

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

International GCSE

Chinese (4CN0) Paper 3

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Alternatively, you can contact our International GCSE Chinese Advisor directly by sending an email to Alistair Drewery on LanguagesSubjectAdvisor@EdexcelExperts.co.uk. You can also telephone 0844 576 0035 to speak to a member of our subject advisor team.

(If you are calling from outside the UK please dial + 44 1204 770 696 and state that you would like to speak to the Chinese subject specialist).

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Speaking

This year was the first sitting for International GCSE Chinese Speaking. Candidates generally performed well, showing high proficiency of language skills and knowledge. There are five topic areas:

- A – Home and Abroad
- B – Education and Employment
- C – House, home & daily routine
- D – The modern world and the environment
- E – Social activities, fitness and health

Topics A, B, C and E were very popular. Topic D appeared to be more challenging, and turned out to be the least popular of the range. However, majority of the candidates who had chosen this topic were well-prepared and were able to give a good account on the sub-topic areas they had chosen, e.g. pollution, internets, film reviews. These candidates often showed good competence in their language skills.

There are two sections in this speaking unit covering three different topics. Section A is a picture based presentation and discussion. The candidate gives an introduction to his / her chosen picture in 1 minute, followed by discussion with the interviewer for 3 minutes. Section B consists of two separate conversations on two different topics chosen by the interviewer. Each conversation lasts for 3 minutes resulting in a total test time of 10 minutes.

Section A

The candidates were generally well prepared and this section was the part that candidates performed best in. Even weaker candidates were able to give a brief introduction and/or description of the picture which provided the context of conversations initiated by the interviewer. The teacher/examiner plays an important role in the exam. Many managed to exploit the candidates' knowledge and language skills by asking opened-ended questions to elicit opinions, imaginative ideas, predictions, etc. Those teacher/examiners who didn't ask such questions often limited their candidates' performance. Some candidates did not include the picture and just conducted this section as presentation of a topic followed by conversations. In some rare cases, the candidate just gave a monologue on the chosen topic without interaction with the interviewer. These discrepancies will have adverse effect on candidates' scores.

Section B

Candidates generally performed well in the two conversations. Many teacher/examiners managed to carry out genuine conversations with candidates, asking appropriate questions to elicit their knowledge of the topics and various language skills. Some adapted the mode and questions from the legacy GCSE specification and built up the context for conversations. On the whole, this section was well conducted.

Points to note:

- Always include a picture which can provide a context for discussion in Section A.
- Always ask open-ended questions to elicit ideas and opinions, not just facts.
- Avoid using the same picture / set of questions for all candidates in a centre.
- Allow individuality. Different candidates might focus on different areas. Questions asked should be in favour of candidates' interests and knowledge.

Administration

It is always helpful to the examiners to receive the scripts in order. Please note the following and share good practice:

- Include the Candidate cover sheet – can be found in the Teacher's guide Appendix 3.
- Include the picture for Section A or a description if the picture is a personal photograph.
- Place the microphone in favour of the candidate.
- Listen to the recording and check if it is audible and clear before sending out to examiner.
- Label the cassette / CD/ MP3 / Memory stick with the candidates' names in sequence.

Grade Boundaries

The modern foreign languages specifications share a common design, but the assessments in different languages are not identical. Grade boundaries at unit level reflect these differences in assessments, ensuring that candidate outcomes across these specifications are comparable at specification level.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link: <http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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