

# GCSE

# CHINESE

Unit 3 Speaking  
Report on the Examination

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46703  
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## General comments

This was the fourth year of the GCSE award in Chinese Speaking and, as in previous years, there was a positive response to this specification. Evidence indicated that the specification allows teachers the scope to engage their students with attainable goals and flexible content and it was very pleasing to see another big increase in the number of schools that entered students this year. Most schools administered and carried out the tests very well. In particular, some schools that had used this specification in the previous year administered and carried out the tasks to a much higher standard this year, which indicates that the feedback from AQA on the conduct was useful, and the advice/suggestions were taken on board and followed. On the whole, students seem to have been well prepared for their tasks and well guided by their teachers. However, in a minority of cases the detailed instructions for the submission and conduct of the test and Principal Moderator's feedback seem to have been misunderstood, misinterpreted or only partly implemented, as can be seen from the repeated mistakes made by some schools. This sometimes seriously delayed the moderation process and occasionally disadvantaged students. Fortunately, many schools responded promptly to requests for these matters to be put right. Teachers should be aware that there is a great deal of help available during the preparation, teaching and assessment of students through e-AQA, the AQA website:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/chinese-mandarin/gcse/chinese-mandarin-4670/controlled-assessment> and via the Assessment Adviser, who is available to give advice on all aspects of the specification. Key messages about the requirements of the specification are listed below, followed by specific comments on this year's work.

## Key messages

### Administrative matters: what to submit

- One recorded task per student, saved as a separate track on CD/memory stick with student name/number and task title.
- The Task Planning Sheet (with bullet points/questions) for the recorded task (The student's copy must be in English: the task title and bullet points; the teacher's copy may be in Chinese and an unpredictable question for each student must be included.)
- A copy of the unpredictable question(s) used for the recorded task (4–6 are recommended, depending on the number of students entered.)
- The AQA exemplar tasks in Appendix E of the specification can be used/adapted, but the unpredictable question(s) must be changed, and the task sheets must be submitted.
- Schools/colleges must change their tasks every two years. This means that the Speaking tasks which have been used by schools/colleges for the last two years have to be changed. To change Speaking tasks, at least one major bullet point must be different (see FAQ 30).
- Teachers must ensure that for each individual student the tasks in Speaking and Writing do not lead to duplication of content (see FAQ 29).
- Task Planning Form (TPF) for the recorded task – this is optional, but if used must contain a maximum of 40 words in English, in Chinese characters or Pinyin. Drawings, photos, icons or visuals of any kind, full sentences or long phrases are NOT allowed.
- Candidate Record Form (CRF), one per student, fully completed, signed and dated (No signature, no award!).
- Centre Declaration Sheet (CDS), one per centre – must be fully completed, ticked, signed and dated, as appropriate.

- Two Centre Mark Forms (CMF), or Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) or Supplementary Centre Mark Forms (SCMF) - one for SR (recorded task) and one for SU (unrecorded task), the top copies going to AQA, the second and third copies to the moderator.
- Schools are reminded that the recorded evidence must be submitted on CD or memory stick, cassette recordings are not accepted since 2014. Each student should be recorded as a separate track on CD/memory stick. Recordings should be clearly identified with candidate name/ number and task title. It causes difficulty in finding the individual work if the recordings are saved as 'Track 1, Track 2...'.  
• Recordings should include tracking lists, particularly for large centres with more students.
- A tag should be attached to the memory stick with component code, centre name/number.
- The component code, centre name/number should be written on the CD with an indelible pen.
- If any of the above items are missing, moderation cannot take place and the students could be disadvantaged.
- Despatch of the sample: Please ensure that envelopes are tightly sealed or materials, particularly memory sticks could fall out. Audio CDs need to be well packaged, (ideally in a plastic case inside a padded envelope,) as they are vulnerable to damage in transit.

