



Examiner's Report Principal Examiner
Feedback
Summer 2019
Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Chinese (8CN0) Paper 2

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Introduction

Summer 2019 is the second sitting for the new specification Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Chinese Paper 2.

The paper consisted of three sections: A, B and C. Candidates answer Section A and one question from either Section B or Section C. The duration of the examination was one hour and forty minutes and there was no evidence to suggest that candidates had trouble completing the paper in the time allowed.

In general, the candidates performed well. In Section A Question 1, candidates are required to translate a short piece of text from English into Chinese. Candidates are assessed for their ability to produce an accurate translation using appropriate language. Section B is focused on written response to literary works and consists of Question 2 and Question 3. Section C is focused on written response to cinematic (film) works and consists of Question 4 and Question 5. Each question requires the candidates to write an essay of between 225 — 300 Chinese characters in response to an essay topic which is referenced to one of the literary or cinematic works as prescribed in Appendix 2 of the Specification. Guidance is provided in the form of 3 bullet points which lay out suggestions for the content of the essay. Candidates are required to choose to answer 1 question only from either Section B or Section C. The resulting essay is assessed for the quality of written Chinese through the accuracy and articulate application of a range of complex grammatical structures and vocabulary as well as the ability of the candidate to respond critically to a literary or cinematic work through the construction of a cogent argument which is well-justified and consistently evidenced by reference to the work. Whole responses are marked regardless of length.

Students' Performances

Section A

Question 1

This question consisted of a short English text to be translated into Chinese. The English text was divided into 20 discrete language elements each worth one mark to give an overall mark out of 20. The lexis was relatively straightforward. Although most candidates did not struggle with vocabulary, some basic phrases seemed to present difficulties for a few candidates. These included '已经/已經', '之一', '担心/擔心' and '安全性'. Character formation was usually satisfactory, although certain characters proved to be problematic, for example '餐', '现/現', '便' etc. A range of features from grammar lists were tested. These ranged from the relatively straightforward '和', '更', to the more sophisticated conjunctions, such as '但是'.

As a result, candidates scored across the whole mark range. Overall, the performance was encouraging and most candidates showed that they could transfer the meaning of a piece of English with acceptable accuracy. It is necessary to draw attention to certain details as being essential if candidates are to score for every language element.

Examiners noted the following:

- The division of marks enabled most candidates to score at some point. Marks were awarded most often for translating '世界上', '用手机/用手機', '付款', '但是' and '一些人'. Marks were most often lost for '之一', '餐厅', '用手机付款/用手機付款', '担心/擔心' and '安全性'. '餐厅', '担心/擔心' and '安全性' presented a challenge to candidates because of the harder characters or vocabulary. '比.....更' seemed to be difficult for some candidates. Some candidates had difficulty with the last sentence as they misunderstood the meaning of the English text.

Section B and C

In Section B and C, candidates have a free choice between questions 2, 3, 4 and 5, with questions 2 and 3 being based on literary texts and questions 4 and 5 being based on cinematic works.

In general, candidates performed better than the previous year which was the first sitting of the new specification. More candidates have read the rubric carefully and produced more appropriate responses than the previous year.

Question 2

This text was favoured by more candidates this year and the question attracted a bigger amount of interest. The intention of the question was to discuss the reason(s) for the change in the relationship between Xia Wang and Qiu Hu.

The best essays allowed themselves to be guided by the question, comparing Xia Wang's and Qiu Hu's differing and developing family backgrounds. They developed the idea that the author included this facet of the work as context to highlight how the sharp differences in their social situation informed the relationship between the two children and the sudden changes in their circumstances were the inciting incidents for the relationship between the two to evolve towards a friendship characterised by generosity in the face of adversity.

Unfortunately, a certain number of candidates simply did not appreciate that the question was both an assessment of language ability as well as their critical analysis and argument. Many essays were heavy on narrative and focussed too much on simply describing the family backgrounds of Xia Wang and Qiu Hu without referencing it back to the question or analysing the implications of the author introducing such detailed descriptions of this context.

