

Chinese (background speakers)

2012 Chief Assessor's Report



Government
of South Australia

SACE
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CHINESE (BACKGROUND SPEAKERS)

2012 CHIEF ASSESSOR'S REPORT

OVERVIEW

Chief Assessor's reports give an overview of how students performed in the school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall, it was clear that students were well prepared when they had a clear understanding of the requirements of the subject and of each task.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 1: Folio

There are three assessments in this part: interaction, text production and text analysis. Most teachers designed four or five tasks for this assessment type, which provided students opportunities to demonstrate that they had met the performance standards in this assessment type.

Interaction

The most popular styles of task in the oral assessment were Powerpoint presentations followed by responses to questions, discussions, and interviews.

The most successful students demonstrated a clear idea of the purpose, audience, and context of their interaction, and this understanding influenced the way the interaction was structured and the language that was used. They also demonstrated competence in the Ideas and Expression assessment design criteria by expressing opinions in response to open-ended questions without using a script or relying too much on pre-rehearsed questions.

The less successful interactions offered only general information on the topic, with less explanation of this information and less analysis of the topic. Some students need more confidence and preparation to respond at some length to unscripted questions and comments.

It is important for an appropriate interlocutor to be engaged in the interaction tasks. For example, in a discussion, care should be taken so that students are given the opportunity to expand on answers.

Teachers should note that, if a presentation or talk is chosen as the interaction task, it is important that students have the opportunity to respond to questions, to demonstrate specific feature E3 (Use of strategies to initiate and sustain communication).

Text Production

Responses were more successful when they were based on a specified contemporary issue and focused on one text type. This provided opportunity for formative preparation, with explicit focus on the language and structure relating to this text type. Successful responses were achieved when the question was more specific than 'write an essay on...' or 'write a response to...'

The most successful responses met the task requirements of:

- addressing an issue as specified in the subject outline; it was less effective to provide, for example, a recount of a film or information on a topic without considering different perspectives
- conveying opinion about the issue, as well as providing information; the higher achieving responses were from students who were able to use information and ideas arising from the text(s) to form and express their own opinions.

Text Analysis

The most successful text analysis tasks demonstrated students' ability to evaluate and analyse, e.g. explaining the content, purpose, and audience of the texts. The students responded to question(s) in their own words and with appropriate textual references to support their opinions. In the less successful responses, students identified the key issue but were not able to incorporate examples from the text(s) effectively in supporting their own views.

It is important that students are given the opportunity to fulfil the requirements of the subject outline. Some good text analysis tasks allowed students to compare the perspectives, ideas and opinions in the text/s on the topic so that students were able to demonstrate their competence in the assessment design criterion Evaluation and Reflection.

Assessment Type 2: In-Depth Study

Students are required to carry out an in-depth study of a contemporary issue of their choice. While it is appropriate for teachers to advise students on suitable issues, the in-depth study must be a product of independent work. Where a teacher chooses the topic of the study, then each student should research a different aspect of the topic. All students must undertake an individual study, and develop their own ideas, opinions, and perspectives.

Students who focused on a specific topic of interest or relevance to them generally had more success. Some students chose broad and general topics, which made it difficult to demonstrate the specific features of the assessment design criteria Ideas and Expression to a high level.

Students who achieved a high standard in the oral presentation in Chinese task were able to present or discuss the process and findings of their in-depth study research in a spontaneous and independent way without over-reliance on reading from a script. Successful oral tasks demonstrated analysis and comprehensive knowledge, supported by opinions on the issue investigated.

The stronger responses for the written response in Chinese analysed findings from a variety of sources and synthesised information. Better responses correctly referenced quotes and the ideas of others and were then elaborated in the student's

own words. Responses were less successful when presented as a series of quotes without attempts to analyse and evaluate the information, ideas, or perspectives.

For the reflective response in English, the most successful students obviously had a clear idea of what they wanted to achieve in this assessment. They focused on certain aspects and elaborated in detail with reflection on their learning. Less successful responses did not have a clear purpose other than to present some general information of the topic or simply describe the process of their research.

