

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/11
Listening

Key messages

The spoken Chinese in the exam 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 and 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. It is also essential that candidates do plenty of listening comprehension practice. To perform well in the last exercise candidates also need to be able to write down short answers in characters or pinyin.

General comments

The number of excellent performances this year 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.

Candidates from most centres had been well prepared for the examination and were usually well aware of the requirements. When preparing their candidates, centres should ensure that candidates clearly understand the rubrics, as such familiarity can only aid and reassure the candidates in the examination and that candidates are encouraged to read questions carefully before considering their answers.

It's worth noting that when responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, if a candidate makes two 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.

Candidates should also be warned that they must tick the number of boxes stated in the rubric. For **Question 16**, it is also advisable that when ticking their choices, candidates put their ticks in the boxes next to the letters rather than the pictures themselves.

For **Questions 11–15** and **Questions 17–21**, candidates were required to write the correct letter in the appropriate box. Candidates are advised to write their chosen letters in the boxes in clear handwriting.

For **Exercise 2** in **Section 3**, complete sentences are not required in response to these questions. Candidates are allowed to write their answers in either Chinese characters or pinyin, whichever enables them to express what they want to say more clearly and correctly. Answers should be clear and straight to the point. This can reduce the risk of adding extra material, which can invalidate an otherwise correct response.

Care should be taken when writing a response in the form of pinyin or characters and then again in the other form. This is because when there are mistakes, a response written in one form can invalidate an otherwise correct response written in the other form. Candidates should also be aware that marks will not be awarded when the characters they write mean something totally different from the required answer.

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. More mistakes were made with **Question 1** and **Question 2**. Among the mistakes made with **Question 3**, **Question 4** and **Question 5**, option **A** was often selected.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

This exercise featured a short conversation about what Wang Shan did the day before. Candidates generally did well on this exercise. Many candidates made mistakes with **Question 10** and selected **A** instead of the correct answer, **B**. Other common mistakes include selecting **C** for **Question 6**, **B** for **Question 7** and **E** or **C** for **Question 8**.

It is worth noting that in **Section 1**, some candidates performed much better in **Exercise 2** than in **Exercise 1**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 11–15

This exercise tested candidates' comprehension of a short recording in which a person talked to her friend about a new park. To do well in this exercise, candidates need to be familiar with expressions of locations and directions. This proved to be challenging for many candidates. In this exercise candidates performed better on **Questions 12** and **14**.

More mistakes were made with **Questions 11**, **13** and **15**. Among the incorrect choices made for these three questions, **E** or **D** was often selected for **Question 11**, **A**, **E** or **D** was often selected for **Question 13** and **E** or **F** was often selected for **Question 15**.

Exercise 2 Question 16

In this exercise candidates heard a conversation between Li Ming and a tour guide. Li Ming had joined a tour group and had just arrived in Europe. Candidates were required to listen to the recorded conversation and work out what Li Ming might do while in Europe.

Candidates generally performed very well on this exercise with most candidates achieving 3 or more marks. The most common mistakes were not selecting **A**, **C** or **H**. Among the incorrect choices, **E** and **G** were selected relatively more often.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 17–21

This exercise featured five friends talking about what they planned to do during their spring holidays. On the whole, candidates did very well with these questions.

The most frequent mistake in this exercise was choosing **G** instead of **E** for **Question 21**. Other mistakes included choosing **E** for **Question 17**, **B**, **C** or **E** for **Question 18**, and **B** for **Question 20**.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

In this exercise candidates heard an interview with Mr Zhang who was visiting an art gallery. There was a wide range of performance on this exercise.

Question 22 asked the candidates why Mr Zhang had free time on a Monday (to visit an art gallery). Many candidates answered the question correctly. However, a range of answers was seen. Much inaccuracy in pinyin spelling was seen here. Some candidates' responses were unintelligible, which may be an indication that those candidates did not understand this section of the interview. Mistakes include 'bu shang dan' and 'bu shang dang'.

Question 23 asked candidates to say when Mr Zhang started to learn Chinese painting. Candidates generally performed well here. There were many responses that were short, clear and straight to the point. A frequently seen mistake here was: 五年一天 and 'wu nian yi tian'.

Question 24 asked the candidates to state the two other things that Mr Zhang did to learn Chinese painting besides practicing it every day. This was a challenging question for many candidates but there were some excellent answers. Some answers were short and straight to the point; some were longer and more explanatory. Again a variety of answers was seen here, with a wide range of pinyin spellings. Many responses showed an adequate understanding of the recording and satisfied the requirements of the mark scheme. There were some responses that were too far away from the correct answer and there were also some unintelligible responses, both of which indicated a lack of understanding of the recorded material.

Question 25 asked candidates to state Mr Zhang's other hobby. In this exercise, this question was the best performed question with most candidates giving correct answers.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/12
Listening

Key messages

The spoken Chinese in the exam 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 and 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. It is also essential that candidates do plenty of listening comprehension practice. To perform well in the last exercise candidates also need to be able to write down short answers in characters or pinyin.

General comments

The number of excellent performances this year 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.

Candidates from most centres had been well prepared for the examination and were usually well aware of the requirements. When preparing their candidates, centres should ensure that candidates clearly understand the rubrics, as such familiarity can only aid and reassure the candidates in the examination and that candidates are encouraged to read questions carefully before considering their answers.

It's worth noting that when responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, if a candidate makes two 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.

Candidates should also be warned that they must tick the number of boxes stated in the rubric. This year a few candidates ticked six boxes instead of the required five for **Question 16** and a few candidates ticked fewer than five. For **Question 16**, it is also advisable that when ticking their choices, candidates put their ticks in the boxes next to the letters rather than the pictures themselves.

For **Questions 11–15** and **Questions 17–21**, candidates were required to write the correct letter in the appropriate box. Candidates are advised to write their chosen letters in the boxes in clear handwriting.

For **Exercise 2** in **Section 3**, complete sentences are not required in response to these questions. Candidates are allowed to write their answers in either Chinese characters or pinyin, whichever enables them to express what they want to say more clearly and correctly. Answers should be clear and straight to the point. This can reduce the risk of adding extra material, which can invalidate an otherwise correct response.

Care should be taken when writing a response in the form of pinyin or characters and then again in the other form. This is because when there are mistakes, a response written in one form can invalidate an otherwise correct response written in the other form. Candidates should also be aware that marks will not be awarded when the characters they write mean something totally different from the required answer.

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. More mistakes were made with **Question 1** compared with the other four questions. Option **C** was often selected for **Question 2**; option **A** was often selected for **Question 3**; option **C** was often selected for **Question 4**; and option **B** or **C** was often selected for **Question 5**.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

This exercise featured a short conversation about what Wang Shan did the day before. Candidates generally did well on this exercise.

More mistakes were made with **Questions 8** and **9**. Some candidates made mistakes with **Questions 6** and **10**. When incorrect choices were selected for **Question 6**, option **C** was often selected; for **Question 10** option **B** was often selected.

It is worth noting that in **Section 1**, some candidates performed much better in **Exercise 2** than in **Exercise 1**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 11–15

This exercise tested candidates' comprehension of a short recording in which a person talked about her family. This proved to be challenging for many candidates. In this exercise candidates performed better on **Questions 11, 13** and **15**.

More mistakes were made on **Questions 12** and **14**. Many candidates chose **A, G** or **E** as the answer for **Question 12** and **F, G** or **D** as the answer for **Question 14**. A number of candidates chose **A** for **Question 12** and **F** for **Question 14**, while the correct choices were the other way round.

Exercise 2 Question 16

Candidates heard a conversation between Li Ming and a friend. Li Ming and her friend were going to visit Wuhan and were talking about what they needed to do to prepare. Candidates generally performed very well on this exercise. The most common mistakes were not selecting **C** or **H**. Among the incorrect choices, **F** and **A** were selected relatively more often.

A few candidates ticked more than five boxes and a few other candidates ticked fewer than five boxes.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 17–21

This exercise featured five friends talking about the things they enjoy doing. On the whole, candidates did well with these questions.

Among the common mistakes, **E** or **A** was chosen for **Question 17**, **C** was chosen for **Question 18**, **C** or **E** was chosen for **Question 19**, **A** or **D** was chosen for **Question 20** and **D** was chosen for **Question 21**.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

In this exercise candidates heard an interview with Zhang Yue who was a middle school student and helped with taking care of elderly people at a care home.

Question 22 required candidates to state who had made the arrangement for Zhang Yue to help out at the care home. Many candidates answered the question very well while many gave answers that were acceptable.

There was a wide range of responses here. 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 these candidates did not understand this section of the interview.

Some responses with misused characters were not accepted as correct answers. For example: 目己, 只己, 自己, 己几 and 自子.

Question 23 asked candidates to state the two things that Zhang Yue would do while helping out at the care home. Candidates generally performed well here. There were many responses that were short, clear and straight to the point. There were also responses with misused characters that were not acceptable as correct answers. For example, for **Question 23(i)**: 哥唱, 唱哥, 喝歌 and 晶歌; for **Question 23(ii)**: 沙步, 山步, 撒步 and 三不.

Question 24 asked the candidates to say what Zhang Yue enjoyed hearing from the elderly people. Many candidates did exceptionally well and produced excellent answers. Some answers were short and straight to the point; some were longer and more explanatory.

Again a variety of answers was seen here, with a wide range of pinyin spellings. Many responses showed an adequate understanding of the recording and satisfied the requirements of the mark scheme.

There were some responses that were too far away from the correct answer and there were some responses that indicated a lack of understanding of the recorded material.

Question 25 asked candidates to state who Zhang Yue would come to visit after graduating from her school. Many candidates showed they understood that Zhang Yue had made a friend at the care home while helping out there and that was the person that Zhang Yue would come back to visit after she graduated.

