



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011**

Chinese (Mandarin)

46703

(Specification 4670)

Unit 3: Speaking

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

Overall, the response to GCSE Chinese Speaking in this first award of the new examination proved to be very positive. Most teachers administered and carried out the tests very well. There was strong evidence that most teachers understood the requirements of the specification and applied the assessment criteria correctly but, in a minority of cases, the detailed instructions for the submission and conduct of the test seemed to be misunderstood or partly implemented and this sometimes delayed the moderation process and disadvantaged students. The specification and FAQ document relating to Controlled Assessment Speaking on AQA's website should be read carefully to ensure that the administration and tests are carried out appropriately. Teachers' attention is drawn to the specific comments below.

Administration

Centres are requested to note the following points for future series.

- Errors in additions on Candidate Record Forms were noted at times and total marks also need to be copied onto Centre Mark Forms correctly.
- Centre Declaration Forms must be enclosed with samples but occasionally had to be requested.
- Centres are reminded that task sheets must be provided to the moderator. Moderation cannot take place without the task sheet.

Most centres submitted their work in good time, some even well in advance of the deadline. All the relevant paperwork was correctly enclosed with the audio CDs/memory sticks or cassettes, clearly presented, including excellent administration, which contributed to a more efficient moderation process. However, some teachers did not seem very clear about what materials should be included. As a consequence, requests were sometimes needed via email, telephone and letter for the missing materials. These included task sheets for both recorded (SR) and unrecorded (SU) tasks, a copy of the unpredictable questions, Candidate Record Forms, Centre Declaration Sheets (fully signed) etc. Some centres seemed to confuse the task sheets with other forms eg Task Planning Form (optional) and Candidate Record Form (mandatory). For centres with more than one student, the task sheets for both recorded (SR) and unrecorded (SU) tasks should be submitted per student rather than only one for all students at the centre. Occasionally arithmetical errors occurred when adding the itemised marks, and clerical errors when transferring the marks to the CMFs (Centre Mark Form) for SR and SU. Centres are reminded of their responsibility to ensure that the cassettes, CDs, memory sticks are clearly labelled/completed with examination details. Furthermore, care should be taken when preparing the submission for postage, ensuring that cassettes/CDs are well packaged; in particular, CDs need to be carefully packed to avoid damage in transit.

It is vital in centres using peripatetic teacher-examiners, that the examiner speaks the same target language as the students, and the Speaking test (interaction between the teacher and the students) must be conducted in Mandarin Chinese rather than using English or another Chinese dialect, although the task sheets were in English. It is greatly appreciated when centres use checklists to ensure submissions are correct and to avoid missing materials.

Tasks

A wide variety of tasks were offered. Some centres used the AQA exemplar tasks provided in Appendix E of the specification, some used an adapted version of these exemplar tasks, and some produced their own tasks which reflected their students' individual learning needs and interests. In some centres, several unpredictable questions were prepared and appeared very accessible and enabled students of all abilities to respond successfully. Some centres, however, did not change any element of the unpredictable tasks when they used the AQA exemplar materials. This should be avoided because the tasks are in the public domain and the students might have seen them. Some centres used identical unpredictable questions for all the students when they devised their own tasks. It should be noted that, although teachers can use the same Speaking tasks with a number of students, they must use different unpredictable questions to ensure that the unpredictable question is not known to any student before they carry out the task.

The task sheets must be produced in English and centres are reminded that they should not use English-Chinese bilingual language nor Pinyin. Furthermore, the unpredictable questions should be only on the teacher-examiner's sheets and should not appear on students' task sheets.

Recordings

The majority of centres provided excellent recordings, ie one per student, per cassette, or per student per clearly indicated track, which contributed to a more efficient moderation process. However, some centres recorded the whole centre on one single sound file, which rendered finding specific students for moderation very difficult indeed. Sometimes the recording quality was variable, and students were not always clearly audible. In some cases sound quality was poor or very low, or completely inaudible. Occasionally, there was some background noise and sometimes the teacher did not say 'End of test' at the end and did not stop the recording immediately, but left the machine on and other irrelevant conversations were recorded on the students' work. Centres should ensure quiet conditions for recording and, if an external microphone is used for recording, it must be placed to favour students rather than the teacher-examiner. Furthermore, centres should make sure that centre and examination details and name of examiner are recorded at the beginning of each cassette/CD or memory stick and that before each test, the examiner announces the student's name, number and task title. It is very important that before submitting cassettes/CDs or memory sticks, teachers check to make sure that students have been recorded.

