

# MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Paper 0547/11  
Listening

## General comments

In general, this paper was accessible to candidates, and the exercises discriminated across the full range of ability. Except for the last exercise, questions were objective, requiring non-verbal responses, and visuals were used wherever possible. The spoken Chinese in the examination gradually increased in terms of difficulty and length, and questions moved from testing candidates' ability to understand short factual information to, in the later exercises, testing their ability to understand and identify opinions, explanations in narrated accounts, and interviews. To do well in this examination, it is essential that candidates learn and be very familiar with the Defined Content for the syllabus.

The number of excellent performances from Centres all over the world shows that Centres recognise the importance of listening and responding skills, and that these skills are being well taught. In general, the topics and themes of the exercises were well within the knowledge and life experience of candidates from around the world.

The listening examination is a test of comprehension. Candidates are reminded to keep their answers clear and to the point, and to avoid adding extra material, which can invalidate an otherwise correct response.

## Comments on specific questions

### *Section 1*

#### **Exercise 1 Questions 1–5**

Candidates generally did well on this exercise, which tested the comprehension of very short recordings of one or two sentences. Most candidates scored 4 or 5 marks. The most common mistakes made were selecting C for **Question 2**, A for **Question 3**, A for **Question 4**, and again A for **Question 5**.

#### **Exercise 2 Questions 6–10**

This exercise featured a short conversation about Wang Li's first day of term. Candidates generally did very well on this exercise.

More mistakes were made with **Question 8** and **Question 9**. When incorrect choices were selected for **Question 8**, choice C was often selected; for **Question 9**, choice B was often selected.

### *Section 2*

#### **Exercise 1 Questions 11–15**

This exercise tested the candidates' comprehension of a short introduction given by a hotel receptionist about the facilities in the hotel. While many candidates did well here, it also proved to be challenging for a good number of other candidates. In this exercise, for each question the whole variety of choices was selected by candidates as a response. Amongst all of them, the common mistakes were choosing B, C or G for **Question 11**, C or D for **Question 12**, E or G for **Question 13**, C for **Question 14**, and G for **Question 15**.

#### **Exercise 2 Questions 16**

Candidates heard a conversation between Xiao Wen and her friend. Xiao Wen was visiting Beijing, and her friend was helping her to plan some activities. Candidates generally performed very well on this exercise and many achieved 4 or 5 marks.

With this exercise, candidates are reminded not to tick more than 5 boxes. They are also advised to make all 5 choices to their best understanding.

Candidates from most Centres had been well prepared for the examination and were usually well aware of the requirements. It is worth noting that when responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, if a candidate makes 2 choices whether in pencil or ink, the mark cannot be awarded. Answers which candidates do not wish the Examiner to consider must be clearly crossed out, including any written in brackets. Candidates should also be warned that they must tick the number of boxes stated in the rubric, such as in **Question 16**. Candidates are reminded to read rubrics carefully and follow the instructions. The format of the paper and the question rubrics remain fairly constant from year to year. When preparing their candidates, Centres should ensure that candidates clearly understand the rubrics, as such familiarity can only aid and reassure them in the examination.

### **Section 3**

#### **Exercise 1 Questions 17–21**

This exercise featured five friends talking about the things they enjoyed doing at Christmas. On the whole, candidates did very well with these questions. In this exercise, candidates performed better with **Question 17** and **Question 21**. More mistakes were made with the other three questions. Many candidates incorrectly chose D or F as the answer for **Question 18**, E as the answer for **Question 19**, and A as the answer for **Question 20**.

#### **Exercise 2 Questions 22–25**

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Zhang Hai, a Chinese tourist in Europe. As intended, this final exercise, targeted to test the top-level IGCSE skills, elicited the widest range of performance. There were some very accessible questions, affording even the weakest candidates the opportunity to score one or two marks, but there were also questions to challenge the most able candidates.

**Question 22** required candidates to state Zhang Hai's occupation.

Most candidates answered the question perfectly well or gave answers that were acceptable. There were also responses to this question that were incorrect, among which were '工程', '工师' and the pinyin equivalents of those.

**Question 23** asked candidates to state whom Zhang Hai travelled to Europe with.

Again most candidates answered this question perfectly well or gave answers that were acceptable. There were some minor inaccuracies in character writing and pinyin spelling. The most common mistake made when responding to this question was answering '同学' instead of '同事'.

**Question 24** asked the candidates to list the two things that Zhang Hai enjoyed doing the most while visiting Europe.

This is a challenging question. Many candidates did really well producing excellent answers as well as responses that might have some minor inaccuracies in character writing or pinyin spelling but adequately demonstrated sufficient understanding of this section of the interview required by the mark scheme.

Besides the responses that were completely wrong or unintelligible, two most common mistakes made were: 1) only answering '参观' or 'can guan' but not saying '参观' what; 2) instead of saying '坐船' or 'zuo chuan', some candidates said '划船' or 'hua chuan'.

**Question 25** asked candidates to give the reason why Zhang Hai said that she would definitely visit Europe again in the future.

This proved to be a challenging question. A large variety of responses were seen here. A good number of the responses to this question, written in pinyin that were unintelligible, showed a lack of understanding. There were also many responses that were short and straight to the point or were longer and more explanatory, both of which well demonstrated that the candidates understood what was said in this final part of the interview.

For **Exercise 2** in **Section 3**, Examiners do not expect complete sentences in response to these questions. Candidates are allowed to write their answers in either Chinese characters or pinyin. A response written in Chinese characters or pinyin that have minor inaccuracies can be accepted, provided that the response's meaning remains clearly correct according to the recorded text. Marks will not be awarded when candidates' intentions are not clear for whatever reason. For example, there were many cases this year where there were so many mistakes with the pinyin spelling that it was unclear what the candidates' intentions were. When preparing their candidates, it would be beneficial that Centres help their candidates improve in this area.

# MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Paper 0547/12  
Listening

## General comments

In general, this paper was found to be accessible to candidates, and the exercises worked well and discriminated across the full range of ability. Except for the last exercise, questions were objective, requiring non-verbal responses, and visuals were used wherever possible. The Chinese spoken in the examination gradually increased in terms of difficulty and length, and questions moved from testing candidates' ability to understand short factual information to, in the later exercises, testing their ability to understand and identify opinions, explanations in narrated accounts, and interviews. To do well in this examination, it is essential that candidates learn and be very familiar with the Defined Content for the syllabus.

The number of excellent performances from Centres all over the world shows that Centres recognise the importance of listening and responding skills, and that these skills are being well taught in many Centres. In general, the topics and themes of the exercises were well within the knowledge and life experience of candidates from around the world.

The listening examination is a test of comprehension. If candidates get into the habit of keeping their answers clear and straight to the point, they can reduce the risk of adding extra material, which can invalidate an otherwise correct response.

For **Exercise 2 in Section 3**, Examiners do not expect complete sentences in response to these questions. Candidates are allowed to write their answers in either Chinese characters or pinyin. A response written in Chinese characters or pinyin that have minor inaccuracies can be accepted, provided that the response's meaning remains clearly correct according to the recorded text. Marks will not be awarded when candidates' intentions are not clear for whatever reason. For example, there were many cases this year where there were so many mistakes with the pinyin spelling that it was unclear what the candidates' intentions were. When preparing their candidates, it would be beneficial that Centres help their candidates improve in this area.

Candidates from most Centres had been well prepared for the examination and were usually well aware of the requirements. It's worth noting that when responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, if a candidate makes 2 choices whether in pencil or ink, the mark cannot be awarded. Answers which candidates do not wish the Examiner to consider must be clearly crossed out, including any written in brackets. Candidates should also be warned that they must tick the number of boxes stated in the rubric, such as in **Question 16**. It will be helpful if candidates get in the habit of reading rubrics carefully and following the instructions. The format of the paper and the question rubrics remain fairly constant from year to year. When preparing their candidates, Centres should ensure that candidates clearly understand the rubrics, as such familiarity can only aid and reassure them in the examination.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section 1**

#### **Exercise 1 Questions 1–5**

Candidates generally did well on this exercise, which tested the comprehension of very short recordings of one or two sentences. Among the mistakes made, choice **A** was often selected for **Question 2**; choice **C** was often selected for **Question 3**; choice **B** was often selected for **Question 4**; and choice **B** or **A** was often selected for **Question 5**.

## Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

This exercise featured a short conversation about what Wang Li did during New Year's Day. Candidates generally did well on this exercise.

More mistakes were made with **Question 7** and **Question 9**. When incorrect choices were selected for **Question 7**, choice **B** was often selected; for **Question 9**, choice **A** was often selected.

It is worth noting that in this section, **Section 1**, some candidates who performed much better in **Exercises 2** than in **Exercise 1**. There could be many reasons for this, one of which could be that candidates got more settled as they progressed in the examination. In that case, some extra training in exam techniques could be helpful.

## Section 2

### Exercise 1 Question 11–15

This exercise tested the candidates' comprehension of a short introduction given by a teacher about after-school activities. It proved to be challenging for a good number of candidates. In this exercise candidates performed better with **Question 11**, **Question 12** and **Question 13**. More mistakes were made with **Question 14** and **Question 15**. Many candidates chose B, C or F as the answer for **Question 14** and G or F as the answer for **Question 15**. A good number of candidates chose B for **Question 14** and G for **Question 15**, while the correct choices should be just the other way round.

### Exercise 2 Questions 16

Candidates heard a conversation between Miss Huang and a hotel receptionist. Miss Huang had just checked in to the hotel and was finding out from the receptionist about a few places of interest near the hotel. Candidates generally performed very well on this exercise. Among the wrong choices, B was selected relatively more often. F and G were also incorrectly selected by many candidates. Mistakes were often made by not selecting H and I.

A few candidates ticked more than 5 boxes. More candidates ticked fewer than 5 boxes. Candidates are strongly advised to make all 5 choices and only 5 choices to their best understanding.

## Section 3

### Exercise 1 Questions 17–21

This exercise featured five friends talking about their favourite holiday activities. On the whole, candidates did very well with these questions. The interesting thing is that while A is not a correct answer to any of the 5 questions, A was often picked incorrectly as an answer to all the questions. Besides incorrectly selecting A as the answer, B or D had also been chosen incorrectly and relatively frequently as an answer to **Question 17**, and F or G for **Question 21**.

### Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

In this exercise candidates heard an interview with a young diver who won first place in diving at a university students' sporting event. As intended, this final exercise, targeted to test the top-level IGCSE skills, elicited the widest range of performance. There were some very accessible questions, affording even the weakest candidates the opportunity to score one or two marks, but there were also questions to challenge the most able candidates.

**Question 22** required candidates to state at what age Zhang Jing started to learn diving.

Most candidates answered the question perfectly well or gave answers that were acceptable. There were also many candidates who gave totally wrong answers, such as '八岁', '十岁' or even '二十三岁', which indicates that some candidates did not understand this part of the interview.

**Question 23** asked candidates to state where Zhang Jing practiced diving.

There was a good variety of answers here. Those showing that the candidate understood that Zhang Jing practiced diving at an Institute of Physical Education were accepted, and so were the ones that said Zhang Jing practiced diving nearby his university. However, responses saying that Zhang Jing practiced diving in a gymnasium or sports ground were not accepted. Much inaccuracy in character writing, pinyin spelling, as well as expression was seen here. Some candidates' responses were unintelligible, which may be an indication that those candidates did not understand this section of the interview.

**Question 24** asked the candidates to give the reason why Zhang Jing chose diving.

This is a challenging question. Many candidates did exceptionally well producing excellent answers. Some answers were short and straight to the point; some were longer and more explanatory.

Again a variety of answers were seen here, with a wide range of pinyin spellings. Many responses generally showed an adequate understanding of the recording and satisfied the requirements of the mark scheme, but there were some responses that sounded far away from the correct answers, and some were very confusing.

