

CHINESE

<p>Paper 9715/21 Reading and Writing</p>
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Key message

- **Question 1** is a vocabulary recognition exercise, which requires candidates to find words or phrases from the first reading passage that are closest in meaning to those given in the question. Words that are not in the specified paragraphs of the passage are not acceptable.
- **Question 2** is a grammatical manipulation exercise. It requires candidates to rewrite the sentences using the given phrases without changing the meaning.
- **Question 3** and **Question 4** consist of a series of comprehension questions, requiring straightforward and specific answers. Candidates need to read the passages carefully and should answer using their own words based on the information given in the passages. No credit can be given for responses if candidates have lifted an entire unit of language unchanged from the original texts, or if they are based on candidates' general knowledge, or personal experience.
- **Question 5 (a)** requires candidates to produce a summary of the information given in both passages, which this year were concerned with achieving career success through challenging yourself and the importance of choosing a job you enjoy.
Question 5 (b) requires candidates to give their personal response to the material, which can be their own understanding, experience and opinion of the issues raised. Responses to **Question 5 (b)** should be personal and not a mere repetition of the materials in the given texts. The whole response for **Question 5** is to be kept to a limit of no more than 200 characters.

In order to perform well for this paper, candidates should:

- consolidate synonyms, conjunctions and linking words, set phrases and question words
- read the questions carefully and provide answers based on the passages in the paper rather than using their own general knowledge or personal experience
- to use own words to answer every question rather than copying from the passages
- have a plan on timing for each question, depending on the complexity of the questions
- attempt every question in the paper, even the questions they feel less confident about.

General comments

The quality of work produced in this year's examination was good. Most candidates showed they had a thorough understanding of the two reading passages and a good number of candidates offered complete and accurate answers. In general, candidates answered the questions using full sentences and it was a rarity that candidates lifted from the passages. Answers were presented clearly and, for the most part, handwriting was legible. Most questions were attempted by all.

Many good and clearly expressed responses to **Question 3** and **Question 4** were seen this year. Many candidates demonstrated their ability to rephrase information through using appropriate connectives, using synonyms, rearranging the word order and selecting the key information. In some cases candidates had clearly understood the questions, but did not provide responses pertinent to the question even when there was quite a lot of information in the text. It is important that candidates cover all the points required by the questions, as some able candidates lost marks by not giving full answers. Teachers should remind the candidates to take note of the mark allocation; for example, if a question has 4 marks, 4 distinct pieces of information will be required.

It should be noted that marks are also available in **Question 3** and **Question 4** for Quality of Language.

Whilst many candidates provided well-written responses, others gave answers in note-form or bullet points, which were fully credited for content, but may not have provided sufficient language to be placed in the higher bands in the Quality of Language category.

Performance on **Question 5(a)** shows that this continues to be the most challenging task for many candidates. Most candidates were aware of the length limit for **Question 5** and managed to write their summaries within 200 characters. Candidates need to ensure that they read the question carefully to make sure they understand the specific focus of the task, rather than writing a general summary. Candidates can improve by working on the skills to summarise relevant specific details rather than writing on something either too general or irrelevant.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

A high level of performance was seen in answers to this question, showing that most candidates had understood the vocabulary well and also had a solid knowledge of synonyms. To improve performance further, candidates need to better understand the function of the vocabulary items and analyse their position within the sentence. The best way to check if the correct synonym has been found is to see if the two pieces of vocabulary are interchangeable in the context.

- (a) Candidates were familiar with the vocabulary item as the majority could locate 补助 in the passage. A small number of candidates did not attempt the question.
- (b) Quite a lot of candidates found this sub-question very challenging. The overall impression was that those candidates who lost marks did not know the vocabulary 萧条 in the question, therefore, they either gave no response or made what seemed to be guesses, such as, 倒闭; 激烈. It is worth mentioning that there were a very small number of candidates who managed to locate the answer in the text as they wrote 景气, but, without the character 不, it was the antonym rather than a synonym. Only those candidates who had genuine understanding of the vocabulary 萧条 managed to secure the mark.
- (c) This was the best answered question with most candidates finding the target vocabulary item. Candidates who did score 0 did so mainly due to the fact they did not attempt the question.
- (d) Most candidates handled this question well and a high percentage of candidates scored the mark. 业余时间 was accepted as a possible answer. The most common wrong answer given was 懒散.
- (e) Not all candidates seemed to understand the words 借助于 and 凭着 had the same meaning, as quite a few candidates wrote 利用, which was not worthy of the mark. Some candidates gave 却凭着 as the answer, but as the extra character changes the meaning, no mark could be awarded.

Question 2

Candidates handled these grammatical manipulation questions with ease. All candidates attempted these questions and it gave the highest performance on the paper, with many candidates achieving full marks, particularly on **Question 2(a)** and **(b)**. Candidates were fully aware that they need to use the structures given in the questions to re-write the sentence whilst maintaining the same meaning.

- (a) Most candidates were able to use the structure 之所以……是因为…… correctly to answer the question. Most candidates knew they needed to rearrange the sentence order to maintain the same meaning in their answers to that in the question.
- (b) The structure tested here was familiar to most candidates, and the majority of candidates answered the question successfully. Some more able candidates had the confidence to manipulate the wording, to provide answers like, 如果想拥有稳定的生活, 人们就要做改变, of which the meaning is exactly the same as the question. However, answers such as 如果想拥有更稳定的生活, 人们就不能不做改变 could not be credited because the extra character 更 changed the original meaning.

- (c) **Question 2(c)** proved to be challenging for a number of candidates. A good number of candidates knew how to use the 是…… 的 structure to manipulate the sentence correctly but weaker responses showed confusion about the word order. Common wrong answers were, 是不思进取、怕冒险的人会被生活淘汰的; 不思进取、怕冒险的人会被生活淘汰的. Some careless mistakes seemed to occur with answers like 不思进取、怕冒险的是会被生活淘汰的. Without 人 in the answer, the meaning was unclear compared to the original sentence, therefore, no marks were awarded.

Question 3

Most candidates performed very well in this question and showed that they had understood the reading passage about career success through challenging yourself. Responses which used a variety of vocabulary and also employed a good range of linking words to connect answers together, including: 首先……其次……最后; 第一, 第二 often scored well for quality of language. Most candidates expressed answers in their own words.

Overall, most candidates were able to use the information from the texts to answer questions. Where candidates did not score full marks, it was often because answers were not full enough for all marks to be awarded. As mentioned in the general comments, candidates need to have a genuine understanding of the passage, so as to filter through the extra information in the text to secure the marks rather than listing irrelevant answers which may contradict the correct answer.

- (a) Most candidates gave good answers to this question. A very small number of candidates interpreted 每天朝九晚五 as 有固定的工作, which did not demonstrate a thorough understanding of the sentence in the passage. Other common incorrect answers, such as 回到家乡工作, were not awarded marks. For the last point in this question, a few candidates gave answers like 有出差旅游的津贴. Whilst it was commendable for candidates to use their own words to answer the question, candidates need to be reminded that they must keep the meaning the same as that of the original text. On this occasion, 出差 and 旅游 are two different concepts, and as a result, 有出差旅游的津贴 was not rewarded with a mark.
- (b) Performance on this question was mixed. The majority of candidates were able to say that people with particular skills would have an advantage in the job market. The other point was awarded for understanding that people with other or broader experience would also have an advantage, and required candidates to understand the vocabulary 其他 in the text. It was evident that several candidates did not fully comprehend the text as they gave answers like 有(工作)经验的人 rather than 有不同的工作经验的人。
- (c) This was the best performed sub-question of **Question 3**, with the majority of the candidates securing both available marks.
- (d) Candidates needed to be able to select and filter the relevant information to fit the requirements of the question, and this proved to be challenging for some. The text used negative wording to express the changes which needed to be made, and candidates needed to have fully understood those ideas reformulating them in their responses. Some candidates struggled to identify the key concepts and gave answers which were not close enough to the ideas in the text to be credited, for example, 学会反思改进; 勇往直前; 要勇敢地面对风险.
- (e) Candidates performed well on this question. Some candidates managed to fully explain all three points. Others found it difficult to connect his enthusiasm for work as part of his positive attitude, with some candidates incorrectly thinking 在电视台做了主播 was the answer. It is important that candidates read the question carefully as the question did not ask for what type of job Zhang Tian did at the time, but rather a specific example of the positive attitude he had.
- (f) The majority of the candidates responded well to this question. Whilst some candidates managed to gain full marks, others seemed to have struggled in switching positive expressions into negative expressions in their responses for the second point. In addition to that, a few candidates seemed to have forgotten to provide an answer for the first point, 要靠自己/安全感不是别人给的 as they only provided two valid points. Candidates need to look at the mark allocation of the question carefully to prevent this from happening again.

Question 4

Most candidates performed well in this question and showed that they had understood the reading passage well. Some interesting language was used in the answers provided, including a good selection of linking words. Overall, a large number of candidates were able to use the information from the texts to answer questions.

