

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCE Chinese (6CN01) Paper 1A

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This speaking assessment requires candidates to speak in monologue for five to six minutes, based on an assigned stimulus card in English with guidance questions.

It is imperative that invigilators do not ask the candidates any questions in either the target language or in English.

Candidates have 15 minutes preparation time and they are allowed to make notes during the preparation time which may be referred to during their speaking assessment.

There are 8 stimuli cards which cover the following four topic areas:

- Leisure, Youth Interests and Chinese Festivals;
- Food, Diet and Health;
- Transport, Travel and Tourism;
- Education and Employment.

On each stimulus card, there is a picture and a short passage in English which is relevant to the topic. The guidance in the form of a series of questions provides candidates with clues to explore their ideas.

Candidates are expected to refer to the guidance questions so that they can communicate effectively in Chinese about the stimulus topic. Candidates need to express opinions as well as provide relevant and appropriate information, as specified in the *Edexcel GCE Chinese specification (page 4)*.

Assessment: Content and understanding

The majority of candidates gave good quality performances, showing they were familiar with the exam setting and were well prepared. Some gave developed and detailed answers, demonstrating that they had considered thoroughly the issues relating to the stimulus.

Most candidates started the speaking assessment with a full or partial translation of the English stimulus, the manipulation and/or paraphrasing were usually sufficient to provide a good start. Candidates should read the English stimulus fully by covering the guidance points well and can enrich the speech by providing developed ideas in depth. More able candidates were those who spoke logically and accurately in an authentic manner at native or near-native standard.

Candidates were unable to gain high marks if they struggled to speak for the full time allocation; or they were over-reliant on pre-learnt material or became repetitive. Candidates received lower marks if they were unable to extend their responses to the full range of guidance points, especially to the last open-ended question.

For example, Stimulus 4, Midday nap. It is crucial that candidates gave opinions and comments to the last question: *'What other factors are important for maintaining good health?'*

Although a full summary of the English stimulus is not required. It will be unwise to ignore it completely and go for a free-style speech. Guidance questions were important for this assessment and candidates were encouraged to respond to those questions in their speech.

Assessment: Quality of language

Quality of Language marks were awarded based on pronunciation and grammar accuracy, as well as the range of vocabulary and variety of structures and expressions.

The majority of candidates received good marks for Quality of Language. High marks of 9-10 were often awarded for performances which were not faultless, but showed clear pronunciation and good control of complex language structures.

The weaker candidates tended to demonstrate problems with tones which sometimes caused misunderstanding. Some candidates spoke fluently, but any simplicity of language expressions or structures or limited vocabulary affected their quality of language marks.

Administration

OR1CN form

A completed OR1CN form should be attached with the recording for every candidate.

Recording on CD or USB

Most of the centres recorded the exam digitally and sent recordings on CD or USB. Preferred formats are: .mp3 or .wma or .wav.

Centres are reminded to check thoroughly that the recordings on CD and cassette are complete and of a good audible quality before sending for assessment to the Edexcel examiner.

Centres are also reminded that CDs/USB should be packaged carefully with appropriate wrapping in order to prevent damage to the recordings. It is considered good practice for Centres to keep back-up copies of all recordings of candidate assessments, in case of loss or damage to the original CD/ USB.

The Centre name/number, candidate name, candidate number and stimulus card number should be announced at the start of each and every recording.

Teacher Examiners

There were many examples of good practice but teacher examiners should be reminded to read the instructions carefully before conducting the exam. It is important for the integrity of the examination that teacher examiners accurately follow the sequence of oral tests, as specified in the oral booklet.

Candidates must not be allowed to choose their own stimulus card.

Centres should keep candidates' preparation notes produced during the 15 minutes preparation time till the last date for the Enquiry about Results (EAR) date.

More importantly, teacher examiners should not prompt candidates by reading out questions from the stimulus card, or by asking supplementary questions either in English or in Chinese.

The assessment requires the candidates to produce a monologue and additional support by the invigilator could disadvantage candidates' performance.

Conclusion

The stimulus material in this assessment proved accessible to all candidates.

The examination requires candidates to give complex, well-structured and extended answers based on the stimulus material provided by Edexcel. In preparation for this assessment, teachers should ensure that candidates are given proper training and experience of the expectations of the assessment prior to the examination.

Grade Boundaries

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