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# FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

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Paper 0509/02  
Reading and Directed Writing

## General comments

The vast majority of candidates performed well. They demonstrated their ability to comprehend the passages on the Question Paper and were able to respond fluently. Candidates had been extremely well prepared for **Section Three** and an impressive number were able to achieve full marks.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section One**

#### **Question 1**

This question required the candidates to read the two passages on life in the future and write their own predictions. A big improvement on last year was that most candidates were able to use their own words, rather than rely on copying chunks from the Question Paper. Most candidates were able to organise their ideas logically and focused on either the environmental issues or the landscape of the future city.

### **Section Two**

#### **Question 2**

The question seemed to cause candidates more problems than **Question 1**. Candidates were asked to give their opinion on whether they thought it worthwhile to risk one's life in the pursuit of sporting achievements. A considerable number, however, wrote about the merits of sport and exercise. Of those who interpreted the question correctly, some found it hard to develop a clear line of argument. Some simply restated the contents of the original passage, albeit in their own words, others listed a few examples without making clear their own opinion. Only a handful of candidates were able to present reasons both for and against risking one's life in this way, arriving at a clear and well argued conclusion.

### **Section Three**

#### **Question 3**

Candidates were required to fill in the gaps and complete the sentences. It should be noted that the finished sentences must make sense. A few candidates simply put a single character in each space, which was not adequate.

#### **Question 4**

This proved to be the most difficult question of the final section: a lot of mistakes were made, especially on **(b)** and **(c)**.

#### **Question 5**

All candidates achieved at least one mark for this question. Different versions were accepted as long as they made sense.

#### **Question 6**

Candidates performed well on this question. Well done.

**Question 7**

Most gave the correct answer, with only a few cases of candidates who obviously did not understand the rubric.

**Question 8**

Candidates performed well on this question. Well done.

**Question 9**

Marks were not awarded where candidates could not write the characters they intended to write correctly. With this type of question, candidates should be encouraged to read through the whole passage again once they have finished in order to help them identify any possible errors.

<p><b>Paper 0509/03</b> <b>Continuous Writing</b></p>
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**General comments**

It is worth mentioning the same general points as last year.

In most cases, candidates wrote essays that were appropriate, detailed and which included plenty of examples. Much of the work produced was interesting to read. It was a shame, however, that in some cases, although the essays displayed great potential, arguments were not well developed or there were too many examples of incorrect grammar, word usage and characters. There were also cases where candidates seemed to lose their way and much of the essay was irrelevant.

The overall structure of the candidates' compositions was generally good, with adequate paragraphing and many examples of good beginnings and endings. However, there were also cases where the ending seemed rushed or where the structure was so simplified that the beginning and ending were very short and the rest of the essay was contained in a middle section in the form of a single large paragraph. Occasionally, there was no paragraphing at all.

Accuracy is one area that could be greatly improved. Although the majority of candidates showed competence in word usage, grammar, character correctness and punctuation, there were too many who did not seem to be aware that these form the basis of any sound piece of writing. In the worst examples, faulty language and inappropriate use of punctuation meant that whole sections of the work produced were difficult to understand, if not incomprehensible.

**Comments on specific questions****Question 1**

This title, which required candidates to write about the place where they grew up, proved to be one of the most popular. Many good pieces of writing were produced, some of which were extremely interesting. The most successful answers were often very moving and candidates were able to communicate a genuine feeling for a place associated with their childhood.

**Question 2**

Quite a few candidates chose this title, which required them to explain their understanding of a well-known Chinese saying and provide exemplification. As is often the case, the best work was rooted in personal experience.

**Question 3**

'An unforgettable day' was the most popular title on the Question Paper and produced a wide variety of responses. Although there were many interesting compositions, there were also candidates who seemed to have chosen this because it seemed like an 'easy' option and who did not then take the trouble to develop their material.

**Question 4**

Here, candidates were asked to write an article for their school journal about whether reading/studying could be considered a useless waste of time. With essays of this kind, it is important to impose a clear train of thought and use convincing arguments.

**Question 5**

Another very popular title. Candidates were expected to write about a stranger and the best compositions were both interesting and moving, often because they seemed to be written from the candidates' personal experience.

**Question 6**

Candidates were expected to write about 'a climb on an autumn day'. There were some excellent answers written in fluent Chinese and which developed the material in a very personal way.

**Question 7**

Many candidates chose this title and wrote about the relationship between 'material life and spiritual life'. The work of weaker candidates was characterised by lack of exemplification and repetitive, sometimes confusing, language.

**Question 8**

Only a few candidates responded to this title and most of them responded satisfactorily.

**Question 9**

Candidates were expected to read this well-known Chinese saying and write an article or story. Only a few candidates chose this title and they all approached it in different ways.