Oral Examination

The Chinese oral examination assessed Criterion 2 – Communicate in Spoken Chinese. The questions asked were under Theme 1 – The Individual covering all subtopics of Personal World, Education and Daily life. The topics included personal and family information, daily routine activities during school days, school information, school studies, food, seasons and weather, holidays, future career and plans.

Some able students also answered some extended questions under Theme 2 such as Chinese traditional festivals. The examiners of the oral examination were very pleased that most of the candidates prepared and performed very well although they appeared to be nervous and some of them were even stressful at the beginning. The oral examiners were very happy to hear that the candidates asked for a repetition of the questions in Chinese when needed.

Most of the candidates demonstrated good conversational skills with the topics and the questions the examiners asked. The strongest candidates not only fluently answered all the questions using correct vocabularies, grammar and good pronunciation, they were also able to use a range of more complicated sentence structures and authentic expressions to elaborate the topics themselves. They were able to discuss more demanding topics by using the words and grammar they knew to express their ideas and opinions.

The less successful candidates were penalized due to the use of incorrect words, grammar and expressions. Inaccurate pronunciation and poor fluency were common problems for some of the less able candidates.

The following questions were found difficult and challenging for some of the candidates.

请你说说你的日常生活；
你平常怎么去学校？
从你家去学校要多长时间？
这个暑假你有什么旅行计划？
圣诞节你打算怎么过？

Overall, the majority of the candidates demonstrated they had put a lot of effort in and worked very hard with their teachers to master the basic Chinese conversational skills.

Written Exam Paper

Question 1

The spoken text I was a scenario of money exchange in a bank in China which the candidates were unlikely to encounter and not familiar with. The words/phrase “填表 (to fill up a form)”, “换 (to change/exchange)”, “排队 (to queue/line up)” and “窗口 (window for service)” were not required by the syllabus and therefore most likely not studied/focused on in their course. But they were the key words for answering questions 1 (d) and (e), which had 5 marks allocated out of 13 for this question. That was more than one third of the total mark allocated, consequently the candidates suffered a heavy loss of marks.

Some other words that the candidates were not familiar with included “读 (to read)”, “表 (form)” and “顺便 (by the way)”. Overall, this question was answered very poorly. Only two candidates achieved good marks; most of the candidates guessed the answers and about two thirds of the candidates scored 4 marks or less.
The suggested answers and marking guide:
(a) Next month (1/2) go to university (1/2) in Australia (1) (2 marks)
(b) Chinese to Australian ( tick the second box) (1) (1 mark)
(c) Passport (1) and photo (1) (2 marks)
(d) Fill up the form (1), go to the 2nd window/service place (1), line up/wait (1) (3 marks)
(e) There are many people (1) change money (1) (2 marks)
(f) (i) Toilet / rest room / washing room (1) (1 mark)
 (ii) go to the front door (1) then turn left (1) (2 marks)

Question 2

This was considered a very well designed spoken text. If the wording of the questions that followed could be
 clearer, that would make this question even better. Most of the candidates appeared to be familiar with the
 topics in this spoken text. Consequently this question was the best performed. The speed of the spoken
text from the male was a little too fast.

A few of the words/phrases were not required by the course document and they should have been listed in the
 new word list. These were: “换” (to change), “刚才” (just / a moment ago), “麻烦” (to trouble/bother) and
 the expression “交个朋友” (to make a friend). Especially the first two words/phrases, were the key words to
 answer question 2(d).

Most of the candidates missed the marks for this question 2(d) and only one of them received the marks for this
 particular question. The clues to the order of the shoes (the first, second and third pair of the shoes) in the
 questions was very confusing, which made the questions 2(d) particularly hard to analyse and comprehend within
 the limited timeframe.