**Question 25** asked candidates to list the two other hobbies that Zhang Jing pursued besides sports.

Many candidates did show they understood that Zhang Jing enjoyed singing besides sports and gave adequate responses. This is another place in this exercise where we saw a great variety of responses, including a variety of pinyin spellings and character usage. Many of those were acceptable, but in some cases what the candidates wrote was unintelligible. Answers that expressed the meaning of 'appreciating popular songs' rather than 'singing popular songs' were not acceptable.

Most candidates understood that the other one of the two things that Zhang Jing enjoyed doing other than sports was making clothes, and their responses clearly demonstrated that understanding even though with some minor inaccuracies in the character writing or pinyin spelling in some of them. Responses such as 'chuan yi fu', 'mai yi fu' or '做音符' were not acceptable since it showed that the candidates misunderstood this part of the recording.

When responding to the second part of this question, quite a few candidates used the notation ' / ' e.g. zuo yi fu / biao yan. It is inappropriate to use this notation in this examination in this way. When answering a question, candidates need to make up their minds as to what they want to give as their answer and make that clear to the examiner.

# MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Paper 0547/13  
Listening

## General comments

In general, this paper was accessible to candidates, and the exercises discriminated across the full range of ability. Except for the last exercise, questions were objective, requiring non-verbal responses, and visuals were used wherever possible. The spoken Chinese in the examination gradually increased in terms of difficulty and length, and questions moved from testing candidates' ability to understand short factual information to, in the later exercises, testing their ability to understand and identify opinions, explanations in narrated accounts, and interviews. To do well in this examination, it is essential that candidates learn and be very familiar with the Defined Content for the syllabus.

The number of excellent performances from Centres all over the world shows that Centres recognise the importance of listening and responding skills, and that these skills are being well taught. In general, the topics and themes of the exercises were well within the knowledge and life experience of candidates from around the world.

The listening examination is a test of comprehension. Candidates are reminded to keep their answers clear and to the point, and to avoid adding extra material, which can invalidate an otherwise correct response.

## Comments on specific questions

### *Section 1*

#### **Exercise 1 Questions 1–5**

Candidates generally did well on this exercise, which tested the comprehension of very short recordings of one or two sentences. Most candidates scored 4 or 5 marks. The most common mistakes made were selecting C for **Question 2**, A for **Question 3**, A for **Question 4**, and again A for **Question 5**.

#### **Exercise 2 Questions 6–10**

This exercise featured a short conversation about Wang Li's first day of term. Candidates generally did very well on this exercise.

More mistakes were made with **Question 8** and **Question 9**. When incorrect choices were selected for **Question 8**, choice C was often selected; for **Question 9**, choice B was often selected.

### *Section 2*

#### **Exercise 1 Questions 11–15**

This exercise tested the candidates' comprehension of a short introduction given by a hotel receptionist about the facilities in the hotel. While many candidates did well here, it also proved to be challenging for a good number of other candidates. In this exercise, for each question the whole variety of choices was selected by candidates as a response. Amongst all of them, the common mistakes were choosing B, C or G for **Question 11**, C or D for **Question 12**, E or G for **Question 13**, C for **Question 14**, and G for **Question 15**.

#### **Exercise 2 Questions 16**

Candidates heard a conversation between Xiao Wen and her friend. Xiao Wen was visiting Beijing, and her friend was helping her to plan some activities. Candidates generally performed very well on this exercise and many achieved 4 or 5 marks.

With this exercise, candidates are reminded not to tick more than 5 boxes. They are also advised to make all 5 choices to their best understanding.

Candidates from most Centres had been well prepared for the examination and were usually well aware of the requirements. It is worth noting that when responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, if a candidate makes 2 choices whether in pencil or ink, the mark cannot be awarded. Answers which candidates do not wish the Examiner to consider must be clearly crossed out, including any written in brackets. Candidates should also be warned that they must tick the number of boxes stated in the rubric, such as in **Question 16**. Candidates are reminded to read rubrics carefully and follow the instructions. The format of the paper and the question rubrics remain fairly constant from year to year. When preparing their candidates, Centres should ensure that candidates clearly understand the rubrics, as such familiarity can only aid and reassure them in the examination.

### Section 3

#### Exercise 1 Questions 17–21

This exercise featured five friends talking about the things they enjoyed doing at Christmas. On the whole, candidates did very well with these questions. In this exercise, candidates performed better with **Question 17** and **Question 21**. More mistakes were made with the other three questions. Many candidates incorrectly chose D or F as the answer for **Question 18**, E as the answer for **Question 19**, and A as the answer for **Question 20**.

#### Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Zhang Hai, a Chinese tourist in Europe. As intended, this final exercise, targeted to test the top-level IGCSE skills, elicited the widest range of performance. There were some very accessible questions, affording even the weakest candidates the opportunity to score one or two marks, but there were also questions to challenge the most able candidates.

**Question 22** required candidates to state Zhang Hai's occupation.

Most candidates answered the question perfectly well or gave answers that were acceptable. There were also responses to this question that were incorrect, among which were '工程', '工师' and the pinyin equivalents of those.

**Question 23** asked candidates to state whom Zhang Hai travelled to Europe with.

Again most candidates answered this question perfectly well or gave answers that were acceptable. There were some minor inaccuracies in character writing and pinyin spelling. The most common mistake made when responding to this question was answering '同学' instead of '同事'.

**Question 24** asked the candidates to list the two things that Zhang Hai enjoyed doing the most while visiting Europe.

This is a challenging question. Many candidates did really well producing excellent answers as well as responses that might have some minor inaccuracies in character writing or pinyin spelling but adequately demonstrated sufficient understanding of this section of the interview required by the mark scheme.

Besides the responses that were completely wrong or unintelligible, two most common mistakes made were: 1) only answering '参观' or 'can guan' but not saying '参观' what; 2) instead of saying '坐船' or 'zuo chuan', some candidates said '划船' or 'hua chuan'.

**Question 25** asked candidates to give the reason why Zhang Hai said that she would definitely visit Europe again in the future.



This proved to be a challenging question. A large variety of responses were seen here. A good number of the responses to this question, written in pinyin that were unintelligible, showed a lack of understanding. There were also many responses that were short and straight to the point or were longer and more explanatory, both of which well demonstrated that the candidates understood what was said in this final part of the interview.

For **Exercise 2** in **Section 3**, Examiners do not expect complete sentences in response to these questions. Candidates are allowed to write their answers in either Chinese characters or pinyin. A response written in Chinese characters or pinyin that have minor inaccuracies can be accepted, provided that the response's meaning remains clearly correct according to the recorded text. Marks will not be awarded when candidates' intentions are not clear for whatever reason. For example, there were many cases this year where there were so many mistakes with the pinyin spelling that it was unclear what the candidates' intentions were. When preparing their candidates, it would be beneficial that Centres help their candidates improve in this area.

# MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Paper 0547/21

Reading

## Key messages

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

- Study the Minimum Core Vocabulary list carefully, and be familiar with the format and rubrics of the papers from previous years.
- Attempt every question in the paper, even the ones that they feel less confident of. Specifically, candidates should not omit any questions in **Section 1** as they are multiple-choice questions.
- Be familiar with all the key question words and answer the short-answer questions accordingly.
- Double check written answers to ensure character writing is correct and that the lifted section has demonstrated genuine understanding of the passage.

## General comments

On the whole, the standard of performance demonstrated by candidates across the paper was very good. Candidates appeared well prepared for the examination and demonstrated a high level of competency.

Most candidates answered the paper with confidence. In particular, **Question 17s – Question 26** were handled very well. Although, and regrettably, a small number of candidates chose not to attempt certain questions, such as the last Exercise. Centres may wish to advise that instead of missing these tasks entirely, making an attempt is highly recommended.

Further improvements are possible if careless mistakes are avoided by the candidates when writing Chinese characters; for example:

- Missing half of a character;
- Alternatively, writing characters with the same sound but with different meanings.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section 1**

#### **Exercise 1, Questions 1–5**

Candidates demonstrated confidence in this exercise as the questions are generally well tackled, especially **Question 2** and **Question 5**, which were very well answered with only a handful of candidates answering incorrectly.

**Question 3** and **Question 4** generated some wrong answers, with which even some strong candidates making errors. This is probably because the words for ruler “尺子” and toothache “牙疼” are less common. Therefore, candidates would benefit from being familiar with all the words and phrases in the Minimum Core Vocabulary list.

#### **Exercise 2, Question 6–9**

For this set of questions, candidates were required to match the key vocabulary with the related pictures.

From the answers, it is obvious that the topic of hobbies had been well studied as the vast majority of candidates excelled in **Question 6** and **Question 9**. However, a number of candidates made an incorrect attempt in **Question 8**, as it required them to understand “laboratory 实验室” a word that appears less frequently among other School facility vocabulary.

Further, a number of candidates did not attempt certain questions such as **Question 7** and **Question 8**.

### **Exercise 3, Question 10–12**

In general, responses by candidates across all ability ranges were of a good standard for these questions. **Question 12** proved to be one of the most challenging, as some candidates did not recognise the word “dress 连衣裙” in the text, especially it was after an adjective “new 新”.

## **Section 2**

### **Exercise 1, Questions 13–16**

In this exercise, candidates were requested to read a short passage in Chinese and choose the correct phrases from the given table to complete sentences. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. There were more potential answers given in the table than correct answers, hence candidates needed to show their genuine understanding of the passage to be able to distinguish the correct answer from the distractors.

The responses were exceptionally good, such as **Question 13**, **Question 14** and **Question 16**. Almost all the candidates provided the correct answer for **Question 13**.

**Question 15** appeared to be challenging mainly due to the negate word “没”. Candidates who made a wrong attempt obviously did not spot the negate word, hence the wrong answer “Tofu 豆腐” was provided instead of the correct answer “meat 肉”.

The quality of written Chinese was considered only for the purposes of communication. The vast majority of candidates produced clear writing that could be easily recognised in this exercise.

### **Exercise 2, Question 17 – 24**

In this comprehension section, candidates were asked to read a passage in Chinese and to answer a series of questions. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage.

The passage took the form of a letter from Da Wei to his friend Xiao Wang about his experience of studying in Si Hai University. A brief and accurate answer was encouraged and only required. However, provided that the correct answer was present, reasonable additional harmless material copied from the text was tolerated, unless it was contradictory or made the lifted answer incomprehensible.

Most candidates have demonstrated the ability to extract relevant specific information from the passage, although the last two questions showed a slight increase in excessive lifting. The quality of written Chinese is considered only for the purposes of communication except when it can cause confusion in understanding.

A number of candidates who did not attempt the questions, however, it is pleasing to see that among the candidates who did answer the questions, the majority of them responded to the questions very well, especially **Questions 22** and **Question 23**.

**Question 21** proved problematic for a number of candidates. It was asking for “what conference has been held in Si Hai University during the summer”. Most incorrect answers were because candidates either did not provide the full name of the conference or copied down a phrase that was incomprehensible.

In order to handle this section well, candidates need to be familiar with all the key questions words in order to provide answers accordingly. Further, special attention needs to be paid when writing down the key concept. This is because by missing certain parts of a Chinese character, the Chinese word can mean something completely different. For instance, “教学” vs “教写”.

### Section 3

#### Exercise 1, Question 25–28

Section 3 is the most challenging part of this paper. There was an improvement in the performance in **Exercise 1** this year. All candidates managed to attempt the questions and handled them fairly well.

In this Exercise, candidates were set the task of reading an extended passage in Chinese and answering the multiple choice. This passage featured Li Li's experience of celebrating Mother's Day. Responses for **Question 25** and **Question 26** were of a high standard, with the majority of candidates achieved full marks.

