



GCSE **Chinese (Mandarin)**

8673/LH

Report on the examination

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General comments

This year's listening examination was a great success, demonstrating that the AQA GCSE Chinese Listening papers remain accessible to all students, both at Foundation and Higher Tier. Overall, students performed better than last year, with outcomes closely aligned to centres' predicted grades. In particular, students responded well to questions of higher demand.

There were noticeably fewer questions left blank, indicating that students were generally well prepared and able to demonstrate their knowledge, comprehension skills and critical thinking. This is a credit to both the students and their teachers.

However, there are still areas worth noting. Answers in English proved harder to mark in some cases, as handwriting was occasionally unclear. This highlights the continuing importance of legible handwriting. Teachers are also reminded to encourage students to read each question carefully. Listening comprehension questions typically require key ideas rather than full sentences, but responses must be clearly written in order to be awarded marks.

Question 1

The paper began with an accessible overlap table-matching question. Higher Tier students performed notably better than those at Foundation, with 82% scoring full marks - an excellent outcome. Topics on home, town, neighbourhood and region are clearly well taught and familiar, which reflects strong classroom practice.

Question 2-3

These multiple-choice questions, also overlapping with the Foundation paper, further demonstrated the strength of Higher Tier students. Some 73% scored all four marks, while 91% achieved at least three out of four. The familiar topic of life at school made these accessible, although the word 亲切 was comparatively more challenging.

Question 4-5

These overlap questions were generally answered very well. In Question 4, students needed to identify an evening event, with marks generously awarded for either 去市中心 or 看灯. This was an accessible question, yet it still posed some difficulty for less able students. Teachers should remind their students to read questions carefully; in this instance, Question 4 asked what the speaker will do, but quite a few students gave answers in the past tense, such as "saw grandma" or "went to the city centre". Question 5 was answered very successfully: 很好吃 was widely understood, and while 肉 was generally well recognised, some students confused 猪肉 with chicken, beef or lamb.

Question 6

This question, which tested understanding of events across different time frames, sharply differentiated tiers. Whereas only 28% of Foundation students scored at least one mark, 87% did so at Higher Tier. This question also underlines the importance of training students to read questions carefully: it explicitly asked about the past and the future, with "no trees" provided as the example for the present. A number of students gave answers such as "he wants to move to a city", which, although containing the key word "city", changed the intended meaning and could not be credited. Teachers should ensure students are thoroughly

prepared for these types of questions, which appear regularly and demand careful interpretation of time references and details.

Question 7-8

This section, involving table matching with two speakers each giving a line, was of medium demand. It tested students' ability to identify key points and draw conclusions (for example, linking 赚钱 to "financial success" and 离我家很近 to "location"). Most students secured at least one mark per speaker, with approximately three quarters achieving both marks.

Question 9-12

This set of P, N and P+N opinion questions was answered exceptionally well. Over 95% of students correctly identified the opinions and gained all four marks, demonstrating secure knowledge of opinion-related vocabulary and excellent exam practice. Teachers deserve particular recognition here.

Question 13-14

Although weather is a popular GCSE topic, written answers in English often present more of a challenge. This weather forecast section, despite being of medium demand, posed some difficulty, with 暖和 being a less familiar term. Students should also be reminded to give precise answers rather than vague expressions like "very good weather", which verge on opinion rather than describing actual weather conditions.

Question 15-16

This multiple-choice section was answered extremely well, with the vast majority of students securing all four marks. It showed students' ability to extract information, deduce meaning from short narratives and understand overall messages. However, a few students missed the logical link between 很忙, 没有时间 and the correct answer "Dazhong refused".

Question 17-18

This was one of the most challenging sections of the paper and effectively differentiated students. Only 44% scored both marks for Question 17, with 写信 proving unfamiliar. Some confused it with 谢谢 (leading to answers like "thank his grandpa") or with 新闻 (producing "read news to his grandpa"). Question 18 was answered better: 61% gained both marks, with a further 16% scoring one mark. A few students mistook 汉字 for 孩子, resulting in answers such as "should start learning Chinese from a child".

Question 19

Despite being set as a high-demand item with long spoken texts involving multiple speakers discussing Eurorail travel plans, students performed remarkably well. Over 90% were able to evaluate the content and select the correct option for each speaker, achieving full marks.

Question 20-21

This proved to be the most challenging section, offering clear opportunities for the most able students to excel. Question 20 was generally well handled, although common errors included

misunderstanding 同事 as “classmates” and partially misinterpreting 春节的时候结婚 as “celebrate the Spring Festival”. Only 32% of students achieved both marks for Question 21, with 顶饭馆很麻烦 proving particularly difficult - even for some native speakers, as the informal phrasing is tricky despite appearing within the GCSE core vocabulary list.

Question 22-24

These questions tested one of the most demanding GCSE topics, health/unhealthy living. Students largely performed very well, with an 81% success rate on Question 22 and 83% on Question 24. Although 上瘾 was less familiar, many students were able to deduce “addiction” through the context of 我每天晚上都喝酒. This is an area where teachers might emphasise exam techniques during the course, encouraging students to infer meaning from broader context.

Question 25-27

This final multiple-choice section seemed to leave many students exiting the exam hall with a smile. Questions 25 and 26 could serve as good teaching examples for identifying detail and eliminating distractors, such as 兔子 and 公园 in Question 25, or 前面 and 十字路口 in Question 26. Question 27.1 highlights how students can use process of elimination - when “rainy” and “windy” are more familiar, 有大雾 should stand out as “foggy” – this question was in fact the lowest performing of this section (83% success), yet still very strong, with over 90% success on the others. No surprise then that many left the exam visibly relieved and happy. Well done to the 2024-2025 cohort.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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