

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

International GCSE Chinese (4CN0)
Paper 03 Speaking

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This is the last year for this separately endorsed speaking paper. Building on the past years' experience, the students' performance as well as the conduct of the examination has improved and the majority of the students were well prepared for the exam.

Topic areas and students' performance

The topics and exam procedures remained the same and all topic areas were favourably attempted. Topic D –The modern world and the environment- remained to be a more challenging one. It was pleasing to find that more students opted for this topic for their section A test this year and many came up with new ideas and personal opinions which added merit to their marks for content and knowledge. On the other hand, topic C- House, home and daily routine – seemed to be a more accessible as students could give an account based on their daily tasks. However, it gave little scope for students to extend their imaginations or thoughts which would have lead them to gain more marks here. The other 3 topics were also well attempted, but performances varied according to ability in the knowledge and language section. Some students managed to give an interesting account on their activities with vivid descriptions and sophisticated language and therefore scored well, while less able students just gave a basic account which and not score as well. Centres are advised against using the same topic and / or a similar set of questions for the whole cohort. In such cases each students' account and answers did not differ much and therefore did not attract high marks as they failed to demonstrate spontaneity and individuality. It was also found that some students' performances differed within the 3 conversations. Most were well prepared for Section A, but showed deficiency in knowledge and language for the conversation in Section B. Students are reminded that they should prepare themselves for all topic areas, not just the one they have chosen for Section A.

Conducting the examination

There are two sections in this speaking paper covering three separate topics.

Section A is a picture based presentation and discussion. Here students give an

introduction to their chosen picture in one minute, followed by a discussion with

the interviewer for three minutes. Section B consists of two separate conversations on two different topics chosen by the interviewer, each conversation lasting for three minutes. The assessment is 10 minutes in total. Most centres followed these instructions, but some were not familiar with the specification and did not conduct the assessment properly.

Common errors included: short timing – less than 3 minutes for each conversation, allowing over 1 minute for the picture introduction and mixing up 2 conversations in Section B.

Section A

Students were generally well prepared and normally gave a good

account on their chosen pictures. Many interviewers managed to exploit the students' knowledge and language skills by asking opened-ended questions to elicit opinions, imaginative ideas and predictions. However, some lacked questioning techniques and therefore limited their students' performance. Some interviewers allowed students to give a monologue on the chosen topic without any interaction. These discrepancies in conducting the examination had adverse effect on students' communication and spontaneity marks. Hence, centres are advised to follow the guidelines when conducting the examination so that students are given the opportunity to score highly.

Section B

On the whole, this section was well conducted. Many interviewers managed to carry out genuine conversations with students, asking appropriate questions to elicit their knowledge of the topics and various language skills. As this section consisted of two unprepared conversations on two different topics chosen by the interviewer, the performance of the students varied. Stronger students continued to perform well however weaker students appeared to struggle in the conversations, lacking the knowledge and language skills to respond appropriately. This section differentiated the language abilities of the students. It was commonly found that students scored lower marks in this section than in Section A.

Further guidance for centres

- 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.
- Do not use the same picture / set of questions for the whole cohort.
- Allow individuality in Section A: different students might wish to focus on different topics . The topic chosen should be in favour of students' interests and knowledge.

Administration

Centres should note the following:

- It is always helpful for the examiners to receive the scripts in student number order
- Always include the student cover sheet. This can be found in the Teacher's guide Appendix 2 which can be downloaded from the Edexcel website
- Include the picture for Section A.
- Place the microphone closer to the student.
- Listen to the recording and check if it is audible and clear before sending to the examiner.
- Label the CD/MP3/memory stick with the students' name in the order that they are heard on the recording.

Grade Boundaries

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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