### **Examining technique**

- It is recommended that, if possible, a quiet area is found for recording to avoid extraneous noises.
- If an external microphone is used for recording, the microphone should be positioned so that both teacher/examiner and students are clearly audible – please try out the recording equipment in situ before beginning any testing.
- At the beginning of each recording, the component code, school name, number, student name, number and the task title must be announced by the teacher/examiner, not by the student.
- Tasks must be completed in the form of a dialogue, and must be conducted in the target language - Chinese (The teacher must ask the questions in Chinese, not in English, nor English/Chinese bilingual language).
- To score full marks for Communication, the teacher/examiner must ensure that students are able to give information on all bullet points on the task sheet, including the unpredictable question. If one or more bullet points are not covered by the student, for any reason, this will affect the maximum mark available for Communication, which will inevitably affect the award of a mark for the other three criteria.
- The timing, between 4 and 6 minutes, must be kept to. This begins when the teacher/interlocutor asks the first bullet point in the task. If the task lasts for less than 4 minutes, a student cannot get full marks for Communication. Worked produced after 6 minutes will not be credited.
- To score high marks for Communication, students need to show their ability to speak with confidence and narrate events where appropriate. In order to do this, they have to develop their answers well. They have to offer ideas / opinions / points of view (minimum 2) and be able to explain them.
- To achieve marks of 9-10 for Range and Accuracy of Language, a variety of time frames must be used, which means two or more. A greater range of time frames will add to the

complexity of the language used and most students getting marks in this band will probably use three time frames to refer to present, past and future events.

- To assist students aiming for higher marks, the teacher/examiner should ask questions which allow the student to show that s/he can narrate events or express ideas and opinions referring to the present, the past and the future.
- Teacher/examiners are reminded that they should keep to each main bullet point given on the student's Task Sheet in order not to disadvantage their students. Please make sure that the teacher asks exactly the same questions as on the list and in the same order, so that students are given the opportunity to respond to each of bullet points and develop their answers, and to avoid omission of any information. It is not advisable to ask two or more questions together which could cause omission of the information, particularly for less able students.
- For the unpredictable questions, it is worth noting that only one question is required: one per student, and this should always be the last question in the test. The teacher/examiner should not ask more than one question. (A couple of unpredictable questions could be prepared so the teacher has a choice for different students and it might be that a teacher will go on to ask other unpredictable questions, probably to make the task last at least 4 minutes.)
- When asking the unpredictable question, it is recommended that, if possible, it should be indicated where the prepared conversation ends and the '!' unpredictable question begins. This should be clearly indicated as 'the last question' or 'the last question which you have not prepared'; in Chinese it may be for example, '最后一个问题' or '请回答一个你没有提前准备的问题'.
- It may be that the answer given in response to the unpredictable question will not be as well developed as the main bullet points, but students should be allowed a bit more time to develop their answers rather than delivering 'closed' style of question/answers, particularly for more able students.
- If the school has no Chinese teacher to carry out the marking, please apply to AQA for Prime Marking, but two recorded tasks must then be submitted per student and these must be accompanied by all the relevant paperwork.

## Specific comments on this year's work

### Administration

Most schools submitted their work in good time, some well in advance of the deadline, enclosing all the relevant paperwork, with clearly labelled audio CDs/memory sticks. Recordings were very clear, information was clearly identified on the audio CDs/memory sticks and administration was excellent, all of which contributed to a more efficient moderation process. However, insufficient information on the CD/memory stick tracks – no centre name, no candidate name/number, no task title, just 'Track 1, Track 2....', caused difficulty in finding the individual students. Some schools sent Speaking materials to the Writing examiner by mistake, and included no Task Sheets, or the wrong Task Sheets. Some used a specification from another awarding organisation, or gave insufficient information on the related forms. This resulted in a lot of additional requests for missing materials via email, telephone and/or letter, causing unnecessary delays. This situation could have

been averted if the 'Checklist for Despatch of Sample to Moderator' (available in the Teacher Resource Bank on [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)) had been followed by the centre.

Some schools seemed to confuse the Task Sheets with other forms eg Task Planning Form (optional) and Candidate Record Form, or even with the Assessment Criteria.

Occasionally there were clerical errors, causing the wrong total mark on both the Candidate Record Form and Centre Mark Form. All this prevented the moderation process from going as smoothly as it might otherwise have done. Teachers are reminded that they should check additions carefully in order to avoid arithmetical errors and transcription errors of marks.

Care should also be taken when sending the work in the post. CDs in particular need to be well packed, to avoid damage in transit. Occasionally some CDs were broken when they arrived. In schools where teacher/examiners are peripatetic, it is very important that they refer to the specification and follow all instructions very closely. Moderators were very grateful to those schools where checklists were obviously used, ensuring that their submissions contained all the necessary materials.

### **Task and Task Sheets**

As in previous years, it was very pleasing to see the wide variety of tasks which were offered. Most schools used the AQA exemplar tasks provided in Appendix E of the specification, some used an adapted version of these, whilst others produced their own tasks which reflected their students' individual learning needs and interests. In some schools, several unpredictable questions were prepared and these were very accessible, enabling students of all abilities to respond successfully. The majority of Task Sheets were produced in an excellent, professional way and met the requirements of the specification very well. It should be emphasised that the Task Sheet is an essential requirement when completing the Speaking tasks and should be submitted with each student's recording.

