

CHINESE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0523/01
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- In the reading section, candidates are required to understand and respond to information presented in a variety of forms. Candidates are expected not only to understand the information provided in the passages but also to be able to distinguish between facts, ideas and opinions. They should demonstrate the ability to extract relevant specific information from various text types and organise and present it in a logical manner.
- In the writing section, candidates need to show that they can communicate clearly and appropriately in written Chinese to convey information and express opinions. Candidates are expected to use a range of vocabulary and show control of a variety of grammatical structures. Register should be appropriate. Writing conventions, such as paragraphing and punctuation, should be followed. The characters produced by candidates should be accurate.
- Candidates should choose either the traditional or simplified character version of the paper and write all their answers within that section of the question paper booklet. Candidates must not answer in both versions. If a candidate starts to answer in one part of the booklet by mistake and then moves to a different character version, he/she must cross out any work that he/she does not wish the examiner to consider.
- Candidates should try to be precise when answering questions. Although notes may be made on the question paper, any work that the candidate does not wish the Examiner to consider must be clearly crossed out. The mark cannot be awarded if the examiner has to 'choose' the correct answer from a longer response.

General comments

Performance on this component was good. The majority of candidates were able to understand the three reading passages in detail. In the writing section, most candidates showed that they were capable of communicating competently in the target language. Many responses successfully and clearly communicated interesting ideas, but care should be taken to ensure precision in using simple grammatical structures. Some candidates also need to take care when writing characters to ensure clarity and accuracy.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1 Questions 1 – 7

In this exercise, candidates are presented with a blank form, and need to complete it according to their understanding of the passage. A high level of accuracy is needed to score well.

Question 1 required candidates to identify the school in which the protagonist studied. 德州实验中学 was answered correctly by most candidates.

Question 2 was found to be challenging with a high percentage of candidates answering with the incorrect response. 《会说话的杰克狗》 was only answered correctly by less than 20 per cent of the candidates. Candidates who gave a response of 《醉人的巴黎》 were not credited. They needed to understand the meaning of the question word '出版作品' and look for '为英国《会说话的杰克狗》编绘了五册绘本' from the passage, so as to locate the correct answer.

For **Question 3**, candidates needed to give two precise responses, 法国国际漫画青年人才奖 and (英国) 格林绘本奖 rather than just one response to be credited the 2 marks.

In **Question 4**, candidates needed to read the important keyword, 如何定期更新美术理论知识 of the question judiciously, and locate (去德州美院) 听讲座 from the passage for the mark to be credited.

Questions 5, 6 and 7 were all answered well by most candidates; they were able to find the information from the passage with ease.

Generally, candidates showed confidence in locating the correct information for the questions in **Exercise 1**. Most candidates also showed care and precision in completing the form, for example, not to put she, 她 or the name of the protagonist, 张蕊 in the answer. This is because all the questions in this exercise required the candidate to put himself or herself in the position of the protagonist to fill out the form.

Exercise 2 Questions 8 – 16

Questions in **Exercise 2** require precise and accurate short answers. Where questions test implicit meaning, candidates are required to answer in their own words.

Questions 8 把保育的社会效益和经济效益看成对立的双方 was answered well by many.

Question 9 成为财务上的无底深渊 was also handled well by most candidates. Responses which contained the lifted sentence 这样才不会成为财务上的无底深渊 were not accepted.

The majority of candidates were able to find the answers to **Questions 10 and 11** successfully.

Question 12 required two elements, 符合该区老化人口的医疗需要 and 带动了社区商业的发展. Most candidates answered well. Some candidates answered with further communication, 成为服务社区的中医药保健中心 which was only awarded a total of 1 mark.

Question 13 proved to be the most challenging in **Exercise 2**, as it required candidates to pay close attention to both the passage and the question. This question required candidates to answer in their own words such as 支持, 赞同, 正面 or the sentence 活化还是比较适合香港的 from the passage. Many candidates misunderstood the question and lifted the whole sentence with extra information from the passage, which was not credited.

Two elements were also required in **Question 14**. One of the elements, 建立保育街道 was tackled well by most candidates. Candidates who answered the other response incorrectly frequently stopped at the word 格外, or missed the word 高度 from the answer 控制古迹附近的建筑物高度(格外重要). These show that they did not fully understand the meaning of those words and made the answer unsatisfactory.

Most candidates performed very well in **Question 15** and showed that they had understood the reading passage well. Two elements were required in **Question 16** as well. They were also handled well by most candidates, but candidates who wrote an additional message of ‘国际建筑师’ to the two responses were only awarded 1 mark instead of 2 marks.

