

Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

October 2020

Pearson Edexcel GCE In Chinese (9CN0) Paper 2: Written response to works and

translation

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#### Introduction

This was a special and additional assessment of this paper unit in autumn 2020. This paper includes a translation exercise and two written responses to works. The total mark for this paper is 120.

Candidates must answer Question 1 in Section A by translating a short piece of text from English into Chinese. In addition, they must answer two questions from Sections B and C – this means either two literary works from Section B or one literary work from Section B and one film from Section C. The duration of the examination is 2 hours 40 minutes.

In Section A Question 1 (20 marks), candidates are required to translate a short piece of text from English into Chinese. The content of the translation is a passage based on one of the four themes as indicated in the Specification. Candidates are assessed with reference to their ability to produce an accurate and appropriate translation.

Section B consists of three questions (Question 2, Question 3 and Question 4) on different literary works, whereas Section C consists of three questions (Question 5, Question 6 and Question 7) on different films. Prescribed literary works and films can be found in Appendix 2 of the Specification. Candidates are expected to write between 250 and 350 Chinese characters for each question. The whole essay is marked regardless of length.

For Question 2 to Question 7, each essay is assessed based on the following three categories: critical and analytical response (20 marks); range of grammatical structures and vocabulary (20 marks); and accuracy of language (10 marks).

### Section A (Question 1)

This question consisted of a short English passage on "Family". It was divided into 20 discrete language sections. Each correctly translated section was given one mark.

While the majority of the candidates were able to convey the overall meaning of the passage, only a few were able to achieve full marks.

The vocabulary items were closely relevant to the theme. Examples were "two-child policy", "birth rate", "elderly people", and "married couples". Most candidates were able to give a close transfer of the meaning in Chinese.

However, some lost marks owing to their inability to write the Chinese characters correctly, such as 出生 "律".

While most of the candidates were aware of the nuance between English and Chinese, careless mistakes were found in some commonly used English words, as shown in the following table.

English words/phrases	Common mistakes made by candidates
aims	目地; 为了; 特点
two-child policy	计划生育;双胞胎政策
birth rate	出生律;生育数目;生日率
percentage	比例
elderly people	老龄化;老年化;老龄人口
journalist	学术调查者;游客;专家;旅行家;媒体
costs of living	居住;居住生活花费;物价
live in Shanghai	在上海
many of them	很多人;大部分人;他们
only afford to have	只能付担; 只能有; 只能生; 只可以兼顾
career	生涯; 青春; 前途
mothers	家庭主妇
people	他们

In terms of sentence/word order, the majority of the candidates paid great attention to the differences between English and Chinese, including the question: "Will the government be able to change people's minds?"

The following competent piece of translation was awarded 19 out of 20 available marks.

SECTION A: TRANSLATION





The language section "and reduce the percentage of elderly people" lost 1 mark because "elderly people" should be 老 (4) 大 rather than 老龄人口.



This example demonstrated very good translation skills. However, candidates should avoid over-translating vocabulary items. The phrase "elderly people" does not contain the meaning of "population".

Despite the efforts made, the following piece of translation scored 5 out of 20 marks.

#### SECTION A: TRANSLATION





The candidate found this question very challenging, only being able to translate five language sections into Chinese accurately: 住在上海的;一个孩子;一些女人说;政府and人们的想法.



The example showed that the grammatical structures were mostly correct, but there were a lot of errors in vocabulary items. The use of pinyin in place of Chinese characters is considered unacceptable. In order to enhance the quality of translation, candidates must familiarise themselves with Chinese characters.

#### Section B

Compared with Section C (films), many more candidates attempted the questions on literary works. Candidates should be aware that evidence must be based on the original literary works. No credit will be given for essays on literary works that are based on the film versions adapted from the literary works.

