MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/03
Speaking

Key messages

Candidates must show the ability to use a variety of structures and precise vocabulary **both** in the Topic Presentation/Topic Conversation **and** in the General Conversation sections.
In the two Conversation sections, the Teacher/examiner **must** ask questions which allow the candidate to show that s/he can describe events or express ideas using **both** past **and** future time-frames. [See *Teachers' Notes Booklet* pages 9, 10 and 15 and also Appendix A of this document.]
Discussion in the General Conversation should be appropriate to the individual candidate's ability: the questions **must** be differentiated for each candidate.
At least two topics need to be covered in the General Conversation and should not overlap with the content of the Topic Presentation.
Teacher/examiners must not suggest possible answers or give clues to candidates.
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.
Centres wishing to use more than one teacher/examiner must be aware of the correct procedure for internal moderation. Centres wishing to use more than one Examiner **must seek permission from Cambridge before the Speaking Test period starts**. Permission must be sought for each new examination session. It cannot be carried over from one session to the next.

General comments

Most Centres administered and carried out the tests very well. In order to give candidates the best possible chance, teacher/examiners should ensure they have read the *Teachers' Notes* booklet carefully so that both the tests and the relevant administration are carried out correctly.

Previous Moderator's Reports for the Centre should be consulted.

In order to allow the moderation process to operate effectively, it is important that CDs arrive undamaged and on time. They must 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 candidates 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 candidates who have been included in the recorded sample, particularly in Centres with many candidates

Centres using more than one Examiner should include samples from each Examiner in an appropriate proportion.

Recording quality and presentation of the sample

The sample should always be saved onto a CD. 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, candidates and/or the teacher/examiner were not always clearly heard. If an external microphone has been used for recording, please make sure that it is nearer to the candidate than to the teacher/examiner. The recording should be checked at intervals by the Examiner to ensure that it is clear and there are no extraneous noises. In some Centres the CD received by the Moderator was almost inaudible, making moderation difficult.

The CD should not be stopped during the recording. The candidates should be introduced by name and candidate number by the **teacher/examiner**, not by the candidates themselves.

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

Internal Moderation in Centres

In most cases, Centres which had been given permission to use more than one teacher/examiner 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 teacher/examiner 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.

Centres with large numbers of candidates may use more than one teacher/examiner for the tests, but **this must be agreed by Cambridge in advance.** Permission must be sought for *each examination* series – **it cannot be carried over** from the previous examination series.

Details of the Centre's Internal Moderation procedures must also be sent to CIE, as specified on the 'Cover sheet for moderation sample'. *Guidelines for the Internal Standardisation/Moderation of Cambridge IGCSE Foreign Language Speaking Tests* are available from CIE. The form on page 9 of the *Guidelines* indicates the evidence that should be provided.

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

Working Mark Sheets

This year some incomplete Working Mark Sheets were submitted. These should be filled in with candidates' full names, the numbers of their Role Play cards, and signed and dated by the Teacher/examiner.

It is helpful to the Moderator if asterisks (*) are put against the names of the candidates who are included in the recorded sample, particularly in Centres with many candidates.

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 questions

Role plays

Teacher/examiners are reminded of the need for careful preparation. Centres are reminded that the Teacher/examiner must not create extra tasks, nor must s/he omit tasks. If the stipulated tasks are changed or omitted and/or extra tasks are added this will confuse candidates 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 candidate should be handed a single Role Play card and should complete both the Role Plays on that card. Candidates should be given the Role-play cards in **random order**, not 1, 2, 3, 4 or 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2… Centres must always **record the number of the card given** to each candidate in the space provided on the Working Mark Sheet.

The situations at the head of the Role-plays should be read aloud in Chinese by the Teacher/examiner before commencing the test. This is reassuring for the candidate, and establishes that he/she is playing a role, not merely answering for him- or herself. **The introduction should NOT be read in English.**

Candidates 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 candidate has understood the question.

The A Role Plays

All the terms used in these Role plays are in the Minimum Core Vocabulary.

> *You are planning a trip to the zoo with a friend.*
> Most candidates handled this Role play well.

A new pupil has just joined your class You are answering his/her questions.
Weaker candidates did not use the correct measure-word 节 for 'lesson'.

The question about the location of the toilet should have been answered by a location rather than, for example, 'In the Chinese lesson.'

You are on an aeroplane talking to a flight attendant.
Most candidates handled this well.

The B Role plays

You are at a Chinese language summer camp in Beijing. A journalist wants to write an article about the camp and is talking to you.

The third question 'What facilities does the camp have?' caused problems for candidates who did not know the term 设施 [facilities].

You have lost your mobile phone. You are talking to a friend at school.

Most candidates handled this well.

You are in a department store buying a present for a child

Some candidates said they were buying a present for a parent. Weaker candidates did not use the correct term for a unit of currency.

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。 The candidate should begin by stating clearly what his/he 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 candidates focus on their topic.

Topics chosen

Many candidates chose 'My family', 'My hobby', 'Sport, 'School life' 'My future' ,'My friend' , 'My holiday in ….', 'My pets' , or a comparison between life in two different countries. A few candidates appeared not to have prepared a topic at all. More unusual topics included: 'The US diet and the Chinese diet.', 'The British Christmas and Chinese New Year', 'Dreams', 'An embarrassing incident', 'When | moved to Shanghai', 'A Maths competition I took part in', 'My Mum's birthday', 'Education', 'Use of water', 'Distance learning', 'My balcony', 'My neighbourhood' and 'My on-line business'.

Candidates who chose 'Myself' as their topic were disadvantaged 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 candidates were thereby disadvantaged. In a few cases the Examiner did not ask any questions after the candidate had finished the presentation. In such cases **no** marks can be awarded, as the mark scheme specifically rewards **responses** to questions.

Topic Conversation

The teacher/Examiner should introduce this section **in Chinese**, for example by saying
'我现在问你几个问题。'

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

The Teacher/examiner should listen carefully to the candidates' presentations, and then lead them skilfully through the Topic Conversation by asking appropriate questions, allowing them both to develop their topic and to demonstrate their language skills. In some cases the Teacher/examiner ignored what the candidate had just said and asked a prepared question even though the answer to his/her question had just been given. This is very confusing for the candidate.

Centres are reminded that candidates should not be corrected during the tests.

Most Centres handle 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 <u>MUST</u> 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.**

Candidates 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 candidate can convey a past time-frame meaning. In such a case, **a <u>verb</u> is also required**, for example '我学了三年。'

Teacher/examiners should ask more questions, until candidates have showed they can convey meaning using <u>both</u> past <u>and</u> 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 candidates were disadvantaged. In most cases, however, it was carried out well.

Questions asked

In a few Centres <u>identical</u> questions were asked of <u>all</u> the candidates. This is not in the spirit of the examination and makes the whole exercise artificial and lacking in spontaneity. **Each candidate should be asked different questions at an appropriately challenging level, according to their ability**. The Teacher/examiner should judge the appropriate level of question for the individual candidate. A weaker candidate might be asked 'What sports do you like?', but a more able candidate might be asked 'Why do you think exercise is important?'

The General Conversation should be based on the individual candidates' 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.

'Presentations' in the General Conversation

There is no 'Presentation' within the General Conversation. **The General Conversation involves the Teacher/examiner asking the candidates a series of questions on two or three topics.** Some Centres seem to have required candidates to carry out a second presentation.

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Time-frames

The Teacher/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 candidates will be disadvantaged. Candidates 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 Booklet.*

See Appendix A.

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 candidate 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 *hui* 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 candidates 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 Booklet*.**

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Paper 0547/11 **Listening**

General comments

Candidates generally performed well in this examination. The spoken Chinese in the exam gradually increased in terms of difficulty and length. Except for the last exercise, questions were objective, requiring non-verbal responses, and visuals were used wherever possible. The questions moved from testing candidates' ability to understand short factual information, to testing their ability to understand and identify opinions and explanations in narrated accounts and interviews. It is essential that candidates learn and be very familiar with the Defined Content for the syllabus.

The topics and themes of the exercises were designed to be within the candidates' knowledge and life experiences. The number of excellent performances from Centres shows that the importance of listening and responding skills were well recognised. Candidates from most Centres were well prepared for the examination and were usually well aware of the requirements.

We should remind Centres that questions requiring a written response in Chinese are set in such a way that answers should be short and straight to the point. The listening examination is a test of comprehension, so Examiners do not expect complete sentences in response to the questions. In fact, by keeping their answers short, clear, and to the point, candidates can reduce the risk of adding incorrect material which can invalidate an otherwise correct response. When trying to write long sentences in response to those questions, candidates also risk not hearing or running out of time to produce the necessary key words.

In their written responses to the questions in **Exercise 2** in *Section 3,* candidates are allowed to write their answers in either Chinese characters or pinyin, but not English or other languages. Candidates must also refrain from using '/' or '( )'. Candidates need to make up their own minds about what they want to give as their answer and make it very clear to the Examiner in order to score well. When preparing their candidates, Centres should help their candidates improve in this area.

This year we saw an improvement in terms of candidates not ticking more than one box when only one choice is required as the answer, and not ticking more than 5 boxes when only 5 choices are required. A few candidates did not answer all the multiple choice questions or made less than 5 choices in **Question 16.**

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. Candidates performed the best on **Question 1** and least well on **Question 3** where choice **A** or **B** was often selected instead of the correct choice **A**. Among the other common mistakes made in this exercise, choice **A** was sometimes selected for **Question 2** and **C** for **Question 4.**

This exercise is designed to contain the most straightforward questions in this exam; it does still require candidates to be very familiar with the core vocabulary for this syllabus.

Exercise 2

Questions 6 – 10

This exercise featured a short conversation about what Wang Shan did the previous day. Candidates generally did very well with all the questions in this exercise and particularly well with **Question 6** and **Question 8.**

More mistakes were made with **Question 9**. Instead of the correct choice **C** some candidates selected **B.**

Section 2

Exercise 1

Question 11 – 15

This exercise tested the candidates' comprehension of a short monologue divided into 5 parts, in which a friend talks about the climate in Xi'an.

Candidates performed very well with **Question 11** and **Question 13**. More mistakes were made with **Question 12, Question 15** and particularly **Question 14**. The interesting thing is that the common mistake made with all those three questions was the tendency to select **D** as the answer.

