



Examiner's Report Principal Examiner
Feedback
Summer 2019
Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Chinese (8CN0) Paper 3

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Paper overview

The GCE Chinese 8CN0 03C/03M was set as per the GCE 2017 Specification, and is consistent with the format of the previous paper. The speaking tasks are externally set and all the assessments are marked by Pearson. Each assessment consists of two tasks and all the passages are taken from the following two published themes:

Theme 1: Changes in contemporary Chinese society

- Family
- Education and the world of work

Theme 2: Chinese culture

- Traditions
- Cultural activities

The overall length of the assessment all together is 27 to 30 minutes, which is 7 to 9 minutes in task 1, 5 to 6 minutes in task 2 plus 15 minutes' preparation time for both tasks.

Format of the Assessment

Task 1 requires the candidates to respond to one short text on a stimulus card based on Theme 1: Changes in contemporary Chinese society (当代华人社会变迁), which is divided into two sub-themes Family (家庭) and Education and the World of Work (教育与工作). The candidate is given a stimulus card according to the allocation table in the front of the teacher-examiner booklet on one of the above sub-themes. The candidate is asked four compulsory set questions by the teacher/examiner in the order they are written. Stimulus cards 1- 6 are for Task 1.

Task 2 is based on the content from the Theme 2, which is set in the context of Chinese-speaking countries and communities. This theme covers Chinese culture and traditions (传统 through festivals and customs) and Chinese culture activities (文化活动 through films, television, music and reading).

The stimulus card for this task contains three bullet points which will act as a springboard for the discussion under the “aspect” of the sub-theme, which is highlighted in a box and indicate the context for the questions. At the start, the teacher/examiner asks the three compulsory questions on the card, and the task is then followed by a broader discussion on any other aspect(s) of the same sub-theme. Stimulus cards 7-12 are for Task 2.

Candidates are assessed on their ability to use a range of language accurately (AO3) 0-12 marks, communicate and interact effectively (AO1) 0-6 marks, summarise and understand written sources in speech (AO2) 0-12 marks, and show knowledge and understanding about the culture and society where the language is spoken (AO4) 0-12 marks.

AO2 is only assessed in Task 1, therefore Task 1 is worth 42 marks and Task 2 is worth 30 marks.

Important notes for the Task 1:

Firstly, the teacher/examiner must ask the four questions in the order from top to bottom as presented on the stimulus card.

These questions are mandatory and may be repeated, however, for the purpose of fair assessment across all centres, they must not be rephrased or expanded on in any way.

Secondly, the examiner broadens the discussion to encompass the whole of the sub-theme. Never should an examiner ask any other questions in between the four mandatory questions.

Q1 requires the student to summarise the text.

Q2 requires the student to answer a comprehension question on the text.

Q3 requires the student to respond with a view to the discussion point.

Q4 will stimulate wider discussion of the cultural and social context of the sub-theme beyond the focus of the texts on the stimulus card.

Candidates' Performances

Many congratulations to the candidates and centres for their efforts – Although this public exam of a subject is in the second year of the Specification, it is still quite new for a lot of them. It was reassuring to see that well-prepared, candidates were able to discuss the issues on the cards and had the linguistic ability to express themselves well. Also, it was a pleasure to hear how candidates and teacher examiners handled the demands of this new speaking exam with success.

Task 1

Q1 asked the candidate to summarise the main points of the text. Most of them were able to say what the text was about and were able to give an outline of the ideas. At times, however, many of them just read the full passage to play it safe, which does not fulfil the requirements.

Q2 was a comprehension question, always starts with “根据短文” and the answer is most definitely found from the context of the passage. However, some candidates have mistaken this question as a debate, and provided an answer with “I think” frequently. Some of them did talk a lot but very little relevant to the question.