In short, candidates are reminded of the need to read the questions and passage in **Exercise 2** carefully. Furthermore, candidates should be reminded to give a precise response, not to lift whole sentences from the passage, or give an incomplete answer in order to convey the meaning without ambiguity.

Exercise 3 Question 17 – 26

In **Exercise 3**, the multiple matching exercises, it is recommended that candidates practise skimming and scanning reading techniques and carefully consider each question, taking into account any distracting information in the texts. When writing their answer, candidates should clearly indicate the letter they have selected. Most candidates demonstrated a good level of understanding of the task and there were some very successful attempts at the exercise.

Overall, the whole range of marks were awarded, with most candidates achieving more than five marks. The greatest number of correct answers was to **Question 26**, and the most commonly found wrong answers

were **Questions 20 to 23**. Presentation of answers was generally clear. When writing their answers, candidates are reminded that if they change their mind, they should not write the second answer over the first, but should cross out the wrong answer clearly, and write their final choice alongside.

Exercise 4 Question 27

For **Question 27**, candidates were required to write a diary entry relating to a recent celebrity visit to the school to give a speech. Candidates were asked to explain what makes this celebrity unique. In addition, they had to give an account of the main content of the celebrity's speech and describe their feelings after listening to the speech.

Most candidates were aware that they should write between 100 and 120 characters, and successfully addressed the tasks given in the bullet points within the character limit.

Many candidates addressed all three-bullet points well in their diary entry. Some needed to explain/describe what makes this celebrity unique more clearly to access higher content marks. A brief justification is required to show candidates' understanding of the question.

In terms of language use, many candidates demonstrated that they could use simple grammatical structures effectively and precisely. In order to reach the highest mark band, candidates also needed to show that they can use more complex structures and sophisticated language accurately. Candidates are reminded not to use pinyin in the writing exercise.

Exercise 5 Question 28

Question 28 was a task that invited candidates to present arguments for and against a topic, concluding with their own point of view. This year, candidates were asked to write a letter to their parents to express their opinions on what they wanted to do while their parents moved overseas for a year due to work commitments: go abroad with their parents or go to a boarding school.

Two written comments were provided as a stimulus to provoke candidates into thinking about the topic. Candidates were not obliged to include these and could use their own ideas and opinions. These were given as suggestions of the arguments which may be put forward, and it was expected that candidates would not simply re-state the ideas provided but present their own ideas and opinions as well.

Most candidates could clearly state their opinions. The key to success in this section is to make sure ideas are fully developed, using connective words where appropriate. Candidates needed to generate persuasive arguments and to engage the reader's interest to be awarded the highest marks. The highest scoring essays contained interesting and sustained personal opinions in respect of the given issue with well-developed ideas.

In conclusion, centres should continue to support candidates in writing Chinese characters accurately. Candidates should be reminded that the use of idioms and sayings only enhance the quality of the language when used appropriately.

CHINESE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0523/02
Listening

Key messages

- Candidates are expected to identify the key information from a range of spoken material, including talks and conversations and to respond to factual information as well as abstract ideas.
- In Exercise 1 to 3 candidates are required to provide short answers to questions in Chinese characters or pinyin. If a candidate has chosen to write their answers in pinyin instead of characters, there is no requirement to use tones on pinyin, and the spelling of the pinyin does not have to conform to the standard spelling rules. However, the answer must communicate the required information and be completely unambiguous within the context.
- Candidates should choose either the traditional or simplified character version of the paper and write all their answers within that section of the question paper booklet. Candidates must not answer in both versions. They can write either in simplified or traditional characters. If a candidate starts to answer in one part of the booklet by mistake and then moves to a different character version, he/she must cross out any work that he/she does not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Candidates should attempt all questions, write clear and legible responses in the spaces provided in the question paper. Candidates should not write over their initial answers. Attempts which cannot be read, may not be credited.

General comments

Overall, candidates demonstrated confidence in their listening skills and performed well in this exam. Most candidates were well prepared for the exam and were aware of the requirements.

There were some excellent performances, and many candidates were able to provide brief written responses in Chinese (whether characters or pinyin). Most candidates could identify the relevant keywords from the texts and it was evident that some had taken notes while listening to the recordings to help them. Candidates should be encouraged to read the questions carefully during the reading time and to keep the responses short, clear, and to the point to avoid any incorrect material that may lead to invalidating an otherwise correct response.

