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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

CHINESE

GCE Advanced Level and GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Papers 8681/02 and 9715/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

Understanding of the texts

On the whole, candidates demonstrated an excellent understanding of the arguments, ideas and information contained in the two articles, and there were only a few cases where insufficient understanding of the texts caused problems.

Responding to the questions

Generally, candidates' answers were full, clearly-expressed and showed good engagement with the texts. Where there were problems, these were usually due to candidates answering questions from personal experience rather than from the information contained in the texts, or making no effort to use any of their own words, but merely copying answers straight from the texts.

Quality of language

Most candidates were able to organise the required information in their own words. However, although the quality of language was generally good, certain expressions and grammatical structures were sometimes used inappropriately.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

The majority of candidates achieved full marks on this question.

Question 2

Again, most candidates coped very well with this question. Answers to **(a)** were occasionally rather awkward and in **(c)** some candidates did not drop *jiu*.

Question 3

In general, candidates performed well. Answers to **(a)**, **(d)** and **(e)** were sometimes incomplete. Candidates should be reminded that the mark allocation for each question is an indication of how many pieces of information the answer should contain.

Section 2

Question 4

On the whole, candidates coped well with this question. Where problems occurred it was usually because answers did not include enough information to score full marks or because candidates answered questions from general knowledge rather than looking in the text for the answer.

Question 5

There were some excellent answers to this question in which candidates were able to successfully summarise material from both texts and then add their own opinions. Occasionally, candidates omitted to include any information from the texts, simply giving their own opinions: such answers could not score highly.

Papers 8681/03 and 9715/03

Essay

General comments

Once again, the general standard of performance was extremely good, with many candidates demonstrating sound mastery of the Chinese language. While the very best candidates were able to produce concise, well structured and grammatically accurate essays, weaker candidates should concentrate on improving their fluency and use of linking devices in order to produce more sophisticated work.

Candidates should be reminded of the need to examine the issues raised by each question from different perspectives. For example, in the question on the value of learning to play a musical instrument, those candidates who mentioned the benefits as well as possible pitfalls achieved better content marks. Some candidates simply stated why in their opinion it was good to learn to play a musical instrument, without demonstrating any awareness that there might be less straightforward issues to consider. Essays which present rounded arguments taking account of different points-of-view will score the highest marks.

Generally, organisation tended to be better when more everyday questions were chosen and some of the candidates who chose **Questions 1** and **2** found it difficult to argue in a persuasive manner.

There were very few examples of essays that departed from the actual title. It is clear that the majority of candidates understand the importance of responding to the selected title and marshalling evidence that is relevant.

Finally, it is helpful to Examiners if candidates indicate on their answer sheet which question they are answering. In addition, candidates are reminded that they must write their candidate name/number and their Centre number clearly on each answer sheet.

Papers 8669/04 and 9715/04

Texts

General comments

Many candidates taking this paper did extremely well, writing carefully organised short answers and essays, showing an in-depth knowledge of the texts they had read. Such scripts were a pleasure to read.

Some candidates did not do as well in this paper as they should have done, as some of their answers showed no evidence that they had read the text for which they were answering the question. Even if a candidate's standard of written Chinese is high, if they have not read the text for which they are writing an answer, they will not perform satisfactorily.

A few candidates misread the rubrics and therefore answered parts **(a)** and **(b)** for each of the questions they attempted, whereas they should have answered *either* **(a)** or **(b)**. Occasionally, candidates answered too many questions from one section. Centres should ensure that candidates are familiar with the requirements of the examination so that such unfortunate errors are avoided.

The essays of most candidates would have benefited from a judicious use of well-chosen brief quotations from the texts to illustrate the points they were making. In many questions, no set answer was required; the Examiner was looking for a well-argued essay from the candidate, backed up by evidence from the text.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

There were some very good answers. Some candidates answered **(a)** and **(b)** and only one other question from **Section B**. This meant that only two out of three essays could be awarded marks. Candidates must illustrate their answers with apt quotations/concrete references to the text.

- (a)** Candidates, in general, answered this question well.
- (b)** The best answers to this essay showed some idea of Lu Xun's underlying intentions in the story. Weaker answers just used information extracted from the passage in **(a)** to answer the question.

Question 2

- (a)** There were some very good detailed answers here, the best giving the reader a real insight into Act IV of the play.
- (b)** This question was answered well with a good discussion of Zhou Ping.

Question 3

Many of the answers to this question were disappointing. Responses to the printed excerpt were excellent, showing a good use of language and an ability to write in Chinese about poetry, but it was apparent that many candidates had never read the whole poem.

- (a)** There were some very good answers, but too many candidates had obviously not read the whole of the poem. Their answers were therefore incomplete and they were unable to make the comparison required in part **(iii)** of the question.
- (b)** Many candidates thought 《乞丐》 and 《北方》 were the same poem; this was disappointing. Those candidates who were more familiar with Ai Qing's poetry answered very well.

Question 4

- (a)** There were some excellent answers to this question, but also some candidates who had never read the text.
- (b)** Those candidates answering this question did very well.

Section B

Question 5

Both essays for **Question 5** were answered well. However, all candidates would have benefited from a better use of well-chosen quotations to illustrate their points.

Question 6

There were some good essays presented for this question, but some candidates had clearly not read the text and tried to guess the answer, with disappointing results.

Question 7

This text was, perhaps, the text which the majority of candidates seemed to know well. As the standard of written Chinese of most of the candidates was very high, there were, consequently, some very fluent and well-argued answers.

Question 8

This text, too, was well-known by the candidates and there were some very good essays written.

Paper 9715/05

Prose

General comments

Candidates taking this prose paper did extremely well. They provided accurate and careful translations of the English in very well-expressed Chinese. Candidates were generally successful in providing an intelligent alternative for words or phrases they did not know, rather than leaving gaps and thereby adversely affecting the flow of their translation.

For most candidates, any problems there were arose from not quite understanding the English. A lot of candidates did not understand 'sighed' and the phrase 'a light evening breeze' caused significant confusion. Many candidates confused 'bedding' with 'bed' and only a few candidates were successful in their translation of 'making two days out of one'. However, as virtually all candidates put down an intelligent alternative for words or phrases they did not know, they thereby generally scored some marks and their overall mark for the paper was not badly affected.

Having finished the prose, candidates should always leave time to check their work and polish the translation to improve it.