The suggested answers and marking guide:
(a) White (1 mark)
(b) Old fashioned (1) and not good looking/beautiful (1) (2 marks)
(c) A little too big (1 mark)
(d) One size bigger (1) than the third pair (1) [or size 37 (2)] (2 marks)
(e) It is good looking/beautiful/fashionable (1) and size is just right (1) (2 marks)
(f) Too expensive (1) (1 mark)
(g) 300 yuan (1) (1 mark)
(h) 320 yuan / tick the third box (2 marks)

Question 3

This question had a good mix of different topics including travelling, transportation, study, housing, and leisure
 activities. The text was quite long with approximately 320 characters. Although the topics should be familiar to
 the candidates, they did not perform very well with this question due to the speed of the spoken text and the
 vast amount of information which needed to be digested. There were a few new phrases which should have
 been listed: “传统的 (traditional)”, “习惯 (to get used to)”, “总是 (to make progress)”, “总是 (always)” and “
希望 (to hope)” in the New Word List.

The suggested answers and marking guide:
(a) Three months (1 mark)
(b) Australia (1 mark)
(c) Rested 3 days (1) and then looked for a house/accommodation (1) (2 marks)
(d) It was not easy / spent two weeks to find a house (1) (1 mark)
(e) It was not expensive (1), not far from school /was convenient location (1) (1 mark)
(f) By bike (1) (1 mark)
(g) Chinese dancing (1) (1 mark)
(h) Weather (1) (1 mark)
(i) Went out with friends (1)  
(j) See William/his friend (1/2) and show him the photos (1/2)

### Question 4

This spoken text was about personal health and wellbeing together with a little relevance of the topic of study. However the design of the scenario was about a car accident, injuries and recovering in a hospital which the candidates were unfamiliar with. The expressions for car accidents, injuries, treatment and recovery were not the focus of the study for the topic of health and wellbeing. This resulted in less ability to understand the spoken text and answer the questions that followed. The words/phrases suggested to be listed were: “担心(worried)”, “撞伤(injured by a car crash)”, “胳膊(arm)”, “腿(leg)”, “重(heavy)”, “检查(medical examinations)” and “恢复(to recover)”.

The suggested answers and marking guide:

(a) To see/visit her friend (1 mark)
(b) Talking to his mother (1/2) on the phone (1/2) (1 mark)
(c) A car (1 mark)
(d) Right arm (1) and right leg (1) (2 marks)
(e) Take medicine (1) three times a day (1), twice examinations (1), one hour of recovering exercise (1) and lots of rest (1) (4 marks)
(f) No / not (1) (1 mark)
(g) He is going to do some self-study in the hospital (1), make phone calls (1) or write letters /emails (1) to ask his classmates (1) about their progress of study (4 marks)
(h) Fruits (1) (1 mark)

### Question 5

This spoken text was a long notice/announcement addressed to the primary school students. More than half of the questions for this text were non-routine items which meant that the candidates were not familiar with the scenario. As some of the news words not listed in the Word List, this also resulted in a loss of marks for question 5(d), (e), (f) and (g). These words / phrases were: “习惯(habit), “帽子”(hat), “垃圾(rubbish)”, “重要”(important), “提前”(in advance). Very few students achieved more than 10 marks and the majority of candidates performed relatively poorly with this question.

The suggested answers and marking guide:

(a) They want to see the newly arrived animals (1) (1 mark)
(b) 9:00 am (1) (1 mark)
(c) Take car/bus (1 mark)
(d) Their ages /tick the second box (1 mark)
(e) Water (1) and hat (1) (2 marks)
(ii) More interesting (1) and played better (1) (2 marks)
(f) On the green outside (1) of the zoo (1) (2 marks)
(g) Rubbish (1) (1 mark)
(h) Leave the zoo at 2pm (1) arrive at school 3:30pm (1) [or one and half hours (2)] (2 marks)

### Part 2: Reading and Responding

The exam paper markers considered that questions that followed the reading texts were good combinations of Type 1, 2 and 3 questions. The first text in Section A was very well designed. It was a real-world scenario covering the topics of personal world, education and daily life. The candidates appeared to be most confident with these topics and performed quite well.
The second text in Section A and third text in Section B were all culturally-oriented texts and covered a big range of topics from Daily Routine, Past and Present, People and Places, Arts and Entertainment, Social Issues, Travel and Tourism, and World of Work under all three themes.