In this question a great variety of responses was seen, including a variety of pinyin spellings and character usage. Many of those were acceptable, demonstrating that candidates had understood what was said in this final part of the interview. Some of them were short and straight to the point while many others were longer and more explanatory. There was also a variety of responses that were not acceptable as correct answers such as 盆友 and 朋油. A few responses such as 'hao peng you hui lai kan ta' were also rejected because the meaning it can carry is different from the correct answer.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/13
Listening

Key messages

The spoken Chinese in the exam 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 and 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. It is also essential that candidates do plenty of listening comprehension practice. To perform well in the last exercise candidates also need to be able to write down short answers in characters or pinyin.

General comments

The number of excellent performances this year 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.

Candidates from most centres had been well prepared for the examination and were usually well aware of the requirements. When preparing their candidates, centres should ensure that candidates clearly understand the rubrics, as such familiarity can only aid and reassure the candidates in the examination and that candidates are encouraged to read questions carefully before considering their answers.

It's worth noting that when responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, if a candidate makes two 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.

Candidates should also be warned that they must tick the number of boxes stated in the rubric. For **Question 16**, it is also advisable that when ticking their choices, candidates put their ticks in the boxes next to the letters rather than the pictures themselves.

For **Questions 11–15** and **Questions 17–21**, candidates were required to write the correct letter in the appropriate box. Candidates are advised to write their chosen letters in the boxes in clear handwriting.

For **Exercise 2** in **Section 3**, complete sentences are not required in response to these questions. Candidates are allowed to write their answers in either Chinese characters or pinyin, whichever enables them to express what they want to say more clearly and correctly. Answers should be clear and straight to the point. This can reduce the risk of adding extra material, which can invalidate an otherwise correct response.

Care should be taken when writing a response in the form of pinyin or characters and then again in the other form. This is because when there are mistakes, a response written in one form can invalidate an otherwise correct response written in the other form. Candidates should also be aware that marks will not be awarded when the characters they write mean something totally different from the required answer.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

Many candidates performed well on this exercise which tested the comprehension of very short recordings of one or two sentences. More mistakes were made with **Questions 1** and **2** compared with the other three questions. Many candidates chose **C** instead of **B** for both **Questions 1** and **2**. Among the mistakes made with the other three questions, option **C** was often selected for **Question 3**; option **A** was often selected for **Question 4**; and option **A** or **B** was often selected for **Question 5**.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

This exercise featured a short conversation about what Wang Shan did the day before. Candidates generally did well on this exercise. Stronger performance was seen on **Question 8** than on the other four questions.

Some common mistakes included choosing **A** for **Questions 6** and **7**, choosing **A** or **B** instead of **C** for **Question 9**, and choosing **C** for **Question 10**.

It is worth noting that in **Section 1**, some candidates performed much better in **Exercise 2** than in **Exercise 1**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 11–15

This exercise tested the candidates' comprehension of a short recording in which a teacher talked to students about their after-school activities. This proved to be challenging for some candidates. In this exercise candidates performed better on **Question 11** and **Question 14**.

More mistakes were made with **Questions 13** and **15** and many candidates chose **B** or **G** for **Question 13** and **A**, **B** or **C** for **Question 15**. A number of candidates chose **B** or **D** for **Question 12** and **D** or **G** for **Question 14**.

Exercise 2 Question 16

Candidates heard a conversation between Li Ming and his mother. They were moving to another city and Li Ming asked his mother some questions about the move.

Candidates generally performed very well on this exercise. Among the incorrect choices, **A** and **F** were selected relatively more often. A few candidates ticked fewer than five boxes.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 17–21

This exercise featured five friends talking about the things they need to buy in the shops. On the whole, candidates did very well with these questions.

Among the common errors, **C** was chosen for **Question 17**, **D** was chosen for **Question 20**, and **C** was chosen for **Question 21**.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

In this exercise candidates heard an interview with Zhang Yue who was a Chinese employee in a hotel in London.

Question 22 required candidates to state where Zhang Yue was born. Many candidates answered the question well while many gave answers that were acceptable.

A variety of pinyin spellings were seen here. Some inaccurate pinyin spellings were not accepted as correct answers. For example: xi zhuan, shu chun, zi chuan and zu chuan.

Question 23 asked candidates to state the course that Zhang Yue had studied in the UK. There were many responses that were short, clear and straight to the point.

There were some inaccurate pinyin spellings that were not accepted as correct answers such as 'li you' and 'liu you'.

Question 24 asked the candidates about the hotel. Many candidates did very well with this question, while some other candidates' responses were unintelligible, which may be an indication that those candidates did not understand this section of the interview.

Question 25 asked candidates to state the two reasons why Zhang Yue would want to return to China in the future. Some responses to this question were excellent while some other responses didn't show an understanding of this part of the interview.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/21
Reading

Key messages

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

- ensure they are familiar with all the key question words and answer questions accordingly. A concise answer is highly recommended.
- attempt every question in the paper, even the ones that they feel less confident about.
- study the entire vocabulary list for defined content and consolidate this vocabulary.
- develop a good time management plan and set aside more time for the last exercise.

General comments

On the whole, candidates appeared well prepared for the examination and there were many excellent responses to this paper. The vast majority of candidates were aware of the requirements.

More attention should be paid to learning the key question words, such as when, what, how, why, how long, as these will help candidates to understand the questions and locate answers correctly.

Candidates should ensure they have sufficient time to read the last passage and answer all the questions. **Question 33** for instance, was the question with most questions not attempted. However, candidates who did answer this question, were generally accurate.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1: Questions 1 – 5

The questions in this exercise were generally answered well, especially **Questions 4** and **5** which were answered consistently, with very few candidates making mistakes. **Questions 3** proved challenging for many candidates. This was probably because candidates were less familiar with the characters of ‘围巾 scarf’.

Exercise 2: Questions 6 – 9

The majority of candidates answered these questions very well. However, **Question 7** generated a number of incorrect responses. Many candidates chose **D** instead of **B**. This was because both of the hints in the question ‘服装店 clothing store’ and ‘售货员 shop assistant’ are fairly challenging words.

Exercise 3: Questions 10 – 12

Overall responses by candidates across ability levels were of a good standard. In particular, **Questions 11** and **12** were well answered. **Question 10** proved to be more challenging, as some candidates did not understand the meaning of ‘雾很 very foggy’. Consequently, other answers were selected instead of the correct one.

Section 2

Exercise 1: Questions 13 – 16

This exercise required candidates to show comprehension of a short passage and choose the correct words from a given table to complete given sentences. Most candidates were able to locate some correct answers in the passage even when they did not fully understand the content. **Questions 14 and 15** were well answered. However, genuine comprehension and careful reading is required to obtain high marks. For instance, many candidates answered **Question 16** incorrectly. Candidates needed to understand the last sentence of the passage as well as **Question 16** itself. Many candidates chose the wrong answer ‘白天 day time’ which is grammatically correct for the question but did not match the meaning of the original passage.

Exercise 2, Questions 17 – 24

In this exercise, candidates read a passage of Chinese and answered questions regarding it. The passage took the form of a letter from Xiao Li to his friend Xiao Wang about his three-week trip in Beijing.

Often, only a very brief answer was required, but provided that the correct answer was present, additional material copied from the text was accepted unless it was contradictory or made the answer incomprehensible. The quality of written Chinese was considered only for the purposes of communication.

The responses were excellent but there were some candidates who did not attempt all questions, in particular **Questions 19, 20, 21, 23 and 24**. Attempting every question is highly recommended.

On the whole, questions were answered fairly well, especially **Questions 19 and 21**. However, candidates sometimes had problems with **Questions 22 and 23**. For **Question 22**, the correct answer is ‘有很多名人去那里 a lot of famous people go there’, but some candidates were confused with the reason and result and answered ‘游人特别多 a lot of tourists’ instead. This showed that these candidates did not understand **Question 22** itself. **Question 23**, required candidates to fully understand the original paragraph as two prices were mentioned in the passage. It also required candidates to understand two time phrases ‘以前 previously’ and ‘现在 now’. All incorrect answers showed candidates were confused with which price the question was referring to.

Section 3

Exercise 1: Questions 25 – 28

In this exercise, candidates read an extended passage in Chinese and then answered multiple-choice questions. The passage introduced Huang Yang’s experience of helping in a farm and her dream of becoming a vet in the future.

Responses for **Questions 25, 26 and 27** were of a good standard, with the majority of candidates achieving high marks. **Question 28** generated the highest number of mistakes, with many candidates incorrectly selecting option **C**. Carefully identifying the relevant text was the key to answering this exercise well.

Exercise 2: Questions 29 – 35

In this final exercise, candidates read an extended passage in Chinese and demonstrated their understanding by answering short-answer questions referring to the passage in Chinese. The passage referred to the Sunshine programme that the teenager Sun Yu had participated in. The programme involved doing sports activities, voluntary work and outdoor expedition.

There were some good responses, but in general, candidates found this exercise very challenging. Many candidates left some questions blank, especially from **Question 30 to Question 35**.

Question 34 was the most challenging question of this paper. It asked ‘孙玉的交流能力是怎么提高的 how did Sun Yu improve his communication skill?’ but a significant number of candidates simply copied down the question and answered ‘他的交流能力提高了很多 his communication skill has improved a lot.’ It was probably because these candidates did not pay enough attention to the key question words ‘怎么 how’ and did not understand that the phrase ‘交流能力’ means ‘communication skill’.

Candidates also found **Question 35** challenging. Many candidates located the last paragraph correctly, but they found it difficult to locate the exact sentence. Many phrases from the last paragraph were seen in answers as well as lifting of the entire paragraph. The correct answer needs to specify how Sun Yu became good friends with other team members, i.e. via ‘帮其他的队员背行李 helping them to carry luggage’

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/22
Reading

Key messages

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

- study the entire vocabulary list for defined content to expand vocabulary levels accordingly
- consolidate common key questions words, time phrase, synonym and antonym
- read the passage carefully and provide answers based on the given information instead of relying on background knowledge or assumption
- double check written answers to ensure the written phrases make sense and that the lifted section has demonstrated genuine understanding of the passage.

