



B O A R D O F S T U D I E S
NEW SOUTH WALES

1999 HSC
Vietnamese
Notes from the Examination Centre

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1999 Higher School Certificate Vietnamese Notes from the Examination Centre

2 Unit

Listening and Speaking Examination

Speaking Skills

Part A: Oral Presentation

General comments

Candidates are advised to:

- structure their presentations appropriately with an introduction, argument and conclusion
- focus on the main issues raised in the question
- avoid the use of prelearned material as this invariably does not relate to the question asked
- support their argument with relevant facts and information.

Question 1

In general this question was handled well by candidates. However, some candidates:

- considered only the role of Vietnamese women in Australia
- referred to the rearing and education of children rather than the role of women in the field of education
- referred only to the role of women in the Vietnamese traditional society or the conditions of women in that society.

Question 2

This question was handled well by most candidates. Most candidates were able to incorporate their knowledge of the set-text: *Bong Hong Nuo Cho Me* to present the difficulties facing the elderly Vietnamese in Australia. Difficulties from the text included feelings of uselessness and the loneliness and isolation due to poor English communication skills. In addition candidates referred to the poor communication between grandparents and their grandchildren, who often prefer to speak English.

Question 3

Some candidates did not refer sufficiently specifically to the questions and spoke instead of the advantages of living in a flat rather than the advantages and the disadvantages of building medium/high density housing. In many instances, candidates did not refer to any of the disadvantages. Those who did, spoke almost exclusively about the lack of space and privacy and did not refer to any associated social problems.

Question 4

Candidates who selected this question, spoke with conviction and passion. On the whole, most candidates spoke in favour of the family reunion scheme. The best responses referred to the impact of the scheme on different groups. Candidates spoke for example about those migrants who could be beneficial to Australia (like the young who can contribute to the economic and social development of Australia) and those who might be perceived as being a burden to the host country.

Question 5:

Only a few candidates selected this question. Candidates attempting such questions need to be familiar with the appropriate political terminology. The best responses referred to policies, political platforms, ideology and leadership rather than simply making general statements about honesty and the past performance of candidates.

Part B: Picture Stimulus

Question 6

Few candidates referred to the written information provided with the stimulus material. Many candidates did not make reference to the written stimulus and misinterpreted the picture as one dealing primarily with littering. Candidates are advised to take particular notice of any written material that accompanies the visual stimulus material in this section.

Question 7

Most candidates were able to name four items from the picture.

Question 8

Most candidates referred to a lack of awareness of environment protection. Those who thought that the stimulus material referred to littering talked about the lack of bins in the streets or the lack of civic pride by those who litter. Very few commented on the environmental impact of consumerism. The best answers addressed this issue.

Question 9

Most candidates answered this question well. Most referred to pollution (air, water and land) and furnished appropriate examples and/or explanations.

Those who believed that the picture referred to the problem of littering went on to discuss litter as a possible source of infection or disease.

Question 10

Most candidates performed well in this question. Proposed solutions included:

- recycling waste material such as plastic bottles, bags etc
- an education campaign about recycling, environmental protection
- a campaign to encourage people to buy products made from recycled materials
- a campaign to encourage industries to reduce packaging
- heavy fines for littering.

Listening Skills

Most candidates performed well in the listening section. The most challenging item was Item 2.

Item 1

- Most candidates identified the correct response. Some candidates did not include in their response “she thought that” (Tung didn’t learn about recycling at school). This omission changed the whole meaning of the sentence.
- Most candidates answered this part correctly.
- Most candidates answered this part correctly. Some candidates did not refer to the fact that recycling can save trees.
- Most candidates found this question challenging and gave only one objective for recycling plastic and glass: **to reduce the volume of waste** and did not refer to the second objective which was ‘to reduce the area of land required to bury waste’.
- All candidates answered this part correctly.

Item 2

- Most candidates answered this part correctly.
- Most candidates answered this part correctly.
- Some candidates chose B or D instead of A.
- Some candidates chose B or D in place of C.
- The correct answer was D.
- The correct answer was C.

