

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCSE  
in Chinese (5CN0/1H)  
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 students had been entered for the correct level and had been prepared as much as possible both for the necessary content and for the various question formats. Whilst many questions proved approachable, it was again the last question (Q9), asking for answers in English, that proved the most challenging across the ability range.

The 'crossover' questions (Q1,2,5,6) were on the whole, as one would expect, handled better by the C grade candidates on this paper (compared to those on the foundation paper), but this same group also did well on some of the other questions (e.g. Q4) which were meant to be more challenging.

Some lexical areas such as the above-mentioned urban description (Q4) and healthy lifestyle (Q8) were reassuringly well known, whilst Q3ii (pet) proved strangely difficult, especially for the lower ability candidates.

Q7 proved to be a good differentiating question, partly due to the vocabulary needed (做生意, 网页), partly due to the amount of time information given for Q7iv, from which the listener had to pick out the one necessary fact.

For Q1(i) most candidates chose both items correctly, although there were noticeably fewer responses given 2 marks amongst the lower ability candidates. 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 3 (iii) Across all abilities this question presented little difficulty. Candidates are clearly reminded to revise school subject vocabulary thoroughly. (As noted above, it was Q3ii which bizarrely proved more difficult in this task.)

Question 9 (a) Most candidates successfully recognised 去年 which was enough to gain the mark for this question, although many of the more able wrote 'last summer', having also heard 暑假.

Question 9 (b) Many candidates on this question struggled to find the word 'earn', but any reasonable alternative was accepted. This was one of the less demanding parts of the task and most candidates identified 钱 as the key element. Some candidates, for whom the phrase 零用钱 was perhaps too much, made a sensible (incorrect!) guess at 'work experience', using their own knowledge to guide them.

Question 9 (c) This question proved particularly challenging, not only at the lower end of the ability range. Most students would probably have recognised 打扫, but the use of the word 清洁 stumped many, who then

focused on the rest of the sentence which they had understood, but which was not the answer.

Question 9 (d) A pleasing number of candidates knew the phrase 没有意思, rendering it correctly as 'boring/dull'. However, many (perhaps native speakers) were too literal and wrote 'meaningless' which in the context was incorrect; cleaning does, after all, have a purpose.

Question 9 (e) This question was surprisingly challenging as many candidates across all the ability range failed to recognise 书店 as the place of work. Some candidates, perhaps understanding some of what follows and catching onto 书, guessed at 'library'.

Question 9 (f) Although the answer to this question was not in itself an unexpected part of the job, it proved beyond the abilities of all but the most able. The individual words (放, 书架, 上) were possibly known but the syntax caused confusion. Students for whom the 把 construction may be unfamiliar should be encouraged to ignore it and focus on the verb which carries the meaning. Another problem here was the English as anything which did not give the clear impression of books being placed for the first time onto bookshelves (or shelf) was rejected. (Thus, answers such as 'put back', 'sort on the shelf' gained no credit.)

Question 9 (g) The answers to this question were spread over 2 sections in the dialogue which may have proved confusing to less able students and, indeed, this question was dealt with poorly by most candidates. There are several possible reasons for this:

There may have been confusion over the use of 名字 to refer to book titles; the modifying construction was unfamiliar to many (买书的人) although this was the answer that was most frequently correct, especially if 聊天 had been identified; candidates picked up the 读书 but the more challenging word 兴趣 was not recognised.

Overall candidates responded well to this examination with the longer questions (particularly Q9) differentiating well between groups of differing ability. To enable candidates of middle ability especially to perform better, the following are suggested: not to neglect 'easy' vocabulary when revising (Q3ii), to suggest alternative ways of expression where possible (Q9c), to split unfamiliar vocabulary up to help comprehension (Q7ii: 网页 = 上网 + 页 which must occur in classroom talk).

Candidates should also make sure when writing answers in English that what they write cannot be misinterpreted and says clearly what they intend.

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