

MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/11

Listening

Key messages

In preparation for this paper, it is worth bearing in mind the following points:

- When answering in Chinese (whether characters or pinyin), full sentences are not required. Brief answers are frequently all that is needed.
- Inaccuracies of Chinese (whether characters or pinyin) are tolerated provided that the message is clear 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.
- Answers should be written in black or blue ink. Answers should not be written first in pencil and then overwritten in ink as this makes them very difficult to read.
- In exercises where candidates are required to tick a certain number of boxes, such as Exercise 2 in Section 2, candidates must not tick more/fewer than the required number of options. If a candidate makes a choice and then changes his/her mind, s/he must cross out the original choice very clearly.
- 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 provided by the candidate, which contains extra material that is incorrect, invented or contradictory.

General comments

This paper was found to be accessible to candidates, and the exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. The spoken Chinese in the exam gradually increased in terms of difficulty and length, and questions moved from testing candidates' ability to understand short factual information to, in the later exercises, testing their ability to understand and identify opinions, explanations in narrated accounts and interviews.

There were many excellent performances from Centres all over the world, showing that Centres recognise the importance of listening skills and that these skills are being well taught in many Centres.

Candidates should be encouraged to write brief answers to questions requiring a written response in Chinese. Answers should be short, clear and to the point, as this reduces the risk of candidates adding extra incorrect material, which might invalidate an otherwise correct response.

The listening paper tests comprehension. Candidates are allowed to write their answers in either Chinese characters or pinyin. English and phonetic systems other than pinyin are not accepted here. Accuracy in written responses in Chinese is not an issue provided that the message is clear. It was noticeable again this year, however, that answers given in pinyin contained a range of inaccurate spellings. Although inaccuracies in spelling are tolerated, the message does need to be communicated clearly. In some cases, the pinyin spelling had so many mistakes that it was very difficult to understand, and it was unclear what the candidates' intentions were.

Candidates are reminded that when responding to a question requiring only one choice as the answer, as in Section 1, the mark can only be awarded if a candidate makes one correct choice. Two or more choices, whether in pencil or ink, cannot be credited.

Any material which candidates do not wish the Examiner to consider should be clearly crossed out.

Candidates need to ensure that they read the rubrics carefully and following the instructions. The format of the paper and the question rubrics remain fairly constant from year to year. When preparing their candidates, Centres should ensure that candidates clearly understand the rubrics, as such familiarity can only aid and reassure them in the examination.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Candidates generally did well on this multiple-choice exercise, which tested the comprehension of very short recordings of one or two sentences. All candidates understood the rubric well and the visuals caused no problems of interpretation. The vocabulary areas tested were food, clothing, drinks, places and activities. Candidates found **Question 2** and **Question 4** the most challenging in the set.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

This exercise featured a short conversation about the things Zhang Wen had done with his friend the day before. Candidates generally did well on this multiple-choice exercise.

Candidates occasionally made a mistake in **Question 10**, most commonly selecting **B**, rather than the correct answer **A**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 11-15

Candidates heard a short introduction given by a teacher about facilities on the school campus. The vocabulary was taken from the defined content. Candidates needed to understand compass directions and to plot where each of the facilities was on a simple plan of the campus.

In this exercise, candidates needed to give their answer on the plan next to the corresponding question number. A small number of candidates wrote down more than one answer for a question. In such cases, the examiner cannot award a mark, as it is not clear which answer is the candidate's 'final' answer, and the examiner is put in the position of having to choose. Candidates are strongly advised to read (and listen to) the rubrics carefully and follow the instructions. It is also advisable to look at the layout of the exercise before answering questions to ensure that candidates are clear about what is expected.

This exercise proved to be challenging for some candidates. **Questions 14** and **15** were generally well-answered. Several candidates had difficulty with **Questions 11** and **12** and some transposed the answers for **Questions 12** and **13**.

This exercise highlighted that many candidates need a greater knowledge and understanding of the expressions for geographical locations and compass directions in Chinese.

Exercise 2 Questions 16

The format of this exercise is now well understood and it was rare for Examiners to see too many or too few ticks. Candidates should, however, be reminded to use a consistent method of indicating the six correct answers, either six ticks or six crosses, and not to mix the two as this can become confusing.

Candidates heard a conversation between Xiaohua and Xiaoqiang in which they were planning holiday activities for their classmates. Candidates generally performed very well in this exercise. Candidates sometimes had difficulty identifying **D** as a correct answer in this exercise, perhaps indicating unfamiliarity with the vocabulary item “滑旱冰”.

If candidates ticked one of the four incorrect pictures in this question, **G** was less frequently chosen compared with **A**, **C** and **E**.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 17-21

This exercise featured five classmates talking about the type of job they would like to do in the future. On the whole candidates performed well here. Candidates most commonly made mistakes when answering **Question 19** and **Question 20**. Several candidates chose **G** for **Question 19**.

Exercise 2 Questions 22-25

Candidates heard an interview with a candidate from China studying in France. This was a very appropriate final exercise and, as intended, the most demanding on the paper, including questions to challenge the most able candidates. Some very accessible questions were also included to help maintain concentration and motivation and these were successfully answered by a good proportion of the candidates. This final exercise elicited the widest range of performance.

As described in the rubrics, both Chinese characters and pinyin are accepted in this exercise. Candidates should be aware that English and phonetic systems other than pinyin are not accepted.

Question 22 required candidates to state what subject Wang Lan studied in France. Many candidates answered the question correctly. Although some inaccuracies in character writing and pinyin spelling were allowed, answers which were so inaccurate as to mean something totally different were not accepted, for example: “画学” and “华学”.

Question 23 asked candidates to state what Wang Lan did during weekends and holidays. This question elicited a wide variety of answers. Those showing that the candidate had understood that Wang Lan spent her weekends and holidays travelling with her friend were accepted. The range of pinyin spellings and inaccurate writing of characters was also exceptionally wide here, but the majority of responses satisfied the requirements of the mark scheme. Answers which did not convey that the candidate had understood, and could not be accepted included “游行”, “和朋友一起度假” and “去澳洲”.

Question 24 asked the candidates to list two reasons why Wang Lan chose to study in France. The two expected answers were that Wang Lan liked French food and that Wang Lan's elder sister was also in France. A variety of answers was seen here, with the range of pinyin spellings being exceptionally wide. Many responses showed an adequate understanding of the recording and satisfied the requirements of the mark scheme. Weaker candidates sometimes gave the following answers “喜欢法国” and “姐姐在法国留学” which could not be credited.

Question 25 asked for the reason why Wang Lan wanted to return to China after graduation. This final question proved to be the most challenging, and was the most frequently unanswered question in the paper.

Candidates provided a great variety of answers here, with a variety of pinyin spellings. It was evident in some cases that candidates had not understood the audio and in other cases what the candidates had written was unintelligible. However, many candidates managed to show that they understood the idea of “想在父母身边” and/or “照顾父母” from the recording and gave satisfactory answers.

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Paper 0547/12

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General comments

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Question 23 asked candidates to state what Wang Lan did during weekends and holidays. This question elicited a wide variety of answers. Those showing that the candidate had understood that Wang Lan spent her weekends and holidays travelling with her friend were accepted. The range of pinyin spellings and inaccurate writing of characters was also exceptionally wide here, but the majority of responses satisfied the requirements of the mark scheme. Answers which did not convey that the candidate had understood, and could not be accepted included “游行”, “和朋友一起度假” and “去澳洲”.

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Paper 0547/13

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MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/21

Reading

Key Messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:

- be aware of the format and rubrics used in the Question Paper, as well as the Minimum Core Vocabulary list. Familiarity with this can help to expand candidates' vocabulary.
- read all instructions, questions and texts carefully.
- attempt to answer every question on the paper.
- aim to write short, accurate answers for comprehension questions. Full sentences are not required, and brief answers with sufficient content are frequently all that is needed.
- ensure that they indicate the final answer clearly. If it is necessary to make a correction, candidates should do so by clearly crossing out the incorrect answer.
- give clear answers to questions. When responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, if a candidate makes two choices (whether in pencil or in ink), the mark cannot be awarded.

General Comments

This Reading paper followed the revised syllabus format.

On the whole, the standard of performance demonstrated by candidates across the paper was very good.

Candidates were confident in answering multiple choice questions or questions requiring short simple answers as seen in **Sections 1** and **2**. In the final exercise in **Section 3**, many candidates showed a thorough understanding of the longer reading passage. Others needed to improve by including all the relevant information in their answers, and by reading the questions carefully enough to respond in a precise way. Sometimes candidates did not manage to address the question asked adequately enough to score the mark. A few candidates gave answers according to their own general knowledge, or by guessing. Candidates should be reminded that answers should be given according to the information provided in the reading passage; this is a test of comprehension, and answers given from general knowledge cannot be credited.

If candidates have been able to use material directly from the text to answer a question, they should be careful to ensure that it has been copied correctly, and that Chinese phrases have not been split up. E.g. the answer to **Question 22** should be “胡同”, not “胡” or “同”.

Candidates should be reminded to take care when writing their answers to ensure that they produce accurately written Chinese characters. This is especially important in words which can change their meaning if characters are written incorrectly. For example, character “新” in **Question 30**, was sometimes written as “亲” instead.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

Most candidates excelled in these questions, which tested the comprehension of very specific vocabulary and phrases. The majority of candidates scored four or five marks.

Question 4 proved to be the most difficult as candidates needed to recognise the character for train station ‘火车站’ and choose picture **B**. A fair amount of candidates incorrectly chose **C** (zoo) instead. Furthermore, a small number of candidates stumbled on **Question 2**, suggesting variable knowledge of the vocabulary for pets.

Exercise 2, Question 6–9

This exercise required candidates to match a series of short sentences with a corresponding picture. Candidates coped well with this exercise and full marks were common. Where difficulties were encountered, this was usually in **Question 6** and **Question 8**, perhaps suggesting unfamiliarity with the vocabulary for hairdresser’s “理发店” and riverside “河边”.

Exercise 3, Question 10–12

This exercise featured a short introduction about Xiaoyun’s morning. Overall, candidates answered these questions with ease. **Question 12**, which required candidates to understand the transportation method “走路” meaning “walk”, seemed to generate the most incorrect answers, with some candidates choosing **B** “by bike” or **D** “bus” instead.

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 13–16

This is a new exercise type for the Reading paper. Candidates were required to read a short text, in this case a piece about a high school in Beijing which uses different languages to teach different subjects. In order to demonstrate comprehension of the text candidates then completed statements in Chinese, choosing words from a given list.

Genuine comprehension and careful reading is required to obtain full marks. **Question 13** generated the most incorrect answers. This question required candidates to understand that the sentence, “all the lessons were taught in foreign languages in the school” in the passage equated to the fact that “no lessons were taught in Chinese in the school”.

Question 16 also proved to be challenging because candidates needed to understand the conjunction word “not only...but also...” (不但...而且) in the sentence, conveyed the same meaning as the sentence “一边...一边...” in the passage. Both **Question 14** and **Question 15** were well answered.

Exercise 2, Question 17–24

In this exercise, candidates were asked to read a piece of text and to answer questions on it in Chinese. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. The passage took the form of a letter from Xiao Ying to her friend Xiao Wang about her experience when going back to Beijing for the Spring Festival. Often, only a very brief answer was required, but provided that the correct answer was present, additional material copied from the text was tolerated, unless contradictory. The quality of written Chinese is considered only for the purposes of communication.

All candidates attempted these questions and the majority of candidates responded very well, with **Questions 17, 20, 21, 23** and **24** being especially well-answered.

Question 18 asked the reason why it is not easy to buy a ticket (during the Spring Festival). The correct answer was “旅客很多”. Candidates need to be familiar with question words to ensure that they understand the requirements of the question. Some candidates merely copied the same question again from the passage “买票非常不容易” instead of providing the relevant reason.

Question 19 asked what grandmother gave 小英 during the Spring Festival. The most common incorrect response was “新年快乐/happy new year”, which did not answer the question.

Question 22 seemed to be the most challenging question in this exercise with many candidates seemingly not understanding the question phrase “where/ 哪儿”. Some candidates instead wrote what Xiao Ying had bought (skirt “裙子”). It was evident that a few candidates also did not understand the phrase “胡同”, and separated the two component characters into just “胡” or “同” in their answers, which did not make sense.

Section 3

In **Section 3** candidates are asked to read two longer passages and need to answer questions in such a way as to demonstrate that they have understood both the passages and the questions. In **Section 2** they are asked just to locate the required answer in the text, but here, in **Section 3 (Exercise 2)**, they need to be more selective in their choice of answer, excluding irrelevant details to show that they have really understood what is required. While it will be possible to lift some answers from the text, candidates need to be very discriminating in what they choose – additional material copied may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

Exercise 1, Question 25–28

In this exercise, candidates needed to read an extended passage in Chinese about Zhangping's experience of having a pet dog and then answer the multiple-choice questions that followed.

A varied performance was seen across the questions in this exercise. Responses for **Question 26** and **Question 28** were of a high standard, with many candidates achieving full marks. **Question 25** and **Question 27** proved to be more challenging.

Question 25 was frequently answered incorrectly. Candidates needed to understand the reason that Zhangping named his dog Huahua (B). Some candidates recognised that the text given in option A (十分可爱) appeared in the passage and opted for that answer. This underlines the importance of reading the question carefully.

Question 27 also required very careful reading of the passage and the question, as the words given in the different options all appeared in the reading passage, thus a thorough understanding was needed to find the correct answer. The most commonly given incorrect answer was A, which was Huahua's age when she was given to Zhangping.

Exercise 2, Question 29–34

In this final exercise in the paper, candidates were asked to read an extended passage in Chinese, and demonstrate their understanding by answering short-answer questions in Chinese. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. The passage this year was about mobile devices and young people's opinions of them. Genuine comprehension is required for this exercise and a careful approach is needed when tackling these questions. Although in most cases candidates were able to locate the correct part of the text from which to answer a question, it was pleasing to see that some candidates showed that they had fully digested the passage by providing the correct answer using their own words.

In general, the overall performance was comparable to that of previous years. A number of candidates did not attempt **Questions 31** and **32**. As this was the last exercise in the paper, it is possible that candidates ran out of time, and so candidates could improve performance through more emphasis on time management in the future. Most candidates performed well on **Question 33** and **Question 34**.

Question 29 asked candidates to identify two functions which students might use mobiles for in school. Many candidates managed to find the answers “查生词” and “做作业”, whereas others wrote more general functions of mobile phones, which were not specific enough to be credited.

Question 30 was seeking the reason why Li Hai changes mobiles yearly (because “手机的新功能”). In some cases candidates incorrectly gave the reason for his classmates doing so (“很酷”). Some problems in the writing of characters was seen in this exercise, with some candidates writing “dear/亲” instead of “new/新”.

In **Question 31**, candidates needed to be careful to include the verb in a fixed phrase; e.g. the verb “提供” was required to get the mark here.

Question 32 (i) proved to be challenging, with some candidates having difficulty understanding the key phrase “benefits 好处” in the question. Candidates needed to say “容易找到要去的地方” and “避免堵车” but many incorrectly copied what he experienced previously “不管开车去哪儿都要带上地图，还常常迷路” instead. This question highlighted that some candidates would benefit from a better understanding of time phrase such as “previously 以前” and “now 现在”.

MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/22

Reading

Key Messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:

- be aware of the format and rubrics used in the Question Paper, as well as the Minimum Core Vocabulary list. Familiarity with this can help to expand candidates' vocabulary.
- read all instructions, questions and texts carefully.
- attempt to answer every question on the paper.
- aim to write short, accurate answers for comprehension questions. Full sentences are not required, and brief answers with sufficient content are frequently all that is needed.
- ensure that they indicate the final answer clearly. If it is necessary to make a correction, candidates should do so by clearly crossing out the incorrect answer.
- give clear answers to questions. When responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, if a candidate makes two choices (whether in pencil or in ink), the mark cannot be awarded.
- try to write Chinese characters correctly and accurately.
- improve their understanding of some common synonyms and antonyms in Chinese.

General Comments

This Reading paper followed the revised syllabus format.

On the whole, the standard of performance demonstrated by candidates across the paper was very good.

Candidates were confident in answering multiple choice questions or questions requiring short simple answers as seen in **Sections 1** and **2**. In the final exercise in **Section 3**, many candidates showed a thorough understanding of the longer reading passage. Others needed to improve by including all the relevant information in their answers, and by reading the questions carefully enough to respond in a precise way.

If candidates have been able to use material directly from the text to answer a question, they should be careful to ensure that it has been copied correctly, and that Chinese phrases have not been incorrectly split up. E.g. the answer to **Question 21** included the key verb phrase “了解”, which should be written as such and not broken up into just “了” or “解”.

Candidates should be reminded to take care when writing their answers to ensure that they produce accurately written Chinese characters. This is especially important in words which can change their meaning if characters are written incorrectly. For example, the character “午” in **Question 19** was sometimes written as “牛” instead.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

Most candidates excelled in these questions, which tested the comprehension of very specific vocabulary and phrases. The majority of candidates scored four or five marks.

A small number of candidates stumbled on **Question 3**, which required them to identify the correct school lesson and showed that not all candidates were able to recognise the word for chemistry “化学”.

Question 1 also exposed some gaps in candidates’ basic vocabulary, with even some strong candidates giving answers other than eggs “鸡蛋”. Candidates should be reminded to take care in these early exercises to read the questions fully and look at the pictures carefully to avoid making simple errors which may lose them marks.

Exercise 2, Question 6–9

This exercise required candidates to match a series of short sentences with a corresponding picture. Candidates coped well with this exercise and full marks were common. Where difficulties were encountered, this was usually in **Question 8** and **Question 9**, perhaps suggesting unfamiliarity with the vocabulary for the word skateboard “滑板” and hat “帽子”.

Exercise 3, Question 10–12

This exercise featured a short introduction about Wangli. Overall, candidates answered these questions with ease. **Question 11**, which required candidates to understand the word “地图 (map), seemed to generate the most incorrect answers, with some candidates choosing **C** “suitcase” or **D** “umbrella” instead.

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 13–16

This is a new exercise type for the Reading paper. Candidates were required to read a short text, in this case a factual piece about a museum. In order to demonstrate comprehension of the text candidates then completed statements in Chinese, choosing words from a given list.

Genuine comprehension and careful reading is required to obtain full marks. **Question 15** generated most incorrect answers, and was not attempted by some. This question included the word “not 不” and required candidates to understand the antonyms “expensive 贵” / “cheap 便宜”.

Question 16 also proved to be challenging because candidates needed to understand that the conjunction word “not only...but also...” (不但...而且) in the sentence conveyed the same meaning as the sentence “又...又...” in the passage.

In some cases candidates needed to be more familiar with common synonyms and antonyms, as well as conjunction words to score more highly in this exercise.

Exercise 2, Question 17–24

In this exercise, candidates were asked to read a piece of text and to answer questions on it in Chinese. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. The passage took the form of a letter from Mary (Ma Li) to her friend Xiao Wang about her experience of attending a Chinese summer camp in Beijing. Often, only a very brief answer was required, but provided that the correct answer was present, additional material copied from the text was tolerated, unless contradictory. The quality of written Chinese is considered only for the purposes of communication.

All candidates attempted these questions and the majority of candidates responded very well, with **Questions 17, 18** and **20** being especially well-answered.

Question 19 required candidates to understand that the conversation lesson took place in the morning (上午). The incorrect answer ‘two hours 两个小时’ was sometimes given. In **Question 23**, candidates were asked to give the *teacher’s* opinion of Mary’s accent, whereas some candidates answered with Mary’s (Ma Li)’s own thoughts instead. This highlights the need for candidates to read the questions carefully.

Question 21 seemed to be the most challenging question in this exercise, with many candidates not understanding the phrase “了解”. This resulted in candidates separating the two component phrase into just “了” or “解” which did not make sense.

Question 24 needed candidates to say “北京有那么多名胜古迹” to explain *why* learning Chinese culture and history is a rare opportunity. Some candidates merely copied the same question again from the passage “在北京学习中国文化和历史是一个难得的机会” instead of providing the relevant reason. Candidates need to be familiar with question words to ensure that they understand the requirements of the question.

Section 3

In **Section 3** candidates are asked to read two longer passages and need to answer questions in such a way as to demonstrate that they have understood both the passages and the questions. In **Section 2** they are asked just to locate the required answer in the text, but here, in **Section 3 (Exercise 2)**, they need to be more selective in their choice of answer, excluding irrelevant details to show that they have really understood what is required. While it will be possible to lift some answers from the text, candidates need to be very discriminating in what they choose – additional material copied may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

Exercise 1, Question 25–28

All candidates managed to attempt the questions in **Exercise 1** and handled them relatively well.

In this exercise, candidates needed to read an extended passage in Chinese about Wangwen’s experience during an unforgettable summer holiday in which he and friends visited Yunnan. They then had to answer the multiple-choice questions that followed.

A varied performance was seen across the questions in this exercise. Responses for **Question 25** and **Question 27** were of a high standard, with many candidates achieving full marks. **Question 26** and **Question 28** proved to be more challenging.

Question 28 was frequently answered incorrectly. It was common for candidates to assume that ‘snow mountain’ was synonymous with cold weather and therefore select **C** as the answer. More careful reading of the passage was needed in these cases; the conjunction words “因为...所以...” provided the clue, leading candidates to the correct answer (**B**).

Where candidates had difficulty with **Question 26**, this seemed to be because the word *dangerous* “危险” was not well-understood. Option **C** was the most frequently selected incorrect answer.

Exercise 2, Question 29–34

In this final exercise in the paper, candidates were asked to read an extended passage in Chinese, and demonstrate their understanding by answering short-answer questions in Chinese. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. The passage this year was about online shopping and young people’s opinions towards it. Genuine comprehension is required for this exercise and a careful approach is needed when tackling these questions. Although in most cases candidates were able to locate the correct part of the text from which to answer a question, it was pleasing to see that some candidates showed that they had fully digested the passage by providing the correct answer using their own words.

Generally speaking, candidates answered the questions competently, although a small number of candidates did not attempt the exercise at all. As this was the last exercise in the paper, it is possible that candidates ran out of time, and so candidates could improve performance through more emphasis on time management in the future.

In **Question 32** candidates were asked to identify the two items which Fangfang’s parents thought should be bought in a shop; candidates frequently answered by giving the items thought better to be purchased online. This highlights the need for careful reading of the questions and passage.

In **Question 33**, candidates needed to be careful to include the verb in a fixed phrase, e.g. the verb “看” was required to score the mark.

Question 31 proved to be one of the most challenging questions. Candidates needed to understand that “这样” in the passage means “cheap 便宜”, whereas the question used the word “expensive 贵”. A genuine understanding of the passage is required to be able to provide a correct answer for this question, which is “加上邮费”.

MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/23

Reading

Key Messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:

- be aware of the format and rubrics used in the Question Paper, as well as the Minimum Core Vocabulary list. Familiarity with this can help to expand candidates' vocabulary.
- read all instructions, questions and texts carefully.
- attempt to answer every question on the paper.
- aim to write short, accurate answers for comprehension questions. Full sentences are not required, and brief answers with sufficient content are frequently all that is needed.
- ensure that they indicate the final answer clearly. If it is necessary to make a correction, candidates should do so by clearly crossing out the incorrect answer.
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- try to write Chinese characters correctly and accurately.
- improve their understanding of some common synonyms and antonyms in Chinese.

General Comments

This Reading paper followed the revised syllabus format.

On the whole, the standard of performance demonstrated by candidates across the paper was very good.

Candidates were confident in answering multiple choice questions or questions requiring short simple answers as seen in **Sections 1** and **2**. In the final exercise in **Section 3**, many candidates showed a thorough understanding of the longer reading passage. Others needed to improve by including all the relevant information in their answers, and by reading the questions carefully enough to respond in a precise way.

If candidates have been able to use material directly from the text to answer a question, they should be careful to ensure that it has been copied correctly, and that Chinese phrases have not been incorrectly split up. E.g. the answer to **Question 21** included the key verb phrase “了解”, which should be written as such and not broken up into just “了” or “解”.

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In some cases candidates needed to be more familiar with common synonyms and antonyms, as well as conjunction words to score more highly in this exercise.

Exercise 2, Question 17–24

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All candidates attempted these questions and the majority of candidates responded very well, with **Questions 17, 18** and **20** being especially well-answered.

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In this exercise, candidates needed to read an extended passage in Chinese about Wangwen’s experience during an unforgettable summer holiday in which he and friends visited Yunnan. They then had to answer the multiple-choice questions that followed.

A varied performance was seen across the questions in this exercise. Responses for **Question 25** and **Question 27** were of a high standard, with many candidates achieving full marks. **Question 26** and **Question 28** proved to be more challenging.

Question 28 was frequently answered incorrectly. It was common for candidates to assume that ‘snow mountain’ was synonymous with cold weather and therefore select **C** as the answer. More careful reading of the passage was needed in these cases; the conjunction words “因为...所以...” provided the clue, leading candidates to the correct answer (**B**).

Where candidates had difficulty with **Question 26**, this seemed to be because the word *dangerous* “危险” was not well-understood. Option **C** was the most frequently selected incorrect answer.

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In this final exercise in the paper, candidates were asked to read an extended passage in Chinese, and demonstrate their understanding by answering short-answer questions in Chinese. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. The passage this year was about online shopping and young people’s opinions towards it. Genuine comprehension is required for this exercise and a careful approach is needed when tackling these questions. Although in most cases candidates were able to locate the correct part of the text from which to answer a question, it was pleasing to see that some candidates showed that they had fully digested the passage by providing the correct answer using their own words.

Generally speaking, candidates answered the questions competently, although a small number of candidates did not attempt the exercise at all. As this was the last exercise in the paper, it is possible that candidates ran out of time, and so candidates could improve performance through more emphasis on time management in the future.

In **Question 32** candidates were asked to identify the two items which Fangfang’s parents thought should be bought in a shop; candidates frequently answered by giving the items thought better to be purchased online. This highlights the need for careful reading of the questions and passage.

In **Question 33**, candidates needed to be careful to include the verb in a fixed phrase, e.g. the verb “看” was required to score the mark.

Question 31 proved to be one of the most challenging questions. Candidates needed to understand that “这样” in the passage means “cheap 便宜”, whereas the question used the word “expensive 贵”. A genuine understanding of the passage is required to be able to provide a correct answer for this question, which is “加上邮费”.

MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/03
Speaking

Key messages

- To score high marks, candidates need to show consistent ability to use a variety of structures and precise vocabulary both in the Presentation and in the Conversation sections.
- In the two Conversation sections, the Examiner **must** ask questions which allow the candidate to show that s/he can describe events or express ideas using **both** past **and** future time-frames.
- Discussion in the General Conversation should be appropriate to the individual candidate's ability; the same questions should **not** be asked of all the candidates.
- At least two topics need to be covered in the General Conversation and should not overlap with the content of the Topic Presentation.
- Examiners must not suggest possible answers or give clues to candidates.
- The Speaking test should be conducted entirely in Mandarin Chinese. There should be no use of English in the test. Only Chinese should be used in the transitions between sections of the test. Cantonese and other varieties of Chinese should not be used in the test.
- Centres wishing to use more than one Examiner must seek permission from Cambridge **before** the Speaking Test period starts. Permission must be sought for each new examination series. It cannot be carried over from one series to the next.
- Please note that a Chinese-language version of the *Teachers' Notes* may be found on the Teacher Support section of the CIE website (<https://teachers.cie.org.uk>)
- If the Centre has made entries for the syllabus before, it would be useful to consult previous moderator's reports for the Centre to ensure that feedback is taken into account and acted upon.

General comments

Most Centres administered and carried out the tests very well. In order to give candidates the best possible chance, Examiners should ensure they have read the *Teachers' Notes* booklet carefully so that both the tests and the relevant administration are carried out correctly.

Centres wishing to use more than one Examiner need to read the relevant guidelines and follow the procedure carefully.

In order to allow the moderation process to operate effectively, it is important that CDs arrive undamaged; they must therefore be well packaged, ideally in a plastic case within a padded envelope.

The full requirements of the speaking test are clearly laid out in the *Teachers' Notes* booklet and all Centres are strongly advised to read through a past paper well in advance of the test, so they have plenty of time to clarify any uncertainties. A Chinese-language version of these requirements also exists and is available on the Teacher Support section of the CIE website: <https://teachers.cie.org.uk>.

• Clerical checks

In most Centres, the addition and transfer of marks was accurate. In some Centres a number of errors were found, sometimes with large discrepancies between the recorded totals and the actual totals. It is essential that the addition of marks on the Working Mark Sheet as well as the transcription of the total marks onto the

MS1 mark sheet/computer is checked to ensure candidates receive the correct mark. It is advisable for more than one person in the Centre to check these numbers.

- **Cover sheet for moderation sample**

Most Centres remembered to submit the Cover Sheet for Moderation Sample, duly completed, along with the other materials for external moderation. Completion of this form allows Centres to check that their moderation sample is correct before they dispatch it to Cambridge, and the completed form must be submitted with the sample.

- **Sample size**

Many Centres managed to select a good recorded sample which evenly covered the full spread of performance in the Centre. Centres need to ensure that the marks are spread evenly, not grouped as “good”, “middling” and “poor”: for example, a well-selected sample might be 99, 87, 76, 67, 53 but should not be 99,98, 76, 75, 53,51.

It is helpful to the Moderator if asterisks (*) are put on the Working Mark Sheet to indicate the candidates who have been included in the sample, particularly in Centres with many candidates.

Centres using more than one Examiner should include samples from each Examiner in an appropriate proportion.

- **Recording quality and presentation of the sample**

The sample for external moderation should be submitted on a CD; USB sticks should not be used. Please do not put sticky labels on the CD as these can easily become detached and make the CD unplayable.

Speaking tests should be conducted in a quiet place, away from any noise which might cause disruption. In a small number of cases, candidates and/or the Examiner were not always clearly heard. If an external microphone has been used for recording, please make sure that it is nearer to the candidate than to the Examiner. The recording should be checked at intervals by the Examiner to ensure that it is clear and there are no extraneous noises. In some Centres the CD received by the Moderator was almost inaudible, making moderation difficult.

The CD should not be stopped during the recording. The candidates should be introduced by name and candidate number by the Examiner, not by the candidates themselves.

The tracks on CDs should be labelled using the convention specified in the *Teachers' Notes*: Centre number_candidate number_examination number_component number, e.g. PQ123_0001_0547_03. Please do not label them as “Track 1”, “Track 2” etc. as this makes finding individual candidates difficult during the moderation process. A card stating which candidates appear on each CD must be enclosed, *not glued*, with each CD.

- **Internal moderation in Centres**

In most cases, Centres which had been given permission to use more than one Examiner had adopted a thoroughly professional approach to internal moderation and had carefully documented their procedures for achieving consistency. It was clear that in many Centres great efforts had been made to cross-check the standard applied by different Examiners and to ensure that marks awarded followed a single rank order before they were submitted to Cambridge.

In a small number of cases Centres had provided insufficient evidence of the internal moderation procedures followed, merely writing different marks next to the original marks on the Working Mark Sheet. Some justification of why the adjustment was made must be included in the documentation.

Centres with large numbers of candidates may use more than one Examiner for the tests, but this must be agreed by Cambridge in advance. Permission must be sought for *each* examination series – it cannot be carried over from the previous examination series.

Where more than one Examiner is used, Cambridge needs to be able to check that all Examiners in the Centre have adopted a uniform approach to the conduct of the test and have applied the mark scheme

consistently so it is important that examples of the work of each Examiner are included in the sample for external moderation.

Details of the Centre's Internal Moderation procedures must also be sent to CIE, as specified on the 'Cover sheet for moderation sample'. In order to assist Centres that have been given permission to use more than one Examiner, Cambridge has produced guidelines for internal standardisation/moderation.

The coordinating Examiner is responsible for checking that the mark scheme has been applied consistently by all of the Examiners in the Centre. If after checking the sample for a particular Examiner the decision is taken to adjust that Examiner's marks, that adjustment must then be applied to the marks of **all** the candidates who were examined by that Examiner, and not just to the work of those candidates who were part of the internal check. Likewise, if an Examiner is judged to be out of line over part of the mark range, the marks of all the other candidates s/he examined with a mark in that range should be adjusted. Where a particular Examiner is judged to be out of line, it is good practice to select some more of that Examiner's candidates for a further check.

- **Transitions between sections of the test**

Centres are reminded that no English should be used during the tests: each new section can be introduced in Chinese, for instance by using sentences such as 现在进行情景对话A / 现在进入第二部分。 / 现在进行自由对话吧。

- **Working Mark Sheets**

This year once again there were examples of incomplete Working Mark Sheets being submitted. These should be filled in with candidates' full names, the number of the Role Play Card for each candidate, and signed and dated by the Examiner.

It is also helpful to the moderator if asterisks (*) are put against the names of the candidates who are included in the recorded sample, particularly in Centres with many candidates.

- **Despatch of the sample**

Please ensure that CDs are well packaged before they are despatched to Cambridge. CDs are particularly vulnerable to damage in transit, and need to be carefully packed in strong containers, ideally in a plastic case inside a padded envelope. This year a few Centres sent their CDs in flimsy plastic or paper pockets, which caused them to arrive damaged, thus delaying moderation. Please avoid using staples to attach the Centre label to the soft plastic cover of the CD, as it can damage the CD and make it unplayable.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays

Examiners are reminded of the need for careful preparation. Centres are reminded that the Examiner must not create extra tasks, nor must s/he omit tasks. If the stipulated tasks are changed or omitted and/or extra tasks are added this will confuse candidates and it changes the nature of the examination. Marks can only be awarded for completing the tasks as presented on the Role Play cards. Centres are reminded that on some tasks a short response may be sufficient to attract a mark of three.

Each candidate should be handed a single Role Play card and should complete both the Role Plays on that card. Candidates should be given the Role Play cards in random order, not 1, 2, 3, 4 or 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2... The number of the card given to each candidate should be recorded in the space provided on the Working Mark Sheet.

It is good practice for the Examiner to read the Chinese introduction to the Role Play aloud, to set the scene, and to indicate the roles of the candidate and the Examiner. This is important for the candidate, and helps them to understand that they need to answer according to the role they are playing, rather than answering as themselves.

Candidates should avoid answers in the Role Plays which are formulaic or neutral, such as 不了 'yes' or 不知道 'I don't know'. Such answers give no indication of whether the candidate has understood the question, and therefore no marks can be awarded.

A Role Plays

The A Role Plays were found to be of equal difficulty, and very similar in difficulty to those in 2014.

All the terms used in these role plays are in the Minimum Core Vocabulary.

You are on a Beijing underground train reading a Chinese book. A passenger is talking to you.

Some candidates said they were going to Beijing even though the role play was situated in Beijing. This would score 0 marks, and reinforces the need for the Examiner to read aloud the situation in Chinese before starting the Role Play, so the candidate realises what they are supposed to do.

Tomorrow you are going on a bike ride with some friends, for a picnic.

Weaker candidates did not know the terms 多久 (How long?) or 谁 (Who?).

You are discussing going to a football match with a friend.

The answer to the question 球场离这儿有多远? required *either* a number with a unit of length (e.g. 一公里) or a verb with a length of time (e.g. 走路十分钟)

When stating the price of the ticket, a unit of currency had to be stated e.g. 三十块钱

B Role Plays

You intend to find work abroad. You are talking to a Chinese friend.

Some candidates did not know the term 怎么? How? (asking for a means of transport))

The term 气候 (climate) was unfamiliar to some candidates.

You are chatting to a Chinese friend about studying in China.

Most candidates handled this well.

You are travelling to China. You are talking on the telephone to the manager of a hotel in Beijing.

Weaker candidates did not know the terms 呆 (to stay) or 名胜古迹 (historic sites).

Topic Presentation and Conversation

The standard of work in this section covered the full range of performance.

Centres are reminded that the Topic Presentation must be introduced by the Examiner in Chinese, not English, for example by saying 现在进入第二部分。It is helpful for the candidate to begin by stating clearly what his/her topic is: “我的题目是…” as such a statement helps candidates focus on their topic.

A wide range of topics was presented by candidates. Generally, candidates were enthusiastic about their chosen topic and are to be commended for the way in which they had prepared their material.

Most candidates chose to speak on familiar topics such as 'My family', 'My hobby', 'Sport', 'School life' 'My future', 'My friend', 'My holiday in ...', or a comparison between life in two different countries. More able candidates should be encouraged to tackle more challenging topics than these. A few candidates appeared not to have prepared a topic at all. Candidates should be discouraged from choosing 'Myself' or 'My life' as their topic, as this can seriously limit the possibilities for the General Conversation.

More unusual topics this year included: “Collecting shoes”, “My hero: my mother”, “Weekend work experience”, “Is it true that the more friends you have the better?”, “Student anxieties”, “The person I most admire”, “My childhood”, “Mongolian festivals” and “My ideal job”.

Centres are reminded that the whole section, Topic Presentation and Topic Conversation, should last about five minutes in total. In some Centres much less time than this was allowed, which therefore did not allow candidates sufficient time to show their full ability. In a few cases the Examiner did not ask any questions after the candidate had finished the presentation. In such cases candidates were severely disadvantaged, and no marks could be awarded, as the mark scheme specifically rewards *responses* to questions.

There were many examples of good examining technique, and candidates were helped when a clear transition to the Topic Conversation was introduced by the Examiner in Chinese, for example by saying 我现在问你几个问题。

In some Centres it was evident that the opening sections of the Topic Presentation had been memorised: this type of rote learning misses the point of the Speaking Test, and will not allow candidates to show the full range of their ability in Chinese. Candidates should be encouraged to speak spontaneously, and not to memorise speeches.

Most Examiners understood the importance of listening carefully to candidates’ presentations, which then enabled them to lead the candidate skilfully through the Topic Conversation by asking appropriate questions, allowing candidates to both develop their topic and to demonstrate their language skills. Examiners should avoid asking the candidate a prepared question if the candidate had already given the answer to that question previously.

Centres are reminded that no English should be used during the Speaking Test, and that candidates should not be corrected during the tests.

Most Centres handled the transition from the Topic Conversation well, although some Centres are still not making the ending of the Topic Conversation and the start of the General Conversation clear. This can be done by using sentences such as 现在进入第三部分。 or 现在进行自由对话吧。

Although Examiners were often aware of the need to elicit both past and future time-frames, in a few Centres questions to test different time-frames were not asked in the Topic conversation. It is vital that questions both about the past (e.g. “When did you begin...?”) and about the future (e.g. “When do you plan to....?”) are included. If candidates do not show that they are able to talk about the past and the future, they cannot score above 6 in the mark scheme for Language (Table C).

The Examiner should routinely include questions which enable candidates to show that they can talk about past and future events. It should be noted that a question such as “How long (a time) did you do (an action)?” which elicits a response using a length of time such as ‘三年’ is not by itself sufficient to show that a candidate can convey a past time-frame meaning. In such a case, a verb is also required, for example ‘我学了三年。’

General Conversation

Please note that the General Conversation should last about five minutes: whilst most Centres adhered to the timings set out in the syllabus, in some cases much less time than this was allowed, which did not give candidates the opportunity to work for marks.

In a few Centres identical questions were asked of all the candidates. This is not appropriate as using the same set of questions with each candidate can lead to conversations that are lacking in spontaneity. Each candidate should be asked different questions at an appropriately challenging level, according to their ability. The Examiner should judge the appropriate level of question for the individual candidate. A weaker candidate might be asked “What sports do you like?”, but a more able candidate might be asked “Why do you think that exercise is important?” Once underway, the General Conversation should be based on the individual candidates’ responses and so should not be overly rehearsed beforehand. Questions should arise spontaneously as the conversation develops in a natural way. It is better to ask questions in depth on a few topics rather than a number of unrelated questions.

Many Examiners were aware of the need to cover two or three different topics in this section of the test, though it is worth bearing in mind that it may be necessary to cover more topics with weaker candidates who will not be able to answer in as much depth. The topics discussed in this part of the test should not be the same as those discussed in the Topic Conversation and should be chosen by the Examiner, rather than by the candidate.

The Examiner should include questions about the past (“When did you begin...?”) and about the future (“When do you plan to....?”).

- **Time-frames**

Centres are reminded that they must include questions in **both** conversation sections which allow the candidate to show that they can construct and use past and future time-frames correctly. Such usage is essential if candidates are to score more than 6 marks for Language.

There are a number of ways of expressing past and future time frames in Chinese: the below notes indicate possible ways of doing this in the speaking test.

PAST ACTIONS

(a) **Time phrases** such as 昨天, 去年, 上个月, etc. can indicate actions in the past;...的时候 can be used to indicate both past and future time frames

e.g.岁的时候, or 小时候(past). 那(个)时候 can also be used for past time frames.

(b) **Aspect particles** can also be accepted for actions with different time references, e.g. verb + 过 or verb + 了.

FUTURE ACTIONS

(a) **Time phrases** such as 六十岁的时候, etc.; 明天, 明年, 下个月 and 那(个)时候 can also be used for future time frames.

(b) **Modal verbs** such as 想, 会, 打算, 计划, 准备, 希望 or 要 + verb, etc. can also indicate the future.

OTHER PHRASES

Phrases such as 以前, 从前, 以后 can also indicate time frames.

There are also a number of other ways of expressing past and future time frames in Chinese: the above notes simply indicate some possible ways of doing this.

MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/41

Writing

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to demonstrate that they can communicate in writing, showing knowledge of a range and variety of vocabulary and applying the grammar and structures of the target language accurately.

Centres should be aware that answers have to be relevant to the questions, and all the bullet points need to be addressed with as much relevant information as possible. Since this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible and both English and pinyin should be avoided. The proportion of Pinyin used in paper 41 seemed higher than that in paper 42/43.

Candidates do not need to copy out the questions, particularly for **Question 3**. Writing straight to the bullet points and expanding accordingly without pre-setting sentences too much is more efficient to gain higher marks. Letter format is not as essential as it was in previous years to score a communication mark.

General Comments

The new format Writing paper featured two new of question types. **Question 1** was totally new to candidates, and allowed them to build confidence by writing a small number of individual vocabulary items. **Question 2** was more familiar to candidates, as it was the same format as appearing in the Reading and Directed paper up until 2014. In **Question 3**, there were three options candidates could choose from; therefore most of the candidates opted for the one they felt most confident with. It was pleasing to see that questions were accessible to the majority of candidates and there were a number of excellent performances.

It was pleasing to see that, in general, the topics and themes of the writing exercises were well within the knowledge and life experiences of candidates. Writing skills are very important and it was clear that candidates had been well prepared.

The majority of the candidates did very well, and there were many excellent essays which were awarded full marks. There were a number of candidates who provided a detailed and expanded essay with plenty of extra information. Some candidates made mistakes in the grammar or vocabulary used; however, it was very impressive that they attempted to tell interesting and complicated stories with most characters written correctly.

Candidates generally adhered to the guidelines about length, producing around 150 characters. Whilst there is no need for candidates to count the number of characters written (after they have achieved the minimum required characters), it should be remembered that a composition requires a certain amount of words to address all the bullet points in the question, and variety in vocabulary and sentence structures is rewarded. Therefore a long but less varied essay will not be awarded as many marks as a shorter one with greater variety and interest. However, candidates should be reminded that if they write significantly fewer than 150 characters they will not produce enough evidence of their ability to gain access to the highest marks.

Comments on Specific questions

Question 1

The task was for candidates to write down five things they might see in a department store and most candidates attempted this question well. The most popular words were about stationery, following the example on the paper. Other popular words were clothes, people etc. A maximum of 2 marks were awarded for 'people' as answers should be focussed on the situation of a department store, rather than merely listing family members or 'people' with the same character e.g. 中国人, 英国人, etc.

Simple characters were encouraged in **Question 1**, e.g. 人, 水, 肉, 包 if candidates felt less confident about writing complicated ones.

If there were missing radicals or incorrect radicals which created a new character with a different meaning, the mark could not be awarded. Candidates could improve on their accuracy of certain characters with correct radicals or correct suffix, e.g. 象皮 (橡皮) 书子 (书本) 找 (钱) etc. and not use the characters with similar pronunciation 点元 (店员) 心用卡 (信用卡) etc.

No measure words and verbs were needed. If a verb-object construction word was given, a complete object (noun) needed to be in place e.g. 看电影. Answers like 看电 could not be awarded a mark

Candidates need to read the instructions both in Chinese and English carefully. If there is any doubt in the Chinese instructions, read the English ones as a confirmation and the example to avoid confusion. Copying the example or answering the questions in pinyin or English was not awarded marks.

Question 2

This question required candidates to write about their school and 5 questions were given for candidates to structure their answers around. The overall performance in this question was very good, and candidates were clearly familiar with the format.

10 marks were available for communication, 1 mark for each item of relevant information conveyed. All the information and details provided in the composition had to be related to one of the set tasks. Each piece of information could only be rewarded once e.g. “我明年要学中文因为我的中文老师很好” cannot score both for tasks (c) and (d).

Candidates should remember to answer all the questions and provide additional details about each point to score the full communication marks, e.g. “我的学校很大, 有八百个学生。有英国人, 也有外国人。” would score more communication marks than “我的学校有八百个学生”. Sometimes, despite the use of excellent sentence structures, full marks could not be awarded for communication because the content was insufficient and did not address all of the points.

Candidates should be reminded that a list (e.g. saying all the subjects you study at school) can only score a maximum of three marks, however long it is. If one of the tasks is not addressed, the maximum communication mark that can be awarded is 9, no matter how many extra marks were gained from other bullet points.

Candidates should be aware this as this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used and both English and pinyin should be avoided. Pinyin and English words will not be credited or taken into account in the award of communication marks.

Candidates are encouraged to use a variety of simple sentence structures in this question. The focus of this task is on communication, and complicated structures are not essential to score the highest language marks.

A number of candidates did not understand 课外活动 in bullet point (b) and wrote what subjects they study this year. However, many candidates wrote very good description words for bullet point (c) to describe their Chinese teacher with appearance, personality or nationality.

Accuracy of language was generally good, simple and straight to the point answers were largely seen. However, candidates should be reminded to use varied sentence structures and avoid Anglicised structures.

The following grammatical errors were frequently seen in responses:

- Measure words for people, e.g. 个
- 是 has proved to be overused once again this year when it was not needed, e.g. 中文老师是很好人。
- Misused phrases and characters of the similar pronunciations. 八白学生 (八百个学生)
- Common errors for simple characters: “口禾” for “和”

Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. Candidates were clearly familiar with the type of question that could be expected, and opted for the one they felt more confident about. There were many excellent essays showing language skill and abilities in creative writing.

Most candidates covered all the bullet points since they had no problem understanding them apart from the third bullet point in **3(a)** which required the candidates to express their opinion about the place they visited. Only a few candidates missed the first bullet point in **3(c)**, as they seemed to find it challenging to express their reasons.

Question 3(a)

For **3(a)**, the task was to describe the recent trip abroad with school. **Question 3(a)** was the most popular choice. Letter format is not as essential as it was in previous years to score a communication mark, therefore candidates are expected to give detailed information for the bullet points in order to score the full communication marks.

The majority of candidates covered all the bullet points very well, although some did not cover the third bullet point which required the candidates to express their opinion about the place they visited. Some candidates did not fully understand the question and wrote what they did instead of giving an opinion.

There were many interesting responses for bullet point 4 including negative ones, showing that candidates were well-prepared for the task.

Characters and Grammar

The essays of many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters. There were a number of homophone or near homophone errors and characters with a similar shape, such as

洒点 (酒店), 今夫 (今天), 牛 (午)

Candidates showed a good knowledge of Chinese grammar. The most frequent problems were:

1. Overuse of 是 when it was not needed e.g. 我是很高兴, 他是很好人。
2. Overuse of 有 e.g. 我有跟老师一起去美洲。
3. Some Anglicisation occurred, e.g. 我在美洲见面她。到了在酒店。
4. Use of 和 to link sentences, which is a common mistake every year, e.g. 我喜欢中国和我明年要再去。
5. Mixing past tense with future tense in the same sentence, e.g. 我的班都要了去美洲。

Question 3(b)

In **3(b)**, the task was to write an article about whether it is better to cycle or use the car. Candidates who opted to do this question had very strong language skills and expressed their opinions thoroughly and justifiably, also displaying skills in argumentative writing when debating their preference regarding future travel. The five bullet points guided the candidates to provide their opinion fully.

Characters and Grammar

Opinions were presented convincingly and there were many well-written arguments about traveling by car or cycling. Some difficult words and Chinese idioms like 双刃剑、探亲访友、对环境造成污染、随着科技发展、显现优势 etc. were also written.

Question 3(c)

In **3(c)**, the task was to write about a story of a stranger who came to talk to you in a restaurant while you were eating. Only a handful of candidates chose this task, which required candidates to have a good range of vocabulary. Candidates should be reminded to avoid embarking on topics for which they know very few of the characters involved. Use of pinyin affected candidates' marks for accuracy of characters. The first bullet point seemed to be challenging to some candidates, as this asked them to express their justifications.

A few candidates focussed on eating and food in the restaurant rather than developing the storyline, which affected their communication marks.

Characters and Grammar

Candidates displayed a range of characters for food and drink. Some Anglicisation occurred, e.g. 他也买我饭。我的朋友要坐飞机在美国。他是最友好和很高兴人。

MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/42

Writing

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to demonstrate that they can communicate in writing, showing knowledge of a range and variety of vocabulary and applying the grammar and structures of the target language accurately.

Centres should be aware that answers have to be relevant to the questions, and all the bullet points need to be addressed with as much relevant information as possible. Since this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible and both English and pinyin should be avoided.

Candidates do not need to copy out the questions, particularly for **Question 3**. Writing straight to the bullet points and expanding accordingly without pre-setting sentences too much is more efficient to gain higher marks. Letter format is not as essential as it was in previous years to score a communication mark.

General Comments

The new format Writing paper featured two new of question types. **Question 1** was totally new to candidates, and allowed them to build confidence by writing a small number of individual vocabulary items. **Question 2** was more familiar to candidates, as it was the same format as appearing in the Reading and Directed paper up until 2014. In **Question 3**, there were three options candidates could choose from; therefore most of the candidates opted for the one they felt most confident with. It was pleasing to see that questions were accessible to the majority of candidates and there were a number of excellent performances.

It was pleasing to see that, in general, the topics and themes of the writing exercises were well within the knowledge and life experiences of candidates from around the world. Writing skills are very important and it was clear that candidates had been well prepared.

Most of the candidates did very well, and there were many excellent essays which were awarded full marks. There were a number of candidates who provided a detailed and expanded essay with plenty of extra information. Many of them also used Chinese idioms and complex sentence structures. Some candidates made mistakes in the grammar or vocabulary used; however, it was very impressive that they attempted to tell interesting and complicated stories with most characters written correctly.

Candidates generally adhered to the guidelines about length, producing around 150 characters. Whilst there is no need for candidates to count the number of characters written (after they have achieved the minimum required characters), it should be remembered that a composition requires a certain amount of words to address all the bullet points in the question, and variety in vocabulary and sentence structures is rewarded. Therefore a long but less varied essay will not be awarded as many marks as a shorter one with greater variety and interest. However, candidates should be reminded that if they write significantly fewer than 150 characters they will not produce enough evidence of their ability to gain access to the highest marks.

Comments on Specific questions

Question 1

The task was for candidates to write down five things they might see in a restaurant and most candidates attempted this question well. Most candidates wrote about food and drink, furniture, people (customers), crockery and cutlery. A maximum of 2 marks were awarded for 'people' as answers should be focussed on the restaurant situation, rather than merely listing family members or 'people' with the same character e.g. 中国人, 英国人, etc.

Simple characters were encouraged in **Question 1**, e.g. 火, 肉, 刀, 叉, 包. Some candidates took the challenge and attempted more difficult ones with more strokes and a more interesting meaning e.g. 柜台, 餐牌, 地板, 灯饰, 垃圾桶. Candidates are advised to use simple characters which they are confident they can write accurately, rather than writing more complex words incorrectly or writing the wrong homophone characters, i.e. writing 工作人员 instead of 服务员.

If there were missing radicals or incorrect radicals which created a new character with a different meaning, the mark could not be awarded. Candidates could improve on their accuracy of certain characters with correct radicals, e.g.

桌子 (桌子) 椅子 (椅子) 座位 (座位) 面包 (面包) 孩子 (孩子) 米饭 (米饭) 苹果 (苹果)
冷气机 (冷气机) etc. and not use the characters with similar pronunciation
服务员 (服务员) 风伞 (风扇), 电等 (电灯) 信用卡 (信用卡) etc.

No measure words or verbs were needed. Candidates should be reminded that this question did not require sentences e.g. 他吃食物, 他们喝什么 etc. If a verb-object construction word was given, a complete object (noun) should be in place e.g. 吃饭, 唱歌. Answers like 校想, 想用, 看电 could not be awarded a mark

Candidates need to read the instructions both in Chinese and English carefully. If there is any doubt in the Chinese instructions, read the English ones as a confirmation and look at the example to avoid confusion. There were a handful of candidates who wrote *swimming pool*, *guest room* and *bed* etc. referring to a hotel instead of a restaurant. Copying the example or answering the questions in pinyin or English was not awarded marks.

Question 2

This question asked candidates to write about their TV watching habits, and 5 questions were given for candidates to structure their answers around. The overall performance in this question was very good, and candidates were clearly familiar with the format.

10 marks were available for communication, 1 mark for each item of relevant information conveyed. All the information and details provided in the composition had to be related to one of the set tasks. Each piece of information could only be rewarded once e.g. “我喜欢看这个节目因为我跟妹妹一起看” cannot score both for tasks (a) and (e).

