

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/11
Listening

General comments

Key messages

Candidates generally performed very well in this paper. **Section 1** mainly tested candidates' ability to spot the key words of the information from short sentences. **Section 2** included longer sentences for candidates to pick up the factual information. Although sentences were longer, they also gave candidates a chance to double check their answers since the information was repeated in other words or examples were provided. **Section 3** tested candidates' ability to understand and identify opinions in narratives, conversations or interviews. Learning the Defined Content for the syllabus thoroughly will help candidates to score high marks.

Candidates should be aware that for multiple choice questions, they need to indicate their final answers clearly. This is the same with the written responses. A small number of candidates did not clear their first attempt properly and ended up with providing two answers, which was not acceptable.

In **Section 3 Exercise 2**, candidates are not expected to answer in full sentences. Selecting the key words is perfectly acceptable. Writing out the full sentences of what is heard jeopardises the marks as it shows that the candidates cannot locate the key information. Candidates also risk missing the following information or running out of time when they wrote down full sentences. When candidates were not sure about how to write the answers in characters, answering in pinyin is equally valid.

There were a few candidates using '()' or '/' in **Section 3 Exercise 2**. Candidates are strongly recommended to avoid this as they need to show their final answers clearly. Answers in the brackets or after the slash will not be considered as their answers.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1

Question 1–5

Candidates generally performed well in this question. The topics covered food, future jobs, School life and the weather, which are likely to be the first topics that candidates learn. Candidates did particularly well on **Question 1 to 3**, but many candidates chose B, instead of C for **Question 4**. As for **Question 5**, some candidates chose C, instead of B, and even some able candidates made a mistake on this question.

This exercise expected candidates to pick up the key words from short and straightforward statements; therefore, candidates who were familiar with the core vocabulary for this syllabus would be able to tackle this question.

Exercise 2

Question 6–10

The vocabulary in this exercise related to hobbies and drinks. Candidates did well in this exercise, but more mistakes occurred on **Question 9** and **10** with some candidates choosing A.

Section 2

Exercise 1

Question 11–15

This exercise is about going shopping in a department store. Even though all the key words were in the Minimum Core Vocabulary list, the topic areas covered in the exercise were broader; therefore, some candidates found this exercise more challenging. In particular, **Question 15** seemed to be the most difficult with many candidates choosing B, instead of C. For **Question 13**, some candidates chose C or E, instead of D.

Exercise 2

Questions 16

Candidates heard a conversation between Zhang Xue and her father, talking about Zhang Xue's preparation for her trip to France. Candidates generally performed well in this exercise with the majority achieving at least 4 marks. Comparing to other correct answers, H and I were more often missed, even by the able candidates. Many candidates ticked E as the right answer while a small amount of the candidates also mistook B or G as the correct answers.

Section 3

Exercise 1

Question 17–21

In this exercise, five people were talking about what they did at the weekend. The statements were not as straightforward as those in **Section 1**, and some candidates were distracted by words that were not the answers. In particular, **Question 21** appeared to be the most difficult, with some candidates choosing F instead of G. Most of the candidates answered **Question 19** and **20** correctly. As for **Question 17**, a small amount of candidates selected A or G. There were some candidates choosing A for **Question 18**.

Exercise 2

Questions 22 – 25

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview between a journalist and Wang Li, who was the winner of this year's national high school novel-writing contest. As this was the final exercise of the paper, it required candidates to have a solid understanding of the vocabulary and sentence patterns.

Question 22 asked candidates to state when Wang Li started to write novels.

This question seemed to be challenging for many candidates. Even though the answer key 中学 was common, many candidates did not manage to understand it correctly. There were also variations of the answer 'zhong xue', such as 'zhong jue', 'zhong que', 'zhong shi', or 'zhong zue'...etc. This means that candidates were not familiar with the sound of 'x'. Most of the candidates answering in characters scored this question, but a small amount of candidates wrote 中家 and lost the mark.

Question 23 was about Wang Li's favourite subject at School.

The majority of the candidates picked up the correct word 历史 and answered it correctly either in characters or pinyin. However, a small amount of the candidates wrote 历史、反史、力史、‘li xue’ or ‘li shu’ and did not score.

Question 24 required candidates to write what Wang Li’s hobby is.

Candidates answered this question most successfully. The majority of the candidates wrote the answer in pinyin ‘paobu’ correctly or wrote a combination of pinyin and characters, such as pao步 or 跑bu. It was a shame that a few candidates attempted to write in characters but got it wrong as 包步. It is therefore recommended that if in any doubt, candidates can write in pinyin and still score.

In **Question 25**, candidates were required to give the two reasons why Wang Li wanted to go travelling abroad.

This question also seemed to be very challenging. For 25 (i), some candidates spotted the key word 作家, but did not include the verb 认识, which could not deliver the meaning of ‘getting to know other writers’. Some candidates knew which part in the conversation was the answer, but unfortunately did not manage to score the mark as the pinyin was not sound-alike. For example, ‘zuo ren’, ‘shu jia’ ‘zhuo zhu’, ‘zhuo zha’ or ‘guo jia’. There were some candidates answering in characters perfectly and others used a combination of characters and pinyin to score the mark.

For 25 (ii), comparing to 25 (i), more candidates understood the sentence and scored the mark. However, similarly, some candidates did not include the verb ‘学’ and only wrote 外语, which could not deliver the full reason of why Wang Li would like to travel. There were also a variety of pinyin spellings such as ‘wan yu’, ‘huai yu’ or ‘way yu’. For those candidates who seemed not to understand the phrase ‘学好’, they answered ‘hao wai yu’, ‘xue hai wai yu’, ‘shu hai wai yu’ ‘xie hao wai yu’ or ‘xia hao wai yu’...etc. Some candidates seemed to get the rough idea of the answer, but did not manage to follow the exact meaning. Therefore some answers such as 会别的语言, 喜欢别的语言, 去外国学习 were seen.

It is advised that candidates pay attention to their presentation when writing their answers. Some candidates scribbled and their writing was unintelligible, while others did not cross out their attempted answers properly, making it difficult to see which their final answers were. Examiners could not give credit in such instances.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/12
Listening

Key Messages

Except for the last exercise, questions were objective, requiring non-verbal responses, which candidates performed well in. To do well in this examination, it is essential that candidates learn and are very familiar with the Defined Content for the syllabus. It is also essential that candidates do plenty of listening comprehension practice. To perform well in the last exercise that requires verbal responses, candidates also need to be able to write down their answers in characters or pinyin. These answers can be very short but must be straight to the point.

General Comments

The number of excellent performances this year shows that centres recognise the importance of listening and responding skills, and that these skills are being well taught in many centres. In general, the topics and themes of the exercises were well within the knowledge and life experience of candidates from around the world.

The examination was a test of listening comprehension and visuals were used wherever possible. Candidates from most centres had been well prepared for the examination and were usually well aware of the requirements. It is helpful if candidates develop the habit of reading rubrics carefully and following the instructions; the format of the paper and the question rubrics remain constant from year to year. When preparing their candidates, centres should ensure that candidates clearly understand the rubrics, as such familiarity can only aid and reassure them in the examination.

It is worth noting that when responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, if a candidate makes 2 choices whether in pencil or ink, the mark cannot be awarded. Answers which candidates do not wish the Examiner to consider must be clearly crossed out.

Candidates should also be warned that they must tick the number of boxes stated in the rubric, such as in **Question 16**. For **Question 16**, it is also advisable that when ticking their choices, candidates put their ticks in the little boxes next to the letters rather than the pictures themselves. Ticks put in the pictures themselves are not obvious to see.

For **Questions 11–15** and **Questions 17–21**, candidates were required to write the correct letter in the appropriate box. Candidates are advised to write their chosen letters in the boxes in clear handwriting.

For **Exercise 2** in **Section 3**, Examiners do not expect complete sentences in response to these questions. Candidates are allowed to write their answers in either Chinese characters or pinyin, whichever enables them to express what they want to say more clearly and correctly. A response written in Chinese characters or pinyin that have minor inaccuracies can be accepted, provided that the response's meaning remains clearly correct according to the recording. Candidates are advised to keep their answers clear and straight to the point. Adding extra material can invalidate an otherwise correct response.

This year there were a few cases where ' / ' or ' () ' was used in responses to **Questions 22–25**. Candidates need to make up their minds regarding their responses to a question and avoid using ' / ' or ' () '.

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. Most candidates scored 4 or 5 marks. Most candidates responded to **Question 3** and **Question 5** correctly.

The most common mistake made was selecting **C** for **Question 1**, in other words selecting ‘鸡’ instead of ‘鸡蛋’. Other mistakes include selecting **C** for **Question 2**, and **B** for **Question 4**.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

This exercise featured a short conversation about what Wang Shan did on his grandfather’s birthday. Generally speaking candidates performed better on **Question 6**, **Question 8** and **Question 10**.

More mistakes were made with **Question 7** and **Question 9**. When incorrect choices were selected for **Question 7** and **Question 9**, choice **A** was often selected.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 11–15

This exercise tested the candidates’ comprehension of a short explanation of where things are on a bookshelf. While many candidates did well here, it also proved to be challenging for a good number of other candidates. In this exercise, for each question the whole variety of choices were selected by candidates as a response. The most common mistake was choosing **E** instead of **B** for **Question 15**. In other words, ‘电话’ was incorrectly chosen by many candidates instead of ‘电脑’.

