

CHINESE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0523/01
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- In the reading section, candidates are required to understand and respond to information presented in a variety of forms. Candidates are expected not only to understand the information provided in the passages but also to be able to distinguish between facts, ideas and opinions. They should demonstrate the ability to extract relevant specific information from various text types and organise and present it in a logical manner.
- In the writing section, candidates need to show that they can communicate clearly and appropriately in written Chinese to convey information and express opinions. Candidates are expected to use a range of vocabulary and show control of a variety of grammatical structures. Register should be appropriate. Writing conventions, such as paragraphing and punctuation, should be followed. The characters produced by candidates should be accurate.
- Candidates should choose either the traditional or simplified character version of the paper and write all their answers within that section of the question paper booklet. Candidates must not answer in both versions. If a candidate starts to answer in one part of the booklet by mistake and then moves to a different character version, he/she must cross out any work that he/she does not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Candidates should try to be precise when answering questions. 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.

General comments

Performance on this component was good. The majority of candidates were able to understand the three reading passages in detail. In the writing section, most candidates showed that they were capable of communicating competently in Chinese. Many responses successfully and clearly communicated interesting ideas, but care should be taken to ensure precision in using simple grammatical structures. Some candidates also need to take care when writing characters to ensure clarity and accuracy.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

Questions 1 – 6

In this exercise, candidates are presented with a blank form, and need to complete it according to their understanding of the passage. A high level of accuracy is needed to score well. Generally, there was a high level of performance this year for this exercise. Most candidates showed care and precision in completing the form, for example, remembering to omit 他 or the name of the protagonist 马修 in their answers, as the question requires them to fill out the form from the perspective of the protagonist. Candidates could improve in general by reading different types of forms so that they are familiar with the layout and some key words.

Both **Question 1** and **Question 2** were answered correctly by most candidates.

Question 3 proved challenging for many candidates, and some responses suggested a misunderstanding of the question. Some candidates wrote 视觉效果/配乐 without the descriptive words, which was not sufficient to score the marks. Many wrote 玩家的道德立场受到挑战 which was not a *feature* of the game.

Question 4 was handled well by most candidates. A small number of candidates answered 一种语言 instead of stating that English was the language used for the game.

For **Question 5**, the two types of devices need to be written out precisely. Candidates' answers for this question were mixed. Those who were familiar with the key words 下载 and 终端 performed well in this question. Some candidates answered 视觉效果非常棒/游戏的配乐令人难忘, which showed that they had misunderstood the question. A small number of candidates wrote 手机 which is one type of 移动电子设备, hence no mark was awarded.

A high percentage of candidates were able to use the information from the passage to answer **Question 6** with ease.

Exercise 2

Questions 8 – 16

Questions in **Exercise 2** require precise and accurate answers. Where questions test implicit meaning, candidates are required to answer in their own words.

Question 7 was answered well by many.

Most candidates answered **Question 8** correctly. Some candidates wrote 在安全的场合, which was slightly ambiguous and could change the perspective from cats to people, which meant it could not be credited.

Question 9 required two elements to be addressed, one of which was tackled well by most candidates. Weaker responses frequently copied the whole sentence which contained the relevant points, including 营业结束后猫咪可在店内自由活动, which is not part of the design of the café; such answers were therefore invalidated. Candidates should be reminded that their answers must be precise and show understanding of the question and text. Indiscriminate lifting does not show this and so cannot be credited.

Most candidates performed well in **Question 10**. A small number of candidates wrote 以本土不常见的动物 which was not a grammatically accurate sentence, and the meaning was incomplete; the mark was therefore not awarded.

Question 11 required candidates to pay close attention to both the passage and the question. The majority of candidates answered 心理压力 accurately. Higher-scoring candidates were also able to provide a passive expression such as 被虐待 or 受到虐待 from the pets' perspective rather than the owners' to gain the second mark.

Question 12 asked candidates to identify the consequences of releasing racoons back into the wild. The most successful responses were very precise, such as 危害当地生态. Weaker responses again relied on lifting language from the passage unchanged, and some copied the whole sentence including 浣熊非本土生物, 且适应力强、繁殖速度快, which could not be awarded the mark.