General comments

On the whole, candidates appeared well prepared for the examination. There were many excellent responses to this paper and few candidates left questions unanswered.

To score full marks in **Section 1**, a good knowledge of the words in the defined content list is required. To gain higher scores in **Sections 2** and **3**, careful reading of both passages and questions is needed. Questions requiring simple and straightforward answers such as **Questions 26** and **32** were answered well. But more challenging questions, such as those in the last exercise, were only answered well by the strongest candidates.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1: Questions 1 – 5

The questions in this exercise were generally well answered, especially **Questions 2** and **4**. **Questions 1** and **5** were answered less accurately. For **Question 1**, some candidates chose **C** ‘面包 bread’ instead of the correct answer **B** ‘包子 steamed bun’ probably because both words share one same character ‘包’. **Question 5** was more challenging because the word ‘邮局 post office’ did not seem to be understood by some candidates.

Exercise 2: Questions 6 – 9

Candidates were required to match key vocabulary with related pictures. Most candidates answered these questions accurately. **Question 9** in particular was answered extremely well, with almost no candidates making any mistakes.

Exercise 3: Questions 10 – 12

Candidate responses across all ability ranges were of a good standard. **Questions 11** and **12** proved to be more challenging as some candidates did not recognise the word ‘照相机 camera’ in the text and used their background knowledge to choose the answer.

Section 2

Exercise 1: Questions 13 – 16

This exercise required candidates to read a short passage in Chinese and choose the correct phrases to complete sentences. Candidate responses were generally good, particularly for **Questions 13** and **14**, which were almost always answered accurately. **Question 16** was also very well answered but a few candidates incorrectly chose ‘作业 homework’.

Question 15 was often not answered well as candidates did not read the passage carefully enough and copied down ‘喝水 drink water’ from the last line of the passage instead of showing genuine understanding of the entire passage.

Candidates should learn common antonyms for this exercise, such as ‘多 more’ as opposed to ‘少 less’.

Exercise 2: Question 17 – 24

In this exercise candidates were required to read a passage in Chinese and to answer subsequent questions. The passage was a letter from Xiao Li to his friend Xiao Wang about his two-week trip to Hong Kong. Brief and accurate answers were required. However, provided that the answer was accurate, additional material copied from the text was acceptable, unless it was contradictory or made the answer incomprehensible.

Most candidates identified the key information as required by the questions, but the last two questions showed a slight increase in excessive lifting. The quality of written Chinese was only considered for the purposes of communication and inaccuracies in Chinese characters were tolerated provided that the message was clear and that the answers given did not have a different meaning which might cause confusion in comprehension of the message.

Most candidates attempted almost all questions, but a few left **Question 22** unanswered.

Overall, the majority of candidates responded to the questions in this exercise very well, especially **Questions 17, 19** and **20**. The best-answered question was **Question 20** where hardly any candidates made a mistake.

Questions 18 and **22** were more challenging for many candidates and some did not read the questions carefully enough. Identifying the key question words accurately is crucial for this exercise. In **Question 18** for instance, the key question words were ‘多长时间 how long’. The question asks how long Xiao Li stayed in Hong Kong. A common incorrect answer ‘住在奶奶家 stayed in grandma’s place’ obviously did not answer the question. Similarly, in **Question 22** the key question word was ‘在哪里 where’. Therefore, any answers which did not give the correct location ‘美国 USA’ were inaccurate.

To answer questions in this section well, candidates need to be familiar with all the key question words.

Section 3

Exercise 1: Questions 25 – 28

Nearly all candidates, regardless of their ability level, attempted the four questions for **Exercise 1**.

Candidates read an extended passage in Chinese and answered multiple-choice questions. This passage introduced a pair of good friends, Anna and Wen Li. Responses for **Questions 25, 26** and **28** were of a high standard, and many candidates achieved full marks.

A number of candidates had difficulty with **Question 27**, and some candidates chose the incorrect answer **C**. This is probably because candidates were not familiar with the time phrases ‘以前 before’ in the question.

Exercise 2: Questions 29 – 35

In this final exercise, candidates read an extended passage in Chinese and demonstrated their understanding by answering a number of short-answer questions in Chinese. The content of the passage referred to a teenager Jack’s unusual hobby – plants.

The performance on this exercise varied. Generally, candidates answered **Questions 31** and **32** well, but found other questions challenging.

A small number of candidates did not attempt certain questions, in particular **Questions 33** and **34**.

Question 29 was the most challenging question in this exercise. The question itself was straightforward, asking 'what does Jack like?'. However, many candidates did not identify Jack's hobby: '植物 plants'. It is also assumed that some candidates also did not recognise the word '不像 unlike' in the passage.

Question 30 was also challenging for a number of candidates, as they did not understand the natural pause between words and phrases in the key sentence. i.e. '小' should be grouped together with '从小 since young' to form a phrase, instead of '哥哥 brother'. A common incorrect answer was '小哥哥 little brother'.

Genuine comprehension and careful answering is required for this exercise. Lifting large amounts of text from the passage cannot be credited and this was the reason why **Question 33** was problematic for many candidates. Furthermore, the answer given by candidates must be comprehensible. In **Question 32** for instance, even though '植园' and '物园' are only one Chinese character away from the correct answer '植物园 botanic garden', did not make sense.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/23
Reading

Key messages

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

- study the entire vocabulary list for defined content and consolidate this vocabulary
- study questions carefully. Marks are awarded for accurately locating answers in the passage. A concise answer is highly recommended.
- demonstrate genuine understanding of a passage before tackling questions. Over lifting and random lifting cannot result in any mark.

General comments

Most candidates answered the paper with confidence. Many candidates appeared well prepared for the examination and demonstrated a high level of competency. In Particular, **Questions 14** and **22** were answered very well. While weaker candidates answered the more straightforward questions well, they found the last exercise more challenging.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1: Questions 1 – 5

Candidates demonstrated confidence in this exercise and the questions were exceptionally well answered. **Questions 1, 2** and **3**, were answered correctly by almost all candidates. **Questions 4** and **5** were more challenging with some wrong answers, and even some of the stronger candidates answered incorrectly. This is probably because the vocabulary for ‘巧克力 chocolate’ and toothache ‘体育馆 stadium’ are less common. Therefore, candidates would benefit from being familiar with all the words and phrases in the prescribed vocabulary list.

Exercise 2: Questions 6 – 9

From the answers, it was obvious that the topic of hobbies had been well studied as most candidates answered **Question 7** accurately. However, a number of candidates gave incorrect answers to **Question 6**, as it required them to understand ‘报纸 newspaper’, a word that appears less frequently among other activity words.

Exercise 3: Questions 10 – 12

In general, these questions were answered well. **Question 12** proved to be one of the most challenging, as some candidates did not recognise the word ‘护士 nurse’ in the text.

Section 2

Exercise 1: Questions 13 – 16

In this exercise, candidates read a short passage in Chinese and chose the correct phrases from the given table to complete sentences.

The responses were exceptionally good particularly for **Questions 13, 14** and **15**. **Question 16** appeared to be slightly more challenging due to the distractor ‘上网 go online’ which also appeared in the passage. Candidates needed to read carefully to find the correct activity associated with coffee shop.

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

Exercise 2: Questions 17 – 23

In reading the comprehension section candidates read a passage of Chinese and answered a series of questions. The passage was a letter from Wu Tian to her friend Ma Yuan about her experience as a part-time employee in a hotel, as well as learning how to roller skate. Only a brief and accurate answer was required. However, provided that the correct answer was present, reasonable additional material copied from the text was allowed, unless it was contradictory or made the lifted answer incomprehensible.

Most candidates demonstrated the ability to extract relevant specific information from the passage, but some candidates copied large amount of text for **Questions 20** and **21**. Most candidates answered **Questions 17, 18, 19** and **22** extremely well.

Question 20 was the most challenging question on the paper. It asked ‘which question (from the guests) does Wu Tian find most difficult (to answer)?’. Most incorrect answers were because candidates did not understand the question itself or the relevant section in the passage. Often they simply copied down ‘我也不知道 I do not know’ or ‘这个问题很难 this question is difficult’ from the passage.

Question 21 also generated a number of incorrect answers with many candidates copying the entire paragraph.

In order to handle this section well, candidates need to be familiar with all the key questions words. They also need to read the passage carefully and demonstrate a genuine comprehension.

Section 3

Exercise 1: Questions 24 – 27

In this exercise, candidates read an extended passage in Chinese and answered the multiple choice questions. The passage featured exchange candidates. Responses for **Question 25** were of a high standard, with the majority of candidates achieving full marks.

Some candidates found **Question 26** challenging. This was probably due to the fact that all of the distractors were present in the passage. **Question 24** was frequently answered incorrectly, as many candidates did not distinguish the distractor from the correct answer.

Exercise 2: Questions 28 – 33

In this final exercise, candidates read an extended passage in Chinese and answered short-answer questions in Chinese. The content of the passage referred to a singing competition in China, and a young contestant Ayad who is from Indonesia. All candidates attempted all of the questions.

Most candidates answered **Question 28** very well. For several other questions, candidates did not score marks because there was extended lifting, which included both the wrong answer as well as the correct answer. For instance, **Question 30** asked ‘Why do people like Ayad?’ and the correct answers were ‘歌唱得特别好 good at singing’ and ‘笑起来帅极了 looks extremely handsome when smiling’. However, many candidates copied down too much information which included the incorrect answer ‘只会说一点中文 can only speak a little bit of Chinese’.

Another common mistake was that the answer was not comprehensible. For **Question 33 (ii)** for example, many candidates gave partial phrases as their answer such as ‘很留言’ and ‘多留言’.

