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# Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

## Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE  
In Chinese (5CN01) Paper 1H  
Listening & Understanding in Chinese

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GCSE Chinese 2018

## Unit 1H: Listening Examiner's report

### Introduction

As in past years, the candidate cohort seen as a whole dealt very well with the range of tasks and topic areas in this paper: there was little problem with the 'crossover' questions (those that also appear in the Foundation paper), with results statistics showing that accuracy in response was often close to 100% (question 5iv was in fact answered correctly by **all** candidates), the questions aimed at B grade learners (Q3 and 7) likewise had a high rate of accurate response. It was only really the questions aimed at the top of the cohort which successfully distinguished the good from the very good (A\*) students. As has been the case before, Q4 (written answers in English) was, for various reasons discussed below, statistically the most challenging task, with only 20% of learners achieving a full 8 marks. Similarly, there were parts of the multiple choice Q8, which even candidates at the top of the ability range found difficult.

### Crossover questions (Q1, 2, 5, 6)

Although it was stated above that the crossover questions were handled well by the cohort as a whole, closer examination of the statistics reveals that even students working at grade A level had difficulty with some tasks. Q1 in particular was not a comfortable first question for many: whilst the vocabulary used was not in itself that difficult and the topic area was one with which most students would be familiar, it was perhaps firstly the need to process the information heard so that it matched the answers in the box which was very demanding for some. Candidates had, for example, to recognise that 上网, 看书, 听音乐 were activities that can be done on a train, and then further realise that this was inferring that this made good use of the time spent travelling (option E). Although, as in past years, the answers were not in the order heard, some candidates may also have been slightly thrown by the question format.

In Q2 the only element that caused any problem, mainly among candidates working below the A boundary, was 2iii; students were perhaps expecting to hear 在家 (as the question said 'at home' ) and then for some reason rejected the word 家 when it was said as part of a verb phrase (回家).

All parts of Q5 were, as expected, answered correctly by virtually everyone sitting this paper. Q6, too, was not found unduly challenging, the statements this year being in the order heard. If any parts were at all 'difficult', it was parts iii and iv. As previously in Q1, candidates had to interpret what they heard (离我家不远, 不用花钱) to make it match the English statements which used slightly different words to express the same thing.

## Higher questions

### Q3

This question used a lot of media vocabulary, but it is a lexical group that candidates are clearly very familiar with: over 80% of the cohort gained full marks here.

### Q4

This was, as mentioned above, the task with which candidates struggled the most; this is, of course, intended to be a question which challenges the top end of the ability range, but even students working at the A boundary found it difficult to gain more than 4/8. In some cases, this was through failure to distinguish words which can sound similar to a learner's ear (ai), for some there was a lack of knowledge of words which one might reasonably expect learners at this level to have learnt (bii), and in some cases inaccurate English led to answers meaning something different from their probable intended meaning (aii).

In response to (ai) a surprising number of candidates described the inhabitants as 'small/short/thin', none of which, whilst confusion over the audible difference between 少, 小 and 瘦 may be understandable, can surely be correct in the context? The next part (aii) was not straightforward and many variations of answer were accepted, as long as it was clear that a film was made in the town where he lived as a child. In this instance, many students wrote 'came to his place', which makes it sound as though the film crew visited his house.

The first two questions in part 2 depended on single vocabulary items being known. Whilst the answer to (bi) had to be a possible verbal reaction (with 哈哈) being a useful support), (bii) could have been any time adverb, and it was disappointing how few candidates recognised 圣诞节.

### Q7

This was a question that described how the young people individually 'did their bit' for the environment. It is important to note, however, that no technical vocabulary was used (except perhaps 空调), all the key words needed to complete the task being ones that candidates should have met in other contexts (train, jumper, fruit, etc). It was probably for this reason that students across the ability range were not thrown by the possibly difficult-looking task ('waste water', 'heating', 'sorts the rubbish', etc), the majority of even the lower ability listeners gaining full marks on this task.

### Q8

The multiple choice format of this final task on the paper (with only 3 options to choose from) has in the past sometimes seemed 'too easy', but this was not so much the case this year, suggesting that the level of the question was perhaps better suited to its task of challenging the top end of the ability range; only candidates working above the A grade boundary managed to complete this task with relative ease.

In part 1 of Q8, it was part (iii) that curiously gained the most wrong answers. In some questions on this paper, as already discussed, there was a need to 'process' the spoken words, but in this case the speaker said very clearly 我忘了地图, with option B stating 'she had forgotten the map'; the spoken and written words match perfectly, so one can only come to the conclusion that either the verb 忘 or the noun 地图 was not known, which seems rather unlikely for more able candidates. Perhaps 下了火车 somehow led to confusion with 下(雨)?

In part 2 only (iv) was answered well by everybody, parts (i) and (iii) proving particularly challenging, as was indeed the intention of the writers. The meaning of the spoken statement, using the structure 除了。。。以外, might have not been too hard to grasp, but the listener had to think in order to recast that in terms of the given English statements. Part (iii) similarly was intellectually quite demanding as the Chinese structure of comparison 没有。。。那么。。。 is one that again needs the student to process what is heard and change the meaning to match what is written on the exam paper.

#### Paper summary

This year's Higher paper gave a variety of tasks aimed at the range of ability of those candidates sitting the exam. Those performing at the lower end of the C - A (\*) range were able to deal comfortably with the crossover questions and some of the easier sections of the other tasks, whilst those at the other end of the ability range were sufficiently stretched, particularly in questions 4 and 8.

To help teachers prepare students for future exams, it might be useful to note the following points, which arose as a result of the responses to this year's paper: firstly, it is important that students know vocabulary (such as 'Christmas') relevant to their home country, as well as words specifically used in connection with the target language country, China. Students should also be advised that where '**one** detail' is asked for, they should do as instructed, choosing the point they feel most confident about, rather than listing everything they heard. Lastly, it is necessary to ensure that students have sufficient opportunity to practise being able both to **process** information, that is to find equivalent meaning from two different ways of expression, and to draw **inference** from the language that they are presented with in the exam.

