

GCSE

Edexcel GCSE

Chinese (1666/1667)

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Examiners' Report

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## Paper 1 - Listening and Responding

Overall the standard of entry was good. Candidates seemed well prepared and confident with the different test types and many performed well across the paper as a whole. There was also evidence of a marked improvement in the performance of learners.

### Question 1

Candidates responded well as television, computer, making telephone call, etc. were all items very familiar to candidates.

### Questions 2, 3, 7

Very well answered by all candidates across the ability range.

### Question 4

Posed no difficulties to the majority of candidates but some weak candidates appeared not to know the term '祖母' and opted for either the man or the toddler which were incorrect.

### Question 5

The theme of this question was illness. Learners appeared to be less familiar with this topic area. The terms relating to different parts of the body such as (i) '牙痛 tooth ache' and (iii) '背痛 back pain' proved difficult for them.

### Question 6

A more sophisticated and extended dialogue but generally dealt with well. A small number of candidates had difficulties with task (ii). It required candidates to demonstrate true understanding of the term 'half year' by ticking 'six months' from the clues. It proved to be a good discriminator. There was also evidence of guessing on the part of a minority of candidates who in their response to (i), picked the wrong answer C (Chinese New Year).

### Questions 8, 10

Generally well attempted with only a very small number of candidates not being able to respond fully.

### Question 9

There was a mixed response to this question. Examiners were surprised that a sizeable number of candidates lost one mark by not being able to pick F (panda) as one of the correct answers.

### Question 11

Good and average candidates approached this question confidently, scoring full marks. Weaker candidates made a good start with (i) and (ii) but tended to have mixed responses to (iii), (iv) and (v). The concept of '吸塵' appeared to have created some difficulties for candidates from international centres.

### Question 12

There was less evidence this year of weaker candidates failing to score. The first three questions were set to encourage weaker candidates to take part. They were based on themes that were relatively simple such as name of country and age. Part (d) was the most challenging, demanding a higher level of listening skills and English writing skills. Again, the majority made a very encouraging attempt.

Q12(a) Very well answered.

Q12(b) Generally well attempted. A small number of candidates wrote down 'Germany' as the answer. They must have confused 得過獎 with 德國.

Q12(c) The majority gave the correct answer, but a minority relied on guessing. A few wrote 1 instead of 7.

Q12(d) Candidates lost marks due to wrong spelling and poor expression. There was also evidence of guessing such as 'size and weight the same' or 'must be beautiful' etc. Some candidates probably confused '個性' with '歌聲' and suggested that the partner needed to have 'beautiful voices' or be a 'good singer'.

Q12(e) This question turned out to be less well scored than expected. Candidates lost marks due to imprecision by simply stating that Yongsheng went to performances and competitions. Examiners were surprised to find a considerable number of candidates who did not know the term '國際' (international), which is in the list of core vocabulary.

Q12(f) Well answered, but some weak candidates mistook the very last sentence 'his parents have confidence in him' as one of the points. This was evidence of not understanding the text and lost one mark.

## Papers 2 - Speaking

The majority of candidates did well in this year's examination. It was noted that preparation and guidance provided by the teachers before and during the examination made a significant difference in the candidates' performance. Most of the teacher examiners adapted the sample conversation questions to carry out genuine and friendly conversations with the candidates, giving appropriate prompts when needed and maximising their opportunities to demonstrate various language skills by asking open-ended questions. However, it was also noted that some oral exams had not been conducted properly and affected the candidates' performance. The following are some examples:

- No interactive conversations between teacher examiner and candidate: candidates were asked to give a monologue on the topics chosen. This seriously affected candidates' performance as no interactive communication skills were demonstrated.
- No open-ended questions asked, hence limited chances for candidates to develop their responses and demonstrate various language skills.
- Topics did not conform to those outlined in the Teacher Examiner's Handbook. Teacher and candidates spoke freely without reference to a specific topic area.
- Timing: some centres allocated less than the minimum of 8 minutes per candidate; some timings were not evenly distributed across the 3 topics, thus affecting the content communicated. For weaker candidates, the maximum time of 12 minutes and extra guidance questions from the teacher examiner are recommended to maximise their chances of scoring marks.
- The target language should be used throughout the oral test. Expressions in English should be avoided unless there are no equivalent Chinese terms, eg names of school or person.
- In some centres, candidates came up with the same structured model answers to certain questions asked. This is not to be encouraged as it does not reflect the candidates' individual language abilities.