Some candidates stumbled on **Question 28**. This was probably due to the distractors being present in the passage as well. **Question 27** was frequently answered incorrectly, as many candidates did not understand the phrase “以为” in the passage and chose option A “家里没人”. Therefore, careful reading and accurate locating of answers is needed for such exercises.

#### Exercise 2, Question 29–34

In this final exercise, candidates were asked to read an extended passage in Chinese and demonstrate their understanding by answering short-answer questions referring to it, also in Chinese. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. Performance in the questions varied as candidates had mixed levels of success in them.

This being said, it is encouraging to see more and more candidates attempting these questions, even though there were still several questions, which were been left blank.

The content of the passage was referring to the trend that more and more foreigners are coming to work in China, the reasons behind it and their thoughts.

For several of the questions, the main reason candidates did not score points was because there was extensive lifting, which included both the wrong answer as well as the correct answer. It put the Examiner in the position to choose the correct answer from the wrong answer which cannot be accepted. For instance, **Question 30**, which was asking “other than working for other people, what job can foreigners do in China” and the correct answer is “being their own boss 自己当老板”, whereas many candidates copied down too much information which included “working for banks, Schools, companies etc.  
他们在各种各样的地方工作, 比如银行、学校、公司”.

Another common mistake was that the questions were not answered fully. **Question 31** proved to be the hardest in this exercise. It was asking “why Peter can work in Europe easily?” The correct answer is because “his grandparents have a big company in Europe and they have already invited him to work there 他的爷爷奶奶在欧洲有很大的公司, 已经让他去那里工作”. However, many candidates only provided half of the answer, therefore no point was awarded.

Both **Question 33** and **Question 34** are split answer questions. Candidates are required to study the passage thoroughly to understand what was needed exactly. **Question 33** “why does Peter still want to work in Shanghai?” The correct answer should clearly list two positive points about Shanghai. However, many candidates did not pick up the conjunction word “although 虽然” and answered the negative points about Shanghai instead.

**Question 34**, “What did Peter's parents allow him to do in China?” The correct answers were (i) work in China for a short time period “短期在中国工作”; (ii) get a girlfriend in China “在中国找女朋友”. However, as the passage also mentioned what Peter's parents suggested him not to do in China, such as “living in China for a long term 在中国长期居住”; and “living in China after getting married 结婚后最好住在欧洲”, saw a significant amount of candidates copying down the wrong information for this question.

To sum up, the best responses showed a genuine understanding of the passage, addressed the specific question asked, and considered all aspects of the question in a relevant way.

# MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Paper 0547/22

Reading

## Key messages

In order to be prepared for this paper, candidates should focus on:

- Studying the 'Minimum Core Vocabulary List', as well as the rest of the 'Defined Content' for this syllabus.
- Attempting every question in the paper, even those they are less confident in answering.
- Supplying brief answers for 'short-answer' questions. In these cases, full sentences are not required.
- Double checking written answers to ensure character writing is correct and that the lifted section has demonstrated genuine understanding of the passage.

## General comments

This year, the overall performance demonstrated by the candidates across the different centres was very promising. It showed that both the centres and the candidates are familiar with the syllabus, exam requirements and that exam preparations were thorough.

In particular, candidates tackled **Question 6 - Question 15** better than previous years. The majority of candidates demonstrated an improvement in performance in Exercise 2 of Section 2. However, a small number of candidates chose not to attempt the last Exercise. Candidates should be encouraged to make every effort, even if they are less certain in answering all exam questions. Moreover, attempted responses have to be relevant to the questions, extensive lifting from the passage does not result in any awarded mark.

Further improvements are possible if careless mistakes are avoided by the candidates when writing Chinese characters, for example, missing half of a character, or writing characters with the same sound but with different meanings.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section 1**

#### **Exercise 1, Questions 1–5**

The questions in this Exercise were generally well tackled, especially **Question 3**, which was answered consistently well, with almost no candidates making any mistakes. **Question 2** was very well answered except for a handful of candidates incorrectly choosing answer B.

**Question 1** and **Question 5** saw a number of candidates answering the questions incorrectly. Even stronger candidates tended to make incorrect attempts. This is probably because candidates are not familiar with the words for biscuit “饼干” and cup “杯子”. Interestingly a number of candidates coincidentally chose the balloon for **Question 5**.

### Exercise 2, Question 6–9

The candidates were required to match key vocabulary with related pictures. Due to each question providing two clues for the correct answer, the majority of candidates excelled in these questions. For example, even with the relatively uncommon phrase towel “毛巾” for **Question 7**, was usually known.

### Exercise 3, Question 10–12

Candidate responses across all ability ranges were of a good standard. **Question 10** proved to be one of the most challenging, as some candidates failed to recognise the phrase “working in the office 在办公室上班” in the text and assumed usually mother would not work over weekends by applying common sense.

### Section 2

#### Exercise 1, Questions 13–16

This exercise required the candidates to read a short passage in Chinese and choose the correct phrases in order to complete sentences.

The questions asked were in the same order as the information in the passage. There were more potential answers given in the table than correct answers, thus requiring candidates to show an understanding of the passage in order to identify the correct answer from the distractors.

Candidate responses were of a very good standard, particularly for **Question 13- Question 15**, albeit occasionally some candidate put down more than one phrase from the given table for a question.

**Question 16** generated more incorrect answers due to candidates not understanding the fixed pattern “和...一样” means “像” and answered “爸爸” instead. Candidates would benefit from knowing more common used synonyms in the future.

The quality of written Chinese was only considered for the purposes of communication. If a candidate answered “手笔” instead of “毛笔” for **Question 14**, and “卖” instead of “买” for **Question 15**, no mark was awarded.

#### Exercise 2, Question 17 – 24

In this comprehension, candidates were required to read a passage in Chinese and to answer subsequent questions. The questions asked were in the same order as the information presented in the passage.

The passage was a letter from Xiao Gang to his friend Xiao Wang about his plan after graduation. Brief and accurate answers were required and encouraged. However, provided that the answer was reasonable, additional harmless materials copied from the text was acceptable, unless it was contradictory or made the answer incomprehensible.

Most candidates identified the key concepts, although the last two Questions (**Questions 23** and **Question 24**) evinced a slight increase in excessive lifting. The quality of written Chinese was only considered for the purposes of communication.

It is pleasing to see candidates attempting almost all questions, however, **Question 24** was not attempted by some candidates.

Overall, the majority of candidates responded to the questions in this Exercise very well, especially **Questions 17** through to **Question 21**. The best-answered question was **Question 20**; hardly any mistake was made. Thus demonstrating that candidates had prepared themselves well with the key question words how long “多久”.

**Question 24** is asking for the specific type of bun with “which type 哪种” as the key question word. Some candidates copied down the entire paragraph, whereas others wrote the key concept wrong by being confused with **Question 23**.

In order to handle this section well, candidates need to be familiar with all the key question words in order to provide the answers accordingly. Further, special attention needs to be paid when writing down the key

concept, because by missing certain parts of a Chinese character, the Chinese word can mean something completely different. For instance, instead of the correct answer of “fresh prawn bun 鲜虾小笼包” for **Question 23**, a number of candidates wrote “fish bun 鱼肉小笼包” or “worm bun 虫肉小笼包”. For **Question 21**, a subset of candidates wrote “四季女春” instead of “四季如春”. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that candidates ‘double-check’ their answers to avoid unnecessary mistakes.

### Section 3

#### Exercise 1, Question 25–28

Section 3 is the most challenging part of this paper. There was an improvement in the performance this year and candidates attempted all questions and handled them fairly well.

In Exercise 1, candidates were tasked with reading an extended passage in Chinese and to answer multiple-choice questions. This passage featured Lan Lan’s experience of celebrating Chinese New Year – the Spring Festival. Responses for **Question 27** and **Question 28** were of a high standard, with many candidates achieving full marks.

A number of candidates encountered difficulty with **Question 26**. Due to candidates assuming that the question was asking ‘what was the actual activity’. Hence, option B “想画国画” was chosen instead of the correct answer A “演出好看”.

**Question 25** gave rise to the highest number of mistakes, a number of candidates incorrectly selected option B “饺子”. This maybe because candidates are familiar with the Chinese word dumpling “饺子”. Furthermore, candidates did not pay enough attention to the adjective “特别” in the question, and “普通” in the passage. Careful reading and accurate locating answer is needed for such exercises.

#### Exercise 2, Question 29–34

In this final exercise, candidates were asked to read an extended passage in Chinese and demonstrate their understanding by answering a number of short-answer questions, which were also in Chinese. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. A thorough understanding of the passage and questions is required, as along with a diligent approach when tackling the questions. The candidates’ performance in answering these questions varied. Generally speaking, candidates answered **Question 32** and part of **Question 33** with ease.

**Question 29** could have been answered better. However, a number of candidates did not read the question “What activity did Bai Hua do” properly. Consequently, they answered “what activities were available in the summer camp” and provided the wrong answer “水上运动或爬山”.

**Question 30** requires two answers. This proved to be challenging for the majority of candidates. Some candidates are not familiar with dual answer questions and the observed tendency of these candidates was to delegate one response over two answer lines, which can only be awarded one mark. Other candidates did not provide a full answer of the reason why Bai Hua has a sense of achievement, and only provided a partial answer, such as: “being very nervous 非常紧张”. Whereas the correct answer should have been: “although being very nervous, he still completed the task independently 非常紧张, 但他独立完成了”. However, it is pleasing to note that a number of the stronger candidates were able to use their own words to provide accurate answers. For instance, “he tried water sports even though he was scared of them initially 他挑战了自己很怕的水上运动”.

**Question 31** was confusing for a number of candidates as they did not understand who the pronoun “he 他” was referring to in the passage. The question asked how did Bai Hua learnt the culture of other countries, whereas some candidates simply lifted the last part of the sentence in the passage and repeated the question itself by answering: “I have learnt many interesting culture 我觉得我学到了很多有趣的文化”.

**Question 33** is again a dual answer question. Generally, candidates who delivered satisfactory answers. Notwithstanding, this exercise was not attempted by many candidates. It is assumed the reason was due to the difficulty of the passage, and candidates having insufficient time during the examination. Therefore, performance could be improved through more emphasis on time management. Candidates who attempted the question wrong, clearly did not understand the word “what have been changed 什么变化” in the question, and ergo provided the wrong answer, “he did not make any good friends 我没有交到好朋友”. Further,

candidates need to be reminded that a full phrase is required for answering such questions. For example, (learnt) to be cooperative “和别人合作”, not only “别人合作”.

**Question 34** also posed problems for many candidates, who simply copied the last sentence of the passage “今年暑假比以前只在家里玩电脑有意义多了” instead of showing their understanding. The question was asking ‘what did Bai Hua do in the previous summer holidays?’, it was not asking for a comparison of Bai Hua’s previous summer holiday compared to this year’s summer holiday. Therefore, a simple answer of “only playing on the computer at home 只在家里玩电脑” was sufficient to answer the question correctly.



# MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Paper 0547/23

Reading

## Key messages

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

- Study the Minimum Core Vocabulary list carefully, and be familiar with the format and rubrics of the papers from previous years.
- Attempt every question in the paper, even the ones that they feel less confident of. Specifically, candidates should not omit any questions in **Section 1** as they are multiple-choice questions.
- Be familiar with all the key question words and answer the short-answer questions accordingly.
- Double check written answers to ensure character writing is correct and that the lifted section has demonstrated genuine understanding of the passage.

## General comments

On the whole, the standard of performance demonstrated by candidates across the paper was very good. Candidates appeared well prepared for the examination and demonstrated a high level of competency.

Most candidates answered the paper with confidence. In particular, **Question 17s – Question 26** were handled very well. Although, and regretfully, a small number of candidates chose not to attempt certain questions, such as the last Exercise. Centres may wish to advise that instead of missing these tasks entirely, making an attempt is highly recommended.

