

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.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Candidates generally did very 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 places, stationery items, clothing, food and sport.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

This exercise featured a short conversation about what Wang Li did last Sunday. Candidates generally did very well on this multiple-choice exercise.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 11-15

In this exercise, candidates heard Xiao Ying talking about where the members of her family work. Candidates generally performed very well in this exercise, and a high percentage of candidates answered **Question 13** correctly. **Question 15** proved to be challenging, where **B** was often incorrectly selected.

Candidates are strongly advised to give only one answer to each question in this exercise and cross out any writing they do not wish the Examiners to consider.

Exercise 2 Questions 16

Candidates heard a conversation between Liu Hai and a member of staff at a summer camp. They talked about what activities were available at the camp. Candidates generally performed very well in this exercise. If candidates ticked one of the four incorrect pictures in this question, **A** and **F** were chosen most often. Among the five correct choices, most candidates correctly selected **B** and **G**.

Candidates now appear to be very familiar with the requirement to tick five boxes on this exercise and there were very few incidents of candidates ticking fewer or more than the required number.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 17-21

This exercise featured five classmates talking about their hobbies. On the whole, candidates performed very well here. Most candidates managed to answer **Question 19** correctly. **Question 17** and **Question 20** were found to be challenging for some candidates.

Exercise 2 Questions 22-25

Candidates heard an interview with Li Ming, the winner of the Guangzhou Secondary School Art Competition. As intended, 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 asked candidates who taught Li Ming to paint. Most candidates answered this question correctly. A few candidates incorrectly answered “奶奶”, and some candidates incorrectly answered that “爷爷” and another art teacher together taught Li Ming.

Question 23 asked candidates what type of painting Li Ming liked the most. A wide range of answers was seen in response to this question, and the range of pinyin spellings and inaccurate writing of characters was also exceptionally wide here. Some answers, whether in pinyin or characters, showed that the candidates did not understand the term “山水画” or were unable to transcribe it. Weaker candidates confused “shan shui” with “shang xue” and “山” with “学”.

Question 24 asked candidates to state the two things that Li Ming thought one could do to learn to paint well, besides having a good teacher.

- (i) It was clear that most candidates understood the point that one needed to paint often in order to paint well. Some candidates gave answers which could not be credited, for example “长长画” and “zhang zhang hua”.
- (ii) Many candidates showed that they understood that another thing one should do to learn to paint well was to visit painting exhibitions and art galleries. Many candidates indicated this understanding by saying that one should look at many paintings. Where candidates did not manage to show this understanding, they tended to give answers such as “美术竞赛”, “参加画展 / 画馆” which did not gain the mark.

Question 25 proved to be the most challenging; it asked candidates to explain why Li Ming was not planning to go to an art college. Many candidates gave good and clear answers by saying that Li Ming wanted to study physics, or by saying that painting is only a hobby for her. There were candidates who did not give a clear enough answer to show that they understood this. The work of weaker candidates was characterised by the use of characters that mean something totally different: for example, using “舞” instead of “物” or using “护理” instead of “物理”.

MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/12

Listening

Key messages

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- 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.

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Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Candidates generally did very 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 places, stationery items, clothing, food and sport.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

This exercise featured a short conversation about what Wang Li did last Sunday. Candidates generally did very well on this multiple-choice exercise.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 11-15

In this exercise, candidates heard Xiao Ying talking about where the members of her family work. Candidates generally performed very well in this exercise, and a high percentage of candidates answered **Question 13** correctly. **Question 15** proved to be challenging, where **B** was often incorrectly selected.

Candidates are strongly advised to give only one answer to each question in this exercise and cross out any writing they do not wish the Examiners to consider.

Exercise 2 Questions 16

Candidates heard a conversation between Liu Hai and a member of staff at a summer camp. They talked about what activities were available at the camp. Candidates generally performed very well in this exercise. If candidates ticked one of the four incorrect pictures in this question, **A** and **F** were chosen most often. Among the five correct choices, most candidates correctly selected **B** and **G**.

Candidates now appear to be very familiar with the requirement to tick five boxes on this exercise and there were very few incidents of candidates ticking fewer or more than the required number.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 17-21

This exercise featured five classmates talking about their hobbies. On the whole, candidates performed very well here. Most candidates managed to answer **Question 19** correctly. **Question 17** and **Question 20** were found to be challenging for some candidates.

Exercise 2 Questions 22-25

Candidates heard an interview with Li Ming, the winner of the Guangzhou Secondary School Art Competition. As intended, 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 asked candidates who taught Li Ming to paint. Most candidates answered this question correctly. A few candidates incorrectly answered “奶奶”, and some candidates incorrectly answered that “爷爷” and another art teacher together taught Li Ming.

Question 23 asked candidates what type of painting Li Ming liked the most. A wide range of answers was seen in response to this question, and the range of pinyin spellings and inaccurate writing of characters was also exceptionally wide here. Some answers, whether in pinyin or characters, showed that the candidates did not understand the term “山水画” or were unable to transcribe it. Weaker candidates confused “shan shui” with “shang xue” and “山” with “学”.

Question 24 asked candidates to state the two things that Li Ming thought one could do to learn to paint well, besides having a good teacher.

