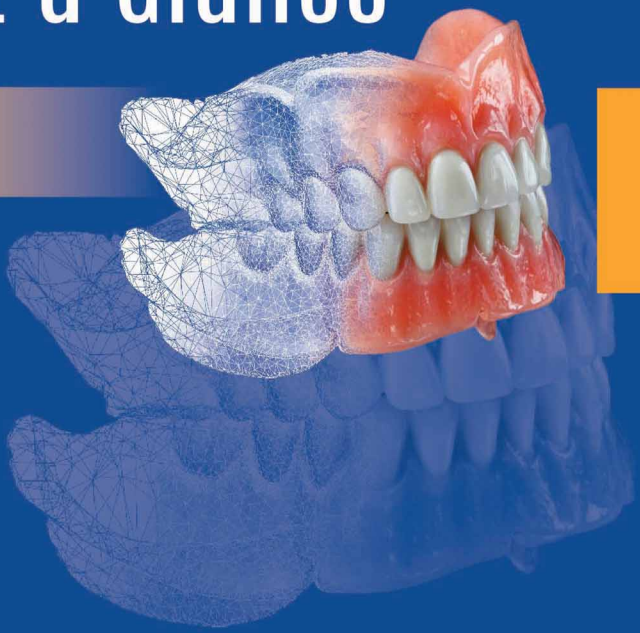
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PROSTHODONTICS at a Glance



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Contents

1. How to Face Viva Voce 1

2. Complete Dentures 6

3. Removable Partial Dentures 71

4. Fixed Partial Dentures 97

Index 127

CHAPTER

1

How to Face Viva Voce

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How to Face Viva Voce

A viva is essentially a precise but detailed conversation with the student. It follows a fairly structured pattern. The time, place, length, participants and subject matter are established well in advance and one participant controls the proceedings and contributes mainly questions and the other contributes mainly the answers.

It has become one of the most important criteria in any selection procedure. A written test provides only an idea about the knowledge possessed by the candidate but does not indicate personal traits, behavioral pattern, confidence level, etc. and so oral tests (viva voce) have become very important.

In a viva, the observation of verbal and nonverbal responses are the chief features. Under verbal responses comes the manner of speaking, accent, language and the knowledge, etc. whereas nonverbal responses includes movements, etc.

By its nature, the viva sets up an artificial and often daunting relationship between people. The participants have to adopt roles and are not equal partners. If you take part in a viva, then with a proper strategy and preparation you could

shine and come out with flying colors. The examiner's role is to judge and the student's job is to present themselves in favorable light. Hence, the student must do justice to himself or herself.

For many people, the time before a viva is a nerve racking, adrenalin-pumping period. Try to put all that adrenalin to positive use. This means first of all adopt a positive attitude. The underlying strategy for success is to value yourself. The viva does not require you to take on the role of victim. It is a dialogue and you are an active participant.

You may be the best candidate, but that is no guarantee that you will be evaluated and assessed to be the best. It is the proper preparation and experience that will make you sell yourself as the best person. Begin by thinking how you can make your best impression on the examiner. Not that you should present yourself as being different from what you are but you can present yourself in a very positive way. Consider what examiner is likely to ask. A prompt and flowing answer will always be in good light. Know your strengths and do not miss out on the opportunity to exhibit your strong areas. Also know your weak areas and try and see how you can circumvent them. Remember that most of the questions in a viva lead from one question to another and so plan your answers so that you can lead to your strong areas and evade weak areas.

On the day of the viva, allow yourself plenty of time to get ready. Reach the place of viva well in time. Ensure that you are not flustered when you arrive for the viva. Do not feel nervous and make friendly conservation with other students to ease up the tension, if required. Before you speak, you will be seen. The appearance should indicate your grasp and hence, it helps to be neatly dressed. Make sure your clothes are comfortable to wear and suite to you. Remember that you want to make good impression and be careful not to distract the examiner.

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First impressions are of paramount importance and so, follow the following points:

- Enter the viva hall gently and exchange greetings of the day
- Sit with slight forward learning posture; put your hands in a natural and comfortable position
- Maintain the body posture which should not be too stiff or too relaxed
- While replying, make eye contact
- Speak with a slight smile
- Keep your cool and remain self controlled
- Answer questions in a concise, distinct and normal accent
- Control hand, body and finger movements
- Maintain self confidence and exhibit self assured style
- Establish good rapport with the examiner
- Keep your sentences short to the point
- While ending your answer, it is recommended to drop the pitch of your voice on the last syllable of your final sentence. This will indicate to examiner that you have completed your answer.

You can usually predict at least a few of the broad topics that will be raised during the viva. But it is unwise to predict the exact questions that might be asked to you. The question and answers that you wrote down and practiced with a friend should be no more than a rough guide.

Do not learn these answers by heart, as you run the risk of answering the wrong question. By all means prepare your ideas but not the exact words for conveying them. You could often find some difficult questions, those you hoped were never asked. Do not panic, pause, think and take your time to answer. Examiner is not looking for glib answers to difficult questions.

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If the question is complicated and you do not understand, do not feel ashamed to ask the examiner to repeat the question. Do not allow yourself to be overwhelmed. Do not undersell yourself by giving up the difficult question without first trying to answer it. However, if you are really stuck and cannot answer then do not try to invent an answer. A quite confident admission of ignorance is more impressive than a bluster.

During a viva one must avoid the following points:

- Do not slam the door while entering the viva room. Avoid leaning back during the viva
- Do not fold arms or legs
- Avoid speaking in whispers or hushed tone or artificial accent
- Do not lose patience and get involved in an argument during the viva
- Do not remain too reserved or too arrogant
- Do not giggle or mumble during the viva
- Do not scratch yourself during the viva
- Do not tell lie and if you do not know the answer, say so
- Do not bite nails during the viva
- Do not launch into an answer without taking time to assemble your thoughts
- Do not think that you have to keep on talking until you are interrupted
- Do not talk in the abstract. Use specific examples
- Do not be too apologetic and in turn undersell yourself
- Do not exaggerate yourself or your knowledge.

At times, the examiner may ask you if you have any question at the end of the viva. In case you do wish to ask, ensure that it is constructive and in a positive spirit. You could then exhibit your initiative and imagination as well as knowledge and enthusiasm.

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At the end of the viva, exchange greetings of the day and leave with a smiling face.

Summary

In short, day by day viva is becoming an important mode of evaluating capabilities. To be able to come out successful in viva, one must prepare oneself. For effective performance during the viva, one must be well studied in the subject, be present in time, neatly dressed, polite, alert, well-mannered and take time to reply and be positive in one's replies. One should not be nervous, self conscious and scared.

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PROSTHODONTICS
at a Glance

Salient Features

- A ready reckoner for students of prosthodontics to answer questions at post-end exams
- Enables students to answer chairside viva
- Helps in recalling and revision of the important points after completion of a chapter
- Covers questions with their answers on all aspects of prosthodontics
- A must-have book for the students stepping in for viva to attain confidence.



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She is a distinguished teacher, perfectionist and well-disciplined clinician and has bagged several national and international papers to her credit.

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