Where candidates did not score full marks, it was often because answers were not full enough for all marks to be awarded. As mentioned in **Question 3**, it is essential that candidates take note of the mark allocation when they write their answers, in order to ensure that they provide sufficient detail to gain the maximum marks for each answer.

- (a) The majority of candidates tackled this question confidently and some excellent vocabulary appeared in the responses, such as 为了体验中国的迅猛发展; 为了亲身体验中国翻天覆地的变化和发展, which demonstrated genuine understanding.
- (b) A wide range of good answers were seen. However, a few candidates mistook 攻读中医学 as the answer and ignored the fact 攻读中医学 was the evidence to support the hardship Mike had in China, which was the correct answer, 一切要从零开始. When candidates provided answers like 不会中文, they were accepted as the meaning is very close to 有语言障碍. A small number of candidates gave answers like 学习 中文, which did not secure a mark.
- (c) Most candidates gave detailed answers and also managed to rephrase the wording of the text for all three points. A small number of candidates who only offered partial answers were not awarded the mark, such as, 70 per cent 的时间都在工作. Without the concept 生活中, the meaning is not clear as this could be mistaken as any 70 per cent of the time for someone.
- (d) Most candidates were able to discuss the possible impact of one's interest towards their career. Answers like 使人在工作时感到快乐; 在工作中学习到更多知识 were accepted. A few candidates located where the ideas were in the passage, however, they were not able to grasp the key points as common wrong answers like, 使人集中精力; 为工作单位带来收益, 为这个领域做出贡献 were given.
- (e) This was the best performed sub-question of **Question 4** with most candidates finding the answers without difficulty.

Please note that in **Question 3** and **Question 4**, candidates are not required to rephrase every word they take from the passages to use in their answers. Candidates may use the passages as support to retrieve some vocabulary but should not lift material from the passages indiscriminately or at length, as this does not show that they have fully understood either the passages or the questions. Although the mark scheme is presented in bullet point format, this is to show the key concepts required for each mark-bearing content point only. It is expected that candidates try to use full sentences when answering questions, as they need to show they can use more complex structures accurately to reach the highest marking band for Quality of Language.

Question 5

The majority of candidates were able to successfully and skilfully summarise many relevant points from both passages. Almost all candidates kept their answers to the required character limit. The most successful responses were those which paid careful attention to the question which had been asked, and focused on the specific details to avoid lack of progress, to achieve success through challenging yourself and the importance of choosing a job you enjoy. Some candidates also effectively integrated their own ideas for **Question 5(b)** with the summary task **Question 5(a)**. Some candidates did not score highly in **Question 5(a)** because they did not address the question and drifted off-topic or peppered their summaries with points from the text which did not relate to the question. This may suggest a misunderstanding of the question. It is important for candidates to read the question carefully to ensure answers are focused and relevant in order to be credited with content points.

All candidates would have benefited from taking more care when reading the question given on the paper for **Question 5(a)** and checking that their answers are fully focused on that question. One useful technique is for candidates to highlight the key words from the question to ensure they are writing relevantly.

For **Question 5(b)**, candidates should try to keep their experience or opinions concise in order to allow them to express different views relating to the points from the texts. It does not matter if the opinions are positive or negative, it is more important that the candidate demonstrates their understanding of the topic discussed in the texts to give relevant responses to the question.

In order to score highest marks for language, it is essential that candidates remember to answer the question in a continuous prose style. Furthermore, candidates need to be able to show their capability of applying complex sentence structures accurately.



CHINESE

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Key message

- **Question 1** is a vocabulary recognition exercise, which requires candidates to find words or phrases from the first reading passage that are closest in meaning to those given in the question. Words that are not in the specified paragraphs of the passage are not acceptable.
- **Question 2** is a grammatical manipulation exercise. It requires candidates to rewrite the sentences using the given phrases without changing the meaning.
- **Question 3** and **Question 4** consist of a series of comprehension questions, requiring straightforward and specific answers. Candidates need to read the passages carefully and should answer using their own words based on the information given in the passages. No credit can be given for responses if candidates have lifted an entire unit of language unchanged from the original texts, or if they are based on candidates' general knowledge, or personal experience.
- **Question 5 (a)** requires candidates to produce a summary of the information given in both passages, which this year were concerned with properties in school catchment areas and parental education. **Question 5 (b)** requires candidates to give their personal response to the material, which can be their own understanding, experience and opinion of the issues raised. Responses to **Question 5 (b)** should be personal and not a mere repetition of the materials in the given texts. The whole response for **Question 5** is to be kept to a limit of no more than 200 characters.

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- consolidate synonyms, conjunctions / linking words and question words
- read the questions carefully and provide answers based on the passages in the paper rather than using their own general knowledge or personal experience
- use their own words to answer every question rather than copying from the passages
- have a plan on timing for each question, depending on the complexity of the questions
- attempt every question in the paper, even the questions they feel less confident about.

General comments

The majority of candidates demonstrated a very good understanding of the two reading passages and responded well to the questions asked. Some did an excellent job, responding to the questions fully, using clear expressions and giving focused answers.

In general, candidates attempted to answer all questions on the paper. Furthermore, most candidates used their own words to answer the questions rather than 'lifting' the original words from the texts, with many writing confidently to express the relevant key concepts to answer the question asked.

Many good and clearly expressed responses to **Question 3** and **Question 4** were also seen this year. Many candidates demonstrated their ability to rephrase information through using appropriate connectives, using synonyms, rearranging the word order and selecting the key information. It is important that candidates cover all the points required by the questions, as some able candidates lost marks by not giving full enough answers.

Candidates are improving at answering questions in full sentences, however, responses which used bullet points or were written in note-form were still observed. Candidate should be reminded that marks are awarded for quality of language against these questions; in order to reach the highest mark bands for language there needs to be evidence of use of complex structures, which may not be possible in a bulleted list.

Most candidates were aware of the length limit for **Question 5** and managed to write their summaries within 200 characters. A small number of candidates only produced very short pieces which limited the scope for them to develop their answers for **Question 5(b)**. Some candidates are also still answering **Question 5(a)** using a bulleted list. The expectation is that responses are written in continuous prose – marks are awarded for quality of language, and so responses need to provide sufficient language to show evidence that candidates can write consistently accurately and use more complex structures.

Candidates need to ensure that they read the question carefully to make sure they understand the specific focus of the task, rather than writing a general summary. Candidates can improve by working on the skills to summarise relevant specific details rather than writing on something either too general or irrelevant.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Performance on this question was very good, with the vast majority of candidates showing that they had understood the vocabulary being tested and could correctly locate the synonyms from Passage 1. To improve performance further, candidates need to better understand the function of the vocabulary items and analyse their position within the sentence. Furthermore, candidates need to be take care when writing their answers, ensuring that they write the character accurately.

- (a) Candidates were familiar with the vocabulary item and the majority could locate 在乎 in the text. A small number of candidates made errors in writing the answer and instead produced 左乎 or 在于. Such answers could not be credited as they have a different meaning.
- (b) This question proved to be quite challenging. Candidates who answered 升值空间 were able to locate the answer in the sentence, but the inclusion of the extra word 空间 showed that those candidates did not have a genuine understanding of the vocabulary being tested, and may indicate they picked a four character word to match the question 价格增长. Other incorrect answers included 日渐升温.
- (c) Most candidates were able to supply the correct answer 区域 to this question. Where incorrect answers were given, these were most frequently 周边 or 附近.
- (d) This vocabulary item was well-known amongst candidates, and most candidates secured the mark by locating 打折 in the text.
- (e) Most candidates were able to supply the correct synonym 拮据. Once again there were a few problems of written accuracy in this question, with candidates making careless mistakes, such as writing 拮桔. It is essential that candidate write answers clearly and legibly.

Question 2

Candidates seemed very well prepared and handled these grammatical manipulation questions with confidence. Performance was extremely good, with many candidates achieving full marks. Candidates were fully aware that they needed to use the structures given in the questions to re-write the sentence whilst maintaining the same meaning.

- (a) Most candidates were able to use the structure 因为……所以…… correctly to answer the question.
- (b) Although 虽然……但是…… is quite a commonly used structure, a small number of candidates rearranged the sentence order to give answers such as, 虽然不敢乱花钱, 但是想买. Whilst this is a grammatically correct sentence, the meaning has changed, thus, no credit could be given. Some candidates managed to identify where to insert the structure, but kept 是 in their answer, which produced 虽然想买, 但是是不敢乱花钱, and could not be credited.
- (c) Most candidates knew how to use the 是……的 structure to manipulate the sentence correctly.

Question 3

The passage about properties in school catchment areas was well understood and the majority of candidates were able to selectively use the information from the text to answer the questions. Where candidates did not score full marks, it was often because answers were not full enough for all marks to be awarded. Candidates should be reminded to take note of the mark allocation when they write their answers in order to ensure that they provide sufficient detail to gain the maximum marks for each answer; if a question has 4 marks for example, 4 distinct pieces of information will be required.