Question 13 was handled well by most candidates. Either 收入来自餐饮消费 or 咖啡厅以动物作为亮点吸引客人, 但真正的收入来自于餐饮消费 was awarded the mark. Some candidates also included 经营者只需申请普通的咖啡厅营业执照 in their answers, which is the *result* of pet cafés being in a legal grey area, not the *reason*.

Question 14 was answered well by the majority of candidates.

Question 15 required candidates to use their own words to describe Lin Jun's reaction to the fact that pet cafés do not need to apply for a professional licence. Many candidates showed that they had understood the messages given in the passage and could then digest the information to produce answers such as 不满/生气/感觉不可思议.

Many candidates answered **Question 16** correctly. Some perhaps did not understand the expression 迫在眉睫 in the question and provided 减少不良业者对动物的伤害 as their answer, which was not the urgent action Lin Jun said was needed.

In short, candidates are reminded of the need to read the questions and passage carefully in **Exercise 2**. Furthermore, candidates should be reminded to give a precise response and not to lift whole sentences from the passage.

Exercise 3

Questions 17 – 26

In **Exercise 3**, the multiple matching exercise, it is recommended that candidates practise skimming and scanning reading techniques and carefully consider each question, looking for which paragraph contains the matching information or opinion. When writing their answer, candidates should clearly indicate the letter they have selected.

Most candidates demonstrated a good level of understanding of the task and there were some very successful attempts at the exercise. Overall, the whole range of marks was awarded, with most candidates achieving more than five marks. The greatest number of correct answers was to **Question 18**, and the most frequently incorrect answers were to **Question 20** and **Question 22**. Presentation of answers was generally clear. When writing their answers, candidates are reminded that if they change their mind, they should not write the second answer over the first, but should cross out the wrong answer clearly, and write their final choice alongside.

Exercise 4

Question 27

Candidates were required to write a diary entry to talk about their recent experience at a summer camp where no electronic devices were allowed. Candidates were asked to include the reason why they took part in this camp, the activities at the camp and their thoughts on this experience.

Most candidates were aware that they should write between 100 and 120 characters, and successfully addressed the task given in the bullet points within the character limit.

Many candidates addressed all three bullet points well in their diary. Some missed a mark as they included the reason why the summer camp organisers did not allow electronic devices but not the reason why they wanted to join the camp.

In terms of language use, many candidates demonstrated that they could use simple grammatical structures effectively and precisely. In order to reach the highest mark band, candidates also needed to show that they could use more complex structures and sophisticated language accurately. Candidates are reminded not to use pinyin in their writing.

Exercise 5

Question 28

Question 28 was found to be the most challenging part of the exam for many candidates. It was a task that invited candidates to present arguments for and against a topic, concluding with their own point of view.

This year, candidates were asked to write an article to their school magazine to express their opinions on whether all candidates should do work experience for a week every term.

Two written comments were provided as a stimulus to provoke candidates into thinking about the topic. Candidates were not obliged to include these and could use their own ideas and opinions. These were given as suggestions of the arguments which may be put forward, and it was expected that candidates would not simply re-state the ideas provided but present their own ideas and opinions as well.

Most candidates could clearly state their opinions. Some misinterpreted the question and talked about travelling or doing sports as part of their work experience. Candidates should be reminded that they need to read the question carefully before starting their essays.

The key to success in this section is to make sure ideas are fully developed, using connective words where appropriate. Candidates needed to generate persuasive arguments and to engage the reader's interest to be

awarded the highest marks. The highest scoring essays contained interesting personal opinions in respect of the given issue with well-developed ideas.

In conclusion, centres should continue to support candidates in writing Chinese characters accurately. Candidates should be reminded that the use of idioms and sayings only enhance the quality of the language when used appropriately.

CHINESE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0523/02
Listening

Key messages

- Candidates are expected to identify the key information through a range of spoken material, including talks and conversations and to be able to respond to factual information as well as abstract ideas.
- In **Exercises 1 to 3** candidates are required to provide short answers to questions in Chinese characters or pinyin. They can write either in simplified or traditional characters. If a candidate has chosen to write their answers in pinyin instead of characters, there is no requirement to use tones on the pinyin, and the spelling of the pinyin does not have to conform to the standard spelling rules. However, the answer must be completely unambiguous within the context.
- Candidates should choose either the traditional or simplified character version of the paper. They must write all their answers within their chosen section of the question paper booklet. Candidates must not answer in both versions. If a candidate starts to answer in one part of the booklet by mistake and then moves to a different character version, he/she must cross out any work that he/she does not wish the examiner to consider.
- Candidates should attempt all questions; write clear and legible responses in the spaces provided in the question paper. Candidates should not write over their initial answers. Attempts that cannot be read may not be credited.