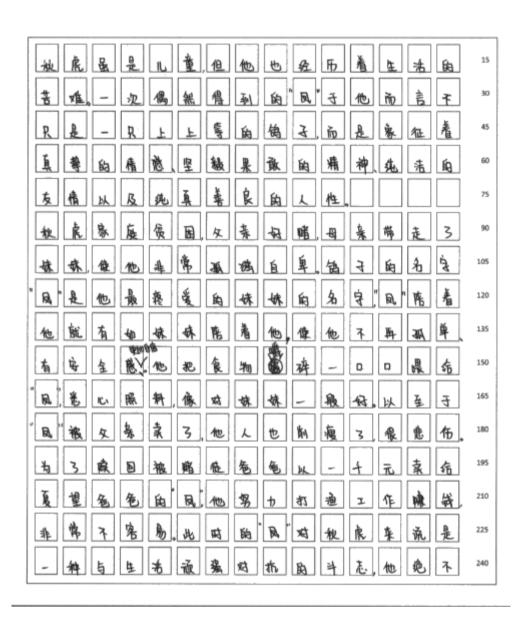
# **Question 2**

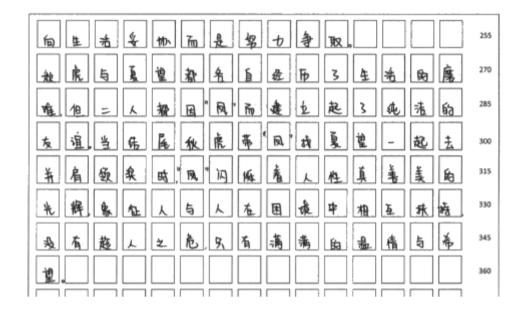
Most candidates were able to demonstrate that the pigeon symbolised Qiuhu's sister and his love for his sister. More able candidates provided additional symbolism pertaining to Feng in the life of Qiuhu such as hope, determination, pride, and the beginning of friendship with Xiawang at the end of the story. However, some candidates made errors in their evidence about the pigeon.

In sum, candidates were **unable to gain high marks** if they

- showed a lack of understanding of symbolism despite the use of relevant evidence from the literary work. For example, many candidates simply described how Qiuhu raised the pigeon with care and love without highlighting its symbolic meaning.
- summarised the story (e.g. Qiuhu's family background; his relationship with Xiawang; how Qiuhu lost the pigeon) with no analysis of symbolism.
- provided only one symbolism.
- focussed on other writing techniques such as "contrast" and "personification.
- gave wrong evidence, such as the pigeon was sold to Xiawang instead of to Xiawang's father.

The following essay achieved 40 out of 50 (15 marks for Critical and Analytical Response; 16 marks for Range of Grammatical Structures and Vocabulary; 9 marks for Accuracy of Language).







The essay contained predominantly relevant response to the question. The introductory paragraph succinctly summarised four symbolic meanings of the pigeon to Qiuhu, justified with appropriate evidence from the fiction in the following paragraphs. There was good use of grammatical structures, vocabulary and literary terminology.



The link between the first two symbolic meanings in the introduction and the arguments in the second paragraph needs to improve so that there is a clear connection of each symbolic meaning and its evidence. In order to achieve higher marks, candidates need to focus on coherence and connectivity in essay-writing.

### **Question 3**

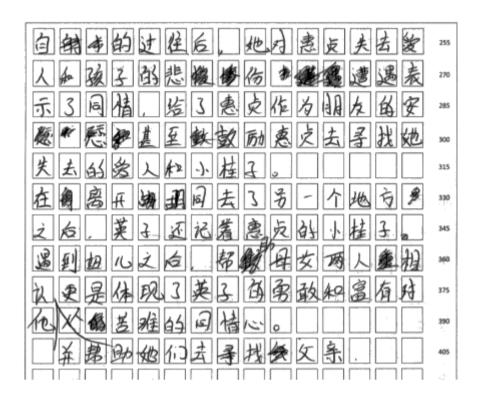
In general, candidates had a good understanding of the fiction, which is the longest one among the three fictions in the Specification. Most of the candidates were able to indicate that Yingzi was an innocent, brave and compassionate girl with relevant evidence from the fiction. However, many of them did not point out how the author presented Yingzi's personalities in the fiction, such as through the eyes and mentality of the six-year-old Yingzi.

In sum, candidates were **unable to gain high marks** if they

- merely summarised the story without any exploration of how the author presented Yingzi's innocence, bravery and compassion.
- provided wrong evidence from the work, such as Yingzi gave her own money to help Xiuzhen and Niu'er.
- missed out one of the three personalities of Yingzi.
- failed to analyse the three personalities in a reasonably balanced manner.
- failed to provide details to make their argument convincing and coherent.

The following essay achieved 24 out of 50 (8 marks for Critical and Analytical Response; 9 marks for Range of Grammatical Structures and Vocabulary; 7 marks for Accuracy of Language).







The response related to the work, but the evidence was not well-organised with some inaccuracies. Xiuzhen, one of the main characters, was miswritten as Huizhen. The language was in general accurate with some use of terminology appropriate for literary analysis.



