



GCSE Chinese (Mandarin)

8673/WH

Report on the examination

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General comments

This is another successful year in this component. A significant number of students demonstrated a strong command of the language, particularly in their use of effective communication, accurate sentence structures, and precise character writing. Several students went beyond the expected requirements by incorporating more advanced grammar, using less common or more complex characters, and applying idiomatic expressions appropriately. These elements clearly reflected a high level of linguistic ability.

Conversely, a minority of students did not perform to the required standard. Some responses contained minimal or no meaningful content, with a few students copying directly from the rubrics or submitting blank answers. This resulted in limited or no credit being awarded for those responses.

The number of students who chose Question 01.1 to answer was almost double the number who chose Question 01.2, but there was a similar level of performance. More students chose Question 02.2 over Question 02.1; however the performance on Question 02.1 was stronger than on Question 02.2. The performance on Question 3 is comparable to last year and it was good to see that the vast majority of the students attempted this question: the mark range shows that the question discriminated well.

It was also noted by our examiners that some students' handwriting was too careless, or writing was too small to read. Whilst examiners will try their absolute best to read what the students have written, credit cannot be given for work that is unintelligible. Students should be reminded that it is in their own interest to ensure that examiners are able to read their work clearly.

Question 1

For this question, there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students are required to write approximately 75 characters in total about four different bullet points. All bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets. The standard of work at this tier was generally very good, with many students able to provide extended responses, which demonstrated their ability to develop ideas, express opinions and refer to different time frames.

Content

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: coverage of the bullet points, development of ideas, clarity of communication and expression of opinions. A vast majority of the students wrote more than 75 characters, which enabled them to cover a lot of information to fulfil the higher bands for this category. They need to be reminded that coverage of bullet points is key. Occasionally a bullet point seemed to be misunderstood and therefore four marks were not scored for Content. In order to score 7 marks or more for Content, information in relation to all four bullet points must be conveyed. Lapses in accuracy which had a bearing on communication could also contribute to a lower mark for Content.

Question 01.1

‘House, celebration and places’ was clearly popular amongst students as nearly three quarters of students chose this question to answer. The vast majority of students successfully addressed all four bullet points and provided substantial information along with relevant opinions.

The first bullet point was answered best, and many students handled some complex ideas successfully. Excellent examples like 我家在市中心，离学校很近。 Many students cleverly substituted 家 (house) with 家 (home). Positive responses like 生日是最受欢迎的庆祝活动，通常在家庭聚会中举行。 Birthday was the most popular celebration mentioned for bullet point two, followed by Spring festival. However, a small number of students wrote about the celebration at a restaurant or somewhere else but not at home, which has impact on content, if the writing was clearly not relevant to a recent celebration at home. Bullet point three was generally handled very well. Many students used common expressions such as 经常 or 总是。 More advanced students expanded their responses by including location details, for example, 在公园 or 在广场。 For bullet point four, most students correctly identified the need to use the future tense and included appropriate time markers such as 明天, 后天 or 下周。 Some students found the character 挑战 challenging.

Question 01.2

About a quarter of the students chose this question. This might be due to the English wording, such as young people, local leisure facilities. Students should be encouraged to utilise all the vocabulary learnt in Chinese rather than focus on English wording. It is worth mentioning that the outcome for this question was as pleasing as for Question 01.1.

More able students successfully wrote 年轻人 which was excellent to see. Most of the students used 年轻人 or 青年。 Answers with 少年 or 小孩 were accepted too providing it was clear and relevant. Some students wrote answers like 年轻人喜欢去公园... indirectly conveyed “young people” and showed skilful manipulation of the language. Some fantastic answers like 年轻人喜欢去公园和广场。 The first three bullet points were very well answered with a wide range of excellent answers. For bullet point three, popular local leisure facilities mentioned were 公园 and 广场。 Bullet point four’s “suggestions to improve local leisure facilities” seemed to be challenging to some students as some students wrote about what they would like to do at those local facilities instead of suggestions on how to improve them, for example 在公园散步, 在广场跳舞。

Quality of Language

Most students demonstrated a wide range of vocabulary and structures, often across three time frames. Accuracy was generally high, with excellent examples including 明天, 后天, 下周, 今年, 明年, 后年, 以后。

However, instead of using 青年 or 年轻人 in response to Question 01.2, a few students wrote 小孩 or 少年 to express ‘young people’, which caused ambiguity.

