

CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8681/21
Reading and Writing

Key Messages

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 they are identical to 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 adolescent obesity and healthy eating initiatives in schools.

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 no more than 200 characters.

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.

Most candidates attempted to answer all of the questions, and many managed to express answers in their own words rather than 'lifting' the original language from the texts.

Some good and clearly expressed responses to **Question 3** and **Question 4** were seen this year. Many candidates demonstrated their ability to rephrase information by using appropriate connectives, using synonyms, rearranging the word order and selecting the key information. Candidates should be reminded to take note of the mark allocation for each question. If a question is worth 3 marks then 3 distinct points need to be made. In some cases candidates had clearly understood the questions, but did not provide full enough answers to be credited with the full mark available. 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.

It was evident this year that most candidates were aware of the character limit stated in **Question 5** and endeavoured to keep their answers within that limit. A small number of candidates produced very short pieces, leaving little scope for them to develop their answers for **Question 5(b)**. It was also noticeable that **Question 5(a)** was less well-answered than other questions on the paper. Candidates need to read the questions carefully, making sure they understand the specific focus of the task. Candidates could improve by working on writing summaries containing clear and informative sentences, rather than using up the character count on superfluous or irrelevant information.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Question 1

The overall response was very good and the vast majority of candidates were able to find the correct synonyms from the text and write them accurately. Most candidates secured the marks for **(b)**, **(c)**, **(d)** and **(e)**. A very small number of candidates gave ‘反映’ as the answer for **(a)**, which was not credited. The correct answer, ‘发现’, has a deeper meaning than ‘反映’, and expresses ‘it has been reported’, therefore, ‘发现’ is the only acceptable answer for this question. Parts **(d)** and **(e)** were answered extremely well.

Question 2

The majority of candidates coped well with parts **(a)** and **(b)**. Candidates were able to demonstrate that they fully understood the structures and knew how to apply them into the contexts correctly. The ‘被’ structure was handled confidently by the candidates, showing an excellent understanding and application of the structure. In part **(c)**, some candidates were confused between ‘尽管’ and ‘虽然’, as they kept ‘尽管’ in the answer, which showed a lack of understanding of the question.

Question 3

A strong performance was seen on this question, and candidates had clearly understood the passage well. Most candidates either managed to manipulate the language used in the passage to answer the questions, or used the information from the texts selectively to show genuine comprehension of the question asked. 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.

Candidate answered parts **(a)**, **(b)**, **(c)**, **(e)** and **(f)** well. Some excellent language was used, for example, in part **(a)**: ‘早上睡了懒觉, 为了不到, 就不吃早饭了’; part **(b)**: ‘更有甚者, 把绿色饮食的条例列入校规了’; and part **(c)**: ‘学校的菜不仅单调且难吃.’ In a few cases, candidates mixed the concept of ‘food in school’ in the texts with ‘green food’ as there were some wrong answers for part **(c)** such as, ‘绿色饮食太乏味.’ In part **(e)** and part **(f)** candidates demonstrated an excellent understanding of the passage, but also use sophisticated language to interpret the answers in their own words, e.g. in answer to part **(e)** ‘...把采摘来的新鲜蔬果拿到厨房去烹调, 更是增加了学生学习生活技能的机会, 真是一石三鸟呀!’ and part **(f)** ‘...可谓是一举两得.’ Part **(d)** was the least well-answered question in this section. Only a few candidates managed to include all 3 points. Some common wrong answers like ‘老师给及时的奖励’ or ‘老师给学生们奖励’, showed that candidates had understood some of the text, but had not got a thorough enough understanding to be specific enough regarding why rewards were given and to what type of students.