Exercise 2

Questions 16

Candidates heard a conversation between Li Ming and a teacher in a School. Li Ming had just arrived at the School and was finding out from the teacher about the School facilities. Candidates generally performed very well on this exercise with the majority achieving 5 or 4 marks. The most common mistake seen in the performance on this exercise was not selecting **E.**

Section 3

Exercise 1

Questions 17 – 21

This exercise featured five friends talking about what they like the most. Most candidates answered **Question 17** and **Question 18** correctly. More mistakes were made with **Question 19,** and **Question 21**. Among the common mistakes, **G** or **F** was often chosen as the answer for **Question 19** and **C** or **E** for **Question 21.**

Exercise 2

Questions 22 – 25

In this exercise candidates heard an interview with an American professor in Nanjing University. As intended, this final exercise targeted to test the top-level IGCSE skills and provided challenge to many of the candidates.

Question 22 required candidates to state what kind of article the reporter was going to write.

This proved to be one of the most challenging questions in the paper. Many candidates answered the question perfectly well or gave answers that were acceptable. There were also many cases where the responses were unintelligible, which indicates a lack of understanding.

Question 23 asked candidates to state what subject Professor Jackson was teaching.

Many candidates responded well to this question giving perfect straight to the point answers. There were also many responses that were not acceptable, such as '英文' and '学习', which indicates that those candidates did not understand this section of the interview.

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Question 24 asked the candidates to list the two reasons why Professor Jackson came to China to teach.

This is reasonably challenging and many candidates did very well producing excellent straight-to-the-point answers.

A variety of answers were seen here, with a wide range of pinyin spellings as well as a wide selection of characters. Many of the responses showed an adequate understanding of the recording and satisfied the requirements of the mark scheme. However, there were some responses that did not sound like the correct answers or used characters that carry a different meaning from that of the correct answers. For example, there are cases where candidates wrote 'er fu' instead of 'zhang fu' and '文话' instead of '文化'. In cases like this, the mark was not awarded.

Question 25 asked candidates to state what Professor Jackson's candidates often do.

This proved to be a challenging question for many candidates. Again, a variety of responses were seen here, with a wide range of pinyin spellings and character usage. Many candidates responded well giving brief and straight to the point answers. Some candidates did not seem to have understood the key word '做菜' and as a result provided responses that were unintelligible.

In **Exercise 2** of *Section 3,* there were still quite a few candidates who used the notation '/' in their responses. It is inappropriate and unhelpful to use this notation in this examination. When answering a question, candidates need to make up their minds as to what they want to give as their answer and make that clear to the Examiner.

It should be noted that for each character in a response, candidates are advised to either write the character itself if they know how to or use pinyin instead if they do not know how to write that particular character. In other words, candidates can choose to use either pinyin or Chinese characters, whichever they think best expresses what they want to say. For example, 'zhang fu', '丈夫', 'zhang 夫' and '丈fu' are all acceptable.

It is not advisable to write both the character and its pinyin at the same time, because one of them could be written incorrectly, and as a result invalidates an otherwise correct response. Again, candidates need to make up their minds about what they want to give as their answer and make it very clear on the question paper.

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Paper 0547/12

Listening

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General comments

Candidates generally performed well in this exercise. The spoken Chinese in the listening examination gradually increases in terms of difficulty and length. Except for the last exercise, questions were objective, requiring non-verbal responses, and visuals were used wherever possible. They moved from testing candidates' ability to understand short factual information to testing their ability to understand and identify opinions and explanations in narrated accounts and interviews. The exercises worked well and discriminated across the full range of ability. It is essential that candidates learn and be very familiar with the Defined Content for the syllabus.

The number of excellent performances from Centres all over the world showed that the importance of listening and responding skills are well recognised and are usually taught well. Candidates from most Centres had been well prepared for the examination and were usually well aware of the requirements.

We should remind Centres that questions requiring a written response in Chinese are set in such a way that answers can be short and straight to the point. The listening examination is a test of comprehension, so Examiners do not expect complete sentences in response to the questions. In fact, by keeping their answers short, clear, and to the point, candidates can reduce the risk of adding incorrect material which can invalidate an otherwise correct response. This year, there were quite a few long and often unintelligible responses to **Question 23.** There were also cases where candidates wrote some extra material that invalidated an otherwise correct response to **Question 25**. A lack of understanding can be a cause of this; an effort to write as much as possible can be another cause.

In their written responses to the questions in **Exercise 2** in *Section 3,* candidates are allowed to write their answers in either Chinese characters or pinyin, but not English or other languages. Candidates must also refrain from using '/' or '( )'. Candidates need to make up their own minds about what they want to give as their answer and make it very clear to the Examiner. When preparing their candidates, Centres can help their candidates improve in this area.

This year we have seen an improvement in terms of candidates not ticking more than one box when only one choice is required as the answer. It is worth noting that in **Question 16** candidates should make sure that they follow the rubrics to tick only five boxes**.**

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. There were still many mistakes made with the first three questions and especially **Question 3**. Among the mistakes made, choice **A** was often selected for **Question 1** as well as for **Question 3**; choice **B** was often selected for **Question 2**. Compared with **Question 1, Question 2** and **Question 3**, candidates performed really well on **Question 4** and **Question 5**.

Exercise 2

Questions 6 – 10

This exercise featured a short conversation about what Wang Shan did on the first day of his summer holiday. Candidates generally did well on this exercise and performed particularly well in **Question 10.**

More mistakes were made with **Question 6, Question 8** and **Question 9**. When incorrect choices were selected for **Question 6** and **Question 8**, choice **B** was often selected instead of the correct choice **A**.

Section 1 is the least challenging in the exam. In **Exercise 1** candidates did much better in the last two questions than the first three. Candidates also performed slightly better in **Exercise 2** than in **Exercise 1**. There could be many reasons for this, one of which could be that candidates got more settled as they progressed in the examination. If this is the case, some extra guidance for candidates on examination techniques could be helpful.

Section 2

Exercise 1

Question 11 – 15

This exercise tested the candidates' comprehension of a short introduction given by a teacher about a newly built school building. It proved to be a challenging exercise for a good number of candidates.

Candidates performed better with **Question 13** and **Question 15**. More mistakes were made with **Question 11, Question 12** and **Question 14**. Many candidates chose **A, D** or **E** as the answer for **Question 11**. **A** was popularly chosen as the answer for **Question 12** and **D** as the answer for **Question 14. Question 12** proved to be challenging for many candidates. It looked like that many candidates mistook the keyword 'hua xue' (chemistry) in **Question 12** as 'hua hua' (painting).

Exercise 2

Questions 16

Candidates heard a conversation between Li Ming and a member of staff at a holiday village. Li Ming had just arrived at the holiday village and was finding out from the member of staff what he could do there. Candidates generally performed very well on this exercise with the majority achieving 4 or 5 marks. Mistakes were often made by not selecting **C, D** or **E.**

A number of candidates ticked either fewer or more than 5 boxes. Candidates are strongly advised to make all 5 choices and only 5 choices to their best understanding.

Section 3

Exercise 1

Questions 17 – 21

This exercise featured five friends talking about what they plan to do on Sunday. On the whole, candidates did very well with these questions. The interesting thing is that while **E** is not a correct answer to any of the 5 questions, **E** was often picked incorrectly as an answer to all the questions and particularly **Question 17, Question 19** and **Question 20**. **Question 19** proved to be one of the most challenging questions in this paper and many candidates achieving 4 marks in this exercise incorrectly chose **E** as the answer.

Exercise 2 Questions 22 – 25

In this exercise candidates heard an interview with the School Literature Club. As intended, this final exercise, targeted to test the top-level IGCSE skills, elicited the widest range of performance. There were some very accessible questions, affording even the weakest candidates the opportunity to score one or two marks, but there were also questions to challenge the most able candidates.

Question 22 required candidates to state who organised the School Literature Club.

Most candidates answered the question perfectly well or gave answers that were acceptable. There were

also some candidates who gave wrong answers, such as '五个人', '十五个' or simply '张月', which may be an indication that some candidates did not have a sufficient understanding of this part of the interview.

Question 23 asked candidates to state who came to the Club to give lectures.

This proved to be the most challenging question in the paper. There was a good variety of answers here. Some candidates answered the question perfectly well or gave answers that were acceptable. There were also a lot of responses that were not acceptable, such as '学校', '老师', '座家', and 'fu jia', to name just a few. Many candidates' responses were unintelligible, which may be an indication that those candidates did not understand this section of the interview.

Question 24 asked the candidates to list the two things that people do in the Literature Club.

This is a challenging question requiring candidates to include the verbs in their responses. Many candidates did exceptionally well producing excellent straight-to-the-point answers.

A variety of answers were seen here, with a wide range of pinyin spellings as well as a wide selection of characters. Many of the responses showed an adequate understanding of the recording and satisfied the requirements of the mark scheme. However, there were some responses that sounded far away from the correct answers or used characters that mean something totally different from the correct answers. A good number of candidates used characters such as '师', '思', '时', '司' or '事' instead of '诗'.

Question 25 asked candidates to state what Zhang Yue would like to study at university.

Many candidates did understand that Zhang Yue would like to study history in university and gave excellent answers. This is another place in this exercise where we saw a great variety of responses, including a variety of pinyin spellings and character usage. Although many of those were acceptable, some indicated a misunderstanding. For example, a number of candidates wrote '律师' or the pinyin for it, while a couple of other candidates wrote '力学'. There are also some cases where what the candidates wrote was long and unintelligible.

In **Exercise 2** of *Section 3,* there were quite a few candidates who used the notation '/' in their responses. It is inappropriate and unhelpful to use this notation in this examination. When answering a question, candidates need to make up their minds what they want to give as their answer and make that decision clear to the Examiner.

It should be noted that for each character in a response, candidates are advised to either write the character itself if they know how to or use pinyin instead if they do not know how to write that particular character. In other words, candidates can choose to use either pinyin or Chinese characters whichever they think best express what they want to say. For example, 'li shi, '历史', 'li 史' and '历shi' are all acceptable.

It is not advisable to write both the character and its pinyin at the same time, because one of them could be written incorrectly and as a result invalidates an otherwise correct response. Again, candidates need to make up their own minds about what they want to give as their answer and make it very clear on the question paper.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/13
Listening

General comments

Candidates performed well in the main. The spoken Chinese in the exam gradually increased in terms of difficulty and length. Except for the last exercise, questions were objective, requiring non-verbal responses, and visuals were used wherever possible. Questions moved from testing candidates' ability to understand short factual information to testing their ability to understand and identify opinions and explanations in narrated accounts and interviews. The exercises worked well and discriminated across the full range of ability. It is essential that candidates learn and are very familiar with the Defined Content for the syllabus.