Amongst other mistakes in this exercise, **C** was often selected as an answer to any one of the questions even though **C** only serves as a distractor here.

Exercise 2 Questions 16

Candidates heard a conversation between Li Ming and his tour guide. Li Ming was visiting the U.K. He was talking with his tour guide to plan some activities. Candidates generally performed very well on this exercise and many achieved 4 or 5 marks.

Mistakes tend to be missing choice **B** or choice **F**.

With this exercise, candidates are advised to make all 5 choices to their best understanding and not to tick more than 5 boxes. It is very pleasing to see that this year candidates did this exercise according to this principle except the very few.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 17–21

This exercise featured five friends talking about what they plan to do on their birthdays this year. On the whole, candidates did very well with these questions. In this exercise, candidates performed better with **Question 17** and **Question 19**. More mistakes were made with the other three questions. Many candidates incorrectly chose **D** as the answer for **Question 21**. Some candidates chose **B** or **D** as the answer for **Question 18**, and **D** as the answer for **Question 20**.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Zhang Yue, a participant at a summer camp in Germany. As intended, this final exercise, targeted to test the top-level IGCSE listening skills, elicited the widest range of performance.

Question 22 required candidates to state who organised the summer camp.

In this final exercise, candidates’ responses to **Question 22** showed the largest variety. Most candidates answered the question well or gave answers that were acceptable. There were also responses to this

question that were incorrect, among which were ‘小张’, ‘学长’, ‘校章’ and ‘师长’.

Question 23 asked candidates to state Zhang Yue’s favourite activity at the summer camp.

Again most candidates answered this question perfectly well or gave answers that were acceptable. There were some minor inaccuracies in character writing and pinyin spelling.

There were responses that were not acceptable including ‘吃饭’, ‘早饭’, ‘坐饭’, ‘做反’ and ‘走饭’.

Question 24 asked the candidates to list the two reasons for holding the summer camp in Germany.

This is a challenging question. Many candidates did really well producing very good answers or responses that might have some minor inaccuracies in character writing or pinyin spelling but adequately demonstrated sufficient understanding of this part of the interview.

- (i) The key word here was 大学. Most candidates understood that well and responded correctly. There were cases where the candidates wrote ‘很多好大的学校’. This meant something very different from ‘很多好大学’ and was not acceptable.
- (ii) The key word here was ‘不热’ or ‘不太热’. A variety of responses in both characters and pinyin were seen here, most of which conveyed the meaning clearly and were acceptable. There were responses to this question that were not accepted including ‘不太然’, ‘不头热’ and ‘不犬热’.

Question 25 asked candidates to state where Zhang Yue would go the following year.

A variety of responses were seen here. There were many responses that were short and straight to the point or were longer and more explanatory, both of which well demonstrated that the candidates understood what was said in this final part of the interview.

The required answer to this question was ‘日本’. It was perfectly fine to respond ‘去日本学日语’. There were some candidates who responded ‘学日语’, which was not acceptable because this response did not tell us the location that she would go to.

There were also a variety of responses written in characters that were not acceptable, including ‘日体’, ‘白本’, ‘本日’.

On the whole, candidates performed well in this last exercise.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/13
Listening

Key Messages

To do well in this examination, it is essential that candidates are very familiar with the Defined Content for the syllabus. It is also essential that candidates do plenty of listening comprehension practice. To perform well in the last exercise that requires verbal responses, candidates also need to be able to write down their answers in characters or pinyin. These answers can be very short but they must be straight to the point.

General Comments

The number of strong performances this year shows the understanding of the importance of listening and responding skills.

The examination was a test of listening comprehension and visuals were used wherever possible. Candidates from most centres were well prepared for the examination and were usually well aware of the requirements. It will be helpful if candidates get in the habit of reading rubrics carefully and following the instructions. The format of the paper and the question rubrics remain constant from year to year. When preparing candidates, centres should ensure that candidates clearly understand the rubrics, as such familiarity will support candidates in the examination.

It is worth noting that when responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, if a candidate makes two or more choices, whether in pencil or ink, the mark cannot be awarded. Answers which candidates do not wish the Examiners to consider must be clearly crossed out.

Candidates should be warned that they must tick the number of boxes stated in the rubric, such as in **Question 16**. For **Question 16**, it is also advisable that when ticking their choices, candidates put their ticks in the little boxes next to the letters rather than the pictures themselves. Ticks put in the pictures themselves are not obvious for the Examiners to see.

For **Questions 11–15** and **Questions 17–21**, candidates were required to write the correct letter in each appropriate box. Candidates are advised to write their chosen letters in the boxes in clear handwriting.

For **Exercise 2** in **Section 3**, Examiners do not expect complete sentences in response to these questions. Candidates are allowed to write their answers in either Chinese characters or pinyin, whichever enables them to express what they want to say more clearly and correctly. A response written in Chinese characters or pinyin that have minor inaccuracies can be accepted, provided that the response's meaning remains clearly correct according to the recording. It would also be beneficial to the candidates if they can keep their answers clear and straight to the point. This can reduce the risk of adding extra material, which can invalidate an otherwise correct response.

For **Questions 22–25**, candidates need to make up their minds regarding their response to a question and refrain from using ' / ' or ' () '.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

Candidates generally performed well on this exercise, which tested the comprehension of very short recordings of one or two sentences. Most candidates scored 4 or 5 marks. The most common mistake made was with **Question 2**. Instead of **C**, many candidates selected **B** and a few selected **A**.

Other mistakes include selecting **B** for **Question 3** and **A** for **Question 5**.

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.

The most common mistake was selecting **B** or **C** instead of **A** for **Question 8**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 11–15

This exercise tested the candidates' comprehension of a short explanation of what each of the five members of a family does on a Sunday. While many candidates did well here, it also proved to be challenging for a good number of other candidates. The most common mistakes were with **Question 11** and **Question 13**. For **Question 11**, some candidates chose **E** or **G** instead of **F**. For **Question 13**, instead of **G**, many candidates chose **E** and some chose **D** or **F**.

Candidates generally responded to **Question 12** and **Question 14** correctly. Some mistakes were made with **Question 15**, where **C**, **E** or **G** was chosen instead of **D**.

Exercise 2 Questions 16

Candidates heard a conversation between Li Ming and his friend. Li Ming was visiting his friend who lived in the countryside. They were talking to work out things to do during Li Ming's visit. Candidates generally performed very well on this exercise and most achieved 4 or 5 marks.

Mistakes in this exercise tend to be missing choice **E** or choice **F**. There were also a few candidates who missed choosing **A** or **I**.

With this exercise, candidates are advised to make all 5 choices to their best understanding and not to tick more than 5 boxes. It is very pleasing to see that this year candidates generally did this exercise accordingly.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 17–21

This exercise featured five friends talking about what they planned to do after school. On the whole, candidates did well with these questions. In this exercise, candidates performed better with **Question 18**, **Question 19** and **Question 21**. More mistakes were made with the other two questions. Many candidates incorrectly chose **E** as the answer for **Question 17**. Some candidates incorrectly chose **C** or **E** as the answer for **Question 20**.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Zhang Yue who had sent her son abroad to study. As intended, this final exercise, targeted to test the top-level IGCSE listening 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 the age of Zhang Yue's son when he went to study in France.

This was the first question in this exercise and was a straightforward one. Most candidates answered the question very well or gave answers that were acceptable.

Question 23 asked candidates to explain why Zhang Yue's son wanted to learn French.

Again most candidates answered this question well or gave answers that were acceptable even though with some minor inaccuracies in character writing and pinyin spelling.

There were responses that were not acceptable including ‘很重要’ and ‘很好ping’.

Question 24 asked the candidates to list the two things that Zhang Yue was planning to do with her son this summer.

This proved to be a challenging question. However, many candidates did well producing strong answers or responses that might have some minor inaccuracies in character writing or pinyin spelling but adequately demonstrated sufficient understanding of this part of the interview.

- (i) The key word here was 参观大学. A variety of responses in both characters and pinyin were seen here, many of which conveyed the meaning clearly and were accepted. There were cases where candidates simply wrote ‘大学’ or ‘法国大学’. These were not full enough answers and were not acceptable.
- (ii) The key word here was ‘去英国’. Most candidates understood that and responded correctly. Again a variety of responses in both characters and pinyin were seen here, many of which conveyed the meaning clearly and were accepted.

Question 25 asked candidates to state what Zhang Yue’s son would like to study in university.

It’s a very straightforward question and most candidates responded well. A variety of responses were seen here. Some were acceptable while some others were not e.g. ‘理shi’ and ‘liu shi’.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/21
Reading

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should remember:

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

That inaccuracies in Chinese characters 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 of the message.

To learn adjectives and their antonyms, especially the common ones, which can be seen in **Question 13**.

To attempt every question in the paper, even those that candidates may feel less confident in, such as questions in the last exercise.

General comments

On the whole, there were many very good responses to this paper. Vast majority of candidates were aware of the requirements.