Examining technique

Timings

Most centres kept excellent timings ie between 4 and 6 minutes as required, however, in some centres, recordings were less than 4 or more than 6 minutes. If a recording is too short, students did not have sufficient time to demonstrate their ability, and any information given after the maximum time of 6 minutes cannot be credited, eg the unpredictable questions at the end. Therefore centres are reminded of the importance of the timings - for instance, with tests lasting less than the minimum 4 minutes, students could not get full marks for Communication.

Performance

There was strong evidence from the recordings that the majority of teachers did an excellent, very professional job in encouraging students to perform very well. Generally, students were provided sufficient opportunities to give of their best and to respond to all questions, including the unprepared questions. It was a pleasure to hear such able students! Teachers had obviously worked very hard and the students had clearly been well prepared for their examinations – these were well conducted and encouraged and allowed students to demonstrate their abilities. The topics were appropriately chosen, well presented, well communicated with the teacher and the range of tasks enabled students of all abilities to respond successfully. Events demonstrating 2 or 3 different time references flowed naturally and coherently, including views and accurately using the learnt vocabulary and grammar structures including 4 character expressions. The examining was sympathetic and the teachers put students at their ease and worked very hard to get the best out of less able students.

There was no significant problem with the coverage of bullet points in the tests, although there were occasional timing problems. However, there were some examining issues which teachers need to pay attention to next year. Teachers should allow the students some thinking time and let them complete their answers before moving to another question. Students should not be distracted by teachers correcting their language or offering related words or confirmation during the test. The questions need to be carefully prepared, particularly to avoid repeated questions, which might confuse the students and affect their marks. Teachers should always remember to prepare the unpredictable questions for the test.

Assessment

Evidence indicates that almost all the centres' marking was broadly in line with the AQA standard. Teachers clearly understood the assessment criteria. However, sometimes the marks awarded appeared slightly lenient, particularly in the category of Interaction and Fluency. To access the higher mark bands, students must respond readily and show initiative. When students hesitated, paused and needed the teacher's repetition or explanation, marks should not have been awarded in the higher bands. Furthermore, the highest mark for Range and Accuracy of Language is '10', not '5'. Occasionally, students were awarded '5' for this area when an excellent performance merited full marks. There appeared to be some confusion regarding the top marks for the categories.

Task Planning Form (TPF)

As the TPF is optional, many students did not use it. Most students who used the TPF made best use of it. The 40 words, characters or Pinyin maximum was almost always adhered to and caused no significant problems. However, some students wrote a couple of full sentences or long phrases, which must be avoided. Complete phrases or sentences are not allowed on the TPF and marks will not be awarded for these utterances.

Overall, the response to the GCSE Chinese Speaking in this first award of the new examination proved to be very positive and successful.

Terminology – a glossary

Task Sheet	The sheet containing the bullet points in English which forms the task.
Unpredictable Question	The last question asked by the teacher, which the student has not prepared in advance. Shown as ! on the Task Sheet.
Task Planning Form	Downloadable from the AQA website, this is the form that a student uses as a prompt during the task. It is not compulsory.
Centre Mark Form	There are 2 of these, one for the recorded task and another for the unrecorded task. There are 3 copies, white, yellow and pink. Before May 7 in the year of entry, the marks for all students are entered on the form. The white copy goes to AQA and the other two go to the centre's moderator, who will then select a sample.
Recorded Task	The recording of this task is sent to the moderator. Only one task is sent for moderation.
Unrecorded Task	This is the second task (which may in fact have been recorded) but only the marks for this task are sent to the moderator, not the recording.
Candidate Record Form	This form is available on the AQA website and must be filled in for all students. It includes the breakdown of marks for the recorded and unrecorded tasks.
Centre Declaration Sheet	This is also available on the AQA website and is a declaration by the centre that the work is that of the students and has been carried out in line with the regulations.

The moderation process – a quick guide

1. Before 7 May, complete the Centre Mark Forms (SR for recorded task and SU for unrecorded task) and send the appropriate copies of both forms to AQA (top copy) and to your moderator (pink and yellow copies).
2. Receive the Centre Mark Form from your moderator highlighting the students whose recorded tasks are needed for the moderation sample, indicated by the letter S alongside the candidate name.