Question 4

The majority of candidates handled this question well, with particular success in answering parts **(a)**, **(b)**, **(c)** and **(f)**. In part **(b)**, a small number of candidates forgot to include ‘一天不锻炼就心感不安’. In part **(c)** there were some excellent answers like ‘每天进行适度的轻度体育运动的话, 可以让你充满活力’. Some candidates used ordinal numbers to elaborate the three points required, ‘第一...第二...第三...’, which demonstrated an excellent application of the language. Part **(d)** was less successfully answered than the other parts of the question. Candidates frequently wrote ‘很多人相信全麦食品最健康, 从而放弃吃米饭’, which did not answer the question. Furthermore, answers like ‘很多人为了补充营养, 吃很多的保健品’, ‘经常吃保健品’ did not cover the fact illustrated in the texts ‘常年吃保健品’.

Parts **(e)** and **(f)** were managed well by most candidates and lifting was rare. Examiners noted that errors in character writing were also infrequent.

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. Furthermore, it is important that candidates are aware that they need to use full sentences when answering questions in order to score full marks for language marks.

Question 5

Many candidates were able to successfully and skilfully summarise a range of relevant points from both passages. However, very few candidates secured high marks for **Question 5(a)**. Whilst most candidates managed to make plenty of good points relating to healthy eating and exercising, candidates also needed to mention the variety of activities the school and parents have done to increase their content marks, i.e. ‘学校和家长共同帮助孩子制定午餐计划’; ‘老师为学生树立榜样’; ‘奖励在健康饮食活动中取得进步的学生’; ‘体验绿色饮食实践活动’. It was quite common for candidates to repeat the question at the start of their summary, thus wasting 20-30 character spaces which could have been used to express personal views in **Question 5 (b)**.

Part of this exercise is to show an ability to summarise, and so it is important that the points are presented clearly and succinctly. The question required candidates to summarise ‘how to maintain good health’ from both the diet and exercise points of view, and the strongest responses were those which gave a balanced response and covered both sides. In part **(a)**, candidates are credited for each discrete point or idea they include in their summary, and so they need to ensure their response is not repetitive. In a few cases, candidates repeated or expanded upon points they had already included and did not give enough different points to gain the full 10 available marks.

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: reformed fussy eaters; negative experiences of ‘diet’ pills; the health benefits of having plenty of sleep; getting into healthy eating habits from a young age; drinking enough water.

Where candidates did not do as well, it was usually for one of the following reasons:

- not referring to the information in the reading passages for the summary element
- giving a response to **(a)** that was too detailed, and did not leave enough space to express personal views or experiences in the answer to **(b)**
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CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8681/22
Reading and Writing

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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 they contain whole sentences which are identical to 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 how smoking bans have been enforced in different countries and factors contributing to a healthy lifestyle. **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 no more than 200 characters.

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.

Most candidates attempted to answer all of the questions, and many managed to express answers in their own words rather than 'lifting' the original language from the texts.

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It was evident this year that most candidates were aware of the character limit stated in **Question 5** and endeavoured to keep their answers within that limit. A small number of candidates produced very short pieces, leaving little scope for them to develop their answers for **Question 5(b)**. It was also noticeable that **Question 5(a)** was less well-answered than other questions on the paper. Candidates need to read the questions carefully, making sure they understand the specific focus of the task. Candidates could improve by working on writing summaries containing clear and informative sentences, rather than using up the character count on superfluous or irrelevant information.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Question 1

The overall response was good and the vast majority of the candidates were able to find the correct synonyms from the text and write them accurately. Most candidates secured the marks for (c), (d) and (e). A very small number of candidates seemed unfamiliar with ‘趋势’ in (a), mistaking it for a verb and giving answers like ‘推动’, ‘实施’ or even ‘标志’ instead. Candidates need to be aware that their answers should be precise for this question. A few candidates, for example, wrote ‘不成文的礼节’ as the answer to (e), which was not credited as the extra words ‘礼节’ invalidate the correct answer ‘不成文(的)’.