The topics and themes of the exercises were well within the candidates' knowledge and life experiences. The number of excellent performances from Centres shows that the importance of listening and responding skills are well recognised. Candidates from most Centres were generally well prepared for the examination and were usually well aware of the requirements.

We should remind Centres that questions requiring a written response in Chinese are set in such a way that answers can be short and straight to the point. The listening examination is a test of comprehension, so Examiners do not expect complete sentences in response to the questions. In fact, by keeping their answers short, clear, and to the point, candidates can reduce the risk of adding incorrect material which can invalidate an otherwise correct response. When trying to write long sentences in response to those questions, candidates also risk running out of time to produce the key words which are necessary. This year there were some scripts where candidates wrote long unfinished sentences which could not be credited.

In their written responses to the questions in **Exercise 2** in *Section 3,* candidates are allowed to write their answers in either Chinese characters or pinyin, but not English or other languages. Candidates must also refrain from using '/' or '( )'. Candidates must decide what they want to give as their answer and not require the Examiner to choose for them. When preparing their candidates, Centres should help their candidates improve in this area.

This year there was an improvement in terms of candidates not ticking more than one box when only one choice is required as the answer and not ticking more or less than 5 boxes when only 5 choices are required.

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. Candidates performed the best on **Question 2** and least well on **Question 3** where choice **A** was often selected instead of the correct choice **C**. Among the other common mistakes made in this exercise, choice **B** was often selected for **Question 5** and **A** for **Question 4.**

Exercise 2

Questions 6 – 10

This exercise featured a short conversation about what Wang Shan did the day before. Candidates generally did very well on this exercise and particularly well with **Question 6** and **Question 8.**

More mistakes were made with **Question 9** and **Question 10.** Instead of the correct choice **C** for both questions, some candidates selected either **A** or **B.**

Section 1 is designed to contain the most straightforward exercises in this exam; it does still require candidates to be very familiar with the core vocabulary for this syllabus.

Section 2

Exercise 1

Question 11 – 15

This exercise tested the candidates' comprehension of a short monologue divided into five parts in which a girl tells her friend the places she will go to in the next five days. It proved to be a challenging exercise for a good number of candidates.

Candidates performed the best with **Question 11** and very well with **Question 15**. More mistakes were made with **Question 12, Question 13** and **Question 14**. Many candidates chose **E** as the answer for **Question 12**. **G** was popularly chosen as the answer for **Question 13** and **E** as the answer for **Question 14.**

Exercise 2

Questions 16

Candidates heard a conversation between Li Ming and a member of staff at a summer camp in China. Li Ming had just arrived at the summer camp and was finding out from the member of staff what he could do there. Candidates generally performed very well on this exercise with the majority achieving 5 or 4 marks. Mistakes were often made by not selecting **A** or **F** or both**.**

Section 3

Exercise 1

Questions 17 – 21

This exercise featured five friends talking about what they plan to do after they graduate from high school. As the exam progresses, the level of difficulty increases. On the whole, candidates performed well with these questions and more so with **Question 17** and **Question 19.** More mistakes were made with **Question 18, Question 20** and **Question 21**. Among the common mistakes, **B** was often chosen as the answer for **Question 18** and **A** was popularly chosen as the answer for **Question 20.**

Exercise 2

Questions 22 – 25

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview with the winner of the High School candidates' Singing Competition. As intended, this final exercise targeted to test the top-level IGCSE skills and provided challenge to many of the candidates.

Question 22 required candidates to state who taught Zhang Li singing.

This proved to be one of the most challenging questions in the paper. Many candidates answered the question perfectly well or gave answers that were acceptable. There were some cases where the responses were unintelligible. Responses such as '老师' or '德国人' were not accepted.

Question 23 asked candidates to state where Zhang Li practised singing.

Many candidates responded well to this question giving excellent answers or answers that were acceptable stating the correct key words. There were also a lot of responses that were not acceptable, such as '家里' and '老师', which indicates that those candidates did not understand this section of the interview.

Question 24 asked the candidates to list the two reasons why Zhang Li learned to sing.

This is reasonably challenging and many candidates did very well producing excellent straight-to-the-point answers.

A variety of answers were seen here, with a wide range of pinyin spellings as well as a wide selection of characters. Many of the responses showed an adequate understanding of the recording and satisfied the requirements of the mark scheme. At the same time, there were some responses that did not sound like the correct answers or used characters that mean something totally different from the correct answers. For example, there are cases where candidates wrote ' … ying yu' which sounds just like '英语'.

There are some other cases where candidates simply wrote something along the lines of 'because she liked singing'. In cases like these, the mark was not awarded.

Question 25 asked candidates to state what Zhang Li would like to do in the future.

This is a challenging question. Many candidates did understand that Zhang Li would like to become an actress and they gave excellent answers. This is another place in this exercise where we saw a great variety of responses, including a variety of pinyin spellings and character usage. Although many of those were acceptable, some indicated a misunderstanding. There are some cases where what the candidates wrote was long and unintelligible or was long but missed the key word '演员'.

It should be noted that for each character in a response, candidates are advised to either write the character itself, if they know how to, or use pinyin instead if they do not know how to write that particular character. In other words, candidates can choose to use either pinyin or Chinese characters, whichever they think best expresses what they want to say. For example, 'biao yan, '表演', 'biao 演' and '表 yan' are all acceptable.

It is not advisable to write both the character and its pinyin at the same time, because one of them could be written incorrectly, which as a result invalidates an otherwise correct response. Again, candidates need to make up their minds about what they want to give as their answer and make it very clear on the exam paper.

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MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/21   **Reading**

Key Messages

In order to perform well in this paper, the following points should be considered:

Candidates must study the questions carefully. Marks are awarded for accurately locating answers in the passage. A concise answer is therefore required.

Inaccuracies in Chinese are tolerated provided that the message is clear and that the candidate's answer does not give a different meaning, which might cause confusion in comprehension understanding the message.

Candidates must learn grammar points, especially common used phrases and patterns, as these give a clue for answers, as seen in **Question 14**.

Candidates should attempt every question in the paper, even those they may feel less confident of, such as **Question 32** and the last couple of questions.

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.

The difficulty of questions increases through the paper. However, the accuracy of answers is largely related to whether candidates can comprehend the key words or not. For instance, **Question 4** appeared to be more challenging due to the less common key words. All the vocabularies in the prescribed minimum core vocabulary list needs to be studied thoroughly before taking the exam.

Grammar learning and vocabulary learning should occur hand-in-hand. Understanding key sentence patterns and fixed phrases will facilitate the comprehension of passages.

More emphasis should be placed on attention to detail. It is a requirement to both understand the questions, as well as provide relevant answers. Just as random lifting cannot result marks being awarded, it is the same for any partial answer. For instance, **Question 19**, '语文老' is a wrong answer, even though it only missed one character '师'.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

The questions in this exercise are generally well tackled, especially **Question 3**, which was answered consistently well, with very few candidates making mistakes.

There are only two exceptions, **Question 2** and **Questions 4**, where even some strong candidates tended to make mistakes. This was probably because candidates were less familiar with the testing characters of '汽水', and '手套'.

Exercise 2, Question 6–9

The majority of candidates excelled in these questions, as almost all the candidates have delivered an excellent performance across these questions, which has demonstrated an improvement from last year.

Exercise 3, Question 10–12

For this exercise, candidates need to read a couple of sentences in Chinese before handling the following multiple-choice questions. Overall responses by candidates across ability levels were of a good standard. **Question 12** proved to be more challenging, as a reasonable amount of candidates did not understand the meaning of ' 橙子 ' (orange) and selected other fruits instead. Apparently candidates were more familiar with fruits such as apples, bananas rather than oranges. All the vocabulary should be covered before taking the exam.

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 13–16

This exercise requires 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. Both **Question 13** and **Question 14** were well answered. However, genuine comprehension and careful reading is required to obtain full marks. For instance, **Question 15**, which generated many incorrect answers, required candidates to understand the frequency phrase '每天／天天' (everyday) and '很少' (seldom) before choosing the correct word to complete the sentence. Whereas for **Question 16**, which appeared to be one of the most difficult questions in this paper, required candidates to draw a connection between characters and activities, and carefully select the relevant information.

Exercise 2, Questions 17–24

In this exercise, candidates were requested to read a passage of Chinese and to answer questions regarding it. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. The passage took the form of a letter from Xiao Liu to his friend Xiao Wang about the summer holiday he spent with his grandmother. Often, only a very brief answer was required, but provided that the correct answer was present, additional material copied from the text can be tolerated, unless contradictory or made the answer incomprehensible. The quality of written Chinese is considered only for the purposes of communication.

Many responses were excellent, which showed an improvement from last year. Although a handful of candidates decided not to attempt certain questions, such as **Question 20** – **Question 23**.

On the whole, candidates handled questions fairly well. Where there were wrong answers, the problems were frequently encountered with **Questions 20**. It was asking when does Xiao Liu go to visit his grandma every year. However, a number of candidates did not pay enough attention to the frequency word ' 每年' (every year) and question words ' 什么时候 ' (when). Instead, they repeated 'every year' in the question, which was not a sufficient answer. A good answer should be ' 暑假 ' (summer holiday). Some candidates also stumbled in **Question 24** as they did not select the entire key phrase ' 玩游戏 ' (play games), but only wrote ' 玩 ' (play), which has a different meaning.

Section 3

Exercise 1, Question 25–28

In this exercise, candidates were set the task of reading an extended passage in Chinese and then answering the multiple-choice questions. Responses for **Question 25** and **Question 27** were of a high standard, with the majority of candidates achieved full marks.

Question 26 generated the highest number of mistakes, with plenty of candidates incorrectly selecting C. It was because the distractor C also appeared in the passage. Furthermore, a few candidates encountered difficulty with **Question 28.** A common issue in answers across both questions was not carefully identifying the relevant text in the passage.

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Exercise 2, Question 29–34

In this final exercise, candidates were asked to read an extended passage in Chinese and demonstrate their understanding by answering short-answer questions referring to it, also in Chinese. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage.

As this is the final exercise, both the passage and questions become more difficult. Even though there were some excellent responses, generally speaking, candidates find this exercise challenging, some candidates even left the questions blank, especially **Question 32**. Trying for all the questions is highly recommended, as the ones who have tried for **Question 32**, generally have gained a mark.