### Comments on candidates' performance on different topics:

All 4 topic areas were found evenly distributed among candidates' choices, and the majority of the candidates were well prepared, giving detailed and descriptive speech within the one minute talk on their chosen topics. This often formed the best performed part of the speaking exam, especially for the weaker candidates. The discriminators came when the teacher examiner initiated conversations with candidates. The more capable ones often demonstrated their various language skills in elaborating on their answers or giving their views and opinions, while the weaker ones could only give short and limited responses. It should be noted that marks are awarded globally based on the overall performance of the speaking examination and the interactive conversations with the teacher examiner play an important part in the examination. Marks were favourably awarded to the responsive candidates who took the initiative in elaborating on their answers or giving their opinions during the conversations with the teacher examiner. Some candidates who demonstrated good speaking skills could have been encouraged to expand upon their answers, thereby increasing their chances of scoring higher marks.

Candidates generally did well with the description on topics relating to weather, houses, families, routines, subjects and favourites, but not many responded well to opinions. The expression “很有意思” was commonly used to respond to a wide range of questions such as “Why do you like / do \_\_\_?” “What is your opinion on \_\_\_?” “How do you find \_\_\_?” and the object ranged from a person, a hobby to an event or future plan. It should be noted that the expression “很有意思” itself without any elaboration is only a general comment which does not convey any specific meanings, views or opinions. Look at the following examples:

“我喜歡運動，因為它很有意思，既可以鍛鍊身體，又可以促進健康。”

“我喜歡我的老師，她很有意思，不但教書認真，而且很關心我們。”

“這本書很有意思，它的內容生動有趣，很適合兒童閱讀。”

These examples demonstrate the expression “很有意思” without the following elaboration becomes meaningless [沒有意思]. Hence, it is recommended that candidates include appropriate elaboration when using this expression for justification or opinions.

#### Comments on suggested questions for Additional Higher:

The majority of the candidates attempted the Additional Higher questions and did well in general. A lot of them came up with constructive answers. For example, for the question “Today young people watch too much television. Do you agree?” examiners were pleased to hear that many candidates gave the genuine opinion - “young people nowadays are more engaged in internet access instead.”

It was also noted that candidates encountered difficulties in the following areas :

- Many candidates didn't answer well on “work experience”.
- “Do you get on with your family?” seemed to be a difficult question. Not many candidates could elaborate their answers apart from “很好”
- A sizeable number of candidates didn't understand the terms ‘儲蓄 (saving)’ and ‘兼職 (part-time job)’. Some teacher examiners re-phrased the questions to help comprehension and candidates usually managed to respond well accordingly.

#### Administration

It was pleasing to note that most centres had improved on the administration of the speaking exam with the exception of a few centres which left out the attendance registers or the LT3 forms that should be sent together with the tapes to the examiners for marking. The procedures are clearly listed in the Teacher Examiner's Handbook. The cooperation of centres in the appropriate administration of these tests is highly appreciated as it helps to speed up the marking process.



## Paper 3 - Reading and Responding

This paper tests candidates' reading comprehension of a variety of texts, ranging from single lexical items /sentences, short passages, interviews/ dialogues to extracts from the media. It compares well with previous exam series, placing comparable demands on candidates.

Overall candidates performed well, exhibiting the same high standard as in previous years. A large majority scored an A grade.

Q1: Candidates responded very well to this question, with most scoring full marks.

Q2 and Q3 tested straightforward vocabulary. Most candidates answered both questions well, although a few failed to distinguish 'textbook' from 'exercise book' in Q2 and thereby lost marks.

Q4 was generally well attempted with some candidates not being able to read '郊區' (suburb) and '農場' (farm) or mistaking Picture 'C' to be suburb.

Q5: Most candidates scored full marks on this question, the topic area of 'food and drink' being familiar to them.

Q6, Q7 and Q8 were good discriminators and they differentiated well. Q6 required candidates to match questions with appropriate answers in a job interview situation. Q7 and Q8 involved inferring skills. A common mistake for less careful candidates was to choose (E) (watching films) for (ii) (liking drama) rather than the correct answer (C) (enjoying performance).

Q9 Candidates seemed to have done better on this question than in previous years. Many candidates were able to score high marks, despite having to answer in English.

