

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE Chinese (5CN04)
Paper 1 Writing in Chinese

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GCSE Chinese
Unit 4 Writing in Chinese
Examiner Report

This year the controlled assessment requirements remain the same as last year. Most centres adapted the possible writing tasks and stimuli provided by Edexcel, but there was an increasing number of centres creating their own to suit their students' interests. In whatever the case, the tasks and stimuli should be refreshed every 2 years by changing either the topic or some of the bullet points.

Students were generally well prepared and the essays often covered a wide range of knowledge and details showing their efforts in the research

and preparation prior to the assessments. While the strong students managed to score high marks with a piece of coherent writing, the weaker ones also managed to produce some contents relevant to the topics chosen. Their efforts were highly appreciated and duly rewarded.

It was found that some students showed a diversity of writing abilities between the two essays causing a big difference in the marks awarded. While it could be the case that the student was well prepared in one essay but not in the other, it also raised concern of the actual writing ability of the student. Therefore, students 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

Well-constructed tasks and stimuli are often found useful as a guide to coherent writing. Some essays were presented with just a title without task and stimuli nor the CA4. This kind of free-style writing was not encouraged as the contents were prone to irrelevance and incoherence, especially for the weaker students.

There was still some confusion in the following topic areas:

- Jobs and application, work experience and part-time jobs
- Lifestyle of young people, leisure activities, healthy eating
- The suitability of your country as a holiday destination, a holiday trip

Teachers are advised to give clear instructions and guidelines in the task and stimulus sheets.

For the centre-devised tasks and stimuli, the following are some suggestions:

- 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

There were some centres using the same topic, task and stimuli for the whole cohort, resulting in similar content in their essays. This is not good practice as it limits students' individuality and does not conform to the ethics of the controlled assessment.

The CA4 Notes Form

The CA4 is used as a plan to help the preparation and writing of the essay, and preferably written in the form of a mind map or bullet points. There is a limit of 30 words / 50 characters. Details of guidance can be found in the Administrative Guidance document.

The majority of students used the CA4 correctly this year. There were still some writing sentences or paragraphs which were then copied into their essays. This is not permitted and should be avoided in future.

The word-count

This year majority of the essays conformed to the word limit of 100 – 150 characters. Some weaker students failed to produce the minimum numbers of characters required and their content marks were affected. Some students wrote over 150 characters but no extra marks were awarded for this additional effort. However, it was found that students 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 task titles & duly signed by the teacher & student
- The task and stimuli
- The CA4 notes form (please indicate on the CM4 if not used)
- The two tasks

The guidelines are listed in the *Administrative Guidance* document which is produced annually and available from the Edexcel website.

It is good practice to prepare and conduct the controlled assessments in accordance with these guidelines and send all the necessary documents, together with the writing tasks, 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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