



Preparing for the practical (oral) examination – Discussion of personal investigation

If you are studying one of the following ATAR Year 12 courses, or preparing to sit the examination as a non-school candidate, you are required to undertake a personal investigation:

- French: Background Language
- German: Background Language
- Italian: Background Language.

The personal investigation is the basis of the practical (oral) examination for these courses.

Selection of your topic for the personal investigation

During the practical (oral) examination you must be prepared to discuss the topic, or area of interest, you have chosen for the personal investigation. Your choice of topic must relate to one of the topics in Unit 3 or Unit 4 of the syllabus. In Appendix 2 of the Year 12 syllabus there is a list of suggested sub-topics that may assist you in determining the focus of your personal investigation. You may also choose something different; however, if it is difficult to align your topic to one of those in the syllabus you will need to choose another topic for your research.

The syllabus is available on the course page of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (Authority) website at:

- French: Background Language
<https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/syllabus-and-support-materials/languages/french-background-language>
- German: Background Language
<https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/syllabus-and-support-materials/languages/german-background-language>
- Italian: Background Language
<https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/syllabus-and-support-materials/languages/italian-background-language>.

Tips for selecting a topic for the personal investigation

- Select a topic that allows for analysis and reflection. A topic, such as ‘My trip to [Country]’ may not allow you to show in-depth research if you simply talk about how you travelled, the food you ate, some of the sights you visited and other ‘superficial’ information.
- Focus on a particular aspect of [Language] society and culture, and compare/contrast it to that in Australia. In essence, the personal investigation needs to show evidence of research, analysis and reflection. Your opinion counts – it is not just about providing information.
- Personal experience may be brought in to the discussion, but the discussion will focus on what you have researched.

Selection of source texts for the personal investigation

As part of the personal investigation, and to permit you to explore your topic in depth, you are required to select and analyse a range of different texts in the language you are studying. Examples of source texts include films, newspaper articles, songs, documentaries, short stories, extended interviews, extracts from works of fiction and non-fiction, and electronic texts or oral histories. Appropriate texts in English could also be included but should be a limited aspect of the research.

Tips for selecting source texts for the personal investigation

- Do not limit your research to information found on the internet. You should consider texts from other sources; for example, the State Library of Western Australia has resources in a range of languages.
- While you are required to include three source texts as part of your annotated bibliography, you can also refer to other texts in your 300-word summary and during the examination.
- Try to use different types of source texts in your research. Rather than just choosing online articles, you could consider documentaries, extended interviews and songs related to the topic you have chosen.
- If you are enrolling in the examination as a non-school candidate it is suggested that you start reviewing texts well in advance of the examination period. This will give you sufficient time to make any changes to the source texts and/or topic selection.

Using the practical (oral) marking key to support your preparation

Performance in the *Practical (oral) examination – Discussion of personal investigation* is assessed using the following criteria:

- personal investigation – introduction
- response – relevance and depth of information
- linguistic resources – range
- linguistic resources – accuracy
- speech – fluency, pronunciation and intonation.

The *Practical (oral) examination marking key*, published on the course page of the Authority website, describes levels of candidate performance for each of the above criteria. You are advised to familiarise yourself with the marking key in preparation for the examination; for example, if the description for the highest level of the marking criterion, Response – relevance and depth of information, reads ‘Engages effectively with the marker about the focus of the personal investigation. Presents a range of highly relevant information when discussing their learning, ideas, personal and/or cultural identity. Makes comprehensive reference to the source texts,’ the expectation would be that you:

- participate in a discussion with the marker, rather than attempt to recite a prepared response that resembles a monologue
- respond with relevant information to comments and/or questions from the marker
- provide considered and relevant information about the topic, your learning, your ideas, your personal and/or cultural identity (where appropriate), and make reference to the source texts used in your research, for example
 - What did you know about this particular topic before you started your research?

- How has your study of this particular topic, or the source texts you used, influenced your opinion or changed the way you think about it?
- Did your research uncover anything unexpected?
- How are cultures, values and beliefs represented in the source texts you selected?
- How is the topic related to language, culture and identity?

Predicting questions that could be asked about the topic you have chosen for your personal investigation

Imagining questions you may be asked may help you in the preparation of your personal investigation. The following questions are provided as a guide, and are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

- What source texts did you use for your personal investigation?
- Were they easy to find? How useful were they?
- Did you conduct interviews? Who did you interview?
- Why did you choose the topic?
- What is the message or lesson that you drew personally from your research?
- What have you learned about yourself while researching the topic?
- What aspect of the topic did you find most interesting?
- If you had the opportunity to conduct further research on the topic, which direction would you choose and why?

Preparing the 300-word summary and annotated bibliography

Prior to the practical (oral) examination, you are required to complete the *Personal investigation interview sheet* and use the template included to provide the Authority with a 300-word summary, in [Language], and an annotated bibliography of three source texts, to demonstrate knowledge of your area of interest. Schools and non-school candidates will be advised of the precise timing and manner of submission prior to each year’s practical (oral) examination.

300-word summary

The 300-word summary is in [Language] and includes a brief introduction to the topic and the source texts.

The following example is provided in English for illustrative purposes.

Current global issues – recycling

Today recycling is an important but frequently controversial topic, especially when it comes to the interests of industry. Often a lot is promised but not much is done.

Where should we begin? Is it already too late to do anything? Our oceans are polluted with plastics of every type and rubbish in general. At my school there is also a lot of rubbish. Perhaps if the school started a recycling program, students would be exposed to environmentally positive practices which they would hopefully continue outside school.

Recently there was an interesting broadcast on the ABC – *War on Waste* – that highlighted the Australian love of plastic and showed many alarming images of landfill and dirty waterways. It gave us an important message – we must do more to help the environment. As a result, there are

changes in supermarkets, where they have replaced free plastic bags with low-priced carry bags made of different environmentally friendly materials. Unfortunately, the consumer response to this has not been all positive.

In comparison, the recycling industry in Germany is much better organised – differentiated rubbish collection makes it very easy to dispose of rubbish correctly. This in turn makes rubbish collection more efficient and cost-effective. Rubbish is sorted in colour-coded bins, for example, green/brown for biodegradable products, blue for paper, yellow for plastic, black/grey for general waste. Glass is further sorted by the type – clear, brown and green glass.

Another successful initiative, that should be considered, is the returnable bottle deposit. This has been in operation in Germany since 2003. A bottle deposit is paid on each purchase and when the bottle is returned 25 cents are refunded.

Of course, we can all do more to save our environment. We should no longer be indifferent and produce so much plastic and rubbish. If we were not so lazy and picked up our rubbish, our environment would be much cleaner and healthier for the animals. As individuals we should hold each other and society to account.

Annotated bibliography

An annotated bibliography in English or [Language] includes:

- a **citation** for the text – this includes the author, title, publisher and year of publication.
- an **annotation** – a brief summary of the content and relationship to the topic chosen. A paragraph is sufficient.

The following example is provided in English for illustrative purposes.

'Episode 2' *War on Waste Series 1*, ABC, directed by Tim Green, hosted by Craig Reucassel, Screen Australia, 2017.

War on Waste looks critically at why Australia is one of the most wasteful nations in the world. It explores why Australians don't recycle more and what really happens to the waste we do recycle. This episode focuses on how much plastic ends up in the ocean and our waterways and the impact it has on marine life and the environment in general. The series increased my interest in the topic and motivated me to do further research into how other countries approach recycling.