Further improvements are possible if careless mistakes are avoided by the candidates when writing Chinese characters; for example:

- Missing half of a character;
- Alternatively, writing characters with the same sound but with different meanings.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section 1**

#### **Exercise 1, Questions 1–5**

Candidates demonstrated confidence in this exercise as the questions are generally well tackled, especially **Question 2** and **Question 5**, which were very well answered with only a handful of candidates answering incorrectly.

**Question 3** and **Question 4** generated some wrong answers, with which even some strong candidates making errors. This is probably because the words for ruler “尺子” and toothache “牙疼” are less common. Therefore, candidates would benefit from being familiar with all the words and phrases in the Minimum Core Vocabulary list.

#### **Exercise 2, Question 6–9**

For this set of questions, candidates were required to match the key vocabulary with the related pictures.

From the answers, it is obvious that the topic of hobbies had been well studied as the vast majority of candidates excelled in **Question 6** and **Question 9**. However, a number of candidates made an incorrect attempt in **Question 8**, as it required them to understand “laboratory 实验室” a word that appears less frequently among other School facility vocabulary.

Further, a number of candidates did not attempt certain questions such as **Question 7** and **Question 8**.

### **Exercise 3, Question 10–12**

In general, responses by candidates across all ability ranges were of a good standard for these questions. **Question 12** proved to be one of the most challenging, as some candidates did not recognise the word “dress 连衣裙” in the text, especially it was after an adjective “new 新”.

## **Section 2**

### **Exercise 1, Questions 13–16**

In this exercise, candidates were requested to read a short passage in Chinese and choose the correct phrases from the given table to complete sentences. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. There were more potential answers given in the table than correct answers, hence candidates needed to show their genuine understanding of the passage to be able to distinguish the correct answer from the distractors.

The responses were exceptionally good, such as **Question 13**, **Question 14** and **Question 16**. Almost all the candidates provided the correct answer for **Question 13**.

**Question 15** appeared to be challenging mainly due to the negate word “没”. Candidates who made a wrong attempt obviously did not spot the negate word, hence the wrong answer “Tofu 豆腐” was provided instead of the correct answer “meat 肉”.

The quality of written Chinese was considered only for the purposes of communication. The vast majority of candidates produced clear writing that could be easily recognised in this exercise.

### **Exercise 2, Question 17 – 24**

In this comprehension section, candidates were asked to read a passage in Chinese and to answer a series of questions. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage.

The passage took the form of a letter from Da Wei to his friend Xiao Wang about his experience of studying in Si Hai University. A brief and accurate answer was encouraged and only required. However, provided that the correct answer was present, reasonable additional harmless material copied from the text was tolerated, unless it was contradictory or made the lifted answer incomprehensible.

Most candidates have demonstrated the ability to extract relevant specific information from the passage, although the last two questions showed a slight increase in excessive lifting. The quality of written Chinese is considered only for the purposes of communication except when it can cause confusion in understanding.

A number of candidates who did not attempt the questions, however, it is pleasing to see that among the candidates who did answer the questions, the majority of them responded to the questions very well, especially **Questions 22** and **Question 23**.

**Question 21** proved problematic for a number of candidates. It was asking for “what conference has been held in Si Hai University during the summer”. Most incorrect answers were because candidates either did not provide the full name of the conference or copied down a phrase that was incomprehensible.

In order to handle this section well, candidates need to be familiar with all the key questions words in order to provide answers accordingly. Further, special attention needs to be paid when writing down the key concept. This is because by missing certain parts of a Chinese character, the Chinese word can mean something completely different. For instance, “教学” vs “教写”.

### Section 3

#### Exercise 1, Question 25–28

Section 3 is the most challenging part of this paper. There was an improvement in the performance in **Exercise 1** this year. All candidates managed to attempt the questions and handled them fairly well.

In this Exercise, candidates were set the task of reading an extended passage in Chinese and answering the multiple choice. This passage featured Li Li's experience of celebrating Mother's Day. Responses for **Question 25** and **Question 26** were of a high standard, with the majority of candidates achieved full marks.

Some candidates stumbled on **Question 28**. This was probably due to the distractors being present in the passage as well. **Question 27** was frequently answered incorrectly, as many candidates did not understand the phrase “以为” in the passage and chose option A “家里没人”. Therefore, careful reading and accurate locating of answers is needed for such exercises.

#### Exercise 2, Question 29–34

In this final exercise, candidates were asked to read an extended passage in Chinese and demonstrate their understanding by answering short-answer questions referring to it, also in Chinese. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. Performance in the questions varied as candidates had mixed levels of success in them.

This being said, it is encouraging to see more and more candidates attempting these questions, even though there were still several questions, which were been left blank.

The content of the passage was referring to the trend that more and more foreigners are coming to work in China, the reasons behind it and their thoughts.

For several of the questions, the main reason candidates did not score points was because there was extensive lifting, which included both the wrong answer as well as the correct answer. It put the Examiner in the position to choose the correct answer from the wrong answer which cannot be accepted. For instance, **Question 30**, which was asking “other than working for other people, what job can foreigners do in China” and the correct answer is “being their own boss 自己当老板”, whereas many candidates copied down too much information which included “working for banks, Schools, companies etc.  
他们在各种各样的地方工作, 比如银行、学校、公司”.

Another common mistake was that the questions were not answered fully. **Question 31** proved to be the hardest in this exercise. It was asking “why Peter can work in Europe easily?” The correct answer is because “his grandparents have a big company in Europe and they have already invited him to work there 他的爷爷奶奶在欧洲有很大的公司, 已经让他去那里工作”. However, many candidates only provided half of the answer, therefore no point was awarded.

Both **Question 33** and **Question 34** are split answer questions. Candidates are required to study the passage thoroughly to understand what was needed exactly. **Question 33** “why does Peter still want to work in Shanghai?” The correct answer should clearly list two positive points about Shanghai. However, many candidates did not pick up the conjunction word “although 虽然” and answered the negative points about Shanghai instead.

**Question 34**, “What did Peter's parents allow him to do in China?” The correct answers were (i) work in China for a short time period “短期在中国工作”; (ii) get a girlfriend in China “在中国找女朋友”. However, as the passage also mentioned what Peter's parents suggested him not to do in China, such as “living in China for a long term 在中国长期居住”; and “living in China after getting married 结婚后最好住在欧洲”, saw a significant amount of candidates copying down the wrong information for this question.

To sum up, the best responses showed a genuine understanding of the passage, addressed the specific question asked, and considered all aspects of the question in a relevant way.

# FOREIGN LANGUAGE MANDARIN CHINESE

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Paper 0547/03  
Speaking

## Key messages

- To score high marks, candidates need to show consistent ability to use a variety of structures and precise vocabulary both in the Presentation and in the Conversation sections.
- In the two Conversation sections, the Examiner must ask questions which allow the candidate to show that s/he can describe events or express ideas using both past and future time-frames. [See *Teachers' Notes* pages 9, 10 and 15 and also Appendix A of this document.]
- Discussion in the General Conversation should be appropriate to the individual candidate's ability: the same questions should not be asked of all the candidates.
- At least two topics need to be covered in the General Conversation and should not overlap with the content of the Topic Presentation.
- Examiners must not suggest possible answers or give clues to candidates.
- The Speaking test should be conducted entirely in Mandarin Chinese. There should be no use of English in the test. Only Chinese should be used in the transitions between sections of the test. Cantonese and other varieties of Chinese should not be used in the test.
- Centres wishing to use more than one Examiner were not always aware of the correct procedure for internal moderation. Centres wishing to use more than one Examiner must seek permission from Cambridge before the Speaking Test period starts. Permission must be sought for each new examination session. It cannot be carried over from one session to the next.
- Please note that a Chinese-language version of the Teachers' Notes may be found on the Teacher Support section of the CIE website (<https://teachers.cie.org.uk>).

## General comments

Most Centres administered and carried out the tests very well. In order to give candidates the best possible chance, Examiners should ensure they have read the *Teachers' Notes* booklet carefully so that both the tests and the relevant administration are carried out correctly.

Centres wishing to use more than one Examiner need to read the relevant guidelines and follow the procedure carefully (see more information under the heading Internal Moderation below).

Previous Moderator's Reports for the Centre should also be consulted.

In order to allow the moderation process to operate effectively, it is important that CDs arrive undamaged; they must therefore be well packaged, ideally in a plastic case within a padded envelope.

- The full requirements of the test are clearly laid out in the *Teachers' Notes* booklet and all Centres are strongly advised to read through a past paper well in advance of the test, so they have plenty of time to clarify any uncertainties. A Chinese-language version of these requirements also exists and is available on the Teacher Support section of the CIE website: <https://teachers.cie.org.uk>.

- **Clerical checks**

In most Centres, the addition and transfer of marks was accurate. In some Centres, however, a number of errors were found, sometimes with large discrepancies between the recorded totals and the actual totals. It is essential that the addition of marks on the Working Mark Sheet as well as the transcription of the total marks onto the MS1 mark sheet/computer is checked to ensure candidates receive the correct marks. It is advisable for more than one person in the Centre to check these numbers.

- **Cover sheet for moderation sample**

Most Centres remembered to submit the Coversheet for Moderation Sample, duly completed, along with their other materials for external moderation. Completion of this form allows Centres to check that their moderation sample is correct before they dispatch it to Cambridge, and the completed form must be submitted with the sample.

- **Sample size**

Many Centres managed to select a good recorded sample which covered evenly the full spread of performance in the Centre. Please ensure that the sample marks are spread evenly, not grouped as “good”, “middling” and “poor”: for example, they might be 99, 87, 76, 67, 53 but not 99, 98, 76, 75, 53, 51.

It is helpful to the Moderator if asterisks (\*) are put on the Working Mark Sheet to indicate the candidates who have been included in the sample, particularly in Centres with many candidates

Centres using more than one Examiner should include samples from each Examiner in an appropriate proportion.

- **Recording quality and presentation of the sample**

Please do not save recordings onto a USB memory stick. They should be saved onto a CD. Please do not put sticky labels on the CD as these can easily become detached and make the CD unplayable.

Speaking tests should be conducted in a quiet place, away from any noise causing disruption. In a small number of cases, candidates and/or the Examiner were not always clearly heard. If an external microphone has been used for recording, please make sure that it is nearer to the candidate than to the Examiner. The recording should be checked at intervals by the Examiner to ensure that it is clear and there are no extraneous noises. In some Centres the CD received by the Moderator was almost inaudible, making moderation difficult.

The CD should not be stopped during the recording. The candidates should be introduced by name and candidate number by the Examiner, not by the candidates themselves.

The tracks on CDs should be labelled using the convention specified in the *Teachers' Notes*: Centre number\_candidate number\_examination number\_component number, e.g. PQ123\_0001\_0547\_03. Labelling them as “Track 1”, “Track 2” etc. is not helpful when finding individual candidates. A card stating which candidates appear on each CD must be enclosed, *not glued or stapled*, with each CD.

- **Internal moderation in Centres**

In most cases, Centres which had been given permission to use more than one Examiner had adopted a thoroughly professional approach to internal moderation and had carefully documented their procedures for achieving consistency. It was clear that in many Centres great efforts had been made to cross-check the standard applied by different Examiners and to ensure that marks awarded followed a single rank order before they were submitted to Cambridge.

In a small number of cases Centres had provided insufficient evidence of the internal moderation procedures followed, merely writing different marks next to the original marks on the Working Mark Sheet. Some justification of why the adjustment was made must be included in the documentation.

Centres with large numbers of candidates may use more than one Examiner for the tests, but this must be agreed by Cambridge in advance. Permission must be sought for *each examination* series – it cannot be carried over from the previous examination series.