Generally speaking, 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 8** appeared to be more challenging due to inclusion of less common key words. All the vocabulary in the prescribed minimum core vocabulary list must therefore be studied thoroughly before candidates take the exam.

Finally, more emphasis should be placed to attention to detail. It is the requirement to both understand the questions, as well as provide relevant answers. As random, indiscriminate lifting cannot result in marks being awarded, such as in **Question 30 – Question 32** where genuine understanding is required for gaining a high mark.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

The questions in this exercise are generally well tackled, especially **Question 1** and **Question 2**, which has been answered consistently, with very few candidates making mistakes.

There are only two exceptions, **Question 4** and **Question 5**, with which even a few strong candidates made an incorrect attempt. This was probably because candidates were less familiar with the testing characters of “春天” (spring) and “教堂” (church). Consequently, other answers were selected instead of the correct ones.

Exercise 2, Question 6–9

The overall responses by candidates across ability levels were of a good standard, especially for **Question 6** and **Question 7**, as most candidates have delivered an excellent performance across these two questions. However, **Question 8** and **Question 9** have generated a significant number of wrong responses. In particular, **Question 8**, as many candidates only know the vocabulary for mobile phone but not “发短信” (send text message). All the vocabulary in the prescribed minimum core vocabulary list should be covered in preparation.

Exercise 3, Question 10–12

For this exercise, candidates need to read a sentence in Chinese in the box before handling the following multiple-choice questions. The sentence is about New Year, which is very familiar to candidates. Therefore, the majority of candidates handled these questions with great success. Candidates answered the questions very well for **Question 11**.

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 performed very well in this exercise, especially for **Questions 14–16**. However, **Question 13** has generated significant amount of incorrect answers. This is because the word “近” (close) appeared in the passage, many candidates did not pay attention to the negate word “不” (not) before it and adverb “比较” (relatively) in the question. The correct answer should be the antonym of “近” (close) – “远” (far). To sum up, genuine comprehension and careful reading is required to obtain high marks for this exercise.

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 Wang to his friend Xiao Li about his trip to Huang Shan together with his father.

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 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**. Trying for every question is highly recommended.

On the whole, candidates handled questions exceptionally well throughout this exercise. The only one question which candidates frequently encountered difficulty was **Question 23**. It asked what was Xiao Wang father's opinion about the food in the restaurant. Because the last paragraph of the passage mentioned Xiao Wang's opinion as well as his father's option and they are contradictory, a significant amount of candidates copied the wrong information if they did not read that paragraph and question carefully. Furthermore, some candidates simply copied “不同意” (disagree) without explaining what exactly is Xiao Wang's father's opinion about the food, hence this is not sufficient to answer the question.

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. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage.

Performance in the questions varied as candidates had mixed levels of success in them. **Question 25** appeared as the easiest question as vast majority of candidates answered it correctly, whereas **Question 28** has generated most incorrect answers. This is because both the answer A “给妈妈做生日餐” (make birthday meal for mum) and answer C “学做不同的饭菜” (to learn to cook different dishes) have been mentioned in

the passage, but they happened in different time period. Some candidates found it is confusing to understand what happened first and difficult to distinguish the reason and cause of the action “上更多的做饭班” (attend more cooking lessons).

Exercise 2, Question 29–35

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 very good responses, many candidates found this exercise challenging. A number of candidates left some questions blank, especially for **Question 31** and **Question 32**. Trying for all questions is highly recommended, even if unsure of the answer.

The majority of candidates answered **Question 29** and **Question 33** with ease. However, **Question 31** was not answered well at all. This was possibly due to candidates did not understand the key words “变化” (change) within the question, and did not understand the description of the changes for international students mentioned in first paragraph.

Question 35 also proved difficult for some. Many candidates answered “想念父母” (miss parents) as a result of direct lifting from the passage, but did not understand Li Yun said although she would miss parents, she wanted to stay with local English family to “学到更多当地的文化” (learn more local culture), which is the correct answer. Genuine comprehension was required to tackle this exercise.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/22
Reading

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should bear the following in mind during preparation:

- Study the entire range of prescribed Minimum Core Vocabulary carefully, and expand vocabulary level accordingly.
- When providing an answer for short-answer questions, full sentences are not required. A concise answer is required.
- Genuine understanding of a passage is required before tackling questions. Random lifting cannot result in any mark.
- Attempt every question in the paper.

General comments

On the whole, candidates appeared well prepared for the examination and there were some excellent responses to this paper. Most 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 candidates were less familiar with the key words. Therefore, all the vocabularies in the prescribed vocabulary list needs to be studied thoroughly before taking the exam.

More emphasis should be placed to attention to detail. It is required to understand both the questions and passages before attempting to provide answers. This is because quite often, distractors are also included in the passage. Furthermore, random lifting cannot result in any mark, same for partial answer. For instance, **Question 34** “亲朋友” is a wrong answer because it did not mention “亲戚” (relatives), even though it only missed out one character “戚”.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1

Questions 1–5

Most candidates tackled the questions in this exercise very well, especially **Question 3**, which received excellent responses, with only a very small amount of candidates making mistakes. Both **Question 2** and **Question 5** were also well performed.

There was only one exception, **Question 4**, which required candidates to recognise the season mentioned in the sentence and identify it with the given pictures. Many candidates went for A “春天” (spring) instead of the correct answer B “夏天” (summer).

Exercise 2

Question 6–9

In general candidates performed well in this exercise with the vast majority of candidates excelling. Almost every candidate provided the correct answer for **Question 8**. Whilst only a small amount of candidates made an incorrect attempt in **Question 9**, as it required candidates to understand “寄信” (post letter) which seemed less familiar to candidates.

Exercise 3

Question 10–12

Overall responses by candidates across ability levels were of a good standard for these multiple-choice questions. **Question 12** proved to be more challenging, as a sizable amount of candidates did not choose the correct answer B “超市” (supermarket), but assumed C “警察局” (police station) is the correct answer by reading “钱包丢了” (lost wallet). Therefore, all the sentences in the box should be read carefully before choosing the correct answer.

Furthermore, candidates should be advised to give a clear answer by a tick in the relevant box. Candidates should be informed that if they provide more than one answer, even if it includes the correct answer, marks will not be awarded.

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.

Candidates performed exceptionally well in this exercise, which was an improvement from last year. Only **Question 13** has generated a small amount of mistake with a handful of candidates chose “不” (do not) instead of the correct answer “都”(all).

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 Wang to his friend Xiao Li about his other friend Xiao Bai and their overseas trip to South America.

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

The responses were excellent, candidates handled questions exceptionally well throughout this exercise. The only one question where candidates frequently encountered difficulty was **Question 23**. It asked when did Xiao Bai have Chinese lesson. In the passage it mentioned Xiao Bai's School did not offer Chinese lessons, therefore he needed to go for Chinese lessons every Saturday. Some candidates were confused by when Xiao Bai actually had Chinese lessons.

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. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage.

Generally speaking, candidates handled the questions well. Vast majority of candidates chose the correct answer for **Question 25**, **Question 26** and **Question 28**. Only **Question 27** generated some wrong response “A”. This is because some key words of the distractor A “得到了自由” (gain freedom) also appeared in the passage, although linked by a conjunction phrase “不但 ... 还 ...” (not only...but also...). The correct answer was located in the sentence above “但是这些鱼在湖里很快就死了” (but these fish were dead very quickly in the lake). Therefore, a careful reading is required for this exercise.

Exercise 2

Question 29–35

In this final exercise, 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.

A small amount of candidates decided not to attempt certain questions, in particular **Question 33**. Candidates will benefit from being advised to make an attempt on these questions rather than omitting them entirely.

As this is the final exercise, both the passage and questions become more difficult. Even though there were some excellent responses, such as **Question 30i**, generally speaking, candidates find this exercise challenging. A significant amount of candidates encountered difficulty with **Question 32**. This question asked what sport Ding Yi's father wanted to do initially (not the sport he was actually doing). In the passage, it mentioned two sports, “骑车” (cycling) and “跑步” (running). Many candidates did not understand the key words “本来” (originally), and chose the wrong sport for this questions.

Question 34 also proved to be challenging in this exercise, as it required candidates to provide an answer identifying what did Ding Yi do for his father's 50th birthday. The correct answer should be “邀请了亲朋好友一起到公园去跑步” (invited relatives and close friends to run in the park). Many candidates did not include the verb “邀请了” (to invite) for this answer, hence the answer is not sufficient. Other candidates did not copy down the entire phrase “亲朋好友” (relatives and close friends) accurately so made the answer incomprehensible. Therefore, genuine comprehension and careful lifting is required for this exercise.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/23
Reading

Key messages

Candidates should attempt every question in the paper, even where they are less confident.

When providing an answer for short-answer questions, full sentences are not required. Brief answers with sufficient content are frequently all that is needed.

Inaccuracies in Chinese can be tolerated provided that the message is clear and that the candidate's rendering of the answer does not give a different meaning that might cause confusion in comprehension of the message.

Genuine understanding of a passage is required before tackling questions. Random lifting cannot result in any mark.

General comments

Candidates are reminded to be familiar with the full minimum core vocabulary list.