Question 2

Most candidates managed to score the marks for (a) and (b). Those candidates who succeeded in placing the tested structures at different places in both sentences demonstrated that they had fully understood the structures and knew how to use them correctly in the context. **Question (c)** proved the most challenging. A number of candidates simply left ‘在’ at the start of the sentence, which was not correct as ‘在有些国家’ cannot be used as a subject in the sentence. Only a few candidates added ‘人们’ to make the sentence correct. In other cases, candidates omitted ‘在’ before ‘公共场所’, thus causing further misunderstanding.

Question 3

Overall most candidates coped with this question and showed that they had understood the reading passage well. The majority of candidates were able to use the information from the texts 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.

In part (a), most candidates were able to secure the full 3 marks, with just a few candidates only giving ‘教育’ and omitting ‘提高香烟价格’ and ‘增加烟草税’. For part (b), the majority of candidates managed to identify the first two answers correctly, but a common mistake was to answer ‘提高了生活质量’, without also including ‘犯人出狱后’. Parts (c) and (d) were well answered. Part (e) was found to be the most challenging question, with wrong answers frequently given as ‘以烟代茶’, ‘你给我茶, 我给你烟’, ‘讨好领导/对领导的尊重’, ‘是增进友谊, 扩大朋友圈子的社交方式’. In part (f), ‘中国’ was a key word for one of the answers and needed to be included for credit to be given, as the attitude towards smoking cited in the passage related to China in particular.

Question 4

This question was very well-answered. Part (a) was handled well, with many candidates using their own words in order to demonstrate their understanding of the question. Candidates could generally provide the correct answer to part (b), although there were some rare cases where candidates gave answers based on their personal experience, rather than what was stated in the text. Answers such as ‘吃好, 学好, 玩好, 睡好, 运动好, 才能拥有健康’, ‘合理控制饮食, 有时间去运动’ could not be credited.

In part (c), not all candidates managed to include ‘良好的劳动条件’ and ‘人们的健康意识也随之提高’ and therefore could not score all the available marks. In part (d), ‘关于收入的支配’ was covered by nearly all candidates. Those candidates who did not include all points needed to gain the full mark commonly only mentioned ‘时间’ instead of ‘闲暇时间’ and needed to include something in their answer relating to managing their spare time.

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. Furthermore, it is important that candidates try to use full sentences where possible 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. However, very few candidates secured high marks for **Question 5(a)** as they needed to mention the variety of different approaches adopted by the governments regarding to the smoking ban. It was quite common for candidates to repeat the question at the start of their summary, thus wasting 20-30 character spaces which could have been used to express personal views in **Question 5 (b)**.

Part of this exercise is to show an ability to summarise, and so it is important that the points are presented clearly and succinctly. Moreover, the question requires the candidates to summarise “the influence on people’s lives’ from both the smoking ban and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.” Weaker responses tended to be unbalanced, focusing almost exclusively on the smoking ban and not including any ideas relating to health. In part **(a)**, candidates are credited for each discrete point or idea they include in their summary, and so they need to ensure their response is not repetitive. In a few cases, candidates repeated or expanded upon points they had already included and did not give enough different points to gain the full 10 available marks.

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: anecdotes about family members’ health improving after giving up smoking; ways to have a healthier diet; regular exercise; washing hands before meals to improve hygiene and health.

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 **part (b)**.

Where candidates did not do as well, it was usually for one of the following reasons:

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Question 2

The majority of candidates coped well with parts **(a)** and **(b)**. Candidates were able to demonstrate that they fully understood the structures and knew how to apply them into the contexts correctly. The ‘被’ structure was handled confidently by the candidates, showing an excellent understanding and application of the structure. In part **(c)**, some candidates were confused between ‘尽管’ and ‘虽然’, as they kept ‘尽管’ in the answer, which showed a lack of understanding of the question.

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A strong performance was seen on this question, and candidates had clearly understood the passage well. Most candidates either managed to manipulate the language used in the passage to answer the questions, or used the information from the texts selectively to show genuine comprehension of the question asked. 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.