There is much room for improvement, such as the focus on the question, the understanding of the story, the presentation of arguments, and the accuracies of the characters in the work.

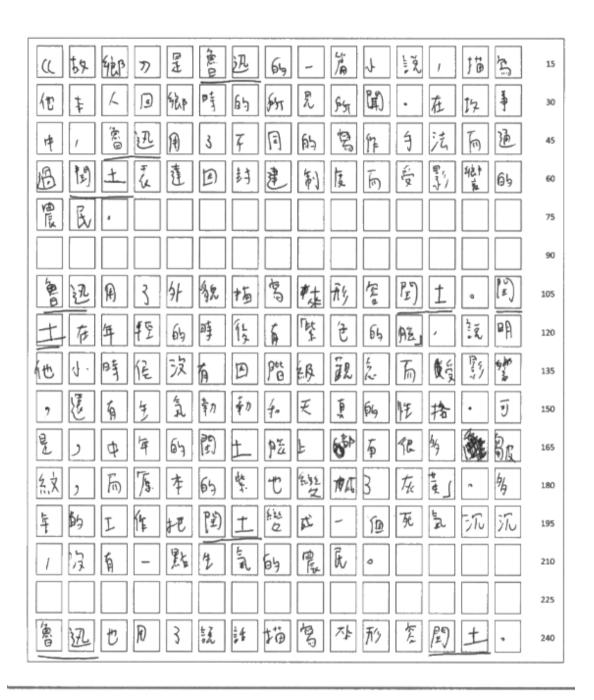
### **Question 4**

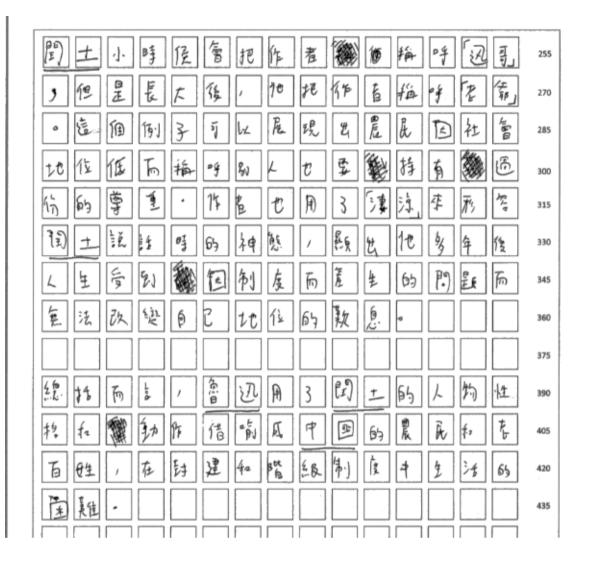
This was one of the most popular questions among the six questions on literary works and films. Good answers from the candidates focussed on the typical image of peasants during the 1920s in China through the depiction of Runtu's appearance, manner and plight. However, while many candidates made a detailed description of Runtu or made a comparison of his childhood and adulthood, they made little or partial use of this evidence to present the image of peasants.

In sum, candidates were **unable to gain high marks** if they

- lost focus in the content. For example, some candidates focussed on the friendship between Runtu and the narrator "I".
- did not sufficiently elaborate the plight of the peasant via Runtu.
- wrote in a prose style to express their own personal feelings on the hardships experienced by Runtu.
- referred the main character of the work as "the author" or "Luxun" rather than "I" (a fictional character).
- provided the response purely based on imagination without showing a good understanding of the literary work.

The following essay achieved 31 out of 50 (11 marks for Critical and Analytical Response; 12 marks for Range of Grammatical Structures and Vocabulary; 8 marks for Accuracy of Language).







The response was relevant to some aspects of the question. It described Runtu's appearance, his greeting to the narrator and his manner. While evidence selected from the work was relevant, there was occasional loss of focus as the evidence about Runtu was fully utilised to depict the image of the peasant.



In order to improve the response, the candidate needs to pay full attention to the requirements of the question. This is important to link the evidence closely with the arguments. For example, what did Runtu's appearance (pale and grey face with deep wrinkles) tell us about the image of peasants during that time?

#### Section C

Not many candidates attempted each of the three questions on films. Candidates should be aware that evidence must be based on the original films.