- (i) It was clear that most candidates understood the point that one needed to paint often in order to paint well. Some candidates gave answers which could not be credited, for example “长长画” and “zhang zhang hua”.
- (ii) Many candidates showed that they understood that another thing one should do to learn to paint well was to visit painting exhibitions and art galleries. Many candidates indicated this understanding by saying that one should look at many paintings. Where candidates did not manage to show this understanding, they tended to give answers such as “美术竞赛”, “参加画展 / 画馆” which did not gain the mark.

Question 25 proved to be the most challenging; it asked candidates to explain why Li Ming was not planning to go to an art college. Many candidates gave good and clear answers by saying that Li Ming wanted to study physics, or by saying that painting is only a hobby for her. There were candidates who did not give a clear enough answer to show that they understood this. The work of weaker candidates was characterised by the use of characters that mean something totally different: for example, using “舞” instead of “物” or using “护理” instead of “物理”.

MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/13

Listening

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General comments

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Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

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Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

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Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 11-15

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Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 17-21

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MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/21
Reading and Directed Writing

Key Messages

In order to do well in 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.
- attempt to answer every question on the paper.
- give clear answers to questions. When responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, (as in the multiple choice questions in **Section 1**) if a candidate makes two choices (whether in pencil or in ink), the mark cannot be awarded.
- 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.
- remember that they must not use pinyin or English in their answers, as this will not be credited. Candidates should be encouraged to use simple vocabulary for which they know the characters over more complex vocabulary written in pinyin.

General comments

Candidates seemed to have been well prepared for the examination and there were some excellent responses to this paper. Most candidates were familiar with the rubrics and the requirements of the examination.

The majority of candidates were able to deliver excellent responses in **Section 1**. A small number of candidates chose not to attempt **Question 12** and **Question 23**. Candidates should be encouraged to try and answer the Writing tasks, otherwise they are missing the opportunity to access 20 available marks. In the writing tasks, candidates should ensure that they address all the bullet points given in the question, and extend their responses to access higher marks.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

The candidates demonstrated a good level of competency in these questions, especially **Question 1** and **Question 3**, which were consistently answered well.

Question 4 proved to be difficult for some candidates. This required candidates to recognise the key phrase "Chinese dumpling" (饺子) and match it to the corresponding picture D.

Exercise 2, Question 6–8

This exercise required candidates to identify the facilities available on different floors of a hotel. The vast majority of candidates excelled in these questions. **Question 6** was answered well by most. A small number of candidates struggled with **Question 8**, as it required candidates to understand the content of the whole table, and to recognise that no swimming pool was listed.

For these true / false questions, candidates must provide a clear answer by placing a tick or a cross in the relevant box. Candidates should be reminded that if they provide more than one answer, marks will not be awarded.

Exercise 3, Question 9–11

In general, candidates across the ability range answered these multiple choice questions well. Most candidates found the correct answer to **Question 9**, but **Question 10** and **Question 11** proved to be more challenging. It seemed that some candidates did not recognise the Chinese character for class “班” given in **Question 10**, and some candidates struggled with **Question 11** because of unfamiliarity with the character leg “腿”.

Exercise 4, Question 12

For this piece of writing, there are three marks available for communication, and two for accurate use of language. Candidates were asked to write a short letter to a new penfriend. They needed to mention:

- (a) their age.
- (b) the members of their family.
- (c) what they like to do.

Candidates needed to include each of these three elements in their answer to gain the full three marks available for communication. A further two marks were available for appropriate use of language.

Responses across the range of ability were of an excellent standard for this Writing exercise. In general, there was an improvement in the overall content of responses compared to last year. Most candidates wrote varied and interesting letters showing a very sound command of the language and successfully completing every bullet point in the task.

For point (a), a specific number was needed, which could be written as either a Chinese character or a numeral. A common grammatical mistake was seen in the usage of *have* “有” as some candidates wrote *I have sixteen years old* “我有十六岁” instead of *I am sixteen years old*. For point (b), candidates needed to say *who* is in their family, rather than merely stating how many people are in their family. For instance “我家有五口人” could not be rewarded as it did not address the question. For point (c), most candidates were able to successfully write an activity, and a large variety of activities was provided. A few candidates could improve their use of combination verb/noun phrases, as occasionally grammatical issues were seen when these were attempted. For example, some candidates wrote *do basketball* “做篮球” instead of *play basketball* “打篮球”.

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 13–22

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 Wang to his friend Xiao Zhang about winter in his hometown and the Ice and Snow 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.

A range of performance was seen across the questions. **Question 15** and **Question 18** were handled well by the majority of candidates. **Question 13** was found to be challenging, perhaps because candidates needed to select the correct location from two different places mentioned in the passage. In **Question 14**,

candidates needed to include *below zero* “零下” when giving the temperature; a number of candidates omitted this.

Several candidates did not provide a response for **Question 19 – Question 21**. Candidates should be encouraged to attempt to answer all the questions.

Exercise 2, Question 23

In this writing task, candidates were asked to write a short letter of 80-100 characters to a Chinese pen friend about their holiday. Ten marks were available for communication of the required elements and five marks were available for accuracy of language. Within the 10 communication marks, 1 mark was awarded for each item of relevant information conveyed. The overall standard of candidates' work is to be commended.