Candidates should remember to answer all the questions and provide additional details about each point to score the full communication marks, e.g. “我下星期六晚上七点半和爸爸妈妈看这个节目” would score more communication marks than “我下星期七点半看这个节目”. Sometimes, despite the use of excellent sentence structures, full marks could not be awarded for communication because the content was insufficient and did not address all of the points.

Candidates should be reminded that a list (e.g. saying all the people you watch TV with) can only score a maximum of three marks, however long it is. If one of the tasks is not addressed, the maximum communication mark that can be awarded is 9, no matter how many extra marks were gained from other bullet points.

Candidates should be aware this as this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used and both English and pinyin should be avoided. Pinyin and English words will not be credited or taken into account in the award of communication marks.

Candidates are encouraged to use a variety of simple sentence structures in this question. The focus of this task is on communication, and complicated structures are not essential to score the highest language marks.

A number of candidates did not answer task 3 ‘下星期你什么时候会看这个节目’ or only indicated the date and/or time in present tense with an implication for the future. Candidates must reference a future time frame in a specific time e.g. 下星期三 or 下星期七点会看 or a generic time e.g. 吃晚饭以后会看。 Candidates are advised to expand upon their answers to each bullet point, giving more details, in separate clauses or sentences, in order to score more communication marks.

A few candidates misunderstood 节目 ‘TV programme’ as 节日 ‘a festival’, therefore they wrote about what people do in 春节 or other festivals and the reasons why they like festivals. They should be reminded to read the tasks carefully.

Accuracy of language was generally good, simple and straight to the point answers were largely seen. However, candidates should be reminded to use varied sentence structures and avoid Anglicised structures. There were some common grammatical errors appearing in responses and candidates could improve their performance by placing emphasis on the following:

1. Place and time position:

- 我们可以看这个节目在星期一， 三点时候。
- 下星期三点早上我看电视。
- 海天，我学习所以我不可以玩在家里。
- 我们可以看电视在家里。
- 下星期六我请小王早我家以前音乐会。
- 我们看在我的卧室。
- 我去我的朋友家看电影或吃与我的家人。
- 每天我会和妈妈看电视，我有看是跟朋有。

2. Avoiding mistakes with time-frames in the same sentence, e.g. 下个星期三我看了这个电视。

3. Use of 兴趣: some candidates wrote 电视很兴趣，我感觉兴趣。

4. More than one candidate wrote 三星期 when they actually wanted to say 星期三。

5. Some candidates demonstrated the misuse of 'or' in Chinese when they wrote about their habit of watching TV. When they meant to use '或者', they used '还是' instead, as shown in the example, 我们喜欢看动物的节目，还是做食物的节目。

6. Use of 和 to link sentences, e.g. 我看了电视和说了话。

7. 是 has proved to be overused once again this year when it was not needed, e.g. 因为饭是很好吃。他是很好人。

8. Avoiding mistakes with phrases and characters of the similar pronunciations. 时后（时候），有明（有名），令天（今天），非种（分钟），但心（担心），看发（看法）。

9. There are often inversions of words and characters: “为因”for“因为”; “口禾” for “和”

Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. Candidates were clearly familiar with the type of question that could be expected, and opted for the one they felt more confident about.

Question 3 (a) seemed the most popular choice. Letter format is not as essential as it was in previous years to score a communication mark, therefore, extra expanded and detailed information for the bullet points are required to score the full communication marks.

There were many excellent essays showing great language skill and great abilities of creative writing. Many candidates tried to use difficult words and Chinese idioms like 津津有味、各种各样、五颜六色、兴高采烈 although there were some spelling mistakes in a few essays.

Most candidates covered all of the bullet points, but some candidates missed out one bullet point due to misunderstanding a particular word. However, they had no problem understanding other bullet points and had opportunities to do the other parts very well.

Question 3 (a)

For **3(a)**, the task was to describe the area they live in; a small amount of candidates did not understand 附近 and wrote about their house or weather in the area which caused them to lose the communication mark for the first bullet point. Some candidates did not use past tense for ‘上个周末’; they may have misunderstood it as ‘下个周末’ and used future tense, or simply just wrote in present tense ‘每个周末’ ‘常常周末’.

Characters and Grammar

The essays of many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters. There were a number of homophone or near homophone errors and character with similar shape, such as

不运（不远），觉定（决定），觉的（觉得），明字（名字），附听（附近），因办（因为），电景园（电影院），土勿（场），有是候（有时候），买（卖），牛（午），格木中格羊（各种各样）

Candidates showed a good knowledge of Chinese grammar. The most frequent problems were:

1. Overuse of 是 when it was not needed e.g. 我家是很大，他是很好人。
2. Some Anglicisation occurred, e.g. 我打篮球在学校，我打篮球和朋友，学校到我的家很附近。
3. Use of 和 to link sentences which was a common mistake every year, e.g. 我经常去图书馆和我去运动场打网球。
4. Mixed past tense with present tense in the same sentence, e.g. 上个周末我和爷爷奶奶常去公园跑步。

Question 3 (b)

In 3 (b), the task was to describe the candidate's experiences of studying Chinese which is very much related with their personal experience, and it should have been easy to follow the guided bullet points. Some candidates pointed out '中文很难/容易' without explaining which part of Chinese learning they felt was hard or easy '什么最难/容易', thus they were not able to get the second communication mark.

For the bullet point '你是什么时候开始学中文的', some candidates misunderstood it as 'what time do you study Chinese' rather than 'when did you start to learn Chinese'.

The bullet point of '以后你想用中文做什么' presented some difficulty. Some candidates wrote 学中文以后，我要学法语 indicating the misunderstanding or overlooking of 用.

Characters and Grammar

The range of characters seemed slightly limited perhaps due to the topic. There were a number of homophone errors and measure word and Anglicisation errors, such as

- 汉子（汉字）
- 我上十一年及和我学习中文六个年。
- 我觉得中文很最难。

Question 3 (c)

In 3 (c), the task was to write about a story of an unattended book bag on the lawn in a park. Many candidates who opted for **Question 3 (c)** wrote really interesting and complicated stories, and also described their feelings and actions in detail. A few candidates misunderstood the task and wrote about their/their friend's schoolbag, and what they did on that day in the park without mentioning what happened to the book bag, greatly affecting their communication marks. For some able candidates, they missed the bullet point "what did you think you should do (你觉得应该做什么)" and as a result lost some communication marks.

Candidates scoring highly were those who wrote a good story using a wide variety of vocabulary and sentence structures. Candidates should be advised not to copy out the whole question before starting their story, nor write too much for the pre-setting of the story.

A few candidates who chose 3(c) used a large amount of pinyin. Candidates are once again advised to use characters within their range of knowledge. It is preferable to write using more simple characters than to use more complex vocabulary expressed in pinyin or using incorrect characters.

Characters and Grammar

Many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters. Most of the stories involved with 警察, 警察局 which is very hard to write, thus candidates sometimes made mistakes or wrote pinyin instead. Other common character errors were 饭馆, 希望, 写字.

MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/43

Writing

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to demonstrate that they can communicate in writing, showing knowledge of a range and variety of vocabulary and applying the grammar and structures of the target language accurately.

Centres should be aware that answers have to be relevant to the questions, and all the bullet points need to be addressed with as much relevant information as possible. Since this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible and both English and pinyin should be avoided.

Candidates do not need to copy out the questions, particularly for **Question 3**. Writing straight to the bullet points and expanding accordingly without pre-setting sentences too much is more efficient to gain higher marks. Letter format is not as essential as it was in previous years to score a communication mark.

General Comments

The new format Writing paper featured two new of question types. **Question 1** was totally new to candidates, and allowed them to build confidence by writing a small number of individual vocabulary items. **Question 2** was more familiar to candidates, as it was the same format as appearing in the Reading and Directed paper up until 2014. In **Question 3**, there were three options candidates could choose from; therefore most of the candidates opted for the one they felt most confident with. It was pleasing to see that questions were accessible to the majority of candidates and there were a number of excellent performances.

It was pleasing to see that, in general, the topics and themes of the writing exercises were well within the knowledge and life experiences of candidates from around the world. Writing skills are very important and it was clear that candidates had been well prepared.

Most of the candidates did very well, and there were many excellent essays which were awarded full marks. There were a number of candidates who provided a detailed and expanded essay with plenty of extra information. Many of them also used Chinese idioms and complex sentence structures. Some candidates made mistakes in the grammar or vocabulary used; however, it was very impressive that they attempted to tell interesting and complicated stories with most characters written correctly.

Candidates generally adhered to the guidelines about length, producing around 150 characters. Whilst there is no need for candidates to count the number of characters written (after they have achieved the minimum required characters), it should be remembered that a composition requires a certain amount of words to address all the bullet points in the question, and variety in vocabulary and sentence structures is rewarded. Therefore a long but less varied essay will not be awarded as many marks as a shorter one with greater variety and interest. However, candidates should be reminded that if they write significantly fewer than 150 characters they will not produce enough evidence of their ability to gain access to the highest marks.

Comments on Specific questions

Question 1

The task was for candidates to write down five things they might see in a restaurant and most candidates attempted this question well. Most candidates wrote about food and drink, furniture, people (customers), crockery and cutlery. A maximum of 2 marks were awarded for 'people' as answers should be focussed on the restaurant situation, rather than merely listing family members or 'people' with the same character e.g. 中国人, 英国人, etc.