Question 29 also appeared to be challenging for many candidates. This is because the question contained a grammar pattern ‘除了... besides’ and required candidates to comprehend the relevant passage and make their own conclusion. The best responses for this exercise showed a genuine understanding of the passage, addressing the specific questions asked, and considered all aspects of the question in a relevant way.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/03
Speaking

Key messages

- Please read the Paper 3 (Speaking) *Teachers' Notes* that accompany the role-play cards each year so you are fully aware of the requirements of this test. 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>).
- To score high marks, learners need to show consistent ability to use a variety of structures, opinions and precise vocabulary **both** in the Presentation **and** in the Conversation sections. The Examiner needs to ask questions that give learners the opportunity to show this.
- In the Topic Conversation, the Examiner should not ask questions which require candidates to merely repeat information from the Topic Presentation. Learners must be given the opportunity to answer unexpected questions to score high marks.
- In both the Topic Conversation and the General Conversation sections, the Examiner **must** ask questions which allow the learner 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 learner's ability: the same questions should **not** be asked of all the learners.
- 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 learners. The learner should be doing most of the speaking.
- 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.

General comments

Most centres administered and carried out the tests very well. In order to give learners 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.

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 and USBs 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.

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 learners 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 learners who have been included in the recorded sample, particularly in centres with many learners

Centres using more than one Examiner should include samples from each Examiner in an appropriate proportion. Each Examiner should complete and sign his/her own Working Mark Sheet.

Recording quality and presentation of the sample

They should always be saved onto a CD or USB as an .mp3 file. 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, learners 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 learner 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. Please ensure you have checked that all the recordings are present and can be played before you send the recording to Cambridge International.

The CD should not be stopped during the recording. The learners should be introduced by name and learner number by the **Examiner**, not by the learners themselves.

The tracks on CDs should be labelled using the convention specified in the *Teachers' Notes*: Centre number_learner 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 learners. A card stating which learners appear on each CD must be enclosed, *not glued or stapled*, with each CD.

Internal Moderation in centres

In most cases, centres 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 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.

Details of the centre's Internal Moderation procedures must also be sent to CIE, as specified on the 'Cover sheet for moderation sample'.

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 learners examined by that Examiner must be checked and adjusted accordingly before paperwork is submitted to CIE.

Transitions between sections of the test

It is very important to indicate the transition between the 3 parts of the test. In some cases there was no transition indicated between the Topic Conversation and the General Conversation. At times it was difficult to ascertain whether the Examiner had simply forgotten to conduct the General conversation, thus affecting the learner's overall mark. 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 learners' 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 learners who are included in the recorded sample, particularly in centres with many learners.

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 sections

Role Plays

Overall, the Role Plays were conducted very well. Examiners are reminded of the need for careful preparation before the test and that they must not create extra tasks, nor omit tasks. If the stipulated tasks are changed or omitted and/or extra tasks are added this will confuse learners 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 learner should be handed a single Role Play card and should complete both the Role Plays on that card. Learners 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 learner in the space provided on the Working Mark Sheet.

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

Learners 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 learner has understood the question.

The question words which caused difficulty in the Role Plays this year were 什么时候? *when?*, 多长时间? *how long?* and 怎么办? *what would you do?*

Specific feedback on each question:

A Role Plays

- **You are talking to a foreigner about your school.**
Some learners forgot the measure word when answering: *How many teachers in your school?*
- **There are two restaurants near your school. You and your friend are planning which one to go to.**
Most learners handled this well.
- **You are talking to your friend about your hometown.**

Some learners were unable to differentiate between *at home* and *in your hometown* when asked: *What do you like doing in your hometown (家乡)?*

B Role plays

- **You are about to leave Xi'an when you suddenly fall ill. You are talking to a doctor.**
Weaker learners found it difficult to answer the following: *How long did you sleep for last night? When do you plan to leave Xi'an?*
- **You are talking to a friend about your future work plans.**
Weaker learners found it difficult to answer the following: *In which country do you want to work in the future? How long do you want to work there? When do you plan to go there?*
- **You are at the airport and you discover your passport has disappeared. A member of staff comes to help you.**
Weaker learners found it difficult to answer the following: *When was the last time you used your passport?* and *What are you going to do without a passport?*

Several learners answered with a country name for the question: *Which city do you want to go to today?*

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 learner should begin by stating clearly what his/her topic is, for example ‘我的题目是….’ as sometimes it is not obvious what topic is being presented. This statement will also help learners focus on their topic.

Topics chosen

Many learners chose *My family, My hobby, Sport, school life, My future, My friend, My holiday.*

More unusual topics included: *Chinese weddings, Starting my own business, Should secondary school candidates have part time jobs?, Why I prefer iPhones, Life in the Philippines, The difference between British and Chinese schools.*

Please do not allow learners to choose *Myself* or *My Life* for their Topic Presentation as this restricts the possibilities in the General Conversation.

Timing

Please note that the **Topic Presentation and Topic Conversation should last a total of about five minutes**. In some centres much less time than this was allowed, and their learners were thereby disadvantaged. In a very few cases the Examiner did not ask any questions after the learner 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 introduce this section **in Chinese**, for example by saying ‘现在我会问你几个问题。’

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 learners to show the full range of their ability in Chinese. Learners should be encouraged to speak spontaneously, and not to memorise speeches.

The Examiner should listen carefully to the learners' presentations, and then lead them skilfully through the Topic Conversation by asking appropriate questions, allowing them both to develop their topic, offer opinions and to demonstrate their language skills. In the Topic Conversation, the Examiner should not ask questions,

which require candidates to merely, repeat information from the Topic Presentation. Learners must be given the opportunity to answer unexpected questions to score high marks.

Most centres handled 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.**

Learners 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)?’ saying a length of time such as ‘三年。’ is not by itself sufficient to show that a learner 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 learners 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 learners were disadvantaged. In most cases, however, it was carried out well.

Questions asked: In a few centres **identical** questions were asked of **all** the learners. This is not in the spirit of the examination and makes the whole exercise artificial and lacking in spontaneity. **Each learner 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 learner. A weak learner might be asked *What sports do you like?* but a more able learner might be asked *Why do you think exercise is important?*

The General Conversation should be based on the individual learners’ 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 large number of unrelated questions.

There is no ‘Presentation’ in the General Conversation. **The General Conversation involves the Examiner asking the learners a series of questions on two or three topics.**

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 learners will be seriously disadvantaged. Learners 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 and Appendix A attached (below)*.

Appendix A

TIME FRAMES v.8

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)

- (d) **Use of 没 when negating a past time-frame.** This is only accepted as demonstrating use of a past time-frame **if a VERB is also used**. For example, if the learner is asked 你去过中国吗? and replies 没有。this is NOT accepted as demonstrating the use of a past time-frame, whereas 没去过。 is acceptable.

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。

- (d) The sentences **must include a VERB to be accepted as examples of future time-frames**. For example Q: 你想当什么? A: 老师 would NOT be accepted as a future time-frame, but A: 我想当老师。 WOULD be accepted.

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 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.

MARK SCHEME In the Topic Conversation and General Conversation, if learners cannot show they can use BOTH past AND future time-frames correctly, **they cannot be awarded more than 6 marks on the Language (b) scale on page 15 of the *Teachers' Notes*.**



MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/41
Writing

General comments

A number of candidates showed strong language skills in Mandarin Chinese. Some candidates used more complex structures and more difficult characters in their essays.

Most candidates answered **Question 1** very well, writing correct words with accurate characters. Candidates understood **Question 2** well and tried to provide more information to expand answers for each bullet point with detail. A number of candidates got full marks for this question but some candidates made a number of grammar mistakes and used pinyin or English.

There were a lot of strong answers for **Question 3**. Many candidates wrote detailed stories with more difficult characters and complex sentence structures. Most candidates attempted to provide extra relevant information for each bullet point, especially in **Questions 3(a)** and **3(b)**.

It is very important for centres to remind candidates that they must cover all bullet points in **Questions 2** and **3**. A number of candidates wrote clear, well-structured essays by answering each bullet point directly and then following with extra information.

Candidates need to be aware of the number of words required for each question. They are not penalised for exceeding the word limit, but some candidates had crossed out some content to reduce the length of their answers.

Candidates need to make it clear which topic they select in **Section 2: Question 3** by circling the question number. Candidates do not need to copy out the questions.

Candidates should ensure they have time to check their work for errors as many candidates made mistakes in basic characters but were able to write difficult and unusual characters accurately. Since this is a writing exam, Chinese characters must be used for all responses.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The task was to write about five things that you might see in a kitchen. Most candidates had no problem in identifying things from many categories such as food, drinks, kitchenware, pets, furniture, stationery, etc. There were many difficult words used in answers, for example: 餐桌、蛋糕、菜刀、垃圾箱、食品、饮料、筷子、洗碗机、饺子、可乐、钢笔, whilst a number of candidates chose to write basic items like 水、书、茶、肉、花、狗、面包、水果.

If candidates wrote more than five things in the list, they were not penalised but a maximum of five marks are awarded for five relevant items. There were a few candidates who crossed out a correct word and wrote a new incorrect answer instead.

Candidates should make sure that the characters in the words are accurately written without homophones or similar characters. Using pinyin or English meant that candidates could not be awarded any marks. Some answers could not be credited for the following reasons:

- 1 Candidates did not answer with Chinese words, and used pinyin or English.
- 2 Candidate wrote characters with unclear meaning, e.g. 点、看子、水东、米房.
- 3 Some similar characters or homophones were used instead of correct words, like 卓(桌)子、午反、午(牛)肉、半(羊)肉.

- 4 Some candidate used verbs rather than nouns: 看, 吃.
- 5 There were also many characters with missing strokes.

Question 2

This question required candidates to write about their neighbour based on five tasks. A number of candidates showed great communication skills in this, as well as good language skills in using simple sentences structures. The overall performance on this question was good.

Candidate needed to provide extra information and to expand the answer for each task. This extra information needed to be relevant to, or based on, the tasks. Some candidates were not able to provide enough extra information with separate sentences for each point. Some candidates with strong language did not achieve high communication scores for this question as they had not written enough for each task.

Task **(a)** was very well answered with different nationalities. The question words in tasks **(b)** and **(c)** asked candidates to give job titles and kinds of family pet. Some candidates were not specific enough and gave vague answers such as 他有工作; or 他工作在伦敦; or 他有宠物; or 他爱他的宠物.