- (a) Many candidates did well to demonstrate their genuine understanding of the text in answering this question. A wide range of good answers were seen, such as, 学生不必参加入学考试; 孩子不用通过考试, 也可以入校就读; 学校离家近, 上学放学很方便 etc. Some candidates misinterpreted the meaning as 免费入学, for which no credit could be given. Where candidates did not score all 4 marks, this was usually because the following point had been omitted: 家长想让孩子进好学校/想住在名校附近. To avoid this from happening, candidates need to pay attention to the marks allocated to each question and to ensure they have provided enough information.
- (b) This question was well answered by the majority of candidates. Most candidates were able to provide answers focusing on the benefits of living in a property within the catchment area. Weaker responses included facts mentioned in the passage that were not benefits, giving answers like 政府重点保证安全的区域; 学校周边文化气息浓. Some candidates struggled to understand the key concepts and gave answers such as 他们能享受学校的成熟配套设施 which did not reflect the same ideas as the text and therefore were not credited.
- (c) Performance on this question was good. Most candidates managed to retain the key focus of 教学 and 教育 in their answers; weaker responses sometimes strayed from this and were more general in nature, e.g. 质量参差不齐 or 资源分配不均 which do not necessarily link to education. A few candidates struggled to find a suitable replacement for 家长 ‘望子成龙’ 的心理, and the most common incorrect answers were 希望孩子比自己强; 希望孩子得到好的教育.
- (d) The majority of the candidates tackled this question with ease. It was rare to see incorrect answers such as 穿着节约 or 不买衣服.
- (e) Candidates generally performed well on this question. Some candidates managed to fully explain both points, whilst others found the first point challenging, misunderstanding 学校不重要/上一般学校也能成功 as 住学区房不重要. A few candidates omitted 孩子 from the correct answer 孩子要勤奋努力 which caused ambiguity.

Question 4

The overall performance on this question was very good. Most candidates demonstrated their capability in understanding the passage about parental expectations and managed to use their own words to answer the questions successfully. Candidates need to be careful when answering questions and to check their work; in some responses needless mistakes were made which suggested a tendency to rush rather than any lack of understanding the question.

- (a) Performance on this question was mixed. This question required candidates to manipulate the language given in the text to provide an appropriate response. Most candidates secured the mark for the first point. Responses such as (怎样) 培养孩子成才 showed that the passage had not been fully understood, as whilst this information was given in the text, it related to what *parents* should do rather than their expectations of their children.
- (b) The majority of candidates handled this question very well. There were some very well-written responses such as 在孩子考试期间, 家长请假以便全心全意地照顾孩子, and some candidates even injected humour into their answers with wording like, 家长在孩子考试期间, 请假为孩子当 ‘全职保姆’. The inclusion of the key points 在孩子考试期间 or 请假 was present in all but the weakest responses.

- (c) The strongest responses were those which were able to successfully identify the relevant information from the text and recast it from being articulated as a negative into a positive expression to answer the question.
- (d) This was one of the highest performing sub-questions of **Question 4**, with the majority of candidates securing all available marks. Most candidates realised that 行为 was needed to produce an unambiguous answer.
- (e) The majority of candidates tackled this question confidently. Some excellent responses were seen such as 名利不是人生的全部; 人生并不只有名利, 而是丰富多彩的.
- (f) This was another high-performing question with most candidates finding the answers without difficulty.

Please note that in **Question 3** and **Question 4**, candidates are not required to rephrase every word they take from the passages to use in their answers. Candidates may use the passages as support to retrieve some vocabulary but should not lift material from the passages indiscriminately or at length, as this does not show that they have fully understood either the passages or the questions. Although the mark scheme is presented in bullet point format, this is to show the key concepts required for each mark-bearing content point only. It is expected that candidates try to use full sentences when answering questions, as they need to show they can use more complex structures accurately to reach the highest marking band for Quality of Language.

Question 5

Candidates continue to find this question the most challenging part of the paper. For **Question 5(a)**, some were able to successfully and skilfully summarise the relevant points from both passages, whilst others struggled to link the points in their summaries to the question asked. Candidates need to read the question carefully to ensure that the information they include is relevant to the question; the summary they are asked to produce is a focussed one, not a general one. Some candidates included points from the passages unrelated to current issues with education, like 有的家长很少买衣服; 家长一下班就陪孩子上补习班 which did not attract content points. The most successful responses were those which used concise language from both passages or combined key points to address the requirements of the question.

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Candidates need to be aware that they must provide 10 distinct points from both passages according to the question asked for **part (a)** and talk about their opinions or ideas in **part (b)**, all within the word limit of 200 characters.

Question 5(b) provides candidates with the opportunity to develop their personal ideas and viewpoints on the topic covered in the texts and several candidates expressed their own personal experience of parental expectation through their own learning experience. Lots of candidates gave very interesting ideas, such as, 当今社会已经出现了大批只会埋头苦读的年轻人, 他们大多被当成炫耀的工具; 父母应该放手让孩子自己动手, 这样才能培养孩子的自理能力和吃苦耐劳的精神; 我父母尊重我的选择, 让我参加各种课外活动。这使我身心更健康, 广结人脉. It does not matter if the opinions are positive or negative, what is important is that candidates demonstrate their understanding of the topic discussed in the texts to give relevant responses to the question. Lower scoring responses had often written long answers for **part (a)** and therefore ran out of room for this question.

The responses which scored the highest marks for quality of language showed an ability to use complex sentence structures accurately, and some successfully used several sophisticated sentences correctly. Responses which merely listed ideas without appropriate linking words or which presented ideas seemingly at random without connecting them into a coherent response were typically placed in the lower bands for language. A small number of candidates presented their responses to **Question 5** as a bullet pointed list, which affected their language mark. It is essential that candidates remember to answer the question in a continuous prose style.

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- **Question 5 (a)** requires candidates to produce a summary of the information given in both passages, which this year were concerned with benefits of learning foreign languages and traveling abroad. **Question 5 (b)** requires candidates to give their personal response to the material, which can be their own understanding, experience and opinion of the issues raised. Responses to **Question 5 (b)** should be personal and not a mere repetition of the materials in the given texts. The whole response for **Question 5** is to be kept to a limit of no more than 200 characters.

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- have a plan on timing for each question, depending on the complexity of the questions
- attempt every question in the paper, even the questions they feel less confident about.

General comments

The quality of work produced in this year's examination was excellent. Most candidates showed they had a thorough understanding of the two reading passages and a good number of candidates offered complete and accurate answers. In general, candidates answered the questions using full sentences and there was only a very small number of candidates who lifted from the passages. Answers were presented clearly and, for the most part, handwriting was legible. The majority of candidates attempted all the questions.

Many good and clearly expressed responses to **Question 3** and **Question 4** were seen this year. Many candidates demonstrated their ability to rephrase information through using appropriate connectives, using synonyms, rearranging the word order and selecting the key information. In some cases candidates had clearly understood the questions, but did not provide full enough answers to be credited with all the available marks.

It should be noted that marks are also available in **Question 3** and **Question 4** for Quality of Language. Whilst many candidates provided well-written responses, others gave answers in note-form or bullet points, which were fully credited for content, but may not have provided sufficient language to be placed in the higher bands in the Quality of Language category.

Performance on **Question 5(a)** shows that this continues to be the most challenging task for many candidates. Most candidates were aware of the length limit for **Question 5** and managed to write their summaries within 200 characters. Candidates need to ensure that they read the question carefully to make sure they understand the specific focus of the task, rather than writing a general summary. Candidates can improve by working on the skills to summarise relevant specific details rather than writing on something either too general or irrelevant.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The overall performance was very good and the vast majority of candidates were able to find the correct synonyms from the text and write them accurately. To improve performance further, candidates need to better understand the function of the vocabulary items and analyse their position within the sentence. The best way to check if the correct synonym has been found is to see if the two pieces of vocabulary are interchangeable in the context.

- (a) Candidates demonstrated thorough understanding of the vocabulary tested with the majority correctly locating 吃力 in the passage. A small number of candidates did not attempt this question.
- (b) The performance on this question was good, however, relatively speaking this was the most challenging sub-question in **Question 1**. The most common wrong answer was 条件相当, which showed that some candidates managed to locate where the answer was but did not have a genuine understanding of the vocabulary being tested, therefore, included the extra words in their answer.
- (c) This was one of the best answered questions in the paper, with most candidates finding the target vocabulary item.
- (d) Most candidates handled this question well, identifying the word 沉默寡言.
- (e) This was another well answered question and almost all candidates were able to supply the correct synonym 交流.

Question 2

The overall performance for this question was the best across the whole paper. The majority of candidates re-wrote the sentences correctly using the structures given. Where errors occurred, they appeared to be as a result of carelessness rather than lack of understanding. Candidates demonstrated their knowledge of the application of the phrases given but did not include all the details from the original sentence in their re-written sentences. To rectify this, candidates should be encouraged to check their answers by putting the reworked sentence back into the passage where the original text is extracted from to see if the meaning remains the same.

- (a) Most candidates secured marks for this question. The most common problem observed in responses to this question was that of the meaning of the sentence being changed whilst manipulating the language to use the required structure. For example, no mark was awarded for answers like 学外语让刘奶奶的大脑保持活跃 as this made it a general view rather than one from granny Liu's personal opinion.
- (b) Most candidates knew how to use the 被 structure successfully. A few candidates omitted 我们 in their responses, which made the sentence unclear compared to the original.
- (c) Most candidates were able to use the 无论……都 structure successfully.

