

Chinese (continuers)

2012 Assessment Report



Government
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SACE
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CHINESE (CONTINUERS)

2012 ASSESSMENT REPORT

OVERVIEW

Chief Assessors' reports give an overview of how students performed in their 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.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Topics covered in both the folio and in-depth study were varied. Generally, students work was of a good standard, with grades assigned appropriately. Most students were able to cope with tasks and meet the standards and requirements outlined in the subject outline and according to submitted learning and assessment plans.

Assessment Type 1: Folio

In general, most students' work in the folio was of a good standard. Students were able to demonstrate their capabilities to use a good range of grammar structures and vocabulary, to meet the learning requirements.

However, some schools did not provide a copy of the learning and assessment plan, or the addendum if any changes had been made. In some instances, some of the tasks submitted did not match the submitted learning and assessment plan. Teachers are advised to provide a copy of the task sheets with the moderation material, and make use of the addendum (if applicable).

Some tasks for the text analysis did not provide opportunity for students to demonstrate learning in relation to the assessment design criterion IR (Interpretation and Reflection). It is important students are given opportunity to analyse language use.

Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study

In the in-depth study, the three assessments should differ in context, audience, and purpose, and be supported by evidence of research, interpretation and text analysis, and preparation. It is not appropriate for the same task to be used both in the folio and in-depth study, nor for the written response in Chinese to be virtually identical to the oral presentation in Chinese.

A range of different texts relating to the topic of the in-depth study should be selected for analysis and interpretation, so that students are able to explore their topic in sufficient depth. At least three of the texts should be in Chinese. It seemed that some students used only limited resources when conducting their in-depth study. A wide range of resources for the in-depth study is essential for the depth and quality of research, interpretation, and text analysis.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 3: Examination

Oral Examination

Section 1: Conversation

Most students were well prepared and were able to handle the questions well using appropriate responses. Although some students seemed flustered to begin with, they performed well once they had settled. Where students do not comprehend the questions, they are encouraged to seek clarification, for example, by asking for the question to be repeated. Where appropriate, the examiners reword the question.

Some responses were limited, and in these circumstances the examiners prompted the students for more information. However, most students were able to elaborate opinions, ideas, evaluations, and arguments without much prompting. When the question was understood, the responses were generally appropriate to the purpose, context, and audience, although some students gave single-sentence answers. Students should be advised to say more rather than less, where appropriate.

In their expression, the more successful responses demonstrated a variety of structures to convey meaning and also provided detail. Most students offered appropriate answers, but some occasionally slipped one or two English words such as 'Sydney' into their answers. 'Sorry' (in Language) was commonly used by students who made a mistake.

Most responses were coherent. In stronger responses the coherence was demonstrated from the use of cohesive devices and good logical sequencing. In weaker responses, answers were usually short and simple with few cohesive devices and, when longer answers were attempted, they were disjointed.

The most successful responses were when students fully engaged in conversation, proffered information, and in some instances even engaged in a humorous exchange with the examiner.

Section 2: Discussion

Most students prepared well for their in-depth study and offered fluent explanations of their research. It was clear that some students were not as well prepared for the discussion section as they were for the conversation section.

There was a variety of topics, although some topics dominated, and some of those did not allow the students sufficient scope to express their own opinions and ideas to any depth. For example, Chinese festivals, daily routines, birthdays, and Chinese food may not provide enough depth to allow students to realise their potential. Students are reminded that the topic chosen is to be associated with 'The Chinese-speaking Communities' or 'The Changing World' themes. Most responses were at least reasonably appropriate for the topic, but some had limited relevant vocabulary and so either did not comprehend some questions or were unable to discuss their topic in depth.

The students were quite diverse in their ability to explore their topics in depth. Those students who had thoroughly prepared themselves and who had chosen a topic that

enabled a diversity of opinions and responses were able to explore their topics in considerable detail and depth, including offering supporting evidence which, interestingly and encouragingly, sometimes originated from international student colleagues. At the other extreme were discussions that were based on simple topics and that tended to revolve around simple, one-sentence answers.

During the discussion, information was generally conveyed well. Some students made grammatical errors, but even so, they were still able to be understood. Most students were able to structure their responses logically and coherently, but students giving short, very simple answers denied themselves the opportunity to demonstrate logical and coherent sequences in their responses. Some students were not able to demonstrate more than superficial reflection on their topic, but most were able to explain what they had learnt and make comparisons.

In general, the students seemed to be better prepared for and more willing to interact in the conversation than in the discussion part of the examination. Some students needed prompting, and in some instances rephrasing of questions, for the interaction to be maintained.

Students who had been provided by their teachers with supportive texts written in Chinese provided distinctly better interpretations of their topics, but as a consequence the interpretations may not be the students' own. Many students had not related their topic to their own lives or situations.

Very few students used support objects during the discussion.

Written Examination

Section 1: Listening and Responding

Text 1

Text 1 was generally well done, but many answers did not provide necessary detail, (e.g. 'exchange/visiting students', not just 'students'). Students are advised to be detailed and specific in their answers.

Text 2

The range of responses was broader. Interpretation of language was generally quite good (e.g. '那也好' was generally well understood by the students).

Text 3

Question 3(a) was a challenge, with a number of responses not specific enough. Question 3(b) was very well done, with high marks achieved.

Text 4

For questions 4(a) and 4(b), many answers did not provide sufficient detail. In the case of question 4(c), many students did not consider the evidence carefully.