Question 3

This question was the most popular of the literary response section and there was a greater range of the quality of responses. The question was intended to allow candidates to explore the symbolism of the eponymous 'Father's flowers' and the use of the 'flowers' as allegory.

The best candidates produced interesting essays showed engagement with the text and fully explored the parallels drawn by the author between the careful tending of the flowers and the care with which 'father' guides and parents the narrator. The best essays mentioned that the title event "Father's flowers have fallen" symbolised the main themes of the story. Some candidates were even able to produce particularly personal and pertinent responses by informing their analysis through their own perspective.

However, a small number candidates failed to read the question carefully as well as focus on the bullet points, only addressing the argument in the last sentence.

Question 4

The film was more a popular choice than last year, and the focus of the question was on Xiao Fei and why her campaign for Class President was unsuccessful.

Many candidates who read the question properly and allowed themselves to be guided by the bullet points produced some very sound answers. Candidates commonly handled the first 2 bullet points well by addressing Xiao Fei's much more withdrawn personality and the fact she came from a single parent family and the significant difference in social values and privilege compared to the other two children.

However, some candidates failed to appreciate that the question was explicitly asking for a discussion of Xiao Fei and although comparisons with the other two children were necessary and beneficial to any arguments, especially in terms of privilege and personality, the focus of the question was meant to be on Xiao Fei. Essays would often turn into an equally balanced three-sided discussion of why Luo Lei won and why Cheng and Xiao Fei did not. In some cases, candidates underperformed by providing a narrative, almost blow-by-blow account of the campaign. As a result, they lost their focus in answering the question and gave some irrelevant responses to the question.

Question 5

This question is based on a cinematic work in Cantonese and the question is more attractive to candidates who have already have a background in Cantonese. The question asked students to discuss the effect Gui Jie was having on Granny's life.

Many candidates showed very good knowledge and understanding of the film. Some candidates also produced some very long essays which go well beyond the suggested word count. The best essays discussed the use of cinematic and narrative techniques to illustrate Granny Leung Foon's lonely, repetitive lifestyle and how the gradual improvements to Granny Leung Foon's life which came about through the intervention of Gui Jie and her son were shown to have a much deeper and long-lasting effect than when considered at face value. Capable candidates also drew attention to the film-maker's juxtaposition of Gui Jie and her son as 'adoptive family' to Granny Leung Foon with the treatment Granny Leung Foon receives at the hands of her 'real' family.

Unfortunately, a small number of candidates who attempted this question either failed to read the questions properly or misunderstood the film entirely and they wrote of Granny Leung Foon as Gui Jie's mother

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Question 1 comprises twenty separate scoring units. Because there is a one-to-one mapping of meaning, candidates should attempt to convey every element of language in the original they can. Candidates should ensure they do not lose credit because of a careless lack of attention to detail and resultant failure to convey nuances (e.g. by failing to translate a qualifier).
- In order to ensure their essays are focused on question, candidates should refer closely to the rubric and the bullet points. Candidates should proofread their essays carefully and ensure that they have addressed all the bullet points.
- Essays need to show candidates' ability to respond critically to the text or to present and justify their points of view. Essays shouldn't be descriptive or narrative. It is recommended that candidates add their own analysis and make sure that it is of an adequate depth and development: i.e. evidenced by quotation or reference to the work and linked backed to a central argument which is being made.
- Candidates are reminded to use good essay writing techniques and to pay attention to structure points should follow logically from one to another following an argument which is being presented. Individually well-argued paragraphs still need to be presented in an order which makes sense and flows well in order to score highly on all fronts.
- When deciding on works to be studied for Sections B and C, candidates and teachers should carefully consider candidates have been taught enough material to be able to cover all potential questions independently and with adequate reference to the literary or cinematic work.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