Question 3

Most candidates performed very well in this question and showed that they had understood the reading passage about the benefits of learning foreign languages. Responses which used a variety of vocabulary and also employed a good range of linking words to connect answers together, including: 首先... 其次... 最后; 第一, 第二 often scored well for quality of language. Most candidates expressed answers in their own words.

- (a) Candidates performed well on this question. The best answers managed to express the sense of comparison in their responses and fully explain all three points. Common wrong answers included: 数学运算快; 学知识的速度很快.
- (b) Most candidates answered this question very well. Those who didn't identify all three points frequently omitted 缓解了社交活动少的问题, which was a key concept given in the passage. There was evidence that some candidates misinterpreted this information, so incorrect answers like 提高老年人的社交能力 were sometimes produced.
- (c) Performance on this question was good. The majority of candidates understood what the question required and successfully used the comparative to discuss the advantages that linguists may have in the job-market. Responses which did not include 国外, did not clearly convey that speaking a foreign language would put them at an advantage in being selected for business trips abroad.
- (d) The majority of candidates tackled this question confidently and some excellent vocabulary appeared in the responses, such as 她觉得才思泉涌, 作品更有想象力了.
- (e) Most candidates gave detailed answers and also managed to rephrase the wording of the text successfully. A small number of candidates answered the first point by saying 她去了人不多的餐馆. Answers needed to specify that those restaurants were not popular amongst tourists. Responses such as the example given were ambiguous, as 'people' in such responses could be anyone.

Question 4

Most candidates performed well in this question and showed that they had understood the reading passage well. Most candidates were able to understand the information provided, demonstrating this by locating the paragraph/section in the text where the answers were found. Some candidates carefully selected the correct parts from the text to show their understanding of the questions, whilst more able candidates could show that they had fully understood larger units of meaning by producing answers using their own words.

- (a) Performance on this question was varied. Most candidates were able to identify the first point 没有功课压力 without difficulty. The second point about the length of the time available for travelling during the gap year was occasionally omitted. Some misinterpretations were observed in relation to the third point, such as 不用担心钱的问题. The passage states that not having money is not a 'big' issue, meaning that it is of some concern but not major. Therefore, answers saying that you don't need to worry about money were not accurate enough.
- (b) The majority of candidates responded well to this question. Most candidates understood that they needed to take the information structured in a negative way in the passage and change this into a positive statement to answer the question correctly. Some responses such as 敢于承认错误 showed that the text had not been fully understood and were quite different from 不怕犯错误.
- (c) There were many strong responses to this question and a good number of candidates scored full marks. Some candidates omitted the key word 第一次 from their responses and 独自安排了行程 was not clear enough to be credited. It is important that candidates read the text carefully and provide all relevant details in their answer.
- (d) Overall, this was the best performed sub-question of **Question 4**, with the majority of candidates securing all available marks.
- (e) This sub-question proved to be most challenging in **Question 4**. Most candidates were able to say that one of the benefits of travel for Mark was that he made lifelong friends, but only the strongest candidates were able to identify the second point. The key concept required was that he 'secured a



job/would be welcome to work there anytime', but some candidates misunderstood this to mean simply that he had gained some work experience and therefore provided answers like 体验到打工挣钱, 尝试了打工的滋味. Other misinterpretations focused on the relationship Mark had with the boss, with responses like 得到了老板的认可, 结识了老板 or 收获到老板对他的厚爱, which could not be credited.

Please note that in **Question 3** and **Question 4**, candidates are not required to rephrase every word they take from the passages to use in their answers. Candidates may use the passages as support to retrieve some vocabulary but should not lift material from the passages indiscriminately or at length, as this does not show that they have fully understood either the passages or the questions. Although the mark scheme is presented in bullet point format, this is to show the key concepts required for each mark-bearing content point only. It is expected that candidates try to use full sentences when answering questions, as they need to show they can use more complex structures accurately to reach the highest marking band for Quality of Language.

Question 5

Many candidates were able to successfully and skilfully summarise a range of relevant points from both passages. Candidates who secured high marks for **Question 5(a)** understood that they needed to cover what impact studying foreign languages and travelling abroad would have on one's study. The majority of candidates managed to find points across both passages, giving them equal weighting in their responses. Candidates should be reminded that part of this exercise is to show an ability to summarise, and so it is important that the points are presented clearly and succinctly.

Many candidates managed to give some convincing personal responses in **Question 5(b)**, writing about their own experiences and opinions with interesting insights and examples. Some of the responses included: examples of candidates themselves living and studying abroad, experiences in travelling with their family and how the language they knew helped them on their journey etc.

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Candidates need to be aware of the need to keep to the limit of 200 characters for both parts of the question. Anything in excess of 200 characters is disregarded by Examiners, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for **Question 5(b)**.

In order to score the highest marks for language, it is essential that candidates remember to answer the question in a continuous prose style. Furthermore, candidates need to be able to show they can use complex sentence structures accurately.



CHINESE

Paper 9715/31
Essay

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- structure the essay to ensure it is focussed and follows a logical argument
- demonstrate knowledge of advanced vocabulary relating to the topic and write grammatically accurate Chinese
- write a response that is clearly relevant and relates to the specific question as set out in the paper.

General comments

Most candidates were fully conversant with the paper and its requirements. The overall performance was good, and there was evidence of thorough preparation across the topic areas.

The strongest performers showed good subject knowledge and used a wide range of topic-specific vocabulary. The best responses presented coherent arguments using logical structures to link the points in an argument with relevant examples. They employed a sound essay structure adhering to good practice by providing an introduction, balanced argument and logical conclusion, and paid attention to the specifics of the question rather than using generalisations. Furthermore, they were able to focus on the task in hand by comprehending the question and using their time wisely.

Candidates who performed less well included those who, despite their subject knowledge, did not properly answer the question set. It is crucial that candidates are reminded of the need to read questions with great care and fully analyse what is being asked of them. Weaker responses often needed to use a wider range of vocabulary and more detail. Such responses also presented less cogent arguments, and used inappropriate or unconvincing examples.

It was noticeable again this year that where candidates had gaps in their vocabulary, they frequently resorted to using a hybrid of Chinese characters with pinyin or even English. In such situations, candidates should be encouraged to modify what they want to say and use alternative vocabulary which they are confident in using and that they know how to write correctly in Chinese. Some candidates also needed a greater awareness of basic grammar, like the use of 的, 地, 得. Others combined two sentences without checking the accuracy of the grammar.

Improvements could be made by addressing the below areas:

- Taking adequate time to understand the exam requirements: candidates can be prone to misreading and/or misunderstanding questions set out in papers. Taking time to absorb the requirements as set out in the rubric will counter this and ensure time isn't wasted writing something that is not relevant.
- Present proper arguments: a strong argument is one which follows a set structure – introduction, balanced argument and logical conclusion. Good essays should flow; taking the reader through the piece without recourse to re-reading sentences or scrutiny of meaning.
- Formatting and punctuation: some candidates submit work which does not use adequate punctuation or paragraphing. This can lead to large chunks of quite cumbersome text that is difficult to read. Candidates should be encouraged to proofread their work to ensure they have properly conveyed meanings.
- Demonstrate sound subject knowledge: strong responses show awareness of the key issues and focus on specific points rather than general overviews. Mature responses often include relevant real-world examples showing a deep understanding of the topic. A rich vocabulary which includes

terminology specific to the topic will equip candidates to set out both descriptive and complex sentence structures.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

社会发展速度越快，代沟问题就越明显。你怎么看？

This was the most popular choice of question among candidates and produced a mixed performance. Most candidates had a good enough understanding of what the generation gap is, together with the general causes for this gap. The candidates who did best successfully illustrated this along with a poignant argument that the faster a society develops, the narrower such gaps should be. Equally, other able candidates argued the contrary. Regardless of the direction candidates took, the strongest responses contained clear arguments and provided relevant examples. Weaker responses were often one-sided, merely highlighting the negatives of the generation gap and how we should address these. At the lowest end of the scale, a few candidates recycled some prior knowledge without ever tackling the actual question.

Question 2

老人们常说的“饭后百步走”在现代生活中有多适用？

Relatively fewer candidates went for this question, although those that did tended to perform very well. Candidates had a good knowledge of exercise, or basic movement, and the health implications for adopting a certain lifestyle. This was supported by arguments showing disease and other ailments associated with modern/convenient lifestyle choices. This extended to the impact on mental health which, again, showed good awareness of the key issues at stake.

Question 3

没有学历也同样可以出人头地。你怎么看？

This was the next most popular question, which was generally well handled. The majority of candidates accepted the motion and tended to reference notable figures as evidence to support their viewpoint. The trend was to highlight those that were very successful despite their modest academic background. The counterargument often took the view point that those who succeed with little educational pedigree are few and far between. Both views showed understanding of the issues at play; both were also well argued by a good selection of candidates. Weaker performance was characterised by narrow personal experience, e.g. *'My dad started with nothing but...'*

Question 4

社会的进步离不开科学创新。请讨论。

This was another popular topic among candidates and almost all candidates produced a strong response. Examples include candidates who provided a detailed historical overview of major invention/innovation and how these positively impacted on society. Such candidates clearly brought their independent knowledge to the fore and exploited it to bolster their arguments. Some candidates argued equally persuasively for a contrary view, i.e. modern technology has been divisive. Again, this was well-handled.