Q9(a), (d) and (e) required one word or one phrase answers. Most candidates did well. However, a surprising number of candidates could not render 東北 (Manchuria or northeast China) into English correctly. Instead they wrote 'east north' or 'east west'. Some candidates misread 'where he was born' as 'when he was born' and answered 1965.

Q9(b) was well answered. A minority of candidates wrote 'it was good' rather than 'he felt good' and lost one mark.

Q9(d) A number of candidates wrote 'video the Earth' instead of 'taking photos of the Earth', which is incorrect. Some did not understand '問好' to be 'greetings'. Rather, they thought it meant 'asking questions'.

Q9(f) Some candidates failed to comprehend '登上' (to land) and '五年內' (within five years). Instead they thought '登' meant '燈' (lamp or light) and wrote 'light up the moon or bring a light to the moon' and instead of 'within five years' wrote 'after five years.'



## Paper 4 - Writing

This paper proved to be accessible to candidates, with a majority scoring high marks. It compares well with previous exam series. The format of the questions, the timing of the exam, the number of tasks which candidates were required to complete and the assessment criteria were in line with those in previous examinations. There were no questions which posed particular difficulties to candidates.

As in previous years, some weak candidates who could not write Chinese characters in Q1 and 2 used *pinyin* instead, which scored no marks. Candidates are again reminded that the inclusion of *pinyin* is only allowed in a continuous piece of writing in Q3 and 4 and the assessment criteria reflect this.

Q1 was well answered by most candidates. However, some candidates lost marks by writing the example given or repeating the same subjects. Candidates are reminded that repeating the same subject does not earn additional marks.

Q2 required candidates to complete sentences using pictures to guide them as well as taking into consideration the syntax of the sentences when filling in blanks. Whilst most candidates did well in this question, some missed the point of the 'walking' to school picture in part (ii) and simply wrote '上學' rather than '走路上學'. Although candidates could tell that the picture in the last part of (iii) was a computer, many failed to write the correct answer 'e-mail' as they did not take into consideration the object status after a verb 'send'. Many wrote 'going on the internet' 'playing computer games' or sending 'computer' to friends.

Q3 and Q4: The open-ended nature of these questions offered optimum opportunity for candidates to show what they could write as long as they covered the bullet points. They also served as good discriminators.

Q3 was easily in the grasp of most candidates, who scored full marks. Surprisingly, however, a sizable number of candidates were unable to write such common characters as 'hair', 'wear', 'skirt', 'trousers' or the colour 'blue' correctly. Weak candidates were only able to say '我大和高' (I big and tall) when describing themselves rather than constructing an accurate albeit simple sentence. Some candidates misunderstood the first bullet point 'what you look like' to be 'what do you like' and wrote about their hobbies. A small minority of candidates seemed to have difficulties understanding the English rubric and bullet points and, as a consequence, wrote something completely different to what was required, despite their standard of Chinese writing being very high.

Q4 Most candidates did well, responding fully to all the bullet points. They wrote about the TV programmes they knew and were creative with their language, employing a wide variety of vocabulary and sentence structures. Less able candidates, however, could not give details of their favourite TV programmes or express an opinion as to why they liked it apart from saying '好' (good), '好笑' (funny) or '有意思' (interesting). A few candidates turned the bullet points into questions and answers rather than linking their writing into a continuous piece of composition. Some learners answered this and Q3 entirely in *pinyin*. It should be pointed out that while acknowledging that occasional use of *pinyin* in a continuous piece of writing offers useful support, the main purpose of this paper is to test candidates' competence in writing Modern Standard Chinese.



# Statistics

## Overall Subject Grade Boundaries 1666

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Overall subject grade boundaries	100	83	73	63	53	45	38	31	24	0

(NB each paper is worth 25% of the total)

## Overall Subject Grade Boundaries 1667

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Overall subject grade boundaries	100	88	79	70	61	51	41	32	23	0

(NB each paper is worth 33% of the total)

## Paper 1 Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 1 grade boundaries	50	45	40	35	31	26	21	16	11	0

## Paper 2 Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 2 grade boundaries	20	19	16	13	11	9	7	6	5	0

## Paper 3 Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 3 grade boundaries	50	44	40	36	32	27	22	17	12	0

## Paper 4 Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 4 grade boundaries	55	47	42	37	32	26	21	16	11	0





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