

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCE Chinese
(6CN02)

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Paper overview

The GCE Chinese Unit 2 6CN02 was set as per the GCE 2008 Specification, and is consistent with the format of all previous 6CN02 papers. As an Understanding and Written Response paper, this paper rewards candidates for their abilities to extract and communicate information from both recorded and written sources in Chinese, to transfer meaning from Chinese into English and to produce a continuous piece of writing in Chinese.

All the passages are taken from the following four published Topic Areas:

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

This paper consists of three sections: Listening, Reading and Writing and there are a variety of task-types, some require non-verbal answers and others require written answers. It begins with four recordings, which are available in Cantonese and Mandarin, followed by three reading passages and a stimulus for the written response. All the passages and questions are printed twice in the Questions Booklet, once in Traditional/full characters and once in Simplified characters. Candidates may write in Traditional or Simplified characters in the Answer Booklet, with the exception of the Reading section where candidates are required to answer in English.

A total of two hours thirty minutes were available for the completion of the paper, with the recording being taken away after 45 minutes. Candidates must attempt all questions and a broad range of marks were awarded. The paper is worth 70 marks in total, of which 20 marks for Listening, 20 marks for Reading and 30 marks for Writing.

As the end of the Specification is reached, most of the teachers and students are, with the reference the many Examiner's Reports, clearly well attuned in many cases to the demands of the paper and there is little evidence that students did not have sufficient time to complete all the questions.

Candidates' Performance

In the 2018 exam cycle, the paper's structure remains the same as the previous exam series of the GCE 2008 Specification in that there are a total of eight questions which test listening, reading and writing skills.

This paper consists of three sections.

Section A Listening (20 marks)

Section A is a listening assessment with a maximum of 20 marks. It requires candidates to listen to a range of recorded Chinese-language materials and to retrieve and convey information given by responding to Chinese-language questions. Candidates will need to show understanding of both the general sense and specific details conveyed. The questions will elicit non-verbal responses or short answers in Chinese.

In this section, candidates will have individual control of the recordings and they may listen to the recording of each passage, in Mandarin or in Cantonese, as many times as they like. However, this section of assessment must be undertaken within the first 45 minutes allocated to this unit. Candidates are advised to make good use of the allotted time to listen, stop, revisit and replay sections of the recordings at will to complete the four relevant listening questions, and to make more certain that the answers they have written down are correct.

The vast majority of the candidates were able to understand the content of the passages and gave some quality performances. Candidates who scored high are likely to be those who responded after listening to the whole passages carefully.

Q1 The majority of candidates responded very well in this question with only a very small number of candidates made mistakes in Q1(iii).

Q2 The performance in this question was good and most candidates scored 3 marks or more. A and G were the least successful items and F and H were sometimes chosen in error.

Q3 The vast majority of candidates showed a good understanding of this passage and they were able to choose and write all four correct answers to this question with some occasional errors in (a) and/or (b). The small number of candidates who responded with “大學/大学” instead of the correct answer of “商業/商业” for (a) indicated that they may have failed to

listen to the recording carefully. And, some candidates did not recognise the meaning “50 多” is “超過/超过” and selected “左右” or “差不多” as their answer.

Q4 This passage is the longest recording amongst the four passages and the question carries the largest number of marks out of the four questions as candidates are required to give a short written response in Chinese based on the information provided in the passage. No credit could be given for answers written in English or Pinyin. It is evident that the question is still very accessible as the writing characters in this question are basic and daily. The vast majority of candidates showed good understanding of the extract. Those who struggled to write Chinese characters lost marks in (b) and/or (h).

Section B Reading (20 marks)

Section B is a reading assessment with a maximum of 20 marks. It requires candidates to comprehend Chinese-language printed materials and to retrieve and convey information given by responding to English-language questions. Candidates will need to show understanding of both the general sense and specific details conveyed. All answers must be based exclusively on the information in the passages and the questions will elicit English answers that require a transfer of meaning from Chinese. No credit can be given for answers written in Chinese or for candidates' own interpretation which have no basis in the original passages.

In this paper, the three reading comprehension passages are relating to Festivals, a Science camp and a Safari park. The first two questions carry 5 marks each and the last one carries 10 marks, giving a total of 20 marks.

The majority of candidates were able to understand the content of the passages but not always able to express themselves in clear English. Misspelling, inaccurate choice of words/phrases and grammatical mistakes were very common whilst details appeared to be glossed over. Candidates are to be reminded that precise understanding and accurate English are essential in order to score higher marks. There is still room to improve in this section.

Q5 A good number of candidates' attempts worked very well for this question. They demonstrated good understanding of the passages and were able to produce accurate responses. For those who did not score well, the common mistakes are: omitted “big”, the key descriptive

adjective of the festival in (a), failed to translate “孤單 / 孤单” in (b) and unable to provide precise English translation in (d)(i).

Q6 This is another very well attempted question and most of the candidates showed a good understanding of the passage and responded all the five sub-questions correctly. The common errors showed that some candidates did not understand “等” and gave “11 subjects” as their answers in (b) and others struggled to translate “北美” in (c) or “話劇/话剧” in (d) correctly.

Q7 This question requires precise understanding of the passage to score and candidates’ performance was rather mixed. There were some detail glossed over in transfer of meaning in (a), missing some key information such as “中國 / 中国”, “野生”, “之一”, “來自世界各地的” or “珍稀” in their responses for (a); struggled to translate “自駕遊/自驾游” for (c) and “入口處 / 入口处” for (e); did not spell “camera” or “wallet” correctly, or, gave “mobile phones” or “personal belongings” as answers. Others failed to read the questions carefully and did not respond with “new option...” for (c) and put “do not shout to animals” and “do not feed animal” as the dangerous behaviours.

Section C Writing (30 marks)

Section C is a writing assessment with a maximum of 30 marks. There is only one continuous writing task in this section which required candidates to write an essay of 180-200 Chinese characters in response to the stimulus, demonstrating their abilities to communicate accurately in Chinese using correct grammar and syntax.

Candidates should read the rubrics carefully, then organise their ideas into paragraphs. It is important to cover all the bullet points given in the question and write within the specified word limit. A good plan and well-balanced writing could help to score higher marks. Candidates are encouraged to use a variety of expressions and structures.

The continuous writing task this year was on hobbies, giving candidates the opportunity to express their views and opinions using the four bullet points provided. Up to 15 marks each were available for Content and Response, and, Quality of Language. The whole question was worth a total of 30 marks.

Q8 The majority of candidates gave good quality performances, covering all bullet points and adhered to the word limit. Their discussions were relevant and developed with successful uses of sentence structures, key phrases and word orders. These essays were awarded the top two band marks for both Content and Language. Moreover, some candidates were to be commended for the developed and detailed answers, demonstrating thorough consideration on the bullet points given in relation to their personal experiences, with effective structure. Their answers were wholly convincing and well developed, and, their language was always fluent and varied. The top band marks for either Content or Language (or both of them) were awarded.

Assessment: Content and understanding

It is evident that this is a very accessible topic and candidates performed well as a whole. There were some creative answers given justification of how hobbies could make them smarter. Some were able to make sensible arguments regarding the impacts that hobbies caused on their studies employing convincing examples from their daily life or personal experiences. For example, a good number of candidates discussed about maintaining a balance between leisure and study. They presented views on how hobbies helped them to relax and refocus on their studies, yet too much time spent on hobbies would result in insufficient time on studies. Further logical and sensible arguments were found in candidates' responses.

However, it is disappointing to see some candidates understood the task and developed some of the points successfully but failed to respond to all the bullet points. Similarly, some candidates did not pay close attention to the word limit and wrote too much on the first two points leaving very little room for the development of remaining points which are equally, if not, more important than the first two. Candidates are to be reminded that even though an essay is well-written, the remaining part of the essay cannot be taken into consideration when the word limit of 200 characters is reached. The essay will fail to meet the requirement of responding to all the bullet points and will not score high. A good plan and well balanced writing is vital.

The small number of candidates who did not do well were those who struggled to give good explanations or make appropriate suggestions to the bullet points; or, those who failed to structure their writing coherently, showing no logical development from one point to another. Some tended

to have much irrelevance, repetition or produced very short essays. Students are to be encouraged to practise on writing responses on the relevant issues on the prescribed topic areas when preparing for this paper.

Assessment: Quality of Language

Quality of Language marks were awarded based on the accuracy of grammar, the range of lexical items, the variety of structures and expressions. The majority of candidates showed competency in mastering the language and received good marks for their quality of language.

Many candidates were proficient and wrote fluently, but some suffered from their simplicity of language expressions and structures, or, limited vocabulary; and others employed an inappropriate flamboyant style with no relevance to the discussion points. It is disappointing that these essays could not reach to top mark band.

There were candidates who used homonyms due to their confusion over the writing of certain characters and a small number of candidates still wrote some pinyin in place of the Chinese characters. Candidates are to be reminded that those are not acceptable and that they should use synonyms or rephrase the sentences if unable to write a character.

Writing characters is an acquired skill in learning Chinese and candidates should keep practising writing when preparing for this paper. Familiarisation of the minimum vocabulary in the syllabus of GCSE is a good starting point.

Paper Summary

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

- Read the rubrics and instructions carefully before answering the questions and to adhere to the requirements, eg whether the answers should be in English or in Chinese
- Answer Section A and B based exclusively on the information in the passages
- Pay attention to the descriptive terms associated with numbers
- Check the corner marks of each question and search for the most appropriate/related answers for the questions.
- Ensure spelling and grammar is all correct
- Essay structure should be clear and coherent. There should be logical connections between each paragraph.
- Take time to plan, draft and produce a well-balanced writing covering all the bullet points given in the question within the specified word limit.
- Use a wide range of vocabulary and a variety of expressions and structures.
- Always develop ideas in depth and support opinions with examples

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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