

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in Chinese (5CN0/2A and 2B)
Paper 2: Speaking in Chinese

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Principal Moderator's report

5CN02 / 2A

The controlled assessment for speaking allows students to select their own topics of interest from either the four themes prescribed by Edexcel or topics chosen by their centres. Each student has to undertake at least two of the three task types, and one of the assessments (task 2A) is sent for moderation. The details and procedures are listed in the Specification and Administrative Guidance document both of which are available to download from the Edexcel website.

Students had prepared well for the speaking assessments this year. As found in past years, the majority of students undertook the presentation & follow-up discussion and the picture-based discussion task-types, but there was an increasing number of students who opted for the open interaction. It was also found that the teacher examiners played an important part in the overall students' performance. Moderators found that some teacher examiners conducted the assessments in an encouraging and professional manner which helped the students to extend their full language abilities, whilst some appeared not to be familiar with the assessment procedures and requirements and therefore disadvantaged their students' performance. Whilst a moderator's E9 feedback report was completed for each individual centre, the following is a summary of important points for sharing good practice:

Documents:

The task and stimulus sheet

- The task set is designed to help students focus on their topic area. The best ones are those with a topic and a few (4–6) bullet points for guidance to help develop the task. Too many bullet points or guidance notes often hinder the students to develop their own views and opinions as well as the 'spontaneity' and 'ability to deal with unpredictable elements', which are vital in achieving high marks for content.
- The same applies to the situation of using the same task and stimulus for the whole cohort in the centre. It is advisable to change some bullet points for individual students even when the same topic is used.
- There are Edexcel set tasks and stimuli for the open-interaction task-type and centres can either adapt them or create their own. Centres are reminded that the stimulus should not include any scripted dialogues and the total number of words should not exceed 70, but some visual prompts can be included. There is no word limit for the task sheet, but it is advisable to be concise.
- There are no sample task sheets for the Presentation and Picture based discussion task types. Centres can create their own tasks here.
- All tasks and stimuli should be revised every two years.

The CA2 form

- Prepared by the students for each speaking assessment
- Limit of 30 English words (or pin-yin) or 50 Chinese characters or 20 English words + 30 Chinese characters
- No scripted sentences
- Can include 5 small drawings.

The CM2 form

- Fill in the details of the student, topics, task-types and marks for both 2A & 2B tasks
- Signed and dated by both the teacher & student

The OPTEMS

- Send the top copies with recorded marks for to Edexcel. There are 2 sets of Optems, one for task 2A and one for task 2B. Put the marks for each (out of 30) on the correct Optems and submit them.
- Send the second copies of the 2A Optems together with the moderation sample to the moderator
- Keep the bottom (pink) copy for your records

The checklist of materials to send to the moderator:

For each student in the sample:

Task/stimulus

Form CA2 (Student Notes Form) or section on CM2 completed if not used.

Student Mark Sheet for Unit 2: Speaking (CM2)- signed by both student and centre-assessor.

Any student unable to provide an authentication statement will receive zero credit for the component.

Recording of task 2A ONLY. Please do not send any 2B recordings.

For your centre:

The OPTEMS middle copy (yellow) or printout of marks submitted on Edexcel Online for 2A ONLY.

The work of the highest scoring student and lowest scoring student, if not already included in the sample.

For any asterisked students which are absent or scored zero, replacement students must be supplied to meet the required number of students

A mixture of task types - (Open Interactions / Presentations /Picture Based Discussions)

The task-types:

Presentation and follow-on discussion

1 – 3 minutes presentation by the student, followed by a discussion with the teacher examiner based on the contents presented and the chosen topic area. Marks are awarded globally according to the performance in both the presentation and discussion. Therefore, a presentation over 3 minutes (or a monologue), would not help students score higher marks as it diminishes the interaction time, while presentations that are less than 1 minute or no presentation at all, would lead to content marks being limited.

Picture-based discussion

Students can spend up to 1 minute to introduce their chosen picture. The teacher examiner should intervene after 1 minute and start the discussion. Some students mixed this with their presentation and spent 3 minutes or more on describing the pictures which did not help them to score marks for content.