The majority of candidates answered **Question 31** and **Question 32** with ease. Question 30 was not answered well. This was possibly due to candidates not understand the content of the passage but simply lifted the section after ' 抄笔记 ' (taking notes) the moment they saw the same words appearing in the question. Another difficult one is **Question 33**. The correct answer should be ' 做中国文化活动 ' (conduct Chinese cultural activities), whereas many candidates did not provide a full answer, either only verb ' 做 ', or only noun ' 中国文化活动 '. To sum up, although exam technique is useful for this exercise, a genuine understanding of the passage still is the key.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, Centres are advised to guide candidates as follows:

Candidates should study questions carefully. Marks are awarded for accurately locating answers in the passage. A concise answer is required.

Inaccuracies in Chinese are tolerated provided that the message is clear and that the candidate's answer does not give a different meaning.

Candidates should have a good grasp of grammar, especially concerning commonly-used phrases and patterns, as it gives a clue for answers. This was seen in **Question 13** and **Question 16**.

Candidates should attempt every question in the paper, even those that candidates may feel less confident of, such as **Question 27** and the last couple of questions.

General comments

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

The difficulty of questions increases throughout the paper. However, the accuracy of answers is largely related to whether candidates can comprehend the key words or not. For instance, **Question 6** appeared to be more challenging due to the less common key words. All the words in the minimum core vocabulary list needs to be studied thoroughly before taking the exam, especially the words which are similar, such as '下雨' (raining) and '下雪' (snowing) in **Question 1**.

Learning grammar and vocabulary learning should occur hand in hand. As understanding key sentence patterns and fixed phrases will facilitate the comprehension of passages.

Last but not the least, more emphasis should be placed to attention to detail. It is the requirement to both understand the questions, as well as provide relevant answers. Random lifting cannot result in any marks awarded, and the same applies for any partial answers. For instance, **Question 22**, '香辣豆' is a wrong answer, even though it only missed one character '腐'.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

Most candidates tackled the questions in this exercise very well, especially **Question 2**, which received excellent responses, with almost no candidate making mistakes.

The questions that generated more wrong answers were **Question 1, Question 3** and **Question 4.** For **Question 1**, some candidates chose B '下雨' rather than the correct answer C '下雪', possibly they are confused with raining and snowing. For **Question 3** and **Question 4,** it probably was due to candidates

being less familiar with the testing words '打保龄球' (play bowling) and '鞋子' (shoes). Therefore, all the vocabulary in the minimum core vocabulary list must be studied thoroughly before taking the examination.

Exercise 2, Questions 6–9

In general candidates delivered a stronger performance in this exercise. The majority of candidates excelled in **Questions 7–9**. However, a fair amount of candidates encountered difficulty with **Question 6**, as it required candidates to understand that '动画片' means cartoon, and to find the matching picture. Generally speaking, candidates were more familiar with other hobbies than different TV programmes, even though they were also in the vocabulary list.

Exercise 3, Questions 10–12

Overall, responses by candidates across ability levels were of a good standard for these multiple-choice questions. **Question 10** proved to be more challenging, as a reasonable amount of candidates did not understand the meaning of '历史' (history) and selected other school subjects instead. This may be because candidates were more familiar with school subjects such as science and English.

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 13–16

This exercise requires 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. Both **Question 14** and **Question 15** were well answered. However, genuine comprehension and careful reading is required to obtain full marks. For instance, **Question 13** and **Question 16**, which generated the most incorrect answers, required candidates to understand the fixed pattern of '帮助' (help somebody do something) as well as understand the relationships between characters in the passage.

Exercise 2, Questions 17–24

In this exercise, candidates were requested to read a passage of Chinese and to answer questions regarding it. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. The passage took the form of a letter from Xiao Liu to his friend Xiao Zhao about Bei Hai Park. Often, only a very brief answer was required, but provided that the correct answer was present, additional material copied from the text can be tolerated, unless contradictory or if it makes the answer incomprehensible. The quality of written Chinese is considered only for the purposes of communication.

The responses were excellent, which showed an improvement from last year. Although there were still a handful of candidates decided not to attempt certain questions, such as **Question 19** – **Question 24**.

On the whole, candidates handled questions fairly well, with only a small minority of candidates making mistakes. Where there were incorrect answers, the problems were frequently with **Question 23**.
This appears to be due to a number of candidates not paying enough attention to the grammar pattern of cause and effect '因为／所以' in the passage and did not provide the reason why Xiao Liu's friend likes that dish. Instead, they repeated the question 'because he likes that dish', which was not a sufficient answer.

Section 3

Exercise 1, Questions 25–28

In this exercise, candidates were set the task of reading an extended passage in Chinese and then answering the multiple choice questions that followed. It is positive to see that all the questions were answered fully.

Performance in the questions varied as candidates had mixed levels of success in them. **Question 25** and **Question 26** appeared to be the easier ones, whilst both **Question 27** and **Question 28** generated a higher number of mistakes. It was because some distractors for these questions have also appeared in the passage. For example, **Question 28**, the reason 艾玛 wanted to stop half through the marathon was

because her foot was injured, not because it was raining or her family member came to watch the competition, even though both have been mentioned in the passage. Therefore, when handling these questions, attention to detail is highly recommended.

Exercise 2, Questions 29–35

In this final exercise of the paper, candidates were asked to read an extended passage in Chinese, and to demonstrate their understanding by answering short-answer questions referring to it, also in Chinese. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage.

Although the amount of blank answers was decreasing, regrettably, there were still some candidates who decided not to attempt the questions, in particular **Question 34** and **Question 35**. As this was the last exercise in the paper, insufficient time is always a possibility, and so candidates could improve performance through more emphasis on time management in the future.

The majority of candidates demonstrated reading comprehension ability in these questions. Most candidates found **Question 33** and **Question 35** to be straightforward and consequently responses were of a high standard. In particular, the vast majority of candidates were aware of the needs to include verb when answering **Question 35**, which was a great improvement from last year.

A significant amount of candidates encountered difficulty with **Question 32**, which asked 'who told Tom what to do?' with the correct answer being '有经验的员工' (experienced employees). Many candidates did not provided the full answer but only copied out a partial phrase. More emphasis on studying fixed phrases in the future would be beneficial.

Question 31 also proved to be challenging in this exercise as it required candidates to provide an answer identifying how long can Tom rest during working hours before the match. Many candidates offered '没有休息时间' or '午饭时间' without indicating the specific time period. It is clear that in order to attain higher marks in this exercise, candidates need to ensure they gain an accurate understanding of the question itself, before rushing an answer.

MANDARIN CHINESE

| Paper 0547/23 |
| Reading |

Key messages

Candidates are reminded of the following points:

Read the questions carefully. Marks are awarded for accurately locating answers in the passage. A concise answer is therefore highly recommended.

Inaccuracies in Chinese are tolerated provided that the message is clear and that the candidate's answer does not give a different meaning.

Pay attention to grammar and learn common-used phrases and patterns. These often give a clue for answers, for example in **Question 15**.

Attempt every question in the paper, even those where candidates may feel less confident. There were omissions in **Question 22** and the last couple of questions.

General comments

There were many excellent responses to this paper and the vast majority of candidates were aware of the assessment requirements. The performance demonstrated by candidates in the paper was of a similar standard to last year.

Generally, the difficulty of questions increases through the paper. However, the accuracy of answers is largely related to whether candidates can comprehend the key words or not. For instance, **Question 3** appeared to be more challenging due to the less common key words. All the vocabularies in the prescribed vocabulary list needs to be studied thoroughly before taking the examination.

Grammar learning and vocabulary learning should occur together. Understanding key sentence patterns and fixed phrases will facilitate the comprehension of passages.

More emphasis should be placed on attention to detail. It is a requirement to both understand the questions, and provide accurate answers. Random lifting of text cannot result in any mark, neither can submitting a partial answer. For instance, in **Question 17**, '星期五' is a wrong answer, even though it only missed out a couple of characters '上个'. The result is a very different meaning.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

The questions in this exercise are generally well tackled, especially **Question 5**, with very few candidates making mistakes.

Question 2 and **Question 3** proved more difficult, with even a few strong candidates making mistakes. This was probably because candidates were less familiar with the testing characters of '毛衣', and '工厂'.

Exercise 2, Questions 6–9

The majority of candidates excelled in these questions. In particular, almost all the answers for **Question 8** were correct.

Exercise 3, Questions 10–12

For this exercise, candidates need to read a couple of sentences in Chinese before handling the following multiple-choice questions. Overall responses by candidates across ability levels were of a good standard. **Question 10** and **Question 12** proved to be more challenging, as a reasonable amount of candidates did not understand the meaning of '骑自行车' (ride a bike) and '铅笔' (pencil). Consequently, other answers were selected instead of the correct ones. All the vocabulary in the minimum core vocabulary list must be learned prior to taking the examination.

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 13–16

This exercise requires 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. Candidates usually answered **Question 13** very well. Genuine comprehension and careful reading are required to obtain high marks. For instance, **Question 16**, , required candidates to locate the key words '凉快' (cool) in the passage; understand that the question contains a negative word '不' (not), and choose the antonym of '凉快' (cool) – '热' (hot) for answer. This question garnered a significant amount of incorrect answers.

Exercise 2, Questions 17–24

In this exercise, candidates were requested to read a passage of Chinese and to answer questions on it. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. The passage took the form of a letter from Xiao Liu to his friend Xiao Lin about his older brother's birthday party.

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

The responses were mainly very good, although a handful of candidates decided not to attempt certain questions, such as **Question 21** and **Question 22**. Attempting every question is highly recommended.

Candidates handled questions **Question 23** and **Question 24** fairly well. Where there were wrong answers, this tended to be with **Questions 17** and **Question 18**. For **Questions 17,** the correct answer is '上个星期五' (last Friday), only '星期五' (Friday) is not sufficient as the meaning is different.

For **Question 18**, it asked 'Apart from his older brother, who does Xiao Liu know in the party?' Many candidates did not understand the grammar pattern of 'apart from', hence produced the wrong answer. Another area needing to be addressed is that key words have to be written fully to score a mark. For instance, **Question 23** '很特另' is a wrong answer, even though it only missed out part of the character '别'.

Section 3

Exercise 1, Question 25–28

In this exercise, candidates were set the task of reading an extended passage in Chinese and then answering multiple-choice questions. Responses for **Question 26** were of a high standard, with the majority of candidates achieving full marks.

Some candidates encountered difficulty with **Question 25**, whilst **Question 27** generated the highest number of mistakes, with plenty of candidates incorrectly selecting distractor B, which also appeared in the passage. A common issue in answers across both questions was not carefully identifying the relevant text.