These topics required a lot of understanding of the cultural contexts, and also a very high level of vocabularies and phrases. Although there was a Word List for both reading texts, the candidates still encountered a large number of new words/expressions that they had not learnt or were not familiar with. The total number of characters in this part was well over 800 which added another difficulty.

Consequently the performances on the last two texts were very poor and also affected the result of the whole Reading and Responding Part with only few candidates achieved A ratings. It is recommended that a range of text types such as conversation, letter, diary and profile should be used in this part rather than just one text type – narrative.

**Question 6**

Most of the candidates did understand the text and answered the questions well. The design of the text and the questions followed should be applauded.

Suggested answers and marking guide:

(a) To attend Dawei's birthday party (1 mark)
(b) By bus (1 mark)
(c) D (4 marks)
(d) Flowers (1) and Veggies (1) (5 marks)
(e) Playing games / tick the third box (3 marks)
(f) (i) False (1 mark)  
   (ii) False (1 mark)  
   (iii) False (1 mark)
(g) Tick the second box (2 marks)

**Question 7**

This reading text had a focus on the Themes of Chinese-Speaking Communities and The Changing World. The topics were about Past and Present, People and Places, and Social Issues. It had an emphasis on Chinese culture whereby students were mainly required to do investigation and research, and complete the work in English.

Although there was a Word List for this text and the questions following, there were still a lot of new words that the candidates were not familiar with as they were not in the word list of the syllabus. Some of the words played a key role in answering the questions, consequently the candidates lost marks heavily on this question. The words/phrases were: "突然 (suddenly)" , "故事 (story)" , "发现 (to discover)" , "关于 (about)" , "生活水平 (living standard)" , "了解 (to know)" , "有礼貌 (polite)" , "其他的 (others)" , "发展 (to develop)" , "帮助 (to help)" , "开始 (to start)". Most of the candidates seemed to have failed to recognize the phrase "报纸 (newspaper)" when they answered question 7(a) although they might be able to understand it when they heard it. The conjunction words and sentence structure of "越来…越… (more…and more…" is also not included in the new syllabus.

This text appeared to be a little bit too long as well, with a word count of more than 400. Overall, this is a high level reading text and the candidates felt it difficult to comprehend and answer the questions well.

Suggested answers and marking guide:

(a) He read about Confucius in a newspaper (1) on his 16th birthday (1) (2 marks)
(b) He visited Confucius' hometown (1), listened to the stories about Confucius(1), took a lot of photos (1) and recorded his experience in his diary (1) (4 marks)
(c) Uncle / nephew (1) (1 mark)
(d) Mike is studying Chinese (1) in Australia (1) and would help him to understand Chinese language and culture (1) (3 marks)
(e) The living standards there were low/poor (1), people respected (1) and knew (1) about Confucius, people were very nice/kind (1) and polite (1) (5 marks)
(f) People’s living conditions improved a lot (1), more and more westernized (1/2) with high buildings/western food/new technologies (1/2), but far from Confucius (1) (3 marks)
(g) Tick the first box (2 marks)

Question 8

This text in Section B was about the art and culture of a Chinese tea house. It was again a culturally oriented text which was not familiar to most of the candidates. The text covered all of the three Themes and topics of Daily Life, Past and Present, People and Places, Arts and Entertainment, and Social Issues from the syllabus. Although there was a relatively longer word list, but there were still a lot of new words/phrases that were not required by the syllabus and not familiar to the candidates. The long list of new words/phrases included: “特色 (characteristics), 之一 (one of …), 出现 (to appear), 不但 (not only), 供 (to provide), 娱乐 (entertainment), 简单 (simple), 木材 (wood material), 摆 (to display), 精致 (fine, delicate), 茶壶 (teapot), 茶杯 (teacups), 极大地 (greatly), 窗户 (window), 墙 (wall), 挂着 (hanging), 古代的 (ancient), 热闹 (lively, bustling with noises and excitement), 安静 (quiet), 体现 (to show), 保持 (to keep).” The text was also very long with over 400 characters.