It was noticeable this year that answers in characters contained a range of inaccuracies and in some cases the wrong choice of character did not communicate the required elements and therefore could not be credited. Inaccuracies of Chinese are tolerated in this exam as long as that the message provided is communicated clearly and that the candidate's rendering of the answer does not give a different Chinese character/pinyin word with another meaning, which might confuse comprehension of the message.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

Question 1 to 6

Generally, candidates performed well in this exercise, which required them to write short answers in response to six questions. All candidates understood the rubric well. Candidates who performed well in this section had a thorough understanding of the question words, e.g. how, why, when, and the keywords in the question. In most cases, a short, direct response is most successful.

Question 1

This question was quite well attempted. Most candidates understood the whole conversation and wrote down the correct clothes item 羊毛衫. Answers that had both 羊毛衫 and T 恤衫 were credited but those which only included T 恤衫 were not credited.

Question 2

This was very well attempted. The question was asking *at least* how many people therefore answers such as 两人以上 could not be credited.

Question 3

Candidates answered this question fairly well. The expected response was 早高峰. Responses which did not score had usually omitted the keyword 早 or 早上. Other attempts such as 堵车、上班人多、交通严重 could not be credited because they did not fully describe the expression of 'morning rush hour' as expressed in the conversation.

Question 4

This question elicited a mixed response. Answers which expressed the idea 着急 gained the mark, whilst words like 惊讶 or 害怕 did not accurately reflect the boys mood and so were not credited.

Question 5

This was very well attempted, and a large number of candidates were able to score the mark. Candidates managed to express the answer in a number of different ways that did not put the meaning in doubt, including 一半, 百分之五十, 50%, 便宜了五折.

Question 6

This question was generally well answered. Many candidates were able to write 专家 with ease either in simplified or traditional characters.

Exercise 2

Question 7(a – h)

Candidates generally performed well in this gap-fill exercise where they heard a longer spoken extract from a news article about China refusing to receive imported waste. Candidates are advised to read each question carefully before listening to the recording. Candidates should not only listen for the correct targeted detail in the recording but also check their responses carefully to make sure the word used makes sense in the sentence. Candidates should not include words which are already part of the sentence printed on the question paper before or after each gap as part of their answer.

- (a) Overall, this question was well-attempted by the majority of candidates. Candidates needed to listen carefully to identify 欧洲 as the correct answer and the strongest candidates managed this, understanding that the waste products from 美国 were paper rather than plastic and glass. If candidates wrote the homophone character 州 this was accepted as it did not interfere with the overall meaning, however, 澳洲、奥州 or 'o zhou' could not be credited.
- (b) This question required candidates to understand China's attitude towards the issue and a variety of responses was seen. Most candidates were able to identify the key information 来者不拒 from the text and many showed they had understood the meaning of the idiom by writing down the characters or pinyin. Some candidates were able to convert 来者不拒 to 接受. A common mistake was for candidates to write 来者不去 instead of 拒. This answer could not be credited because 去 changed the original meaning of 来者不拒.

- (c) This was consistently well-answered by the majority of candidates, many of whom could supply the response 可再利用. If candidates wrote the homophone character 在 instead of 再, this was credited as the meaning was still conveyed.
- (d) This question was quite well-attempted. Weaker responses typically inserted words or phrases into the gap which left the whole sentence incomprehensible. Candidates should be reminded to read back over their answers to ensure that the sentence makes sense.
- (e) Performance on this question was high. Some candidates heard 海洋水质 first and incorrectly gave it as the answer. The correct answer 海洋生物 was given later in the paragraph, reminding candidates of the need to listen carefully to the whole text.
- (f) Candidates were able to answer this question in a number of ways, all of which could deliver the meaning of 'suddenly'. Quite a few candidates heard and wrote the phrase 毫无征兆, some were able to write 征兆 in characters correctly to show their full understanding of this word. Some candidates wrote 兆 in pinyin as 'zhuang', which could not be credited as the meaning was ambiguous.
- (g) This question was extremely well-answered by candidates, most of whom identified the answer as 回收公司/回收企业. The homophone character 工 instead of 公 was credited as being more correct than incorrect in this context.
- (h) This question required candidates to interpret a phrase in context to understand the implied meaning. Many candidates simply wrote the idiom they had heard in the extract 金山银山 directly. The most successful answers were those which completed the sentence by conveying the meaning that 'golden mountains and silver mountains' referred to 'the economy' or 'money' (金钱/经济).