Q3 required an opinion on the discussion point in the box on the card. Some candidates missed out the key words and answered in different directions. This question was very effective in discriminating between able and less able candidates. There were some extensive and thoughtful answers to the question, which required candidates to think quickly about the enquiry as well as find the

appropriate language for the response. At the other extreme, weaker candidates sometime struggled to give more than a minimal answer or to answer coherently, presumably due to not understanding some of the vocabulary on the card.

Q4 and further discussion Qs should lead into the discussion of the sub-theme. The questions posed in this part of the test must give the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the sub-theme in Chinese. This means that the answers must refer to society and culture in Chinese. Personal and anecdotal questions are not appropriate.

All four questions should always be asked, even if a candidate has partially answered the next question in their previous answer.

Candidates must never see the cards in advance of the examination and the table provided in the instructions to examiners giving the order in which the cards need to be given out and be used. Also, candidates must never see the four mandatory questions on the teacher's card. In other words, students will only be given the version of card without any question on it. For this reason, it is not expected that the candidate will begin a response to any question without a few moments thinking time.

To maximise A01 and A04 potential marks, it is a requirement for the examiner to continue the discussion by asking follow-up questions under the same sub-theme, where evidence can be exhibited.

Some follow-up question phrases like “贪官和腐败” was not universally known, and students had problems answering the question, which jeopardise the opportunity on further discussion of the sub - theme.

It is fair to say that this element of follow-up questions was the most challenging for a number of candidates as they failed to link their answers to the life of Chinese societies, e.g. family, education and jobs, etc. So, teachers are advised to root their lessons firmly in the Chinese speaking world in order to comply with this component of the test.

The candidate and the teacher-examiner should respond appropriately to each other's input, whether that be a question, a comment or a remark. To reach the full range of the marking criteria there will be frequent examples of this level of interaction, where, however, the examiner should play more of a supporting role rather than dominating an answer for a lengthy period of time. The candidate needs to demonstrate the ability to interact within a sub-theme. The best oral exam conversations develop naturally from the spontaneous responses of the candidates. A mere question and answer approach cannot facilitate a spontaneous interaction as described above, neither does a series of monologues.

Some recordings showed very good interaction, whereas others sounded very stilted where they kept asking the teacher examiner “你说什么?” or “对不起” at various moments during the test, and thought that's a way of communication

with the examiner, which is not appreciable. Interaction does not simply mean to ask a question, but to interact within the discussion as described above. Care should be taken not to spend too much time on the set questions, as the candidate needs to have the opportunity to show knowledge and understanding of the sub-theme in China and Chinese societies in the remaining discussion in order to access the full range of marks available.

Task 2

Because the candidates are given an “aspect” of the sub-theme, they seemed to feel more focused and have a clear target. They seemed to performed better at this task than in Task 1.

The main problem, again, was the link to Chinese-speaking countries in order to have full access to marking grid for AO4, Knowledge and Understanding of society and culture.

The questions on the stimulus cards were well received and fulfilled their aim to start the discussion.

The most of candidates have known the festivals and the customs very well, so their performance in the all three mandatory questions including the further discussion is very good. However, some weak candidates found hard to talk about the literature work, a film, a music, etc.

Again, as for Task 1, in Task 2 here:

- It is a requirement for the examiner to ask follow-up questions under the “aspect” of the sub-theme to maximise AO1 and AO4 marks.
- The examiner should only broaden the discussion by asking own questions after the all three mandatory questions asked but never to add their own question in between the three mandatory questions.

It is also not advisable for the examiner to take questions from other cards to ask students as follow-up questions since the continued discussion should be based on the same “aspect” of the sub-theme. Some teacher-examiners did use other cards’ questions this year.

Specific Comments on the Stimulus Cards

Stimulus CN1

The most of candidates did not answer well due to their age. They were not able to talk about their self-experience like other topics. For bullet point 3, most candidates are only able to give straightforward answers.

Stimulus CN2

The most candidates did well for this stimulus. They could give details for bullet points 3 and 4 since generation gap, spending time with parents are topics everyone was very familiar with.

