

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in Chinese (5CN04/01)
Paper 4: Writing in Chinese

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GCSE Chinese (2016)
Unit 4 Writing in Chinese
Examiner's Report

Candidates are required to produce two essays of 100-150 characters each under a supervised exam condition in two 45 min to 1 hour sessions. They are given a choice of four themes and topics. Candidates and their teacher can negotiate and choose from the tasks suggested by Pearson Edexcel on the four prescribed themes. Centres can also devise their own task and/or theme as well. Candidates can have up to two weeks preparation time and 6 hours of guidance from the teacher before the assessment takes place.

Most centres used or adapted the Edexcel-set tasks. The most popular title across all levels of ability is again describing about their holidays to their Chinese friends. Another equally popular task/topic is "sport and leisure – task 2: Your best weekend ever."

Other more chosen tasks/titles include:

- Sport and leisure
 - Task 3: an email to your friend about the plan on holiday together after the exam this year
- Travel and tourism
 - Task 4: About your local area (usually adapted if by learners)
 - Task 5: A day out
- Media and culture
 - Task 4: film club (average and higher ability)
- Business, work and employment
 - Task 3: application to work in a hotel in Hong Kong

Popular topics/titles devised by centre include:

- My family and school
- My home and local area
- Food and healthy lifestyle

Examiners are delighted with the evidence that the increased number of candidates who attempted topics on travel and holidays were able to provide more distinctive and individual content. However, examiners also noted two issues:

- (1) A noticeable number of candidates chose to write a description of a past holiday for essay one and then a description of 'best weekend ever' or 'a day out' for essay two. Candidates should be reminded that while both tasks may relate to one specific theme or similar topics, there should be no direct overlap of content between the two pieces of writing, and the phrases and vocabulary used should be sufficiently different, otherwise marks awarded to both the content and the language would be affected.
- (2) Some candidates who chose 'a day out' described it as a journey flying from Britain to a city in China. This rendered the communication as containing lapses or irrelevance.

Examiners also noted the following issues:

- Some essays, when attempting topics such as 'my school' or 'food and healthy lifestyle', tended to be very pedestrian and repetitive in both 'content' and 'language'. They repeated the likes and dislikes of each subject or various type of food using almost the same one or two sentence structures (雖然...但是/虽然...但是, 不但...而且). More able candidates must be encouraged to show some creativity in their ideas; they also need to learn to link the piece into a whole one.
- There was still a significant proportion of candidates who started their essay with a personal introduction irrespective of its irrelevance to the nature of the title and task. On one occasion the candidates of some centres in performing the task of writing a job application gave detailed information of their parents and siblings. Candidates should be reminded that the information chosen to write in the content must be relevant to the purpose of the task to gain higher marks.
- Candidates have taken on board the advice given in previous years' reports as there were fewer candidates applying the particle 'le' unnecessarily whenever a past action and event was mentioned. However the excessive use of 'erization' (adding '儿'sound to syllables as if in spoken Chinese of northern dialects) continued to be a problem. For example, '喜欢玩电子游戏', in written Chinese, to apply 'er' to the verb 玩 to become '喜欢玩儿电子游戏' is both odd and unnecessary.
- Some candidates continued to have the problem of rote learning. Some centres were found to present similar or virtually identical essays according to a template or writing frame. Students should be advised that work which lacks originality will not be awarded marks in the top band for communication and content.
- Candidates are strongly advised to write the title at the start of the essay, whether it has been given on the CM4 form or not. It should be noted that the title is specific to each essay and is different to 'theme' and 'topics' (media and culture, travel and tourism etc). For candidates using the Pearson Edexcel set-tasks, to copy the full description of the task is NOT required, but please **make sure they make it clear which task it is**, for example, "travel and tourism task 2". This needs to be indicated on the CM4 form and repeated at the start of the essay.

Word counts

The majority of candidates were able to produce two essays of between 100-150 characters each.

The following marking principles are applied to shorter essays:

- between 76-95 characters – mark is capped at 12 for Communication and Content
- between 61-75 characters – marks is capped at 9 for Communication and Content

- fewer than 60 characters – mark is capped at 6 for Communication and Content

Students are also reminded that no extra marks would be awarded to the additional effort of writing over 150 characters.

CA4 Notes form

This is generally well used. It can include up to 30 words/50 characters. Please be reminded that for 'words', it means written in English or pinyin as an item and is counted as one word such as xuexiao/school. But if written in characters 學校/学校 it will be counted as 2 characters. Details of guidance can be found in the Administrative Guidance.

Administration

Examiners are grateful to those centres that carried out administrative matters satisfactorily. Centres are advised of the following:

- Use the administrative support guide to check that all procedures are carried out correctly.
- Make sure each candidate's work is secured separately. Please use staples or paperclips to fasten each candidate's work (putting together the CM4 duly signed by the teacher and the candidate, the task and stimuli, the CA4 notes if used, the 2 essays). The use of plastic pockets or card folders for each individual candidate's work should be avoided.
- Both the teacher and the candidate must sign the front sheet to authenticate the work; without the two signatures the marking process cannot be completed.
- Where all candidates have been given the same stimulus task, it is necessary to include this only once.
- The two pieces of work of each candidate should be submitted in the order listed on the CM4 sheet.
- Teachers should not mark, annotate or correct the work in any way.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>