Some schools did not follow the requirements of the specification at all, particularly where native speakers were concerned. All students should know the main bullet points in advance of the test, and have the opportunity to prepare for it, in order to ensure that there can be an unpredictable question asked as the final one. It is not intended that the entire conversation be unprepared. It was noted that some teacher/examiners misinterpreted the specification, did not prepare the Task Sheet in advance and asked no unpredictable questions, their explanation being that native speakers could talk spontaneously. This really disadvantaged the students, particularly very able students. Teachers should be aware that this is an examination, not a free conversation. The Task Sheets with bullet points including the unpredictable question, should have been prepared at an early stage, preferably typed and printed out as a formal submission.

It should be noted that when using the AQA exemplar tasks, the unpredictable question(s) must be changed, as these tasks are in the public domain and it is possible, therefore, that students might have seen them. Where schools devise their own task, whilst it is acceptable for the main bullet points to be the same for all students, it is not acceptable for the unpredictable question to be the same, as students should not know what this question is going to be in advance of carrying out the task.

Furthermore, teachers are reminded that the unpredictable questions should only appear on the teacher/examiner's task sheet, and a copy of this must be included when submitting the materials for moderation. When devising their own tasks, for those students aiming to achieve higher grades, teachers must ensure that tasks offer the opportunity to express and explain ideas and points of view (minimum two), to narrate events, producing extended sequences of speech, and to successfully use a variety of time references, which means that two or more time frames must be used.

## **Recordings**

As in previous years, the majority of schools provided excellent recordings, clearly audible, fully labelled and including track lists, as appropriate, all of which contributed to a more efficient moderation process. However, there were instances when a track was not saved with sufficient information with student's name/number, task title and the lack of an accompanying track list made it very difficult to locate specific students for moderation. It was noted that at the beginning of each recording, sometimes the component code, school name, number, student name, number and the task title were not announced by the teacher/examiner, but by the student who only gave their name, which should be avoided. The teacher/examiner should do this rather than leaving it to the students. The recording quality was variable, too; in some cases the sound quality was poor, or very low, and in others there was background noise, which resulted in the students not always being clearly audible. Schools should ensure quiet conditions for recording and, if an external microphone is used for recording, it should be positioned to favour the student rather than the examiner. It is also very important to check, before submitting CDs or memory sticks, that each student's task has been recorded successfully. It was noted that at times in some schools there was no task on the audio CD or wrong tasks, or even different candidate's work for other awarding organisations.

## **Timings**

Most schools demonstrated correct timing of between 4 and 6 minutes, as specified; however, some tests were less than 4 minutes, or more than 6, which affected the students' marks, particularly for Communication. Where the tests were too short, students were not able to fully demonstrate their ability and could not achieve full marks for Communication. On the other hand, any information given after the maximum permitted time of 6 minutes, e.g. a response to the unpredictable question, could not be credited. Teachers are reminded, therefore, of the importance of timing during the test.

## **Performance**

There was strong evidence from the recordings that the majority of teachers had done an excellent, professional job, allowing students to perform very well. Generally, students were given sufficient opportunities to give of their best in responding to all questions, including the unpredictable ones. The tests were really a pleasure to listen to. Topics were appropriately chosen and well presented, the range of tasks enabling students of all abilities to respond successfully. Information, often demonstrating the use of 2 or 3 time references, flowed naturally and coherently and included opinions/points of view, using accurately learnt vocabulary and grammatical structures that included 4-character expressions. In particular, examining was sympathetic and the

teacher/examiners put students at their ease, working 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. However, there were one or two issues which need to be addressed before next year. At times teacher/examiners did not keep to each main bullet point given on the student's Task Sheet, some questions were asked in a different order from the list; some questions were not on the list; some were different from those on the list; the unpredictable question was not asked, although it was on the list; some 'closed' style of questions made it difficult for the students, particularly able students, to develop their answers, justify opinions and use more complex structures. All of these issues disadvantage students, and caused confusion or omission of information on the list. For example, the teacher asked 'What is your friend's name?' as an unpredictable question, which elicited little information. Teachers sometimes changed the question from the prepared question list, for example, the topic was School, the question on the list was 'talk about your school subject', however, the teacher suddenly asked 'What would you like to eat?' which confused the student, and while the student was trying to answer the question, the teacher moved to another question before getting an answer from the student. Some teachers needed to be a little more patient in allowing students some thinking time and letting them complete their answer before moving on to another question.

