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Principal Examiner Feedback

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In Chinese (4CN1)

Paper 02: Reading and Writing

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Introduction

This paper consisted of two sections: A and B. Section A was composed of 5 questions. Section B was composed of 3 questions. Candidates were allotted one hour and forty-five minutes to complete the questions.

Question 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were designed to assess candidates' abilities to comprehend and utilise information from a range of texts which included multiple choice questions, word drop questions, multiple matching questions, notetaking questions and short answer questions. All the questions were set in English and candidates had to answer questions in English. English grammatical accuracy was not assessed in this part of the paper. Question 6 and 7 were writing questions. Question 8 was the translation question.

Question 1

There were six multiple choice questions. Each question had four options. Most candidates responded very well in this question and scored full marks as usual with only few candidates making mistakes in Q1(f).

Question 2

This was a word drop question. Candidates were provided with twelve words in a box (plus an example) which they must drop in to complete a correct statement about the stimulus text. The vast majority of students showed a good understanding of the text, and they were able to give five correct answers out of six. A few candidates didn't obtain marks for Q2(c) because they didn't read the text carefully and missed the details – "The room was clean, but the bed was a little bit old."

Question 3

This was a multiple matching question. Candidates were presented with three paragraphs, each spoken by a different person, and a grid with statements in each row which apply to one or more of the speakers. Candidates were expected to mark which speaker each statement applied to. Candidates were expected to identify eight correct answers. The performance in this question was reasonably good. However, some candidates lost one or two marks because they ticked 7 answers and a couple of students ticked more than 8 answers.

Question 4

This is a notetaking question. Candidates were expected to read a piece of text and were provided with a short set of notes about the text with 10 gaps to fill. The performance on this question was quite good. A few Chinese native speakers understood the text very well but were not able to answer questions in English. One candidate answered all the questions in Chinese. Most candidates did well in Q4 (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e). Some candidates lost 1 mark in Question4 (f) as expected because candidates were expected to provide two pieces of information. Some candidates lost marks in 4(g) unexpectedly because they confused the English words "two" and "twenty". Candidates did quite well in 4 (h), which we had expected to be a more challenging question as we expected the sentence structure to be more complicated, but most candidates seemed comfortable with it.

Question 5

Candidates are expected to read a longer passage and to respond to a series of questions in English. The candidates were required to understand the language of the original text and to use English to show their understanding. We came across some candidates who answered the questions with full sentences with no grammatical mistakes at all. However, the question served as a discriminator between candidates who had different levels of English language skills. Some Chinese native speakers understood the text but were not able to gain marks because of serious spelling mistakes.

Most candidates did well in Q5 (a), (c), (e)(ii), (f) and (g). Some candidates lost marks in Question 5(b) and 5 (e) (ii) as expected because of the harder Chinese characters for "shirt" and "find". Some candidates didn't know the difference of the two English words – "search" and "find". Some candidates lost marks in Q4 (c) because they failed to clarify "this year". Some candidates lost marks in Q5 (h) because they didn't understand the meaning of the Chinese word "volunteer".

For Question 6

Candidates were required to write 60-75 characters on a topic. Candidates were aided by four bullet points in both English and Chinese, to which they must refer in their answer. This response was assessed for Communication and Content, Linguistic knowledge and Accuracy. The

majority of candidates answered the question quite well, which showed their ability to write about one of their classmates. Even some weaker candidates performed reasonably well as they could get some support from the reading passages and the bullet points in English. However, a couple of candidates failed to write full sentences. They merely copied the questions out or answered the questions in note form. Some candidates wrote quite lengthy responses.

Question 7

Candidates could select one writing task from a choice of three. Candidates were expected to write a continuous response of 125 -150 characters. Candidates are also provided with four bullet points in both English and Chinese to help structure their answer, to which they must refer. This response was also assessed for Communication and Content, Linguistic knowledge, and Accuracy.

Task 7(a) and (c) were more popular this year. As expected, Task 7(b) was less popular because Environment is not an easy topic in IGCSE Chinese because there are some challenging and uncommonly used Chinese characters.

Task (a)

The differing complexity of the bullet points given differentiated the writing abilities of candidates. The performance in the task was generally good. Many able candidates managed to give a detailed description of the sporting event they took part in, expressed their opinions on the event and healthy living, also they responded to the last bullet point and justified why they would like to try the new sport. However, a few able candidates failed to respond to the third bullet point, and hence dropped marks. Some weak candidates managed to write a few simple sentences.

Task (b)

As in task (a), the bullet points also discriminated between the writing abilities of candidates. The performance in the task was quite good. Some strong candidates chose to answer the question. They responded to the bullet points with detailed information about the environmentally- friendly activities, expressed their opinions on the activities and explained what schools could do to help young people realise the importance of

environmental protection. A couple of weak candidates attempted the task. They merely copied the questions out or answered the questions in note form.

Task (c)

Most candidates performed well on this task with full responses to the bullet points. Strong candidates were able to express their thoughts on online shopping and demonstrate their range of writing skills; even weaker candidates were also able to respond to the bullet points with some simple sentences.

Question 8

Candidates were expected to translate four separate sentences from English to Chinese. Most candidates performed well in Question 8(a) and (b). A lot of candidates scored full marks. However, some candidates lost one mark as errors in forming characters hindered clarity. Some candidates couldn't form the Chinese characters for "animal" and "cat". Some candidates scored full marks in 8 (c) and (d). Many candidates used mostly accurate linguistic structures and vocabulary but errors preventing meaning being conveyed meant they lost one or two marks. Some candidates couldn't form the Chinese characters for "pet"

Paper Summary

Based on their performance in this paper, students are offered the following advice:

- In reading tasks, answers should be given to an appropriate level of detail. Marks can be lost for vague answers or answers which do not demonstrate complete understanding.
- In reading tasks, all answers should be based only on the information in the text – no additional information should be necessary.
- In the translation task, students should attempt to translate all characters, vocabulary or phrases in the translation task as leaving out any individual piece of meaning would result in loss of marks.
- Ensure the spellings are correct and syntax is accurate throughout.
- Check the marks available for each question to ensure the correct number of answers have been given and search for the most appropriate/related answers for the questions.

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