

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in Chinese (5CN0/1F)
Paper 1: Listening and understanding
in Chinese

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GCSE Chinese
Unit 1 Listening and understanding in Chinese
Examiner Report

Again this year most students had been entered for the correct level and had been prepared both for the necessary content and for the various question formats. Whilst many questions proved approachable, it was again the last question (Q10), asking for answers in English, that proved the most challenging across the ability range. This despite that fact that this question was, on the surface at least, not by any means the hardest on the paper either in terms of the vocabulary being tested or the character-count.

Some lexical areas (e.g. sport - Q1, jobs - Q6, basic activities - Q9) were generally well known and most of these questions were dealt with very well; Q1 (iv) - 打乒乓球 - was, in fact, answered correctly by all foundation candidates. One particular word (in Q5 ii) that seems, somewhat surprisingly, to have been overlooked is 手机. Relatively few candidates, regardless of ability, gave the correct answer here. It was encouraging to find that in Q6 candidates dealt with the probably less familiar 歌星 by using a process of elimination, perhaps combined with the knowledge that 歌(which they may have learnt as part of the phrase 唱歌) has something to do with singing.

Responses to Q3 showed that candidates at all ability levels need to be given further practice in recognising numbers. Both for the time question (Q3ii) and the money question (Q3iv), candidates seem to have honed in on the element that was familiar (e.g. 九点, 一百) without listening to the whole number.

Question 2(i)

Despite this question being based around what might be expected to be familiar vocabulary, this question was done fairly poorly, with few candidates getting both answers correct. Candidates need to know both generic terms, such as 青菜, and culturally significant food items, such as 饺子.

Question 2(ii)

Overall even fewer candidates picked the correct two answers for this question. Most were familiar with 茶 but only recognised the 水 of 汽水 and consequently chose answer C.

Question 4(i)

Given that Q4 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 candidates struggled to gain full marks.

As for Q4i itself, there few candidates who chose both items correctly. The vocabulary needed was of a higher order (as it needs to be for a grade C question) and there were few 'hooks' to help. Some candidates may have

recognised 卡 from another context, but 护照 simply needs to be known. Responses may, of course, have been influenced by experience or common sense: what would one normally have in one's bag?

Question 10 (a)

As has already been stated, Q10 overall provided the greatest challenge for most candidates, with fewest correct answers being given. This may have been because the candidates needed to ignore the first sentence which contained no directly relevant information.

In Q10a surprisingly few candidates identified 图书馆 correctly. Some answers confused 'bits' of the correct answer, e.g. 博物馆, 书店, 饭馆 whilst others picked out the 大学 in the next sentence. Too many answers did not give a place as an answer to the question 'where?'

Question 10 (b)

This was the part of Q10 that was done (relatively) well, many candidates presumably having learnt school subjects thoroughly.

Question 10 (c)

Although there were two possible answers given, all candidates ignored the 旅游 and chose the other activity as this seemed the more familiar. Unfortunately most candidates, almost without exception, rushed to write their answer without listening to the whole phrase. Of course, there would still be some who would be thrown by the 会 at the end of the phrase 听音乐会, but at least some would have given the correct answer 'listening to concerts' instead of simply 'listening to music' for which no mark was awarded.

Question 10 (d)

One might have expected candidates to recognise the pertinent phrase 快乐 from wishing each other 'Happy Birthday' in class, but this was not the case, although most candidates did at least make sensible guesses.

Overall, then, candidates had been well prepared for this examination with much of the 'core' vocabulary being known. Areas for focus in the classroom to improve performance would be better recognition of numbers and a slight broadening of vocabulary covered for stronger candidates. As far as exam technique is concerned, it might pay weaker candidates to jot down during their reading time the pinyin for any numbers that the paper indicates they might hear. Candidates should also be reminded to listen to the whole of an answer before making any mark on the exam paper.

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