Question 5

文化无国界，文物有国界。你怎么看？

Few candidates took on this question, but those that did performed very well. Candidates successfully set out a convincing philosophical argument around the importance of culture, e.g. how it has the power to bridge differences. There were also arguments around the importance of relics, with some candidates maintaining they themselves constitute a historical record and, hence, must be safeguarded. Others opted to highlight them as a source for appreciation, much in the same way some people describe art. Either way, all responses were rich in content.

CHINESE

<p>Paper 9715/32 Essay</p>
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Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- structure the essay to ensure it is focussed and follows a logical argument
- demonstrate knowledge of advanced vocabulary relating to the topic and write grammatically accurate Chinese
- write a response that is clearly relevant and relates to the specific question as set out in the paper.

General comments

Most candidates were fully conversant with the paper and its requirements. The overall performance was good, and there was evidence of thorough preparation across the topic areas.

The strongest performers showed good subject knowledge and used a wide range of topic-specific vocabulary. The best responses presented coherent arguments using logical structures to link the points in an argument with relevant examples. They employed a sound essay structure adhering to good practice by providing an introduction, balanced argument and logical conclusion, and paid attention to the specifics of the question rather than using generalisations. Furthermore, they were able to focus on the task in hand by comprehending the question and using their time wisely.

Candidates who performed less well included those who, despite their subject knowledge, did not properly answer the question set. It is crucial that candidates are reminded of the need to read questions with great care and fully analyse what is being asked of them. Weaker responses often needed to use a wider range of vocabulary and more detail. Such responses also presented less cogent arguments, and used inappropriate or unconvincing examples.

It was noticeable again this year that where candidates had gaps in their vocabulary, they frequently resorted to using a hybrid of Chinese characters with pinyin or even English. In such situations, candidates should be encouraged to modify what they want to say and use alternative vocabulary which they are confident in using and that they know how to write correctly in Chinese. Some candidates also needed a greater awareness of basic grammar, like the use of 的, 地, 得. Others combined two sentences without checking the accuracy of the grammar.

Improvements could be made by addressing the below areas:

- Taking adequate time to understand the exam requirements: candidates can be prone to misreading and/or misunderstanding questions set out in papers. Taking time to absorb the requirements as set out in the rubric will counter this and ensure time isn't wasted writing something that is not relevant.
- Present proper arguments: a strong argument is one which follows a set structure – introduction, balanced argument and logical conclusion. Good essays should flow; taking the reader through the piece without recourse to re-reading sentences or scrutiny of meaning.
- Formatting and punctuation: some candidates submit work which does not use adequate punctuation or paragraphing. This can lead to large chunks of quite cumbersome text that is difficult to read. Candidates should be encouraged to proofread their work to ensure they have properly conveyed meanings.
- Demonstrate sound subject knowledge: strong responses show awareness of the key issues and focus on specific points rather than general overviews. Mature responses often include relevant real-world examples showing a deep understanding of the topic. A rich vocabulary which includes

terminology specific to the topic will equip candidates to set out both descriptive and complex sentence structures.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

随着数字科技的发展，“数字代沟”成了难以解决的问题。你怎么看？

A comparatively smaller number of candidates chose this question. Strong candidates explained the definition of ‘the digital generation gap’ followed by a clear opinion of whether the digital generation gap is a difficult problem to solve, providing relevant examples to support their argument. Some candidates did not achieve the highest band in content due to a lesser focus on addressing the difficulties in solving the problems of digital generation gap, but more on the cause of the problem. There were also a few candidates who addressed the broad topic area ‘the generation gap’ rather than ‘the *digital* generation gap’. Candidates should be reminded to read the questions with care and ensure answers relate to the specific question.

Question 2

我们的心理健康和生理健康同等重要。请讨论。

This proved to be a very popular question. The majority of candidates showed good knowledge of the importance of good physical and mental health. Strong candidates were able to analyse and explain the reasons why physical and mental health were equally important; providing convincing examples to bolster their position. Weaker responses tended to concentrate on the importance of mental health only or on offering advice on how to keep healthy.

Question 3

教育是成功的捷径。你怎么看？

This was another very popular and well-answered question. The majority of candidates agreed that education is the easiest/quickest path to success. The best responses showed careful analysis of the statement and strong argument on how family/school education can support and help people succeed; again using potent examples to prove their point. Some candidates argued that education is important in many respects, but that it did not guarantee success or provide the key to a successful life. A small number of responses were not supported by good examples or did not contain detailed explanations or coherent arguments.

Question 4

在科技领域，循规蹈矩的人不可能有创新精神。你怎么看？

Fewer candidates chose to answer this question. However, some answers showed a cogent argument, together with excellent examples, that people who follow the rules are innovative in the field of technology. Some candidates argued the opposite: that it is impossible for people who are creative to follow the rules, which changed the statement of the essay title to some degree. Very weak responses showed a misunderstanding of the word ‘循规蹈矩’.

Question 5

建立生态博物馆是对自然的最好保护方式。你同意吗？

There were also a good number of candidates opting for this question. Most candidates showed good knowledge around the topic of environmental protection. Strong candidates were able to approach the question with a focused and balanced argument that building an ecological museum is/is not the best way to protect nature; such candidates providing rich reasons and convincing examples. Some candidates offered bold or controversial viewpoints that were well-argued and supported. Other candidates were able to elucidate a clear point of view, but lacked evidence to prove their argument or gave too much focus on how to protect nature.

CHINESE

<p>Paper 9715/33 Essay</p>
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Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- structure the essay to ensure it is focussed and follows a logical argument
- demonstrate knowledge of advanced vocabulary relating to the topic and write grammatically accurate Chinese
- write a response that is clearly relevant and relates to the specific question as set out in the paper.

General comments

Most candidates were fully conversant with the paper and its requirements. The overall performance was good, and there was evidence of thorough preparation across the topic areas.

The strongest performers showed good subject knowledge and used a wide range of topic-specific vocabulary. The best responses presented coherent arguments using logical structures to link the points in an argument with relevant examples. They employed a sound essay structure adhering to good practice by providing an introduction, balanced argument and logical conclusion, and paid attention to the specifics of the question rather than using generalisations. Furthermore, they were able to focus on the task in hand by comprehending the question and using their time wisely.

Candidates who performed less well included those who, despite their subject knowledge, did not properly answer the question set. It is crucial that candidates are reminded of the need to read questions with great care and fully analyse what is being asked of them. Weaker responses often needed to use a wider range of vocabulary and more detail. Such responses also presented less cogent arguments, and used inappropriate or unconvincing examples.

It was noticeable again this year that where candidates had gaps in their vocabulary, they frequently resorted to using a hybrid of Chinese characters with pinyin or even English. In such situations, candidates should be encouraged to modify what they want to say and use alternative vocabulary which they are confident in using and that they know how to write correctly in Chinese. Some candidates also needed a greater awareness of basic grammar, like the use of 的, 地, 得. Others combined two sentences without checking the accuracy of the grammar.

Improvements could be made by addressing the below areas:

- Taking adequate time to understand the exam requirements: candidates can be prone to misreading and/or misunderstanding questions set out in papers. Taking time to absorb the requirements as set out in the rubric will counter this and ensure time isn't wasted writing something that is not relevant.
- Present proper arguments: a strong argument is one which follows a set structure – introduction, balanced argument and logical conclusion. Good essays should flow; taking the reader through the piece without recourse to re-reading sentences or scrutiny of meaning.
- Formatting and punctuation: some candidates submit work which does not use adequate punctuation or paragraphing. This can lead to large chunks of quite cumbersome text that is difficult to read. Candidates should be encouraged to proofread their work to ensure they have properly conveyed meanings.
- Demonstrate sound subject knowledge: strong responses show awareness of the key issues and focus on specific points rather than general overviews. Mature responses often include relevant real-world examples showing a deep understanding of the topic. A rich vocabulary which includes

terminology specific to the topic will equip candidates to set out both descriptive and complex sentence structures.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

沟通是缩小代沟的唯一办法。你怎么看？

This was a popular topic, with the majority of candidates competently handling the question. Stronger candidates were able to provide a detailed and coherent explanation of the core issues, as well as present an argument backed up by relevant examples. Typical arguments here stated communication was the only means to narrow the generation gap. Although, some candidates argued ‘understanding’ and ‘companionship’ were also effective in narrowing the generation gap. Again, such responses showed maturity.

A number of candidates showed knowledge of the issues at stake but either failed to address the question, or present a cogent argument to support their viewpoint. While others merely relayed their own personal account, which was too narrow to secure a better mark.