Text 5

For question 5(a), many answers were not specific enough. It was apparent that many students answered question 5(c) based on their general knowledge, not on their understanding of the text.

Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part A

The majority of students coped well with the tasks. They understood the general content of the two texts in this section and were able to respond to most questions, but lacked finer detail in their responses. Therefore, students are advised that they need to include all relevant points and ensure that sufficient detail is included in all answers.

Particular issues were noted in the answers to question 6(b), in which students only answered what ‘说唱音乐’ was, but neglected to discuss the context of the text; 6(c), in which very few responses noted that the youth in China were influenced, in comparison to all westerners; and question 7(b), in which some responses indicated that the author likes Xi’an’s dumplings, but missed the smokers in Xi’an restaurants.

Some responses did not support the ideas with enough information. The ideas tended to be given in their answers as they appeared in the text, without further analysis. Students are advised to take care to address all aspects of the questions in their answers. Students are also advised that an allocation of one mark does not necessarily mean that they are expected to present just a key word.

Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part B

Overall, most students did well in this section. The question allowed students to draw from personal experience in responding to the cues. However, some students did not fully understand the content of the given text; they only expressed their personal opinions about whether Xiao Chun should buy the computer (i.e. they did not grasp the fact that Xiao Chun had already bought it) and their personal views of the advantages and disadvantages of using the computer (i.e. they did not provide the views of the parents and the school as requested by the question).

Many students wrote sophisticated expressions in their responding letters, and a few students referred to the content of the letter with comments such as ‘我们澳大利亚学校和家长对高中生用手提电脑的看法和态度不一样’. Most students were able to extract much of the directly relevant information from the texts, and most covered the key elements in their responses, clearly complying with letter format, including the use of an informal tone with suggestions such as ‘你应该和你的父母再谈谈，把我们澳大利亚学生用手提电脑的情况告诉他们’.

A few students limited their letters to criticisms of Xiao Chun’s parents rather than focusing on responses about the approach of Australian students, parents, and schools. Some students tended to limit their responses to answers to Xiao Chun’s questions and did not comment on his experiences. Some took good advantage of the sentence structures in the original text, but others had trouble with paragraphing. Some students had difficulty using complex structures, and some lacked the vocabulary and grammar to express their meaning effectively.

Section 3: Writing in Chinese

Most students performed well in this section of the examination. About the same proportion of students chose to respond to each of questions 9, 10, and 11. Question 10 was the most popular by a slight margin, then question 9, and finally question 11.

Most students were able to handle their chosen questions and complete the task to a sound standard.

In responding to question 9, most students were very familiar with the format of letter writing, but some of them mistook it as an application letter and focused mostly on their Chinese learning experience, ignoring the request for a letter to an editor to encourage other students to continue the learning of another foreign language.

A few students misunderstood question 10 and wrote the article from an Australian student's perspective, not from that of a Chinese exchange student in Australia. Most students were able to convey generally appropriate information that was relevant to the context, purpose, audience, and topic. Most were also able to convey appropriate detail, ideas, information, and opinions; but only a few created interest and engaged the audience.

For question 11, some students wrote from their own perspective of studying overseas, without focusing on the challenges and opportunities facing the Chinese friend mentioned in the question.

Most students offered a good level of depth of treatment, but only a few were able to generate their own ideas and present and support them in depth. Some students lacked the vocabulary and grammatical skills to elaborate ideas and support their opinions.

Many students were able to use a range of expressions in their writing, but the accuracy of those expressions varied depending on how familiar students were with the content that they tried to convey. Most students attempted to use a range of cohesive devices, although some did not use them correctly or appropriately.

There were some common grammatical errors:

'...和.....不一样/不同' was mistakenly written as '...比.....不一样/不同';
'或者' was mistakenly written as '还是'.

'不但...而且...' is correctly used as an instrument indicating that there are two aspects to be expressed, but some responses did not express two different aspects; for example: '学汉语不但很重要而且很有用。' One of the reasons learning Chinese is important is because it is useful, and so 不但.....而且.....was not the most appropriate phrase to use here. It would have been better to write: '学汉语很重要因为汉语很有用' or '学汉语不但很重要而且很有意思。'

Most students followed the convention of letters and speeches, while others found the format of a diary more challenging. In the diary format, many responses closed by signing their names at the end as if they were writing a letter. In addition to the date, some students put the day and weather information at the start of the diary, but some responses contained inaccuracies in the words for different weather conditions.

Many students responded spontaneously instead of organising their information or arguments in a logical manner.

Students are advised to take care to use colloquial words and expressions only when appropriate in their writing. They are encouraged to be creative with their ideas and to organise their information more carefully.

Overall, for this section, teachers are advised to ensure that students not only practise writing a range of text types but also analyse the requirements of different questions to help them structure their thoughts in the written response.

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

Teachers are reminded of the following advice about preparing materials for moderation:

- Any missing student work should be detailed on the 'Variations – Moderation Materials' form.
- Recordings of oral interactions/presentations should be submitted to provide evidence of student work.
- Assessment decisions should be based on the performance standards.
- Work should be clearly marked and organised by student and assessment type. Label student work accurately, including CD and track numbers.
- Clear and complete documentation should be submitted, i.e. the approved learning and assessment plan plus the addendum (if applicable) and task sheets.
- Schools that combine classes are encouraged to cross-mark to ensure the consistent application of performance standards.

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