Candidate answered parts **(a)**, **(b)**, **(c)**, **(e)** and **(f)** well. Some excellent language was used, for example, in part **(a)**: ‘早上睡了懒觉, 为了不到, 就不吃早饭了’; part **(b)**: ‘更有甚者, 把绿色饮食的条例列入校规了’; and part **(c)**: ‘学校的菜不仅单调且难吃.’ In a few cases, candidates mixed the concept of ‘food in school’ in the texts with ‘green food’ as there were some wrong answers for part **(c)** such as, ‘绿色饮食太乏味.’ In part **(e)** and part **(f)** candidates demonstrated an excellent understanding of the passage, but also use sophisticated language to interpret the answers in their own words, e.g. in answer to part **(e)** ‘...把采摘来的新鲜蔬果拿到厨房去烹调, 更是增加了学生学习生活技能的机会, 真是一石三鸟呀!’ and part **(f)** ‘...可谓是一举两得.’ Part **(d)** was the least well-answered question in this section. Only a few candidates managed to include all 3 points. Some common wrong answers like ‘老师给及时的奖励’ or ‘老师给学生们奖励’, showed that candidates had understood some of the text, but had not got a thorough enough understanding to be specific enough regarding why rewards were given and to what type of students.

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Question 5

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Part of this exercise is to show an ability to summarise, and so it is important that the points are presented clearly and succinctly. The question required candidates to summarise ‘how to maintain good health’ from both the diet and exercise points of view, and the strongest responses were those which gave a balanced response and covered both sides. In part **(a)**, candidates are credited for each discrete point or idea they include in their summary, and so they need to ensure their response is not repetitive. In a few cases, candidates repeated or expanded upon points they had already included and did not give enough different points to gain the full 10 available marks.

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CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8681/31
Essay

Key messages

In order to do well in this component, candidates need to show that they have a sound knowledge of the topic area and that they can put forward a reasoned argument on paper which addresses the specific question asked. The most successful essays were those which managed to create a structure containing an introduction followed by a coherent argument and a conclusion. Such essays also used accurate and, where appropriate, complex Chinese vocabulary in order to convey the message with clarity as well as force.

General comments

The performance of candidates was generally good this year. Those who excelled were the candidates who demonstrated a clear knowledge of the subject. They were able to advance cogent arguments in a balanced manner, citing the key issues, as well as examples, using an appropriate idiom. This resulted in well-structured prose which flowed and culminated with a sound conclusion.

At the other end of the spectrum, some candidates exhibited a poor understanding of the task. This included examples of students who employed a hybrid style where Chinese characters, pinyin and English were amalgamated. If candidates do not know the character for a particular vocabulary item, they are advised to use an alternative word, rather than writing it in pinyin or English.

Candidates showed an awareness of the character limit stated on the question paper, and generally wrote within those parameters.

Candidates must respond to the actual title set; essays addressing the general topic area will not score highly.

Improvements could be made in the following areas:

Understanding of questions. Candidates should be advised to read all questions with great care and choose a question where they are confident of the meaning and vocabulary. To have a good understanding of a question is the starting point of producing a good essay.

Essay structure: A clear structure with a reasoned argument or meaningful conclusion is required

Relevant Content: Candidates are advised to provide a clear opinion on the question chosen, highlighting the contemporary issues at stake and making a detailed argument supported with relevant examples. Candidates should avoid relying too heavily on personal experience and should rather use reasoned arguments to back up their opinions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 – 年轻人

A relatively small number of candidates opted for this question, and performance was generally good among those who did. Most candidates successfully addressed the definition of ‘低头族’ as well as giving clear evidence of the attraction of gadgets, and the impact they have on young people. Many candidates also expressed their dismay of such a phenomenon and provided some sensible recommendations to address the social issue.

Question 2 – 媒体

This title was by far the most popular topic among candidates. The majority of candidates were able to produce relevant and detailed pieces of information. Most candidates successfully highlighted the key characteristics of the benefits and shortcomings of making friends online, which was the fundamental requirement of the task. Weaker responses were commonly overly-focused on the internet, or social media, in general, instead of fully addressing the question.