Question 2

健身一定要适度。你是怎么理解的？

This was another popular choice and candidates generally showed great understanding of the theme. Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge by explaining why exercise should be moderate in nature, and why people should be guided by an individual’s health status. This was backed up by arguments of what can go wrong when people push through that threshold. Weaker responses needed greater sophistication when it came to written analysis and needed to make more in-depth arguments. A very small band of weaker candidates merely listed some different types of exercise.

Question 3

教育以家庭为主，学校为辅。请讨论。

Some excellent performances saw candidates provide well-illustrated and convincing arguments. Some candidates agreed with the motion that education should be based on the family, supplemented by school. Some notably strong performances maintained that the Family and School are equally important in a child’s upbringing and development. They successfully provided in-depth analysis of the parental role as a child’s first teacher, e.g. by setting an example and helping children build their character; while schools, on the other hand, are more useful for providing children with an all-round education. The strongest responses analysed the merits and importance of both settings and forwarded an argument to support their viewpoint.

Question 4

你怎样理解“创新的路上没有失败”？

Fewer candidates opted for this question. Those that did generally agreed that there was no failure on the journey of creativity – because every failure would yield useful experience for future endeavours. Some candidates even presented arguments stating future success was predicated on previous failures. Some interesting historical examples were cited to support such arguments. In summary, candidates who opted for this question showed healthy levels of knowledge and maturity.

Question 5

塑料是海洋生物的大灾难。你怎么看？

This was a popular choice and there was a general competence when it came to dealing with the subject. Most candidates were able to reference news articles where wildlife had suffered, which lent supporting weight to their arguments. However, some candidates wasted too much ink on solutions, i.e. how the ocean damage could be reversed.

CHINESE

Paper 9715/41
Texts

Key messages

- Candidates should read the rubric carefully in order to understand the format and structure of the paper. Only three questions should be answered, and these must all be on a different set text and must come from both **Section 1** and **Section 2**. Candidates should write the question number in the left margin of the answer booklet.
- In **Section 1 part (a)**, all subsections must be answered. When candidates answer **Question 1, 2 or 3 part (a)** in **Section 1**, they must answer both **(i)** and **(ii)**. A number of candidates this year could not be fully rewarded as they only answered subsections **(i)** or **(ii)**.
- **Part (a)** of each question in **Section 1** includes a passage from one of the set texts. This is a stimulus passage, and to answer questions fully, candidates need to go further than simply relating their answers to the given passage. They should consider how the issues raised in the selected passage reflect the poem/book as a whole. **Part (b)** of each question in **Section 1** should be answered with reference to the whole text.
- Candidates need to read the questions carefully to ensure they fully address all aspects of the question asked. An element of evaluation and analysis of the text is needed to reach the higher marking bands; a simple re-telling of the story is not required.
- The questions in **Section 1 part (b)** and **Section 2** are best answered using a clear essay structure with different paragraphs containing an introduction and a conclusion. The use of carefully selected quotations from the texts helps candidates to illustrate the points they wish to make or to develop their argument. Candidates should be encouraged to show analysis of the texts in their answers, commenting on the author's use of descriptive and expressive techniques.
- Candidates need to answer three questions in this examination, and so time management is important.
- Handwriting must be legible.

General comments

Overall, the quality of answers seen this year was high. Candidates showed evidence of thorough preparation and were able to give thoughtful and knowledgeable responses to the texts. Most candidates showed detailed understanding of the Chinese texts, and many were also able to demonstrate knowledge of literary techniques when responding to the questions.

Most candidates showed a thorough understanding of the characters and content of the texts. Candidates not only discussed the plot of the story, but some were also able to show awareness of the social, political and historical context in China at the time. Familiarity with the social background of the play or poem was often present in those responses showing understanding of the underlying themes. In a few cases understanding of the context was less secure, with examples of confusion between the Chinese Revolution of 1911 and the Cultural Revolution (1966 to 1976). When students study the works, it is important and helpful to make sure they understand and consider the backgrounds of these works.

Most candidates were aware that the focus of responses should be firmly on the text itself and analyse the plot or characters with illustration. A few responses became distracted by giving general information about the author's life or even relating elements of the texts to their own personal experiences, which is not necessary. Several essays would have benefited from a judicious use of well-chosen brief quotations from the texts to illustrate the points they were making. Candidates should avoid summarising or repeating the story but rather choose a short quote to illustrate the point, then go on to explain why the quotation or reference supports the argument/discussion running through the essay.

Most candidates were able to answer questions in an academic essay style with a clear essay structure, including a short introduction, the main body of the argument and a conclusion, using clear paragraphs. Although candidates are not assessed on their linguistic accuracy in this paper, candidates need to communicate clearly and effectively.

This year there was still a significant number of candidates who did not follow the instructions correctly. Candidates should be familiar with the requirements of the examination; details are given in both English and Chinese on the front page of the question paper and remain unchanged. Candidates should answer three questions in total (choosing either **(a)** or **(b)** in each case). They should answer one question from **Section 1**, one from **Section 2** and the third question from either **Section 1** or **2**. Each answer must be on a different text. Those who answered three questions from the same section or who answered both options on the same text was credited with the two highest marks only.

The most successful responses were those that showed evidence of pre-essay planning and good time management. Each of the three essays is marked out of 25, so candidates need to ensure they give themselves enough time to answer all three equally well.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

艾青 (Selected poems by Ai Qing)

- (a) Most candidates understood the background and theme of the poem 《雪落在中国的土地上》. When answering **part (i)**, many responses linked the scenes described in the poem with what China suffered during the second Sino-Japanese war. In **part (ii)**, stronger candidates started from the artistic characteristics of the poetry and analysed the relationship between artistic techniques used in the poetry (repetition, imagery, metaphor, lyricism, etc.) and the theme expressed by the poem. Weaker responses mainly focussed on analysing the theme and content of the poetry without evaluating the artistic skills.
- (b) This question was a less popular choice. However, all candidates who selected this question successfully selected two appropriate poems to exemplify Ai Qing's attitude towards working people. Stronger candidates carefully analysed aspects of the poet's attitude, including gratefulness, love, praise, sympathy, encouragement, feeling grief and inequality for their experiences as well as the fact that he considering himself as one of them. They did this through using specific and rich examples in the poem.

Question 2

高行健: 《绝对信号》 ('Juedui Xinhao' by Gao Xingjian)

- (a) This question was not chosen by many candidates, but those who did showed a good understanding of the characters and were able to carefully analyse the mentality behind what the characters said and did. Using what Mifeng said, candidates analysed her family situation, her attitude towards work and her independent and responsible personality. Reasonable and concrete analysis on Heizi's psychology were also frequently observed.

- (b) Most candidates were familiar with the content and could analyse the different attitudes of the three young people using specific examples. The strongest responses further analysed the reasons behind their attitude from the perspectives of personality, family, life experience and so on. They showed a good understanding of the author's intentions and combined the three people's attitudes to reflect on the social and historical context. Weaker responses were frequently limited to narrow discussions such as Mifeng's attitude towards love or work and could have been improved by including systematic analysis, for example, mentioning Xiaohao's attitude towards his current position.

Question 3

王安忆：《本次列车终点》（'Benci lieche zhongdian' by Wang Anyi）

- (a) This was a popular question. Most candidates understood that 阿信's sister-in-law tried to persuade him to associate with the 'blind date' girl due to economic considerations and housing issues. Stronger responses comprehensively analysed the psychology of the characters. For example, showing an understanding that Chen Xin's sister in law's view of marriage was not simply because she was selfish but also due to her caring about Chen Xin. Such responses were sensitive to the fact that Chen Xin's sister-in-law had difficulties and hardship in her life. Some very good responses delivered an analysis on Chen Xin's brother's dilemma when dealing with Chen Xin's marriage between his wife and mum. They analysed the historical and social background and pointed out the difficulties faced by the educated youth after returning to the cities. Weaker responses needed to include more systematic analysis on the behaviour and personality of the characters.
- (b) Most candidates successfully described 阿信's thoughts on family and life pursuits at the end of the story and related it to the previous difficulties he encountered when he tried to return to Shanghai. Stronger candidates were able to see the transformation of the protagonist's thinking throughout the plot from feeling frustrated and at a complete loss, to feeling discomfort during his hardship, and finally into feeling more encouraged and motivated to keep moving towards the next 'destination'. They also demonstrated their sound understanding of the social background at the time and the author's intentions. Weaker responses were characterised by a narrow analysis of Chen Xin's thoughts, for example, restricting discussion to his disappointment with family without considering the positive change in his thoughts.

Section 2

Question 4

张抗抗《残忍》（'Canren' by Zhang Kangkang）

- (a) Most candidates were able to give a detailed analysis of the character of 牛犇 (Niu Ben) and discussed him using relevant illustrative quotations. Stronger candidates systematically analysed different facets of Niu Ben's character, discussing aspects such as justice, empathy, cruelty, no sense of law etc. Some candidates delivered a detailed description of what Niu Ben had done, but needed to go on to include analysis of his character and personality.
- (b) Stronger candidates demonstrated their deep understanding of the social background of the novel and the author's intension. They were able to analyse the connotation behind the cruelty. Through describing what Fu Zhenglian, Niu Ben, Ma Rong and the regiment headquarters did and thought, these candidates delivered a detailed analysis of the different features of cruelty by different classes and characters, as well as their origins.