Details of the Centre's Internal Moderation procedures must also be sent to CIE, as specified on the 'Cover sheet for moderation sample'. *Guidelines for the Internal Standardisation/Moderation of Cambridge IGCSE Foreign Language Speaking Tests* are available from CIE. The form on page 9 of the *Guidelines* indicates the evidence that should be provided.

The coordinating Examiner is responsible for checking that the mark scheme has been applied consistently by all of the Examiners in the Centre. If a particular Examiner's marking is judged by his/her colleagues to be out of line with the other marking at the Centre, all the marks for candidates examined by that Examiner must be checked and adjusted accordingly before paperwork is submitted to CIE.

- **Transitions between sections of the test**

There is no need for any use of English during the tests: each new section can be introduced in Chinese, for instance by using sentences such as 现在进行情景对话A / 现在进入第二部分。 / 现在进行自由对话吧。 and so on.

- **Working Mark Sheets**

This year some incomplete Working Mark Sheets were submitted. These should be filled in with candidates' full names, the numbers of their Role Play cards, and signed and dated by the Examiner.

It is helpful to the Moderator if asterisks (\*) are put against the names of the candidates who are included in the recorded sample, particularly in Centres with many candidates.

- **Despatch of the sample**

Please ensure that the CDs are well packaged. CDs are particularly vulnerable to damage in transit, and need to be carefully packed in strong containers, ideally in a plastic case inside a padded envelope. A few Centres sent their CDs in flimsy plastic or paper pockets. Avoid using staples to attach the Centre label to the soft plastic cover of the CD, as it can damage the surface of the CD and hence the recording.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### ***Role plays***

Examiners are reminded of the need for careful preparation. Centres are reminded that the Examiner must not create extra tasks, nor must s/he omit tasks. If the stipulated tasks are changed or omitted and/or extra tasks are added this will confuse candidates and it changes the nature of the examination. Marks can only be awarded for completing the tasks as presented on the Role Play cards. Centres are reminded that on some tasks a short response may be sufficient to attract a mark of three.

Each candidate should be handed a single Role Play card and should complete both the Role Plays on that card. Candidates should be given the Role-play cards in random order, not 1, 2, 3, 4 or 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2... Please record the number of the card given to each candidate in the space provided on the Working Mark Sheet.

The situations at the head of the Role-plays should be read aloud in Chinese by the Examiner before commencing the test. This is reassuring for the candidate, and establishes that he/she is playing a role, not merely answering for him- or herself. The introduction should NOT be read in English.

Candidates should avoid answers in the Role-plays which are formulaic or neutral, such as 对了 'yes' or 不知道 'I don't know', as they give no indication that the candidate has understood the question.

## A Role Plays

The A Role plays were found to be of equal difficulty, and very similar in difficulty to those in 2015. All the terms used in these Role plays are in the Minimum Core Vocabulary.

- *You are at an airport talking to an airport official.*

The first question asked them to state the city they were going to, but some candidates gave a country rather than a city, so were awarded 0 marks.

Weaker candidates did not know the term 呆 (to stay) or 多久 (how long?)

The last question asked how they would go from the airport to the hotel or their friend's house. Weaker candidates did not know 怎么 (how?)

- *You are in a school library borrowing a book. You are talking to the librarian.*

Most candidates handled this Role Play well.

- *You are at a birthday party in a restaurant. You are talking to a waiter.*

Most candidates handled this Role Play well. The term 喝 [to drink] caused difficulty for some candidates.

## B Role plays

- *You are discussing the internet with a friend.*

Most candidates tackled the last question about what to do if they could not go online very well.

- *You are talking to a Chinese customs official.*

Weaker candidates were not familiar with the terms 次 [time], 名胜古迹 [historic sites] or 纪念品 [souvenirs].

- *You are talking to a Chinese friend about festivals.*

Weaker candidates did not know the term 地方 [place]

## Topic Presentation and Topic Conversation

The standard of work in this section covered the full range of performance.

### Introduction to the Topic Presentation

This must be introduced by the Examiner in Chinese, not English, for example by saying 现在进入第二部分。 The candidate should begin by stating clearly what his/he topic is, for example '我的题目是...' as sometimes it is not all obvious what topic is being presented. This statement will also help candidates focus on their topic.

### Topics chosen

Many candidates chose 'My family', 'My hobby', 'Sport', 'School life' 'My future', 'My friend', 'My holiday in....', 'My pets', or a comparison between life in two different countries. A few candidates appeared not to have prepared a topic at all. More unusual topics included: 'Dreams', 'An embarrassing incident', 'When I moved to Shanghai', 'A Maths competition I took part in', 'My Mum's birthday', 'Education', 'Use of water', 'Distance learning', 'My balcony', 'My neighbourhood' and 'My on-line business'.

Candidates who chose 'Myself' as their topic were disadvantaged in the General Conversation.

## Timing

Please note that the Topic Presentation and Topic Conversation should last in total about five minutes. In some Centres much less time than this was allowed, and their candidates were thereby disadvantaged. In a few cases the Examiner did not ask any questions after the candidate had finished the presentation. In such cases no marks can be awarded, as the mark scheme specifically rewards responses to questions.

## Topic Conversation

The Examiner should again introduce this section in Chinese, for example by saying 我现在问你几个问题。 In some Centres it was evident that the opening sections of the Topic Presentation had been memorised: this type of rote learning misses the point of the Speaking Test, and will not allow candidates to show the full range of their ability in Chinese. Candidates should be encouraged to speak spontaneously, and not to memorise speeches.

The Examiner should listen carefully to the candidates' presentations, and then lead them skilfully through the Topic Conversation by asking appropriate questions, allowing them both to develop their topic and to demonstrate their language skills. In some cases the Examiner ignored what the candidate had just said and asked a prepared question even though the answer to his/her question had just been given! This is very confusing for the candidate.

Centres are reminded that no English should be used during the Speaking Test, and that candidates should not be corrected during the tests.

Most Centres handle the transition from the Topic Conversation to the General Conversation well, but some Centres are still not making clear the ending of the Topic Conversation and the start of the General Conversation. This can be done by saying 现在进入第三部分。

## Time-frames

The Examiner MUST include questions BOTH about the past (e.g. 'When did you begin to...?') AND about the future (e.g. 'When do you plan to....?'). See Appendix A.

Candidates who do not produce BOTH past AND future time-frames cannot be awarded more than 6 marks out of 15 for Language Scale(b). See pages 9, 10 and 15 of the *Teachers' Notes*.

In answer to a question such as 'How long [a time] did you do [an action]?' using a length of time such as '三年' is not by itself sufficient to show that a candidate can convey a past time-frame meaning. In such a case, a verb is also required, for example '我学了三年。'

Examiners should ask more questions, until candidates have showed they can convey meaning using both past and future time-frames successfully.

## General Conversation

### Timing

Please note that the General Conversation should last about five minutes: in some Centres much less time than this was allowed, and their candidates were therefore disadvantaged. In most cases, however, it was carried out well.

### Questions asked

In a few Centres identical questions were asked of all the candidates. This is not in the spirit of the examination and makes the whole exercise artificial and lacking in spontaneity. Each candidate should be asked different questions at an appropriately challenging level, according to their ability. The examiner should judge the appropriate level of question for the individual candidate. A weak candidate might be asked "What sports do you like?", but a more able candidate might be asked "Why do you think exercise is important?"



The General Conversation should be based on the individual candidates' responses and so should not be over-rehearsed or prepared beforehand. Please note that two or three of the Defined Content topics should be covered during the General Conversation.

It is better to ask questions in depth on a few topics rather than a number of unrelated questions.

### 'Presentations' in the General Conversation

There is no 'Presentation' in the General Conversation. The General Conversation simply involves the examiner asking the candidates a series of questions on two or three topics. Some Centres seem to have required candidates to carry out a second presentation.

### Time-frames

The examiner MUST include questions BOTH about the past ('When did you begin...?') AND about the future ('When do you plan to...?'). If this is not done the candidates will be seriously disadvantaged. Candidates who do not produce BOTH past AND future time-frames cannot be awarded more than 6 marks out of 15 for Language Scale(b). See pages 9, 10 and 15 of the *Teachers' Notes Booklet*.

### Time Frames v.6

*In Chinese there is no inflection of verbs to indicate tenses: therefore a time reference or context for the action of the verb may sometimes be provided when referring to past, present or future events.*

### Past actions

- (a) **Time phrases** such as 昨天, 去年, 上个月, etc. indicate actions in the past;...的时候 can be used to indicate both past and future time frames e.g. 我……岁的时候, or 小时候 (past). 那(个)时候 can also be used for past time frames.
- (b) **Aspect particles** can also be accepted for actions with different time references, e.g. verb + 过 or verb + 了.
- (c) Use of (有 + verb) is not accepted as a past time-frame

For example we do NOT accept 有去 to mean "went", as in 我有去日本。(x)

### FUTURE ACTIONS

- (a) **Time phrases** such as 六十岁的时候, etc ; 明天, 明年, 下个月 and 那(个)时候 can also be used for future time frames.
- (b) **Modal verbs** such as 想, 会, 打算, 计划, 希望 or 要 + verb, etc. can indicate the future.
- (c) The structure 快(要)了 indicates a future time-frame, for example 他快要来了。

### OTHER PHRASES

Phrases such as 以前, 从前, 以后 can also indicate time frames.

### Note on conditional sentences

Structures using 如果…会 (or equivalent terms such as 要是, 假如) can also indicate a future time-frame, as in these examples of what WILL or MIGHT happen:

如果遇到任何问题, 老师都会尽量帮助我们。

如果你迷路了, 他们也会帮你指路。

Note on the use of *hui* 会

- 1 我会去中国上大学。In this case 会 clearly indicates a future time-frame.
- 2 我每天都会踢足球。Here 会 simply indicates an habitual, repeated action, and is **NOT** counted as indicating a future time-frame.

There are also a number of other ways of expressing past and future time frames in Chinese: the above notes simply indicate some possible ways of doing this.

# MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Paper 0547/41

Writing

## General comments

This was the second year of the new syllabus for the writing paper. Most candidates understood the question type well and produced enough detail and additional information for **Question 2**. Very few candidates failed to answer all of the questions or answer questions in Pinyin. Some candidates used more complex structures and more difficult characters which reflected their linguistic ability. It was pleasing to see that the topics were accessible to the majority of candidates and there were a number of excellent performances from Centres especially for pets and summer work topics. It was evident that many Centres had referred to the last year's Examiner Report and had prepared their candidates very well.

The majority of the candidates performed very well, and there were many excellent essays which were in the top band. There were a number of candidates who provided a detailed and expanded essay with plenty of extra information. Some candidates made mistakes in the grammar or vocabulary used; however, they were able to tell interesting stories and justify their opinions through the characters they chose. Candidates are reminded that their answers have answer the questions, and all the bullet points need to be addressed with as much relevant information as possible. Since this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible, and both English and pinyin should be avoided. There was quite a lot of Pinyin used in this paper.

In terms of length of responses, whilst there was no need for candidates to count the number of characters written (after they have achieved the minimum required characters), it should be remembered that a composition requires a certain amount of words to address all the bullet points in the question, and variety in vocabulary and sentence structures is rewarded. Therefore, a long, but less varied essay will not be awarded as many marks as a shorter one with greater variety and interest. Candidates should, however, be reminded that if they write significantly fewer than 150 characters they will not produce enough evidence of their ability to gain access to the highest marks.

Candidates did not need to copy out the questions, particularly for **Question 3**. Writing sentences that directly targeted the bullet points and expanded appropriately without the pre-setting information would have been a much more efficient way to gain higher marks. Again, letter format is not essential to score a communication mark. The addressee and ending greeting are not included in the word count. Writing more information to the bullet points is likely to score more marks than writing general opening and ending formalities.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

The task was to write about five places near your home and most candidates attempted this question well. The most popular words were about School, friend's house, restaurant etc. Other popular words were tube station, supermarket etc. People and things e.g. 人, 花, 水, 车, 树 etc. were not accepted since it was not the same question style as last year and candidates should be reminded to read the task carefully which was written in English and Chinese.