General comments

Overall, candidates demonstrated confidence in their listening skills and performed well in this exam. Most candidates were well prepared for the exam and were aware of the requirements.

There were many excellent performances, and most candidates were able to provide brief written responses in Chinese (whether characters or pinyin). Many candidates could identify the relevant keywords from the texts and it was evident that some had taken notes while listening to the recordings to help them. Candidates should be encouraged to read the questions carefully during the reading time and to keep the responses short, clear, and to the point to avoid any incorrect material that may lead to invalidating an otherwise correct response.

It was noticeable this year that accuracy in characters had generally improved. There were still some cases where candidates had written the wrong character and if this did not communicate the required elements it could not be credited. Inaccuracies of Chinese are tolerated in this exam as long as the message provided is communicated clearly. The key point is that if inaccuracies in either the candidate's character writing or spelling of a pinyin word changes the meaning, and therefore makes their answer ambiguous, marks cannot be awarded.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

Question 1 to 6

Generally, candidates performed well in this exercise, which required them to write short answers in response to six questions. All candidates understood the rubric well. Candidates who performed well in this

section had a thorough understanding of the question words, e.g. how, why, when, and the keywords in the question. In most cases, short, direct responses were the most successful.

Question 1

This question was quite well attempted. Most candidates understood the whole conversation and wrote down the correct answer 公园 in characters. Some candidates answered with 女生/她的家 which was not credited because the question asked about where the party was held *last year*, not this year.

Question 2

Candidates answered this question quite well. The expected response was 深夜 or 夜里. Candidates needed to include reference to 'nighttime' and so attempts such as 出门前 were not complete enough to be credited.

Question 3

This question was generally well-answered. Many candidates wrote down the keyword 六十个小时 accurately with the additional information 至少 or 以上 to show that they had thoroughly understood the conversation. The number 60 written in numbers or in characters was accepted.

Question 4

Many candidates were able to identify the attitude in the dialogue and score the mark by giving the answer 为难. Some candidates answered with 尽力 perhaps suggesting that they had not understood that an attitude was needed in the answer rather than an action.

Question 5

Most candidates were able to respond to this question well, by clearly providing the reason why the boy could not have pets at home, namely 家（空间）小. Answers needed to include the keyword 家, and some responses such as 大小 were not complete enough to be credited.

Question 6

This question was generally well-answered. Many candidates were able to write 迈开腿 in characters or pinyin confidently. Some candidates understood the well-known saying used in the conversation and wrote down 做运动 as an alternative, which was also credited.

Exercise 2

Question 7(a) – (h)

Candidates generally performed well in this gap-fill exercise where they heard a longer spoken extract about the new rules of mobile phone use on a school campus. Candidates are advised to read each question carefully before listening to the recording. Candidates should not only listen for the correct targeted detail in the recording but also check their responses carefully to make sure the words used make sense in the sentence. Candidates should not include the words which are already part of the sentence printed on the question paper before or after each gap as part of their answer.

- (a) Overall, this question was quite well-answered by most candidates. Many candidates understood the meaning of self-control and were able to write 自控 in characters correctly. Sometimes the wrong character 空 was written instead of 控 and this was not accepted.
- (b) Many candidates were able to provide 社交平台 in answer to this question. Candidates needed to understand that they had to say what had an 'especially/particularly' bad impact on learning; some candidates listed all the features of mobile phones that impacted learning, which was not correct.
- (c) This was consistently well answered by the vast majority of candidates. The expected response was 小学.

- (d) Many candidates were able to supply the answer 班主任, writing it in either characters or pinyin correctly. Although the pinyin spelling of 主任 and 主人 is the same, they have different tones. The answer 班主人 could not be credited because it changed the original meaning of 'class teacher'.
- (e) Candidates should read the question sentence carefully before and after attempting their answers. The sentence structure '...比...' indicated that an appropriate comparative adjective was required in the gap such as 早/长. Some candidates were able to write 早一个小时; the word 'one hour' is additional information and does not affect the key information required to gain the mark.
- (f) Performance on this question was good. Any word which had the meaning of 'public area' such as 公共区域 or 公共场合 was accepted.
- (g) This question was well-handled by most candidates. Many were able to write 投票 in characters or pinyin and the combination of characters and pinyin was accepted. Some candidates gave the wrong character 漂 instead of 票 which was not accepted.
- (h) This question was testing the understanding of implied meaning. The key information 很不错 or 很好 needed to be in the response to gain a mark.

Exercise 3

Question 8(a) – (h)

In this exercise, candidates have to correct a detail in a sentence that contains a piece of incorrect information. Candidates heard a longer spoken text about people who are running their own business from a shared office. Candidates are advised to read each given sentence thoroughly before listening to the recording. It is also helpful for candidates to identify the type of word needed to correct the sentence, e.g. a noun/verb/adjective. Candidates also need to be careful not to rewrite the incorrect words already given in the sentence.

- (a) This question was well-answered. Most candidates understood the context and were able to write the combination of the phrase 'country+people' to complete the sentence.
- (b) Many candidates were able to provide the answer 忙碌 or 繁忙 meaning 'busy'. Incorrect answers included 紧张 meaning 'intense' which could not be credited.
- (c) This question was generally well attempted by the majority of candidates, who were able to provide 热爱. Some candidates provided 乐趣 or 享受 which were both accepted, but 爱好 could not be credited.
- (d) This question required candidates to pay attention to details in the context. The expected response 全球 was mentioned at the end of Paul's interview. Many candidates heard the phrase 'global' and were able to write the answer either in characters or pinyin correctly.
- (e) This question tested candidates' understanding of implied meaning. Many candidates' wrote 时间 which was only part of the answer. The key information 自由 needed to be included to gain the mark.
- (f) This question was well-answered. Many candidates heard the key information 未来的发展 and answered confidently using characters or pinyin. Both words 未来 and 发展 were required in the response to gain the mark.
- (g) This question was less well attempted than others in this exercise. Candidates needed to understand the overall meaning of what Xiao Chen had said. Many candidates heard the word 'difficult' in the extract, and picked that up to complete the sentence, when in fact the opposite meaning was being communicated, i.e. 简单 or 容易. Candidates are advised to read the sentence thoroughly before and during listening to the text.

- (h) There was a high level of success here – the expected response 年齡 required candidates to summarise the conclusion from Xiao Chen’s interview. Many candidates were able to write the characters or pinyin correctly.

Exercise 4

Question 9(a) – (h)

Candidates answer multiple-choice questions in this exercise. Candidates listened to an extract about an interview with Ji Xiang, a candidate who designed a smart caller for his grandfather. Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the content and a number of them obtained full marks. Candidates should be encouraged to make it absolutely clear which option they wish to be taken as their final choice as the answer. It is also important to emphasise that if two boxes are ticked then, even if one of the responses given is correct, it will not be credited.

CHINESE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0523/03
Speaking

Key messages

- Examiners must ensure that they are familiar with the format of the test and should read the instructions given in the syllabus booklet well in advance of the speaking test period.
- While all candidates' Speaking tests must be recorded, centres must follow the guidance given on the samples database to select a sample to upload to the Submit for Assessment platform along with the correct documents.
- The two-to-three-minute Topic Presentation should be related to Chinese culture or an aspect of life in a Chinese-speaking country or community. It should include ideas and opinions as well as factual points.
- In the Topic Conversation, questions should not require candidates to repeat what he/she has already said in the Presentation as this will confuse and disadvantage candidates.
- Examiners should ensure that questioning in both the Topic Conversation and General Conversation offers candidates enough scope to use a wide range of vocabulary and structures and to give opinions and justifications so that they have the opportunity to reach the higher mark range.
- At least two topics should be covered in the General Conversation: one from Areas A-B and one from Areas C – D as set in the syllabus.
- Tests must adhere to the timings as set out in the syllabus.
- Tests must be conducted in Mandarin.