Question 5

韩少功：《归去来》（'Gui qu lai' by Han Shao Gong）

- (a) This was a popular question. Stronger responses discussed that Huang Zhixian's experience as an educated youth made him feel particularly familiar with the village, and that the hidden memories were linked to a dissatisfaction with reality which awakened his self-identity. Through such analysis, they concluded the main theme of the novel is root-seeking, identity and self-reconstruction. Simpler responses focussed more on plot summary, describing the protagonist's process of forgetting himself.
- (b) This was a less popular choice compared with 5(a). When answering this question, candidates needed to explore the idea of transition expressed via suspicion, confusion and struggle at each stage between Huang Zhixian and Ma Yanjing, through describing Huang's experience in the village. The best responses pointed out Huang Zhixian's anxiety caused by identity recognition and self-reconstruction, which is the main reason behind his shouting 'help me, Mum', and they pondered whether this was because a mother gives a person an initial identity and sense of security. Furthermore, the social and cultural background behind this phenomenon was discussed to reflect the main theme of the novel including the common memories of the educated youths during that specific era, aspirations of the urban residents on the simple interpersonal relationships in the country area, and seeking cultural roots.

Question 6

鲁迅：《故乡》（'Gu Xiang' by Lu Xun）

- (a) The majority of candidates displayed a good understanding of this text and were able to compare the different relationships between Xunger and Runtu during different life stages, e.g. when they were children and middle-aged. Many also identified that the main reason for the barriers between them was the concept of inferiority and class. Stronger candidates analysed the different life experiences that Runtu suffered and Xunger lived, drawing a conclusion with relation to the social background. This demonstrated the candidates' understanding of the background of the times in detail and the author's intention to criticise the government at that time. A small number of candidates misunderstood the identity of Xunger, e.g. some believed Xunger became rich or became a government officer.
- (b) Most candidates answered this question well. They were able to analyse the character using appropriate quotations to illustrate their opinions. Stronger candidates compared Yang Ershao's appearance and temperament at different times, and consequently attributed the changes to the social background (e.g. the uncompleted Revolution of 1911, chaotic civil wars, oppression due to feudalism and bankruptcy of Petty economics etc.). Some commented that this led to the author's intention in writing this character.

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Texts

Key messages

- Candidates should read the rubric carefully in order to understand the format and structure of the paper. Only three questions should be answered, and these must all be on a different set text and must come from both **Section 1** and **Section 2**. Candidates should write the question number in the left margin of the answer booklet.
- In **Section 1 part (a)**, all subsections must be answered. When candidates answer **Question 1, 2 or 3 part (a)** in **Section 1**, they must answer both **(i)** and **(ii)**. A number of candidates this year could not be fully rewarded as they only answered subsections **(i)** or **(ii)**.
- **Part (a)** of each question in **Section 1** includes a passage from one of the set texts. This is a stimulus passage, and to answer questions fully, candidates need to go further than simply relating their answers to the given passage. They should consider how the issues raised in the selected passage reflect the poem / book as a whole. **Part (b)** of each question in **Section 1** should be answered with reference to the whole text.
- Candidates need to read the questions carefully to ensure they fully address all aspects of the question asked. An element of evaluation and analysis of the text is needed to reach the higher marking bands; a simple re-telling of the story is not required.
- The questions in **Section 1 part (b)** and **Section 2** are best answered using a clear essay structure with different paragraphs containing an introduction and a conclusion. The use of carefully selected quotations from the texts helps candidates to illustrate the points they wish to make or to develop their argument. Candidates should be encouraged to show analysis of the texts in their answers, commenting on the author's use of descriptive and expressive techniques.
- Candidates need to answer three questions in this examination, and so time management is important.
- Handwriting must be legible.

General comments

Overall, the quality of answers seen this year was high. Candidates showed evidence of thorough preparation and were able to give thoughtful and knowledgeable responses to the texts. Most candidates showed detailed understanding of the Chinese texts, and many were also able to demonstrate knowledge of literary techniques when responding to the questions.

Most candidates showed a thorough understanding of the characters and content of the texts. Candidates not only discussed the plot of the story, but some were also able to show awareness of the social, political and historical context in China at the time. Familiarity with the social background of the play or poem was often present in those responses showing understanding of the underlying themes. In a few cases understanding of the context was less secure, with examples of confusion between the Chinese Revolution of 1911 and the Cultural Revolution (1966 to 1976). When students study the works, it is important and helpful to make sure they understand and consider the backgrounds of these works.

Most candidates were aware that the focus of responses should be firmly on the text itself and analyse the plot or characters with illustration. A few responses became distracted by giving general information about the author's life or even relating elements of the texts to their own personal experiences, which is not necessary. Several essays would have benefited from a judicious use of well-chosen brief quotations from the texts to illustrate the points they were making. Candidates should avoid summarising or repeating the story but rather choose a short quote to illustrate the point, then go on to explain why the quotation or reference supports the argument / discussion running through the essay.

Most candidates were able to answer questions in an academic essay style with a clear essay structure, including a short introduction, the main body of the argument and a conclusion, using clear paragraphs. Although candidates are not assessed on their linguistic accuracy in this paper, candidates need to communicate clearly and effectively.

This year there was still a significant number of candidates who did not follow the instructions correctly. Candidates should be familiar with the requirements of the examination; details are given in both English and Chinese on the front page of the question paper and remain unchanged. Candidates should answer three questions in total (choosing either (a) or (b) in each case). They should answer one question from **Section 1**, one from **Section 2** and the third question from either **Section 1** or **2**. Each answer must be on a different text. Those who answered three questions from the same section or who answered both options on the same text were credited with the two highest marks only.

The most successful responses were those that showed evidence of pre-essay planning and good time management. Each of the three essays is marked out of 25, so candidates need to ensure they give themselves enough time to answer all three equally well.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

艾青 (Selected poems by Ai Qing)

- (a) Strong responses to this question showed a good sense of understanding the author's literary intention during the Japanese incursion in China around the early 1940s. They were able to look beyond the immediate material and write about different types of people and their suffering as individuals and as a nation. Some responses analysed the meaning of "dawn" in the poem at a deeper level by combining the historical background of the poem and ideas of post-war hope. Some candidates were able to display a sufficient personal understanding of the questions, but needed a greater connection to the background of the poetry rather than basing their understanding purely on conventional notions.
- (b) This was answered by relatively fewer candidates and was found to be challenging. The question focussed on the format and style of Ai Qing's poetry. Stronger responses discussed different aspects of the length of sentences used in the poems or the length of the poems as a whole. Some analysed the style of language employed, colloquialisms, rhythm, and even noticed the connection or changes between sentences. Weaker responses mainly focussed on the analysis of vocabulary used in the poems and rarely went on to discuss the emotional expression of the poems etc.

Question 2

高行健: 《绝对信号》 ('Juedui Xinhao' by Gao Xingjian)

- (a) Most candidates were able to pay close attention to the text and analysed the reasons behind the mood changes of 蜜蜂. The well-prepared candidates produced a vivid image of the character through discussion and analysis. They also expressed clear ideas about her attitude towards work and marriage (independence, love first, not a slave to money and material, etc.) Weaker responses were limited to giving a brief example to illustrate her attitudes, but without a full analysis.

- (b) The strongest responses to this question showed an understanding of the artistic characteristics of drama. Many candidates attempted to analyse the psychological activity of characters and to summarise the story of the characters involved. The best responses pointed out devices used in the play such as inner monologue, fantasy, memory, imagination, stage sound and lighting, and how the author used creative techniques in the play to illustrate and enhance the inner activities of each character. Some were also able to extract appropriate material from the text to support their discussion of such techniques.

Question 3

王安忆: 《本次列车终点》 ('Benci lieche zhongdian' by Wang Anyi)

- (a) Most responses to this question were relevant and solid, pointing out what Chen Xin's 'golden memory' was from his happy childhood and youth, as well as his memories of family affection and warmth. Strong responses compared Chen Xin's attitude to life before and after going back to Shanghai. Some weaker responses needed to include the process of mental transformation as well as describing Chen Xin having new feelings upon returning to Shanghai.
- (b) There were some really good responses to this question, many including balanced comments as to the sister-in-law's personality and showing an understanding of why her attitude to Chen Xin changed three times. Most also referred to the supporting characters. There was sometimes a tendency to focus on the negative description of the sister-in-law demanding a share of the division of the house, which showed a somewhat fragmentary aspect of analysis.

Section 2

Question 4

张抗抗 《残忍》 ('Canren' by Zhang Kangkang)

- (a) Most candidates had no problem giving a clear judgement of the character of Fu Zhenglian and were able to discuss him using detailed quotations. Stronger responses also provided a sound historical background knowledge together with an in-depth analysis of the question, exploring the connection of the cruelty of Fu Zhenglian and Headquarters of the Corps. Some responses showed confusion between the Company-level troops and the Headquarters of the Corps, and some answers would have been strengthened by mentioning the attitude of the Headquarters of the Corps to Fu Zhenglian.
- (b) In response to this question, candidates demonstrated their ability to discuss and convincingly evaluate the complicated relationships between the childhood friends, making reference to the social background and the underlying factors that led to the changes. Weaker responses to this question were characterised by a loss of focus, predominantly talking about what happened between the friends rather than aspects of their relationship.