Some students wrote characters that were correct in form but incorrect in context, indicating a lack of solid understanding in their learning. There was frequent misuse of adjectives, such as using 美丽 instead of 漂亮, and 高兴 instead of 开心. Other common character errors included 的 instead of 的, 的 or 的 instead of 的, 的 instead of 的. These mistakes suggest that while students may recognise individual characters, their contextual understanding remains weaker.

Advice to students

- Mention all bullet points; tick them off once addressed.
- Identify which points target different time frames and check time words and verb forms.
- Include opinions and justifications.
- Write as many characters as possible. If unsure of a character, use pinyin instead of leaving a blank.

Question 2

For this question, there are 15 marks for Content, 12 marks for Range of Language and 5 marks for Accuracy. Students write approximately 125 characters in total, about two different bullet points. Both bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets. More students chose Question 02.2 than Question 02.1. The range of the responses varied from fully fluent in response to the bullet points, using language that was largely accurate and varied, to content that was not always relevant and sometimes repetitive, and it was not always easily understood.

Content

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: relevance and detail (implicit in this is coverage of both bullet points), amount of information conveyed, clarity of communication and expression and justification of opinions. A large number of students wrote more than 125 characters, but there was a number of students who wrote greatly beyond the required wordage. Unfortunately for some of those students, the irrelevant information and inaccuracy of their language had a detrimental effect on the mark for Communication as well as on the language marks.

As mentioned above, more students chose Question 02.2 to answer and this may be because the school topic was one of the familiar topics to most students, compared to problems amongst young people.

Question 02.1

Overall, there was very good coverage of both bullet points. Most students addressed bullet point one directly and confidently, often using the structure 问题...问题... to express opinions and justify the problems young people face today. Furthermore, a wide range of problems were mentioned, with the most common being excessive mobile phone use 手机使用过度, 沉迷手机, 浪费时间.

To suggest solutions when answering bullet point two, many students used the structure 应该...应该... effectively while others used the conditional sentence structure 如果...就... accurately and appropriately. As expected, the use of 因为...所以... was common and appropriately employed to explain and support their ideas.

As mentioned above, the range of answers is very varied; examiners have seen excellent examples like 手机使用过度会导致视力下降, 影响学习, 浪费时间, 甚至影响身体健康. 因此, 我们应该限制手机使用时间, 多参加户外活动, 保持健康的生活方式.

It seemed the bullet points on this question were better interpreted by students as the content was mostly relevant. As a consequence, the performance for this question is better than on Question 02.2 despite fewer students having responded to the question.

Question 02.2

This question was extremely popular amongst students as over two thirds of the students chose this question over Question 02.1. The overall performance was very good but, as mentioned above, it was less strong than on 02.1.

Some stronger responses stood out by including detailed personal experiences, such as 我去年夏天去中国留学, 学到了很多, 比如汉语和中国的文化. 而且, 我还交到了很多中国朋友. A good range of experiences was shared by students, with the most popular being 去中国留学, 参加汉语班, 和中国人交朋友. Nevertheless, it was regrettable to see that a number of students misunderstood the first bullet point and wrote about general opinions or the difficulties of learning Mandarin, rather than recalling a past experience.

Bullet point two required students to write about the advantages and disadvantages of studying in China. This was generally well attempted, with many students successfully expressing opinions and justifying them. Students were able to articulate both the benefits and drawbacks of studying Mandarin in China. Common advantages included 可以学习汉语, 了解中国文化, 结交中国朋友 and 可以锻炼口语 while common disadvantages were 费用高, 语言障碍, 饮食习惯不同, 气候不适应 and 学习压力大. However, several students misinterpreted the question. Instead of focusing on studying in China, they discussed the general advantages and disadvantages of learning Mandarin. Others shifted the focus entirely to their future plans to study in China. This led to some irrelevance in content. It was also noted that a very small number of students mentioned only either advantages or disadvantages, rather than discussing both sides, which impacted their content marks.

Range of Language

Students demonstrated sufficient language skills to support their content and express their opinions effectively. In addition to commonly used structures such as 因为...所以..., 不但...而且..., and 不仅...而且..., some students further enhanced their writing by incorporating idiomatic expressions like 受益匪浅, 受益匪浅, and 受益匪浅. Furthermore, it was noticeable that more students were able to handle co-verbs such as 而且 and 并且 successfully, which is evidence of excellent teaching and learning.

