

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCE Chinese
(6CN01/1A)

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General overview

The Unit 1 speaking assessment requires candidates 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.

Candidates have 15 minutes preparation time, during which they are allowed to make notes 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. Candidates 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. Candidates 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 candidates gave good quality performances, showing that 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 candidates started the speaking assessment with a full or partial translation of the English stimulus. This was usually sufficient to provide a good start. Candidates 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 candidates 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 candidates were encouraged to respond to all bullet points in their speech.

An accurate interpretation of the stimulus and the bullet points was essential. Some candidates failed to show their understanding of **commonly-used English words/phrases** such as “queue”, “in a bad mood” and “reasonable” in Stimulus 1; “this had made more people visit previously quiet tourist spots”, “galleries” and “keen” in Stimulus 2; “part-time jobs”, “pocket money” and “career” in Stimulus 3; “it takes too long”, “revise” and “developing their own interests” in Stimulus 4, “daily lives”, “stay up late” and “mentally” in Stimulus 5, “dine” (not “dine out”), “chefs” and “regularly” in Stimulus 6, “support”, “apart from” and “get along with” in Stimulus 7, and “disappear”, “plays” and “leisure activities” (not “extracurricular activities”) in Stimulus 8.

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

Stimulus 1, bullet point 4: “How **can** public transport **be improved** in your local area?” Some candidates misinterpreted it as “How can public transport improve your local area?” or “How has public transport improved your local area?”

Stimulus 2, bullet point 3: “Where can people get information about places **to visit**?” Instead of talking about where people can get information to plan their visits, some candidates ignored the phrase “to visit” by describing where people can get information while they are visiting a place.

Stimulus 3, bullet point 5: “What are the important factors in choosing a **career**?” A number of candidates misinterpreted the word “career” as “part-time job”.

Stimulus 5, bullet point 5: “How can teenagers be healthy, both physically and **mentally**?” Many candidates focussed on physical health and made very little coverage (or hardly any) coverage on the mental aspect of health.

Stimulus 6, bullet point 4: "What are the advantages and **disadvantages of eating at home?**" After talking about the advantages of eating at home, some candidates analysed the disadvantages of dining out rather than eating at home.

Stimulus 7, bullet point 5: "What are the **benefits** of leisure time?" Some candidates simply described what leisure activities they did rather than focussing on the benefits of leisure time.

Stimulus 8, bullet point 2: "Is going to the cinema popular **amongst your friends?**" A number of candidates simply talked about whether they themselves go to the cinema rather than discussing whether going to the cinema is popular amongst their friends.

In sum, candidates 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 and disorganised;
- 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;
- 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 candidates)

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 candidates 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 candidates tended to demonstrate problems with use of lexical items and sentence structures, and tones which sometimes caused

misunderstanding, and hesitation which stemmed from uncertainty. Some candidates 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 candidate. The latest version of the oral form can be found in the ‘Administrative Support Guide’ for GCE Chinese, 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.***

The centre name/number, candidate name, candidate 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 candidates 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 candidate. For example, a centre which has a total of 10 candidates should provide a total of 10 recording tracks.

Each candidate should take the test only once. To do so otherwise deliberately constitutes malpractice.

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. **Candidates 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' 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).

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

Conclusion

The stimulus material in this assessment proved accessible to all candidates. 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 candidates 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/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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