Most candidates understood tasks **(d)** and **(e)** well. Candidates needed to use the future tense to talk about what the neighbour was going to do the next week and needed to give reasons for why he/she was a good neighbour rather than only answering with yes or no.

This year, there were many good sentences in essays:

- 1 Very detailed answers: 他是好邻居, 因为他平时见到我们都会微笑.
- 2 Complex structures used: 他做一名医生, 因为他很喜欢帮助别人;
- 3 Extra information included: 他下个周末会去海边, 看电影, 买东西, 下个周末很热, 很好.

Candidates need to make sure that characters are correctly written. There were also some language mistakes seen:

- 1 Overuse of 是 when it was not needed, e.g. 我的城市是很方便, 他的小狗是可爱, 他是吃.
- 2 的 or measure words were missing or misused in phrases: 我喜欢他小猫; 我有二邻居; 唱歌唱的很好 (唱歌唱得很好); 她有多宠物; 他的有大家 (他有大的家庭)。
- 3 Incorrect word order in sentences: 也他看中文书; 他每天去工作坐火车; 他教小朋友在小学.

Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one question from three options in **Question 3**. With five guided bullet points in **Question 3**, candidates needed to write an essay of around 150 characters for the question that they chose. Most candidates answered **Question 3(a)**, while fewer candidates answered **Questions (b) and (c)**.

The majority of candidates understood the questions well and wrote interesting answers with detailed information. However, some candidates did not cover all bullet points, possibly because they did not understand all of the words in the tasks.

Candidates should be reminded that their 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 needed to be aware of the various tenses required in questions and take note of the tense markers, e.g. ‘会’ or ‘了’. Candidates should ensure they use the tense correctly, for example, without ‘了’ when the future tense is involved. Some candidates confused the time frame in the question, for example, 上个周末 and 下个周末, 上次 and 下次, 后来.

Many candidates used difficult, unusual words and complex sentences, e.g. 朋友比我更有钱, 所以他买了各种各样的贵东西; 依我看来, 买东西越来越好玩; 做交换生最大的好处是提高外语能力; 因为我不但对中国文化有兴趣而且还很喜欢中国的饭。

- (a)** The question was for the candidate to write a letter to their grandmother about a newly opened shopping mall in the city. Most candidates did well on communication here, but many did not

answer the first task well because they did not understand, or misread, 开了 (open). They either did not answer this task or answered with 我喜欢商场, 我坐车开了新商场。

Most candidates chose the past tense for bullet points 2 and 3, listing many items bought in a shopping mall in detail and also giving reasons for buying those items, such as 我买了茶因为我不喜欢水; 我买了一个中国的历史书, 因为我对中国的历史很感兴趣。

There were tense issues for bullet point 5 as many candidates used the past tense for this task, e.g. 我去了商场星期日。A few answers did not indicate a date in response to this bullet point, and only answered saying they were going with friend or a family member, typically an example of a good response would be 我下次打算和 朋友一起会商场看狗; 我打算去商场买一些书, 以为下个月我开大学。

- (b) This question asked candidates to write an article about views on being an exchange student abroad. Candidates needed to follow 5 tasks about their experience and to discuss the advantages and disadvantages. Many candidates answered very well while others found this more challenging. In some cases, task 3 and in particular the key words 活动, was not understood. Some candidates did not mention 最喜欢 (favourite) for task 3 and just listed what activities they played. an example of a good response would be, for example 我们有一天除了参观长城, 虽然下雨, 我们带了雨伞; 我最喜欢的活动是四个。

Most candidate were able to address bullet point 4, and provided very good opinions for both 好处 and 坏处 (disadvantage and advantage), for example, 坐交换学生可以有新外国的朋友, 但有时说外语难; 有很多好处, 比如可以学外国的语言, 但是也有坏处, 我不可以跟我的家人去外国, 所以我有时候哭。

Most candidates addressed bullet points 1, 2, 5 well. There were many good sentences in answers, e.g. 我还想去那里, 住在北京, 跟那里的朋友聊天; 我交换的家庭对我特别好, 晚上会烧不同的料理让我尝试; 我明年想换一个国家, 因为有不同的美食和风景, 我想多出去看看。

- (c) This question was to write a story about the experience of somebody asking you a question during a walk in a park. Few candidates chose this task, and in general responses were not as strong as for the other two options.

The first bullet point asked who the person was. Some candidates misunderstood this and answered with the name of a friend who was walking with them in the park. Some candidates misread the question and did not understand that the person referred to in each bullet point should be the same person in the essay.

For bullet points 2 and 3, stronger answers gave clear reasons about why the person had asked them a question or for help, and what they had replied or suggested. However, some answers had little connection to each other, such as 他问我问题, 因为他很累, 我跟他说了, 那里是我的学生。

For bullet point 4, generally candidates understood the question 你觉得他怎么样, and gave a detailed description, like 我觉得他有棕色的头发, 黑眼睛, 非常帅。

In bullet point5, the word 发生 in the question seemed challenging for some candidates, and many candidates did not know how to write an ending to the story, e.g. 后来发生了我回家; 后来发生了打网球和乒乓球。However, there were some other candidates who wrote excellent sentences for this bullet point: 最后我给了他一百块, 这是我所有的钱。

Characters and Grammar

Most essays showed that candidates had no problem using past, present and future timeframes. Most candidates understood the grammar very well and wrote sentences, even complex ones, correctly, e.g. 但是他说没关系, 只一点点儿也好; 然后突然一个人走过来问我很多问题; 做交换学生使我有更多的知识, 开阔了视野。

Many candidates were able to use conjunctions and complex sentences, like 除了…还; 如果…就; 不但…而且…; 虽然…但是…; 又…又…, 因为…所以… and also used unusual words or Chinese idioms well in essays, such as 各种各样, 丰富多彩, 人山人海, 坚持到底, 饱受相思之苦, 无限魅力, 学以致用.

There were some common errors seen:

- 1 Incorrect spelling of characters with missing strokes or components: 左作 (作业), 星其 (星期), 犬难 (太难), 学交 (学校) 回诘 (回答) 座 (坐) 好气 (好吃), etc.
- 2 Using pinyin or English rather than Chinese words
- 3 Incorrect word order and position of time words or places in sentences: 我打算去在九点.
- 4 The mistake of using '是' with adjectives or other verbs, e.g. 她是很爱; 咖啡是好喝.
- 5 Misuse of 和, 与 to connect sentences, e.g. 她十六岁, 很高和好; 我去公园和我想买东西.
- 6 也, 还 at the beginning of sentences, e.g. 还我喜欢她
- 7 Incorrect words used in the past tense, e.g. 今天他不有吃了饭 (今天他没有吃饭)
- 8 Misuse of 个 and 的, e.g. 我们上个周末在她个家.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/42
Writing

Key messages

Candidates should familiarise themselves with questions words, e.g. 什么 what, 哪里 where, 几/多少 how many, 为什么 why, 怎么 (样) how, 哪个 which, 谁 who, 什么时候 when, 几点 what time, 多长时间 how long.

To achieve the maximum 10 marks for communication for **Question 2** candidates need to elaborate with simple sentence structures.

Candidates need to read the scenario carefully for **Question 3** and answer all the questions.

It is important for candidates to pay attention to different time frames.

It is essential that candidates learn and are very familiar with the vocabulary in the Defined Content for the syllabus.

General comments

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, they were ambitious in attempting to tell interesting and complicated stories with most characters written correctly.

Most candidates tackled the tasks well and not only answered the questions, but also produced detail and additional information for **Question 2** and **Question 3**. Few candidates failed to answer all of the questions or answered questions in Pinyin or with many English words which meant they could not be awarded marks for communication. There were a great number of candidates who showed their higher proficiency in Mandarin Chinese. Some candidates used more complex structures and more difficult characters which reflected their linguistic ability. Overall the paper was accessible to the majority of candidates and there were a number of excellent performances from centres in different regions.

Centres should be aware that answers have to be relevant to the questions, and all the bullet points need to be addressed with as much relevant information as possible. Memorising a big chunk of a general passage e.g. about oneself or family, hobbies, is not good practice. Candidates should read the scenario and questions carefully, especially the tenses and key words which are all in the Defined Content booklet. Since this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible and both English and pinyin should be avoided.

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. However, candidates should 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. In **Question 2** candidates should understand the importance of elaboration with simple sentence structures to achieve the maximum 10 marks for communication. Condensed long sentences with many syntaxes will not necessarily score high marks.

Candidates should circle which option they select in **Section 2 Question 3** since there were 3 choices. They should write the story according to the scenario but there is no need to copy out the scenario lines. For letter writing option (a), candidates needed to pay attention to the person they were writing to.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Candidates were asked to list five things which they need for the new term. Most candidates were able to list the stationery they need such as 书、书包、笔、尺子、练习本 etc. Some candidates listed the school uniform, such as 校服、裤子、鞋、裙子. Others wrote out food and drink for the day, such as 水果、水、果汁 etc. This showed that candidates had been taught well on topics and exam techniques. Easy and simple characters are awarded the same marks as the complicated ones. Basic words such as 水、书、笔、画、包、本子 were sufficient for credit.

At the other end of the spectrum, a few wrote in pinyin or English entirely, thus no mark was awarded. The task requested a list of five things therefore, people, family members, body parts, animals etc., e.g. 老师、同学、爸爸、朋友、脑子、狗 etc. were not accepted, since they are not things. Verbs were not accepted e.g. 看书、喝水. Candidates should be advised not to list more than two words with the same suffix in one category, e.g. 英文书、法文书、历史书 etc. as these can be awarded a maximum of two marks.

