nature lovers
- people interested in architecture
- people interested in art.

## Question 20

The uniqueness of the setting and the important contribution of the monasteries to European civilisation.

## Question 21

Either of:

- to inform the public about the monasteries of Meteora
- to promote Meteora as a tourist destination.

## Question 22

Two of:

- the use of many descriptive adjectives
- the amount of information provided by the author
- reference to international recognition/UNESCO World Heritage Site
- the contribution of the monasteries to European civilisation is stressed.

## Part B: Answer in Greek

Most students provided appropriate information to adequately complete the questions in this part of the examination. Some students, however, did not read the questions carefully and provided information not related to the text and task. Students should take advantage of the fact that the questions in this section are given in both Greek and English.

Students should avoid copying directly from the text or restating the question, as Part B carries a language mark and students need to demonstrate their own ability to write effectively in Greek.

## Text 5

### Question 23

Both of:

- he wrote patriotic songs
- he encouraged Greeks to fight for their freedom.

### Question 24

All of:

- they were both from the Ionian Islands
- they both studied in Italy
- they both were strong supporters of a free Greece
- they both contributed to the national anthem.

### Question 25

Two of:

- the ideals expressed in the poem were loved by people
- the language used was simple
- it became a popular song.

## Section 3 – Writing in Greek

This section assesses students' ability to express ideas through the creation of original text in Greek using the following criteria:

- relevance, breadth and depth
- appropriateness of structure and sequence
- accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar.



Students were required to write 200–300 words in Greek on one of the five topics. Each topic represented a different text type and style of writing (personal, imaginative, informative, persuasive and evaluative). All five questions were attempted by students, but there was a clear preference for the informal writing tasks. This year students on the whole displayed a good knowledge of the different characteristics of the text type and style of writing they chose to write in.

Students must remember that text types marked with an asterisk in the Study Design are those which they may be expected to produce in the examination. When selecting a topic, students should choose one that is familiar to them and one that requires the kind of writing and text type that suits them best. The selected topic should be one for which they have a good range of vocabulary and one in which they are able to express themselves with accuracy. Of the three criteria in this section, students did not perform as well against the third, ‘accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar’.

Students must establish the tone and register of the task from the onset and must always keep in mind the audience for whom they are writing. They should ensure that they do not digress from the topic or include pre-learned material that is unrelated to the task. Ideas should be grouped into separate paragraphs with effective links between them. It is therefore essential that students set aside time to plan their response and to proofread it at the end.

### Question 26

This question required students to write an evaluative review of a movie that they had seen. Students were expected to discuss at least four pieces of information that would assist their readers to decide whether or not they wished to see the movie themselves.

Few students attempted this question, perhaps indicating unfamiliarity with the characteristics of the review text type. This topic, nevertheless, produced a number of very good responses. Students were able to draw from their experiences and successfully discuss and evaluate the plot, acting, direction, special effects, etc. of a movie they had liked or disliked in the past. They were able to relay this information successfully to an audience and to make appropriate recommendations. These students provided ideas that were well organised in sentences and paragraphs that linked well.

### Question 27

In this imaginative story students were expected to describe the events and develop a plot that led to a memorable experience after having found something on a beach during their stay on a Greek island.

This was the most popular topic amongst students and the question was attempted with varying degrees of success. Some responses were fairly creative and original but others were quite predictable. A number of students handled the topic competently, creating an appropriate time, place and atmosphere. These students were skilled in the devices of story-telling and their ideas were well-organised in sentences and paragraphs that linked well. Many students, however, happened to stumble across a treasure chest while many others found bottles in the sand with SOS messages. Some responses made no reference at all to the Greek island setting required by the task. A poor range of vocabulary and language structures often contributed to a weaker story line.

### Question 28

This was the second most popular question in this section. In this personal journal entry students were expected to give their own personal account and interpretation of the events that led to a misunderstanding in the family. Students needed to also contemplate ways in which they could possibly assist to resolve the situation.

Whilst most students successfully gave their own personal account of the events that led to the misunderstanding, fewer managed to suggest ways in which the problem could possibly be resolved. Some entries described fairly tragic and dramatic events that could never be resolved. Better journal entries demonstrated perceptiveness and analysis of events and contemplation of a plausible resolution. The text type, a journal entry, was generally handled well, although in some instances the response resembled an informal letter with long salutations and greetings rather than a journal entry.

### Question 29

In this informative speech students were expected to present to their fellow students their experiences, knowledge and skills gained during a work experience placement.

Most students who attempted this question adopted the required informative approach and displayed the appropriate conventions of a speech. They drew from their own school experiences and successfully described such work placements, making links between their experiences and possible future tertiary studies and career aspirations. This was



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a more challenging linguistic task, but a number of students demonstrated a good range of vocabulary and language appropriate to the purpose and the audience of the task.

## **Question 30**

This question required students to write a formal letter in order to be chosen to participate in an educational tour of Greece. They had to persuade consular officials that they would gain more from the experience than other applicants.

Capable students exhibited very good writing skills in this topic. Their responses observed the conventions, content and style appropriate to formal letter writing. These students adopted the correct register and tone. They were also able to put forward convincing reasons to support their applications. Some students were unable to express themselves in the second person plural and thus failed to use the formal register required by the task.