Some candidates did not read the question carefully and used Chinese to answer question (a). It was a pity to see them losing some marks because of this. Nearly half of the candidates did not understand and answer question (c) correctly. The reason might be because they did not know the characters/phrase “提到” which means “mentioned”. The instructions for question (f) to (h) were not clear. It said “Parts (f-h) are multiple-choice questions”, if that meant there was more than one correct answer, then it only applied to question (f) as question (g) and (h) had only one correct answer.

Suggested answers and marking guidelines:

(a) (i) 对 (1) (1 mark)
(ii) 对 (1) (1 mark)
(iii) 对 (1) (1 mark)
(iv) 不对/错 (1) (1 mark)
(b) 现在茶馆的布置和装饰 (1) 讲究得多了 (1) (2 mark)
(c) C (1 mark)
(d) 因为很多人聊天 (1), 有些茶馆还有评书和唱戏 (1) (2 marks)
(e) 喜欢安静的人/西方人 (1) (1 mark)
(f) 饭馆, 咖啡馆, 街上 (tick the first, second and third boxes) (3 marks)
(g) 喝咖啡 (tick the third box) (2 marks)
(h) 中国文化和西方文化没有不同 (tick the first box) (2 marks)

Part 3 Writing in Chinese

The markers of the exam paper considered that the design of the questions in this part did narrow down the choices of the questions for the candidates. Firstly the descriptions and instructions of the questions needed to be more detailed, and written on the level of understanding of the candidates.

The instruction for Question 9 was considered too concise and would have been better if it had incorporated specific requirements for the contents. The Chinese translation of the English question could be hard for the candidates to understand the words/phrases “记叙 (to write about)” and “经历 (experience)” as they would be new to them.
Question 12 should have included more detailed specifications for the content instead of the cultural differences. More candidates would choose a broader range of questions for their Writing in Chinese if the specifications of the questions were clearer.

Secondly, the text type of speech might have frightened some candidates away from question 12 as it was not the type the candidates had practiced and prepared.

Question 13 looked even harder both for elaborating the story and use of the correct words/expressions for the story as the only word “help” in the pictures had a different meaning which the candidates had not learned, and really meant “rescue”.

From the results of this part, the markers of the exam paper found that most of the candidates did well. They were able to choose the topic in which they felt most confident, and wrote accordingly on the aspects of the content and text types. The candidates also used the dictionary well in helping them to find the characters and write text although there was some very funny misuse of the characters.

The responses for the questions chosen by the candidates were marked and rated as follows:

| Relevance and coherence (topics covered): | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Sentence structure – grammar and accuracy: | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Sentence structure – vocab and variety: | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Text format and style: | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Word count: | 0 | 1 | 2 |

**Question 9**

Only two candidates chose this question and one of them did exceptionally well. The text that the candidate produced was not only relevant and coherent, but also used complicated sentence structures with correct grammar. The word count was well above the requirement of 170 with correct format for the text. The other candidate also did relatively well.

**Question 10**

The exam paper markers considered that question 10 in this part was explained very well. It had clear instructions about the content requirements. If the text type had been clearly explained e.g. personal profile or narrative, that would be even better. Although there were a few new expressions in the Chinese translation of the question such as 描写 (to describe), 以及 (and), 原因 (reason), it was quite well understood by the candidates.
**Question 11**

Only five candidates chose this question and they did relatively well. One of them achieved a very good writing performance and received a very good rating. The format requirement of this text was a letter, which should be familiar to the candidates. But some of the requirements for the content of the text were not explained well and sounded very difficult for the candidates.

**Question 12**

This question had an emphasis on culture, which was normally an investigational research assignment done in English. The candidates were not confident about the content required which were Chinese customs and cultural characteristics.

**Question 13**

No candidates selected this question as it was really difficult. The key word from the pictures “help”, meant “rescue”, for the theme shown in the pictures, but not “helping someone out” in such a situation.