General comments

This year the vast majority of centres carried out the tests well. Each candidate gave a prepared presentation on a culture related topic of their own interest, which was followed by a conversation with the examiner. The most successful conversations were those where the examiner asked a series of relevant questions, which provided candidates with opportunities to express personal ideas and justifications and therefore access the higher marking bands. There were many examples of interesting presentations where candidates showed evidence of thorough research and planning. Examiners were also usually well-prepared and effective conversations involved examiners who listened carefully, asking a series of excellent searching questions pitched at a level and depth appropriate to this syllabus. In the General Conversation, centres usually covered a good balance of topic areas from the syllabus, ensuring a varied range of subjects were discussed.

The best performances from candidates of all abilities were heard in centres where candidates were given opportunities to provide extended responses where they could exhibit their command of the language, or were they engaged in meaningful discussions, expressing and defending their own opinions. Candidates gained marks for responding spontaneously to questions and contributing to the conversation by conveying their ideas with clarity and precision. The strongest candidates also showed consistent and precise use of a wide range of vocabulary and a variety of structures to articulate their perspectives effectively.

Conduct of the test

From the evidence heard in the submitted samples, the vast majority of examiners were familiar with the requirements of the IGCSE Chinese as a Second Language Speaking test and understood the importance of their role. Most examiners were aware that they needed to introduce each part of the test clearly and also ensured that candidates were given ample opportunity to demonstrate the full range of their ability. In a small number of cases, the timing of individual sections did not comply with the guidance given in the syllabus and was sometimes too short or too long. There were also examples of the questions being closed or too fact-based which restricted the answers candidates could give and therefore affected their performance. Examiners need to be careful not to ask questions which will make candidates merely repeat material from their presentation.

Questions should be clear to facilitate natural and spontaneous conversation. In a small number of cases examiners had a tendency to give extended responses themselves, and the question was then lost or not clear enough to the candidate.

Recorded sample: quality and composition

While most centres had selected an appropriate sample and submitted the correct documents to Submit for Assessment, in a number of cases the quality of the recordings or the Working Mark Sheets were poor which made the moderation process difficult. Centres are reminded to spot check the quality of all recordings and particularly any scanned documents before uploading to the Submit for Assessment platform.

Internal moderation

Where centres use more than one examiner to conduct and assess the Speaking Test, the coordinating examiner is responsible for checking that the mark scheme has been applied consistently by all of the examiners in the centre. If a particular examiner's marking is judged by his/her colleagues to be out of line with the other marking at the centre, all the marks for candidates examined by that examiner must be adjusted *before* filling in the last column in the Working Mark Sheet. When a total mark has been changed as the result of internal moderation, the breakdown of marks should also be updated accordingly to avoid any confusion with clerical errors. Guidelines for the Internal Moderation of Speaking tests are available on the samples database: <https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples>

Application of the mark scheme

The mark scheme was generally well understood and applied correctly. In cases where downward adjustments to marks were made, this was often where material from the presentation was repeated and so candidates had not presented new evidence of language/structures. Other examples included where responses were more like a monologue or seemed over-prepared and so were missing the element of naturalness and spontaneity.

Comments on specific questions

Presentation

Most candidates seemed to have taken the opportunity to research and present a topic on an aspect of Chinese culture or life in a Chinese-speaking country or community which was of interest to them. It is recommended that candidates state the title of their presentation before they start. The topics heard this year were diverse, indicating candidates' attentiveness towards traditions as well as social and current affairs in their living communities.

A variety of topics are listed here as an example.

- Traditional festivals and celebrations, for example, 新年贺词, 十二生肖与中国文化, 灯谜, 门神, 年夜饭常见的菜肴, 清明食物, 不同的中秋, 七夕与情人节, 记忆中的重阳节 etc.
- Traditional customs, for example, 中国婚俗, 中西式葬礼对比, 中国的祭祀文化, 二十四节气, 冬至, etc.
- Chinese arts and handicrafts, for example, 丹青, 书法, 文房四宝, 青花瓷, 国画与油画, 中国结, 吹糖人, 皮影, etc.
- Chinese costumes and clothing, for example, 中国服饰, 汉服, 唐装与旗袍, 颜色的寓意, etc.