This year, candidates did not always answer all of the required bullet points, or provide sufficient detail to obtain all available marks for communication. Candidates should remember that they need to address each bullet point given in the question, and that they should expand their answer to each point beyond one short response. In order to gain the maximum 10 marks for communication, each of the bullet points must be covered, and further marks are awarded for additional details written on each question.

In terms of content, most candidates were able to write well about the location of their holiday and the weather they had experienced. Where candidates did not manage to cover all of the bullet points in their response, points **(b)** and **(e)** were most frequently omitted. It was evident that several candidates were not aware of how to apply the correct time expression for a length of time given, with many providing answers such as *six times* “六时间”; “一个月多长时间”. Most candidates tackled point **(c)**, though sometimes answers such as *very rain* “很雨” were written, instead of the correct expression “下大雨 / 雨很大”. Point **(d)** asked candidates to mention any places of interest they saw/visited on their holiday. This did not seem to have been fully understood by some candidates, who responded with answers discussing activities they had undertaken, e.g. *playing tennis* “打网球”; *seeing friends* “看朋友” etc. Point **(e)** seemed challenging for some candidates, as they were not confident in describing the scenery. The most frequently used simple adjectives were *beautiful* “漂亮” or *not too good* “不太好”; any more complex expressions were rare. This year, several candidates provided answers in English. Centres should remind candidates that as this is a test of Chinese, answers in any other language will not be accepted and cannot score any marks.

It should be remembered that there is a minimum number of characters prescribed in the question, and a certain number of characters is needed to address all the bullet points in the question. Variety of vocabulary and complex sentence structure is rewarded. Some candidates wrote quite fluently with a wide range of sophisticated vocabulary. Confusion over homophones 同音字 in character writing appeared to be a common phenomenon.

The lower scoring responses were usually characterised by significant amounts of irrelevant content, or over usage of pinyin. When constructing their responses, candidates should try and choose vocabulary for which they know the Chinese character, even if this means using a simpler word; this is preferable to (and will gain more credit) than using complex vocabulary, but writing in pinyin.

Candidates should remember to study the questions carefully before they start writing and to try not to skip questions.

Section 3

Exercise 1, Question 24–28

In this exercise, candidates were set the task of reading an extended passage in Chinese and then answering the multiple-choice questions. Responses for **Question 24** and **Question 25** were of a high standard, with many candidates achieving full marks.

Question 26 and **Question 27** appeared to be more challenging. A common issue in answers across both questions was not accurately identifying the relevant text.

Exercise 2, Question 29–35

In this final exercise, 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.

In general, candidates responded to the questions well. A number of candidates did not attempt **Questions 33–35**. 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.

Question 34 was answered well by most candidates. A significant number of candidates encountered difficulty with **Question 29**, **Question 33** and **Question 35**. In **Question 29**, candidates needed to provide the name of the volunteer group, rather than the location *London* “伦敦”; this was found to be challenging by some. Several candidates gave an incorrect answer to **Question 33**, substituting *not easy* “不容易” for the key word in the question *very difficult* “很难”. For the last **Question 35**, many candidates lifted an incorrect sentence from the passage, “更自信; 更容易说出自己的想法.”

MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/22
Reading and Directed Writing

Key Messages

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- attempt to answer every question on the paper.
- give clear answers to questions. When responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, (as in the multiple choice questions in **Section 1**) if a candidate makes two choices (whether in pencil or in ink), the mark cannot be awarded.
- 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.
- remember that they must not use pinyin or English in their answers, as this will not be credited. Candidates should be encouraged to use simple vocabulary for which they know the characters over more complex vocabulary written in pinyin.

General comments

Candidates seemed to have been well prepared for the examination and demonstrated a good level of competence in this paper. The performance demonstrated by candidates was of a similar standard to last year.

Most candidates answered the paper with confidence. A small number of candidates chose not to attempt **Question 12** and **Question 23**. Candidates should be encouraged to try and answer the Writing tasks, otherwise they are missing the opportunity to access 20 available marks.

Candidates should be reminded that in order to access the higher marks in **Question 23**, they need to address all of the bullet points given in the question, and to provide some elaboration or additional detail for each bullet point as well. Some candidates clearly had sufficient ability in the language to answer the questions, but did not provide full enough responses to access all available communication points, as they had not provided sufficient information. Once again, some candidates used English and pinyin in their answers; credit can only be given for answers written using Chinese characters. In particular, candidates need to be able to write Chinese characters for numbers, countries and names for people.

Some common grammatical errors appeared in responses, and candidates could improve their performance by developing the following areas:

- expressing time phrases, by using “久”. Several candidates confused this character with year “年” and provided phrases such as “四久”.
- expressing distance by using the word “离”, e.g. “商店离我家很近”; “商店离我家不远”.

- writing characters; characters with the same sound but different meanings (homophones 同音字) remain a challenge for many candidates, and appeared to be a common phenomenon. e.g. ‘商点’(商店); ‘分中’(分钟); ‘方边’(方便); ‘友边’(右边).”

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

Candidates seemed well prepared for this opening multiple-choice exercise, and this was reflected in a good performance in all questions. **Question 2** and **Question 4** were answered best of all. Some candidates struggled in both **Question 3** and **Question 5**, not being able to recognise the character soup “汤” in **Question 3**. In **Question 5**, candidates who chose the wrong answer seemed to confuse the character snow “雪” with rain “雨” and thus picked A incorrectly.