As often the distractors are included in the passage as well, genuine understanding of a passage is the key to gain high marks for this paper. Answers should be short and precise, and should avoid placing the Examiners in the position to choose the correct answer from among wrong answers, which cannot result in any mark being awarded.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 – Questions 1–5

The questions in this exercise are designed to test candidates understanding for key vocabulary. Most candidates tackled the questions in this exercises well, although the whole performance varied depends on how well candidates know the vocabulary. For example, all the candidates answered **Question 2** correctly because they were very familiar with the vocabulary “电脑” (computer). On the other hand, **Question 1** generated more wrong responses, probably because the word “葡萄” (grapes) was less common to candidates compared with ‘apples’ and ‘bananas’.

Exercise 2 – Questions 6–9

Overall candidates delivered a strong performance in this exercise. The majority of candidates excelled in these questions, with only a small amount of candidates giving incorrect attempts for **Question 8**, as it required candidates to understand the word “杂志” (magazine). In fact, this exercise provided two clues for candidates to tackle the questions. **Question 8** for instance, if candidates did not understand the word “杂志” (magazine), they could use the second clue “沙发” (sofa) to work out the correct answer D.

Exercise 3 – Questions 10–12

These multiple-choice questions require candidates to read the sentences in the box and choose the correct answer according to the questions. In general, responses by candidates across ability range were of a good standard. Vast majority of candidates answered **Question 10** accurately as they in general know the subjects well. However, **Question 11** proved to be more challenging, because many candidates did not recognize the phrase “小卖部” (corner shop), and assumed it was school canteen where Xiao Zhang bought his drink, so often chose the incorrect answer C instead.

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 sentences. Some distractors were included in the passage, hence careful reading is required.

For example, the correct answer for **Question 13** is “交通” (transport), which echoed with the information given in the first sentence of the passage. However, many candidates chose the wrong answer “环境” (environment) because this word is also included in the first sentence. Therefore, candidates should have read **Question 13** carefully before making a decision.

For **Question 16**, a fair amount of candidates decided not to attempt this question. But in fact, where they did, the accuracy for this question was quite high.

Exercise 2 – Questions 17–22

In this exercise, candidates were required 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 Li to his friends Xiao Wang about his plan for Spring Festival, when he will attend his elder sister’s wedding in Chong Qing.

The responses were of a satisfactory standard but it is unfortunate that some candidates decided not to attempt certain questions, such as **Question 20** and **Question 21**.

On the whole, candidates handled **Question 17**, **Question 19** and **Question 21** fairly well, with only a minority of candidates making mistakes. Where there were wrong answers, the problems were frequently encountered with **Question 22**. It was largely due to two locations and activities were mentioned in the last paragraph of the passage and a number of candidates did not pay enough attention to “先去哪里” (where to go first) in the question and either answered both locations or the second location.

Section 3

Exercise 1 – Questions 23–26

In this exercise, candidates were set the task of reading an extended passage in Chinese, then answering the multiple choice questions that followed. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. It was encouraging to see vast majority of candidates had attempted all these questions.

Performance in these questions varied. **Question 24** appeared the most accessible, whereas **Question 26** generated the most incorrect answers. This was because the original definition of success for Ma Dong was not the correct answer, as his view about success changed dramatically after his working experience post graduation. The correct answer should be B “做好喜欢的事” (do one’s favourite things well). **Question 23**

also generated a high number of mistakes. This was because two distractors also appeared in the passage. Therefore, when handling these questions, attention to detail is highly recommended.

Exercise 2 – Question 27–32

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, in Chinese. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage.

Although candidates were encouraged to attempt all the questions, regrettably, some questions were still left blank, such as **Question 30** and **Question 32**. The main reason of leaving answers blank was because candidates did not know what to answer. However, those candidates who did attempt **Question 32**, usually produced answers of a good quality. Hence, trying every question in the exam paper is highly recommended in the future.

Question 29 was not usually answered well and this was possibly due to candidates not being able to distinguish between fact and Li Mei father's opinion in her words. **Question 28** and **Question 31** also posed problems for many candidates, as they did not appear to understand the sentences in the passage. For example, some candidates wrote down irrelevant time phrase for **Question 28** instead of directly answering the question. **Question 31** was the same. The grammatical structure “不是... 而是...” (not...is...) provided the answer of why Li Mei likes her job clearly. This is an example of candidates needing to show their comprehension instead of random lifting.

Chinese character writing is tolerated provided the meaning is clear. It is a pleasant trend that candidates produced neater and clearer handwriting for Chinese characters in these short-answer questions.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/03
Speaking

Key messages

Those conducting the test must read the Paper 3 (Speaking) *Teacher/examiners' Notes Booklet* that accompanies the role-play cards each year in order to be fully aware of the requirements of this test. To score high marks, candidates need to show consistent ability to use a variety of structures and precise vocabulary **both** in the Topic Presentation/Conversation **and** in the General Conversation sections.

In both the Topic Presentation/Conversation and the General Conversation sections, the teacher/examiner/teacher/examiner **must** ask questions which allow the candidates to show that s/he can describe events or express ideas using **both** past **and** future time-frames. (See *Teacher/examiners' Notes Booklet*) pages 9, 10 and 15 Discussion in the General Conversation should be appropriate to the individual candidate's ability: the same questions should **not** be asked of all the candidates.

At least two topics need to be covered in the General Conversation and should not overlap with the content of the Topic Presentation.

Teacher/examiner/teacher/examiners must not suggest possible answers or give clues to candidates. The candidate should be doing most of the speaking.

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.

General comments

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

Previous Principal Moderators' Reports for the centre should also be consulted.

In order to allow the moderation process to operate effectively, it is important that CDs arrive undamaged; they must therefore be well packaged, ideally in a plastic case within a padded envelope, and clearly labelled.

The full requirements of the test are clearly laid out in the *Teacher/examiners' 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 teacher/examiner/ teacher/examiner should include samples from each Teacher/examiner should include samples from each Teacher/examiner in an appropriate proportion. Each Teacher/examiner should complete and sign his/her own Working Mark Sheet.

Recording quality and presentation of the sample

They should always be saved onto a CD or USB as an .mp3 file. This should be clearly labelled (see below), but 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/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 teacher/examiner to ensure that it is clear and there are no extraneous noises. Please ensure you have checked that all the recordings are present and can be played before you send the recording to Cambridge.

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 *Teacher/examiners' Notes Booklet*: 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 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/examiners 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.

Details of the centre's Internal Moderation procedures must also be sent to Cambridge, as specified on the 'Cover sheet for moderation sample'.

The coordinating teacher/examiner is responsible for checking that the mark scheme has been applied consistently by all of the teacher/examiners in the centre. If a particular teacher/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 teacher/examiner must be checked and adjusted accordingly before paperwork is submitted to Cambridge.

Transitions between sections of the text

English must not be introduced during the tests: each new section can be introduced in Chinese, for instance by using sentences such as 现在进行情景对话A / 现在进入第二部分。 / 现在进行自由对话吧。 and so on.

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

Overall, the Role Plays were conducted very well. Teacher/examiners are reminded of the need for careful preparation before the test and that they must not create extra tasks, nor 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... Please **record the number of the card given** to each candidate in the space provided on the Working Mark Sheet.

The situations at the start of each role-play 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.

A Role Plays

The A Role Plays were found to be of equal level of challenge.

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

You are on a bus on the way to school. You meet a friend or relative. He/she is asking you about your school.

Some candidates had difficulty with answering: *How many students in your school?*

You are at a cinema talking to your friend.

Weaker candidates omitted the currency word when answering: *How much for a ticket?* and some candidates were not clear how to answer: *What do you want to eat?* (in the context of a cinema).

You are telephoning a Chinese restaurant, talking to a waiter.

Most candidates handled this well.

B Role plays

You would like to visit another city. You and your friend are talking about your plans.

Weaker candidates answered with a country name for the question: *Which city do you want to go to?*

After returning home from holiday, you have a fever. You go to see the doctor.

Most candidates handled this well.

You are in a big department store. You can't find your friend. A shop assistant comes to help you.

Weaker candidates misinterpreted 多大 as a question about size rather than age.

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 teacher/examiner **in Chinese, not English**, for example by saying 现在进入第二部分。 The candidate should begin by stating clearly what his/her 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*.

More unusual topics included: *India's Diwali festival, The benefits of reading, Adapting to life in the UK, Comparing life in China with life in Spain, The buildings of Jakarta, An unforgettable school trip*.

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 very few cases the teacher/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 ‘现在我会问你几个问题。’

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, offer opinions 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 no English should be used during the Speaking Test, and that candidates should not be corrected during the tests.

Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education
0547 Mandarin Chinese June 2018
Principal Teacher/examiner Report for Teacher/examiners

Most centres handled 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 Teacher/examiner **MUST** 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 Booklet*.

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 verb 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 both past and 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 identical questions were asked of all 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 weak 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.

There is no ‘Presentation’ in the General Conversation. **The General Conversation involves the teacher/examiner asking the candidates a series of questions on two or three topics.**

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 seriously 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*.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/41
Writing

General comments

Most candidates understood the question type well and produced enough detail and additional information for **Question 2**. A few candidates failed to answer all of the questions or incorrectly answered questions in Pinyin, occasionally with English words. Some candidates used more complex structures and more difficult characters which reflected their linguistic ability. It was pleasing to see a number of excellent performances from centres especially for **Question 3 (a)** helping out in a primary school and **Question 3 (b)** views of mobile phones.