Some students produced very lengthy pieces of writing but often relied on repetitive language which affected the variety and impact of their work. Additionally, errors in word order were common, with the incorrect phrase 在()中国 frequently used instead of the correct expression in Chinese for “studying in China”.

Accuracy

On the one hand, plenty of excellent responses with great accuracy were seen during the marking. As a consequence, a good proportion of students have scored very good marks for Accuracy.

On the other hand, there were signs of further reinforcement of commonly used vocabulary as a number of answers showed some uncertainty when writing 因为...所以... . Errors also occurred in the most commonly used vocabulary like 因为, 所以, 而且, 并且, 不仅, 不但. A few students encountered challenges in writing characters such as 而且 and 并且. Practice with key vocabulary would support more precise and confident expression, especially when discussing advantages and disadvantages and opinions.

Advice to students

- Read the bullet points and the scene setting carefully, ensuring you know exactly what they require in terms of response.
- Ensure that what you write relates directly to the bullet points.
- Try not to say things that are really difficult or for which you do not know the vocabulary. It is better to be simple and clear than complex and unclear.
- When you give an opinion, make sure you justify it. Ensure there are at least two opinions and justifications in your writing.
- Try to write as many characters as possible. If you are stuck with a particular character, write in pinyin rather than leave it blank.

Question 3

For this question, there are 6 marks for Conveying key messages and 6 marks for Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures. Given that the level of demand of the messages was aimed at covering Grades 4 to 9, the question differentiated well with the vast majority of students able to score some marks.

It was very encouraging to see that most students attempted this question in this series. The performance is consistent compared to last year's.

The passage was divided into 13 key messages, as in the table below.

Conveying key messages

We studied the environment	More able students handled this confidently. It was regrettable that some students wrote only 环 instead of 环境. In addition, inaccuracies or careless errors such as writing 境 were commonly seen. The characters 环 proved challenging for most students. Common mistakes included writing 环, 环, 环 or 环 instead, or omitting strokes in 环.
in the geography lesson	Responses were mixed, as a variety of incorrect 地理 were seen: 地理, 地理, 地理 or 地理.
yesterday.	As expected, a large number of students secured this tick. Typical mistakes included: 昨天.
Although	Performance on this point was mixed. Some students only wrote 虽然 without 但是 or 但是, clearly influenced by direct English translation.
the subject is interesting,	Good responses were seen. Common character errors included 趣, 趣, and occasionally missing characters or the use of 兴 instead.
I think the teacher is too strict.	This was generally well answered. Students who missed the tick often struggled with the characters 严格, with common errors such as 严格, 严格, 严格 or 严格. Furthermore, it was sometimes written in pinyin.
Mandarin is my favourite subject	This was relatively well received and delivered.
because it is more useful.	A very strong performance on this point, considering the level of difficulty. Some students used 因为 instead of 因为; other common mistakes included: 因为/因为, 因为, 因为, 因为.
Next week,	This was very well answered.
some Chinese students	Only high-ability students scored the tick. A number of students found 中国 challenging, writing instead 中国, 中国; 中国, 中国.
will visit my school.	This was a challenging item. High-ability students managed to secure the tick. Common mistakes included using 访问 or 访问.
We plan to have a basketball match	Any ball activity was accepted as the character 球 was bracketed. As predicted, a large number of students found 球 tricky.

with them.	Very well received and delivered.
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A generous approach was taken with the marking of the penultimate key message. Unfortunately, the word 'Basketball' was included in this question which does not feature in the vocabulary list in the specification, we apologise for this oversight. Although it is a commonly taught and well understood word, credit was given to students who gave any other 'ball' sport, or indeed to those students who missed out the character(s) altogether.

Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

Overall, students demonstrated a reasonable knowledge of the required content, with most achieving 3 marks or above. As in other questions, word order and character accuracy proved challenging for some students. Minor inaccuracies in character writing, provided they did not change the intended meaning, did not on their own prevent the award of a tick for the key message. However, an accumulation of such errors had an overall impact on accuracy, which could be reflected in the mark awarded for this category. Excessive use of pinyin also had a negative effect on marks.

Advice to students

- Practise high-frequency words and phrases regularly, especially connectives.
- Check carefully to ensure you have not accidentally left out any parts of the translation.
- Always include time-frame particles or future time expressions where necessary.
- Try to write as many characters as possible. If you are unsure of a character, write it in pinyin rather than leaving it blank.
- Even if you cannot complete the whole sentence, write as much as you can to show what you know, rather than leaving it unattempted.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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