Exercise 2, Question 6–8

For these true / false questions, candidates must provide a clear answer, by placing a tick or a cross in the relevant box. Candidates should be reminded that if they provide more than one answer, marks will not be awarded.

There was an improved performance in this set of questions this year, demonstrating that candidates had a sound grasp of the vocabulary relating to directions and location. A small number of candidates made an incorrect attempt at **Question 8**, suggesting that candidates are perhaps less familiar with “中间”.

Exercise 3, Question 9–11

In general, candidates across the ability range answered these multiple choice questions well.

Question 10 was found to be the most challenging, as a small amount of candidates did not understand the meaning of “网球运动员”.

Exercise 4, Question 12

For this piece of writing, there are three marks available for communication, and two for accurate use of language. Candidates were asked to write a short letter to a new penfriend. They needed to mention:

- (a) their nationality
- (b) their birthday
- (c) what present they would like to receive on their birthday.

Candidates needed to include each of these three elements in their answer to gain the full three marks available for communication. A further two marks were available for appropriate use of language.

Overall, candidates delivered a strong performance, with all candidates making a good attempt and many scoring full marks. The general proficiency in Chinese demonstrated was impressive. The most successful answers were those that managed to communicate the required information briefly, yet accurately. Pinyin and English should be avoided in this exercise.

For point (a), a nationality was required and the vast majority of candidates answered very well. Some even managed excellent answers such as “我是混血儿，一半是英国人，一半是泰国人”，showing full understanding of the question and the ability to give a precise description. Answers which could not be credited included “我是美国的中学生” as they did not express nationality in any way.

For point (b), a specific date was needed, either using Chinese characters or numbers. Candidates generally responded very well.

For point (c), any item or activity which might be given as a birthday present was accepted. Most candidates were able to provide an answer of something they wanted as a present, such as “电脑” or “书包”. A number of candidates interpreted the question as requiring an activity in response. Activities which could broadly

speaking be given as gifts (e.g. days out etc.) were accepted, but general activities not relating to the question, such as “打网球”; “看电视”; “去商店” could not be credited.

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 13–22

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 Liu to his friend Xiao Zhang about his experience at summer camp. 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.

The questions were answered well by most, with **Question 14** and **Question 16** being the most accessible. **Question 15** asked candidates to identify which countries the students at the camp came from, *not* their nationality and therefore “中国” was needed, rather than “中国人”. **Question 17** asked about the weather, and proved to be challenging for some. Some candidates confused the question word *how* “怎么样” with *where* “哪里” generating answers such as “去了颐和园”.

Exercise 2, Question 23

In this writing task, candidates were asked to write a short letter of 80-100 characters to a Chinese pen friend talking about where they live. Ten marks were available for communication of the required elements and five marks were available for accuracy of language. Within the 10 communication marks, 1 mark was awarded for each item of relevant information conveyed.

Candidates across all ability levels made an encouraging attempt at this task. Some candidates found this question challenging and chose to omit it entirely, others simply provided a pre-learnt, irrelevant written piece. Candidates are reminded that in order to obtain high marks for communication, they need to answer all of the required bullet points and provide sufficient detail. Many candidates only provided a very short composition, or one with little relevant content. The points frequently missed were point **(b)** ‘你在你的房子住了多久了’ and point **(c)** ‘从你家到商店怎么走’.

For point **(a)**, candidates had to say who they lived with, and the majority identified members of their family here. Some candidates gave the name of a person, or even a pet, all of which were rewarded. Some candidates answered simply with *how many* people were in their family, which did not answer the question. Point **(b)** asked how long the candidate had lived in their house, and required a simple time phrase. The phrase “多久” seemed to be challenging for many candidates, and some could not write the character year “年” correctly. A fair amount of candidates wrote “four years” as “四久” instead of “四年”, which was allowed for communication. Interestingly, some candidates wrote about the layout of their houses for this question, e.g. “我家有四个房间”; “我的房间 很小”, which was not relevant to the point and thus no marks were given.

For **(c)** candidates could either talk about transportation or give directions of how to get to the shops from their house. This generated a mixed response. Some excellent answers were given, such as “商店离我家很远, 需要坐车才能到 有时, 爸爸开车带我们去商店。” A common occurrence was that candidates only provided *how long* it took to get to the shops, without detailing *how* they actually got there from their house. e.g. “商店离我家十分钟”; or without any direction included in the context, e.g. “商店离我家不近”.

Candidates generally dealt with points **(d)** and **(e)** more effectively. The majority of candidates were able to express ideas clearly and coherently. Point **(e)** required candidates to provide a reason to justify where they would prefer to live; weaker candidates omitted this part.

In terms of accuracy of language, there was an improvement in the use of efficient, simple structures with varied vocabulary. The best responses were those that addressed the specific question asked with plenty of additional details. Stronger candidates clearly showed a very sound command of the language, successfully completing every bullet point of the task with a wide range of sophisticated vocabulary and applying a range of conjunction words that made the written piece flow naturally. Complex sentence structures were also applied as well as simple, clear sentences.

The lower scoring responses were usually characterised by significant amounts of irrelevant content, or over usage of pinyin. When constructing their responses, candidates should try and choose vocabulary for which they know the Chinese character, even if this means using a simpler word; this is preferable to (and will gain more credit) than using complex vocabulary, but writing in pinyin.