Adding or missing strokes were tolerated but if there were missing radicals or incorrect radicals which created a new character with a different meaning, the mark could not be awarded. The common mistakes when writing characters were: 像皮/象皮/相皮(橡皮), 抱(包), 书饱/书跑/书句(书包), 铅笔合/铅笔和(铅笔盒), 毛(笔), 刚(钢)笔, 课体(课本), 监(篮)球, 毛(手)机, 毛(手)包, 电话(话), 司(词)典, 笨(本)子, 迟(尺)子, 尽(尺)子, 小兑(说), 平(苹)果, 本书(书本), 午(牛)肉, 水平(瓶), 笔记书(记本), 工(功)课, 笔记体(本), 笔心(芯), 比(笔)包, 文且(具), 永(水), 木(大)米。

Some things were not correct logically, e.g. 新家, 电, 学校, 体育官, 飞机. Some words were invented by candidates or words were not recognised, e.g. 宿怕, 第, 毛七, 早子。

Candidates could improve on their accuracy of certain characters with correct radicals and should ensure they don't use characters with similar pronunciation or similar shape. A small number of candidates wrote characters which mainly function as radicals and can't be used on their own as an independent word, such as 木、火, and here marks could not be awarded.

Copying the example or characters from the rubric and answering the questions in pinyin or English was not awarded marks.

Question 2

The question required the candidates to write about their new home. The overall performance in this question was very good. Most candidates understood the questions very well and produced lots of detailed and interesting information for each task. Apart from addressing the bullet points, candidates also provided extra information which could be awarded extra marks. However, candidates need to be aware that extended sentences should relate to the tasks, not elaborating freely. Some stronger candidates, despite scoring full marks for Language, did not manage to score full marks for Communication as their sentences were very condensed and they did not give enough extra information.

For Task 1, places e.g. 在印尼(countries), 离学校很近 (near a certain place), 在山上 (on the mountain) etc. were mostly seen in the answers. Since this is a writing exam, candidates should avoid using English names or Pinyin for places e.g. Greenlake or 'yin ni'. Task 2 was well attempted. However, some candidates mistook "how many rooms are there" with "what rooms are in your house" and wrote '有各种各样的房间, 有厨房, 厕所等等' so could not be awarded the communication marks. Candidates were quite familiar with the type of question in task 3 and different favourite rooms were found in the answers with justifications which scored extra marks for communication. However, some candidates wrote public places e.g. 公园, 运动场 as their favourite rooms which could not be credited. For Tasks 4 and 5, as in Task 1, most candidates wrote places with a future tense particle 将来, 想, 要, 打算 etc. However, distinguishing '那' and '哪' was problematic since some candidates wrote '我将来想住在哪里' instead of '我将来想住在那里' for Task 4 which couldn't be awarded marks.

Candidates should be advised to answer the questions first then elaborate to the relevant questions. Copying out rubrics without extra information will not be awarded extra marks, e.g. 我最近搬家了. However, 我上个星期搬家了, 我的新家在北京 was awarded 2 marks for Task 1.

For Task 2, after stating how many rooms there were in the house, many were able to list a variety of rooms applying noun omission such as 姐姐的, 妈妈和爸爸的. There were many excellent attempts with 比 structure in Task 3 about which room the candidate liked the most. Many extended their ideas convincingly and appropriately. 我最喜欢哥哥的房间, 因为他的比我的大, 也有电视。所以我要看电视的时候就去他的房间。

Some good examples with good idioms and structures were:

书房里摆满了栩栩如生的画, 仿佛进入了一个海洋世界
我最喜欢我的那个房间, 因为我买了很多海报贴在墙上, 还有我最爱的电脑也放在我的房间里。
因为它虽然小, 但是里面的东西可齐全了。我的睡房有..., 可以说麻雀虽小, 五脏俱全。
我将来想住在海里, 因为我比较喜欢游泳。住在海里也可以和小鱼儿们一起玩耍。玩累了就回家吃妈妈做的海鲜。
从他们的房间看出去, 大自然很美, 景色背山面海。
虽然那里的房子很小, 但我还会回去, 因为我想我家人和那些陪我一起长大的朋友和邻居。
我还是希望可以搬到乡下, 因为我还没有体验过住在乡下的心情。
五颜六色、目瞪口呆

Some strong candidates with high language scores could not be awarded full communication scores for this question as they had not written enough points in a simple, clear way. In order to score more communication marks, candidates are advised to write extended elements in simple clauses rather than in an integrated sentence. For example, 我的新家很大, 有三个房间, 它们都很大, 也很漂亮 (4 marks related to Task 2) would score more communication marks than 我最喜欢的房间是第三层靠右的房间, 因为我可以从房间的窗口看到美丽的风景 (2 marks related to Task 3).

Some candidates showed a couple of different sentence structures and were unable to score high marks for Language. Candidates are encouraged to use a variety of simple sentence structures in this question, not just a few types of sentence structures or rambling, e.g. 我搬了新家。我的新家很大, 我很喜欢。我很喜欢我的新家, 因为很大。On the other hand, complicated structures are not essential to score the highest language marks in this question. Simple, accurate and varied sentence structures would be enough to be awarded 5 for the language marks.

Candidates should be reminded that a list will not score more than three marks. 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.

A small number of candidates simply copied out the tasks and swapped 你 with 我 in the sentences, and no marks were awarded.

Some candidates limited the marks they could be awarded in Task 4 as that they did not mention future tense by either using future time phrase e.g. 将来、以后 or a future tense marker 想、要 or 打算, and instead wrote in present tense, e.g. 我住在英国. Therefore, candidates should be reminded to read the questions carefully to avoid either misunderstanding or unnecessary omissions.

Candidates could improve on their accuracy of certain characters, e.g. 哪里 (那里), 一前、一后 (以前、以后), 作天 (昨天), 应刻 (应该), 正热闹 (真热闹), 亲家 (新家), 为因/以为/应为 (因为), 新加皮 (新加坡), 阳太 (台), 票 (漂) 亮, 风 (景) 色, 家 (房) 间, 餐间 (厅), 分种 (钟), 方更/放更/方边 (方便), 更 (便) 宜, 处 (外) 面, 列 (例) 如, 舒饭/舒附 (服), 先 (洗) 手间, 公圆/公员 (园), 工做 (作), 平净 (静), 非 (北) 京, 属与 (于), 好好 (妈妈), 近 (进) 来, 一洪 (共), 沙法 (发), 相 (想), 有 (又)

Accuracy of language was generally good and simple and straight to the point answers were largely seen. However, candidates should be reminded to use varied sentence structures and avoid Anglicised structures. Some common grammatical errors appeared in responses and candidates could improve their performance by placing emphasis on the following:

The most common mistakes were using ‘和’, ‘是’ incorrectly.

- 1 ‘和’ is wrongly used to link adjectives/sentences: e.g. 我的房间很大和很美; 我的新家在北京和我家的西面有一个体育馆。
- 2 Using ‘是’ with adjectives: e.g. 英国是很好; 我的家是很大和有七个房间
- 3 Some candidates attempted to use “...离...很近/很远” structure but were not successful: e.g. 我的新家附近我的学校
- 4 Incorrect measure word used or missing measure word: e.g. 这间家离我的学校比较近; 我的新家有七房间; 我家有四房间, 爸爸和妈妈一房间, 哥哥一房间, 我一房间。
- 5 Incorrect comparison sentence pattern: e.g. 因为我的房间比我姐姐的是很小; 我的家比以前的多大。
- 6 Mixing up ‘花园’ and ‘公园’: e.g. 我家有一个不大不小的公园。
- 7 Using pinyin or English instead of characters, and some pinyin without tones or wrong spelling were not understandable: e.g. 我最喜欢的是我哥哥的 room。
- 8 Repeating the same sentences from the questions or just changing 你 to 我: e.g. 我的新家在哪里. Some of the answers simply changed the questions into statements, e.g. 我最喜欢房间
- 9 Keeping the questions words e.g. 吗、哪里、几 in the sentences: e.g. 我家有多少四个房间。
- 10 Missing characters or writing incorrect characters, including some of the characters which were on the scenario or tasks: e.g. 我喜欢亲(新)家; 我沿(没)有最喜欢的房间; 哪(那)里的 huanzing (环境)很好; 我觉得她很妈(好); 我的新是不大也不小, 高高的, 不(下)面看很多花; 我的家在中国京北(北京); 我最近搬家了今天(天);
- 11 Incorrect characters which look similar or which have the same sound: e.g. 两个卧会(室)和一个听 suo(厕所); 我的卧是(室)很大; 我家有一个书间(房); 我们着间新家有(又)大又漂亮。
- 12 Misusing 了 and 也: e.g. 我家大, 以(因)为我爷爷喜欢了很多的房间; 我们的间都有一个厕所; 爸爸打算了给我一个房间也 妹妹了一个房间。
- 13 Incorrect tenses: e.g. 我昨天最近搬家; 明天我们搬家了。
- 14 Incorrect collation with adjectives: e.g. 环境也比较方便。
- 15 Incorrect structure: e.g. 我们家的北方(边)有一个店给买家的东西, 五分种(钟)走会(回)来。

Section 2

Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. **Question 3(a)** ‘write about a music festival’ and **Question 3(c)** ‘you and three friends got lost’ were the most popular choices.

Candidates should be reminded that, for letters, 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 for language 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?’; ‘快给我写信好吗? 祝你身体健康, 万事如意!’.

Most candidates demonstrated a high proficiency in Mandarin Chinese in terms of communication, accuracy of characters, grammar and structures. Candidates not only fully understood the requirements of the questions but also gave additional information using complex connectives, and even some Chinese idioms e.g. ‘念念不忘, 人山人海, 载歌载舞, 精彩绝伦, 手舞足蹈, 各种各样, 丰富多彩’ etc.

There were many excellent essays showing great language skill and great abilities of creative writing.

There were some common characters mistakes such as 昨(去)年, 作(昨)天, 去(上个)月, 上(去)年, 星其(期), 又(有), 篮球(篮球), 高心(兴)

Candidates who scored highest tended to have a range of sentence patterns, and 让, 使, 给, 被, 把 were used in some of the essays. Many candidates are able to use conjunction words and complex sentences, like 除了...还; 如果...就; 不但...而且...; 虽然...但是...; 又...又...