The test must be conducted entirely in the target language – Mandarin Chinese; some teachers used English, English/Chinese bilingual language to ask questions, which is not allowed and should be avoided. The students' language should not be corrected during the test, nor should they be given items of vocabulary etc. The questions need to be carefully prepared, particularly so as to avoid repetition, which might confuse students and lead to lower marks for Communication and/or Range and Accuracy of Language. Several unpredictable question(s) should be practised and used as part of the Stage 1 teaching, even if there is sometimes only one student at the centre.

## **Assessment**

Evidence indicated that almost all the marking was broadly in line with the AQA standard. Teachers clearly understood the assessment criteria. However, sometimes the marks awarded appeared slightly severe this year, particularly in the categories of Communication and Range and Accuracy of Language. Students can be awarded marks in the higher band of 9-10 for Communication if they can speak with confidence and narrate events, where appropriate, including a minimum of 2 opinions. When students produce a wide range of vocabulary, using complex structures and two or more time references to describe present, past and/or future events and actions, with only some minor errors appearing in the more complex structures, they should be awarded a mark in the higher band of 9-10 for Range and Accuracy of Language.

Occasionally the marking appeared too lenient, where insufficient information was communicated and limited structures/vocabulary were used, and particularly the mispronunciations and tones conveyed unclear messages.

This year the moderators were happy to see that the errors were not repeated for the marks eg half marks '4.5' for Pronunciation and Intonation. However, some teachers entered the breakdown of marks on the Candidate Record Form, for Range and Accuracy of Language, '9+1'. Teachers should be aware that the mark scheme does not allow for any half marks, nor using 'plus', e.g. the highest mark band for Pronunciation and Intonation is '5', '4.5' is not available, and the highest mark band for Range and Accuracy of Language is '10', '9+1' should not be used.



## Task Planning Form (TPF)

As the Task Planning Form is optional, many students did not use it. Most of those who did, made very good use of it; the 40 word or Pinyin maximum was almost always adhered to and caused no significant problems. Moderators were very pleased to see that no complete sentences were used this year. However, in one or two cases, photos were included; this is not allowed and should be avoided next year. Teachers are reminded that for AQA's specification, drawings, photos, icons or visuals of any kind, full sentences or long phrases are **not** allowed on the Task Planning Form.

## Conclusion

It is hoped that through these comments teachers will be assisted in their on-going preparation of students for future GCSE Speaking tests, and that by highlighting strengths and weaknesses (particularly in the individual feedback to each school/college) this will help to make that preparation even more effective. The majority of schools, however, must be commended for the efficient submission and organisation of students' work, which is greatly appreciated.

As stated at the beginning of this report, overall, the response to GCSE Chinese Speaking, in this fourth award of the examination, proved to be very positive. The moderators look forward to seeing further success next year!

## Terminology – a Glossary

|                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Task Sheet                              | The sheet containing the task bullet points in English which form the task.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Main Bullet Points                      | The number of main bullet points which make up the task and all of which must be addressed by the student.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Unpredictable Question/<br>Bullet Point | The last question asked by the teacher, which the student has not prepared in advance. Shown as ! on the task sheet.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Task Planning Form (TPF)                | Downloadable from our website, this is the form that a student uses as a prompt during the task. It is not compulsory.<br><a href="http://www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/coursework-and-controlled-assessment/candidate-record-forms-2014-2015/gcse-201415">http://www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/coursework-and-controlled-assessment/candidate-record-forms-2014-2015/gcse-201415</a> |
| Centre Mark Form (CMF)                  | There are 2 of these, one for the recorded task (SR) and another for the unrecorded task (SU). 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 copies go to the school's moderator, who will then select a sample.                                                |
| Recorded Task (SR)                      | The recording of this task is sent to the moderator if the student is in the sample. Only one task is sent for moderation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Unrecorded Task (SU)                    | This is the second task (which may in fact have been recorded)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

|                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                | but only the marks for this task are sent to AQA and the moderator, not the recording.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Candidate Record Form (CRF)    | This form is available on our website and must be filled in for all students. It includes the breakdown of marks for the recorded and unrecorded tasks.<br><a href="http://www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/coursework-and-controlled-assessment/candidate-record-forms-2014-2015">http://www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/coursework-and-controlled-assessment/candidate-record-forms-2014-2015</a>                                     |
| Centre Declaration Sheet (CDS) | This is also available on our website and is a declaration by the school that the work is that of the students and has been carried out in line with the requirements of the specification.<br><a href="http://www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/coursework-and-controlled-assessment/candidate-record-forms-2014-2015">http://www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/coursework-and-controlled-assessment/candidate-record-forms-2014-2015</a> |