Candidates showed confusion in the use of “还是” versus “或者”, as one is used in a question the other in a statement. Furthermore, candidates need to be able to differentiate between “家”; “房子”; “房间” – although these have very similar meanings in English, the Chinese meanings are quite different.

Candidates should be reminded that a careful approach is required when answering the questions. Some candidates needed to pay closer attention to the time frames given in the question, and to answer accordingly and logically. Candidates should remember that they need to address each bullet point given in the question, and that they should expand their answer to each point beyond one short response. In order to gain the maximum 10 marks for communication, each of the bullet points must be covered, and further marks are awarded for additional details written on each question.

Section 3

Exercise 1, Question 24–28

In this exercise, candidates were set the task of reading an extended passage in Chinese and then answering the multiple choice questions that followed.

Performance in these questions varied. Responses to **Questions 26–28** were of a high standard. A few candidates encountered difficulty with **Questions 24** and **25**. **Question 24** proved to be the most challenging, with some candidates incorrectly selecting **A**. Many candidates struggled with **Question 25** as they did not understand the comparison sentence structure ‘学到了很多书本上没有的东西’ meaning ‘比在学校学得快’.

Exercise 2, Question 29–34

In this final exercise, candidates were asked to read an extended passage in Chinese, and to 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.

Most candidates managed to show their proficiency in understanding the passage and there was a general improvement in the overall performance compared to last year. Some candidates did not attempt the questions 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.

Most candidates handled **Question 31** and **Question 32** well, and dealt with these two point questions successfully. A significant number of candidates encountered difficulty with **Question 29**, as they did not provide a full enough answer, which required having the verb “参加” as well as noun phrase “中学生中文比赛”. Some candidates struggled with **Question 33** as they identified the first half of the key sentence in the passage “对中国语言和文化更有兴趣了” rather than the second half “想以后在大学学中文” which was needed to get the mark.

A few candidates lifted large chunks of text in response to **Question 34**. Candidates should be reminded that they need to answer questions in a way which shows the examiner that they have understood both the requirements of the question and the passage. Indiscriminate lifting does not do this and will not be credited.

MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/23
Reading and Directed Writing

Key Messages

In order to do well in 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.
- attempt to answer every question on the paper.
- give clear answers to questions. When responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, (as in the multiple choice questions in **Section 1**) if a candidate makes two choices (whether in pencil or in ink), the mark cannot be awarded.
- 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.
- remember that they must not use pinyin or English in their answers, as this will not be credited. Candidates should be encouraged to use simple vocabulary for which they know the characters over more complex vocabulary written in pinyin.

General comments

Candidates seemed to have been well prepared for the examination and there were some excellent responses to this paper. Most candidates were familiar with the rubrics and the requirements of the examination.

The majority of candidates were able to deliver excellent responses in **Section 1**. A small number of candidates chose not to attempt **Question 12** and **Question 23**. Candidates should be encouraged to try and answer the Writing tasks, otherwise they are missing the opportunity to access 20 available marks. In the writing tasks, candidates should ensure that they address all the bullet points given in the question, and extend their responses to access higher marks.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

The candidates demonstrated a good level of competency in these questions, especially **Question 1** and **Question 3**, which were consistently answered well.

Question 4 proved to be difficult for some candidates. This required candidates to recognise the key phrase “Chinese dumpling” (饺子) and match it to the corresponding picture D.

Exercise 2, Question 6–8

This exercise required candidates to identify the facilities available on different floors of a hotel. The vast majority of candidates excelled in these questions. **Question 6** was answered well by most. A small number

of candidates struggled with **Question 8**, as it required candidates to understand the content of the whole table, and to recognise that no swimming pool was listed.

For these true / false questions, candidates must provide a clear answer by placing a tick or a cross in the relevant box. Candidates should be reminded that if they provide more than one answer, marks will not be awarded.

Exercise 3, Question 9–11

In general, candidates across the ability range answered these multiple choice questions well. Most candidates found the correct answer to **Question 9**, but **Question 10** and **Question 11** proved to be more challenging. It seemed that some candidates did not recognise the Chinese character for class “班” given in **Question 10**, and some candidates struggled with **Question 11** because of unfamiliarity with the character leg “腿”.

Exercise 4, Question 12

For this piece of writing, there are three marks available for communication, and two for accurate use of language. Candidates were asked to write a short letter to a new penfriend. They needed to mention:

- (a) their age.
- (b) the members of their family.
- (c) what they like to do.

Candidates needed to include each of these three elements in their answer to gain the full three marks available for communication. A further two marks were available for appropriate use of language.

Responses across the range of ability were of an excellent standard for this Writing exercise. In general, there was an improvement in the overall content of responses compared to last year. Most candidates wrote varied and interesting letters showing a very sound command of the language and successfully completing every bullet point in the task.

For point (a), a specific number was needed, which could be written as either a Chinese character or a numeral. A common grammatical mistake was seen in the usage of *have* “有” as some candidates wrote *I have sixteen years old* “我有十六岁” instead of *I am sixteen years old*. For point (b), candidates needed to say *who* is in their family, rather than merely stating how many people are in their family. For instance “我家有五口人” could not be rewarded as it did not address the question. For point (c), most candidates were able to successfully write an activity, and a large variety of activities was provided. A few candidates could improve their use of combination verb/noun phrases, as occasionally grammatical issues were seen when these were attempted. For example, some candidates wrote *do basketball* “做篮球” instead of *play basketball* “打篮球”.

