



Pearson

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Chinese (6CN01) Paper 1A

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General overview

The Unit 1 speaking assessment requires students to speak in **monologue** for 5 to 6 minutes, based on an assigned English stimulus card with bullet points.

Invigilators/teachers should NOT ask any questions either in Chinese or in English.

Students have 15 minutes preparation time and they are allowed to make notes during the preparation time which may be referred to during the speaking assessment.

There are 8 stimuli cards which cover the following four topic areas:

- Food, diet and health
- Transport, travel and tourism
- Education and employment
- Leisure, youth interests and Chinese festivals

On each stimulus card, there is a picture and a short passage in English which is relevant to the topic. The guidance in the form of a series of bullet points provides students with clues to explore their ideas. Students are expected to refer to both English stimulus and the bullet points so that they can communicate effectively in Chinese (either Mandarin or Cantonese) about the stimulus topic. Students need to express opinions as well as provide relevant and appropriate information. (*Edexcel GCE Chinese specification page 4*)

Assessment: Content and understanding

The majority of students gave good quality performances, showing they were familiar with the exam setting and were well prepared. Some gave developed and detailed answers, demonstrating thorough consideration on the issues relating to the stimulus.

Most students started the speaking assessment with a full or partial translation of the English stimulus. This was usually sufficient to provide a good start. Students who aimed at a good result should **use the English stimulus thoroughly and properly; cover all the bullet points well** and enrich the speech by **providing developed ideas in depth**.

Top students were those who spoke logically and accurately in an authentic manner at native or near-native standard.

Although a full summary of the English stimulus is not required, it will be unwise to ignore it completely and go for a free-style speech. Misinterpretation of the content of the English stimulus should be avoided. Bullet points were important for this assessment and students were encouraged to respond to all bullet points in their speech.

An accurate interpretation of the stimulus and the bullet points was essential. Some students failed to show their understanding of commonly-used English words/phrases such as "between meals" and "on the way home" in Stimulus 1, "the elderly" and "regularly" in Stimulus 2, "festivals" and "it is celebrated at the beginning of summer" (not "it celebrates the beginning of summer") in Stimulus 3, "leisure time" and "wisely" and "balance" in Stimulus 4, "compete" and "how **can** your school **improve** its extracurricular activities" in Stimulus 5, "challenge" and "take a year off" in Stimulus 6, "taxi stands", "since" (to introduce reasons, not time) and "least favourite means of transport" in Stimulus 7, and "more interested in shopping than sightseeing" and "overspend" in Stimulus 8.

Some students did not pay enough attention to the details in the bullet points. For example:

Stimulus 1, bullet point 4: "In your opinion, is it easy to maintain healthy eating? Why?" Some students did not answer the question and simply talked about how to maintain their health.

Stimulus 4, bullet point 3: "Why do young people enjoy spending leisure time with friends?" Some students misinterpreted it as "How do young people spend their leisure time with friends?"

Stimulus 4, bullet point 4: "What kind of voluntary work would you like to do? Why?" Some students focused on the voluntary work they have done before and did not relate the past experiences to answer the question. Some students misinterpreted voluntary work as part-time work.

Stimulus 4, bullet point 5: "Why is it important to maintain a balance between leisure and study?" Some students talked about how to maintain a balance between leisure and study. Some students presented views on the consequences of too much study and insufficient leisure without talking about the outcomes of too much leisure and insufficient study. Quite a number of students could not translate the word "balance" properly.

Stimulus 5, bullet point 4: "How can your school improve its extracurricular activities?" Some students described what their schools have done to improve their extracurricular activities.

Stimulus 6, bullet point 3: "What are the benefits of taking a year off after leaving school?" A number of students mainly used the ideas from the stimulus with little expansion.

Stimulus 6, bullet point 5: "How can teachers and parents help with your future plan?" Some students did not respond to the role of parents or simply merged the roles of teachers and parents together.

Stimulus 7, bullet point 5: "Compare your most favourite and least favourite means of transport." A few students misinterpreted "least favourite" as "second favourite". A few students mentioned one means of transport and discussed its strengths and weaknesses.

