

CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9868/12
Reading

Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key
1	B	11	C	21	B	31	C
2	A	12	G	22	A	32	D
3	D	13	B	23	D	33	B
4	A	14	D	24	B	34	C
5	C	15	A	25	C	35	D
6	D	16	D	26	C	36	A
7	F	17	C	27	A	37	A
8	H	18	B	28	B	38	B
9	A	19	A	29	D	39	C
10	D	20	C	30	A	40	D

Key messages

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

- demonstrate genuine understanding of a passage
- read the questions carefully and provide answers based on the texts in the paper rather than using their own experiences or assumptions
- differentiate between synonyms, vocabulary and language structures within the context
- attempt every question in the paper, even the questions they feel less confident about.

General comments

This was the first examination of the new specification. The paper consisted of 40 multiple-choice questions.

Candidates read five different lengths of texts, featuring topics like science and education, photography, people's views about higher education, travel and dance. The emphasis of the questions moved between assessing learners' ability to understand detailed information, identify emotions and opinions which are stated or implied in texts. In order to do well on this paper, candidates also needed to demonstrate a good understanding of a wide range of vocabulary and language structures and to understand ideas and conclusions in discursive texts.

It was pleasing to see so many positive responses across centres. The vast majority of candidates understood the requirements of the specification very well and applied themselves exceptionally on this paper.

Comments on specific questions

Questions 1–6

Question 1 was answered correctly by 76 per cent of candidates who correctly chose option **B**. 18 per cent of candidates chose option **A** as they simply linked the sentence 我们从哪里来? 到哪里去 to the key words in option **A** 地方. For **Question 2**, the majority of candidates responded well; typical wrong answers were options **B** and **C**. **Question 4** proved to be the most challenging question in this exercise as only 48 per cent of candidates secured the mark. This question required candidates not only to fully understand paragraph three, but also to be able to draw conclusions. **Questions 3, 5 and 6** were answered exceptionally well as over 95 per cent of candidates scored the marks.

Questions 7–12

This exercise was a sentence gap-fill task. Learners read a passage about photography. The passage had six missing sentences and candidates had to choose the correct sentence from a choice of eight options to fill each gap.

The response to **Question 7** was positive as over three quarters of candidates secured the mark. The question required candidates to be able to work out that 总想为世界做点什么 means 做贡献 within the context. A typical wrong answer was option **B**. For **Question 9**, typical wrong answers were option **D** or **H**. **Question 10** was well answered as over three quarters of candidates gained the mark. A small number of candidates went with option **A** or **B**. **Questions 8, 11 and 12** were very well answered. It is worth mentioning that **Question 11** was one of the most successfully answered questions on the paper as 99 per cent of candidates secured the mark for this question.

Questions 13–20

This was a matching exercise in which learners read a text about four different people's views on whether high school graduates should go to university or not. This was the exercise that candidates scored most highly on across the whole paper as over 90 per cent of candidates answered all questions successfully. 99 per cent of candidates gave positive responses to **Questions 14 and 15**, which was excellent.

Clearly this was a topic that learners were very familiar with and it was pleasing to see such outstanding performance.

Questions 21–32

This multiple-choice exercise required candidates to read a passage about eco-tourism. Candidates' knowledge of a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures were tested in this exercise.

Again, the overall performance in this exercise was outstanding as over 90 per cent of candidates secured the marks in all questions except **Question 23**, which was answered successfully by 86 per cent of candidates. Those who lost the mark in this question mistook option **B** 一会儿.....一会儿 as the correct answer. In this exercise, 99 per cent of candidates secured the marks in **Questions 25 and 31**.

Question 33–40

In this final exercise, candidates were required to read a longer piece of text about a person's experience of learning to dance and to demonstrate their understanding of the text by answering a set of multiple-choice questions. These questions tested their comprehension and ability to identify opinions and draw conclusions from both explicit and implicit information. Despite the fact that the level of demand in this exercise was the highest of the whole paper, the performance was fantastic.