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 13–22

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 Wang to his friend Xiao Zhang about winter in his hometown and the Ice and Snow 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.

A range of performance was seen across the questions. **Question 15** and **Question 18** were handled well by the majority of candidates. **Question 13** was found to be challenging, perhaps because candidates needed to select the correct location from two different places mentioned in the passage. In **Question 14**, candidates needed to include *below zero* “零下” when giving the temperature; a number of candidates omitted this.

Several candidates did not provide a response for **Question 19** – **Question 21**. Candidates should be encouraged to attempt to answer all the questions.

Exercise 2, Question 23

In this writing task, candidates were asked to write a short letter of 80-100 characters to a Chinese pen friend about their holiday. Ten marks were available for communication of the required elements and five marks were available for accuracy of language. Within the 10 communication marks, 1 mark was awarded for each item of relevant information conveyed. The overall standard of candidates' work is to be commended.

This year, candidates did not always answer all of the required bullet points, or provide sufficient detail to obtain all available marks for communication. Candidates should remember that they need to address each bullet point given in the question, and that they should expand their answer to each point beyond one short response. In order to gain the maximum 10 marks for communication, each of the bullet points must be covered, and further marks are awarded for additional details written on each question.

In terms of content, most candidates were able to write well about the location of their holiday and the weather they had experienced. Where candidates did not manage to cover all of the bullet points in their response, points **(b)** and **(e)** were most frequently omitted. It was evident that several candidates were not aware of how to apply the correct time expression for a length of time given, with many providing answers such as *six times* “六时间”; “一个月多长时间”. Most candidates tackled point **(c)**, though sometimes answers such as *very rain* “很雨” were written, instead of the correct expression “下大雨 / 雨很大”. Point **(d)** asked candidates to mention any places of interest they saw/visited on their holiday. This did not seem to have been fully understood by some candidates, who responded with answers discussing activities they had undertaken, e.g. *playing tennis* “打网球”; *seeing friends* “看朋友” etc. Point **(e)** seemed challenging for some candidates, as they were not confident in describing the scenery. The most frequently used simple adjectives were *beautiful* “漂亮” or *not too good* “不太好”; any more complex expressions were rare. This year, several candidates provided answers in English. Centres should remind candidates that as this is a test of Chinese, answers in any other language will not be accepted and cannot score any marks.

It should be remembered that there is a minimum number of characters prescribed in the question, and a certain number of characters is needed to address all the bullet points in the question. Variety of vocabulary and complex sentence structure is rewarded. Some candidates wrote quite fluently with a wide range of sophisticated vocabulary. Confusion over homophones 同音字 in character writing appeared to be a common phenomenon.

The lower scoring responses were usually characterised by significant amounts of irrelevant content, or over usage of pinyin. When constructing their responses, candidates should try and choose vocabulary for which they know the Chinese character, even if this means using a simpler word; this is preferable to (and will gain more credit) than using complex vocabulary, but writing in pinyin.

Candidates should remember to study the questions carefully before they start writing and to try not to skip questions.

Section 3

Exercise 1, Question 24–28

In this exercise, candidates were set the task of reading an extended passage in Chinese and then answering the multiple-choice questions. Responses for **Question 24** and **Question 25** were of a high standard, with many candidates achieving full marks.

Question 26 and **Question 27** appeared to be more challenging. A common issue in answers across both questions was not accurately identifying the relevant text.

Exercise 2, Question 29–35

In this final exercise, 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.

In general, candidates responded to the questions well. A number of candidates did not attempt **Questions 33–35**. 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.

Question 34 was the answered well by most candidates. A significant number of candidates encountered difficulty with **Question 29**, **Question 33** and **Question 35**. In **Question 29**, candidates needed to provide the name of the volunteer group, rather than the location *London* “伦敦”; this was found to be challenging by some. Several candidates gave an incorrect answer to **Question 33**, substituting *not easy* “不容易” for the key word in the question *very difficult* “很难”. For the last **Question 35**, many candidates lifted an incorrect sentence from the passage, “更自信; 更容易说出自己的想法.”

MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/03

Speaking

Key messages

- To score high marks, candidates need to show consistently their 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 in 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 and assessed 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 using more than one Examiner were not always aware of the correct procedure for internal moderation. Feedback to such Centres was provided by the Moderator and should be acted upon in future sessions.
- 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 session. It cannot be carried over from one session to the next.

General comments

This paper was common to all candidates, whether they had followed a Core Curriculum or an Extended Curriculum course.

Most Centres administered and carried out the tests very well. In order to give candidates the best possible chance, Examiners should ensure that they have read the Teachers' Notes booklet carefully so that both the tests and the relevant administration are carried out correctly. It should be noted that Examiners who changed the tasks, added to them, or who had not prepared their roles fully, added to the difficulty of this section of the test for their candidates. It is recommended that previous Moderator Reports to Centres should also be consulted.

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. 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.

The full requirements of the 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 that they have plenty of time to clarify any uncertainties. A Chinese language version of these requirements also exists and is available on the Cambridge website.