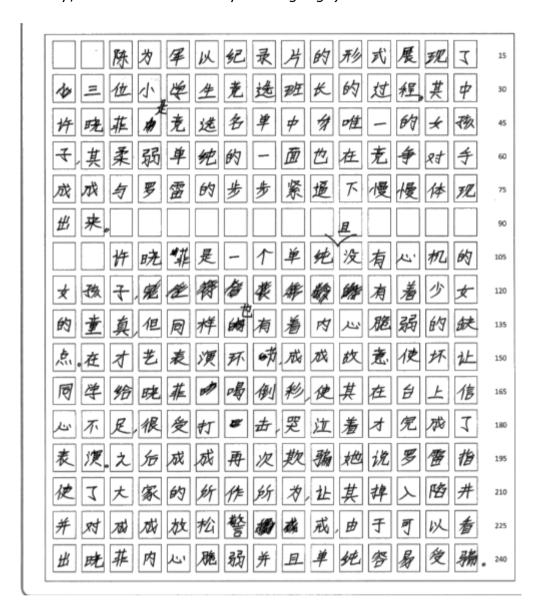
#### **Question 5**

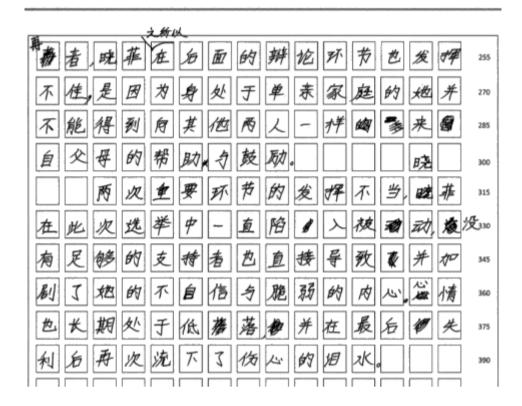
Most of the candidates were familiar with the plot of the film. However, some still mixed up the details relating to the three main characters. In general, candidates performed better in examining Xiaofei's situation rather than her feeling during the election campaign. More able candidates made an in-depth analysis in a succinct way.

In sum, candidates were **unable to gain high marks** if they

- simply described the election campaign without responding to the key words "situation" and "feeling".
- failed to show a good understanding of the film. For example, some candidates mixed up the sequence of the first competition and the second one.
- provided inaccurate evidence, such as Xiaofei withdrew from the election after the second competition.
- over-emphasised the situation and feeling of Chengcheng and/or Luo Lei.

The following answer achieved 44 out of 50 (17 marks for Critical and Analytical Response; 18 marks for Range of Grammatical Structures and Vocabulary; 9 marks for Accuracy of Language).







The response consistently demonstrated a critical analysis of Xiaofei's situation and feeling. The interpretations were convincing with appropriate evidence from the film. On the whole, the essay was written with fluency and accuracy.



The response may attempt to explore Xiaofei's feeling when she was chosen to be one of the candidates, and why she carried out negative tactics in preparation for the debate.

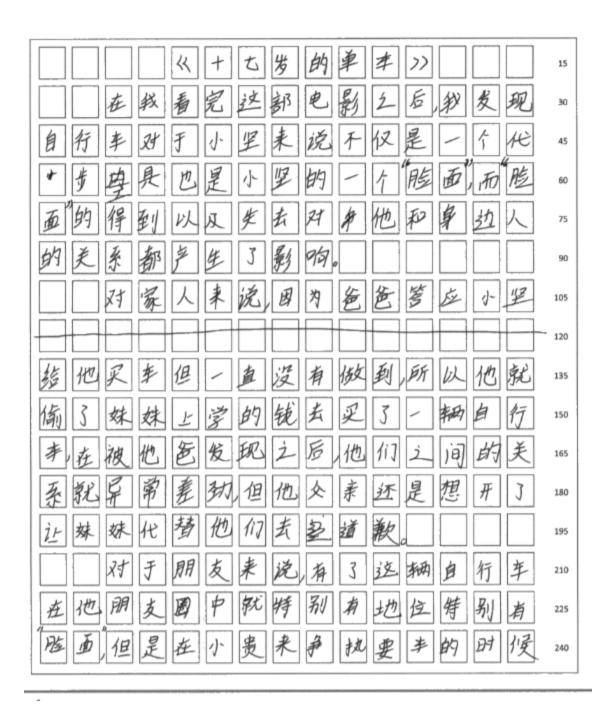
## **Question 6**

Question 6 was to discuss how the bicycle brought impact on the relationships between Xiaojian and his family, friends and girlfriend. Only a few could make a thorough and balanced analysis of his relationships with three "groups" of people. Some shifted the focus to Xiaogui, another main character.

