

Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCE

GCE Chinese (8610/9610)

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AS Chinese (6261)

The examination this year did not vary in format or tasks, so candidates in general performed in line with last year.

Section 1 - question 1 to 5

Candidates were very used to the style of the questions. Some, however, seemed a bit uncertain about the new system this year - the use of cross 'X' to indicate a correct answer. Occasionally candidates were found to have used both tick and cross to indicate the right and the wrong answers. Unfortunately it resulted in ambiguity and confusion and led to the loss of marks. Candidates are advised to read and follow the rubric for each question.

Question 1

All candidates made a good start to the examination and scored well. A minority of weaker candidates who seized on single lexical items to match the answers often answered (3) incorrectly. They tended to pick 'food' instead of 'health' as they only recognized 'eat rice' but did not understand 'stomach ache'. (4) also caused significant problem for this group of candidates..

Question 2

The majority of candidates answered well with weaker candidates also able to earn at least one mark. However, examiners were surprised to find a noticeable small number of average and able candidates picked the incorrect answer B. This could be evidence of them not paying enough attention.

Question 3

This question proved a good discriminator. A substantive number of average candidates lost 1 or both marks in their response to (b) and (c). This could be the result of candidates not paying enough attention to details, and could also be evidence of them lacking the intention to understand, thus only seized on the word 'all' and ignored the sentence 'not appropriate for people who have heart disease'.

Question 4

Generally well attempted. Some candidates gave the answer to (c i) as "8 to 9" without making clear that it is 'morning' or 'am' and lost the 1 mark. A tiny number of candidates failed to copy the word '衫' correctly but wrote '杉' rendering the

answer incorrect. Candidates should have sufficient time and are advised to write and double check their own answers carefully.

Question 5

This question mainly tested candidates' level of understanding and ability to convey information by locating the right answers from the passage. Some candidates, weak and able, misread 'destination' as 'purpose' and lost mark. Candidates who presumed things without referring to the text or who had no confidence but relied on lifting as much details as possible lost marks on one or more questions such as (d) (e) (f) (g) (h). Some candidates had the answers for (f) and (h) swapped and lost a total of 6 marks. Candidates are reminded that the questions are numbered in the order according to the text.

Section 2

Most candidates provided an adequate translation. The text proved accessible to all candidates, but there were certain points that caused problems.

Firstly, some answers would have earned higher marks, had the candidates translated the first paragraph in the past tense.

Secondly, a fair number of candidates did not know how to deal with the word 我們 /我们. Many were not aware that in the text, it was an indefinite pronoun used to denote people in general. Hence, many were unable to translate '我們很多人/我们很多人' in simple and natural English but wrote 'lots of people and myself' or tended to omit '我們/我们' in their answer. '住的地方' meant 'at where we lived', but many translated it variously as 'offices', 'houses', 'apartments' etc. '我們常和家人/我们常和家人' was mistaken as 'I and my family.' '一家人' meant 'the whole family' but became 'families sit together'.

Thirdly, in the last paragraph, a few were not able to grasp the concept of '在這二十年中/在这二十年中'.and mistranslated it as '20 years before' or relied on a pedestrian transfer of meaning.

Lastly, examiners were surprised that the majority did not know that '公共汽車/公共

汽车' was 'bus'. Many translated it as 'public transport'.

Section 3

Candidates in general performed well on communication, but were less convincing on content. Many answers were, strictly speaking, only focus on the first bullet point, describing what had been done last summer. Many did not realize that an 'unforgettable' or 'meaningful' holiday or event was not necessarily the 'happiest experience'. Candidates are reminded that they must read the question carefully and respond to all the bullet points given.

Some candidates unwisely spent too many words elaborating the stimulus. These answers usually either resulted in exceeding the stipulated length of 180-200 characters, or meant that there was not enough content to impress.

A2 Chinese (6262)

Section 1: Reading and Writing

Passage 1

Total marks for this passage is 10. Almost all achieved 7 marks or above. Candidates' performance maintained similar standard of last year.

Question 1

There were generally no problems, occasionally some candidates made mistakes on question 1, 2 and 4, either because of a lack of comprehension, or because of a lack of adequate reading.

Question 1 - some candidates gave 'Beijing' as the answer instead of the correct answer 'Europe'.

Question 2 - some candidates gave or added their own explanation such as 'to reduce traffic and pollution'. Candidates should remember that information not contained in the printed material and combinations of correct and incorrect information earn no credit.

Question 4 - occasionally some candidates left out '有車的 / 有车的' rendering part of the answer incorrect and led to the loss of 1 mark.

Passage 2

There were very few really weak attempts. Candidates clearly appreciated and were aware of the vocabulary support provided in passage one.