Lots of positive responses were seen in **Questions 33, 34, 35, 36 and 37**. It was amazing to see that all candidates handled **Question 35** with ease as the data showed 100 per cent of learners had secured the mark. Candidates found **Question 38** a little more challenging with 66 per cent choosing the correct option **B**. Option **A** was a good distractor as this question required candidates to understand 负面情绪 and, indeed, 29 per cent of candidates picked option **A** due to a lack of thorough understanding of the passage. For **Question 39**, only three quarters of candidates answered this question successfully. The question required candidates to understand the opinions expressed in the paragraph and to draw a conclusion, therefore, only option **C** 生活有苦有甜 was the correct answer. For **Question 40**, a typical wrong answer was option **A** as



candidates that chose this option only took the surface meaning 跳舞是兴趣爱好 from the passage. Only those candidates who understood the implied meaning secured the mark by choosing option **D**: 在跳舞上下了苦功夫.

CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9868/22
Writing

Key messages

In order to score the highest marks for essays, candidates are expected to communicate information, opinions, arguments and creative ideas clearly and effectively, with support/justification, as well as use text conventions and register appropriate to the given purpose and audience. Furthermore, they should organise ideas into coherent text by using a range of cohesive devices and paragraphing where appropriate, and employ a wide range of vocabulary and grammar effectively and accurately.

General comments

Despite the fact that this is the first year of this syllabus, the majority of candidates seemed to be well-prepared for the examination, and the level of the linguistic ability shown by some candidates was outstanding. Centres should be congratulated for their great input into this. Towards the top of the range, candidates displayed an in-depth knowledge of the topic and a clear understanding of the issues involved. Ideas were well-organised and arguments competently illustrated with relevant examples. A coherent structure was demonstrated with a logical progression of ideas leading to an effective conclusion.

The work of weaker candidates was characterised by using inappropriate style for their chosen task, i.e. failing to differentiate descriptive from narrative essays and a lack of development of ideas. For the argumentative essay, statements were sometimes overly generalised. Linguistically, there was also a reliance on *pinyin*.

Question 1

“我从社交媒体中所学的知识比老师在课堂上教的更有用。” 你同意这种看法吗？
请讨论。

This question sparked heated debate amongst our candidates and the view was evenly split. Regardless of which stance the candidates took, most responses demonstrated convincing arguments on the subject. Successful ones that argued for the motion approached the characterisation of social media's accessibility, practicality and coverage of knowledge. Effective arguments against the motion focused on the nature of knowledge obtained through conventional classroom teaching in terms of its creditability, thoroughness and interaction.

Candidates ought to focus on demonstrating the usefulness of 'knowledge' obtained through different channels by exploring the advantages and disadvantages of online versus conventional classroom teaching and learning. However, some candidates focused purely on teaching style, which detracted from the main topic, while some other weaker responses simply listed the pros and cons of the internet.

As mentioned in the general comments, candidates must read the question carefully and fully to understand what is being requested of them. In this task, candidates were expected to state their own view. Candidates who confidently analysed both sides of the argument should make sure they also give their own so as not to affect their marks for content.



Question 2

描写生日聚会后家里的样子及你的感受。

This question examined the candidates' ability to write a descriptive essay. Most candidates understood the requirement and were able to describe the scene and their feelings after a birthday party.

The majority of candidates were able to use detailed, multi-sensory descriptions. This successfully led to a vivid and immersive picture of the aftermath of a birthday party. Some good examples were 空气中充斥着蛋糕的甜味; 已经泄了气的彩气球半悬在空中; 生日快乐歌还在反复地播放着; 抹去脸颊残留的腻乎乎的奶油.

However, some candidates did not grasp the requirement, instead focusing on describing the extensive preparations before the birthday party, or their justification for such a party. Additionally, some candidates wrote a narrative essay instead, telling the story before and after the birthday, with only brief descriptions of the scene.

Question 3

叙述一次你坐飞机的经历。

This question examined the candidates' ability to write a narrative essay. Overall, the candidates' performance was pleasing, and some high-performing candidates did an excellent job, writing a well-organised account of their unique experience on a plane trip, with an impressive central idea and effective climax. Weaker responses often had the following characteristics: the plot lacked highlights, simply narrating the entire process of taking the plane in a step-by-step manner; the focus was placed on describing the scenery outside the window, overlooking the essence of narration; or the climax was cliché, mainly describing how they dealt with the turbulence on the plane. Therefore, candidates should carefully plan the plot of their narrative essay to make the experience convincing and engaging.

