

Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

June 2011

GCSE Chinese (5CN02) Paper 2A

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Speaking in Chinese

Candidates on the whole performed well in the June 2011 series of GCSE Chinese speaking examination.

The most successful performances were from the task type presentation followed by discussion where each individual candidate presented a topic of their own choice in their own way. These were often enhanced by skilful and appropriate questioning from the teacher/examiner who allowed the candidates the opportunities to fulfill their potential in line with the examination criteria and score high marks.

Less successful tasks were often those that were set for the whole cohort at a centre and there was a lack of individuality of topic and response. Questions were often too similar and unfortunately, all too often, so were candidates' responses. This is against the spirit of the specification and often put candidates at a disadvantage where there was either insufficient challenge for some candidates or the questions were over ambitious for others. In both cases where this did occur there was a lack of spontaneity and insufficient interaction between the teacher/examiner and the candidate. Moreover, the resultant lack of unpredictable elements prevented candidates from accessing higher than the middle mark bands.

What concerned moderators most this year was how some teacher/examiners conducted the open interactions. Centres are reminded that an open interaction task is different from the free conversation in the legacy GCSE speaking exam. An open interaction is an unscripted role-play based on a stimulus. Therefore, teacher/examiners should choose or devise a stimulus for the open interactions to be based on, and centres should provide the stimulus sheet for moderators' reference. In this particular task type candidates are expected to ask at least two questions effectively, where appropriate, to demonstrate their ability to 'interact'. Teacher/examiners are reminded to share this requirement with candidates in both the general preparation time and the task-specific preparation time, as failure by the candidates to ask questions within the task will lead to candidates losing marks within the Content and response section of the assessment criteria.

In order for candidates to score highly, centres are reminded that there should be a variety of questions asked within each task type, and each question should somehow relate to the response of the candidate to the previous question. It cannot elicit good interaction and spontaneity when a candidate delivers a prepared speech to a set list of questions.

Each task needs to last for between 4 and 6 minutes. Most submissions were in line with this requirement. It is rarely to the candidates' advantage to let them continue for longer than this. Where submissions were less than 3 minutes 30 seconds there was a deduction of 2 marks for Content and response. Candidates should be advised not to spend too long on the presentation as this may mean there is less time for the more interactive part of the task. In presentations followed by discussions, the presentation should be less than 3 minutes. In picture-based discussions, the initial introduction to the picture should be within one minute.

Samples

Centres are reminded that each candidate must attempt two different task types, and Task A needs to be submitted with the recording. Although centres are not obliged to record Task B, centres are encouraged to record enough of each task type so that they have samples of each in order to satisfy the requirements of the specification.

Samples must include work from the highest and lowest scoring candidate.

A copy of task sheet or stimulus sheet or photo for each sampled candidate should accompany samples. Moderators need to refer to these documents during the moderation. For a picture-based discussion task, candidates need not provide a group of pictures/photos. One picture/photo is enough as long as it relates to something they have interest or involvement in.

Centres are encouraged to use CD for recording samples. It is preferable that these are recorded as audio CDs so they may be played on CD players as well as computers. The track number for each candidate should be notified in the box of 'side/track' on the Candidate Mark Sheet.

The microphone should favour the candidate rather than the teacher/examiner. In order not to make too much noise during the recording the microphone should not be moved on the table unnecessarily. Each Candidate Record Sheet should be submitted with the authenticity statements signed by both the candidate and the teacher/examiner. These procedures are signposted in the specification and without these signatures the work cannot be moderated.

Each candidate should also complete a CA2 form on which the candidate is allowed to write up to 30 English words (or up to 50 Chinese characters, which can be put in pinyin if candidates prefer, or up to 30 Chinese characters + 20 English words / pinyin) and draw up to 5 small pictures to help them during the task. This form should be enclosed whether or not the candidate has used it. Some candidates this year used the CA2 form to write out the whole of their task. This is not permissible.

OPTEMS

OPTEMS 2A should contain the mark of the recorded task that each candidate has undertaken. OPTEMS 2B should contain the mark of the non recorded task. Each task, 2A and 2B, is marked out of 30 in its own right. The marks must not be added to each other. **Edexcel cannot issue results to candidates without marks from the centre.** It is vital that centres contact Edexcel if they are unable to find a teacher to mark the work as well as conduct it. They must not send work to the moderator without a mark and expect the moderator to mark it. This goes against the requirements of the specification.

The top copies (white) of the OPTEMS for both papers should be sent to Edexcel. The second copies (yellow) should be sent to the Moderator and the third copies (green) should be retained by the centre.

Marking

Some centres had a tendency to be too generous to candidates in the Content and response section. Candidates were awarded full marks in this section even when they failed to provide personal opinions or justifications or use different timeframes. All too often this section was overvalued where there was a lack of interaction and merely consisted of a question and answer session. In extreme cases there was also evidence of mini-presentations in response to questions which similarly did not allow for good interaction.

A few submissions for the presentation task contained merely a monologue without any follow-up discussion. Teacher/examiners are reminded that in this case only 7 out of the 18 marks can be awarded in Content and response no matter how perfect the candidate delivers the presentation.

The mere lack of error does not mean that the candidate will score highly in Accuracy. As candidates are encouraged to use more complex sentence structures, they cannot be awarded full mark in Accuracy if they keep using simple language throughout the task and consequently make no errors.

Packing & Posting

All samples should be appropriately packed with suitable padding, and Edexcel polybags should be used to avoid damage in the post.

Centres should adhere to the deadline for sending materials to moderators. Delays in sending materials to moderators can lead to results not being issued on time.

Although reports such as these invariably highlight areas for improvement, moderators wish to thank centres who submitted work for the June 2011 series of this examination. It has become more evident that this is an exciting unit which allows the candidates to show what they can do in the target language using a variety of tasks which interest them.

Marking Guidance

The following general marking principles are offered as guidance on the application of the mark scheme. They were used by moderators this summer and show how the mark scheme should be applied to different scenarios that arise during the conduct of the oral.

Tests should last between 4 and 6 minutes.

Tests which are too short: < less than 3'30" - so 3'29 " is too short

- Automatic deduction of 2 marks on the Content and Response grid.
- There is no adjustment applied to either Range or Accuracy.

Test which are too long: > more than 6 minutes

- Once the 6 minutes have passed, stop listening and assessing at the end of the next sentence.

Test which are a monologue and have no interaction

- Candidates cannot score more than 7 marks for Content and Response.
- This does not affect the marks for either Range or Accuracy.

Open interaction tasks only

- If a candidate asks only one question in a task that requires 2 or more – deduct 1 mark from the Content and Response.
- If a candidate asks no questions during the task – deduct 2 marks from the Content and Response.

The other two assessment criteria will not be affected. There is an expectation in this task type that the candidate will ask the TE questions since it is a transactional task type. Although interaction is important in all three task types, **there is no requirement for candidates to ask questions in the Presentation and discussion or in the Picture-based discussion task options.**

Marks for content and language are awarded discretely – i.e. if a candidate scores 8-11 for content, there is no imposed ceiling on either of the other assessment boxes for range or accuracy

Presentation and Discussion

- The presentation must last between 1 – 3 mins (max). If the presentation is shorter than 1 min deduct 2 marks for Content and Response.

Grade Boundaries

The modern foreign languages specifications share a common design, but the assessments in different languages are not identical. Grade boundaries at unit level reflect these differences in assessments, ensuring that candidate outcomes across these specifications are comparable at specification level.

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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