If your centre has 20 students or fewer, you should send the recorded tasks of all students to the moderator with the pink and yellow copies of the Centre Mark Forms.

The top copy should be sent to AQA.

3. Send to the moderator the following:
 - Centre Mark Form (pink and yellow copies)
 - A recording of the Recorded Task for all students in the sample
 - A completed and signed Candidate Record Form for all students in the sample
 - The Centre Declaration Sheet (signed)
 - The Task Sheet for all tasks used by any candidate in the sample
 - A copy of the unpredictable questions for all tasks used in the sample
 - The Task Planning Form for each student (if used)

Please ensure that the recordings are clearly labelled (see Instructions for the June 2011 AQA Examinations – New GCSE Specification)

Guidance Notes for Moderators

The following guidance, provided to moderators during the moderating period, is reproduced below for information.

Marking Issues

1. Timings

Timing begins as soon as the teacher asks the first question relating to the first bullet point. From that point, the task should last between 4 and 6 minutes.

If the task lasts for less than 4 minutes (even 3' 59"), a student cannot get full marks for Communication. It would still be possible for this type of student to achieve a mark of 9 for Communication. There is no impact on the other assessment criteria.

If the task lasts for over 6 minutes marking stops at 6 minutes. If, at that point, the student is speaking, allow him/her to complete that sentence and then stop marking.

2. Coverage of main bullet points

In order to be able to score full marks for Communication, students must be able to give information on all bullet points on the task sheet. If there are any sub-divisions within the bullet points, these are **not** compulsory.

If one or more bullet points are not covered by the student, for any reason*, this will affect the **maximum** mark available for Communication, as follows:

Total number of bullet points in task	Number of bullet points <u>not</u> covered	Maximum mark for Communication
2-3 + ! task	1	7
2-3 + ! task	2	5
4 + ! task	1	8
4 + ! task	2	7
4 + ! task	3	5
5 or more + ! task	1	9
5 or more + ! task	2	8
5 or more + ! task	3	7
5 or more + ! task	4+	5

*The reasons for a bullet point not being covered are:

- i) The teacher fails to ask anything about that bullet point within the allotted 6 minutes.
- ii) The bullet point is mentioned by the teacher, but the student cannot answer.
- iii) The student gives an answer, but it is unintelligible or not relevant to the bullet point.

3. The unpredictable question / bullet point

In order to accomplish the unpredictable bullet point, the student must answer the question by using a verb. If that is not the case, then the bullet point is not covered and the table above must be used in order to arrive at a mark for Communication.

It is unlikely that the answer given in response to the unpredictable question will be as well developed as the main bullet points. If a student has fully developed answers to the main bullet points and gives a short answer, including any part of a verb (eg infinitive) to the unpredictable question, he/she will still have access to full marks for Communication provided the response is complete.

If a teacher asks more than one unpredictable question, the first one that is asked is the one that should be considered when deciding whether it has been answered appropriately, using a verb. However, some teachers may have a two-part question for the same unpredictable bullet point, which is acceptable practice. For example, 'Do you like...? Why (not)?' or 'Do you prefer x or y? Why?'. In this type of question you should give credit for the language produced in both parts. It may be that a teacher will go on to ask other unpredictable questions, probably to make the task last at least 4 minutes, and these should be taken into account when awarding an overall mark.

Once the student gives an incorrect answer (either in Chinese, in English or in any language) then no further rephrases are possible.

If the student gives a partially correct answer in Chinese then the teacher can ask more questions to elicit further information so that the bullet point is fully covered.

If a student says, in Chinese 'I don't understand' or 'Please repeat' (or equivalents) then this counts as a request for clarification and the teacher is allowed to repeat or rephrase. This does not count as an answer. (If this was said by the student in English or in any language other than the one being tested, then it would be an incorrect answer and no more rephrasing would be allowed).

If the student says, either in Chinese, in English or in any other language 'I don't know' (or equivalents) then this counts as an incorrect answer and no more rephrasing would be allowed.

If the student says nothing in response to a question then the teacher can repeat or rephrase until the student does respond (or until the 6 minutes are up!).