Learning points and advice for centres

- Candidates need to start on the right foot by understanding the task. This is probably a more fundamental issue that needs to be tackled from an early stage. Good exam technique, including the use of timed challenges, should help reinforce good habits and prevent the loss of marks.
- To demonstrate sound subject knowledge, candidates need to employ a thinking approach to the task. This usually means focussing on the key issues at stake and presenting a competent argument that can stand up to scrutiny. When properly assembled, such responses tend to flow, have no ambiguity and lead the Examiner through the argument in a persuasive manner.
- Good responses will be replete with well-chosen vocabulary and show a certain depth. Hybrid language, e.g. use of *pinyin* and/or English will not be considered an acceptable substitute.
- Time set aside for checks on spelling and punctuation should be factored into each response.



CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9868/32
Literature

Key messages

- Candidates should read the rubric carefully to understand the format and structure of the paper. Only two questions should be answered, one from **Section A** and one from **Section B**. Candidates should write the question number in the left margin of the answer booklet.
- Each question in **Section A** includes a passage from one of the set texts. This is a stimulus passage, and to answer questions fully, candidates need to go further than simply relating their answers to the given passage. They should be able to identify the significant issues raised in the selected passage and reflect on the text as a whole.
- Candidates need to read the questions carefully to ensure they fully address all aspects of the question asked. An element of evaluation and analysis of the text is needed to reach the higher marking bands; a simple re-telling of the story is not required.
- The questions are best answered using a clear essay structure with different paragraphs containing an introduction and a conclusion. The use of carefully selected quotations from the texts helps candidates to illustrate the points they wish to make or to develop their argument. Candidates should be encouraged to show analysis of the texts in their answers, commenting on the author's use of descriptive and expressive techniques.
- Candidates need to answer two questions in two hours, and time management is crucial.
- Handwriting must be legible.

General comments

The candidates' performance demonstrated that they had benefited from thorough preparation. They showed a solid understanding of key points in the texts and the requirements of the exam, and had effectively mastered various response techniques. The efforts of both the teachers and the candidates deserve recognition and appreciation.

Most candidates demonstrated a detailed understanding of the texts, with many also showcasing their knowledge of literary techniques in their responses. They displayed a thorough grasp of the characters and content, often going beyond the plot to discuss the social, political and historical contexts in China at the time. This familiarity with the broader social background enriched their analysis, particularly in responses that delved into the underlying themes of the works.

Candidates generally recognised the importance of focusing their responses on the text itself, analysing the plot or characters with appropriate illustrations. However, some essays could have been strengthened by the judicious use of brief, well-chosen quotations to support their points. Rather than summarising or repeating the story, candidates are encouraged to select a concise quote to illustrate their argument and then explain how the quotation supported their discussion.

On the other hand, a few candidates appeared unfamiliar with the works, leading to numerous errors in their re-telling and analysis of the plot. Candidates should select questions based on texts they have thoroughly read and studied to avoid significant mistakes in their answers.

Most candidates were able to respond in an academic essay style, with a clear structure that included a brief introduction, a well-organised main body and a conclusion, all presented in clear paragraphs. Although linguistic accuracy was not assessed in this paper, effective and clear communication remained essential.

Candidates are expected to be familiar with the examination requirements, which are detailed in both English and Chinese on the front page of the question paper. This was the first year of the new 9868 syllabus. The exam required candidates to answer two questions: one from **Section A** and one from **Section B**.



Candidates generally followed the rubrics and instructions better than in previous years. However, a few still answered three questions or responded only to questions from either **Section A** or **Section B**. Most responses were clearly labelled according to the questions on the scripts.

The most successful responses were those that demonstrated evidence of pre-essay planning and good time management. Each essay was marked out of 20, so it was important for candidates to allocate enough time to answer both questions equally well.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

顾城: 《顾城的诗》 (Selected poems by Gucheng)

Candidates who excelled in answering this question provided relevant and well-structured responses, which were supported by appropriate references to the text. Their answers showed a keen understanding of the symbolism in the poetry, effectively identifying and analysing the social and historical context. They also analysed and compared the poet's other relevant poems to explore the use of symbolism and literary techniques such as symbolism, metaphor, personification and contrast. The strongest candidates went further by including the different meanings of light and darkness (for example, in *Sheng Huo Huan Xiang Qu*). Weaker answers did not focus enough on addressing the question. When they chose other poems for comparison, the selected poems were not particularly representative and had less relevance to the theme.