Exercise 2, Question 29–34

In this final exercise, candidates were asked to read an extended passage in Chinese and demonstrate their understanding by answering short-answer questions referring to it, also in Chinese. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage.

As this is the final exercise, both the passage and questions were more difficult than earlier on in the paper. Even though there were some excellent responses, candidates find this exercise challenging. Unfortunately, a small amount of candidates left the questions blank, especially for **Question 29, Question 31 and Question 33**. Candidates are reminded to attempt all questions. Even when unsure of the answer, an attempt is encouraged.

The majority of candidates answered **Question 32(ii)** with ease. However, Question 30(i) was not answered well. This was possibly due to candidates not understanding the main advantage of using the mobile app was that people could send text messages without spending any money. Another difficult one was **Question 32(i)**. Many candidates answered *when* Ming Ming usually uses the mobile app to call his family members, not *why* he usually only uses the app before his bedtime. The same applies for **Question 33**. The correct answer needs to specify when Liu Wen uses the game app, whereas many candidates only answered when he does not use the game app. To sum up, studying the questions thoroughly and carefully remains the key priority.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/41
Writing

General comments

This was the third year of the new syllabus for the Writing paper. Most candidates understood the question type well and produced enough detail and additional information for **Question 2,** in particular. A few candidates failed to answer all of the required questions or answered questions in Pinyin. Some candidates used more complex structures and more difficult characters which reflected their linguistic ability. The topics were accessible to the majority of candidates and there were a number of excellent performances from Centres especially for favourite restaurants and sport activities. The majority of Centres referred to the last year's Principal Examiner Report for Teachers and prepared their candidates very well.

It is pleasure to see many excellent essays which were in the top band. There were a number of candidates who provided a detailed and expanded essay with plenty of extra information. Some candidates made mistakes in their chosen grammar or vocabulary. However, it was impressive that they had attempted to tell interesting stories and justified their opinions with more straightforward characters written correctly.

Centres should be aware 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. 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), it should be remembered that a composition requires a certain amount of words in order 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 they will not produce enough evidence of their ability to gain access to the highest marks.

Candidates should circle which topic they attempted to write in *Section 2* **Question 3** since there are three choices. Candidates did not need to copy out the questions, particularly for **Question 3**. Writing sentences that directly targeted the bullet points and expanded appropriately without the pre-setting information would have been a much more efficient way to gain higher marks. Again, letter format is not essential to score a communication mark. 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 than writing general opening and ending formalities.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The task was to write about five things you could use in a classroom and most candidates attempted this question well. The most popular words were about stationary, textbook, furniture, food and drinks etc. Other impressive answers included 量角器、圆规、铅笔盒、修正带、钢笔、计算机 etc. Some of the candidates misunderstood the rubric 'things you could use' and wrote teachers, classmates or people which were not accepted. Candidates should be reminded to read the task carefully; written both in English and Chinese. If there is any doubt in the Chinese instructions, the English ones are available as a confirmation, and the example is there to avoid confusion. Copying the example or answering the questions in pinyin or English was not awarded marks e.g. 书，but adding suffix 中文书 or 英文书 will score marks although not more than two marks in the same category.

Simple characters were encouraged in **Question 1** and are perfectly fine to score, e.g. 包、笔、尺、本子、灯、门、中文书 if they felt less confident about writing complicated ones e.g. 橡皮. Candidates should be advised not to repeat words with the same ending character in case the character they wrote was wrong e.g. 红毛（笔），黑毛（笔）。

If there were missing radicals or wrong 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(笔)、比(笔)、手几(机)、卓子(桌)、橡支(皮) etc.

No measure words or verbs were needed. A noun should be sufficient to score marks, therefore 看电影 was tolerated.

Question 2

This question requires candidates to write about their favourite restaurant based on four questions. The overall performance in this question was good since the candidates were familiar with the topic and the questions. With guided questions, weaker candidates could also produce some simple answers. A few candidates used complex structures in this section, such as 我之所以喜欢这家饭店，是因为不仅很好吃，而且我喜欢中国菜. However, simple structures and basic vocabulary are enough to score full marks in this section.

Candidates should answer all the questions and provide details to score the top communication marks, e.g. '我下个周末会去那个饭店，因为是我朋友的生日，而且他也喜欢那里的饭菜。' would score more communication marks than '我下个周末会去那个饭店'. It was frustrating to see perfectly able candidates with top language scores not be awarded full communication scores for this question by not having written a sufficient amount of points in a simple clear way. Candidates should not worry about the word count if the minimum word limit has been reached. It is a shame that some candidates crossed out correct sentences which contained more information due to the worry of exceeding the word limit.

Candidates should be aware that most of **Question 2** tasks are set in present tense apart from one task. When candidates wrote the answer, they should have been more alert with tenses and looked at the tense markers e.g. '会' or '了'. Some able candidates wrote what they did last week and why for the whole essay, therefore, communication marks couldn't be awarded.

Some of the answers for task 2 were '我和妈妈去'. Expanding the answer by saying '我和妈妈、爸爸和妹妹去' will get two more marks. As for task 3, some answers were just '我喜欢去，因为很好'. Details such as '因为有很多人、很大、东西很好吃' would help to score more marks for communication.

However, candidates should be aware that a list will not score more than three marks and if there is the same list for more than one task, only one list will be awarded e.g. 我和爸爸，妈妈，哥哥一起去饭店 (3 marks for tick 2 will be awarded) and 下个星期天我打算和爸爸，妈妈，哥哥一起去饭店 (1 mark for tick 4 for next Saturday). 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.

Candidates should be aware this is a writing exam, 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. Some candidates wrote the name of the restaurants in English instead of what type of the restaurant, which should be avoided.

A small number of candidates did not understand '打算什么时候去' and did not score communication marks. Most of the candidates managed to include extra information to score tick 5 for Communication, such as talking about what food they like to eat.

Some candidates who just showed a couple of different sentence structures were not likely to score a full mark for Language. Candidates are encouraged to use a variety of simple sentence structures in this question, not just a few types of sentence structures. But on the other hand, complicated structures were not essential to score the highest language marks in this question, e.g. '我喜欢吃肉、鸡蛋和鱼。它们又便宜又好吃，我常常在学校餐厅吃这些菜。' would score more communication marks than '我喜欢在学校餐厅吃又便宜又好吃的菜'.

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

高心(兴)、非长(常)、作(昨)天、身休(体)、午(牛)肉。 鸟（鸡）肉，鸣（鸡）肉，者（猪）肉，中国采（菜）

Others including 踢、风、画画、漂亮、有意思、电脑、电视 and 电影 appeared to be more challenging for some candidates to write precisely.

是 has proved to be overused once again this year when it was not needed, e.g. 牛肉是很好吃.

Common errors for simple characters: '口禾' for '和'

Use of '和' to link two sentences：我喜欢去那里因为弟弟喜欢吃米饭和也我喜欢吃米饭.

Travel by car: 我明天去饭店坐公共汽车.

Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. With five guided bullet points in **Question 3(a)** and **(b)**, candidates could opt for the one they felt more confident about. **Question 3(a)** and **(b)** were equally popular for paper 41. **Question 3(c)** was rarely chosen. School celebration and views on sports activities seemed to be well trained topics. Letter format was not as essential as it was in previous years to score communication and language marks, therefore, writing more information regarding to the bullet points is likely to score more marks 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?'; '我也想知道你的节日庆祝活动。 快给我写信好吗？ 祝你身体健康，万事如意！'

There were many great essays showing language skill and abilities of creative writing. Candidates who opted for **Question 3(c)** were very strong in language skills and used many describing words to describe the appearance of the thief and had a coherent story line.

Most candidates covered all the bullet points but some did not understand key words 庆祝 in **3(a)** and 多长时间 in **3(b)** in the scenario line and task, and simply copied the '我上个星期参加了节日庆祝活动', therefore, no communication marks awarded. Some candidates attempted to answer the task 多长时间 with when they do sports e.g. 我每个星期三做运动, or how many times they do sport e.g. 我每个星期做三次运动 therefore, the communication mark couldn't be awarded. All the words and rubrics in paper 4 are from the defined content, Centres should advise their candidates to revise it thoroughly to maximise the opportunity to understand the questions which will enable them to produce some answers.

Past time setting seemed to be a continuous issue as in previous years. Past tense marker 了 and past time expressions 最近 were ignored so candidates used either present or future tense '我每天做运动', '如果我有时间，我会和朋友们打篮球' to respond the question '最近你参加了什么体育比赛' and '去年学校有哪些体育活动' and therefore lost communication marks. Centres should advise students to read the questions with greater care and follow the patterns and tense frames which will help candidates achieve better results.

Some candidates copied all the task questions without answering them or simply took out the questions words and inserted with 很好 for 怎么样，很好玩 for 为什么，做东西 or 做很多 for 做什么，很多活动 for 什么活动， 发生了很好事 for 发生了什么事. They should be encouraged to write more in greater detail to score higher possible marks for accuracy of language and characters.

(a) For **3(a)**, the task was to write a letter to a pen-pal to describe a celebration at school. National day, Chinese festivals, music festivals and sport festivals were the popular choices. The majority of candidates covered all the tasks very well and they were well trained to use adjectives to express opinions. However, some candidates did not know what 庆祝 meant or only copied the task 我参加了学校的节日庆祝活动 and did not score for task 1 and missed out task 3. All the words and rubrics in paper 4 are from the defined content, Centres should advise their candidates to revise it thoroughly to maximise the opportunity to understand the questions which will enable them to produce some answers.

Most of the candidates answered task 2 very well. Some of them described the weather with some details or good phrases, such as 不冷也不热，气温从十八度到二十度、风和日丽、万里无云的天空、天气非常炎热、天气好得不得了、除了下雨以外也很冷.

It is pleasing to see Centres trained candidates very well with different activities for celebration. The majority of the candidates managed to write 我们唱歌、我们打篮球、我们吃中国菜 etc. to score the communication mark for task 3.

Majority of the candidates were able to answer task 4 and 5 '你最喜欢什么活动，为什么' quite well. Most popular simple answers were 我喜欢很多活动因为很好玩 which were fine to score communication marks, but candidates will be encouraged to use more sophisticated words and structures in order to score high marks for accuracy of characters and grammar.

The essays of many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters including or idioms 美轮美奂、和蔼可亲，畅所欲言 etc.

