

LOTE: Macedonian GA 2: Oral examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Generally, students performed well and demonstrated a high level of language skills in all the three parts of the examination. It was obvious that students had adequately prepared for the task for which they were being assessed. Some students presented their report with visual material and relied very little on cue cards. Most students were able to initiate and continue the conversation in a natural manner. Student responses were not rehearsed and there was a natural flow and interaction with the assessors. Given that the Macedonian language has a polite form of 'You' students need to have a better understanding of its usage, especially when referring to or discussing a matter with the assessors.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Part 1 – General conversation

Students are required to engage in a natural conversation and maintain it without being prompted too much by the assessors. Those that scored well were able to do this in a very natural way, expanding on the ideas raised.

Most students were familiar with the subjects on which they were reporting in Macedonian, and were able to demonstrate research and analytical skills and used this information for their reports. This showed that they were comfortable with the language and willing to work just a little harder to achieve better results. Some students felt comfortable with the handshake upon entering the room, which is culturally appropriate, but others clearly did not. Those same students then found it difficult to exit the assessment room with the appropriate leave-taking formulae. Some emphasis should be placed on culturally appropriate greetings.

Part 2 – Report and discussion

Some students were able to lead the conversation and get straight into their report in a confident and natural way and therefore scored well. They displayed confidence and knowledge of the subject matter as well as a good command of the spoken language. They presented topics of general interest, rather than a report on their favorite pop star or TV star. They showed an ability to research and find material that was both interesting and challenging for them, and were then able to maintain the interest of the assessors.

All reports need to have a well-defined beginning, middle and conclusion. The students who worked within this structure scored well. Students are reminded that they need to choose topics that have sufficient scope for a discussion.

Part 3 – Situational role-play

Most students used their preparation time effectively and came up with very interesting arguments for their role-play. They immersed themselves in the role-play, actually thought about the answer that they were going to give and they were able to successfully come up with solutions to some of the problems set before them. Many students demonstrated strategies for persuasion and negotiation, showing resilience to negative responses, used appropriate dramatisation techniques and kept the interaction flowing with gestures/repetition/gap fillers. The best students seized the initiative by interjecting as if in a real life situation. Less successful students tried to impose a memorised script prepared for a typical scenario. This meant that they were inflexible and unable to adapt to the given situation, and therefore there was no natural flow to the conversation.

All parts of the task

The three parts tested different skills. Some students only expressed themselves in basic terms. Few students handled tenses accurately or displayed a broad range of vocabulary. Students need to demonstrate their knowledge by using a wider range of vocabulary. They need to vary language and demonstrate cultural knowledge where appropriate.

Successful students were able to keep the conversation flowing and avoided giving a single word answer. They were able to take the initiative, be lively as well as focused on what was going on. They demonstrated communicative competence and good language control.

LOTE: Macedonian GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The examination was well received by students and this was evident in their scores. The students' use of vocabulary was extensive and appropriate for the required tasks. Students must get into the habit of taking notes and planning before starting to write a task. This allows some forethought and synthesis of ideas and makes it much easier when answering questions. Students' performance in the various parts of the examination was well correlated, i.e. a student who did not perform well in the first part of the examination usually did not perform well in the other two parts. Most students concentrated on responding in the correct text type form.

Paper 1 – Processing spoken information

Part A – Tasks on the two spoken passages

Students clearly understood both texts and were able to respond to questions using their own words. Some students had poor note-taking skills and therefore were not always able to give correct answers without transcription. They copied whole sentences rather than noting points, and were not able to get the key point from an elaborate sentence. Those that came prepared for the examination, knowing what to expect, completed this section reasonably well. They included all the necessary details for the answers (e.g. full names and titles of people).

Part B – Drawing on both passages

Those students who were able to select information and then rephrase it in their own words scored much higher than those who took phrases directly from the given script. Students must understand the material given and then work it to fit into a different discourse form. Those that did not score well did not understand the material and therefore did not reorganise it in the required new discourse form.

Student note-taking skills are tested in this part and by taking good notes they are then able to use them efficiently.

Paper 2

Part A – Writing in Macedonian

The right topic is one which is chosen to permit the student to demonstrate their abilities and overall language control. Those that chose wisely, selected topics where they could express themselves clearly and logically paying particular attention to grammar and syntax. Some students did not choose a topic that enabled them to demonstrate their skills. In their writing, students are encouraged to write to maintain reader interest as well as to adhere to the rules of grammar, keeping in mind that sequencing and paragraphing is also an important part of writing.

Part B – Reorganising written information

This proved to be difficult for some students, due in part to reading skills which were not up to the required standard.

Students should attempt all sections of the examination even those that may look difficult. It is better to provide some response than none at all.

Planning is important, and those students that scored well did so because they had an overall plan that they had thought about before starting writing.

Paper 3 – Discussing a theme

(completed by interstate students)

The responses were well organised and the information included in students' responses demonstrated an understanding of the text studied in class.