Exercise 3

Question 8(a – h)

In this exercise candidates have to correct a detail in a sentence that contains a piece of incorrect information. Candidates heard a report from a journalist about a primary school in Singapore. Candidates are advised to read each given sentence thoroughly before listening to the recording. It is also helpful for candidates to identify the type of word needed to correct the sentence, e.g. a noun/verb/adjective. Candidates also need to be careful not to rewrite the incorrect words already given in the sentence.

- (a) This was fairly well-answered and stronger candidates were able to provide the response 学校建设管理, recognising the keyword 建设 to distinguish it from the incorrect word 建筑设计.
- (b) Performance on this question was high and most candidates were able to correct the word 教堂 in the sentence with 热带植物园. Some candidates miswrote the character 热 as 日; as the key information is 植物园 the mark could still be awarded in those cases.
- (c) The most successful responses were those which showed candidates had not only heard the word 污染 but also heard the detail 二次污染. Some attempts such as 开支、费用 contained a similar meaning as the underlined word in the original sentence, already identified as incorrect.
- (d) Candidates needed to identify how the head teacher felt about not having air-con in the school. Some candidates were able to use the incorrect word in the sentence as a reference point in the extract and distinguished the change of tone from students/parents feeling *concerned* to the head teacher feeling 自豪.
- (e) This question required candidates to listen carefully to the details given in the context. The expected response was a *location*, correcting the word 去厕所 given in the incorrect sentence. A common mistake was for candidates to write 洗手池. The key information was 教室 and some candidates were able to give detailed responses such as 教室后面的洗手池.

- (f) This was generally well-attempted by the majority of candidates. Most were able to supply the correct answer ‘公德心’ or its pinyin; most candidates were able to answer using characters.
- (g) There was a mixed level of success here – the best responses showed that candidates could process the detail 拓宽两米 in the extract to arrive at the answer 宽敞/敞亮. Candidates needed to read the given sentence carefully to identify that the required answer was a descriptive word rather than a verb phrase.
- (g) This question was well-answered. Many candidates heard the key information 以人为本 and could answer correctly. Some candidates were able to use a different phrase 人性化 to replace the given word 现代化.

Exercise 4

Question 9(a – h)

Candidates answer multiple-choice questions in this exercise. Candidates listened to an extract from an interview with an international candidate and her work experience during Chinese Chun Yun. Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the content and many of them obtained high marks. Candidates should be reminded to make it absolutely clear which option they wish to be taken as their final choice of answer. It is also important to emphasise that if two boxes are ticked, even if one of the responses given is correct, it will not be credited.

CHINESE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0523/03
Speaking

Key messages

- Examiners must ensure that they are familiar with the format of the test and should read the instructions given in the syllabus booklet well in advance of the speaking test period.
- The two-to-three minute Presentation should be related to Chinese culture or an aspect of life in a Chinese-speaking country or community.
- Although the candidate will have chosen the topic area for the Presentation, follow-up questions in the Topic Conversation should be unprepared, allowing spontaneous responses and natural conversation.
- In the Topic Conversation, questions should not require candidates to repeat what he/she has already said in the Presentation. In order to reach the higher marks for vocabulary and structures, new evidence needs to be heard that candidates can use a wider range of vocabulary and structures.
- Good questioning in both Topic Conversation and General Conversation should offer candidates the scope and the depth to use a wider vocabulary and structures, opinions and justifications for higher marks.
- Discussion in both conversation sections should include opinions, explanations and comparisons, as well as facts, to show the level and depth of their command of the language.
- At least two topics should be covered in the General Conversation: one from Areas A-B and one from Areas C-D as set in the syllabus.
- Tests must adhere to the timings as set out in the syllabus.
- Tests must be conducted in Mandarin.

General comments

Most centres managed the Speaking Test this series quite well. A wide range of interesting topics were chosen by candidates for their presentation. The best performances in the conversation sections were where examiners were well-prepared and listened carefully, asking a series of excellent searching questions pitched at a level and depth appropriate to this syllabus. Most centres were aware of the requirement to cover sufficient topic areas in the General Conversation, making the test thorough and complete.

A full range of performance from candidates of all abilities was heard this year. Many candidates delivered a well-organised presentation showing significant research and preparation of their chosen topic area. Candidates could generally respond to a variety of questions and contribute to the conversation offering opinions and justifications and using a variety of vocabulary and structures. The best performances were where candidates were given plenty of opportunities to talk about their own opinions and to defend their ideas. The strongest candidates showed precise use of a solid range of vocabulary and a variety of structures in spontaneous interactions.