Open interaction

This task type is “an unscripted role-play” rather than a general conversation. Centres need to create a scenario and set a task against the context. The student and teacher examiner will play 2 different roles. Therefore, the interaction has to be transactional, achieving the tasks set. Centres can prepare the task and stimulus sheets and allow the students up to 2 weeks’ time for preparation. Some centres had made full use of this facility and produced interesting dialogues in the interaction. It was found that properly conducted open interactions benefited both the able and weaker students as the former could extend their knowledge and language abilities in the dialogues, and the latter could also produce some transactional dialogues with the help of the stimulus. Many students forgot to ask questions (at least 2) during the dialogues as required by the specification. Teacher examiners could have reminded them of this in order to avoid the content marks being limited.

The open interaction task was still problematic this year due to centres thinking of the task as free flow conversation. Some centres used two students to generate content rather than one student and one teacher. This was problematic as it was often difficult to tell the students apart during the conversation, making it difficult to give fair marks for the task if the level of speaking was slightly different. For this task, it is more beneficial to only have one student conversing with the teacher at a time. This way it will be clear to the examiners how and what to award points for.

Conducting the assessment:

Timing

The total time for each speaking assessment is 4–6 minutes. Teacher-examiners should note and follow the instructions to avoid marks being deducted (as listed below).

Questioning

Questions asked should be based on the student's previous response and should not be a series of pre-set questions. To maximize the student's scores in the assessment, it is useful to note the following:

- Ask open-ended questions to elicit knowledge, information, ideas and opinions.
- Re-frame questions in a simpler way if students fail to understand what is being asked
- Do not prompt answers unless it's necessary
- Do not finish or summarize answers for the student
- Do not use the same set of questions for the whole cohort.

Recording

- Check that both the teacher examiner and the student's voices can be clearly heard without any background noise
Check that the recording is on mp3, a CD or memory stick
- Double-check if the CD / memory stick is clearly audible before sending it to the moderator
- Always keep a copy of the recording.

Marking the assessments

While some centres' marking was in line with the National standard, some needed to be adjusted. The majority of the centres whose marks that required adjustment had over-marked the assessments. There was a tendency to award the top bands when the student spoke fluently. Some teacher examiners based their marks on information given and level of language used by a student in the presentation alone, without acknowledging that this was not sustained in the discussion. However, centres should note that marks are awarded globally across the whole performance, and the points listed in the assessment criteria should be matched before awarding a certain band. The following is an analysis of the marking.

Content and response

The assessment criteria is applied globally on a best-fit basis and it is necessary to demonstrate an ability to interact well with the teacher examiner and respond spontaneously to unpredictable questions in order to attain marks in the higher bands. Centres are reminded that pre-learned mini-monologues or 'conversations' that consist of a question and answer session but lack interaction, or an ability to expand or take the initiative, cannot be rewarded with top marks. Marks were incorrectly awarded in the 16–18 band in cases where the student gave extended, informative answers but did not show any spontaneity or ability to respond to unpredictable questions. Moderators are looking for students to produce their own language throughout the task or manipulate the language used by the teacher examiner to make it their own. Similarly, marks were awarded too generously in the 12–15 band for students who answered a lot of questions but tended to give a one-sentence answer, i.e. they did not take the initiative and develop elaborate answers.

Range of language

There must be evidence of a wide range of structures and vocabulary used throughout the assessment, as well as different tenses included before awarding a mark of 5 or above.

Accuracy

It is important to note that the mere lack of error does not mean the student will score highly. The student must attempt to use more complex structures to reach 5 and there generally be good pronunciation and intonation.

Centres are reminded to read the marking principles carefully which are in the Administrative Support Guide (Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination and Controlled Assessments), available on the web site, in order to help them use the assessment criteria accurately when the student has not fulfilled the requirements of the task.

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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 in a task where questions are required – deduct 2 marks from the Content and Response.
- The other two assessment criteria will not be affected.

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.
- Where no presentation takes place, candidates can only score a maximum of 11 for content and response.

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.

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>

