

# FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

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Paper 0509/01

Reading

## Key messages

When answering this paper, candidates need to remember to read the passages carefully before starting to write their answers. In **Section 1**, it is important to address the specific questions asked and in **Section 2**, it is important to keep to the recommended number of characters.

In order to score well in either section, candidates need to show that they can:

- understand and collate explicit meanings
- understand, explain and collate implicit meanings and attitudes
- select, analyse and evaluate what is relevant to specific purposes
- make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

In addition, in **Section 1**, candidates need to show that they can understand how writers achieve effects.

In **Section 2**, they will need to show that they can:

- order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- understand and use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- use language and register that is appropriate to audience and context.

## General comments

This paper consists of two sections. The majority of candidates performed well in **Section 1**, demonstrating their ability to understand the reading passage in detail. Many candidates were awarded the full five marks available for accuracy of language in this section. Most of the errors that occurred in **Section 1** were due to candidates not reading the passage carefully enough. Candidates should be reminded that it is a good idea to plan their time during the examination to allow themselves time at the end to check their answers.

When answering the questions in **Section 1**, some candidates copied from the text and used the pronoun “I” when referring to the author Hu Shi. It would have been more appropriate to use the pronoun “he” in this context.

**Section 2** requires candidates to write a summary of the two reading passages, focusing their response on the two bullet points mentioned in the question. The majority of candidates were able to understand the gist of the passages and to communicate their ideas. As in **Section 1**, accuracy of language was high. Candidates can improve by receiving more practice in writing summaries.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section 1**

#### **Question 1**

- (a) Most candidates did well in part (a), correctly identifying the two reasons. A few did not mention 母亲不让.
- (b) Most candidates answered this part well.

- (c) (i) The correct answers to this part were 听母亲训话 (1 mark) and 上早学 / 上学堂背书 (1 mark). Some candidates needed to be more specific in their response; answers such as “母亲告诉他父亲的好”, “要向父亲学习” were generally too vague for the mark to be awarded. For the second mark, some candidates wrote “到学堂开门”, which was not considered correct.
- (ii) Most candidates did well here.
- (d) The correct answer for this part was “母亲是为了教育儿子不是出气” and most candidates answered well. A small number of candidates wrote further incorrect details, such as “不想让胡适丢脸”, which meant that the mark could not be awarded.
- (e) There were four marks for this part. Some candidates lost one mark because they gave only three points in their answer. A number of candidates confused “大哥” with “二哥”. Careful reading of the question and the passage may help to prevent such errors in the future.
- (f) Most candidates answered this part correctly, with only a few explaining the meaning of “打主意” (which is incorrect).
- (g) This part instructed candidates to re-read paragraph five. The answer should therefore have been drawn from this paragraph (a small number of candidates re-read paragraph four instead). Some candidates gained two out of the three available marks because they missed “大哥女儿的饮食衣服总是和我一样”.
- (h) The majority of candidates were awarded full marks here.
- (i) A number of candidates were awarded two marks out of a possible three for this part. Many missed the point on “读书”.

## Section 2

### Question 2

In **Question 2** candidates are required to draw information from both passages and to use this information to write a summary according to the bullet points given in the question paper.

Candidates should be encouraged to re-read the two passages carefully before beginning to select the main points for inclusion in their summary.

Flowery discussions and reflections are discouraged: Examiners are looking for a concise and coherent summary of the points that appear in the two passages. It is important that candidates do not write personal experiences, personal opinions or issues that are not covered in the given passages.

# FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/02

Writing

## Key messages

When answering a question from **Section 1**, candidates need to remember to present a discussion or argument. When answering a question from **Section 2**, candidates need to provide a description or narration, depending on the topic set.

To score well in either section, candidates need to:

- order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- demonstrate that they can use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- articulate experience (where necessary)
- express what is thought, felt and imagined
- address the specific topic that they have chosen and ensure that their answer is relevant
- make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

## General comments

The majority of candidates performed well on this paper. Most wrote good quality essays and adhered to the required number of characters. Many presented organised responses containing varied sentence structures and a good range of vocabulary.

The best answers contained ideas of great clarity presented in a logical manner, told interesting or touching stories with surprising endings, or presented vivid descriptions that created mood and atmosphere. Weaker candidates could improve their writing by avoiding clichés and bland lists.

Most candidates demonstrated an excellent grasp of Chinese grammar and a wide range of vocabulary. Candidates need to improve their use of measure words, e.g. 做<sup>个</sup>坏事 rather than 件 should be used. Candidates should remember that the use of very colloquial expressions, such as “你<sup>有</sup>看过狮子学跑步”, is not generally appropriate for a formal essay (unless the task specifically requires the use of such a register). Candidates should try hard to eliminate interference of English grammar on their writing in Chinese, e.g. “当我在球场比赛时，他会在场外看着我<sup>和</sup>给我打气”.

Misuse of homonyms can be reduced with more attention and regular comparisons. Some common errors included 别人<sup>致</sup>息（令，室），故名<sup>诗</sup>义（顾，思），行为举<sup>指</sup>（止），瓜<sup>目</sup>相看（刮）.

Candidates should be reminded to read the rubric carefully: this year some candidates answered two questions rather than one.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section 1**

#### **Question 1**

Candidates were expected to discuss their view on the saying “You reap what you sow”. The majority of candidates succeeded in developing their argument in a logical and coherent manner. Some answered from unusual and creative perspectives, often to great effect, thus proving their originality. A few candidates talked too much about beans and melons; they needed to develop their essays further.

## Question 2

Candidates were expected to write about the opportunity to learn from others. The overall standard of responses to this question was good. Many candidates developed the topic well, using some good examples.

## Question 3

Candidates were expected to comment on the generation gap and most were able to develop a clear and logical argument. Some candidates misunderstood the definition of generation gap and instead wrote about general communication gaps.

## Question 4

Candidates were expected to comment on if, and how, different types of friends could influence one's own behaviour. This was a popular topic and most candidates handled it well, with some concise use of appropriate examples. Weaker essays tended to be repetitive.

## Section 2

### Question 5

Candidates were expected to write about their treasure box. Most candidates tackled the topic very well and presented very moving stories of friendship or of memory of a loving grandparent. A few candidates wrote imaginatively about their brain and the wonders of this "treasure box", with convincing details and a surprising and effective twist.

### Question 6

This was the most popular question. Candidates were expected to write about how they planned to celebrate their next birthday. The best candidates presented a carefully balanced story with well-managed climaxes; weaker answers were characterised by a chronological list of things to do, using very simple language and with limited ideas. Some candidates wrote about their best birthday to date, without adding an extra line to say that they would like their next birthday to be the same, which would have made the material relevant.

### Question 7

Candidates were expected to write about the most influential person in their life. This was another popular question and most candidates tackled it well. In this question, candidates tended to draw on their own experiences and wrote about a parent, grandparent, favourite teacher or friend, which made their essays vivid and convincing. Weaker answers tended to be clichéd with a limited range of expressions.

### Question 8

Candidates were expected to write a story about white lies. This question proved popular and the majority of candidates answered it well, with good development of material. A number of candidates wrote an argumentative piece debating whether or not white lies are good, rather than giving a narrative piece as the rubric required.