- Chinese cuisines, for example, 中国各地美食, 茶道, 武汉过早, 香港茶餐厅文化, 煲汤, 椰浆饭, 自热火锅, 中国外卖, 澳门饮食, 珍珠奶茶, 咖啡和茶, 舌尖上的中国, 狗不理包子, etc.
- Chinese music and instruments, films and performing arts, for example, 中国古筝, 琵琶, 扬琴, 二胡, 京剧, 华语电影的发展, 中国动画, 方言歌曲, 中国综艺节目, etc.
- Chinese medicine, 中医与西医, 中药, 针灸, etc.
- Traditional games and martial arts, for example, 中国传统游戏和玩具, 中国象棋, 麻将, 扯铃, 功夫, 太极, 中国足球的历史与发展, etc.
- Chinese philosophies and religions, for example, 古代中国的传统哲学之一: 道法自然, 百善孝为先, 重男轻女, etc.
- Classical literature and historical figures, or a role model from modern society, for example, 西游记, 水浒, 三国, 孙子兵法, 唐诗宋词, 苏轼, 秦始皇, 赵云, 武则天, 孔子, 孙悟空, 猪八戒, 诸葛亮, 韩信, 西施; 马化腾, 李宗伟, etc.
- Reflections of life in Chinese speaking regions or societies, for example, 马来华人的教育观, 虎妈, 鸡娃—补习文化, 高考, 尊师重道, 中学生是否应该出国留学, 不要输在起跑线上, 谷歌翻译是否有助于中文学习, 华文的传承, 马来西亚国际学校和华校的异同, 香港家庭教育方式, 隔代教育; 中国的人口政策, 中国基建—地铁, 高铁如何改变中国人民的生活, 中国火车发展史, 亚洲青少年的容貌焦虑, 中国青少年近视率, 中国网络文化及走向, 微信, 抖音, 小红书, 盲盒, 亲子游, etc.

Centres are reminded that when a more general topic has been chosen by a candidate, for example, 网络的利弊, or 健康饮食, this has to be linked to an aspect of Chinese culture or life in a Chinese-speaking country or community. Candidates are also advised to avoid copying large amounts of material from different written sources and using these in their presentations unchanged; the presentation should be the candidate's own work, and language drawn from other sources often leads to stilted or less coherent presentations.

Topic Conversation

This part of the Speaking Test should be an interactive conversation based on what candidates have presented in their presentation. The timing for this part is 4 – 5 minutes to allow deeper discussions on the topic and the materials presented. Examiners are reminded that they should not ask questions which require candidates to repeat what they have already said in the Presentation, as this will restrict the range of language that candidates produce and can also cause confusion. The most successful conversations were those where examiners asked open questions that were logically linked and which gave candidates opportunities to provide further information, opinions and justifications. For example, if the Presentation was about a famous local cuisine, the questions in the Topic Conversation could ask for detailed, further information on anything from the cooking method, ingredients, personal experience / memories and comparisons to other cuisines, to deeper discussions on the meaning behind the local cuisine, links to history and customs, healthy dietary habits, culinary diversity, etc.

Whilst it is expected that candidates would have thought about and prepared possible follow-up questions around their chosen topic, they should not be aware of any actual questions in advance. It is important that examiners include unexpected questions and changes in direction of the conversation which enable candidates to show their ability to respond spontaneously, to initiate and maintain conversation to achieve a higher category in the mark scheme.

General conversation

At least two topics should be covered in the General Conversation: one from Areas A and B, the other from Areas C-D. Topics chosen for the General Conversation should not overlap with the content of Part Two, Topic Conversation in this Speaking test. A full list of the topics can be found in the syllabus.

Most examiners managed to discuss at least two topics and many also succeeded in having an in-depth discussion. In conversations that required improvement in terms of the way they were conducted, examiners tended to ask a series of more superficial questions on many different topics, which candidates found overwhelming and had difficulty in explaining and justifying arguments to reach the higher marks. It is helpful to candidates if examiners clearly indicate the broad Topic Area before asking the first question.

The majority of examiners were fully aware that the level of language and depth to which general topics should be discussed in this examination should be beyond that expected of a Foreign Language examination. In a few cases, questions were not challenging enough to allow candidates to express themselves fully. Centres are reminded that the treatment of topics such as 'Sports and exercise' should be more mature and in-depth at this level, for example, 你个人觉得做运动有哪些好处? 有什么坏处? or 有人说做运动会占用学习时间, 你觉得呢? rather than more basic questions such as where they play, with whom, how long for, etc. The best examining was when candidates were invited to express their opinions on a topic, or when examiners raised a particular issue which gave candidates the opportunity to discuss both sides of the argument.