Conduct of the test

From the evidence heard in the recorded samples, the vast majority of examiners were familiar with the requirements of the IGCSE Chinese as a Second Language Speaking test and understood the importance of their role. Examiners, particularly external examiners who do not teach the syllabus, should ensure that they are familiar with the requirements of the Speaking test, the Topic Areas and the Mark Scheme before embarking on any examining.

Most examiners kept to the stipulated timings and asked short and clear questions, giving candidates ample time and opportunity to demonstrate their skills in spoken Chinese. In a small number of cases, questions were closed or too fact-based which restricted the answers candidates could give and therefore affected their performance. Examiners also need to be careful not to correct candidates or ask questions which repeat information already supplied.

Recorded sample: quality and composition

In a number of cases, candidates and/or the examiner were not always clearly heard. Background noise makes the moderation process difficult, and in some cases there was evidence that it had affected candidates' performance at the time of exam. If an external microphone is used for recording, please make sure that it is nearer to the candidate. Centres are reminded to spot check the quality of all recordings before sending to Cambridge.

Internal moderation

Where centres use more than one examiner to conduct and assess the Speaking test, the coordinating examiner is responsible for checking that the mark scheme has been applied consistently by all of the examiners in the centre. If a particular examiner's marking is judged by his/her colleagues to be out of line with the other marking at the centre, all the marks for candidates examined by that examiner must be adjusted before paperwork is submitted to Cambridge. Details of the centre's Internal Moderation procedures must also be enclosed in the paperwork sent to Cambridge. Guidelines for the Internal Moderation of Speaking tests are available on the samples database: <https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples>.

When a total mark has been changed as the result of internal moderation, the breakdown of marks should also be updated accordingly to avoid the confusion with a clerical error.

Application of the mark scheme

The mark scheme was generally well understood and applied correctly. In cases where downward adjustments to marks were made, this was often where material from the presentation was repeated and so candidates had not presented new evidence of language / structures. Other examples were where opinions or justifications were not included or the timing of sections was too short and candidates had not been given enough time to show evidence of language to place them in a higher marking band.

Comments on specific questions

Presentation

The majority of candidates showed evidence of thorough preparation for their Presentation and performed well, combining factual points with thoughtful personal reflection and critical comments.

Candidates came up with a range of topics for their presentations covering one or more aspects of Chinese culture or traditions. Interesting topics such as 中国民族舞蹈, 两国节日比较, 中国饮酒文化, 中国名菜, 马来美食, 七夕与情人节, etc. were heard this year.

Topics relating to modern Chinese society or local community were also popular, including 抖音, 支付宝, 快时尚与环保, 中国高铁, 淘宝购物平台, 快递小哥, 方言, 四二二家庭结构, 第三文化儿童, 中国体育发展 and of course 新冠疫情下的教育.

Centres are reminded that when a more general topic has been chosen by a candidate, for example, 网络的利弊, or 健康饮食, this has to be linked to an aspect of Chinese culture or life in a Chinese-speaking country or community. Candidates are also advised to avoid copying large amounts of material from different written

sources and using these in their presentations unchanged; the presentation should be the candidate's own work, and language drawn from other sources often leads to stilted or less coherent presentations.

Topic Conversation

Many candidates showed thorough subject knowledge and were able to answer questions asked by the examiner fully. Whilst it is expected that candidates would have thought about and prepared possible follow-up questions around their chosen topic, they should not be delivering another long monologue in this section from memorised material. It is important that examiners include questions that are more unpredictable, and enable candidates to show their ability to respond spontaneously.

In most cases, examiners showed evidence of careful listening to what the candidate had said and raised open questions that were closely linked to the topic and the materials presented. This gave candidates the scope and the depth to provide opinions as well as to provide further information.

General Conversation

At least two topics should be covered in the General Conversation: one from Areas A and B, the other from Areas C-D. Topics chosen for the General Conversation should not overlap with the content of Part Two, Topic Conversation in this Speaking test. A full list of the topics can be found in the 2020 – 2022 Syllabus.

A variety of topics was heard in the General Conversations. Many examiners were fully aware that the level of language and depth to which general topics should be discussed in this examination should be beyond that expected of a Foreign Language examination. In a few cases, questions were not challenging enough to allow candidates to express themselves fully. Centres are reminded that the treatment of topics such as 'Sports and exercise' should be more mature and in-depth at this level, including questions dealing with subjects such as whether taking part in sport conflicts with study time and whether this is problematic, etc., rather than more basic questions such as where they play, with whom, how long for, etc. The best examining was when candidates were invited to express their opinions on a topic, or when examiners raised a particular issue which gave candidates the opportunity to discuss both sides of the argument.