If the teacher asks, as the unpredictable question, a question which has already been asked as one of the student's main bullet points then the student has not been asked an unpredictable bullet point and the table in Section 2 (coverage of bullet points) applies.

If, however, the unpredictable question is different from a main bullet point, but elicits some repeat of information that has already been given in answer to one of the main bullet points, then any additional information can be credited. For example, the main bullet is 'Tell me about your family'. In a long answer, the student says that he/she doesn't get on well with his/her brother. The unpredictable question is 'Do you normally get on well with your family?' and the student says 'I get on well with my parents (new info) but not my brother (repeat)'. Although the unpredictable is connected to one of the main bullets, it is not the same question.

A student is not necessarily required to manipulate language in order to accomplish the unpredictable bullet.

4. The criteria for assessment

All of the criteria should be considered when deciding on a mark, but the following guidelines may prove particularly useful.

(a) Communication

Must the teacher ask extra questions for the student to gain the highest marks for Communication?

No. If the student develops fully his/her answers to each bullet point there will be no need for extra questions to allow the student access to the highest marks for Communication.

Can students get a high mark even if there is little interaction with the teacher?

Yes. Interaction and fluency are a global concept. Students can have access to full marks with minimal teacher input as long as they have provided full and developed responses. This is still true even if there is little interaction with the teacher.

If a student answers a bullet point eliciting reference to future events by using a present tense verb, will he/she be penalised under Communication?

No, not if the response successfully communicates what the bullet point required. However if aiming for a high mark for Range and Accuracy, the student must make sure he/she uses at least two different time reference over the task as a whole.

Must a student give some information relevant to the actual question the teacher asks in order for the bullet point to be accomplished?

Yes. If a student gives an answer that provides information in relation to another bullet in his/her task but does not contain information relevant to the question the teacher has actually asked (eg because the teacher and student get out of sequence), the bullet cannot count as being accomplished. The teacher may ask the bullet again to give the student the chance to offer relevant information.

Can the answer still be considered to give some relevant information even if the tense is wrong?

Yes.

Examples:

What did you do last weekend?

The following answers would be regarded as having some relevant information and would be acceptable:

'Football'

'I play football'.

The following answer would be regarded as unacceptable on the basis that it was clearly not answering the question being asked: it's not only the tense formation that's wrong. There are other indications that the student is not answering the question being asked:

'Next week I will play football' (using a future tense verb).

If the student gives exactly the same response to more than one bullet point and that answer gives relevant information in each case, will the response count as having accomplished the bullet in each case?

Yes.

Examples:

Bullet 3 – What did you do last weekend?

‘I play football’

Bullet 5 – What do you normally do at weekends?

‘I play football’

Both bullets will be judged to have been accomplished.

9-10 marks

- Students can speak with confidence and narrate events where appropriate. In order to do this, they will have to develop their answers well.
- They will have to offer ideas / opinions / points of view (minimum 2) and be able to explain them.

7-8 marks

- The answers will be regularly developed, even though some of them may not be. However, for the award of a mark in this band, most answers will show some development.
- There is a requirement to give opinions (minimum 2).

5-6 marks

- There will still be evidence of an ability to develop some answers.
- There is a requirement to give opinions (minimum 2).

3-4 marks

- Few responses are developed, but for some questions you can expect replies to go beyond the minimal, even if this is in the form of lists or very simple sentences.
- There is a requirement to give opinions (minimum 2).

1-2 marks

- Very few appropriate responses are developed, but therefore there has to be evidence of development, however basic, in at least one reply.

0 marks

- No relevant information is communicated, but a student could still give some very minimal replies and still score 0 if there was no development at all.

(b) Range and Accuracy of Language

- For performances with a large amount of complex language but lots of errors the following should be noted: the Accuracy strand in Range and Accuracy has a bearing on communication of intended messages. If communication is not taking place the marks awarded have to reflect this and a mark of 8 could not be awarded. If, for example, the Range strand warrants 10 marks and the Accuracy strand warrants 4 marks, then a maximum mark of 7 would be appropriate.

- The expressions with 了 to imply imminent action ‘soon, just about to’ (eg 要…了, 就要…了, 快…了, 快要…了, 都要…了, 就快…了,) count as future time references.
- A verb with the aspect marker 过 to indicate past experience of an action counts as the past time reference.