Characters and Grammar

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

1 Character mistakes, such as 蓝(篮)球，是(足)球、高心(兴)、非长(常)、作(昨)天、身休(体)、午(牛)肉. Others including 踢、风、画画、漂亮、有意思、电脑、电视 and 电影 appeared to be more challenging for some candidates to write precisely.
2 Use of 都：我爱都活动, instead of 我爱所有的活动 or 什么活动我都爱.
3 Mistake of using '是' with adjectives, e.g. '天气是冷'，'节日是好玩'
4 A few of candidates wrote 打运动, instead of 做运动.
5 Using 了 with feelings, adjectives or negative statements, such as 我觉得了、我喜欢了、我最喜欢了打网球、那天天气很冷了、我没了跑步.

(b) In **3(b)**, the task was to write an article about views on sports activities. The evidence showed the candidates who opted to do this question were very familiar with this topic area. Apart from the fourth task about 'how long do students do sports for every day?' which was did not understood by some candidates, the other four bullet points were easy to follow and guided the candidates to provide their opinion fully.

Most candidates successfully answered the bullet points to score full marks for Communication. However, small amounts of candidates did not understand what 多长时间 or 好处 meant and missed out the bullet points.

There might be some slips in detailed strokes, but most of the candidates were very familiar with the vocabulary related to sports, such as 篮球、网球、跑步 etc.

Most candidates were able to say at least 运动对身体有好处 and scored the communication mark, if not more details were included. Some good phrases include '体育百利而无一害', '学校有五花八门的体育活动可以让我们参加', '虽然我的比赛成绩没有可以名列前茅，但是我仍然拼尽全力为宿舍争光' or use of past tense '三年以前我很胖， 做了运动以后我不胖了'.

Although a majority of the candidates were able to answer task 5 '你觉得运动有什么好处' quite well, but some just wrote 有很多好处 and did not explain in detail. Candidates are encouraged to use more sophisticated words and structures in order to score high marks for accuracy of characters and grammar.

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Characters and Grammar

Candidates showed a good knowledge of easy characters and basic grammar structures. The most frequent problems were:

1   Confusion of 三小时 with 三时间.

2   No measure word for *hours*.

3   Overuse of 是 when it was not needed e.g. 他们是很高兴, 他们很好人.

4   Some Anglicisation occurred, e.g. 做运动帮我健康, which should be 做运动对我健康有帮助. '我打网球在学校', '我游泳上星期五', '我参加篮球比赛跟朋友'.

5   Comparison. Some candidates wrote 篮球比足球很好, instead of 篮球比足球好.

6   Use of 得 with verbs: some candidates wrote 打网球打的很好, or 打网球的好, instead of 打网球打得很好.

7   A few of candidates wrote 打运动, instead of 做运动.

(c)   In **3(c)**, the task was to write about a story of you saw someone stealing while you were taking the tube. A few dozens of candidates chose this task which required candidates have a good range of vocabulary and imagination. It was very pleasing to see that candidates who chose this task wrote some very impressive essays at native level. The descriptions of the thief's appearance were vivid and most popular stolen items the candidates wrote were either a mobile phone or a purse. The most candidates wrote the reaction by either caught the thief or asked others to help. However, a few candidates expressed their regret for not doing anything to deal with the stealing. Some candidates had a vivid description of the thief, e.g. 身形高大的男子, 有五颜六色的鞋子, 身穿一件黄色的长衬衫, 鬼鬼祟祟的 、很高很壮, 身穿运动服, 头戴鸭舌帽 、小偷东张西望 which were successfully created a sense of suspense and urgency, making readers want to find out what happened at the end.

MANDARIN CHINESE

General comments

The overall standard of responses appeared high this year. Most candidates tackled tasks well and not only answered the questions, but also produced additional detail for **Question 2** and **Question 3**. A handful of candidates failed to answer all of the questions or answer questions in Pinyin or with many English words. There was a great number of candidates showing their higher proficiency in Mandarin Chinese. Some candidates used more complex structures and more difficult characters which reflected their linguistic ability. It was welcome to see there were a number of excellent performances from centres all over the world.

In general, the topics and themes of the exercises were well within the knowledge and life experiences of candidates from around the world and the majority of centres referred to last year's Principal Examiner Report for Teachers and prepared their candidates very well.

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, it was very impressive that they attempted to tell interesting and complicated stories with most characters 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. Candidates should read the scenario and questions carefully, especially the tenses and key words which are all in the defined content booklets. 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), 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 they will not produce enough evidence of their ability to gain access to the highest marks. However, in **Question 2**, candidates should understand the importance of elaboration with simple sentence structures to achieve the maximum 10 marks for Communication. Complicated long sentences with many syntaxes will not necessarily score high marks.

Some candidates' presentation was not very tidy which made the marking difficult, such as half crossed out characters or messily inserted words. Some candidates crossed out correct sentences and forgot to write it again when they produced the final draft, therefore, some marks were needlessly lost. Centres should warn their candidates not to doodle on their paper- this should not happen in future.

Candidates should circle which topic they attempted to write in *Section 2* **Question 3** since there are three choices. They did not need to copy out the scenario lines. Writing sentences that directly targeted the bullet points and expanded appropriately without the pre-setting information would have been a much more efficient way to gain higher marks. Again, letter format was not essential to score a communication mark. The addressee and ending greetings were not included in the word count. Writing more information on the bullet points is likely to score more marks than writing general opening and ending formalities.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The task was to provide five things they might put in a suitcase and most candidates attempted this question well. Most candidates wrote about items from different categories, like 钱，护照，毛巾，手机，衬衫, etc. This showed that candidate have been taught well on topics and exam techniques. Some candidates, however, took the challenge and attempted more creative ideas, such as 日常用品，化妆品， 眼镜，肥皂 etc. On the other end of the spectrum, a few wrote in pinyin entirely, thus no mark was rewarded. Most of the terms written by candidates were accepted. Some used 子 inappropriately i.e. 笔子，衫子， but they were tolerated.

People, body parts and animals were not accepted since they are not 'things'. Candidates should be advised not to list more than two words with the same suffix in one category, e.g. 书，中文书，英文书, etc. Candidates are advised to use simple alternative characters rather than sticking with hard words or writing wrong homophone characters. If candidates were not very confident about producing more complicated words, they are encouraged to stick with the basic/easy ones they know well. Basic words such as 水、书、笔、画、花、刀 were good enough for scoring marks.

If there were missing radicals or wrong radicals which created a new character with a different meaning, the mark could not be awarded, e.g. 毛子（帽子），冒子（帽子），眼睛（眼镜），毛机（手机），手几(机)，咖啡（咖非），西巴（面包），手衣（毛衣），找 （钱），毛（笔），木（水），蓝(篮)球，电活(话)，毛(笔)，平(苹)果etc. Candidates could improve on their accuracy of certain characters with correct radicals and not use the characters with similar pronunciation.

Some candidates even created some words which are not in the dictionary, e.g. 冷衣，晚衣，夜衣, marks could not be awarded. A small number of candidates wrote characters which mainly function as radicals and can't be used on its own as an independent word, such as 木、元、日、毛、火, marks could not be awarded.

No measure words or verbs were needed. Candidates should be reminded that this question did not require sentences or phrase e.g. 我爸爸的书，我的鞋 etc. If a verb-object construction word appears, a complete object (noun) should be in place e.g. 看书、听音乐、画画儿. The answers like看、听 could not be awarded a mark.

Candidates need to read the instructions both in Chinese and English carefully. If there is any doubt in the Chinese instructions, read the English ones and the example as a confirmation to avoid confusion. There were a handful of candidates who didn't read the questions carefully and wrote衣服、旅行箱 、东西 which appeared in the rubric. Candidates are encouraged to add description to the words if they intended to use some of the words from the rubrics e.g. 红衣服，大衣服. Copying the example or characters from the rubric or answering the questions in pinyin or English was not awarded marks.

Question 2

This question required candidates to write about their favourite food. The overall performance in this question was very good. The majority of candidates were able to respond to the bullet points succinctly and accurately, displayed basic skills to manipulate the language and complete the task to a good standard. With guided questions, weaker candidates could also produce some simple answers especially for task (1) due to listing of food followed by (2) list of drinks and (3) listing of family members for 'who usually cooks dinner at your home'. Some candidates displayed skills of a native speaker with sentences like 每年冬天的时候，妈妈都会给我一大杯热可可来暖和身体。 我要再接再厉，以不辜负他们的期望。 Very impressive indeed！

Some other good examples with good idioms and structures are 妈妈的晚饭有各种各样的食物、妈妈煮的饭美味可口、我从小就喜欢喝茶、明天妈妈会做饭给我们吃、他们每天做美味佳肴。

It was frustrating to see perfectly able candidates with top language scores not be awarded full communication scores for this question by not having written a sufficient amount of points in a simple clear way. Candidates should answer all the questions and provide details to score the full communication marks, e.g. '我喜欢吃肉、鸡蛋和鱼。它们又便宜又好吃，我常常在学校吃这些菜。' would score more communication marks than '我喜欢在学校吃又便宜又好吃的肉'. Sometimes, full marks could not be awarded for communication though the sentence structures were perfect because the content included was insufficient to the tasks in what was otherwise a very good answer e.g. 食物是每个人都比不可少的东西。俗话说民以食为天，每个人都要吃东西，一日三餐，是我们最基础的需求。 Candidates should not worry about the word count if the minimum word limit has been reached. It is shame to see some candidates crossed out correct sentences which contained more information due to the worry of exceeding the word limit.

Some candidates who just showed a couple of different sentence structures were not likely to score a full mark for Language. Candidates are encouraged to use a variety of simple sentence structures in this question, not just a few types of sentence structures, e.g. 我最喜欢吃肉。 因为我每天吃肉，所以我最喜欢吃肉。 But on the other hand, complicated structures are not essential to score the highest language marks in this question.

Candidates should be reminded that a list would not score more than three marks. If one of the tasks was missing, the maximum communication mark was nine, no matter how many extra marks were gained from other bullet points. If two of the tasks are missing, the maximum communication mark was eight and so on. Candidates should be aware this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible and both English and pinyin should be avoided, especially for the key words, e.g. 我最喜欢吃 pizza, or 在家一般 maid 做晚饭。 Pinyin and English words cannot count towards the communication mark.

Candidates could improve on their accuracy of certain characters, e.g. 牛肉-午肉；菜-采；苹果-平果/评果；果汁-果计；咖啡 – 咖非；八点-人点；一般 - 一船；饭-反；西巴（面包）。

A handful of candidates did not understand 一般，谁 so they copied out the sentence 'who usually cooks dinner at your home' and could not produce the answer. Candidates need to learn question words, like 谁，怎么样，什么样 etc. and the words in the m in order to understand the tasks and produce answers.