Stimulus CN3

This was the stimulus card most candidates had (The first candidate always had this one.). Although they may not have the experience of starting their own company, it was not difficult for them to talk about balance of work and life. The most of candidates did well for bullet point 3 and 4.

Stimulus CN4

This was the topic which candidates were familiar with. The most of them did well for bullet points 3 and 4. They could give details since doing homework was a topic everyone was very familiar with. However sometimes it could lead to 'free talk'. For example, for bullet point 4, some candidates spent long time to talk about their classmates' cases.

Stimulus CN5

Most candidates did well for this stimulus. They had different argument for bullet points 3 due to their own family background. Most candidates were able to give convincing conclusion although having different viewpoints.

Stimulus CN6

Comparing to topics like homework and family, candidates did not do as well as CN4 and 5. Some candidates found it difficult to explain what is a 'rush culture'. They could only give straightforward answers.

Stimulus CN7 Chinese film (中国电影)

The most candidates only referred their answer to a particular film and missed the point of main type (主要类型).

Stimulus CN8 Spring Festival (春节)

Candidates did well in general. The most of them could give details for all the bullet points.

Stimulus CN9 Dragon Boat Festival (端午节)

Same as the CN8, the candidates did well in general. The most of them could give details for all the bullet points.

Stimulus CN10 Chinese music (中国音乐)

The candidates' performances varied due to their different backgrounds. For the native speakers, they were able to talk in details about the music they loved. For the non-native speakers, candidates in one centre simply referred to the same music and had the same content.

Stimulus CN11 Custom (习俗)

Same as CN8 and CN9, the Candidates did well in general. The most of them could give details for all the bullet points.

Stimulus CN12 Chinese literature (中国文学)

The candidates' performances varied due to their different backgrounds. 《西游记》(West Journey), this book is the most mentioned.

Conduct of the examination

The majority of teacher-examiners conducted the examination quite well. There were, however, a number of issues which arose.

Timing was accurate in general and the most the length of recording is between 12 and 15 minutes.

Recording quality

As currently only CDs and USB sticks are permitted there was generally no problem with the sound quality; however, care should be taken to record the exams in a quiet area of the centre, as background noises can be very off putting to the candidate.

Centres are requested to make sure that CDs have been properly formatted before submission. It is advisable that centres check the recordings before sending them on, and label the individual recordings with the candidate name and number in the index of the CD, rather than just leaving it as track 1, track 2 etc. This year only one centre submitted one task's recording.

USB sticks are becoming more popular too, but these carry the slight danger of transferring a virus. It is requested that only new USB sticks are used and a check made for viruses.

Whatever mode of recording is chosen, it is vital that the recordings are clear, with both teacher-examiner and candidate's speech clearly audible throughout.

It is not a Pearson requirement to have passcode to open the audio files. Centres who do wish to encrypt the USB stick for their own requirements should contact languagesassessment@pearson.com with the passcode to be passed on to the examiner.

Marking is conducted by Pearson Edexcel Examiner. No marks should be provided by centre examiner on the oral form. A few centre teacher-examiners did the marking this year.

Forms Oral forms

Some centres did not send in their oral form (OR3AS), which made it difficult for the Pearson examiners to write down the marks.

Centres are also reminded to write down the number of the stimulus cards (i.e. CN3, CN9 etc.) used in the spaces provided on OR3AS forms.

Centre Authentication Sheet

Some centres did not send a completed authentication sheet (CR3AS) with the students' and the teacher-examiner's signatures. Again, this is vital admin which needs to be taken care of. This year some CR3AS sheets were chased during

the marking.

NB. Each centre usually only requires one copy of the sheet with all the candidates' names and signature listed. An individual copy for each candidate is not required.

A copy of all relevant Oral Forms and Authentication Sheets can be downloaded from the AS Chinese section of the Pearson website under "Administrative Support".

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this paper can be found on the website on this link: <http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.asp>

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