



GCSE

Chinese (Mandarin)

8673/WF Writing (Foundation)

Report on the examination

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General comments

This has been another successful year for this component, with encouraging developments. Notably, there was an increase in the number of students taking this paper, which reflects growing interest and engagement.

Students demonstrated a sound understanding of the required vocabulary and showed a good grasp of the grammar needed to tackle a range of tasks. The vast majority not only attempted all the questions but also successfully secured marks for Questions 1, 2 and 3. While a small number of students left Question 4 blank or gave limited responses, it was encouraging to see that more students chose Question 4.1 over 4.2, with performances on both being broadly similar.

As anticipated, most students performed well in Questions 1 and 2. Questions 3 and 4 proved more challenging and were more effective in distinguishing levels of ability, which is typical for higher-order tasks.

Marking revealed many positive responses. However, it was observed that some answers relied on simple and repetitive language. In a few instances, responses were written predominantly in pinyin. Students are encouraged to write in Chinese characters, as this better showcases their language skills and proficiency in learning.

Question 1

The performance on this question was excellent, with nearly 30 per cent of students achieving full marks. There were many strong responses that were clearly relevant to the image and demonstrated the use of full sentences, including appropriate measure words, adjectives, and verbs. Examples included: 天气很好, 很漂亮, 很漂亮. High-achieving students went further, incorporating more advanced vocabulary and structures such as 天气很好, 很漂亮, 很漂亮 and 天气很好, 很漂亮. Common use of set phrases like 天气很好, 很漂亮 and 天气很好, 很漂亮, reflected positively on the quality of teaching and learning, showing clear progress in students' language development.

While these strengths were evident, some areas for improvement remain. The use of isolated single words, such as 天气, 漂亮 was still fairly common. In addition, some responses included general opinions like 天气 or 漂亮 that were not specifically linked to the content of the picture. A few students included comments unrelated to the image, such as 天气很好 or 很漂亮, which could not be credited.

Advice to students

- Learn useful phrases such as 天气很好 and 很漂亮
- Write full sentences with a subject, verb and object.
- Choose items in the photo you are confident you can write in characters.
- Keep sentences short and clear to ensure accurate communication.

Question 2

In this question there were 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students are required to write approximately 30 characters in total about four different bullet points. All bullet points are compulsory and must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets.

Most students were able to make a reasonable attempt at this question. It was fairly common to see quite a few students produced very lengthy responses. Some responses were quite repetitive or mixed with pinyin. In order to score top mark, it is a good practice that students to write one sentence for each bullet point with clear information.

Content

Nearly 50% of the students achieved 7 marks and above. A number of higher-achieving students successfully addressed all four bullet points clearly using vocabulary such as 天气, 兴趣爱好, 职业, 城市, 国家 and 计划 which was excellent to see. Bullet point two and three are the best performing ones as lot of positive responses were frequently seen. Most students were able to use key words such as 喜欢, 去, 想, 和 and 在, and could express reasons using 因为, 所以 or 为了. Bullet point one proved a little challenging for some students. Responses to bullet point four typically focused on future travel plans, such as 去, 到 or intended activities, e.g. 想, 计划 which was very encouraging. There were some high-level answers that students wrote about friend's future occupations, such as 成为 or 想做.

Students should pay closer attention to writing common characters accurately, as errors like 的 (的) and 在 (在) were frequent and affected clarity.

Quality of Language

In order to score well for Quality of language, students had to show a variety of structures, but there is no requirement for complexity in this question.

A few higher-achieving students were able to use variety of vocabulary and structures, such as 天气, 城市, 国家, 计划, 喜欢, 去, 想, 和, 在, 因为, 所以, 为了. Some students included a location in their responses when answering bullet point three “your friend’s hobby”, however, it was unfortunate that word order was sometimes misplaced. Furthermore, a number of students largely used pinyin in their response, which should be avoided in the future.

Advice to students

- Mention all bullet points, writing something relevant for each.
- Tick off each bullet point once addressed.
- Learn common adjectives to describe people, places and opinions.
- Practise using 喜欢, 去, 想, 和 and combining stative verbs with 在.

Question 3

For this question, there are 5 marks for Conveying key messages and 5 marks for Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures.

Nearly 25% of students scored 2 or above for Key Messages and around 20% for Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures. The most frequently achieved mark on both sets of criteria was 1, suggesting that the translation remain challenging for students.

The sentences were divided into 12 key messages, as in the table below.

Conveying key messages

He has	Best answered in this question.
a blue coat.	Students found this question very challenging.
She likes	Vast majority of the students secured this tick.
history	Mixed performance for this. A few students mistaken □ □ to □ □ as attempts of writing □ □ were seen occasionally.
the most.	Responses to this was very positive.
The classroom	Students found this very challenging.
is above	A bit mixed as some students did well and some found hard.
the library.	Good performance on this point considering the level of difficulty.
My older brother	Excellent response. Some less able students struggled with characters but wrote pinyin A few students mistaken □ □ as □ □ .
is a scientist.	Answers were mixed. Some students did well, some students struggled with this point.
Last month,	Good response on this point. A few students mixed with □ □ □ with □ □ □ .
I went to China.	Strong performance. Students are reminded of including □ .

Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

There was usually a direct correlation between the mark for Key messages and the mark for Application of grammar. However, this was sometimes lower, if the student had been allowed several key messages in spite of imperfect character writing or use of pinyin; or higher, if the mark for Key messages has been lowered by several relatively minor errors but the character accuracy was good.