Some candidates lost marks in task 5 due to the fact that they did not mention future tense either using future time phrase e.g. 明天 or future tense marker 想 or 要, instead of writing in present tense, e.g. 我六点吃晚饭. Therefore, candidates should be reminded to read the questions carefully to avoid either misunderstanding or unnecessary omissions.

Accuracy of Language was generally good; simple and straight to the point answers were largely seen. Candidates should, however, be reminded to use varied sentence structures and avoid anglicised structures. There were some common grammatical errors appearing in responses and candidates could improve their performance by placing emphasis on the following:

The use of language is not accurate.

The most common mistakes were using '和', '是' and '做' incorrectly.

(a)   '和' is wrongly used to link sentences, e.g. 我家一般妈妈做晚饭和爸爸有时候也做晚饭。

(b)   '是': 晚饭是很好，肉是好吃。 水是好喝。

(c)   misused '做', 妈妈不做我喝可乐 instead of '妈妈不让我喝可乐', or 饮料会做我变胖, instead of 饮料会让我变胖

(d)   明天我的爸爸去家七点。

(e)   我喜欢很多吃。我喜欢中吃、美吃和日吃。

(f)   我喜欢吃中国食。

(g)   我喜欢美国喝。

(h)   他还做足球。

(i)   我和她在餐可了长得。

(j)   他们煮很好。 我的喜欢的水果吃是葡萄，又苹果又草莓。

(k)   我们常常吃晚饭在十点。

(l)   我们的晚饭的食物是好对我们身体。

(m)   我喜欢水因为它是很有用身体。

(n)   我觉得吃肉，可以有胖。

(o)   我是女儿，所以应 jian 康。

(p)   我从小每个星期中午总是会吃云吞面一两次，迟到变了我最喜欢的食物到现在。

(q)   奶奶煮的晚饭每次都吃到津津有味。

Wrong character writing as the result of inaccurate pronunciation

(a)   在家里我妈妈做完饭。她是家庭祖父。（完饭 - 晚饭，祖父-主妇）

(b)   我已得小时候妈妈带带叫我吃灯鸡。（已得 – 记得）

(c)   我妈妈中是做完饭。（中是 - 总是，完饭 - 晚饭）

Miswritten characters with wrong radicals

(a)   水很更宜，也时我身体好。（更宜 – 便宜， 时 – 对）

(b)   在家里美天做完饭。(美天 – 每天)

(c)   晚饭很妈。（妈 - 好）

(d)   我喜欢很多美味渴口的东西。（渴 – 可）

Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. The types of questions were similar to the previous ones in the past two years so the candidates were not unfamiliar with it and opted for the one they felt more confident about. **Question 3(a)** 'favourite actor/actress' and **Question 3(b)** 'views on parks' seemed the most popular choices. Letter format was not as essential as it was in previous years to score a communication mark, therefore, extra expanded and detailed information for the bullet points are required to score the full communication marks. 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 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?'; '我也想知道你最喜欢的演员。 快给我写信好吗？ 祝你身体健康，万事如意！'

While over 70 per cent of candidates chose **Question 3(a)**, nearly 20 per cent of candidates who opted for **Question 3(c)** wrote really interesting and complicated stories, and also described the letter and actions in detail. There were many excellent essays showing great language skill and great abilities of creative writing.

Many candidates tried to use difficult words and Chinese idiomatic phrases and chengyu like 津津有味、 各种各样、人山人海、五颜六色、车水马龙、新鲜的空气、百闻不如一见 etc. although there were some common characters mistakes in a few essays such as 作（昨）天，一（以）后，以（已）经，高心（兴），高行（兴），可一（以）.

Candidates who scored highest tended to have a range of sentence patterns, such as 虽然。。。但是，不但。。。而且，先。。然后，都，又。。。又，一。。。就 etc. structures in the defined content booklet.

(a)   For **3(a)**, the task was to talk about a favourite actor/actress. **Question 3(a)** was the most popular choice although some candidates did not understand the key word actor/actress and wrote about their pen pal, their friend or themselves instead of an actor, thus lost a mark on Communication. Candidates generally managed to produce some content relevant to the task chosen, while the strong ones conducted coherent writing with a variety of sentence structures and vocabulary and very interesting and exciting details included in the response.

Task 1 or 2 were well tackled without much difficulties, but for task 3 '他/她来过你的国家吗', some candidates tended to use present tense time phrases, such as '不来过' or '不来'. Some candidates used future tense markers '想' or '要' to answer the question 他会来我的国家, 他要来我的国家, thus they lost a communication mark for this question. Candidates should be advised to be able to use past tense markers e.g. 过 or 了 to indicate past tense frames.

Since some candidates did not understand the character of 'actor/actress and acting in movie', they wrote random activities related with students' daily life, e.g. go to lessons or eating lunch to answer task 4 '除了演电影以外，他/她还做过什么'. Ideally the answer should be job related words or some activities e.g. singing, dancing. Therefore, it is essential that candidates know the words in the defined content and know the task setting before writing the essay. A good example: 18 岁过后就没有上学了，他不是很有钱所以要帮人洗车才有钱.

The majority of the candidates were able to answer task 5 '你为什么喜欢他/她' quite well. Most popular simple answers were '他很好'，'她很漂亮' which were fine to score communication marks, but candidates will be encouraged to use more sophisticated words and structures in order to score high marks for accuracy of characters and grammar.

Characters and Grammar

The essays of many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters. There were a number of homophone or near homophone errors and character with similar shape, such as 作（昨）天，昨（去）年，一（以）后，午（牛）肉，兴好（幸好），高笑（搞笑），国为（因为），蓝（篮）球，母（每）天，该（孩）子，觉的（得），弟一次（第），不次（下次），学饺（校），文花（化），狍（狗），亡（忙），冈（网），夫汽（天气），犬发（头发），方更（方便），叫生（叫声），并（开），方学（放学），友时（有时），时见（时间），上店（商店），卖（读），座（坐），功做（工作），水国（水果），休习（休息），脱明（聪明）。

Candidates showed a good knowledge of Chinese grammar and vocabulary.

- 他拥有一双明亮的眼睛和一头棕色的头发。
- 她很美，美到很多人把她称为天使。
- 他不但能承受一切困难和压力，还能演一部很精彩、很动人的电影。
- 可惜他从来没来过我的国家，不然我一定会去找他。

The most frequent problems were:

1   Anglicisation, e.g. 她是我最喜欢电影从我小时候。 到小学六年级他演员在学校里。The sentence pattern was frequently written wrongly when a time phrase and place word was involved.

2   The use of '过'. For the question "has she/he been to your country", many candidates responded to it without applying the particle '过'. 他不来我国家 or 他要来我的国家.

3   The use of '了'. 我每天做了运动。 - conflict tense '每天'and'了'
• 每天我和我的朋友一起做了运动在学校。
• 我从小的时候看了他们的电影。

4   Same as **Question 2**, the excessive use of '和' between sentences, e.g. 他很友好和他常常最开心.

5   Overuse of 是 when it was not needed e.g. 电影是很好，她是很美丽。我是十年了。

6   Lack of variety in the sentence patterns or vocabulary, e.g. 他很好，很有意思 for opinion.

7   Use of 得 with verbs. Mistakes such as 她打篮球打的非常好。打网球打的很好, 打网球打地很好 or 我不太好打篮球.

8   Common mistakes in syntax: some candidates wrote 我不去中国很多。

9   Mistake of using '都', for example, 都我和他做过运动 or 我做了都画画儿和足球比赛. A few candidates used '都' correctly in terms of grammar, but wrote it as '者'.

10   Some candidates could not tell how to use 会 and 可以 in the right context.

11   Wrong verb, e.g. 她有很多礼貌。

12   Wrong noun and adjective to describe person's appearance, e.g. 小花是一个很美的女。她的面很小。 她的头发很大。

13   Confusion of last上 with next下：下个年小王来香港。你下一次说你想要知道我最喜欢的一位演员。

14   Homophonic words: 她去生在英国。（去生 - 出生）
• 她每次得大了第一名。（得大了 – 得到了）
• 她和喜欢游泳。（和 – 很）
• 她近说新加坡的商店很便宜。（近说 – 听说）

(b)   The task was to express views on parks. This was the second popular topic this year and those who answered this task generally did well. However, some candidates did not answer task (2) and (3) with the past tense frames. A small amount of the candidates did not understand 好处 and lost the communication mark for that and some candidates could not produce characters about 坏处. All the words and rubrics in paper 4 are from the defined content, Centres should advise their candidates to revise it thoroughly to maximise the opportunity to understand the questions which will enable them to produce some answers.

Candidates seemed unfamiliar with past tense marker 了 and past time expressions 最近 so they could not produce past tense for 'whom did you go to the park with recently' and 'what did you do in the park', they used either present or future tense '我每天都会跟我的家人一起去了公园", "每个星期五晚上，我会和朋友们一起去公园里踢足球' to respond the question '你最近和谁去了公园' and '你们在公园做了什么', therefore, lost communication marks. Centres should advise students to read the questions with greater care and follow the patterns and tense frames which will achieve better results.

The last task was 'What are the benefits of having a park for middle school students', some candidates just wrote 有很多好处 and did not write details. The same situation happened in task 3 'what did you do in the park', they just wrote 做很多东西 and did not expand. Students should be encouraged to answer the tasks with greater details in order to gain both communication marks and language marks.

Characters and Grammar

The range of characters seemed promising. Candidates could expand the range of vocabulary and sentence patterns on different activities or opinions since they were familiar with the topic area and could produce careful and interesting work.

However, some common errors were:

Some Anglicisations occurred, e.g. '跑步在公园'
Misuse 出 as 去: 我们出外面玩。

(c)   This topic was the least popular task which candidates attempted. The task was to write about a story of what was happening after receiving a letter from your school. Most strong candidates choose this task with positive answers e.g. being selected as basketball player for school team; exam results; best students. Most of the candidates managed to elaborate the story with interesting plots and a complete storyline. Some candidates used the 把 structure well, for example, 学校寄来的一封信把我吓了一大跳。

Some contents were neutral or not so positive, e.g. about brother's suspension/expulsion letter due to poor performance from school; not paying school fees etc. which could score equally well compared with the positively framed essays. However, candidates should be advised to write a clear story line rather than treating each task individually and simply answer the questions to avoid possible irrelevance.

