

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

International GCSE

Chinese (4CN0) Paper 2

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Publications Code UG027584

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Reading and Writing

This paper consisted of three sections. Students were advised to spend 30 minutes on each section.

Section A – Part 1

The aim for this part of the exam was to assess students' abilities to understand and use information from a range of texts which included matching basic vocabulary to pictures, selecting the right answers to multiple choice questions and answering comprehension questions on a passage. Answers were only assessed for communication. Grammatical accuracy was not assessed in this part of the paper.

Overall candidates performed well in these questions with many scoring full marks, showing their abilities to recognise some basic vocabulary within the syllabus, identify and note main points.

Section A – Part 2

Candidates were required to write about 50 characters on the topic related to the final reading passage in Part 1. This response was assessed for communication and language.

The majority of candidates answered the questions very well, which showed their ability to describe their hobbies, express points of views, emotions, draw inference and conclusions. A small minority of candidates lifted words directly from the text in Q3 and, unfortunately, could not be awarded for this. Other candidates listed different daily activities but failed to expand and express any opinions.

Section B - Part 1

Candidates were asked to answer questions on one reading passage. Candidates were assessed on their ability to extract specific details, identify main points and understand grammatical structures and functions in context.

The questions were designed to differentiate levels of candidates with the questions testing unfamiliar vocabulary with some distracters. The questions were attempted well, but the performance differed among candidates. Some candidates failed to recognise the specific details such as 冬天 and 秋天, 大山 and 小山.

Section B - Part 2

Candidates were expected to read a longer passage and then respond to a series of questions. The candidates were required to show the ability to manipulate the language of the original text and to use their own words and phrases to express ideas from the text.

The nature of open questions offered optimum opportunity for candidates to show what they had understood from the text and rephrase the answers in

their own words. Examiners did come across some excellent candidates who answered the questions in full sentences with no grammatical errors at all.

Q6(a) was generally well handled by candidates although a few answered 四月 instead of 去年四月.

Q6(b) was also well handled. Errors arose most often when candidates did not pay attention to all details in the passage but lifted the words such as 很好 or 晴天 only.

Q6(c) was managed well by the majority of the candidates. Some candidates did not understand the difference between 或 and 和, and answered the question as 旅游和工作 which changed the meaning of the text.

Q6(d) carried two marks, which included two questions. Strong candidates generally managed to get full marks. However, this question appeared to differentiate candidates' ability to respond accurately and clearly to questions. Some candidates answered the questions in one sentence such as 东方明珠有四百六十八米. A few candidates did not quite understand the difference between 长度 and 宽度. A small minority of candidates even thought 东方明珠 was 东方之珠.

Q6(e) was handled well in general but few candidates ignored the Chinese grammar structure的.

Q6(f) was handled very well. Many candidates scored full marks.

Q6(g) was answered well. Some candidates wrote 很友好 as 很好. Others used 和 between two sentences which showed the English sentence structure with the conjunction "and".

Section C

Candidates select one writing task from a choice of three. They were expected to write a continuous response of between 100 and 150 characters.

The three tasks were equally favoured by candidates. The majority did well, responding fully to at least the first three bullet points. They completed the bullet points with sensible language, employing a wide variety of vocabulary and sentence structures. Weaker candidates were able to put down some details. Very few candidates turned the bullet points into questions and answers rather than linking their writing into a continuous piece of composition. The fourth bullet point carried more content marks which allowed candidates to express their opinions and points of view.

Q7(a)

The bullet points differentiated the writing abilities of candidates. Stronger candidates gave a detailed description of the sports match they watched then followed up with feelings and opinions as reasons to support why they liked or disliked the match. Weaker candidates managed only to write some

simple sentences such as 我去看足球, 我和家人去看乒乓球 etc. For the response to the reasons, the typical was 有趣, 有意思 which appeared amongst some poor responses.

Q7(b)

Strong candidates responded to the bullet points with detailed information about the subject they enjoyed most in school. A few candidates neglected the bullet point about the time they spent on homework but went into a lengthy description of the amount homework they received and how hard or easy it was.

Q7(c)

Most candidates performed very well on this task, providing full responses to the bullet points. Many candidates used their own life experience to describe the typical food from the places they lived and the activities they enjoyed doing with their friend. Candidates were allowed to express their ideas with various writing skills and weaker candidates could respond to the bullet points with simple sentences. However, a few candidates failed to mention the reason for inviting their friend, which resulted in a lower content score.

Grade Boundaries

The modern foreign languages specifications share a common design, but the assessments in different languages are not identical. Grade boundaries at unit level reflect these differences in assessments, ensuring that candidate outcomes across these specifications are comparable at specification level.

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Order Code UG027584 June 2011

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