Simple characters were encouraged in **Question 1**, e.g. 火, 肉, 刀, 叉, 包. Some candidates took the challenge and attempted more difficult ones with more strokes and a more interesting meaning e.g. 柜台, 餐牌, 地板, 灯饰, 垃圾桶. Candidates are advised to use simple characters which they are confident they can write accurately, rather than writing more complex words incorrectly or writing the wrong homophone characters, i.e. writing 工作人员 instead of 服务员.

If there were missing radicals or incorrect radicals which created a new character with a different meaning, the mark could not be awarded. Candidates could improve on their accuracy of certain characters with correct radicals, e.g.

桌子 (桌子) 椅子 (椅子) 座位 (座位) 面包 (面包) 孩子 (孩子) 米饭 (米饭) 苹果 (苹果)
冷气机 (冷气机) etc. and not use the characters with similar pronunciation
服务员 (服务员) 风伞 (风扇), 电等 (电灯) 信用卡 (信用卡) etc.

No measure words or verbs were needed. Candidates should be reminded that this question did not require sentences e.g. 他吃食物, 他们喝什么 etc. If a verb-object construction word was given, a complete object (noun) should be in place e.g. 吃饭, 唱歌. Answers like 校想, 想用, 看电 could not be awarded a mark

Candidates need to read the instructions both in Chinese and English carefully. If there is any doubt in the Chinese instructions, read the English ones as a confirmation and look at the example to avoid confusion. There were a handful of candidates who wrote *swimming pool*, *guest room* and *bed* etc. referring to a hotel instead of a restaurant. Copying the example or answering the questions in pinyin or English was not awarded marks.

Question 2

This question asked candidates to write about their TV watching habits, and 5 questions were given for candidates to structure their answers around. The overall performance in this question was very good, and candidates were clearly familiar with the format.

10 marks were available for communication, 1 mark for each item of relevant information conveyed. All the information and details provided in the composition had to be related to one of the set tasks. Each piece of information could only be rewarded once e.g. “我喜欢看这个节目因为我跟妹妹一起看” cannot score both for tasks (a) and (e).

Candidates should remember to answer all the questions and provide additional details about each point to score the full communication marks, e.g. “我下星期六晚上七点半和爸爸妈妈看这个节目” would score more communication marks than “我下星期七点半看这个节目”. Sometimes, despite the use of excellent sentence structures, full marks could not be awarded for communication because the content was insufficient and did not address all of the points.

Candidates should be reminded that a list (e.g. saying all the people you watch TV with) can only score a maximum of three marks, however long it is. If one of the tasks is not addressed, the maximum communication mark that can be awarded is 9, no matter how many extra marks were gained from other bullet points.

Candidates should be aware this as this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used and both English and pinyin should be avoided. Pinyin and English words will not be credited or taken into account in the award of communication marks.

Candidates are encouraged to use a variety of simple sentence structures in this question. The focus of this task is on communication, and complicated structures are not essential to score the highest language marks.

A number of candidates did not answer task 3 ‘下星期你什么时候会看这个节目’ or only indicated the date and/or time in present tense with an implication for the future. Candidates must reference a future time frame in a specific time e.g. 下星期三 or 下星期七点会看 or a generic time e.g. 吃晚饭以后会看。 Candidates are advised to expand upon their answers to each bullet point, giving more details, in separate clauses or sentences, in order to score more communication marks.

A few candidates misunderstood 节目 ‘TV programme’ as 节日 ‘a festival’, therefore they wrote about what people do in 春节 or other festivals and the reasons why they like festivals. They should be reminded to read the tasks carefully.

Accuracy of language was generally good, simple and straight to the point answers were largely seen. However, candidates should be reminded to use varied sentence structures and avoid Anglicised structures. There were some common grammatical errors appearing in responses and candidates could improve their performance by placing emphasis on the following:

1. Place and time position:
 - 我们可以看这个节目在星期一， 三点时候。
 - 下星期三早上我看电视。
 - 海天，我学习所以我不可以玩在家里。
 - 我们可以看电视在家里。
 - 下星期六我请小王早我家以前音乐会。
 - 我们看在我的卧室。
 - 我去我的朋友家看电影或吃与我的家人。
 - 每天我会和妈妈看电视，我有看是跟朋有。
2. Avoiding mistakes with time-frames in the same sentence, e.g. 下个星期三我看了这个电视。
3. Use of 兴趣: some candidates wrote 电视很兴趣，我感觉兴趣。
4. More than one candidate wrote 三星期 when they actually wanted to say 星期三。
5. Some candidates demonstrated the misuse of 'or' in Chinese when they wrote about their habit of watching TV. When they meant to use '或者', they used '还是' instead, as shown in the example, 我们喜欢看动物的节目，还是做食物的节目。
6. Use of 和 to link sentences, e.g. 我看了电视和说了话。
7. 是 has proved to be overused once again this year when it was not needed, e.g. 因为饭是很好吃。他是很好人。
8. Avoiding mistakes with phrases and characters of the similar pronunciations. 时后（时候），有明（有名），令天（今天），非种（分钟），但心（担心），看发（看法）。
9. There are often inversions of words and characters: “为因”for“因为”；“口禾”for“和”

Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. Candidates were clearly familiar with the type of question that could be expected, and opted for the one they felt more confident about.

Question 3 (a) seemed the most popular choice. Letter format is not as essential as it was in previous years to score a communication mark, therefore, extra expanded and detailed information for the bullet points are required to score the full communication marks.

There were many excellent essays showing great language skill and great abilities of creative writing. Many candidates tried to use difficult words and Chinese idioms like 津津有味、各种各样、五颜六色、兴高采烈 although there were some spelling mistakes in a few essays.

Most candidates covered all of the bullet points, but some candidates missed out one bullet point due to misunderstanding a particular word. However, they had no problem understanding other bullet points and had opportunities to do the other parts very well.

Question 3 (a)

For **3(a)**, the task was to describe the area they live in; a small amount of candidates did not understand 附近 and wrote about their house or weather in the area which caused them to lose the communication mark for the first bullet point. Some candidates did not use past tense for '上个周末'; they may have misunderstood it as '下个周末' and used future tense, or simply just wrote in present tense '每个周末' '常常周末'.

Characters and Grammar

The essays of many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters. There were a number of homophone or near homophone errors and character with similar shape, such as

不运（不远），觉定（决定），觉的（觉得），明字（名字），附听（附近），因办（因为），电景园（电影院），土勿（场），有是候（有时候），买（卖），牛（午），格木中格羊（各种各样）

Candidates showed a good knowledge of Chinese grammar. The most frequent problems were:

1. Overuse of 是 when it was not needed e.g. 我家是很大，他是很好人。
2. Some Anglicisation occurred, e.g. 我打篮球在学校，我打篮球和朋友，学校到我的家很附近。
3. Use of 和 to link sentences which was a common mistake every year, e.g. 我经常去图书馆和我去运动场打网球。
4. Mixed past tense with present tense in the same sentence, e.g. 上个周末我和爷爷奶奶常去公园跑步。

Question 3 (b)

In 3 (b), the task was to describe the candidate's experiences of studying Chinese which is very much related with their personal experience, and it should have been easy to follow the guided bullet points. Some candidates pointed out '中文很难/容易' without explaining which part of Chinese learning they felt was hard or easy '什么最难/容易', thus they were not able to get the second communication mark.

For the bullet point '你是什么时候开始学中文的', some candidates misunderstood it as 'what time do you study Chinese' rather than 'when did you start to learn Chinese'.

The bullet point of '以后你想用中文做什么' presented some difficulty. Some candidates wrote 学中文以后，我要学法语 indicating the misunderstanding or overlooking of 用.

Characters and Grammar

The range of characters seemed slightly limited perhaps due to the topic. There were a number of homophone errors and measure word and Anglicisation errors, such as

- 汉子（汉字）
- 我上十一年及 和我学习中文六个年。
- 我觉得中文很最难。

Question 3 (c)

In 3 (c), the task was to write about a story of an unattended book bag on the lawn in a park. Many candidates who opted for **Question 3 (c)** wrote really interesting and complicated stories, and also described their feelings and actions in detail. A few candidates misunderstood the task and wrote about their/their friend's schoolbag, and what they did on that day in the park without mentioning what happened to the book bag, greatly affecting their communication marks. For some able candidates, they missed the bullet point "what did you think you should do (你觉得应该做什么)" and as a result lost some communication marks.

Candidates scoring highly were those who wrote a good story using a wide variety of vocabulary and sentence structures. Candidates should be advised not to copy out the whole question before starting their story, nor write too much for the pre-setting of the story.

A few candidates who chose 3(c) used a large amount of pinyin. Candidates are once again advised to use characters within their range of knowledge. It is preferable to write using more simple characters than to use more complex vocabulary expressed in pinyin or using incorrect characters.

Characters and Grammar

Many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters. Most of the stories involved with 警察, 警察局 which is very hard to write, thus candidates sometimes made mistakes or wrote pinyin instead. Other common character errors were 饭馆, 希望, 写字.