- (a) For **3(a)**, the task was to write about a write about a music festival. There were a number of very well written essays. Most candidates covered the bullet points very well and they were able to give justification for Task 4 and 5. Simple answers from ‘很大, 很好, 很热闹, 很好玩, 有意思’ to

advanced answers e.g. ‘人山人海，载歌载舞，精彩绝伦’ were seen in the essays. Popular answers for Task 5 were ‘下次想跟爷爷去音乐节；跟朋友去音乐节；它可以开阔眼界’ etc.

Although the bullet points had been addressed, a number of candidates misunderstood who they should be writing to. The mistake was writing a letter written to their grandfather instead of their penfriend. A few candidates misunderstood ‘音乐节’ as ‘音乐课’. A small number of candidates did not use past tense when answering Tasks 1 and 2 你和谁去了音乐节 and 你是什么时候去的. Some responses answered the question ‘你还想去音乐节吗?’ but didn't mention ‘为什么’ which could not be awarded a communication mark for Task 5.

Tenses were sometimes problematic as some candidates wrote the task in future tense 下个月，我爷爷送给我和我的姐姐去音乐节。我们去音乐节，因为下个月是我姐姐的生日，她想去音乐节. Some candidates used present tense throughout their writing. Centres should advise candidates to read the scenario with care and to use appropriate tenses in their work.

Characters and Grammar

Most candidates understood grammar very well and wrote sentences, even complex ones, correctly. Most essays showed that candidates had no problem using past, present and future timeframes e.g.

- 1 爷爷看到我时常呆在家里，觉得年轻人不应该呆在家里玩儿电脑游戏，就买了音乐节的票给我和朋友们。
- 2 在音乐节人山人海，我和朋友排了一个小时才进到音乐节。
- 3 那里人山人海，挤得我不能呼吸了。
- 4 结束的时候，我真舍不得回家。
- 5 其实门票是爷爷送的。因为他希望能更深了解体验音乐世界的美妙。下次我还想再去音乐节，我想再次陶醉在音乐里，也想与朋友分享我的快乐。
- 6 到了目的地时，那里人山人海，好不热闹啊！我们享受了很多悦耳的歌曲，吃了很多美味的食物。
- 7 大家都露出了笑容，玩儿得非常快乐。
- 8 在音乐节，我们一边聊天，一边买东西。除此之外，我们还去吃了午饭。
- 9 虽然我不太喜欢这个音乐节，但是我玩儿得很好。

However, there were a number of homophone or near homophone errors and characters with similar shape, such as 作天（昨），海天（每），采（菜），为因（因为），更宜（便宜）这到（知道），音乐节要（票） etc.

Candidates showed a good knowledge of grammar and structures. However, the most frequent errors were:

- 1 Tenses: Some candidates misunderstood the questions and used future tense instead of past: candidates talked about planning to go to a festival rather than a festival experience: 我想跟好朋友一起去，我计划十二月去；我跟小花一起去，在下个星期三
- 2 Confused last ‘上’ with next ‘下’ when talking about a time: 我们下个星期去了音乐节
- 3 Some candidates didn't understand ‘是...的’ pattern which emphasises past action: 我跟我的朋友去；我们前天下午去看；我去昨天的十点
- 4 Misuse of ‘了’, either not using it at all, or incorrectly: 音乐节不但非常好听了，而且很好玩儿了，我喜欢了；昨天我和我家人去音乐节。
- 5 Misuse of ‘是’，‘和’ and ‘也’: 因为是音乐节是很好玩和舒服；也音乐节很大；他是很好人；爷爷给我票因为他不喜欢和今天是我的生日。
- 6 Misuse of measure word 二/两: 爷爷给我二张音乐节票
- 7 Misuse of word order: 爷爷买我音乐节票
- 8 When a time phrase and place word were involved in a sentence, e.g. 我们去了上个周末；我们去在早上八点；音乐节开始七点半；我们六点半晚上的时候去；我和好朋友去音乐节三点十五分昨天
- 9 Sometimes ambitious use of idiom meant that they were not used appropriately e.g. 周杰伦把歌唱得洗耳恭听；那里有琳琅满目的肉和面条；那里的牛肉五颜六色；寻找他们是九牛一毛的事
- 10 Some candidates did not know how to write singer in Mandarin so some words such as 歌员、唱歌人、唱歌名人 were used instead of 歌星。
- 11 Using 了 with adjectives: 我们四个人很开心了要看我们最喜欢的书
- 12 Incorrect syntax: 我们去了音乐节星期三、我要去音乐节跟我的好朋友

- 13 Misuse of 过: 去音乐节以前我从来没去了(should be 过) 音乐节
14 Misuse of 得: 我们玩的很开心
15 Misuse of 做: 我做了很多新朋友

(b) The task was to express views on writing novels. Few candidates opted for this essay and those who answered this task generally did very well in communication and accuracy of language and grammar. However, a few candidates did not give a clear reason why they would be writing a novel in the future and so could not gain marks for communication for this element.

‘多长时间’ caused problems when some candidates were answering Task 2 ‘how long did you spend’ and simply answered with ‘三时间’ instead of ‘三小时’ . Task 1 needed to be in the past tense timeframe but a few candidates missed 过 and used present, present continuous or future tense. The majority of candidates understood ‘好处’ and ‘坏处’ and produced relevant reasons to back up their opinions. All the words and rubrics in Paper 4 are from the defined content and centres should advise their candidates to revise this thoroughly to maximise the opportunity to understand the tasks set.

For Task 3 ‘what is an advantage or a disadvantage of writing novels’, some candidates just wrote ‘有很多好处/坏处’ and did not give details. This was also the case with Task 5 ‘are you going to write novels in the future’ as candidates just answered with yes or no, without answering why. Students should be encouraged to answer the questions with greater detail and follow the patterns and tense frames which will achieve better results in both communication marks and language marks.

Characters and Grammar

The range of characters was very impressive. Candidates could expand the range of vocabulary and sentence patterns on different opinions. Some good examples were:

我写过的小说不计其数，都不知道有多少篇。

除此之外，写小说也会比较有创意，增加我们的思考能力

写小说能帮我增加词汇和增进我的写作技能。我想和全世界分享我的小说。我也想要全部人知道阅读或写小说的好处。每个人都应该培养喜爱阅读的好习惯。

从小时候，我在小学时会在班上和朋友们读小说，然后也会回家完成作业(后)就开始练习写自己的小说。平时的时间里，我会多看看你这些不平常的事情，多注意生活中的细节，这样会给我很多的灵感。

However, some common errors were:

Using present, present continuous (我写/我现在在写...) or future tense to respond to Task 1 ‘你在哪里写过小说?’

Producing incorrect lengths of time, e.g. 三时间, which should be 三小时

Including question words in the answer: 我用了多少四年学些小说。

Incorrect word order: 写小说的时候，我不会做都作业。

Homophone or near homophone errors and characters with similar shape, such as: 小兑 (小说); 写小说需要创以(造)力，而且写的步周(骤)也很难。

Missing radical or strokes of the character: e.g. 与 (写)

(c) This topic was the second most popular task. About 20 per cent of the candidates opted for the task which was to write about a story of what happened after they and three friends had got lost. The overall standard was high. There were some very creative and interesting stories and many of those who gained full marks successfully demonstrated their ability to communicate fluently, and with a high level of grammatical accuracy. A vast majority of the candidates followed the instructions and responded to each question appropriately. The language proficiency of the candidates answering this question varied. Some were extremely good in all three areas (communication, accuracy of characters and accuracy of grammar and structures).

A small number of candidates presented completely irrelevant information which could not be related to any of the set questions.

Communication

Most candidates could tell a clear story about where they went and why. They also wrote about how they became lost as extra information to make the piece coherent. Some of the candidates failed to respond to the third bullet point which was to give information about what they did. The answers were varied, mainly talking about some activities such as eating, sports, visiting places. It seemed that some candidates had missed the purpose, which expected that candidates should write about what they did to find their way rather than when they did in general. In addition, some candidates missed the fourth bullet point 'how did you plan to go home', perhaps due to the word '打算' which is a future tense particle but the whole story was in past tense setting. Other weaker candidates merely answered the bullet points and produced a limited amount of relevant information. Candidates should be advised to write a clear story line rather than treating each task individually.

Stronger candidates wrote good stories using a wide variety of vocabulary and sentence structures. Candidates should be advised not to copy out the scenario line before starting their story, nor to 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 was hard for candidates to demonstrate their language ability.

Option 3(c) is always set in past time frame, so candidates should be prepared to write an account rather than using present tense throughout the writing, or some future tenses in the essay even though there were future tense particles e.g. 想 and 打算 in the tasks.

For the last question '后来发生了什么事', many candidates didn't know how to respond to the question, and started with '后来发生了爸爸妈妈很生气' or '后来发生了书, 手机, 电视事'. Some candidates tried to copy key words to follow bullet point, like 后来发生了我回我的家.

Some good examples were:

我们抬头瞻望那高耸如云的建筑物, 眼神充满了无助, 事实上, 我们迷路了。
幸好小明急中生智, 我们才想起打电话。
经过这件事情之后, 我们下次一定要未雨绸缪, 才能阻止事情再次发生。我们到了一个人生地不熟的地方。突然一位和蔼可亲的老奶奶问了我们想去哪儿, (然后)便好心地把我们载回家。

Characters and Grammar

Many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters and idioms, e.g. 价格中等, 急中生智, 未雨绸缪, 按部就班, 偏僻的森林, 经一事, 长一智, 原来如此 etc.

The common mistakes were : incorrect character: 气(汽)车, 哪(那)里, 饭点(店)一走(起) etc.

The most common grammar errors were:

Mixed up 的/得/地: e.g. 高兴的(地)叫了起来; 狠狠的(地)骂我

Some Anglicisation occurred, e.g. 我们打算回我的家跟我三个朋友

Mixed up 二/两: 等他二个小时

Misuse of 和: e.g. 那个餐厅有很多好吃的东西和爸爸的餐厅很大

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/43
Writing

Key messages

It is essential that candidates learn and are very familiar with the Defined Content for the syllabus which enables candidates to understand the scenarios.