Question 3 – 教育

This title was a popular topic among candidates and the majority were knowledgeable about the subject. Some candidates, who agreed with the statement, explained that healthy pressure and competition stimulated learning and motivation. On the other hand, most candidates who disagreed with the statement convincingly argued that the pressure restricts creativity and prevents students from pursuing their passion. Weaker responses tended to focus too heavily on the negativity of pressure, often using excessive anecdotal evidence.

Question 4 – 科技

Performance on this title was strong amongst those who chose it. Candidates successfully illustrated the convenience of smart phones and demonstrated the detrimental extent to which people have grown to rely on them. Some candidates also articulated a counter-argument that there has been a positive impact from reliance on smart phones, in that they have freed people up to focus on other worthy areas in life.

Overall, a good range of language and examples were used in the arguments.

Question 5 – 环境

Most candidates were familiar with the topic and had been well-prepared by centres. Many candidates were able to outline the importance of environmental protection, but only the strongest essays addressed the question ‘have we done enough?’ Analysis of this question was needed to reach the highest marking bands.

CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8681/32
Essay

Key messages

In order to do well in this component, candidates need to show that they have a sound knowledge of the topic area and that they can put forward a reasoned argument on paper which addresses the specific question asked. The most successful essays were those which managed to create a structure containing an introduction followed by a coherent argument and a conclusion. Such essays also used accurate and, where appropriate, complex Chinese vocabulary in order to convey the message with clarity as well as force.

General comments

The performance of candidates was generally good this year. Those who excelled were the candidates who demonstrated a clear knowledge of the subject. They were able to advance cogent arguments in a balanced manner, citing the key issues, as well as examples, using an appropriate idiom. This resulted in well-structured prose which flowed and culminated with a sound conclusion.

At the other end of the spectrum, some candidates exhibited a poor understanding of the task. This included examples of students who employed a hybrid style where Chinese characters, pinyin and English were amalgamated.

Candidates showed an awareness of the character limit stated on the question paper, and generally wrote within those parameters.

Improvements could be made in the following areas:

Understanding of questions. Candidates should be advised to read all questions with great care and choose a question where they are confident of the meaning and vocabulary. To have a good understanding of a question is the starting point of producing a good essay.

Essay structure: A clear structure with a reasoned argument or meaningful conclusion is required

Relevant Content: Candidates are advised to provide a clear opinion on the question chosen, highlighting the contemporary issues at stake and making a detailed argument supported with relevant examples. Candidates should avoid relying too heavily on personal experience and should rather use reasoned arguments to back up their opinions.

Question 1 – 年轻人

A relatively smaller number of candidates opted for this question, and performance was wide-ranging among those who did. Opinions were clearly divided for this task. Some candidates provided convincing arguments regarding the importance of realising one's dreams at the earliest opportunity; while others argued that it constitutes a rather irresponsible approach tantamount to disregarding one's financial position and pushing the boundaries of desire and greed. Some outstanding reasoning was seen on both sides. In a small number of cases, candidates misunderstood the question. For example, some focussed too narrowly on the negativity surrounding the spending of parents' hard fought earnings. Others needed to broaden their arguments beyond how spending would stimulate the economy.

Question 2 – 媒体

This title was by far the most popular topic among candidates, with the majority believing we should be conservative when dealing with media reports. While a large number of candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of the characteristics of online media, such as exaggeration, censorship and lack of scrutiny, some noted that subjective and biased judgement cannot be avoided. Almost half of the candidates focused heavily on how to prevent being misled by the media. Weaker responses were characterised by a clear lack of reasoned argument when dealing with this task.

Question 3 – 教育

This was another popular topic chosen by candidates, most of whom handled the task competently. Candidates approached the topic with the following aspects: cultural understanding, appreciation of original literature and research, convenience of travel abroad and opportunity for career development. Many well-illustrated examples were provided to support these opinions.

