

Examiners' Report /  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCSE Chinese (5CN04) Paper 01

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## **Examiner Report**

The requirements and the conduct of the writing controlled assessment remain the same as last year. The focus of the writing unit will be chosen by the teacher in consultation with the individual candidates and will relate to themes outlined in the specification. It was noted that some centres were not aware of the new sample controlled assessment tasks for 2011-2013, and used the previous ones instead. The candidates were not penalized in this case, but centres are reminded that writing tasks and stimuli adapted or produced by the centres can only be used for two consecutive years, after which new ones should be created to replace them.

Candidates were generally well prepared and the writing often covered a wide range of knowledge with the detail included showing their efforts in the research and preparation prior to the assessments. While the strong candidates managed to score high marks with a piece of coherent writing, the weaker ones also managed to produce some content relevant to the topics chosen. Their efforts were highly appreciated and duly rewarded.

There was a trend in some centres for candidates to be well prepared in one essay but not in the other, causing a difference in the marks awarded for the two tasks. Therefore, candidates are advised to spread out their efforts in the preparation between the two chosen topics to ensure that they demonstrate their full ability across the two writing tasks.

### **Topics, task and stimuli**

Many centres adapted the sample controlled assessment tasks produced by the Edexcel, and the majority of the candidates managed to follow the stimuli and produced the writing accordingly. There were fewer problems in mis-interpreting these tasks and irrelevant writing this year, but some submissions still lacked clarity in the following topic areas:

- Part-time jobs, summer jobs, work experiences
- Lifestyle of young people, leisure activities, healthy eating
- The suitability of your country as a holiday destination, a holiday trip

There were more centres that opted to create their own topics, tasks & stimuli to suit the candidates' needs this year. Well-constructed stimuli are always helpful for candidates' writing, and centres should note the following when creating their own controlled assessment writing tasks.

- Be precise, preferably in bullet points
- Illicit opinions and prompt new ideas – not just facts
- Allow creativity and individuality

## DO NOT

- Give details of the content
- Give a sequence of questions leading to the whole piece of writing
- Give sentences which can be copied directly into the essay

As mentioned in previous reports, there were some centres using the same topic, task and stimuli for whole cohort, resulting in similar contents in their essays, and in some rare cases, the vocabulary and structures were similar as well. This is not good practice as it limits candidates' individuality and does not conform to the ethics of the controlled assessment.

### **The CA4 Notes Form**

The majority of the candidates used the CA4 correctly this year. There were still some writing sentences or paragraphs on them which were then copied into their essays. This is not allowed and could affect the marks awarded for the task. Candidates are reminded that CA4s should be used as a plan, preferably in the form of a mind-map or bullet points. The limit of 30 words / 50 characters should also be observed.

### **The word-count**

This year more essays conformed to the word limit of 100 – 150 characters, and there were fewer excessively long essays. Some weaker candidates failed to produce the minimum numbers of characters and their marks in contents and communication marks were affected. Some candidates wrote over 150 characters but no extra marks can necessarily be awarded for this additional effort. However, it was found that candidates normally performed well within the word-count limit, while some excessively long essays prone to introducing writing errors and irrelevance.

### **Administration**

Centres are required to send the following documents to the examiners:

- The attendance register
- The CM4 with essay titles & duly signed by the teacher & candidate.
- The task and stimuli.
- The CA4 Notes Form (please indicate on the mark sheet if not in use)
- The two tasks.

The guidelines are listed in *The Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination and Controlled Assessments* (ICE) which is produced annually and available from the Edexcel website. It is good practice that the controlled assessments are prepared and conducted in accordance with these guidelines and all the necessary documents are sent together with the essays to the examiners, so that the marking can proceed smoothly.

## **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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