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GCSE

# CHINESE (MANDARIN)

8673/WF: Writing (Foundation)

Report on the Examination

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8673

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## General Comments

There was a wide difference in the quality of work and the paper discriminated well. Most students were able to gain marks in most questions and it seemed that the vast majority had been entered at the appropriate tier. Most students showed a good knowledge of the vocabulary required for the tasks and many had the grammatical know how to deal with the different tasks.

Time frames were tested in questions 3 and 4 and, again, there was evidence that a good number of students were confident in this area. Where a student's grammatical knowledge was lacking, this would invariably lead to some loss of clarity which had a negative impact on Communication and Quality of language. In question 2, many students far exceeded the recommended word count. In question 4 the responses were very varied; on the one hand, there were students who covered all four bullet points; on the other hand, some students only produced very limited writing or simply left the question blank.

### Question 1

Marks in this question are for Communication only and each of the four sentences written by the student was worth a maximum of two marks. Due to the clarity of the message being the key element, the students who were most successful in this question were those who used simple language, usually with a verb like 是 or 有 followed by something they could see in the photo. Typical examples include: 他是中国人; 这有六个人; 他是学生; 他们是朋友. The most effective responses included 照片里有六个人; 他们很高兴, as 照片 and 高兴 are not very common words for this tier. There were very few instances of students not attempting to write full sentences. Where students failed to score marks, it was mainly for the following reasons:

- responses were not in full sentences
- incorrect use of stative verb 很
- inaccuracy caused a delay in communication
- responses were completely irrelevant to the photo.

### Advice to students:

- always make sure you write a full sentence, with a subject, verb and an object
- keep the sentences short and simple to ensure that you communicate a clear message.

### Question 2

Teachers are reminded that there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of language. Students are required to write approximately 30 characters, about four different bullet points in total. All bullet points are compulsory and must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the points.

### Content

The criteria for assessment addresses both coverage of the bullet points and clarity of communication. The most successful responses were concise and addressed all bullet points.

The first bullet point about size of the school seemed to be a little more challenging compared to other bullet points as the responses were a bit mixed. There were some excellent answers such as 我的学校很大; 我的学校不大不小. Some students seemed to misinterpret the bullet point and

wrote 我喜欢我的学校； 我走路去学校。The rest of the 3 bullet points were well answered. 我喜欢中文； 我有很多朋友； 我的老师很有意思 were the most accessible and students addressed these well. Where students missed one bullet point, this obviously limited the marks that could be awarded. In addition, inaccurate language that led to a delay in communication, and ‘lapses’ had an impact on marks awarded for Content.

### Quality of language

In order to score well for Quality of language, students had to show a variety of structures, but there is no requirement for complexity. The vast majority of students were able to score three marks and above. There were good attempts at variety – for example, different ways of expressing their opinions about subjects and teachers. Students often failed to score high marks when the characters were not recognisable or the verb formations were not secured. That was also frequently the case when they had attempted to write much more than the 30 characters. Such pieces created more scope for error and proved detrimental to overall marks.

### Advice to students:

- aim to write roughly the number of characters required. As with all extended pieces of writing, the emphasis needs to be on **quality** and not **quantity**
- mention all the bullet points. Tick off bullet points once they have addressed them
- practise the use of verbs 是、有、喜欢 and the use of stative verb 很.

### Question 3

For this question, there are 5 marks for Conveying key messages and 5 marks for Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures. Given that the level of demand of the messages was aimed at covering Grades 1 to 5, the question differentiated well with nearly all students able to score some marks.

The sentences were divided into 12 key messages, as in the table below.

### Conveying key messages

My dad is	This was very well answered.
a doctor	This was done very well.
(I) eat breakfast	This was a bit mixed. Some students got confused with 早上 or 午饭
I .....with my friend	Most students were not sure to use 和 to express ‘with my friend’ due to the way the English sentence was phrased.
He goes by bus	This was challenging for majority of the students as no knowledge of the verb 坐 despite the fact 公共汽车 was accurate
to the cinema	Lack of character knowledge led to a failure to gain the mark for this. A few students managed to wrote 电影 but still not able to secure the mark.
I cannot swim	The use of modal verb 会 was challenging. Only a small number of students managed to secure this, however 我不游泳 was

	accepted.
because	This was extremely well answered.
I do not like water	This was very well answered and majority of students gained a mark.
We went shopping	There was often a missing plural particle 们 or verb formations were not accurate
in the city centre	Not many students knew the vocabulary 市中心.
last Saturday	Response was mixed. Typical wrong answers are just 星期六 or 下个星期六.

### Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

Minor inaccuracies, such as in character writing, providing it does not lead to different meaning, will not on their own prevent the award of a tick for the key message. However, some word order errors which has an overall impact on accuracy would be reflected in the mark for application of grammar. Nevertheless, there was usually a direct correlation between the two marks.

#### Advice to students:

- practise high frequency words and phrases
- check carefully that you do not miss out any parts of the translation by accident
- check the word order and verb formation
- if you are not sure about how to write a character, it is best to write out the pinyin rather than leave it blank as a small amount of pinyin is acceptable.

### Question 4

For this question, there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of language. Students are required to write approximately 75 characters, totalling about four different bullet points. All bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets.

Question 4.1 was the more popular choice. In both Question 4.1 and 4.2, the standard of work varied considerably. Many students dealt confidently with all four bullet points and developed their responses by giving opinions and using different time frames, whilst some students only produced a very limited, broken piece of writing. It is noted that there were some overly long responses, something which gave greater scope for errors. This affected the mark for Quality of language. At this tier, it was the students who wrote concisely and accurately who scored the highest marks.

In Question 4.2, an invitation to write in a past-time frame was not made explicit to students. Therefore, an amended mark scheme allowing access to the full range of marks for Quality of language using two time frames was applied to this question (and Q1.2 on the Higher Tier) for the 2019 series only to ensure students were not disadvantaged by the question wording. Please see the mark scheme for full details. Analysis was carried out post marking which showed no meaningful difference between the performance of Question 4.1 and 4.2. The question paper and mark scheme will be updated after the post-results period has concluded.

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## Content

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: coverage of the bullet points, development of ideas, clarity of communication and expression of opinions. Students need to be reminded that coverage of bullet points is key, as misinterpreting or omitting even one means that the award of a mark above 6 is impossible given that for the award of marks in the range 7 – 10, all aspects of the task must be covered. In addition, although students had no difficulty in developing ideas and expressing opinions, there were occasions when inaccuracy led to a lack of clarity of communication (referred to as ‘lapses’) and this impacted on marks awarded.

### Question 4.1

More students answered this question, as holiday is a very familiar topic to students. As would be expected, bullet points 1 and 4 were well covered with some very effective responses. Most students gave details of what their holiday was like and where they would like go to followed by opinions. Bullet point 2 required students to describe both positive and negative aspects of their holiday, most students answered well using 我喜欢……, 我不喜欢…… 虽然……但是……。 However, quite a few students only managed to write about one aspect rather than both. Bullet point 3 was not well covered in this tier as quite a number of students omitted this bullet point. This impacted on marks awarded for Content.

### Question 4.2

Again, bullet points 1 and 4 were well addressed. A wide range of part time jobs were listed in the responses and a vast majority of the students described their jobs too rather than just mentioning the job itself. Some of the ambitions for the future were in the near future, but credit was given for any activity that the student wanted to do. This bullet point elicited reference to a future event and was tackled very well. Similarly to Question 4.1, quite a few students only mentioned one aspect of their job; this had impact on their Content marks. For bullet point 3, most students talked about what they bought or what they were planning to buy. The answers were brief, however most of them were to the point.

## Quality of language

The key features of the criteria for assessment here are variety of language, attempts at complexity, time frames and accuracy. Students were able to show some variety of vocabulary in relation to the four bullet points of their chosen question. The time frames were very well used as most students used two or three time frames in their writing. It was noted that students in this tier were better at using time word at the start of the sentences, rather than using verb + 了, 要/想/打算+ verb. When giving opinions, almost all students were able to use 喜欢 and 不喜欢. It was pleasing to see some students use connectives 不仅……而且……; 因为……所以……. to attempt longer sentences in their writing.

## Advice to students:

- aim to write roughly the suggested number of characters
- mention all of the bullet points. Tick off the bullet points on the question paper once they have been covered
- identify which bullet points target the different time frames and check that your time word and verb formation are accurate
- make sure you include opinions as required by the task

- write in pinyin rather than leave it blank if you are stuck with a particular character as a small amount of pinyin is acceptable.

### **Use of statistics**

Statistics used in this report may be taken from incomplete processing data. However, this data still gives a true account on how students have performed for each question.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.