Candidates need to read the instructions both in Chinese and English carefully. If there is any doubt in the Chinese instructions, read the English ones as a confirmation and the example to avoid confusion. Copying the example or answering the questions in pinyin or English was not awarded marks.

Simple characters were encouraged in **Question 1**, e.g. 车站, 市场, 书店 if they felt less confident about writing complicated ones e.g. 超级市场. Candidates should be advised not to repeat words with the same ending character in case the character they wrote was wrong e.g. 饭官, 图书官, 体育官

If there were missing radicals or wrong radicals which created a new character with a different meaning, the mark could not be awarded. Candidates could improve on their accuracy of certain characters with correct radicals or correct suffix, e.g. 方(房)子, 猫家, 学交(校), 字(学)校, 本甬官/体育信(体育馆), 内(肉)店 etc. They should not use characters with similar pronunciation, 电影员(园, 场)公圆(工园) etc.

No measure words or verbs were needed. And verbs such as 游泳, 海边度假 were not awarded a mark.

## Question 2

This question requires candidates to write about their weekends based on five questions. The overall performance in this question was good since the candidates were familiar with the topic and the questions. With guided questions, weaker candidates could also produce some simple answers.

Candidates must answer all the questions and provide details to score the top communication marks, e.g. “下个周末我会去运动场跟我的朋友打篮球, 因为我喜欢打篮球, 而且打得很好” would score more communication marks than “下个周末我会去运动场”. Sometimes, full marks could not be awarded for communication even though the sentence structures were perfect because the content included was insufficient in what was otherwise a very good answer. Candidates should not worry about the word count if the minimum word limit has been reached. It is a shame to see some candidates crossed out correct sentences which contained more information due to the worry of exceeding the word limit.

Candidates should be aware that most of **Question 2** tasks are set in present tense apart from one task. When candidates wrote the answer, they should have been more alert with tenses and looked at the tense markers e.g. “会” or “了”. Some able candidates wrote what they did last weekend and why for the whole essay, therefore, communication marks could not be awarded.

Candidates should be reminded that a simple list would not score more than three marks and if there is more than one list in the answer, only one list will be awarded. If one of the tasks was missing, the maximum communication mark was 9, no matter how many extra marks were gained from other bullet points. If two of the tasks were missing, the maximum communication mark was 8 and so on.

Candidates should be aware this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible and both English and pinyin should be avoided, especially for the key words. Pinyin and English words would not count towards the communication mark.

Many candidates managed very well for bullet points (a) and (b) though some of the characters for the hobbies are not easy to write. Bullet point (d) was well justified and many candidates extended their answers for bullet point (e) 我坐公共汽车去因为很便宜, 也很方便 as pieces of extra information which maximised the chance to gain full communication marks.

Some candidates who just showed a couple of different sentence structures were not likely to score a full mark for Language. Candidates are encouraged to use a variety of simple sentence structures in this question, not just a few types of sentence structures. But on the other hand, complicated structures were not essential to score the highest language marks in this question.

Accuracy of Language was generally good, and simple and straight to the point answers were largely seen. Candidates should, however, be reminded to use varied sentence structures and avoid anglicised structures. There were some common grammatical errors appearing in responses and candidates could improve their performance by placing emphasis on the following:

- 是 has proved to be overused once again this year when it was not needed, e.g. 我的网球是很好
- Common errors for simple characters: “口禾” for “和”
- Use of “和” to link 2 sentences: 我周末喜欢看电影跟弟弟一起和打网球在学校。

- Travel by car: 坐开车去公园.

### Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. With five guided bullet points in **Question 3 (a) and (b)**, candidates could opt for the one they felt more confident about. **Question 3 (a) and (b)** were equally popular for paper 41 and 60 per cent of candidates chose **Question 3 (b)** in paper 43. **Question 3c** was rarely chosen. Summer job and pets seemed to be well trained topics. Letter format was not as essential as it was in previous years to score communication and language marks, therefore, writing more information regarding to the bullet points is likely to score more marks than writing general opening and ending formalities e.g. “好久没有收到你的信了。你身体好吗? 最近忙吗?” “我也想知道你的宠物。快给我写信好吗? 祝你身体健康, 万事如意!”

There were many great essays showing language skill and abilities of creative writing. Candidates who opted for **Question 3 (a)** were very strong in language skills and used many describing words to describe their pets and justified the reason of why they chose the pet.

A handful of candidates who were very strong chose **Question 3 (c)** and wrote interesting stories with interesting plot and their justification of their feelings and actions in detail.

Most candidates covered all the bullet points since they had no problem understanding them apart from the third bullet point in 3 **(b)** which required the candidates to express how would they like to spend the money they earned in the summer job. Some candidates, however, attempted to answer the task with how much they had earned, therefore, the communication mark could not be awarded.

- (a) For 3(a), the task was to describe pets. The majority of candidates covered all the bullet points very well and there were 2 bullet points which required candidates to give opinions which candidates managed to answer very well with different reasons and justifications. Some real life experiences helped candidates write more vivid accounts expressing their personal feelings towards their pets.

Candidates were well taught to use adjectives to express appearance or “what benefit you would have” even with simple characters or structures. Communication marks were easily gained.

A few candidates did not understand 宠物 and wrote about hobbies instead. All the words and rubrics in paper 4 are from the defined content, Centres should advise their candidates to revise it thoroughly to maximise the opportunity to understand the questions which will enable them to produce some answers.

Centres should encourage candidates to write something for **Question 3** rather than leave it completely blank. A few candidates tried really hard to answer the questions, but it was not successful due to limited language skills. By tactfully using the sentence structures from the questions and replacing the questions words with simple answers, communication marks could still be awarded if it makes sense.

### Characters and Grammar

The essays of many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters including 卷卷的长毛, 胖胖的身体, 温柔, 体贴 etc. There were a number of homophone or near homophone errors and characters with similar shape or wrong radicals, such as

拘 (狗), 今夫 (今天), 上牛 (午)

Candidates showed a good knowledge of Chinese grammar. The most frequent problems were:

1. Over use of 是 when it was not needed e.g. 它是很可爱, 它是很小, 很白。
2. Mis-used 岁, e.g. 我从三时候开始有这个宠物。
3. Some Anglicisation occurred, e.g. 我在公园跑步跟它一起。我和花花一起看电视在家作天。
4. Use of 和 to link sentences which was a common mistake every year, e.g. 我喜欢猫和我要买猫。

- (b) In 3(b), the task was to write an article about a holiday job. The evidence showed the candidates who opted to do this question were very familiar with this topic area. Apart from the third bullet point which was omitted by many candidates, the other four bullet points were easy to follow and guided

the candidates to provide their opinion fully. Instead of expressing how they would like to spend the money they earned in the summer job, some candidates recognised , so they mistakenly answered with how much they have earned in the essay.

Centres should remind candidates to read the questions carefully first then produce the essay and check again when they finish. Evidence showed some able candidates did not read questions carefully and missed “how long did you work every day”. Instead of it, they mentioned again “I worked for two weeks in summer holiday” from the rubrics.

### Characters and Grammar

Candidates showed a good knowledge of easy characters and basic grammar structures. The most frequent problems were:

1. Confused 三小时 with 三时间
  2. No measure word for hours
  3. Over use of 是 when it was not needed e.g. 他们是很高兴，他们很好人。
  4. Some Anglicisation occurred, e.g. 暑假工作帮我上大学 Which should be 暑假工作对我上大学有帮助.
- (c) In 3(c), the task was to write about a story of what happened after an ambulance came to a seaside holiday resort where you and your family were. Only a handful of candidates chose this task which required a good range of vocabulary and imagination. It was very pleasing to see that candidates who chose this task wrote some very impressive essays. One story was about several young people did not listen to the coast guard’s advice and sneaked into the sea only to be bitten by a shark. The other one was about a little girl who was attacked by a jellyfish.

# MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Paper 0547/42

Writing

## General comments

This was the second year of the new syllabus for the writing paper. Compared to the previous year, the overall standard of responses seemed to be higher this year. Most candidates produced enough detail and additional information for **Question 2** and **Question 3**. Few candidates failed to answer all of the questions or answer questions in Pinyin. There were a great number of candidates showing their higher proficiency in Mandarin Chinese. Some candidates used more complex structures and more difficult characters which reflected their linguistic ability. It was pleasing to see that it was accessible to the majority of candidates and there were a number of excellent performances from Centres all over the world.

It was pleasing to see that, in general, the topics and themes of the exercises were well within the knowledge and life experiences of candidates from around the world and the majority of Centres referred to last year's Examiner Report and prepared their candidates very well.

Most of the candidates did very well, and there were many excellent essays which were awarded full marks. There were a number of candidates who provided a detailed and expanded essay with plenty of extra information. Many of them also used Chinese idioms and complex sentence structures. Some candidates made mistakes in the grammar or vocabulary used; however, it was very impressive that they attempted to tell interesting and complicated stories with most characters written correctly.

Centres should be aware answers have to be relevant to the questions, and all the bullet points need to be addressed with as much relevant information as possible. Candidates should read the scenario and questions carefully, especially the tenses and key words. Since this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible and both English and pinyin should be avoided.

Candidates were not penalised for writing too much. Whilst there was no need for candidates to count the number of characters written (after they have achieved the minimum required characters), it should be remembered that a composition requires a certain amount of words to address all the bullet points in the question, and variety in vocabulary and sentence structures is rewarded. Therefore, a long, but less varied essay will not be awarded as many marks as a shorter one with greater variety and interest. Candidates should, however, be reminded that if they write significantly fewer than 150 characters they will not produce enough evidence of their ability to gain access to the highest marks.

Some candidates' presentation was not very tidy which made the marking difficult, such as half crossed out characters or messily inserted words. Some candidates crossed out correct sentences and forgot to write it again when they produced the final draft, therefore, some marks will be lost.

Candidates did not need to copy out the questions, particularly for **Question 3**. Writing sentences that directly targeted the bullet points and expanded appropriately without the pre-setting information would have been a much more efficient way to gain higher marks. Again, letter format was not essential to score a communication mark. The addressee and ending greetings were not included in the word count. Writing more information on the bullet points is likely to score more marks than writing general opening and ending formalities.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

The task was to provide five things they might see at the seaside and most candidates attempted this question well. Most candidates wrote about items from different categories, like 英国人 狗 and 海洋. This showed that candidate have been taught well on topics and exam techniques. People were accepted but only 2 marks for words in one category were awarded. Candidates should be advised not to list more than 2 words about family members, or 'people' with the same character in the category, e.g. 中国人, 英国人, etc.

Most candidates wrote quite similar answers with common words like 沙子, 海水, 泳衣, 毛巾. Simple characters were encouraged in **Question 1**, e.g. 人, 火, 水, 包, 车, 云, 鸟, 山, 天. Some candidates, however, took the challenge and attempted more creative ideas, such as 水母, 螃蟹, 橄榄树, 垃圾桶 and 沙堡.

Candidates are advised to use simple alternative characters rather than sticking with hard words or writing wrong homophone characters. If candidates were not very confident about producing more complicated words which maybe mis-formed, they are encouraged to stick with the basic ones they know well.

If there were missing radicals or wrong radicals which created a new character with a different meaning, the mark could not be awarded. Candidates could improve on their accuracy of certain characters with correct radicals, e.g. 刻子 (孩子) 右头 (石头), 入 (人) etc. and not use the characters with similar pronunciation, 马头 (码头), 求 (球), 渔 (鱼), 鱼夫 (渔夫), 风争 (筝), 风针 (筝), 海摊 (滩), 早 (草), 每 (海), 太日 (阳), 犬 (太) 阳, 沙准 (滩), 永 (水), 海样 (洋), 沙莫 (漠), 笔 (毛) 巾, 海欧 (鸥), 风影 (景), 参 (餐) 馆, 方馆 (饭馆), 玩抄 (沙) etc.

A small number of candidates wrote characters which mainly function as radicals and can not be used on its own as an independent word, such as 木、贝、日、森, marks could not be awarded.

No measure words or verbs were needed. Candidates should be reminded that this question did not require sentences e.g. 我看见人吃食物 etc. If a verb-object construction word appears, a complete object (noun) should be in place e.g. 游泳、跑步. The answers like 跑、游 could not be awarded a mark.

Candidates need to read the instructions both in Chinese and English carefully. If there is any doubt in the Chinese instructions, read the English ones and the example as a confirmation to avoid confusion. There were a handful of candidates who did not read the questions carefully and wrote 船, 海边、东西 which appeared in the rubric. Copying the example or characters from the rubric and answering the questions in pinyin or English was not awarded marks.

### Question 2

This question required candidates to write about the jobs of their family members based on five questions. The overall performance in this question was very good. The majority of candidates were able to respond to the bullet points succinctly and accurately, displayed basic skills to manipulate the language and complete the task to a good standard. With guided questions, weaker candidates could also produce some simple answers especially for bullet point **(a)** due to listing of family members followed by **(b)** "who in your family goes to work" and **(d)** "what job would you like to do in the future". Some candidates displayed considerable skills with descriptive words like '心地善良的妈妈, 勤劳的爸爸'. This was very impressive indeed!

It was frustrating to see perfectly able candidates with top language scores not be awarded full communication scores for this question by not having written a sufficient amount of points. Candidates should answer all the questions and provide details to score the full communication marks, e.g. "我爸爸和妈妈都上班。我爸爸是老师, 在我的中学工作。" would score more communication marks than "我爸爸和妈妈都上班". Sometimes, full marks could not be awarded for communication though the sentence structures were perfect because the content included was insufficient in what was otherwise a very good answer. Candidates should not worry about the word count if the minimum word limit has been reached. It is shame to see some candidates crossed out correct sentences which contained more information due to the worry of exceeding the words limit.

Candidates should be reminded that a list would not score more than three marks and if there is more than one list in the answer, only one list will be awarded. If one of the tasks was missing, the maximum



communication mark was 9, no matter how many extra marks were gained from other bullet points. If two of the tasks are missing, the maximum communication mark was 8 and so on.

Candidates should be aware this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible and both English and pinyin should be avoided, especially for the key words. Pinyin and English words would not count towards the communication mark.

Some candidates who just showed a couple of different sentence structures were not likely to score a full mark for Language. Candidates are encouraged to use a variety of simple sentence structures in this question, not just a few types of sentence structures. But on the other hand, complicated structures are not essential to score the highest language marks in this question.

A handful of candidates did not understand 上班 so they wrote about how they did in the School. There were some candidates who failed to respond to task 3 “does he/she like his/her job” and wrote about “what their hobbies are” or “the parents like each other’s job”, “I like their jobs” instead, e.g. 我的爱好是..., 我爸爸喜欢...我很喜欢妈妈的工作/妈妈喜欢爸爸的工作, 因为.... There were also a significant number of candidates who did not mention task 4 “why they like their job”. Therefore, candidates should be reminded to read the questions carefully to avoid either misunderstanding or unnecessary omissions.

Accuracy of language was generally good; simple and straight to the point answers were largely seen. Candidates should, however, be reminded to use varied sentence structures and avoid anglicised structures. There were some common grammatical errors appearing in responses and candidates could improve their performance by placing emphasis on the following:

1) The use of language is not accurate.

- The most common mistakes were using ‘和’and ‘是’ wrongly.
  - a. ‘和’ is wrongly used to link sentences, e.g. 我爸爸是医生和他每天很早上班.
  - b. ‘是’: 我是十五岁, 妹妹是十三岁;我爸爸是老师和他是很聪明.
- 我将来要变成商人。
- 我的家人有三口人。
- 我觉得他们不喜欢他们的工作, 因为他们不要是老师。我的爸爸要是医生, 我的妈妈要是画画。我将来想是老师在我爷爷的学校。
- 我爷爷的学校很小, 但是很高兴。
- 我的爸爸早上去上班。
- 我有四得家人。
- 我和哥哥姐姐一起了一个学校。
- 我们家虽不多人, 但是我们都依常开心地过日子。

2 Sentence structure is not accurate with misplaced expressions for time and place.

1. 我爸爸工作每天。
2. 我想做医生一样爸爸。
3. 爷爷的学校不大比我的学校。
4. 他有喜欢打篮球。
5. 爸爸常常说他的工作和我们。
6. 我妈妈的工作是老师在我的学校。

Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. The types of questions were similar to the previous ones in the past years so the candidates were not unfamiliar with it and opted for the one they felt more confident about. **Question 3 (a)** “sports day” seemed the most popular choice. Letter format was not as essential as it was in previous years to score a communication mark, therefore, extra expanded and detailed information for the bullet points are required to score the full communication marks. The addressee and ending greeting are not included in the word count. Writing more information to the bullet points is likely to score more marks than writing general opening and ending formalities e.g.

“好久没有收到你的信了。你身体好吗？最近忙吗？”；“我也想知道你们学校的运动会。快给我写信好吗？祝你身体健康，万事如意！”

While over 70 per cent of candidates chose **Question 3 (a)**, nearly 20 per cent of candidates who opted for **Question 3 (c)** wrote really interesting and complicated stories, and also described their feelings and actions in detail. There were many excellent essays showing great language skill and great abilities of creative writing. One example was about hearing a song that she wrote years ago for an old friend. When the friend returned home for the first time in many years, he played the song over the School's radio station so that she would know he had come back.

Many candidates tried to use difficult words and Chinese idiomatic phrases and chengyu like 津津有味、各种各样、赞不绝口、人山人海、色彩鲜艳、人不可貌相，海水不可斗量 etc. although there were some common characters mistakes in a few essays such as 作（昨）天，一（以）后，以（已）经，高心（兴），高行（兴），可一（以），草（操）场。

Candidates who scored highest tended to have a range of sentence patterns, such as 虽然。。。但是，不但。。。而且，先。。。然后，都，又。。。又。

**(a)** For **3(a)**, the task was to write about a School sports day. Candidates generally managed to produce some content relevant to the task chosen, while the strong ones conducted coherent writing with a variety of sentence structures and vocabulary and very interesting and exciting details included in the response. A common answer included a reason for why they think sports day is important and their opinions about the sports day were well justified and explained.

Many candidates, however, misunderstood the question “when was your School's sports day held” by giving an answer to say “when it will be taking place”, caused by lacking the knowledge of the “是...的” sentence pattern. This resulted in losing marks for both **Question 1 and 2**, e. g. 我们学校的运动会会在下个星期举行，我会参加跑步比赛。Some candidates copied out the sentence structure from the rubrics, 运动会是下个星期四开的 but it clearly meant future tense in the whole essay, and therefore communication marks could not be awarded.

For the question “运动会什么时候举行的”，some candidates tended to use past tense time phrases, such as “上个星期/上个月”，they confused the characters “上” and “下” and wrote “下个星期/下个月”；although the rest of the answer was in the past tense, they lost some marks for this question.

A considerable proportion of candidates misunderstood the task and resulted in writing irrelevantly to the task. For example, some candidates wrote what sports they normally do at School and the importance of doing sports instead of the questions being asked – what events did you take part in on the sports day and the importance of having a sports day. Therefore, it's essential that candidates read carefully and understand the topic and task before planning and starting their writing.

The above mistake also might be caused by only knowing the meaning of “运动” but not “运动会”，some candidates also interpreted “会” as club which reflected in the answers like “我们学校有篮球会、乒乓球会，我参加了打篮球会...；我参加了唱歌比赛；开篮球会不重要”。

A very small amount of candidates attempted **3 (a)** without understanding what “运动会” is and went on to talk about hobbies, or a random competitions they attended, for example, 汉语比赛

Majority of the candidates were able to answer bullet point 4 “你觉得开运动会重要吗，为什么” quite well. A small amount of candidates expressed that sports day was not important; studying is more important. Some of them did not like to miss out lessons on sports day or did not like to have more catch-up homework after the sports day, which were absolutely fine and scored communication marks.

### Characters and Grammar

The essays of many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters. There were a number of homophone or near homophone errors and character with similar shape, such as 作（昨）天，昨（去）年，一（以）后，以（已）经，高心（兴），高行（兴），可一（以），蓝（篮）球，母（每）天，该（孩）子，草（操）场，觉的（得）。

Candidates showed a good knowledge of Chinese grammar. The most frequent problems were:

1. Some Anglicisation occurred, e.g. 运动会开始七点早上到五点下午在我的学校. The sentence pattern was frequently written wrongly when a time phrase and place word was involved.
  2. The use of ‘了’. For the question “what events did you participate in”, many candidates responded to it without applying the particle ‘了’. However, ‘了’ was wrongly used for the question ‘你觉得运动会怎么样’, e.g. 我觉得了/想了这次运动会很好.
  3. Same as **Question 2**, the excessive use of ‘和’ between sentences, e.g. 我经常去图书馆和我去运动场打网球.
  4. Overuse of 是 when it was not needed e.g. 运动会是很好, 他是很快. .
  5. Mixed past tense with future tense markers in the same sentence, e.g. 上个周末我和爸爸要去公园跑步.
  6. Lack of variety in the sentence patterns or vocabulary, e.g. 运动会很好, 很有意思 for opinion.
  7. Translating “making friends” as 做朋友 instead of 交朋友.
  8. Use of 得 with verbs. Mistakes such as 打网球打的很好, 打网球打地很好 or 我不太好打篮球.
  9. Common mistake in syntax: some candidates wrote 我参加篮球比赛跟朋友, 我打篮球星期五.
  10. Mistake of using “都”, for example, 都学生喜欢运动会 or 我参加了都篮球和足球比赛. A few candidates used “都” correctly in terms of grammar, but wrote it as “者”.
  11. Some candidates could not tell how to use 会 and 可以 in the right context.
  12. A few candidates wrote 六星期 whilst they actually wanted to say 星期六.
  13. Wrong verb, e.g. 运动会帮你不太胖.
  14. Confuse 太 with 最, e.g. 我觉得这是我太喜欢的一次运动会.
- (b) The task was to talk about an exchange School in Africa. This was not a popular topic this year although candidates should be familiar with a topic about School and very few candidates chose this question to answer. Maybe it was caused by candidates not knowing the meaning of “交流活动” and instead they responded to the questions by talking about the extra-curricular activities their School offered every day. All the words and rubrics in paper 4 are from the defined content, Centres should advise their candidates to revise it thoroughly to maximise the opportunity to understand the questions which will enable them to produce some answers.

Candidates seemed unfamiliar with time expressions so they could not write the answer for “when they had the exchange”. The same situation happened in bullet point 4, the candidates did not understand the question “你想去那个学校吗, 为什么”. Instead of talking about the exchange School in Africa, they talked about Schools in random places, such as China or the US, therefore, lost communication marks.

Same as 3(a), candidates should read bullet points more carefully especially for the tenses and write the essay in past tense frame for the bullet points 1+ 2.

### Characters and Grammar

The range of characters seemed limited. Candidates could expand the range of vocabulary and sentence patterns on different activities or opinions.

