



HSC Languages Courses

Advice to teachers re: oral examinations

This document provides general advice to teachers of Stage 6 Languages courses about the nature and conduct of the Higher School Certificate oral examinations.

Teachers should be familiar with the following documents that are available on the Board's website, http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/languages.html :

- Stage 6 syllabuses
- *Assessment and Reporting in Stage 6* documents
- past HSC examinations (Extension courses only)
- rubrics (Extension courses only)
- marking guidelines
- past *Notes from the Marking Centre*.

General information

- For all examinations, examiners will not correct students or assist with sentence construction or vocabulary. Students should not ask the examiner to translate words or questions.
- Students should not identify themselves, their teachers or their schools to the examiner.
- Except for the examination paper in Extension courses, students may not bring any pictorial, print-based or hand-written materials into any examinations.

Beginners

In the oral examination, the examiner will ask the student questions about his or her personal world as it relates to the prescribed topics in the syllabus. Neither the number of questions nor the number of topics covered by the examination is predetermined. However, students can expect to be asked a range of questions sampling the content of the course. The questions the examiner asks may relate to a previous response made by the student or introduce a new topic.

Students should answer each question only with information related specifically to the question asked. Students are encouraged to respond in such a way that they demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of structures and vocabulary, but not through the inclusion of material irrelevant to the question asked. Students are strongly advised not to attempt to dominate the conversation with long, pre-learned monologues. In the interest of students, such monologues will be interrupted by the examiner at an appropriate moment.

If students do not understand a question, they may ask for a question to be repeated, clarified or rephrased in the language being examined.

Once the allocated time for the examination has elapsed, students will be asked no further questions. Generally, the examiner will bring the examination to a close, but if necessary, students will be requested to draw their final response to a conclusion.

The duration of the Beginners oral examination is approximately 5 minutes.

Continuers

In the oral examination, which is known as the Conversation, the examiner will ask the student questions about his or her personal world (for example his/her life, family and friends, interests and aspirations) as it relates to the prescribed topics in the syllabus. Neither the number of questions nor the number of topics covered by the examination is predetermined. However, students can expect to be asked a range of questions sampling the content of the course. The questions the examiner asks may relate to a previous response made by the student or introduce a new topic.

Students should answer each question only with information related specifically to the question asked. Students are encouraged to respond in such a way that they demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of structures and vocabulary, but not through the inclusion of material irrelevant to the question asked. Students are strongly advised not to attempt to dominate the conversation with long, pre-learned monologues. In the interest of students, such monologues will be interrupted by the examiner at an appropriate moment.

If students do not understand a question, they may ask for a question to be repeated, clarified or rephrased in the language being examined.

Once the allocated time for the examination has elapsed, students will be asked no further questions by the examiner. Generally, the examiner will bring the examination to a close, but if necessary, students will be requested to draw their response to a conclusion.

The duration of the Continuers oral examination is approximately 10 minutes.

Continuers (Conversation and Discussion)

The oral examinations for Continuers courses in Armenian, Croatian, Dutch, Filipino, Hindi, Hungarian, Khmer, Korean, Macedonian, Maltese, Modern Hebrew, Polish, Portuguese, Serbian, Swedish, Tamil, Turkish, Ukrainian and Vietnamese will consist of two sections: the Conversation and the Discussion.

In the Conversation, the examiner will ask the student questions about his or her personal world (for example his/her life, family and friends, interests and aspirations) as it relates to the prescribed topics in the syllabus. Neither the number of questions nor the number of topics covered by the examination is predetermined. However, students can expect to be asked a range of questions sampling the content of the course. The questions the examiner asks may relate to a previous response made by the student or introduce a new topic.

Students should answer each question only with information related specifically to the question asked. Students are encouraged to respond in such a way that they demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of structures and vocabulary, but not through the inclusion of material irrelevant to the question asked. Students are strongly advised not to attempt to dominate the conversation with long, pre-learned monologues. In the interest of students, such monologues will be interrupted by the examiner at an appropriate moment.

If students do not understand a question, they may ask for a question to be repeated, clarified or rephrased in the language being examined.

In the Discussion, the examiner will ask the student a series of questions relating to the student's in-depth study. Students should be prepared to discuss issues related to the study as well as the texts/resources studied. Students must not bring objects such as photographs, posters and pictures to the examination. No questions will be asked after the allocated time for the examination has elapsed. Generally, the examiner will bring the examination to a close, but if necessary, students will be requested to draw their response to a conclusion.

For examinations that include a Discussion, the duration of the oral examination is approximately 7 minutes for Conversation and approximately 8 minutes for Discussion.

Extension courses

In the oral examination, students respond to one question from a choice of two printed on the examination paper. Students have 7 minutes' preparation time during which they may make brief notes in the space provided on the paper. Students may refer to these notes during the examination but must not read directly from them.

Students speak for approximately three minutes. After two minutes and thirty seconds the examiner will ring a warning bell. The examiner will ring a final bell at three minutes, at which time students must bring their response to a conclusion.