### 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 yellow copy of 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 school has 20 students or fewer, you should send the recorded tasks of all your students to the moderator with the pink and yellow copies of the Centre Mark Forms, and all the other items listed in 3 below. **The top copy of the Centre Mark Form should be sent to AQA.**)

- 3 Send to the moderator the following:
  - 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 signed by the teacher and the student**
  - The Centre Declaration Sheet (signed)
  - The Task Sheet for all tasks used by any student in the sample
  - A copy of the unpredictable questions for all tasks used in the sample, on a separate sheet, not on the Task Sheet
  - The Task Planning Form for each student (if used)

Please ensure that the recordings are clearly labelled. A checklist, which the moderator will send when requesting the sample, can be found in the Teaching and learning resources page of our website (see [Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations and Controlled Assessments](#)). It is a very handy reminder of what should be sent to the moderator, particularly for those schools with 20 students or fewer. Please use treasury tags to secure the paperwork.

### Teacher Online Standardisation

There are no longer face-to-face teacher standardisation meetings in the Autumn Term. These have been replaced by teacher online standardisation, which is available on our website from

September 2013. Teacher online standardisation is a web-based system available anywhere with an internet connection.

To use the system you:

- log on to e-AQA, select 'teacher online standardisation' from the list of teacher services and choose your language
- listen to exemplar work, marked and commented on by the Principal Moderator
- mark a variety of work, receiving feedback as you go.

Teacher online standardisation offers your school a much wider access to standardisation. Rather than sending just the one representative to a meeting, you can now all enjoy and benefit from the training. And you still, of course, have the support of your Controlled Assessment Adviser, assigned specifically to your school.

Go to <http://www.aqa.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/products-and-services/teacher-online-standardisation>

## **Extract from the published mark scheme**

### **Assessment Issues**

#### **1. Task Planning Forms (TPF)**

If more than 40 words or individual characters are used on the TPF, ignore when awarding a mark the parts of the student's response (ie the utterances) which use words or individual characters noted on the TPF beyond the first 40.

**Visuals on TPFs are not permitted in June 2012 and beyond.**

#### **2. 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 before you finish conducting the test. The only exception to this would be if you had a student with a disability where the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) procedures allow you to give up to 25% additional time in order for the student to complete the task. In such circumstances you should enclose a note to the moderator explaining why additional time was granted (if the work for the student is called for by the moderator as part of the sample for your school).

### 3. 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.

Students may ask the teacher to repeat/rephrase a question, if they do not understand. Likewise, if the student starts to give the answer to the wrong bullet point, the teacher is allowed to step in and repeat and/or rephrase.

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.

### 4. 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. The clause used, however, need not be totally accurate provided it communicates the required message in the answer to the question.

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 more than one unpredictable question is asked, 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. If other unpredictable questions, are asked, probably to make the task last at least 4 minutes, these should be taken into account when awarding an overall mark.

If the unpredictable questions are not provided, then the last question to be asked counts as the unpredictable question as long as it does not relate to the final main bullet point (in which case it is considered as a follow-up question).

If the unpredictable question is asked in the wrong place, this is still credited.

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.

## **5. 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.

**Does an opinion have to be a personal opinion or can it be someone else's other than the speaker's?**

It can be a reported opinion.

Example:

What do you think is good about your school?

In my school you have to wear a uniform. There are many opinions about the school uniform and whether it is good or not. Some people think it's not good because it's uncomfortable.

**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.

**If a student does not wait for the teacher to ask questions but simply delivers his/her answers to the bullets in the task, will the bullets be judged to have been accomplished?**

Yes. However, in response to any question the teacher does actually ask, the student must give some relevant information – see above.

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.

## 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.

**(b) Pronunciation and Tones**

## 5 marks

- Consistently good accent and tones are required. 'Accent' means 'pronunciation'. Isolated errors in an otherwise full and correct performance can be ignored (ie. we are not looking for a 100% flawless performance).

## 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 <sup>cān tīng</sup>); or 'z' (eg 'zai' for 菜 <sup>cài</sup>).

## 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.

**Converting Marks into UMS marks**

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](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)