Question 4 – 科技

Computer, the internet and smart phones were among the top inventions mentioned. Candidates showed in-depth knowledge of these technologies and convincingly demonstrated the remarkable benefits these inventions had brought to our lives. Some outstanding pieces of work were seen.

Question 5 – 环境

Most candidates were familiar with the topic and well-prepared by centres. Many answers competently handled the topic area of environmental protection. The most successful essays managed to give a balanced perspective, i.e. the preservation of natural resources versus no compromise to living standards. Weaker responses were sometimes vague on the latter area.

CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8681/33
Essay

Key messages

In order to do well in this component, candidates need to show that they have a sound knowledge of the topic area and that they can put forward a reasoned argument on paper which addresses the specific question asked. The most successful essays were those which managed to create a structure containing an introduction followed by a coherent argument and a conclusion. Such essays also used accurate and, where appropriate, complex Chinese vocabulary in order to convey the message with clarity as well as force.

General comments

The performance of candidates was generally good this year. Those who excelled were the candidates who demonstrated a clear knowledge of the subject. They were able to advance cogent arguments in a balanced manner, citing the key issues, as well as examples, using an appropriate idiom. This resulted in well-structured prose which flowed and culminated with a sound conclusion.

At the other end of the spectrum, some candidates exhibited a poor understanding of the task. This included examples of students who employed a hybrid style where Chinese characters, pinyin and English were amalgamated. If candidates do not know the character for a particular vocabulary item, they are advised to use an alternative word, rather than writing it in pinyin or English.

Candidates showed an awareness of the character limit stated on the question paper, and generally wrote within those parameters.

Candidates must respond to the actual title set; essays addressing the general topic area will not score highly.

Improvements could be made in the following areas:

Understanding of questions. Candidates should be advised to read all questions with great care and choose a question where they are confident of the meaning and vocabulary. To have a good understanding of a question is the starting point of producing a good essay.

Essay structure: A clear structure with a reasoned argument or meaningful conclusion is required

Relevant Content: Candidates are advised to provide a clear opinion on the question chosen, highlighting the contemporary issues at stake and making a detailed argument supported with relevant examples. Candidates should avoid relying too heavily on personal experience and should rather use reasoned arguments to back up their opinions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 – 年轻人

A relatively small number of candidates opted for this question, and performance was generally good among those who did. Most candidates successfully addressed the definition of ‘低头族’ as well as giving clear evidence of the attraction of gadgets, and the impact they have on young people. Many candidates also expressed their dismay of such a phenomenon and provided some sensible recommendations to address the social issue.

Question 2 – 媒体

This title was by far the most popular topic among candidates. The majority of candidates were able to produce relevant and detailed pieces of information. Most candidates successfully highlighted the key characteristics of the benefits and shortcomings of making friends online, which was the fundamental requirement of the task. Weaker responses were commonly overly-focused on the internet, or social media, in general, instead of fully addressing the question.

Question 3 – 教育

This title was a popular topic among candidates and the majority were knowledgeable about the subject. Some candidates, who agreed with the statement, explained that healthy pressure and competition stimulated learning and motivation. On the other hand, most candidates who disagreed with the statement convincingly argued that the pressure restricts creativity and prevents students from pursuing their passion. Weaker responses tended to focus too heavily on the negativity of pressure, often using excessive anecdotal evidence.

Question 4 – 科技

Performance on this title was strong amongst those who chose it. Candidates successfully illustrated the convenience of smart phones and demonstrated the detrimental extent to which people have grown to rely on them. Some candidates also articulated a counter-argument that there has been a positive impact from reliance on smart phones, in that they have freed people up to focus on other worthy areas in life.

Overall, a good range of language and examples were used in the arguments.

Question 5 – 环境

Most candidates were familiar with the topic and had been well-prepared by centres. Many candidates were able to outline the importance of environmental protection, but only the strongest essays addressed the question ‘have we done enough?’ Analysis of this question was needed to reach the highest marking bands.