In sum, candidates were **unable to gain high marks** if they

- missed out one or two "groups" of people in the essay.
- made superficial arguments, such as Xiaojian desire for the bicycle was due to the empty promise made by his father.
- provided irrelevant or unnecessary details, such as why Xiaogui wanted the bicycle.
- failed to delve deeper into the film to support their analysis, such as the scenes in which the bicycle helped Xiaojian to develop his romantic love.

The following answer achieved 36 out of 50 (14 marks for Critical and Analytical Response; 14 marks for Range of Grammatical Structures and Vocabulary; 8 marks for Accuracy of Language).







The response showed a good understanding of the requirements of the question. The interpretations and points of views were in general appropriate despite a lack of more details. The essay was coherent with frequent variation in use of sentence structures and vocabulary.



The response may improve by delving deeper into the impact of the bicycle on the relationships of Xiaojian and others. For example, the bicycle caused tension and confrontation with his father.

To express the viewpoints in a convincing manner, the candidate needs to aim at some advanced vocabulary items, such as 融入朋友圈子

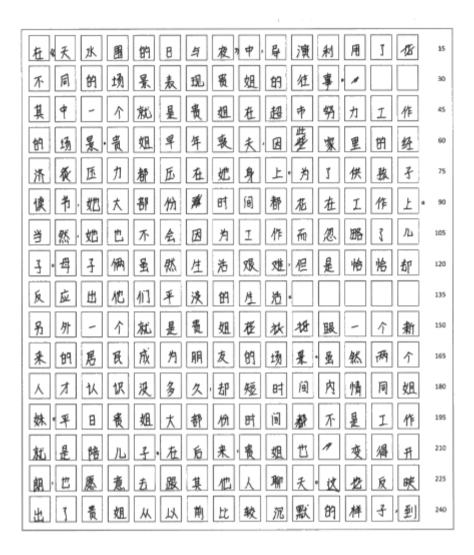
### **Question 7**

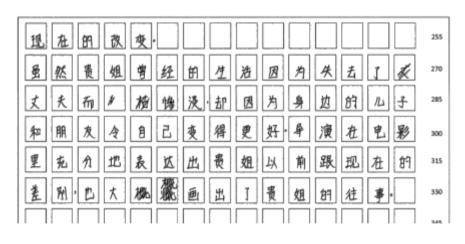
Most of the candidates were able to identify one main scene to show the past of Kwai in the film. Some of them simply narrated Kwai's past without referring to any scenes or made them up to address the question.

In sum, candidates were **unable to gain high marks** if they

- failed to identify the two main scenes about Kwai's past.
- gave a brief account of Kwai's past without referring to any specific scenes.
- provided irrelevant evidence, such as the scene that Kwai was playing mahiong with her relatives.
- ignored the requirements of the question by narrating Kwai's relationship with her son.
- made inaccurate accounts of the film. For example, the grandmother recalled Kwai's past when Kwai, rather than Kwai's son, visited her at hospital.

The following essay achieved 22 out of 50 (7 marks for Critical and Analytical Response; 8 marks for Range of Grammatical Structures and Vocabulary; 7 marks for Accuracy of Language).







The response was far from satisfactory. Though it related to the film, it lost focus on the question. There were hardly any appropriate scenes selected from the film to illustrate Kwai's past. The writing was in general coherent.



In order to capture the main scenes, the candidate needs to pay full attention to the details of the film, including its setting, plot, relationships among the characters, and the events.

## **Paper Summary**

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

- Since Section A (Question 1) is marked based on individual sections of language, candidates must do the translation carefully. Overtranslation and under-translation should be avoided. It is also advisable to practice the Chinese key words for each theme as often as possible.
- To prepare well for Section B and Section C, it is of utmost importance that candidates are familiar with the works.
- When writing the essays, always read the questions carefully and identify the key words in each question. This can help them to avoid irrelevant answers.
- Write the response critically, analytically and logically.
- Remember to justify points of view with appropriately selected evidence from the works.
- Avoid presenting arguments in the style of a book/film review.
- In order to enhance clarity of communication, candidates must aim at producing a wide range of grammatical structures, vocabulary, cinematic/literary terminology, and a high level of accuracy of Chinese characters.