- **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 mark onto the

MS1 mark sheet/computer is checked to ensure that 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 despatch it to Cambridge, and the completed form must be submitted to Cambridge with the sample.

- **Sample size**

Many Centres managed to select a good recorded sample which covered the full spread of performance in the Centre. Centres need to ensure that the marks are spread evenly from the Centre's range, not grouped as "good", "middling" and "poor": for example, they might be 99, 87, 76, 67, 53 but not 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 sample**

Speaking tests should be conducted in a quiet place, away from any noise causing disruption. In a small number of cases, candidates and/or the Examiner were not always clearly heard. If an external microphone is used for recording, it should be placed nearer to the candidate. The recording should be checked at intervals by the Examiner to ensure that it is clear and there are no extraneous noises. In some instances this year, 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.

Centres are also reminded that the tracks on CDs must be named using the convention specified in the Teachers' Notes, and not merely "Track 1", "Track 2" etc. 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 these were submitted to Cambridge.

In a small number of cases, Centres had provided insufficient evidence of the internal moderation procedures that had been carried out, 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.

The coordinating Examiner at the Centre is responsible for checking that the mark scheme has been applied consistently by all of the Examiners in the Centre. Where this checking reveals a particular Examiner's marking to be harsh or lenient, the marks for all candidates examined by that Examiner must be adjusted before paperwork is submitted to Cambridge.

Centres with large numbers of candidates who wish to use more than one Examiner for the tests are reminded that they must apply to Cambridge for permission **in advance** of the speaking test period. This will enable them to access detailed guidelines from Cambridge outlining the procedures to be followed. Centres are also reminded that permission must be sought for *each examination series* – it cannot be carried over from the previous examination series.

- **Transitions between sections of the test**

Please remember that there is no need for any use of English 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 there were several examples of incomplete Working Mark Sheets being submitted. These should be filled in with candidates' full names, the numbers of their Role Play cards, and signed and dated by the Examiner. It is also helpful to the moderator if asterisks (*) are put against the candidates' names who have been included in the sample, particularly in Centres with many candidates.

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. Candidates should be trained to include a greeting and thanks where appropriate. Centres are reminded that on some tasks a short response may be sufficient to attract a mark of three.

Centres are reminded of the need for candidates to 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 also 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-play tasks which are formulaic or neutral, such as 对了 or 不知道, as they cannot be awarded any marks as such answers give no indication that the candidate has understood the question.

The questions asked in the Role Plays should not be modified as by doing so the Examiner may unintentionally change the nature of the examination. The level of difficulty of the Role play situations should remain the same for all candidates.

A Role Plays

The A Role plays were found to be of equal difficulty, very similar in difficulty to those of 2013, and a fair test at this level.

You are in Beijing railway station talking to a ticket-seller.

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.

You are in China, talking to someone about travelling in China.

This was handled well by most candidates.

You are a Chinese person in a teahouse, chatting to a foreign student about your family.

This caused few problems, except for weaker candidates were not familiar with the term 宠物 (pet).

B Role Plays

You are a foreign student in a bookshop, talking to an assistant about learning Chinese.

This was generally handled well. Some weaker candidates were not familiar with the question word 多久? (How long?).

You are chatting to a Chinese friend about your home town.

Most candidates handled this well.

You are a 70 year-old person, chatting to a high school student at a swimming pool.

Most candidates carried this out well.

Topic Presentation and Discussion

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

Centres should introduce this section in Chinese, not English, for example by saying 现在进入第二部分。/ 请你讲你所准备的题目。

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.

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.

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

Many candidates chose ‘My family’, ‘My hobby’, ‘Sport’, ‘School life’, ‘My future’, ‘My friend’ 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.

Interesting topics included: ‘Bullying’, ‘Changes in the world’, ‘my dream’, ‘My good friend’, ‘My favourite place’, ‘The advantages of reading’, ‘An unforgettable day’, ‘The differences between Europe and Asia’, ‘Global warming’, ‘Why I don’t want to move house’, ‘The benefits of reading newspapers’ and ‘Saving water’.

It was evident that in some cases, the opening speeches of the Topic Conversations seem to have 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.

Ideally, the Examiner should listen carefully to the candidates’ presentations, and then lead them skilfully through the Topic Conversation by asking appropriate questions, allowing them both to 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.

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。

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

General Conversation

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.

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.

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

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. 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, 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.

MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/41
Continuous 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.

There is no need for candidates to be unduly concerned about forgetting how to write the occasional character. The questions are intended to enable candidates to show what they know and the guidelines are deliberately left as open as possible in order to allow candidates to choose the vocabulary that they wish to use. They should, therefore, avoid embarking on topics for which they know very few of the characters involved.

Candidates should write compositions which have a short introduction and ending with proper paragraphing and punctuation. Letters should have an appropriate beginning and ending and should also be punctuated correctly. Punctuation and paragraphing add clarity to a piece of writing and ensure that the Examiner does not have to 'guess' the meaning that the author intended.

General comments

The general standard of candidates' work was high. Many candidates used a wide range of vocabulary (including idioms and 成语), appropriate sentence structure, verb complements and comparisons in their letters and stories about a message received from a friend in the park. They were interesting and lively to read and showed that the candidates had been very well prepared for the examination and had revised very well, paying attention to the letter form (for **Question 1**) and showing good understanding of the tasks.