Candidates scoring highly were those who wrote a good story using a wide variety of vocabulary and sentence structures. Candidates should be advised not to copy out the whole question before starting their story, nor 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 difficult for candidates to demonstrate their language ability.

A few candidates who chose **3(c)** were too ambitious and were trying to tell a complicated story but ended up using Pinyin, quite often for keywords, or simply just made up a similar character with similar pronunciation since the vocabulary required to answer the question was less common in general. Also, whilst they were trying to tell a complicated story, the sentence patterns and syntax were incorrect, which made it hard to communicate the idea.

A few candidates copied all the task questions without answer them or simply took out the questions words and inserted with 很好 for 怎么样, 做过东西 for 做过什么，发生了很好事 for 发生了什么事. Candidates should be encouraged to write more in detail.

Characters and Grammar

Many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters. Other common errors were:

1   Some Anglicisation occurred, e.g. '我吃饭在饭店', '爸爸妈妈买我一个手机'，'我高兴在我的学校'.

2   Homophonic words: 我得大（到）了第一名。爸爸个（给）我看。学校有很多公科（功课）。 我的考试及（即）将到来。

3   Missing radicals, e.g. 爸爸卖（读）了这封信，他笑了。

4   Using present tense throughout the writing, when most of the bullet points needed to be responded to with a past timeframe.

MANDARIN CHINESE

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Paper 0547/43
Writing

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General comments

Most candidates understood the question paper format well and produced enough detail and additional information for all the questions. The fluency and proficiency of Chinese in this year's cohort was very impressive. Very few candidates failed to answer all of the questions. The majority of the candidates used more complex structures and more difficult characters which reflected their true linguistic ability. It was pleasing to see that the topics were accessible to the majority of candidates and there were a number of excellent performances from Centres especially for **Question 1** and **3(a)**.

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. Since this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible, and both English and pinyin should be avoided. Writing hometowns in English was not able to gain marks; candidates fared better writing countries to avoid losing marks. Use of pinyin with correct tones for name of small places or towns should be avoided for future exams.

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), 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 accuracy. Candidates, however, 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.

Candidates should circle which topic they attempted to write in *Section 2*, **Question 3** since there are three choices. Candidates did not need to copy out the questions, particularly for **Question 3**. Writing sentences that directly targeted the bullet points and expanded appropriately without the pre-setting information would have been a much more efficient way to gain higher marks. Letter format is not essential to score a communication mark. 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 than writing general opening and ending formalities.

Comments on Specific questions

Question 1

The task was to write about five things you could see at your friend's birthday party and most candidates attempted this question well. The most popular words were about food, drinks, furniture, presents, clothes etc. Some of the candidates misunderstood the rubric 'things' and wrote friends or people which were not accepted. Candidates should be reminded to read the task carefully which was written in English and Chinese. If there is any doubt in the Chinese instructions, read the English ones and the example to avoid confusion. Copying the example or the words in the rubrics or answering the questions in pinyin or English could not be awarded marks e.g. 东西, 饮料， but adding the suffix 大饮料 or甜饮料 scored, although not more than two marks in the same category.

Simple characters were encouraged in **Question 1** which were perfectly fine to score, e.g. 包、笔、肉、本子、灯、门、书 if candidates felt less confident about writing complicated ones e.g. 椅子. Candidates should be advised not to repeat words with the same ending character in case the character they wrote was incorrect e.g. 红毛（笔），黑毛（笔）.

If there were missing radicals or wrong 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(笔)、比(笔)、手几(机)、卓子(桌) etc.

No measure words or verbs were needed. Use of a noun was sufficient to score marks, therefore 吃饭、喝水 was tolerated.

Question 2

This question requires candidates to write about their hometown based on four bullet points. The overall performance in this question was good since candidates were familiar with the topic and the questions. With guided questions, weaker candidates could also produce some simple answers. However, a few candidates wrote their hometown's name in English which wouldn't be able to score marks, they could write countries or at least Pinyin with correct tones for this particular task to avoid losing marks for both task1 'where is your hometown' and 4 'where would you like to live in future' if they did not know how to write their small town's name in Chinese characters. The same rule applies to task 3 'what fun places are available', any general places e.g. 饭店，电影院 etc were acceptable apart from a real place with an English name like 'North Island'. Candidates should be aware that factual errors will not be penalised. Sophisticated syntaxes were welcome but simple structures and basic vocabulary are enough to score full marks in this section.

Candidates tackled task 2 'what is the weather like there' very well and wrote many extended and detailed answers to score the top communication marks, e.g. '那里的天气很好，夏天不冷也不热，冬天有时候下雪' rather than just 那里的天气很好. Candidates should not worry about the word count if the minimum word limit has been reached. It is a shame to see some candidates had crossed out correct sentences which contained more information due to the worry of exceeding the word limit.

Candidates should be aware that most of **Question 2** tasks are set in present tense apart from one task either in future or past tense. When candidates wrote the answer, they should have been more alert with tenses and looked at the tense markers e.g. '会' '想' or '了' '过'.

A few candidates did not understand 将来 in **Question 2** task 4, so used present tense to write the answer and lost the communication mark. All the words and rubrics in paper 4 are from the defined content, Centres should advise their candidates to revise it thoroughly to maximise the opportunity to understand the questions which will enable them to produce some answers.

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.

Some candidates who just showed a couple of different sentence structures were not likely to score a full mark for Language. Candidates are encouraged to use a variety of simple sentence structures in this question, not just a few types of sentence structures. On the other hand, complicated structures were not essential to score the highest language marks in this question, e.g. '那里有游泳池、体育馆和电影院。游泳池又大又便宜，而且离我家很近' would score more communication marks than '那里有又大又便宜的游泳池'.

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

Wrong character, e.g.一走（起），一舟（般），不（下）雨，问（因）为，不太然（热），不太零（冷），百（白）狗，母（海）边，禾（和），公（空）气犬（太）不好
Wrong measure words: e.g. 十四（个）年
Some Anglicisation occurred, e.g. 公园在附近我家。是晴，有时侯雨。天气是很好

Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. With five guided bullet points in **Question 3 (a)** and **(b)**, candidates could opt for the one they felt more confident about. **Question 3(a)** was the most popular choice for paper 43 and **Question 3(c)** was rarely chosen. Summer Chinese camp seemed to be a well-trained topic and students were very familiar with the characters needed for composing the essay. It is pleasing to see there were less opening and ending formalities in candidates' work. Letter format was not as essential as it was in previous years to score communication and language marks, therefore, writing more information regarding to the bullet points is likely to score more marks 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？'； '我也想知道你下个假期的打算。快给我写信好吗？祝你身体健康，万事如意！'

Most candidates were very strong and understood all the tasks so they covered all the bullet points with ease. They also used past tense frames and past tense marker 了 correctly comparing with 42 and 41 cohorts, therefore, top marks for the accuracy of grammar were often seen.

(a) For **3(a)**, the task was to write a letter to granny to talk about a Chinese summer camp in Shanghai. The majority of candidates covered all the tasks very competently and had been well trained to use adjectives to express opinions.

No one missed task 1 'who did you go with'. Variety answers for task 2 were showed the competent using justification and description, e.g. 我每天学三个小时中文；我每天去学校学中文；我和很多中国人说中文，看中文电影；我们请好老师教我们.

It is pleasing to see Centres trained candidates very well with different activities apart from learning Chinese for task 3. The majority of the candidates wrote 我们唱歌、画画儿；我们打篮球、我们吃中国菜 etc. and the accuracy of characters was often considerable.

Future tense word '打算' caused no problem for the candidates answering task 5 '你下个假期有什么打算' and generated good responses.

The essays of many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters including or idioms 丰富多彩、和蔼可亲、 既严格又亲切 etc. Accuracy of Language was generally good, simple and straight to the point answers were largely seen. Candidates should, however, be reminded to use varied sentence structures and avoid Anglicised structures. There were some common grammatical errors appearing in responses and candidates could improve their performance by placing emphasis on the following:

> Wrong character, e.g. 非常女（好），不太然（热），照（热），不太零（冷），中文哥（歌），者（都）经（绍）常，字（安）静，交（饺）子，胶（饺）子，中国采（菜），电影阮（院），博玚（物）馆，犬足泰（太极拳），犬（大）公园
> Wrong measure words: e.g. 十四（个）年，夏令营的老师很有意思，很流行
> Wrong structure: e.g. 他们都对我很帮助的。在利马没最冷。
> Anglicised structures: e.g. 后我们一个课里我们学习说。每天者（都）我们吃中国饭。我犬（太）爱这个假期在中国。我会学习汉语跟学同很多的国。

(b) In **3(b)**, the task was to write an article about views on online shopping. Most candidates who opted to do this question were very familiar with this topic area and produced some excellent essays. Many candidates tackled the tasks with ease and provided their opinion and justification about advantages and disadvantages in detail.

The same like in **Question 3(a)**, the candidates chose **3(b)** also used past tense frames and past tense marker 了 correctly comparing with 42 and 41 cohorts, therefore, top marks for Accuracy of Grammar were often seen. However, there were some common mistake as below and candidates could improve their performance by placing emphasis on the following:

Incorrect characters, e.g. 描（猫），一船（般），便且（宜），铅（超）市，各（名）人，两钦（次），午（牛）肉，直（真）大，口禾（和）

Incorrect words: e.g. 校（书）包，不（没有）坏处，

Incorrect structures and use of English words: e.g. CD 机，我想上网是好 for 年轻人，我来想开始网店是很好。我的老师不会做网上。他有 website 帮他卖多。在网上买东西的坏处是很好。

Anglicised structures: e.g. 也上网是好处因为商。因为很好钱。有很多人，还我的朋友。

(c)　In **3(c)**, the task was to write about a story about how you saw an injured dog in a wood. Just a dozen of candidates chose this task which required candidates to have a good range of vocabulary and imagination. It was very pleasing to see that candidates who chose this task wrote some very impressive essays at native level. The description of the dog's appearance was vivid. The most candidates wrote the reaction by either taking the dog to a vet or asked others to help. The sample of some vivid description, e.g. 卷卷的毛，大大的眼睛，发抖的身子，可怜的样子 which were successfully created a sense of urgency to help the little dog, making readers wanted to find out what happened in the end. There were hardly any grammar mistakes for the top end essays, but a few common errors were:

Incorrect characters, e.g. 貂，招（狗），咋（昨）天，作（昨）天，犬（太）好