Stimulus 8, bullet point 2: "Why do people like shopping during holiday trips?" Many students quoted the views from the stimulus rather than making their own opinions.

In sum, students were **unable to gain high marks** if they:

- struggled to speak for the full time allocation (i.e. 5 to 6 minutes);
- spoke over 6 minutes (the remainder of the presentation was not marked);
- gave limited or no response to the stimulus (i.e. bullet point 1);
- became repetitive;
- talked freely without responding to all five bullet points;
- gave a lot of irrelevant responses;
- failed to extend their responses to the full range of all bullet points; or
- gave an unbalanced presentation (e.g. spent too much time on the first three bullet points and rushed through the last two bullet points);
- spoke like reading out a written text (this way of speaking sounded unnatural particularly among Cantonese-speaking students)

Assessment: Quality of Language

Quality of Language marks were awarded based on **pronunciation and grammar accuracy**, as well as the range of **lexical items** and **variety of structures and expressions related to all bullet points**.

The majority of students received good marks for quality of language. High marks of 9-10 were often awarded for performances which were not faultless, but showed clear pronunciation and good control of complex language structures.

The weaker students tended to demonstrate problems with tones which sometimes caused misunderstanding, and hesitation which stemmed from uncertainty. Some students spoke fluently, but simplicity of language expressions or structures or limited vocabulary affected their quality of language marks.

Administration

OR1CN oral form

A completed **OR1CN oral form** (including "declaration of authentication") should be attached with the recording for every student. The latest version of the oral form can be found in the 'Administrative Support Guide GCE Orals – Chinese 6CN01', which can be downloaded from the Chinese qualification page of the Edexcel website.

Recording on CD or USB

Centres must record the exam digitally and send recordings on CD or USB. **Audio cassettes are no longer accepted for assessment from September 2014.**

The centre name/number, student name, student number and stimulus card number should be announced at the start of each and every recording. Please make sure the students' information matches the registration form. At the end of each recording, "END of TEST" should be announced.

The test should last between 5 and 6 minutes, **excluding** the announcement at the start of each recording. Invigilators **must not stop the recording** at any time during the allotted 6 minutes, even if the students have to stop to think.

The test should be conducted in a quiet environment.

Centres should ensure that they will submit **one recording track** for each student. For example, a centre which has a total of 10 students should provide a total of 10 recording tracks.

Each student should take the test only once. It would be a **malpractice** if a student is allowed to re-do the test.

Centres are reminded to check thoroughly that the recordings on CD and USB are complete and of a good audible quality before sending the assessment to the Edexcel examiner.

Centres are also reminded that CDs/USBs should be packaged carefully with appropriate wrapping in order to prevent damage to the recordings.

Centres must **keep back-up files of the recording** and resend the recording upon request in case of faulty or missing originals.

Invigilation

Invigilators are reminded to read the instructions carefully before conducting the exam. It is important for the integrity of the examination that invigilators accurately follow the sequence of oral stimulus, as specified in the exam oral booklet. **Students must NOT be allowed to choose their own stimulus card.**

Full instructions regarding the conduct of oral assessments can be found in the 'Administrative Support Guide GCE Orals – Chinese 6CN01' on the Chinese qualification page of the Edexcel website.

Centres should keep the students work produced during the 15-minute preparation time till the last date for Enquiry About Results (EARs).

Last and important issue, **invigilators MUST NOT prompt students** by reading out questions from the stimulus card, or by asking supplementary questions either in English or in Chinese. The assessment requires the students to produce a **monologue** and additional support by the invigilator could disadvantage the students' performance.

Conclusion

The stimulus material in this assessment proved accessible to all students. The examination requires students to give complex, well-structured and extended answers based on the stimulus material provided by the examination board. In preparation for this assessment, teachers should ensure that students are given proper training and experience of the expectations of the assessment prior to the examination (such as time management, covering the stimulus as much as possible and responding to all bullet points in order).

Grade Boundaries

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

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