9-10 marks

- A variety of time references must be used. This means two or more. A greater range of time references will add to the complexity of the language used and most students getting marks in this band will probably use three time reference, unless the nature of the task does not allow it.
- There will be complex structures, but remember that this is GCSE level and not higher. We will not necessarily be looking for highly complex grammatical structures. Complexity will often be achieved by variety of expression. There needs to be a wide range of vocabulary. This means that students will not be too repetitive in the words they use.
- Errors usually appear in complex structures, or they may be minor errors which do not appear too often.

7-8 marks

- Two or more time references must be used.
- Some complex structures will be used, but the note about what constitutes complexity for the 9-10 band will apply here.
- There must be a range of vocabulary, so students in this band will again be trying to avoid repetition of the more common words.
- Errors occur, but the message is clear, so that the type of mistake made will not prevent communication.

5-6 marks

- There is no need for students to use more than one time reference to be awarded a mark in this band.
- Sentences are generally simple but occasionally more complex. There will be more repetition of simple constructions here, but sometimes a more unusual structure will be used.
- Errors are quite frequent, but the language used is **more accurate than inaccurate**. This should be apparent from the annotation used for marking.

3-4 marks

- The sentences are short and simple and probably there will be quite a lot of repetition of the more common verbs, such as 喜欢, 有, 是.
- The vocabulary is very limited, so there will probably be quite a lot of repetition of the same words.
- Errors are very frequent and it will be more inaccurate than accurate, or there will be relatively little said, so the lack of evidence means we can't go into a higher band.

1-2 marks

- There are only isolated words of vocabulary with the occasional short phrase. It may well be that there is quite a lot of silence.
- Errors often impede communication, or there is very little evidence to enable us to form an opinion.

Pronunciation and Tones

5 marks

- Consistently good accent and tones are required. ‘Accent’ means ‘pronunciation’.

4 marks

- Generally good. It may be that problems arise mainly with the sounds that students traditionally find more difficult, such as the initial (consonant) ‘c’ in Chinese is pronounced like ‘k’ (eg ‘kanting’ for 餐厅^{cān tīng}); or ‘z’ (eg ‘zai’ for 菜^{cài}).

3 marks

- Generally accurate, but there is some inconsistency. As well as the more common mispronunciations, there may be problems with vowel sounds and anglicised words.

2 marks

- What is said is understandable, although comprehension is sometimes delayed. In other words there will be occasions where we have to listen very carefully to what is being said in order to get the intended meaning.

1 mark

- What is said is barely understandable and comprehension is difficult. There may well be very little to go on, because not much is said by the student.

(c) Interaction and Fluency

5 marks

- The student responds readily, without significant pause before answering the questions.
- There is initiative, as the student is able to fully develop answers to the questions.
- The conversation is sustained at a reasonable speed, but clearly not at native speaker pace.

4 marks

- The student will again have to answer without hesitation.
- The replies will go beyond the minimum, although there will not be as much development as in the top band.
- There is some flow of language, even if from time to time there is some pausing for thought.

3 marks

- There are ready responses, where the student can answer reasonably promptly most of the time.
- There is little if any initiative, so the student may not develop answers to any great extent.
- There is an ability to sustain a conversation, so that any hesitation does not break up the interchange of information too much.

2 marks

- There is some reaction to the teacher’s questions, but the student is sometimes hesitant. In practice, there will be more sections of the test where the student is thinking what to say or can’t answer.
- There is little natural flow.

1 mark

- There is little reaction to what the teacher asks and the student is so hesitant that the conversation becomes disjointed. There will in all probability be lots of silence during the task.

(d) Limiting marks

- It is not possible to go more than on **band** higher than the band in which the Communication mark was given when awarding marks in the other categories. For instance, if 5 is awarded for Communication, the highest mark that can be awarded for Range and Accuracy is 8, and for Pronunciation and Tones and Interaction and Fluency the maximum mark would be 4.
- It is possible to give marks in lower bands for Range and Accuracy, Pronunciation and Tones and Interaction and Fluency than the band in which the mark for Communication was given.
- If one mark or more is awarded for Communication, at least one mark must be given in all other categories.
- If 0 is awarded for Communication, 0 must be given for all other categories.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below:

UMS conversion calculator: www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion.