

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in Chinese (5CN01/1F)
Paper 1F: Listening and Understanding
in Chinese

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GCSE Chinese
Unit 1F Listening and Understanding in Chinese
Examiners' Report

Many of the questions in this Listening paper seemed on first viewing very approachable with familiar topics - places (Q1), school subjects (Q4), food and drink (Q6) - to put the candidates at their ease, but in fact in many cases the results do not bear out the relative familiarity that one might have expected students to have with some of the more basic vocabulary items. Whilst some words - 面条, 公共汽车, 老师 - were known by most candidates, there were indications that many needed to review/expand certain topic areas such as clothing. As is often the case, the last question, needing answers in English, proved to be the most demanding despite not having the highest character count. Very few candidates scored well on this question as it needed some very specific cultural terms to be handled well.

Cultural knowledge was also important in Q3, where a good many candidates could identify 长城 from the script, but failed - especially amongst the candidates at the lower end of the range - to identify 风筝, despite the potential clue of 风 in the word. It was, however, pleasing to see that almost all candidates were able to answer the number question (Q3iv) correctly.

Q04

Although the answers to this question were presented in order (rather than jumping from like to dislike and back again), there was a fair amount of 'extra' material (which was intended to provide support) to listen to and this clearly did not help candidates at the lower end of the ability range. At this level students need to be trained to focus on what they can identify and use that as a basis for their answers. A problem with many of the responses to this question was that students wrote in the greyed-out area, giving 5 answers instead of 4 (the number of marks indicated).

Q05i

At all ability ranges this question proved difficult, partly as the answer was not given directly. Few candidates seem to know the word 鞋子, as this made the answer clear.

Q05ii

Responses to this part of the question were better, although many candidates seem either not to know the word 图书馆 or to have confused it with 博物馆 (one of the alternatives given).

Q05iii

This was the part of the question that proved the most difficult across the ability range. Once again, the answer was not given directly, so the candidates needed to recognise 毛衣 and 裙子 to gain the mark, recognising 商店 would have been helpful in eliminating many answers.

Q05iv

This piece of vocabulary (游泳) was correctly identified by most candidates and led more directly to the correct answer.

Q07i

This is one of the 'crossover' questions, one would have expected candidates to find this whole question more difficult to deal with and this was indeed borne out by the results: even the C grade students struggled to gain full marks. Students need to be careful to choose an answer that is grammatically correct (in English).

There was a lot of information to listen to before the first answer (酒店) was given. Candidates need to be advised perhaps of the wide range of words in Chinese for restaurant/hotel etc; the connection between 酒 as in 啤酒, 葡萄酒 or 酒吧 was not obvious enough to help listeners.

Q07ii

Overall 7ii was the most poorly answered section of this question. There were 4 grammatically possible answers (it needed to be a verb). However candidates need to be more aware of the use of 跳舞.

Q08i

Once again, the vocabulary in this 'crossover' question proved difficult for many candidates. At a higher level students are often called upon to justify choosing one particular profession over another, but the basic names of the jobs are just as important and need to be learnt.

Section 8i (司机) was not often correctly identified by candidates, particularly at grade E and below; although the word itself gives no indication as to a possible meaning, the previous phrase 喜欢汽车 was designed to be an indicator and help with this.

Q08ii

This was a piece of vocabulary (老师) that has been with candidates from the beginning of their studies.

Q08iii

This was the part of this question that was handled worst across the ability range. Candidates may not have known the word 护士 itself, but the help given (working in a hospital) and the fact that the job mentioned was not 医生 (that one would expect candidates to know) should have led more students to the correct answer.

Q08iv

It was heartening to see that more students at the top of the foundation range recognised 工程师.

Q10ai

Few candidates recognised 春节. Common answers given were 'Dragon Boat

festival', 'lantern festival' and 'music festival', the first two showed some cultural awareness.

Q10aii

Only a handful of candidates gave a correct answer to this question. Correctly identifying the festival would have led more students to the real reason (the lion dance); the connection between the 舞 of 跳舞 and that of 舞狮 was perhaps not made.

Q10bi

This section was poorly answered, with a slightly better performance by those at the top end of the ability range. Those who did attempt an answer often gave culturally appropriate suggestions ('Dragon festival', 'Lion festival').

Q10bii

This final question also proved difficult due to candidates not recognising 圣诞节 in the previous section. Although candidates might not be familiar with the word 东西, the words 好吃 were designed as an indicator of the answer.

Paper Summary

Overall, then, this was a paper that was handled well by many but it also highlighted some 'gaps' in the lexical knowledge of certain vocabulary groups (e.g. clothing, food & drink, transport, festivals). Candidates need to be familiar, passively at least, with as wide a spread of words within each topic as possible. As far as exam technique is concerned, candidates should make sure that they have taken note of the number of marks available, and only choose answers when completing sentences that are grammatically possible. Stronger candidates should be trained to identify where the answer is inferred, rather than directly stated (e.g. I'm thirsty...Where am I going?).

Grade Boundaries

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