Question 2

老舍: 《龙须沟》 (*Longxu Gou* by Laoshe)

This was a very popular question. Well-prepared candidates had a solid grasp of the plot. They effectively supported their arguments with relevant textual examples and provided multi-dimensional analyses. The reasons in their answers were explored from various perspectives, including the natural environment, historical background, social context and personal ideological factors. Weaker candidates demonstrated limited understanding, mainly focusing on narration or relying heavily on direct quotations. It is important to note that this question required candidates to focus on the darkness and hardships of life in old China, rather than comparing old and new China or discussing the benefits of the latter.

Question 3

白先勇: 《台北人》 (*Taipei Ren* by Bai Xianyong)

This was the most popular question among candidates. It was acceptable to agree or disagree with this question. However, many answers that agreed with the statement only used the unfortunate experiences of the men around Yin Xueyan as evidence. This level of analysis did not go deep enough. Stronger candidates examined the social background, human nature and desires, and nostalgia for past glory and homeland. They also explored the symbolic meaning the author gave to Yin Xueyan. This demonstrated a good understanding of the theme and the author's intentions.

Section B

Questions 4 and 5

西西: 《我城》 (*Wo Cheng* by Xixi)

Relatively few candidates chose to answer **Question 4**, and even fewer provided a well-organised analysis of the characteristics of the 'city' as depicted by the author. Some candidates only mentioned one part or aspect of the city, such as the air and the rubbish, parks or small houses, without offering a comprehensive analysis. Better answers referenced the background of the novel, highlighted the city's sense of community, and recognised its status as a city undergoing transformation. These candidates understood the author's intention to portray a young, dynamic and vibrant city, while also showing some critical thinking, such as noting the discomfort of the older population with the changes.

Question 5 was the least popular question among candidates. This question required a comparison of similarities and differences. However, many candidates focused only on Ayou's character and experiences without effectively comparing Ayou with other young people. Stronger candidates compared details like lifestyle, attitudes to life and work, and feelings about the city. This showed their familiarity with the work and a clear understanding of the characters.

Questions 6 and 7

铁凝: 《没有纽扣的红衬衫》 (*Meiyou Niukou de Hongchenshan* by Tie Ning)

Question 6 was a very popular question. The majority of candidates were able to analyse the love and care between the sisters. They were familiar with the plot and showed a good understanding of AnJing being the protector and Anran's love and attachment to her sister. Stronger candidates went further by providing relevant examples to analyse the deeper relationship. They pointed out that Anran represents AnJing's inner self and connected their analysis to the theme and social background. Weaker candidates focused more on narrating the plot, with some concentrating on the brief disagreements between the sisters. A few candidates mainly analysed the differences in the sisters' personalities, without focusing on their relationship.

Fewer candidates chose **Question 7**. Most of them were familiar with the story and could reference the few occasions when the painting appeared, connecting it to its symbolic meaning. This showed a solid understanding of the text and its themes. Most candidates could analyse how the painting reflected the father's attitude toward life and his dedication to art, as well as its impact on his daughter. Stronger candidates went further, explaining how the paintings contributed to understanding Anran's character and how they drove the plot. They also connected their analysis to the social background to highlight the themes and explored the complexity of the father's character. Weaker candidates struggled to make connections, often focusing on re-telling the plot rather than providing effective analysis.

Questions 8 and 9

钱钟书: 《围城》 (*Weicheng* by Qian Zhongshu)

Question 8 was another popular question. In this question, the educated elite should be viewed collectively, with Fang Hongjian as a central figure. However, it was not sufficient to analyse him alone. Some candidates relied on pre-prepared content, focusing solely on the analysis of the three 'besieged cities' without directly addressing the question, which led to lost marks. Strong candidates demonstrated a thorough understanding of the book and its social background. They used quotes and examples from different characters to analyse the author's use of satire and metaphor.

Fewer candidates chose **Question 9**. Most of them were familiar with the story and could discuss how Zhao's perception of Sun changed, providing effective examples as evidence. They also connected the character analysis to the social background and themes. Weaker candidates focused too much on re-telling the plot. Some tried to answer the question but forgot that it was about Zhao's perspective, not Fang Hongjian's, or they only gave a vague description of Sun.