Advice to students

- Practise high frequency words and phrases, such as pronouns and 我 你 .
- Check carefully that you do not miss out any parts of the translation by accident.
- If you are not sure about how to write a character, it is best to write out the pinyin rather than leave it blank.

Question 4

For this question, students were awarded up to 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. They were expected to write approximately 75 characters in total, covering four different bullet points. While all bullet points needed to be addressed, equal coverage was not required.

Question 4.1 proved to be the more popular option. In both Questions 4.1 and 4.2, the standard of responses varied considerably. Many students responded confidently to all four bullet points, developing their answers with personal opinions and a range of time frames. These responses demonstrated good understanding and communication skills.

However, some students produced only limited or fragmented writing, which restricted their ability to access higher marks. A number of students wrote well beyond the suggested length, which, while showing enthusiasm, sometimes led to more frequent language errors and impacted the Quality of Language mark.

Content

The criteria for assessment focussed on four elements: coverage of the bullet points, development of ideas, clarity of communication and expression of opinions. Most of the students wrote more than 75 characters to complete the all four bullet points. Occasionally a bullet point seemed to be misunderstood and therefore four marks were not scored for content. For this tier, it seemed relevance and clarity were often the barriers for students from achieving higher marks for this category.

The overall performance on both questions is similar, but more students achieved top band marks in Question 4.1 than Q4.2 and they merged at the middle band of the mark range. Considering Question 4 are the overlap questions with Higher Tier, it was excellent outcome that almost 10 percent of the students achieved 4 marks and above for content.

Question 4.1

It appears that the majority of students chose this question over Question 4.2. This may be due to the familiar and accessible topic of "house." It was encouraging to see a number of students achieving high-band scores.

Bullet Point one was best handled as lots of successful examples were seen. Most students focused on describing the size of the house and were able to produce phrases such as 房子很大, 房子很小, 房子很漂亮, 房子很丑 for bullet point one; Performance on bullet point two was

slightly below expectations. While some students correctly mentioned 节日 as a celebration, many responses lacked sufficient detail. Bullet point three were well answered. Good answers like 节日经常举行, 节日是庆祝的时刻 were seen. Most students made a clear attempt to express frequency, although the character 经常 was often written incorrectly, highlighting an area for further reinforcement. For bullet point four, a common error was the use of 经常 or 经常 instead of 经常 which suggests some students were less familiar with this vocabulary. Continued focus on key topic-specific vocabulary would support improvement in this area. Almost all students were able to offer two opinions, which shows excellent understanding of the task and the mark scheme. It would have been better if students could improve the clarity as frequent error sometimes had impact on the content.

Question 4.2

The response to this question was good. The students who chose this question wrote 青年, 15岁, 年轻人 to express the concept of “young people” which is in the question. This has shown genuine understanding of this task because question 4 are designed to wider opportunities for students to answer.

The coverage of each bullet point varied, but it was encouraging to see that most students made a clear attempt to address all parts of the task. Students who achieved some marks have done well in bullet point one, two and three. Common activities are 学习, 运动, 阅读, 听音乐 and 看电视. It was obvious that quite a few students found learning the time word 时间 tricky as error often occurred. Some students got confused with 时间. Most students were able to use 经常 or 经常 to response Bullet point three, more able students wrote 经常, 经常, 经常, which was pleasing to see. It was fair to say students found bullet point four the most challenging, primarily due to limited vocabulary related to “how to improve” in the question. That said, a few students produced thoughtful and accurate responses for bullet point four, such as 经常, 经常, 经常, 经常 which was particularly pleasing to see.

Most students were able to express at least two opinions using simple adjectives such as 好 and 不好. Those performing in the top bands went further, using more complex structures and a broader range of vocabulary. Successful examples included sentences like 经常, 经常, 经常, showing clear ability to communicate ideas effectively and with variety.

Quality of Language

A variety of appropriate vocabulary and some complex structures were often seen during marking. Most students successfully used at least two-time frames, with many attempting three-time frames, which is an improvement compared to previous year.

The present tense was used accurately by the vast majority, and several students also incorporated more advanced time expressions such as 经常. When lacking specific past or future vocabulary, some students used effective strategies, such as including dates and tense markers, good examples like 1月1日, 经常, 经常. Common errors included incorrect references to the past, a mixture of different variations appeared, and mostly due to character writing of 经常 or confused with 经常 with 经常 as mentioned above. Complex structures were frequently attempted. The most commonly used were 经常

and 在... 中, with some higher-level students also using a wider variety, such as 在... 之前, 在... 之后. Furthermore, compared to last year, there was noticeable improvement in word order with frequent time expressions such as 在... 之前, 在... 之后, 在... 之前.

Many students combined pinyin with characters to clarify their meaning. While this sometimes it aided communication, extensive use of pinyin was penalised in the language mark. It is therefore important to continue encouraging students to master and confidently use core vocabulary in characters.

Advice to students

- Mention all bullet points and tick them off as you go.
- Include opinions using 我认为, 我觉得 and relevant adjectives.
- Identify which bullet points target different time frames.
- Use 在... 之前 for past time frame sentence, 在... 之后 or 在... 之前 for future time frame.
- Check word order carefully.
- If unsure of a character, write pinyin rather than leave a blank

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.