Item 3

- (a) Most candidates named the three main ingredients for the dish in question: 'beef, pork trotters and rice vermicelli'. Many candidates unnecessarily included some of the other items, eg. onions, mint leaves, bean sprouts, coriander and pork roll. A few candidates copied the entire shopping list.
- (b) Most candidates explained why Truong felt embarrassed (traditionally a Vietnamese man does not do the shopping) as well as explaining the slang expression *que* (embarrassed).
- (c) Most candidates answered this question well. The two most quoted reasons were: 'shopping for his wife' and 'bringing a glass of orange juice to his wife.' Some candidates referred to the comment in the text that 'he drinks beer like an Australian' which was also accepted.
- (d) Most candidates answered this question well, ie she is a dedicated wife/a faithful wife'. Some candidates interpreted this as 'she loves him' which was accepted as correct.
- (e) Only half the number of candidates answered correctly that 'She showed flexibility by doing or accepting low paid manual work in Australia at the beginning. This was a step down in professional status. In Vietnam she was a teacher and this is a well-respected profession in Vietnam'. Some candidates copied directly from the passage and wrote: 'she is bright, flexible and can adapt quickly to the new life style in Australia' or 'she wears second hand clothes' without providing any of the supporting evidence of this statement in the text.
- (f) Most candidates gave the correct answer ie 'she doesn't change her way of life, her appearance.' The best answers provided additional information such as, 'She doesn't depend on her husband, she is going back to study to become a teacher in Australia'.
- (g) Some candidates wrote about the qualities of Phuong that conform to Vietnamese traditional values. Other candidates explained the sentence *Em la bong mat yen lank cho cuoc doi auh*. Most candidates deduced from the text that Truong is grateful to his wife, that he loves and respects her and that she is very supportive of him.

Written Examination

Section I Reading Skills (20 marks)

Passage 1 *Ca ro kho to*

Question 1

Most candidates identified relevant evidence that Mrs Hon is from the southern part of Vietnam. The most common details identified were:

- the dish *ca kho to*
- the village *Ca Cao*
- words specific to that part of Vietnam e.g. *Vam, ba Gia, chun*
- forms of address (referring to mother, a woman e.g. *Con Hoa*) used by peasants in that region.

Question 2

This question was handled well by most candidates who gave the answer: ‘She learned to cook that dish from her mother’.

Question 3

Most candidates correctly identified the two reasons as:

- the type of fish used for the dish is only available as frozen in Australia OR the fish is not as fresh as in Vietnam
- the bowl used to cook the dish is not available in Australia.

Question 4

The three reasons are that: the children prefer B.B.Qs, they think the way of cooking the dish is no longer suitable as the nutritional value is lost due to the overlong cooking time, and the smell. Those candidates who gave the second reason as two reasons, ie lack of nutritional value and preparation scored only 5 of the 6 possible marks.

Some candidates referred to ‘the bowl’ or ‘freshness of fish’ mentioned in Questions 3. This response was not acceptable because the author in the text refutes both of these arguments.

It was expected that candidates would refer to the smell and also to demonstrate some understanding of the wordplay involved in *min thom* and *lam sao chin noi*.

Question 5

Many candidates did not specifically address the question which asked for their reflections on the role of women as expressed in the last paragraph of the text. Some candidates did not base their opinions and observations on the text but on their personal knowledge of the role of women in traditional Vietnamese society.

A great number of candidates did not make the distinction between the **role** of women and qualities traditionally associated with Vietnamese women i.e. *cong, dung, ngon, hanh*.

Passage 2 *Nho Tet Vietnam*

Question 6

This question was handled well by most candidates.

Question 7

This question was handled well by most candidates. A few candidates wrote that the author was in Canada (not Finland). A few wrote about the season rather than a description of the weather in the second part of the question.

Question 8

This question was handled well by most candidates. A few candidates did not base their answers on the text, but on their personal knowledge of the customs of Tet. Some candidates referred only to Vietnamese living in Finland, whereas the question referred to Vietnamese families in general.

As a result they referred to details of the way Vietnamese families living in Finland celebrate Tet such as the sausages used as an offering to the ancestors instead of the traditional offerings such as sticky rice cake *bank chung*, *bank tet*.

Question 9

Most candidates identified three of the following details:

- visit friends, relatives
- dragon dances in the streets with fire crackers
- going to the temples to pray, to wish for good fortune
- young girls
- games of *bau*, *cua* in Carnivals...

Question 10

This question was not well answered. Most candidates identified the reasons behind the author's hesitations while praying. Some candidates wrote about the situation, the state-of-mind of a refugee (like nostalgia of the home country, alienation) and did not fully address the question that asked for information about the author's state of mind.