However, a noticeable number of candidates tended to rely on copying from passage 1 without paying enough attention to the actual details in the English text, for example, it was 'environmental damage' in the first paragraph of the English text.

Some candidates simply lifted from passage 1 '過度使用私家車所造成的問題 / 过度使用私家车所造成的问题'. The last sentence in the English text mentioned 'cycle lanes and pavements'. Some candidates just copied the last sentence from passage 1 which was read as '降低公共交通票價 / 降低公共交通票价'.

There were also certain points that caused problems.

In the second paragraph, 'as many people as possible, was often translated as 'more and more' or 'many'. Error was noticeable with the sentence 'by making changes to

the way they travel for today, they will consider...' when a sizeable number of candidates misinterpreted the sentence into an objective case and turned 'they' from the subject to 'them' the object. Meaning was also twisted when some candidates changed the sentence 'using the car less helps to...' into 'excessive use of car does not help...'. The sentence 'it must not be just an annual event' proved to be quite difficult for a lot of candidates. '活動應該不止一年一次 / 活动应该不止一年一次',

'一定不只是一年的活動 / 一定不只是一年的活动' were some of the examples of how the meaning was mistranslated or misunderstood.

Section 2: Research based essay

Candidates are required to write a piece of essay in Chinese on a topic chosen from the prescribed list of topics and texts. The piece of essay should be between 500 - 1000 characters in length. Candidates are expected to choose and research their own individual topics, devise the title for the essay and provide a plan together with a list of sources and bibliography.

As this is only the second year of the introduction of research-based essay, it is still useful to remind ourselves of the rationale

Rationale

It is believed that candidates, both learners and native-speakers, will benefit from the introduction of research-based essay. The question and answer type of topics and texts was found unrealistic for learners. In the process of preparing the essay, candidates are expected to go through some exercises in reading, thinking and writing. Candidates work from the first draft to the final version and this process involves continuously some useful practices in writing. This kind of exercise and practice is understood to be essential for learning a language.

All subjects alike require and involve memorisation to certain extent during the process of leaning. Candidates pre-learn their own work should not be dismissed as meaningless and sheer memorisation. All candidates had to pre-learn something related to the chosen topics in order to respond to the questions set for them under the previous question and answer type topics and texts. But to present it in an

organised way with relevance to the question asked proved to be too demanding for learners.

Candidate performances

This year there was an increase in number of candidates who turned the essay plan form for bibliography and sources into written notes for the essay. Some had brought with them the whole answer written on a piece of paper. Some used various methods to cover up the fact that they had pre-written notes or answers, for example, tippexed some of the notes until the plan read only 100 characters.

Plan

Improvements - the majority of candidates had attached a plan form, showing that centres, unlike last year, were aware of this new test and the system.

Concerns - Most candidates had produced a plan, but half of them were of sub-standard.

- Some plans consisted of only single words and broken phrases, showing no regards to its production.
- Some candidates produced a plan that exceeded the stipulated length of 100 characters, some up to 400 characters.
- There was clear evidence that plans exceeded 150 characters were actually detailed notes and candidates used them as the skeleton for the essay. Candidates simply added words and phrases only to join the plan components together.

Candidates are reminded that a good essay begins with a good plan. The plan must be more than single words for each point but not too long. It should be written in a way that it shows the basic structure of the essay. When the examiner reads the plan, he/she is able to have an idea of what to look for when reading the essay - what the focus is, how it will start (introduction) and develop (main argument and examples) and what the conclusion will be and if it is relevant to the title.

Bibliography and sources

- A number of candidates did not provide sufficient details of sources consulted, or simply did not provide any at all. Some examples are provided below:
- Examiners commented that a noticeable number of candidates gave 'my father', 'my own', 'my cousin in HK', 'my memories' etc as their sources. These were not accepted.
- Over two-thirds of sources supplied were web addresses such as 'Wikipedia', and 'google'; or name of a newspaper (文匯報 / 文汇报). They were not valid. The name of the article, author of the article together with full detailed address and date must be provided.
- Some candidates provided the title of books. The title alone is not sufficient. Details of the author, publisher and publishing date must be provided.
- Some candidates only used 'textbook' as their source. Secondary school textbooks may be used as a starting point for some basic minimum knowledge, but should not be used as the main source(s) for research.
- Many candidates provided details of one source only. This is a research based essay and 1 source is not sufficient. This was raised last year and this point clearly needs to be emphasised again.
- Some candidates obviously made up some sources, for example, '中國高二歷史教科書 / 中国高二历史教科书' for an essay titled '春節 / 春节'.

Candidates are advised to attach the plan form to the back of the answer book. It should **not** be put on top of the front cover of the answer book.

Titles

Candidates must devise a title of the essay. Many candidates did not provide a title.