It was pleasant to see a number of candidates who were learners providing a detailed and expanded essay with plenty of extra information. Some candidates made mistakes in the grammar or vocabulary used; however, it was very impressive that they attempted to tell interesting stories and justified their opinions with most straightforward 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. Since this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should always be used, 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 for **Question 3** 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 were 3 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 can buy in a supermarket and most candidates attempted this question well, providing a wide range of things which can be bought from supermarkets, such as food, clothes, stationery, etc. However, a small amount of the candidates answered in pinyin or English, which could not be awarded any marks. Other impressive answers included 卫生纸、口香糖、矿泉水、蛋糕、钢笔、葡萄酒 although basic words were perfectly fine to score marks in this section, such as 笔、米、花、水、门、书 etc. Copying the example or answering the questions in pinyin or English was not awarded marks e.g. 东西 or 报纸. Adding suffix to 书 e.g. 中文书 or 英文书 will score marks but not more than 2 marks in the same category.

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)、手几(机)、午(牛)肉、毛(手)机、面句(包)、蓝(篮)球, 是(足)球 etc.

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

Question 2

This question requires candidates to write about their summer camp based on 5 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

“我喜欢踢足球，因为我的技术比其他人好；明年我打算去非洲，因为我的性格特别好奇；

夏令营的活动有不少，但是其中...是我最喜欢的” or idiom 读万卷书、行万里路. However, simple structures and basic vocabulary are enough to score full marks in this section.

Some candidates did a good job expanding answers. For example, for bullet point (a), some wrote “夏令营在北京，北京很漂亮，天气也很好” to add more details. For bullet point (b), some added details such as “星期一到星期五的活动九点开始，周末的活动十点开始”.

Some answers were very brief and lack of details therefore could not score fully for the communication mark. Candidates should keep in mind to include more details where it is possible. For example, some of the answers for bullet point (c) were just “我喜欢打篮球”. Details such as “因为很有意思、很好玩” would help to score more marks for Communication. As for (d), instead of just saying “我觉得午饭很好吃”, expanding the answer by saying “夏令营的午饭有鱼、有肉，我觉得很好吃” will get three more marks.

Some candidates, despite scoring a full mark for Language, did not manage to score a full mark for Communication as they missed out a couple of bullet points or did not provide enough information. Candidates should not be concerned about the word count if the minimum word limit has been reached. It is a shame to see 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 were 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. 想 or time phrase 明年. Some able candidates wrote what they did last summer for the whole essay, therefore, some Communication marks could be lost.

Candidates should be aware this is a writing exam, and Chinese characters should be used. English and pinyin should be avoided, especially for the key words. Pinyin and English words cannot count towards the communication mark. Some candidates wrote the place name of the summer camp in English e.g. Paris instead of a country e.g. 法国, they should avoid this happening in future exams. Places like 在海边, 在山里 were accepted for task (a) 夏令营在哪里.

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、身体(体)、午(牛)肉、鸟(鸡)肉，鸣(鸡)肉，者(猪)肉，中国采(菜)。
- 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 2 sentences, e.g. 明年暑假我想打篮球和去看爷爷.
- Misuse of 也 to link a list of nouns, e.g. 我们吃很多米饭也面包。.

Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. With five guided bullet points in **Question 3**, candidates could opt for the one they felt more confident about. Nearly 60 per cent of the candidates opted for **Question 3 (a)** while **(b)** and **(c)** were equally popular. School experience and views on mobile phones 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？”；“我也想知道你的情况。快给我写信好吗？祝你身体健康，万事如意！”

It was pleasing to see the improvement of understanding the rubrics this year. Most candidates covered all the bullet points but some candidates wrote 六时间, instead of 六个小时 although they understood 多长时间 in **Question 3 (a) task 1**, probably were affected by their mother tongue. Some candidates did not read the tasks carefully e.g. 上个星期五 which should be in a past time frame. Instead, they wrote “我每个星期五在小学呆三个小时”. Candidates should be advised to pay particular attention to different tenses in **Question 3**.

Past time setting seemed to be a continuous issue in the recent years. Past tense marker 了 and past time expressions 最近, 上个, 后 were ignored so candidates used either present or future tense “我在那里做运动”, “我的朋友参加跑步” and “后来发生去饭店吃饭” to respond the question “你在那里做了什么”, “谁参加了比赛” and “后来发生了什么事”, therefore, communication and language marks would be affected. Centres should advise candidates to read the questions with greater care and follow the patterns and tense frames which will achieve better results.

A few candidates copied all the task questions without answering them or simply took out the questions words and inserted with 很好 for “你觉得那里的学生怎么样”, 做东西 for “你在那里做了什么”, 发生了很多事 for “后来发生了什么事”, 不知道为什么 for “爸爸妈妈为什么没有来”. It should not be encouraged in the teaching practice and candidates should be encouraged to write more relevant information in greater details for the tasks.

- (a) For 3(a), the task was to write a letter to grandpa to describe a day at a primary School you helped with. The majority of candidates covered all the tasks very well and they were well trained to use adjectives to express opinions and different activities for task 2 “what did you do there” and task 5 “what do you plan to do next term”.

Task 1 was well attempted with a reasonable length of time, but some candidates wrote 六时间, instead of 六个小时 although they understood 多长时间. A handful of candidates did not understand 时间 and wrote what time the School started. A few candidates wrote 很长时间 instead of 三个小时, it would be better to write more details about a certain period of time, e.g. 从早上八点到下午五点 after that sentences to gain higher marks in language.

Most of the candidates answered task 2 very well. The most popular answers were that they went to the primary School to teach the children, read with them, doing sports with them, or chat with them, but some expressive answers in more advanced level such as “帮老师搬东西、把教科书搬到教室、打扫卫生、打扫教室、告诉他们做笔记的重要性和复习的方法、帮忙整理图书” etc. were appeared on the paper.

Candidates were well trained in expressing opinions, e.g. task 3 “what do you think of the candidates there”. Apart from the candidates were nice, friendly, cute and tall etc. basic adjectives, other adjectives to describe the candidates at the primary School, e.g. “很乖、很懂事、很好相处、听话、聪明、亲切、没有礼貌、调皮、有活力” etc. were really impressive.

Candidates tackled advantage or disadvantage of helping out in a primary school very well and typical answers were “很好玩, 可以帮助别人, 让我很高兴, 可以赚钱” etc. and a few candidates wrote that they would use the money earned by doing the job to help the poor “用赚的钱去帮助穷人/弱势群体”. It was pleasing to see candidates not only showed their language proficiency, but also stood on a high moral ground.

Majority of the candidates were able to answer task 5 “what do you plan to do next term” without any difficulties, but a small number of candidates misread 下个学期, writing what they want to do next week 下个星期,我想 so they missed the communication mark. Most of the candidates used a future time indicator 想, 要, 打算, 计划 etc. when talking about the plan next term.

Characters and Grammar

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

- Character mistakes, such as 蓝(篮)球, 是(足)球、高心(兴)、非长(常)、作(昨)天、身体(体)、午(牛)肉。Others including 有意思、电脑、电视 and 电影 often were missing some strokes and appeared to be more challenging for some candidates to write precisely.
- Confused 三小时 with 三时间.
- No measure word for hours: 二小时.
- Express length of time: 在小学呆了的很长, 二点, .
- Use of 都: 我做都活动, instead of 我做所有的活动 or 什么活动我都做。
- Mistake of using ‘是’ with adjectives, e.g. 学生是很好, 在小学帮忙是好玩
- A few of candidates wrote 打运动, instead of 做运动。
- Wrong word order: 我喜欢去小学星期五
- Use of 得: 他不好说英文 instead of 他英文说得不好
- Use of 是/很: 我在小学是开心, 他们是很高兴, 他们很好人

- (b) In 3(b), the tasks were to write an article about views on mobile phones. The evidence showed the candidates who opted to do this question were very familiar with this topic area. All bullet points were easy to follow and guided the candidates to provide their opinion fully. Some candidates successfully used the word 就 to imply they started using mobile phones at a young age “我从七岁就开始用手机”。However, a very small amount of candidates did not answer “从什么时候开始用手机”。And a few candidates wrote “我每天从下午四点开始用手机” in a present tense instead of past tense timeframe.

Task 2 “who bought the mobile phone for you” were very well attempted due to familiar characters about family members. Candidates did well answering bullet point 3 as well, writing all kinds of things they do with their phones, such as “打电话、看电视、看电影、玩游戏、看电子书、听音乐、画画儿、和朋友聊天、和父母联系、看天气、拍照片、学习” etc.

For bullet point 4, although it did not require candidates to answer why/why not candidates should use mobile phones at School but majority of candidates managed to express the reason, such as “手机很方便、可以查资料、有助于减缓压力、很有用 or 学生如果在学校用手机, 就不会做课外活动、上课会不专心、让学生废寝忘食”. A few candidates also used the phrase “各有利弊/有利也有弊” before stating both of the arguments.