It is important to note that the three assessments should differ in context audience, and purpose. The same requirements should not be used for both the oral presentation and written responses. Using the same or very similar requirements for both tasks is problematic as there is almost inevitably some crossover of information and ideas between the two tasks, which would limit students' opportunity to meet the requirements.

In addition, in Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study, a time limit of 5 to 7 minutes is set for the oral task (the same duration applies to the reflective response in English, if the student chooses to respond orally). This year, a number of oral tasks overran. Teachers and students are advised to keep within the time limit as anything longer than this cannot be considered when assessed or moderated. Similarly, the written tasks for the in-depth study have a prescribed word-limit, and any materials beyond that limit are not assessed.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 3: Examination

Oral Examination

The overall performance of students in this area was good this year. The majority of students demonstrated a sound understanding of the various contemporary issues through their discussions in the oral examination, and achieved a satisfactory or higher result. However, a lack of preparation was evident in a few cases.

The more successful students were able to demonstrate an excellent knowledge of their research topics in both depth and breadth, including the use of references and valid evidence to justify their views. Their information, opinions, ideas, and perspectives were expressed clearly, logically, coherently, and with insight.

Although most students performed at above the satisfactory standard, some showed only a superficial understanding of the topics and were unable to demonstrate depth of knowledge of the topics which they studied. Some did not refer to references, provide evidence of their learning, or justify their views.

In the less successful discussions, there seemed to be a lack of study, research, or preparation. These students were unable to provide any evidence of learning in relation to the issue chosen.

Students chose a diverse and most appropriate range of topics of in-depth study this year. However, a few topics were either too broad (e.g. 'Youth issues' or 'Environment issues') or too narrow, either of which limited the depth of the studies.

Almost all students said that they had conducted their research using the Internet. Some selected their resources from only one viewpoint and some appeared to have

memorised information without further analysis or critique. Students are reminded that they are required to develop their own ideas, opinions, and perspectives, which they should support with evidence from the texts they have studied. The texts should include a variety of contemporary sources, with different perspectives presented in different text types. A range should be selected for analysis, so that students can explore their topic in sufficient depth.

A few students brought pictures or diagrams as their supporting material, but these did not generally add further depth to the discussion.

Advice to Students

Students are reminded to select an appropriate topic for the in-depth study. They should use a range of sources for research, to assist in understanding and developing ideas, opinions, and perspectives on the topic/issue chosen.

On the day of the oral examination, students should arrive at the venue 15 minutes before the scheduled time. They must wait quietly outside the examination room until called, and leave immediately after completing the examination, without interacting with other students.

Written Examination

Section 1: Listening and Responding, Part A

Most students' performance in this section was satisfactory or better, although it was the weakest section for most students, possibly due to ability and confidence in English. Some students misunderstood some questions, and some responses were not expressed clearly in English.

However, some students were very successful, demonstrating very good understanding of the text, and were able to respond to the questions using simple but efficient English vocabulary and grammar structures.

For question 1 (a), most students were able to give the correct answer.

Most students were able to give the correct answer for question 1 (b).

Similarly, most students were able to give the correct answer for questions 1 (c) and (d). However, a few students were unable to complete their answers or gave an incorrect answer.

Only a few students achieved an outstanding result for question 1 (e). To give a good answer students were required to analyse, to evaluate the text with a certain depth, and to express their opinions using their own words. This was challenging and most students did not perform to the highest standards in answering this question, as they did not analyse and draw a conclusion from the text, and were able to answer only superficially.

Students are advised to focus on English skills and reading comprehension skills, including analysis and evaluation.

Section 1: Listening and Responding, Part B

Most students achieved a better result in this part of the examination because there was no language barrier. They generally understood the texts and the questions well. However, many of them failed to address the key point that 'a gap year is not for everyone'.

The more successful students were able not only to identify the information from the two texts but also to form their opinions logically and cohesively into an email.

However, this section indicated some problems that it would be advisable for students and teachers to address. As in previous years, some students only repeated what was in the texts, and did not analyse, evaluate the information, or put forward their own thoughts; some did not use the information from both texts; some wrote an article instead an email as they were required to do; some used incorrect characters.

Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part A

As in previous years, students generally performed well in this section of the examination. Most understood the text and the questions very well, although some questions were more challenging, particularly testing students' Chinese literary knowledge and accomplishment.

The most successful students were able to appreciate both the author's ideological connotations and the literary techniques used in the text.

For question 3(a) (i) and (ii), most students were able to identify rhetorical devices and the intention of the author in using them. However, some of the responses showed a lack of knowledge of stylistic features, only identifying the rhetorical devices without illustrating the beneficial effects they had on the text. Some responses did not identify the rhetorical devices.

For question 3(b) (i) and (ii), most students were able to explain the phrases in the context of the text. However, not all demonstrated the ability to analyse and evaluate the text or to express their opinions using their own words.

Students generally performed well in question 3 (c) and (d), which again required students to analyse and evaluate the text with certain depth, and express their opinions by using their own words. As mentioned earlier, these kinds of questions are more difficult and challenging. There were only a few students who answered the questions very well. However, most achieved a satisfactory or higher result.

A few students did not answer question 3(c) and (d), possibly because they did not notice the instruction 'PLEASE TURN OVER' on the examination paper.

Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part B

Most students handled the question well and achieved a satisfactory or higher result in this section.

The most successful students were able to identify the issue with deep thought, for example, pointing out that the issue is discrimination against women (sexism) rather than merely difficult employment conditions for women. They were also able to formulate their opinions into the text as required, logically and cohesively.

Areas for Improvement

Depth of treatment: Students should avoid only repeating what was in the texts. In contrast, they should analyse, evaluate the information, and put forward their own thoughts.

Relevance: Responses should respond to the text, and draw on appropriate information from the text.

Text type: Students should take care to use the specified text type (e.g. a letter).

Coherence: Students should avoid writing long paragraphs with no structure or logical sequence.

Expression: Students should take care to write correct characters.

Section 3: Writing in Chinese

The table below shows the question number, theme, required text type, and percentage of students who chose each question in this section.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Text Type</i>	<i>Students (%)</i>
5	China and the World	An online article	42%
6	Language in Use in Contemporary China	An essay	28%
7	Modernisation and Social Change	A speech	19%
8	China and the World	An article for a magazine	11%

Most students generally performed well in this part. Most were able to produce the text types competently and achieved a satisfactory or higher result. They demonstrated a good understanding of the issues, and were able to formulate their opinions into text as required, logically and cohesively. There were few obvious grammatical problems.

The most successful students in this section were commonly not only able to meet the specifications with the correct logical structures, but also, most importantly, they had a clear view with depth on the topic and were able to offer explanations and justifications in their discussion.

The less successful responses, however, did not show an understanding of the question – opinions were not quite relevant to the questions set; opinions were not clearly expressed and justified; some views were superficial or not to the point. For example, for question 6, some responses did not focus on the impact of the Internet and foreign words on Chinese language and culture.

Advice to Students

Students are advised to study the conventions for each text type, and to develop an understanding of the topics/issues. Students should remember not to write their name anywhere on their examination paper.

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

All student work and supporting materials are to be submitted as required. Where student work is missing, a 'Variations — Moderation Materials' form should be provided.

There is no need to submit the supporting materials (e.g. the texts studied for the in-depth study, the draft of the written tasks, and so on). Evidence of students' learning will only be looked for from the assessment tasks.

It is vital that moderators are able to access and hear the oral, as there is at least one oral task within each assessment type. Teachers should refer to the SACE website for guidance on the preparation of non-written materials and submission of electronic files, and submit work in accordance with these instructions. Discs should be checked to make sure that that all orals are able to be accessed by moderators.

A CD/DVD for each student with oral tasks in a separate file (not in a continuous single file) is a good option for the presentation of audio files. An alternative is to include a folder of tasks for each student on a single CD/DVD. With either of these options, students' identification (i.e. SACE number) should be indicated clearly for each audio file.

A copy of the approved learning and assessment plan should be included with each school package, together with a complete set of task sheets. If there have been changes in the learning and assessment plan since it was approved, the addendum should be completed.

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