Some candidates simply copied a sub-topic or the name of the literary text from the

specification or the question booklet. For example:

中國節日與習俗，國共關係，儒家學說；王蒙說客盈門；南海十三郎；黃河；文化大革命；上海在環境、經濟、城市發展規劃或文化等方面的現狀與問題

中国节日与习俗，国共关系，儒家学说；王蒙说客盈门；南海十三郎；黄河；文化大革命；上海在环境、经济、城市发展规划或文化等方面的现状与问题

These are not appropriate titles.

Some of the titles provided were inappropriate and unhelpful. They either lacked focus or lacked an evaluative slant. For example

討論香港的歷史、地理、經濟和文化

上海在中國文明史上起到的作用。

讨论香港的历史、地理、经济和文化

上海在中国文明史上起到的作用。

Some titles that were not related to any of the sub-topics prescribed. Answers with these titles were awarded at best the level of 'minimal k/u'. 'Hardly any relevant material presented' or at their worst 'zero - completely irrelevant to title and subject'. Please note that 'title' means the title relevant to any of the sub-topics in the list of Topics and Texts.

母語教學和本港學生英語水平下降有關連嗎？

香港全民運動成功嗎？

從北京奧運談談中國運動員的水準

改革開放

香港的歷史

母語教學和本港學生英語水平下降有關連嗎？

香港全民運動成功嗎？

從北京奧運談談中國運動員的水準

改革開放

改革开放
香港的历史

Candidates are reminded that they should write the same title twice - one on the space provided in the plan form and in the answer book before they begin writing their essay.

Topics and Texts

Candidates in the main still adopted an approach largely descriptive and narrative.

History

There was evidence that some candidates viewed it as an 'easy' target. These candidates very often relied on one school textbook. There was no evidence showing that research had been done at all.

There were still some candidates who had devised a title that was outside the prescribed list, for example, 洋務運動 / 洋務運動

Geography

Most of the essays produced were descriptive, largely resembling the work produced by an official tourism board or government publicity bureau. A lot of candidates used too much space in their essay describing the history of either the city or the river, which was unnecessary. Many seemed unaware that it is essential to choose an issue that involved one or more of the features listed under the topic of cities.

Society

Festivals - the common problems with Festivals this year were:

- Most of the pieces remained overly detailed about the tales and legends with little understanding of the implication of the story and events mentioned. Candidates should be reminded that details of tales should never be the focus of the essay.
- Some answers showed evidence of a lot of quotations in classical language, but showed little evidence of genuine understanding.

- There were candidates who chose to compare Chinese festivals with western festivals. This is not advised. Candidates must also be reminded that this is a Chinese paper, and the specification clearly states that this topic is about 'Chinese tradition', therefore to set a title on Christmas would be inappropriate.

Women issues

This year the most common problem with this topic was that there was little mention of the period 1911-1949. Many essays only mentioned change or development from 1949 or even 1981 by the communist government.

Confucianism and Taoism

Considering contrasting views or question commonplace would contribute to a successful essay. This was undertaken by very few candidates and instead points given were usually naive and over simplified.

Films

Examiners noticed that planning relating to films was generally better managed although fewer candidates attempted these two topics.

Literary texts

A problem that arose this year was that some candidates compared contemporary issues to events in the stories. Many of these answers showed that the discussions were unconvincing, naive and rigid, for example, making connection between the SARS and what happened in 'Baihehua'. For literary texts, candidates must focus on the events and people in the story. Author's life and writing skills are not accepted. The following is an example of a title that is inappropriate.

怎樣透過友誼寫人與人的關係?爲什麼這樣的友誼在現代社會十分罕見。

怎样透过友谊写人与人的关系?为什么这样的友谊在现代社会十分罕见。

The following is an example of how marks can be lost if the correct procedures for the Research based essay are not followed.

Title - no title or poor quality of title

Deduction of 1 to 3 marks

Plan - no plan or poor quality of plan

Deduction of 1 to 3 marks

Sources - no sources / incomplete sources / fake sources / insufficient sources

Deduction of 1 to 3 marks

Plan over 100 characters - 120-140 characters deduction of 2 marks. More than 140 characters deduction of up to 5 marks

Some helpful reminders for candidates:

- On the front cover of the examination paper please write the number which relates to the topic or text you have chosen for your research based essay. These are provided in the question paper and the specification.
- Please start your research based essay on a new page in your answer booklet.
- Write the title of your essay (same as the one on your essay plan form) in your answer book before you start writing your essay.
- Please attach your essay plan form to that back of your answer booklet, not the front.

2008 Statistics

Unit 1 (6261) Reading and Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	81	68	55	42	30
Uniform boundary mark	300	240	210	180	150	120

Unit 2 (6262) Reading and Writing; Topics and Texts

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	68	60	52	44	37
Uniform boundary mark	300	240	210	180	150	120

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