Most candidates were able to express the reason why or why not they want a new mobile phone next year for task 5, such as “我的手机很慢、很旧、没有游戏、新手机比较好看、比较有用 or 买衣服比买手机重要, 我的手机很新, 手机可以打电话就好”.

Characters and Grammar

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

- Use of 和: misused 和 to link clauses, which is not necessary: 我想要新手机, 因为我觉得很漂亮和我想玩很多游戏。.
- Use of 了: 我很喜欢了.
- Some anglicism occurred, e.g. 妈妈买了我手机.

- (c) About 18 per cent of candidates chose this task, it was very pleasing to see that candidates who chose this task wrote some very impressive essays at native level. Many of the candidates talked

about sports games at School “在学校参加了体育比赛” for task 1, but “国际比赛、天津市羽毛球比赛、水球比赛” were also mentioned for more advanced candidates.

“Who participated the competition” was a well-trained question and popular answers were my friends, other Schools etc.

Opinion words such as “比赛很好玩，很好看，很有意思” were often seen but some candidates used more interesting words to describe the game, such as “比赛很激烈、精彩、紧张” for task 3 which was really impressive.

Task 4 provided a good scale for candidates to show their linguistic abilities. Most candidates wrote a valid reason why parents did not come, such as “爸爸妈妈很忙、爷爷生病了、爸爸的车子坏了、他们忘记了” etc.

It was pleasing to see a coherent story line in this narrative writing for most of the candidates but a small number of candidates did not know how to elaborate the last bullet point “后来发生了什么事” and merely gave a short answer as “后来发生好事/大事/很多事”, which did not really deliver any specific message.

Characters and Grammar

The most frequent mistakes were:

- Comparison: 他们比我很有意思 instead of 他们比我有意思
- Use of 了: 他们没来了 instead of 他们没有来

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/42
Writing

General comments

Many candidates tackled tasks well and not only answered the questions, but also produced detail and additional information for **Question 2** and **Question 3**. Few candidates failed to answer all of the questions or answer questions in pinyin or with many English (or other foreign language) words which were not awarded marks for Communication. There were a 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 pleasing to see that it was accessible to the majority of candidates and that there were a number of excellent performances from centres all over the world.

Many candidates performed very well, and 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. Memorising big chunks of a general passage e.g. about oneself or family, hobbies etc. is not good practice, hence no marks can be awarded. Candidates should read the scenario and questions carefully, especially the tenses and key words which were all in the defined content booklet. 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.

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 will be lost. Candidates should check their work again after crossing out sentences and make sure that all the bullet points have been attempted.

Candidates should circle which topic they attempted to write in **section 2 Question 3** since there were 3 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 e.g. "How are you? I haven't written to you for long periods of time. I hope everything is ok with you. I have to stop here. Wish you all the best and in good health. Hope to get your response soon" etc.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The task was to provide five things they might take to School and most candidates attempted this question well. Stationary was the popular items and most candidates could write items from different categories, like 学生证, 课本, 本子, 日记本, 午餐, 衣服, 裤子, 铅笔, 三明治, 手机, 小说, 白纸, 果汁, 钱, 水, 尺, 表, 饭, 球 etc. This showed that candidates have been taught well on topics and exam techniques. Easy and simple characters are rewarded the same marks as the complicated ones. Some stronger candidates, however, took the challenge and attempted more complicated characters such as 考试通行证, 剪刀, 涂改液, 铅笔盒, 化妆品, 眼镜, etc. On the other end of the spectrum, a few wrote in pinyin or English entirely, thus no mark was rewarded. Most of the terms written by candidates were accepted. Some unusual items e.g. 狗, 椅子, 桌子, 电视 are awarded marks because it is possibly allowed to take into a School in some situations. Some used 子 inappropriately i.e. 笔子 but they were tolerated.

People, family members e.g. 同学, 爸爸, 妈妈, 朋友 etc. were not accepted since they are not “things”. Animals were tolerated this year. 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. 毛电 (手提电话), 书体 (书本), 课体/课末 (课本), 钱笔 (铅笔), 写 (作) 文, 围市 (围巾), 亲果 (水果), 毛子 (帽子), 冒子 (帽子), 眼睛 (眼镜), 毛机 (手机), 手几 (机), 相皮/象皮 (橡皮), 篮求 (篮球), 工课/公课 (功课), 本字 (本子), 水平/水并 (水瓶), 饭采 (饭菜), 书抱 (书包), 午内 (牛肉), 三体书 (三本书), 手衣 (毛衣), 找 (钱), 毛 (笔), 木 (水), 电活 (话), 平 (苹) 果 etc. Candidates could improve on their accuracy of certain characters with correct radicals and not use the characters with similar pronunciation or similar shape.

Some candidates even created some words which are not in the dictionary, e.g. 空纸, marks could not be awarded. A small number of candidates wrote characters which mainly function as radicals and can not 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 e.g. 三本书, 喝水. Candidates should be reminded that this question did not require sentences or phrase e.g. 我的书, 我的鞋 etc.

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 did not read the questions carefully and wrote 东西, 报纸 which appeared in the rubric and the example. Copying the example or characters from the rubric and answering the questions in pinyin or English (or another language) was not awarded marks.

Question 2

This question required candidates to write about a zoo near their house. The overall performance in this question was very good. The majority of candidates were able to respond to the bullet points, displayed basic skills to manipulate the language and complete the task to a good standard. However, candidates needed to be aware that extended sentences should be related to the tasks, not elaborating freely. With guided questions, weaker candidates could also produce some simple answers especially for task (a), just replace 几 with a number. Task (b) was well attempted with different means of transport. However, a handful of candidates have mistaken “how do you go to the zoo” with “whom do you go with to the zoo”. Candidates were quite familiar with the type of question in task (d), many describing words and adjectives were used. For task (e), a majority of the candidates listed family members or people for “whom would you like to go there with next time” to score maximum three marks with a future timeframe 想, 要, 打算 or 明天.

Task (c) seems a bit varied in performance since some candidates tried to write difficult and unfamiliar words such as 老虎, 狮子, 猴子, 熊 rather than 鱼, 鸟, 马, 狗, 猫, 鸡, 鸭.

Candidates should be advised to answer the questions first then elaborate to the relevant questions. Only copying out rubrics without extra info will not be awarded extra mark, e.g. 我家附近有一个动物园, however, 我家附近的动物园很大, 它早上八点开门 would get an extra mark for task (a).

Some good examples with good idioms and structures were

- 动物园里有很多热带雨林动物。那里有强大的老虎, 巨大的大象, 活泼的猴子等。咖啡馆内的设计古色古香。
- 动物园有很多不同的动物, 从水里游的企鹅, 到天上飞的老鹰, 或巨大的大象都有。
- 我打算下次跟朋友们一起去, 与其跟他们说一百遍, 不如带他们亲眼去见一见。
- 当我空闲时我会跟家人走路过去, 因为动物园就在我家对面。
- 美味可口, 和蔼可亲, 人山人海 etc.

The rubrics and bullet points encourage candidates writing detailed and extra information. For example, many candidates wrote different open time for weekdays and weekend for task (a) and walking and other alternative way to zoo for task (b). Many candidates listed different kinds of animals in the zoo and listed different people who and why would go together next time e.g. 动物园里有猫, 狗, 还有很多鸟, 有红色的鸟和黄色的鸟。下次我想跟爸爸和妈妈一起去, 因为妈妈很喜欢那里的动物和咖啡, 我要和她一边喝咖啡一边看动物。

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. “动物园早上七点开门, 晚上八点关门。我和朋友一起坐公共汽车去那里, 因为公共汽车又便宜又快。” would score more communication marks than “我跟朋友早上六点坐又便宜又快的公共汽车去动物园”。

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 words 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 or rumbling, e.g. 动物园的咖啡馆很好。因为咖啡馆很好, 所以我喜欢动物园的咖啡馆。 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 9, no matter how many extra marks were gained from other bullet points. If two of the tasks are 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, e.g. 咖啡馆的 pizza 好 chi。我 zou lu 去动物园。动物园十 dian kai 门。我shi二十 fenzhong 做巴 shi。动物园 9 am 开门。Digit number e.g. 10 点, 9 点半, 2015 年 were not rewarded marks.

Candidates could improve on their accuracy of certain characters, e.g.

兔(兔)子, 大橡/大傢/大想/大像(象), 大家(大象), 侯子(猴子), 乌(鸟), 气(汽)车, 相(想), 喜饭(喜欢), 个(各)种个(各)样, 地房(方), 饭房(店), 眷食天堂(美食), 好唱(喝), 良非(浪费), 做/作(坐)车, 午(牛)肉, 采(菜), 平(苹)果, 几(九)点。

A handful of candidates simply copied out the tasks and swapped 你with我在 the sentences; so no marks were awarded.

Some candidates lost marks in task (e) 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、要or打算, instead of writing in present tense, e.g. 我跟朋友一起去动物园。 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 most common mistakes were using ‘和’, ‘是’ and ‘做’ incorrectly.