Candidates should familiarise themselves with questions words, e.g. 什么 what, 哪里 where, 几/多少 how many, 为什么 why, 怎么 (样) how, 哪个 which, 谁 who, 什么时候 when, 几点 what time, 多长时间 how long.

Candidates should pay attention to different time frames words and familiarise themselves with different particles related with different tenses e.g. 打算, 想, 以后, 下次, 将来, 后来, 以前, 了, 是... 的.

To achieve the maximum 10 marks for communication for **Question 2** candidates need to elaborate with simple sentence structures.

General comments

The overall standard of responses was good. Most candidates understood the question types well and produced enough details and additional information for **Questions 2** and **3**. Almost all candidates followed instructions and answered the correct number of questions. Most candidates used complex structures and difficult characters which allowed them to show their linguistic ability. The topics were accessible to the majority of candidates and there were a number of excellent performances from centres.

There were many strong essays produced which were detailed and expanded with plenty of extra information. Some candidates made mistakes in the grammar or vocabulary used, but they were ambitious in attempting to tell interesting stories and justified their opinions and generally most easy characters were 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. Memorising a big chunk of a general passage e.g. about oneself or family, hobbies, is not good practice. Candidates should read the scenario and questions carefully, especially the tenses and key words which are all in the Defined Content booklet. 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, some candidates crossed out correct sentences when they exceeded the word limit. 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 for **Question 3** they will not produce enough evidence of their ability to gain access to the highest marks.

Candidates should circle which option they select in **Section 2, Question 3** since there were 3 choices. Candidates did not need to copy out the questions, particularly for **Question 3**. Writing sentences that directly target the bullet points and then expanding appropriately without the pre-setting information was an efficient way to gain access to higher marks.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Candidates were asked to list five things they want to take to a picnic. Most candidates were able to list food, drinks, such as 水果、水、果汁、肉 etc., and used easy and simple characters. Some candidates listed the utensils, cutlery and furniture, such as 碗、盘子、叉、椅子、桌子、桌布. This showed that candidates had been taught well on topics and exam techniques. Easy and simple characters are awarded the same marks as the complicated ones. However, a small number of candidates answered in pinyin, which could not be awarded any marks. Other impressive answers included ‘自行车、游戏、零食’. People e.g. 爸爸、妈妈、朋友 appeared in answers but could not be awarded marks since they are not things. The answer of pets was accepted.

Copying the example or answering the questions in pinyin or English was not awarded marks e.g. 东西、野餐 or 筷子.

If there were missing radicals or incorrect 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. 毛(帽)子、句(包)、水课(果)、水平(瓶)、蓝(篮)球, 王(球) etc.

Question 2

This question required candidates to write about a botanic garden where they live. The overall performance in this question was good. The question words were understood and there was plenty of scope to extend the answers. A few candidates wrote animals ‘猫、狗、马’ etc. in the garden which was unexpected. There were some excellent responses with complex structures in this section, such as ‘植物园离我家很近, 走路五分钟就到了; 一到周末, 一家老少都会来植物园看花、看树’ or idioms ‘花草树木、不亦乐乎、热情礼貌、乐于助人’. However, simple structures and basic vocabulary are enough to score full marks in this section.

Some candidates did a good job expanding answers. For example, for bullet point 1, some wrote ‘植物园里有各种各样的花草树木, 有玫瑰花、百合花和葡萄树等等’ to add more details.

Task 4 was done very well with popular answers such as 友好、好心, and more advanced words and sentences including ‘和蔼、热情助人、工作人员非常热心, 让人有种去了还想去的感受’ etc.

Since the first part of Task 5 was a close-ended question, candidates needed to answer that question, but also to write the reason why they would like, or would not like, to go there again to gain a mark for communication.

In this paper, 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 e.g. ‘我最喜欢在那里 pai zhao 因为很 piao liang’ could not be awarded marks for Task 3.

Accuracy of language was generally good and simple, and straight to the point answers were usually seen. However, candidates should be reminded to use varied sentence structures and to avoid Anglicised structures. Some common grammatical errors appeared in responses and candidates could improve their performance by placing emphasis on the following:

- Character mistakes: e.g. 吗(马)、吃叛(饭)、果(课)、牛(午) 饭、令(今)年、工作人(员)
- Misuse of ‘是’ with adjective: e.g. 在植物园是有趣
- Misuse of measure word: e.g. 他的植物园有一个吗
- Incorrect words order: e.g. 在那里, 我和姐姐喜欢说说, 也我最喜欢做看书
- Misuse of comparison ‘比’: e.g. 那里在中方心, 比我家很近
- Misplaced adjective: e.g. 花的黑色和白色

Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. About 55% of the candidates opted for **Question 3(a)**, while 32% chose **3(b)** and **3(c)** was the least popular with about 13%.

Most candidates understood and followed the instructions and used varied timeframes. Most candidates covered all the bullet points but ‘多长时间’ was a difficult point for some candidates in **Question 3(a) Task 2**. ‘满意’ may also have caused problems for some candidates in comprehending the scenario and **Task 4**.

A few candidates copied all the task questions without answering them or simply took out the question words and inserted ‘很好’ for ‘你觉得早餐怎么样’, ‘很多长时间’ for ‘在旅馆住了多长时间’, ‘发生了很多事’ for ‘后来发生了什么事’. It should not be encouraged in the teaching practice and candidates should be encouraged to write more relevant information in greater detail for the tasks.

(a) For **3(a)**, the task was for the candidate to write a letter to their grandma about a hotel they weren't satisfied with on a recent trip they went on. Over half of the candidates chose this task and covered all the bullet points very well. The question words in the tasks were understood and candidates had been well trained to deal with ‘who’, ‘how long’, ‘where’, ‘why’ and ‘how’.

Task 1 was well attempted, with the most popular choice being family members and friends which were easy to write.

Task 2 ‘多长时间’ (how long did you stay at the hotel) was challenging for weaker candidates. Some attempted to write ‘很长时间’ but included a question word such as ‘很多长时间’.

Candidates were able to express opinions well in Task 3 ‘what did you think of the breakfast’. Apart from the common words such as nice, interesting, etc., other adjectives to describe the performance e.g. 免费的、美味可口、十分有特色 were really impressive.

The performance for Task 4 was varied. Some candidates wrote interesting complaints e.g. heating was down; room was too small and dirty; attitude was bad etc., but a few candidates didn't understand the meaning of ‘满意’, so they missed the task.

A majority of candidates were able to answer Task 5 without any difficulties and used the future timeframe well. Generally, candidates were able to use different timeframes in this question.

Characters and Grammar

Candidates showed a good knowledge of Chinese grammar. However, the most frequent errors were:

Character mistakes: such as 朋发 (友), 下 (明) 年、午 (牛) 肉、犬 (太)

Errors in using ‘是’: e.g. 他是十五岁; 我觉得早餐是不好, 奶奶觉得是很好

Errors in expressing length of time: e.g. 我们在旅馆住了多

Incorrect word for length of time: e.g. 我们在旅馆住了四时间

Including question words in the answer: e.g. 很多长时间

Errors in using ‘过’: e.g. 我们去过中国二十一天

Incorrect word order: e.g. 对旅馆很冰

Some Anglicisation occurred: e.g. 我们有很多玩儿

(b) In **3(b)**, the task was to write an article about new extra-curricular activities at the candidate's school. The evidence showed candidates who opted to do this question were very familiar with this topic area. All bullet points were easy to follow and guided the candidates to write their answers and opinion fully. Sport and musical extra-curricular activities were the most popular, while robotic and coding clubs were also mentioned by several candidates. ‘奥数班’ Math Olympiad class, English class and language classes were also given as provision at their schools.

Task 4 was ‘what benefit do those activities have’ and most of the candidates did very well with justifications, e.g. 运动对身体好; 学生可以交朋友; 帮助更多的人 etc. There were some impressive idioms used, e.g. 百利无一害、完善制度、增强能力、提高水平、积极参加、资金不足、增加学校名气、开发潜力 etc.

Task 5 was also an opinion question and most candidates were able to express some ideas e.g. 活动非常好、很有趣、很好玩儿、我爱我学校的活动 etc. More advanced answers such as 在我看来、受益不浅、对。。十分有帮助 were also seen.

Characters and Grammar

Candidates showed a good knowledge of easy characters and basic grammar structures. There were some excellent responses with complex structures in this section.

The most frequent mistakes were:

Character mistakes: e.g. 做餐（饭）

Use 又 to link 2 nouns: e.g. 又星期六又星期天没有课外活动

Use of ‘了’: e.g. 跑步组今年二月开始了

Incorrect words order: e.g. 我看电影星期二; 他们学习法语在他们的房子

Some Anglicisation occurred: e.g. 我的学校活动开始后课; 这些开始十六点半

Missing objects: e.g. 我以前参加过看法语书

- (c) This year, 3(c) was not a popular topic and only 13% of candidates chose this task. The most common stories talked about a surprise birthday party, Christmas party and changing of place for the party for Task 3. Making phone calls or checking SMS were popular methods for Task 4 ‘how are you going to find him/her’.

Teachers should advise candidates to read the scenario sentences with greater care to avoid copying down characters incorrectly e.g. 派队 for 派对; 圣旦 for 圣诞. However, some stronger candidates used advanced phrases such as 无比欢快激动、左思右想、把我骗了、姗姗来迟 etc.

Most candidates produced coherent storylines in this narrative writing but a few candidates could not elaborate due to limited vocabulary and sentence structures.

Characters and Grammar

The most frequent mistakes were:

Character mistakes: e.g. 、明（朋）友

Misuse of ‘是’ with adjective: Antonio 比我是大

Some Anglicisation occurred: e.g. 我喜欢多玩, 多肉和水

Incorrect word order: e.g. Antonio 是严格在学校