Question 5

韩少功: 《归去来》 ('Gui qu lai' by Han Shao Gong)

- (a) Most candidates understood that this question required more than a simple retelling of the story. Strong responses demonstrated sound knowledge of the literary techniques used and referred to specific examples which demonstrated ways of advancing the story; these included character development through conversations between different characters telling the story or setting up suspense for the reader. Weaker responses focussed more on simply regurgitating the narrative with only an occasional reference to technique.
- (b) Strong responses to this question were able to look beyond the immediate material and show sound knowledge of the novel as a fantasy and as part of the movement of "root-seeking literature" exploring the author's approach to a self-identity crisis. They were also able to link the characters doubt to the life of the educated youth. Simpler responses focussed more on plot summary, describing the protagonist's process of forgetting himself rather than exploring the idea of transition expressed via suspicion, confusion, and the struggle at each stage between Huang ZhiXian and Ma YanJing.

Question 6

鲁迅：《故乡》（'Gu Xiang' by Lu Xun）

- (a) This was a very popular question. Most candidates produced strong responses, comparing the two characters and comparing each characters' appearance, personality and life before and now. The strongest responses were able to draw a conclusion as to the reason for their changes. Some responses also expressed the candidates' deep understanding of the historical background of the time and the author's intention to criticise the government at that time.
- (b) Many candidates showed a thorough understanding of the text and produced good essays. A few responses analysed the different reasons why Xunger was sad for example: the land view, the atmosphere, the people's life and changes in the hometown, his own and the next generation's life, and especially the current society and social issues.



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Texts

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General comments

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Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

艾青 (Selected poems by Ai Qing)

- (a) Most candidates showed an understanding of the background and theme of the poem 《煤的对话》 and recognised the meaning of the dialogues and the symbolic meaning represented by coal, i.e. the Chinese nation's spirit of being unyielding and constantly striving to become stronger. Taking the artistic characteristics of the poem, stronger responses discussed how the dialogue helps express the theme. Techniques such as anthropomorphising the coal to express the human spirit are used. Some candidates discussed the link between the simple nature of the dialogue and the character symbolised by the coal, or that the poet used the comparison of emotions between the questioner and the respondent to reflect the perseverance and passion symbolised by the coal. Others mentioned how the dialogue highlighted and revealed the main theme.
- (b) Most candidates selected appropriate poems to reflect the requirements of the question and performed well. Stronger responses identified different emphases for different poems. Some candidates used specific examples to systematically analyse how Ai Qing describes the suffering and fate of the motherland and people, as well as his love and emotion for them. They analysed not only the content of the poems, but also the artistic techniques used by the poet, such as symbolism, repetition, contrast, imagery, parallelism and metaphor when expressing these themes. This reflects their deep understanding of Ai Qing's poems.

Question 2

高行健: 《绝对信号》 ('Juedui Xinhao' by Gao Xingjian)

- (a) Most candidates could analyse Heizi's psychological state and understand the reason why Chefei said “得推他一把”. They explained that Chefei felt Heizi hesitate after seeing Xiaohao and Mifeng, he was afraid that Heizi would not take part in the train-jacking and therefore pushed Heizi to prevent what he was worried about from happening. Some good responses included a comprehensive analysis of Xiaohao. They combined their knowledge of the social background at the time to analyse Xiaohao's attitude to his current work and the ideal job he wanted, and to analyse the change in his attitudes following the development of the plot. Weaker responses usually only focussed on one aspect.
- (b) Candidates were familiar with the plot and were able to choose specific examples in the play to analyse the social reality of China in 1980s. They discussed many aspects, including when the whole country was in a transitional period moving to the emerging market-oriented economy; the imperfect work system/policy which made people feel a certain degree of bias towards the market-oriented economy; rising numbers of unemployed youths and an increasing crime rate; general social problems such as young people losing confidence in their future etc. They also discussed the positive aspects, e.g. the spirit of independent women represented by Mifeng, the older generation's guidance of the confused youth.

Question 3

王安忆: 《本次列车终点》 ('Benci lieche zhongdian' by Wang Anyi)

- (a) Most candidates performed well on this question. They showed an understanding of the different opinions of the mother and sister-in-law, i.e. that the former loves her son and the latter does not want to give up half-of the room. Most could explain the reason behind the change in their cries, reflecting a sound understanding of these two characters. In **part (ii)**, stronger responses used specific examples to comprehensively analyse the characteristics of the elder brother's personality. They included details such as: he is quiet, timid and not good at expressing himself, he has delicate feelings; he loves the family and wants to maintain the unity of the family, causing embarrassment on both sides of his relatives.
- (b) Most candidates composed their essays using a clear structure and were able to organise materials to support their opinions. Many discussed what Chen Xin's life goal was when he worked in the countryside and that it changed after he returned to Shanghai. Some candidates also analysed the reason behind it through his experience after he came back to Shanghai. Strong candidates expressed their understanding of the social background and the author's intention. They pointed out that what Chen Xin had experienced, i.e. finding new life goal, was a typical phenomenon for educated youth during that particular period. A small number of candidates showed an element of misunderstanding and only emphasised Chen Xin's disappointment in his life in Shanghai or simply believed that Chen Xin's goal was work, marriage and a steady life, etc.

Section 2

Question 4

张抗抗《残忍》 ('Canren' by Zhang Kangkang)

- (a) Some very good responses comprehensively analysed the reasons why Marong did not return for 20 years, citing feelings of guilt for Niu Ben or avoidance of the dark and oppressive memories of the educated youth era. Such essays also pointed out that it was due to the accident and the change in his mentality that he finally returned – Marong denied what he used to believe, he does not reflect on his past cruel behaviour but is grateful for his survival and enjoys his current life with wealth and beauty. They recognised the influences from the distortion of human psychology during the Cultural Revolution and the concept of money supremacy during the period of reform and opening up. This reflects their deep understanding of the characters in the novel, the associated social background the author's intention.

- (b) Candidates generally performed well on this question. Stronger responses analysed the social problems in two special eras in Chinese history, following the story line, e.g. officials' greed and oppression towards subordinates; inaction of the superiors; admiring power and violence; indifferent legal awareness; lack of humanity and moral education; men's disrespect for women during the Cultural Revolution; the concept of money supremacy; suspicion and distrust between people during the period of reform and opening up. Weaker responses mainly discussed the meaning of 'cruelty' and not the social problems.

Question 5

韩少功：《归去来》 ('Gui qu lai' by Han Shao Gong)

- (a) Those candidates who chose to answer this question generally discussed several important 'imagined' scenes in the novel. These included: the imagined village scene when entering the village, self-imagination during bath time, the imagined conversation with San Agong, imagining being entrapped in the rugged road during the dream. Candidates typically established the importance of the imagination in the novel, i.e. that it creates a magical atmosphere, promotes the development of the plot, shows the awakening and reconstruction of the characters' self-awareness in different environments. Weaker candidates mainly focussed on the description of the scenes and needed to examine the role of imagination more fully.
- (b) Most candidates were able to analyse the reason for "I" feeling suffocated through Huang Zhixian's magical experience where all villagers mistook him for Ma Yanjing and their warm hospitality. Stronger candidates used their knowledge of the history of the educated youth and the social background to conclude that the main reason that made him feel suffocated was the difficulty of identity and self-reconstruction during the process, as well as the anxiety of being unable to get out of the 'giant me' that represented traditional culture in the process of root-seeking.

Question 6

鲁迅：《故乡》 ('Gu Xiang' by Lu Xun)

- (a) In answering this question, most candidates analysed the changes in the scenery, people's lives and thoughts as well as the interpersonal relationships over the past two decades through Xunger's experience on returning to his hometown. They analysed Xunger's memories and inner thoughts, describing the beauty of his hometown during his childhood and pointing out the social factors causing the decline of his hometown. Stronger responses pointed out that what was described in Xunger's mind was not the real hometown, but a spiritual home where there was no feudal ideology, no hierarchical oppression and harmony between people. Weaker responses focussed more on analysing the characters in the novel. Some misunderstood the social background, e.g. mixed the Revolution of 1911 with the Cultural revolution.
- (b) Most candidates showed a good understanding of the text. They were able to analyse the difference between two pairs of children (e.g. younger Xunger and Runtu, Honger and Shuisheng) and adults (adult Xunger and Runtu) and attribute the differences to the effect of the feudal ideology— the barriers between adults is the concept of the classes. Stronger candidates gave more reasons, e.g. children being relatively naïve, enjoying playing with their friends, having no real contact with society, and not understanding the hardships of life. They also analysed the differences in Xunger and Runtu's life experiences and gave more detailed discussions on other social issues causing the barriers between them, e.g. the uncompleted Revolution of 1911, chaotic civil wars, and bankruptcy of the rural economy.