- (c) Apart from 3 (a), 3(c) was the second most popular task which candidates attempted. The task was to write about a story of what was happening after hearing music playing while reading in the library. Most strong candidates choose this task due to the familiarity of the setting and their ability. Most of the candidates managed to elaborate the story with interesting plots and many interesting creative essays in this section were seen with a complete storyline. Romantic stories were interesting examples. Some candidates explained how they found where the music was from and realised that it was someone they like playing music instruments/dancing/singing. They then became boyfriends and girlfriends!

One candidate wrote about hearing a song that she wrote years ago for an old friend. When the friend returned home for the first time in many years, he played the song over the School’s radio station so that she would know he had come back.

Most candidates were able to explain where the music was from, although some weaker candidates did not manage to explain/describe why there was music. A few candidates, however,

misunderstood “音乐声” as music or sound, therefore, instead of talking about the sound of music; they wrote about the original country of the music, e.g. 音乐是从美国来的 rather than 音乐声是从哪里来的 which required an answer to: “the music coming from a place”. Some candidates wrote someone was screaming/talking or about some mice making sounds which greatly affected their communication marks.

Candidates scoring highly were those who wrote a good story using a wide variety of vocabulary and sentence structures. Candidates should be advised not to copy out the whole question before starting their story, nor write too much for the pre-setting of the story. If the storyline was too short and there was no elaboration of the bullet points, it would be hard to demonstrate candidates' language ability.

A few candidates who chose 3 (c) were too ambitious and were trying to tell a complicated story but ended up using Pinyin, quite often for keywords, or simply just made up a similar character with similar pronunciation since the vocabulary required to answer the question was less common in general. Also, whilst they were trying to tell a complicated story, the sentence patterns and syntax were incorrect, which made it hard to communicate the idea.

### Characters and Grammar

Many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters. Other common character errors were:

1. Some Anglicisms occurring, e.g. “我看书在图书馆”, “我喜欢看书, 书是很好”, “我买书在我的学校”.
2. Confusing “认” with “让”, e.g. 妈妈认 (让) 我们回家看书.

# MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

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Paper 0547/43

Writing

## General comments

This was the second year of the new syllabus for the writing paper. Most candidates understood the question type well and produced enough detail and additional information for **Question 2**. Very few candidates failed to answer all of the questions or answer questions in Pinyin. Some candidates used more complex structures and more difficult characters which reflected their linguistic ability. It was pleasing to see that the topics were accessible to the majority of candidates and there were a number of excellent performances from Centres especially for pets and summer work topics. It was evident that many Centres had referred to the last year's Examiner Report and had prepared their candidates very well.

The majority of the candidates performed very well, and there were many excellent essays which were in the top band. There were a number of candidates who provided a detailed and expanded essay with plenty of extra information. Some candidates made mistakes in the grammar or vocabulary used; however, they were able to tell interesting stories and justify their opinions through the characters they chose. Candidates are reminded that their answers have answer the questions, and all the bullet points need to be addressed with as much relevant information as possible. Since this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible, and both English and pinyin should be avoided. There was quite a lot of Pinyin used in this paper.

In terms of length of responses, whilst there was no need for candidates to count the number of characters written (after they have achieved the minimum required characters), it should be remembered that a composition requires a certain amount of words to address all the bullet points in the question, and variety in vocabulary and sentence structures is rewarded. Therefore, a long, but less varied essay will not be awarded as many marks as a shorter one with greater variety and interest. Candidates should, however, be reminded that if they write significantly fewer than 150 characters they will not produce enough evidence of their ability to gain access to the highest marks.

Candidates did not need to copy out the questions, particularly for **Question 3**. Writing sentences that directly targeted the bullet points and expanded appropriately without the pre-setting information would have been a much more efficient way to gain higher marks. Again, letter format is not essential to score a communication mark. The addressee and ending greeting are not included in the word count. Writing more information to the bullet points is likely to score more marks than writing general opening and ending formalities.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

The task was to write about five places near your home and most candidates attempted this question well. The most popular words were about School, friend's house, restaurant etc. Other popular words were tube station, supermarket etc. People and things e.g. 人, 花, 水, 车, 树 etc. were not accepted since it was not the same question style as last year and candidates should be reminded to read the task carefully which was written in English and Chinese.

Candidates need to read the instructions both in Chinese and English carefully. If there is any doubt in the Chinese instructions, read the English ones as a confirmation and the example to avoid confusion. Copying the example or answering the questions in pinyin or English was not awarded marks.

Simple characters were encouraged in **Question 1**, e.g. 车站, 市场, 书店 if they felt less confident about writing complicated ones e.g. 超级市场. Candidates should be advised not to repeat words with the same ending character in case the character they wrote was wrong e.g. 饭官, 图书官, 体育官

If there were missing radicals or wrong radicals which created a new character with a different meaning, the mark could not be awarded. Candidates could improve on their accuracy of certain characters with correct radicals or correct suffix, e.g. 方(房)子, 猫家, 学交(校), 字(学)校, 本甬官/体育信(体育馆), 内(肉)店 etc. They should not use characters with similar pronunciation, 电影员(园, 场)公圆(工园) etc.

No measure words or verbs were needed. And verbs such as 游泳, 海边度假 were not awarded a mark.

## Question 2

This question requires candidates to write about their weekends based on five questions. The overall performance in this question was good since the candidates were familiar with the topic and the questions. With guided questions, weaker candidates could also produce some simple answers.

Candidates must answer all the questions and provide details to score the top communication marks, e.g. “下个周末我会去运动场跟我的朋友打篮球, 因为我喜欢打篮球, 而且打得很好” would score more communication marks than “下个周末我会去运动场”. Sometimes, full marks could not be awarded for communication even though the sentence structures were perfect because the content included was insufficient in what was otherwise a very good answer. Candidates should not worry about the word count if the minimum word limit has been reached. It is a shame to see some candidates crossed out correct sentences which contained more information due to the worry of exceeding the word limit.

Candidates should be aware that most of **Question 2** tasks are set in present tense apart from one task. When candidates wrote the answer, they should have been more alert with tenses and looked at the tense markers e.g. “会” or “了”. Some able candidates wrote what they did last weekend and why for the whole essay, therefore, communication marks could not be awarded.

Candidates should be reminded that a simple list would not score more than three marks and if there is more than one list in the answer, only one list will be awarded. If one of the tasks was missing, the maximum communication mark was 9, no matter how many extra marks were gained from other bullet points. If two of the tasks were missing, the maximum communication mark was 8 and so on.

Candidates should be aware this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible and both English and pinyin should be avoided, especially for the key words. Pinyin and English words would not count towards the communication mark.

Many candidates managed very well for bullet points (a) and (b) though some of the characters for the hobbies are not easy to write. Bullet point (d) was well justified and many candidates extended their answers for bullet point (e) 我坐公共汽车去因为很便宜, 也很方便 as pieces of extra information which maximised the chance to gain full communication marks.

Some candidates who just showed a couple of different sentence structures were not likely to score a full mark for Language. Candidates are encouraged to use a variety of simple sentence structures in this question, not just a few types of sentence structures. But on the other hand, complicated structures were not essential to score the highest language marks in this question.

Accuracy of Language was generally good, and simple and straight to the point answers were largely seen. Candidates should, however, be reminded to use varied sentence structures and avoid anglicised structures. There were some common grammatical errors appearing in responses and candidates could improve their performance by placing emphasis on the following:

- 是 has proved to be overused once again this year when it was not needed, e.g. 我的网球是很好
- Common errors for simple characters: “口禾” for “和”
- Use of “和” to link 2 sentences: 我周末喜欢看电影跟弟弟一起和打网球在学校。

- Travel by car: 坐开车去公园.

### Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. With five guided bullet points in **Question 3 (a) and (b)**, candidates could opt for the one they felt more confident about. **Question 3 (a) and (b)** were equally popular for paper 41 and 60 per cent of candidates chose **Question 3 (b)** in paper 43. **Question 3c** was rarely chosen. Summer job and pets seemed to be well trained topics. Letter format was not as essential as it was in previous years to score communication and language marks, therefore, writing more information regarding to the bullet points is likely to score more marks than writing general opening and ending formalities e.g. “好久没有收到你的信了。你身体好吗? 最近忙吗?” “我也想知道你的宠物。快给我写信好吗? 祝你身体健康, 万事如意!”

There were many great essays showing language skill and abilities of creative writing. Candidates who opted for **Question 3 (a)** were very strong in language skills and used many describing words to describe their pets and justified the reason of why they chose the pet.

A handful of candidates who were very strong chose **Question 3 (c)** and wrote interesting stories with interesting plot and their justification of their feelings and actions in detail.

Most candidates covered all the bullet points since they had no problem understanding them apart from the third bullet point in 3 **(b)** which required the candidates to express how would they like to spend the money they earned in the summer job. Some candidates, however, attempted to answer the task with how much they had earned, therefore, the communication mark could not be awarded.

- (a) For 3(a), the task was to describe pets. The majority of candidates covered all the bullet points very well and there were 2 bullet points which required candidates to give opinions which candidates managed to answer very well with different reasons and justifications. Some real life experiences helped candidates write more vivid accounts expressing their personal feelings towards their pets.

Candidates were well taught to use adjectives to express appearance or “what benefit you would have” even with simple characters or structures. Communication marks were easily gained.

A few candidates did not understand 宠物 and wrote about hobbies instead. All the words and rubrics in paper 4 are from the defined content, Centres should advise their candidates to revise it thoroughly to maximise the opportunity to understand the questions which will enable them to produce some answers.

Centres should encourage candidates to write something for **Question 3** rather than leave it completely blank. A few candidates tried really hard to answer the questions, but it was not successful due to limited language skills. By tactfully using the sentence structures from the questions and replacing the questions words with simple answers, communication marks could still be awarded if it makes sense.

### Characters and Grammar

The essays of many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters including 卷卷的长毛, 胖胖的身体, 温柔, 体贴 etc. There were a number of homophone or near homophone errors and characters with similar shape or wrong radicals, such as

拘(狗), 今夫(今天), 上牛(午)

Candidates showed a good knowledge of Chinese grammar. The most frequent problems were:

1. Over use of 是 when it was not needed e.g. 它是很可爱, 它是很小, 很白。
2. Mis-used 岁, e.g. 我从三时候开始有这个宠物。
3. Some Anglicisation occurred, e.g. 我在公园跑步跟它一起。我和花花一起看电视在家作天。
4. Use of 和 to link sentences which was a common mistake every year, e.g. 我喜欢猫和我去买猫。

- (b) In 3(b), the task was to write an article about a holiday job. The evidence showed the candidates who opted to do this question were very familiar with this topic area. Apart from the third bullet point which was omitted by many candidates, the other four bullet points were easy to follow and guided

the candidates to provide their opinion fully. Instead of expressing how they would like to spend the money they earned in the summer job, some candidates recognised , so they mistakenly answered with how much they have earned in the essay.

Centres should remind candidates to read the questions carefully first then produce the essay and check again when they finish. Evidence showed some able candidates did not read questions carefully and missed “how long did you work every day”. Instead of it, they mentioned again “I worked for two weeks in summer holiday” from the rubrics.

### Characters and Grammar

Candidates showed a good knowledge of easy characters and basic grammar structures. The most frequent problems were:

1. Confused 三小时 with 三时间
  2. No measure word for hours
  3. Over use of 是 when it was not needed e.g. 他们是很高兴，他们很好人。
  4. Some Anglicisation occurred, e.g. 暑假工作帮我上大学 Which should be 暑假工作对我上大学有帮助.
- (c) In 3(c), the task was to write about a story of what happened after an ambulance came to a seaside holiday resort where you and your family were. Only a handful of candidates chose this task which required a good range of vocabulary and imagination. It was very pleasing to see that candidates who chose this task wrote some very impressive essays. One story was about several young people did not listen to the coast guard’s advice and sneaked into the sea only to be bitten by a shark. The other one was about a little girl who was attacked by a jellyfish.