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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

CHINESE

GCE Advanced Level

Paper 9715/01
Speaking

General comments

All the candidates who took part in this examination demonstrated an extremely high level of competence in spoken Mandarin. They spoke fluently and with confidence.

Centres are reminded that candidates are expected to ask questions of the Examiner in both the Topic and General Conversation sections. Marks are allocated for this activity in the Mark Scheme and are forfeited by candidates who fail to ask questions.

Paper 9715/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

Understanding of the texts

On the whole, candidates demonstrated an excellent understanding of the arguments, ideas and information contained in the two articles, and there were only a few cases where insufficient understanding of the texts caused problems.

Responding to the questions

Generally, candidates' answers were full, clearly-expressed and showed good engagement with the texts. Where there were problems, these were usually due to candidates answering questions from personal experience rather than from the information contained in the texts, or making no effort to use any of their own words, but merely copying answers straight from the texts.

Quality of language

Most candidates were able to organise the required information in their own words. However, although the quality of language was generally good, certain expressions and grammatical structures were sometimes used inappropriately.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Many candidates scored full marks. No particular problems.

Question 2

(c) caused problems for a few candidates who did not use *dou* or *ye* in conjunction with *lian*.

Question 3

Candidates tended to cope well with these comprehension questions and no question caused any particular problems

Section 2

Question 4

(c) was the only question to cause any particular problems. There was a tendency by weaker candidates to copy answers directly from the text or to make up answers which bore no relation to the text.

Question 5

There were some excellent answers to this question in which candidates were able to successfully summarise material from both texts and then add their own opinions. Occasionally, candidates omitted to include any information from the texts, simply giving their own opinions: such answers could not score highly.

Paper 9715/03

Essay

General comments

Candidates demonstrated the ability to write clearly on their chosen subject. Almost all candidates had a sound grasp of grammar, with a high proportion showing complete control of the Chinese language as a tool for communication. The best candidates were able to use idioms and sayings appropriately and to present arguments that were coherent and convincing. Future preparation could focus on encouraging candidates to expand their vocabulary and on teaching them how best to develop an argument.

Paper 9715/04

Texts

General comments

Most candidates performed well on this paper. Short answers and essays were largely well-planned with the information asked for in the question provided in a carefully thought-out and systematic fashion. Candidates should ensure that their essays are supported by specific examples/information/quotes from the text to back up their answers.

Candidates should remember that it will always be very apparent to the Examiner if they have not read, or have little knowledge of, the text. Where candidates have no real knowledge of the text, this will have a significant impact on the marks they can gain, even if they write in fluent Chinese.

Candidates are required to answer one question from **Section 1**, one from **Section 2** and one other. Candidates should therefore ensure that they do not mistakenly answer three questions from the same section.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

- (a) A large number of candidates answered this question and answered it well on the whole. In order to gain high marks for this question, candidates, in (ii) and (iii), needed to show knowledge of the whole story, the meeting of Xiang Lin's wife with Liu Ma, the attitudes and ideas of the author etc. However well candidates are able to understand and comment on the excerpt printed on the question paper, if they are not able to relate this to the text as a whole, their mark will be affected.
- (b) Candidates choosing this question discussed Fourth Uncle's views and contrasted them with those of the author very well.

Question 2

- (a) This question was well answered. Some candidates muddled the course of events in Act IV. A few candidates were insufficiently conversant with the play to be able to answer correctly.
- (b) There were too few responses to this question to make any general comments appropriate.

Question 3

- (a) Candidates responded to this question with sensitivity. Some of the answers were a delight to read. In (i), candidates were asked to *explain* the metaphors used. It was insufficient merely to quote them.
- (b) There were too few responses to this question to make any general comments appropriate.

Question 4

- (a) Some candidates answered this well, showing a thorough knowledge of the story. Others displayed no knowledge of the story beyond what was quoted in the question.
- (b) There were too few responses to this question to make any general comments appropriate.

Section 2

Question 5

- (a) There were some good, well thought-out and well-structured answers to this question.
- (b) The answers to this question were variable. There were some well-planned essays full of examples from the text. However, some essays lost sight of what was required, with candidates either writing about marriage in general without sufficient reference to the text or getting sidetracked into unnecessary details about parts of the story unrelated to the question. A third type of answer discussed arranged marriages without any reference to the text whatsoever.

Question 6

There were too few responses to this question to make any general comments appropriate.

Question 7

- (a) Candidates showed a good knowledge of the text in their answers. Rather than merely saying the *yi yuan huo* was successful, the best answers showed that the candidate was aware of what happened after the immediate success of the sales policy.
- (b) Those candidates choosing this question presented Mr Lin in a rather two dimensional light, thus overlooking some of the intentions of the author.

Question 8

- (a) Candidates answered this well. The question was looking for an answer with predominant reference to the set chapter and not the whole book.
- (b) Candidates answering this question needed to plan their answers more carefully before beginning their response.

Paper 9715/05

Prose

General comments

Candidates taking this Prose Paper did extremely well. They provided accurate translations of the English in well-expressed Chinese.

Some candidates had problems with translating 'faint' into Chinese. Some did not notice that the sentence 'My work began to suffer' was obviously referring to schoolwork. The sentence which presented candidates with the most difficulty was, 'The harder I looked at anything, the more it hurt and there was always a dark blur in front of my eyes'.

Having finished the prose, candidates should always leave time to check their work and polish the translation to improve it.