Most candidates discussed the state of mind of the author and quoted the right verses. Candidates are advised to write down the whole quotation (if the quotation is not too long) or to paraphrase the quotation using some key words.

Section II Writing Skills (20 marks)

General Comments

The topics were equally popular. Markers observed an improvement this year in candidates' ability to address the main points and to provide relevant support for their arguments.

Question 11

Some candidates confused the problem of legalisation of drugs with the ill-effects of drug abuse. Instead of writing a discussion about the problem, some candidates wrote in a question/answer style.

'Do you know about?' 'No, tell me about it.'

'I think that ...' 'You're right.'

'Furthermore,' 'I agree with you.'

Candidates who achieved high marks:

- conveyed the deep conviction of the antagonists
- provided support for their argument
- presented a well-structured text through use of linking words, appropriate transition between arguments, eg. 'What you say may be right, but' or 'There is another side of the coin...'

Question 12

Most candidates did not really know how the Scheme (Work for the Dole) works and there was some confusion with the 'Working Nation' scheme (part of the benefit is paid by employers). Some candidates wrote about the cause and effects of youth unemployment instead of expressing their opinion about 'Work for the Dole' scheme.

Section III The Arts & Literary Studies (20 marks)

General Comments

Most candidates analysed the questions effectively and appropriately and focused on the main points. Candidates are advised to observe the word limit of approximately 100 words. Candidates are reminded that additional marks are not awarded for responses that exceed the word limit. Overlong responses often compound errors, contain unnecessary repetition or irrelevant information and use up valuable time that could be better spent in reviewing answers or in planning the response.

Part A The Arts

Question 13

Very few candidates chose this question. Many of these wrote about folk songs/Vietnamese opera instead of traditional Vietnamese musical instruments.

Question 14

This was the most popular question. Most candidates handled the question well and provided three conditions with supporting arguments. Some candidates only wrote about one handicraft. Lacquer ware and pottery/porcelaine were the most popular handicrafts.

Question 15

Most of the candidates who chose this question analysed and made personal comments about the Vietnamese art of photography. Some candidates gave what appeared to be pre-learned material that did not address the question.

Part B Literary Studies

Question 16 Prose

Part (a)

In general, candidates handled this question very well. However, some candidates did not write about the ‘memories of her dead husband’ which was considered to be the main point. A few candidates included details from the text that were not included in the extract provided e.g. ‘the betel plant that her husband planted for her’. Candidates are advised to refer only to information provided in the extract.

Part (b)

Most candidates gave at least the one reason that ‘She missed the good relationship with her children.’ Other reasons included:

- a family meal is rare + explanation
- she is home by herself all day long, therefore she needs her children to talk to
- a family meal is an opportunity for her and her children to talk about their pleasant memories of Vietnam.

Part (c)

Most candidates referred to Mrs. Giao’s habit of keeping all left-over food (her habit from Vietnam, a traditional value, fear for Buddha...) but did not give their opinion of this habit ie whether it was good or bad / suitable in America / hygienic, which was as a requirement of the question.

Part (d)

Most candidates’ answers were based on common knowledge, ie aged migrants feel lonely because they cannot speak the language, cannot find work, cannot adapt to new situations, rather than the information in the extract ie difference in lifestyle, children too busy with their new life, privacy is important.

Question 17

Part (a)

The majority of candidates were able to explain the literal significance of the title of the poem, ie that the title referred to a story of a young couple in the past. However, only a small number of candidates explained its figurative significance as referring to the nostalgia for a golden age or for the traditional values of that age.

Part (b)

Few candidates achieved full marks in this question because they did not follow the instruction in the question to rewrite the two verses into prose. Instead, they explained the meaning of the verses, rewrote the verses by changing the first person to the third person (she), or rewrote them as verse and not as prose with the appropriate punctuation and the inclusion of some additional expressions.

Part (c)

Most candidates identified three of the following ideas:

- exams are the only way to a higher rank in society
- success in exams brought honour and happiness not only to that person but also to his family and relations
- study was very hard: full time, needs support from family especially the wife
- exams are based on the Confucian classics
- only males can sit the exam.

Part (d)

Most candidates did not base their answers on the poem but from their personal knowledge. Some candidates quoted the cliché ‘ behind a successful man there is a woman.’ Many candidates mistook ‘role’ for ‘virtues’ (patience, self-sacrifice, tolerance, diligence). As a result, they only explained what women have to go through while their husbands are studying.