- (a) “和”is wrongly used to link sentences, e.g. 咖啡店的饭是很好吃, 和东西很便宜。
- (b) 是” : 咖啡店是很好, 是很大, 人是很多。动物园是我家附近。因为动物是很可爱和少。
- (c) “做” : 我做汽车去动物园。

Incorrect word order:

- (a) 动物园开门八点早上。
- (b) 我去动物园坐火车。
- (c) 我去动物园一起我的朋友。
- (d) 我家很近动物园 or 我家附近动物园和我走路去。
- (e) 我想去动物园跟我的朋友。
- (f) 爸爸和妈妈从时寺我在那边。

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 few years so the candidates were not unfamiliar with it and opted for the one they felt more confident about. **Question 3 (a)** “write about a gift you have received recently” and **Question 3 (c)** “you heard someone calling you at the airport last Sunday” 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 for language 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?”; “我也想知道你收到了什么礼物。快给我写信好吗? 祝你身体健康, 万事如意!”

While nearly 65 per cent of candidates chose **Question 3 (a)**, 27 per cent of candidates who opted for **Question 3 (c)** wrote really interesting and complicated stories. There were many excellent essays showing considerable language skill and great abilities of creative writing.

Many candidates tried to use difficult words and Chinese idiomatic phrases and chengyu like 各种各样、众所周知、人山人海、滔滔不绝、相亲相爱、百闻不如一见 etc. although there were some common characters mistakes in a few essays such as 作(昨)天, 星其(期), 又(有), 蓝球(篮球), 高心(兴), . Some candidates wrote characters careless and made mistakes like 相一想(想一想), 利物(礼物), 下星期(上星期), 动(东)西 which they could copy from the rubrics.

Candidates who scored highest tended to have a range of sentence patterns, and examiners were pleased to see that 让, 使, 给, 被, 把 were used in some of the essays apart from 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 write about a gift you have received recently. There were a number of excellently written responses, and some very creative and beautiful stories. Most candidates covered the bullet points very well and they were able to give example of gifts such as a pet or a technological device. It was not seen as difficult for the majority to provide ‘who gave the gifts’. Some candidates did not understand bullet point 3 关系 thus lost a mark on Communication. Some

candidates with high-level language ability provided a story to narrate the relationship which has been considered as a good answer. The reason given is mostly birthday, achievement or people who cannot meet each other often in life.

Bullet points 1,2,4 and 5 were well tackled without many difficulties, but a few candidates were confused by 收到 and did not talk about the gift received but wrote buying a gift for other people or person like a friend or family member. Some candidates did not answer bullet point 3 你和他/她的关系怎么样 explicitly enough even if the gift was given by family members like 爸爸妈妈哥哥, the relationship needs to be clearly written with an adjective or descriptive phrase e.g. 爱, 喜欢 etc. Some responded as 你和他是什么关系 instead of 关系怎么样.

The majority of the candidates were able to answer bullet point 5 “收到礼物后, 你打算做什么” with a future timeframe which was important to show candidates’ ability of manipulating languages. Most candidates provided the plan after receiving the gifts such as say ‘thank you’ or ‘buy a gift’.

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 characters with similar shape, such as 作(昨)天, 星其(期), 又(有), 狍(狗), 作天(昨), 海天(每), 头(买), 为因/力囡(因为), 更宜(便宜), 一假电话(一部/个电话) etc.

Candidates showed a good knowledge of Chinese grammar and vocabulary e.g.

- 我跟她的关系就像姐妹一样要好。
- 他送给我这个礼物是因为他偶然听到我说我很喜欢外太空。
- 虽然这本书并不值钱, 但我依然感觉到她的那份心意。
- 从小的时候, 我们就是好朋友。虽然我有很多好朋友, 但是我跟她的关系最好, 我们相亲相爱。
- 里面人山人海。
- 妈妈太严厉了, 而且还滔滔不绝。
- 谁可以想到平常那么爱省钱的爸爸会给我买电脑啊!

Most candidates understood grammar very well and wrote sentences, even complex ones, correctly. Most essays showed that candidates have no problem using past, present and future timeframes e.g.

- 我今天早上在我的学校收到了一个礼物。礼物是我的男朋友送给我的。
- 他记得我的生日, 说明他是爱我的。
- 收到礼物后, 我会用电脑玩电子游戏。

The most frequent mistakes were:

- Some anglicisms occurred, e.g. 哥哥买我一个新手机。买了我这个礼物。我说谢谢对妈妈。收到礼物后, 我说谢谢跟他。
- Missing 的, e.g. 我收到了狗礼物。
- Same as **Question 2**, the excessive use of ‘和’ between sentences, e.g. 我和他关系很好和他常常最开心。
- The misuse of ‘和’ and ‘也’, e.g. 他喜欢踢足球, 和也我喜欢。
- When a time phrase and place word was involved in a sentence, e.g. 因为我得了第一名在考试
- Confuse last 上 with next 下: 下个星期我收到了一个礼物。

(b) The task was to express views on online learning. Very few candidates chose this task but those who answered this task generally did well. However, some candidates did not understand 多长时间 in task (2) “how long did you learn each time” and simply answered with 六时间. Task (1) should be in the past timeframe but a few candidates missed 过 and used present, present continuous or future tense. It is very pleasing to see the majority of the candidates understood 好处 and 坏处 and produced right reasons to back up their opinions. 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.

For task 3 “What is an advantage or a disadvantage of online learning”, some candidates just wrote 有很多好处/坏处 and did not write details. The same situation happened in task 4 “what new things are you going to learn online” as 我打算上网学很多东西/新东西 which should be a more detailed answer. Candidates should be encouraged to answer the questions with greater details and follow the patterns and tense frames which will achieve better results in 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 opinions since they were familiar with the topic area and could produce nice and interesting work. Some good examples were

- 可以反复学习
- 学习过程不无聊，会增添对学习的兴趣
- 长期盯着手机或电脑会使人的视力下降

However, some common errors were:

- Homophone or near homophone errors and characters with similar shape, such as: 游戏 (with missing strokes), 玩儿 (元儿), 眼睛 (with missing strokes), 健康 (建康), 身体 (身体), 海天 (每天), 亲东西 (新东西), 这到 (知道)。
- Used present, present continuous (我学/我现在在学...) or future tense to respond the question ‘你上网学过什么?’
- Could not produce the correct length of time, e.g. 我每次学三时间, 几时间。
- Misuse of the word order: e.g. 我上网二(两)个时间每天。上网的坏处不好对健康/眼睛。
- Confusion of 大小 and 多少, e.g. 我每天用最大六小时上网, 最小三小时。

- (c) This topic was the second popular task which candidates attempted. The task was to write about a story of what happened after you heard someone calling you at the airport last Sunday. Some candidates used the 把structure well, for example, 听见有人叫我, 把我吓了一跳。

This question started with ‘who’ questions which weaker candidates might usually prefer to consider. Most of the candidates could manipulate and use the questions to help them get an answer for “why you were called” and “what happened later”, however good answers were not often seen. 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. Some of the candidates forgot to include bullet point to “what were you doing” or “how do you feel about the person”.

Although bullet point 1 seems easy but a very few candidates might have not learned the meaning “call” of 叫, but thought the question is about name to be called, so they did not answer well. Some candidates misunderstood 你觉得他怎么样 and responding instead with 你和他是什么关系。

A handful of candidates misunderstood bullet point 2 你在做什么 as “What were you doing (at the airport for)” and responded generally as 我在飞机场因为。

For the last bullet point 后来发生了什么事, some candidates did not know how to respond to the question, therefore started with 后来发生了我和妈妈去了...

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 scenario line 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 would be hard to demonstrate candidates’ language ability. Pre-learnt passages should not be applied in teaching practice.

A few candidates copied all the task questions without answering them or simply took out the questions’ words and inserted with 很好 for 你觉得他/她怎么样, 做东西 for 你在做什么, 发生了很好事 for 发生了什么事. It should not be encouraged in the teaching practice and candidates should be encouraged to write more relevant information in details for the tasks.

Characters and Grammar

Many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters, e.g.

喜极而泣，既快乐又舒服，上气不接下气，我觉得她老实而且善良。

Other common errors were:

- Some anglicisms occurred, e.g. 他说跟我，说谢谢跟我，我买他一个咖啡，我给他一个问题，我的飞机一小时要去。
- Not clear about the uses of ‘地、得’，e.g. 我们开开心心得谈一谈，高兴的哭了起来
- Incorrect characters ‘他很师（帅），知到（道）’
- Incorrect measure word, e.g. 那个天，他是一样的飞机跟我。我知到那个是妈妈
- Incorrect use of 是, e.g. 我不能找到她的妈妈，我是看我的书。
- Misuse verb-adjectives, e.g. 我觉得他们是很可爱。
- Confusion of negative words 不 and 没, e.g. 我不看他六年了。
- Too ambitious to express complex ideas and resorted to using English word order. 我不想给我的票老人谁我不知道。

MANDARIN CHINESE

Paper 0547/43
Writing

General comments

Most candidates understood the question type well and produced enough details and additional information for **Question 2** and **3**. 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, 2** and **3a**. Candidates are reminded that, since this is a writing exam, they must answer in Chinese characters, and not English (or any other language) or pinyin.

Most candidates understood the question type well and produced enough detail and additional information for **Question 2**. A few candidates failed to answer all of the questions or answered questions in Pinyin, occasionally with English words. Some candidates used more complex structures and more difficult characters which reflected their linguistic ability.

Many candidates provided a detailed and expanded essay with plenty of extra information. Some candidates made mistakes in the grammar or vocabulary used; however, it was impressive that they attempted to tell interesting stories and justified their opinions with most easy 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 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 for **Question 3** 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 were 3 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.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The task was to write about five things you can buy as Christmas presents and most candidates attempted this question well, providing a wide range of things such as food, books, clothes, toys, sweets, electronic gadgets, pets etc. However, a small amount of the candidates answered in pinyin or English, which could not be awarded any mark. Other impressive answers included 漫画、游戏、装饰品、烟花 although basic words were perfectly fine to score marks in this section, such as 笔、花、书、车、衣服 etc. Copying the example or answering the questions in pinyin or English was not awarded marks e.g. 东西、礼物 or 鞋. Adding suffix to 书 e.g. 中文书 or 英文书 will score marks but not more than 2 marks in the same category.

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)、手几 (机)、豕 (家)、午 (牛) 两 (肉)、毛 (手) 机、面色 (包)、书句 (包)、蓝 (篮) 球, 是 (足) 球 etc.

Countries and people appeared in the answer which could not be rewarded marks. It's pleasant to see natural phenomenon and simple characters such as 日, 月, 木, 雨 etc. did not appear in the answer.

Question 2

This question requires candidates to write about their foreign language classes based on 5 questions. The overall performance in this question was good since there was plenty of scope to extend the answers. With guided questions, weaker candidates could also produce some simple answers. A few candidates used complex structures in this section, such as

先让我们看一段法国电影, 然后分组讨论; 法语听起来很优雅; 放很多关于中国学校的视频给我们看; 从讨论中增进与同学的友谊 or idiom, 顺便一提、非常耐心地一一解答. However, simple structures and basic vocabulary are enough to score full marks in this section.

Some candidates did a good job expanding answers. For example, for bullet point (a), some wrote 我星期一、星期二学法语, 星期四和星期五学中文、法语和中文我都喜欢学 to add more details.

Some candidates misread task (b) as “how many foreign language lessons do you have” rather than “on which days do you have foreign language lessons”, and answered 每个星期有三次外语课 thus lost the communication mark. Good candidates answered this question with extended information such as 我星期一、星期二和星期四有汉语课, 一天有两节。

Candidates should keep in mind to include more details where it is possible. For example, some of the answers for bullet point (c) were just 我们上课时说汉语. Details such as 看中文电影, 听中文歌, 很有意思、很好玩 would help to score more marks for Communication. A few candidates misunderstood the task as “what sports activities at school” e.g. 上课时有很多活动, 游泳, 打篮球和美术课 rather than writing within the topic area about your foreign language lessons. Some candidates just wrote the very vague sentence 上课时有很多活动, therefore, communication and language marks would be affected. Centres should advise candidates to extend their answers to achieve better results.

Task (d) was tackled very well with popular answers such as 友好、好看、教得有意思, more advanced words including 亲切、耐心、友善、有上进心、对学生负责 etc.

Since task (e) was a close-ended question so most candidates answered well. In addition, many candidates wrote the reason for why they want to learn a foreign language next year which was rewarded extra marks for communication.

Pinyin and English words would not count towards the Communication mark e.g. “去中国 canting 吃了中国cai” could not be awarded mark for task (c).

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:

- Character mistakes: e.g. 因 (凶)、有 (友) 好、果 (课)、高心 (兴)、令 (今) 年
- 是 has proved to be overused once again with adjectives this year: e.g. 中文是非常有用
- Wrong word order: 我学中文, 在七点三十五分早上
- Common errors for simple characters: “口禾” for “和”
- Misuse of “和”: e.g. 在我十四岁的时候, 和今年, 我学中文
- Misuse of 是: e.g. 我很不好是中文

Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. With five guided bullet points in **Question 3**, candidates could opt for the one they felt more confident about. Over half the candidates opted for **Question 3 (a)** while (b) and (c) were equally popular. Teachers from the centres trained their candidates well and reflected on last year's PERT, and as such, general opening and ending formalities for **Question 3 (a)** were hardly seen this year.

It was pleasing to see the improvement of understanding the rubrics this year and used varied timeframes. Most candidates covered all the bullet points but 多长时间 still seems a difficulty point for some candidates in **Question 3 (b)** task 2, 排队 may also cause problem for some candidates to comprehend the question.

Past time setting seemed to be a continuous issue. Past tense marker 了 and past time expressions 上个周末, 昨天、后 etc. were ignored by some candidates so they used either present or future tense “我和妈妈一起看表演”, “我在食堂吃面条” and “后来发生我去她家吃饭” to respond to the question “with whom you went to see the performance”, “what did you eat in school canteen” and “what happened afterwards”, therefore, communication and language marks would be affected. Centres should advise candidates to read the questions with greater care and follow the patterns and tense frames which will achieve better results.

A few candidates copied all the task questions without answering them or simply took out the questions words and inserted with 很好 for 你觉得这个表演怎么样, 做东西 for 学校应该怎么做, 发生了很好事 for 后来发生了什么事. It should not be encouraged in the teaching practice and candidates should be encouraged to write more relevant information in greater details for the tasks.

(a) For 3(a), the task was to write a letter to a pen-pal to describe a performance you watched last weekend. The majority of the candidates chose this task and covered all the bullet points very well and they were well trained to use adjectives to express opinions for bullet point 3 and different activities for bullet point 4 “what did you do after the performance”. The bullet point 5 “when will you go to see a new performance” seems a very straight forward question.

Task 1 was well attempted, with most popular choice of family members and friends which were easy to write.

Surprisingly most of the candidates answered task 2 “why did you go to see the performance” very well. The most popular answers were that the show was a good one and recommended by friends, family member wanted to watch or it's a new show etc., but some expressive answers in more advanced level such as 巡回演唱会、暖场嘉宾 were appeared on the paper.

Candidates were well trained in expressing opinions, e.g. task 3 “what do you think of the performance”. Apart from the common words such as nice, interesting etc. basic adjectives, other adjectives to describe the performance e.g.

不出所料、身怀绝技、加油打气、令人开心、释放压力、作品十分有艺术性 were really impressive.

Majority of the candidates were able to answer task 5 without any difficulties and used the future timeframe well. It was pleasing to see candidates could use different timeframes in **Question 3**.

Characters and Grammar

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

- Character mistakes: such as 朋又 (友), 们 (们)、喜欢 (欠又)、有一 (意) 思、饭电 (店)、粗女木 (姐妹)、木口 (和)、
- Mistake of using ‘是’ with adjectives: e.g. 我觉得这个表演是很有意思
- Mistake of using 了: 我和我的家人是了非常高兴
- Wrong word order: 我去看表演跟我朋友

(b) In 3(b), the tasks were to write an article about views on school canteens. The evidence showed the candidates who opted to do this question were familiar with this topic area. All bullet points were easy to follow and guided the candidates to provide their opinion fully apart from task 2.

Task 2 was “how long did you queue yesterday” and a handful of candidates did not understand 多长时间 and simply answered with 一时间. Candidates did well answering bullet point 3 and 4 because they were familiar with food vocabulary as well as expressing opinion on it. “食堂的饭菜好吃、好看、便宜” were the common ones.

Task 5 seems slightly challenging since the rubrics were slightly longer, but most candidates opted for this question were able to express some ideas e.g. 早点开始, 多一点饭菜, 有法国菜 etc. More advance answer such as 自助买饭、健康饮食 were practical and impressive.

Characters and Grammar

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

- Character mistakes: e.g. 海(每)个、鸟(鸡)肉、讠交(饺)子、午(牛)肉、中文(国)菜、文花(化)、一咩(样)、大(太)好吃、更(便)宜、西食(餐)
- Misused 跟 as 'with': e.g. 鸡肉跟面包
- Use 和 to link 2 sentences: e.g. 食堂很有意思和食堂吃饭非常好吃
- Use of 了: 你要喜欢我的学校了
- Incorrect words order: e.g. 小学同学们吃饭在食堂; 我吃了午饭一二点到二点
- Some anglicism occurred: e.g. 同学们和老师们很好人
- Inappropriate length of time: e.g. 我昨天花了七点多长, 一个时间

- (c) Less than a third of candidates chose this task, the most common stories were talking about exams or revision over the phone, thus the person they were calling was either their friend/classmate or a teacher. Stories of picking up from an airport also appeared several times. "I think I should borrow other people's phone" or "go to the other person's house" were the most solution for task 4 "what you think you should do".

Teachers should advise candidates to read the scenario sentences with greater care to avoid coping down characters incorrectly e.g. 电语for 电话, 后米for 后来. However, 一言为定、焦急万分 etc. advanced words appeared on the other end of the spectrum.

It was pleasing to see a coherent story line in this narrative writing for most of the candidates but a small number of candidates could not elaborate due to limited vocabulary and sentence structures.

Characters and Grammar

The most frequent mistakes were:

- Character mistakes: 识(说)、考式(试)、想with wrong radical、斤户(所)以、令(今)天、电语(话)、识(知)到(道)、这理(里)、peng又(朋友)、明(朋)友
- Missing out measure words: 四出口左右 instead of有四个出口
- Misuse of 是: 这个是很重要instead of这件事很重要