As in previous years, for each essay, the Mark Scheme was divided into marks for Relevant Communication (5 marks), Accuracy of Characters (5 marks), Accuracy of Grammar and Structures (10 marks) and Impression (5 marks).

The examination rubric asks for 150 characters for each essay i.e. about 300 characters in total for the 2 essays. Candidates were not penalised for writing too much. Whilst there is no need for candidates to count the number of characters written, it should be remembered that variety of vocabulary and sentence structure 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.

If pinyin is used at all, it must have the correct tones in order for it to be given any credit. A small percentage of candidates wrote their whole essay in pinyin or used words in English interspersed throughout their essays; this must be avoided.

Overall, the effort made by the candidates and the effectiveness of their teaching showed through and was impressive. The majority of candidates attempted to answer both questions with success including the seemingly weaker candidates. Most candidates were mindful of the need to cover all the bullet points and used the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge. Conjunctions were used well; it is always useful for candidates to be taught to use 因为...所以, 先...然后..., 虽然...但是... etc.

Many seemed able to use 一...就..., 不但...而且..., 不仅...还..., 除了...还..., 连...都..., 如果...就..., 一边...一边..., 越来越..., 又...又... comparison..., etc.

The essays of many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters.

For both essay topics, characters with the same sound but different meanings (别字) were a problem for some candidates, along with characters being written incorrectly (错字). The main common errors in character-writing are listed as follows:

- 电影, 球, 场
- 高心 instead of 高兴。
- 应刻 instead of 应该
- 鸡饭- 鸡 was written with the radical 女

Quite a number of candidates made errors when writing the characters listed below:

- 时后 instead of 时候
- 有明 instead of 有名
- 令天 instead of 今天
- 我两 instead of 我俩
- 兴高彩列 instead of 兴高采烈
- 非种 instead of 分钟
- 但心 instead of 担心
- 长成 instead of 长城
- 分亨 instead of 分享
- 到地 instead of 地道
- 看发 instead of 看法
- 采 instead of 菜
- 这到 instead of 知道

There were a few candidates who mixed up 多 with 都, writing 很都 instead of 很多。

Candidates showed a good knowledge of Chinese grammar. There was particular improvement in basic sentences like 我很忙, 我很好, but still a notable tendency to insert 是.

There was good use of structure and idiom, although candidates need to make sure that they know how to use idioms correctly. The most frequent problems were:

1. Confusion over the use of 的, 得 and 地 – although this had again improved over previous years
2. Misuse of 所以: some candidates used 所以 as the equivalent 'so that' in English.
3. Some phrases or words of place and time were at the end of sentence but not before the verb, e.g. 打篮球在体育馆
4. Measure Words
5. The usage of 还是/或者; 也/和. Candidates often used 和 to link sentences
6. The usage of 会/可以/能
7. Many candidates found it hard to use 了 correctly. Most candidates were able to use 了 correctly some of the time, but not all the time. Some candidates also found it difficult to use the aspect marker 过 correctly.
8. There was also occasionally an inversion of the time phrase e.g. 三点下午 instead of 下午三点
9. Many candidates did not know that 'time how long' comes after the verb.
10. Some candidates should try to reduce the use of 有 when referring to a past time-frame i.e. 有做什么.
11. Time-frames remain a confusing area for quite a few candidates who wrote sentences like 'next week, I went' or 下星期我要去了北京。

12. There was some confusion between 在 and 再. For example, 我们在看了一下

13. It is good to see many candidates using 成语 in their writing, though it has presented a bigger challenge to candidates in terms of how to get the word order correct when using 成语 in a sentence.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The majority of candidates chose the letter to their granny about the shopping trip; they covered all the guidelines and wrote a suitable beginning and ending to their letters, thereby achieving the full 5 marks for Relevant Communication. Where they misunderstood or missed out one of the guidelines they only lost one mark for communication. This did not affect the other marks they attained. Some candidates could not access the highest marks because of a very limited variety of vocabulary and sentence structure. Using large chunks of pre-learnt material is to be discouraged, but if candidates have a few model sentences which they can merge seamlessly into the composition, then this is, of course, fine.

To gain higher marks, candidates could be encouraged to use other adjectives rather than repeating ‘很好’ or describe more than one thing that was bought. They should try their best to attempt to write some more advanced adjectives/characters, whilst making sure that they are still writing the simple ones correctly.

- (a) Candidates wrote some good letters, covering all the bullet points in excellent detail. A few candidates used complex vocabulary and sentence structures well, but made mistakes in basic characters like 电视.
- (b) A smaller number of candidates answered **Question 1(b)**. Weaker candidates found the final bullet point challenging.

Question 2

Question 2 provided a platform for the candidates to demonstrate good story telling, developing interesting storylines from the original scenario. There were some excellent stories about being with little sister at the park, a friend running over and what happened next. Weaker candidates misunderstood the task and only talked about shopping, and so could not be awarded communication marks for this. Some thought 发生了=发现 which was surprising, as this verb comes up regularly in the examination paper.

All candidates should remember that writing in Chinese still requires a story structure with a proper concluding paragraph rounding off events. The ability to use 了 and the ability to use time phrases with correct word order sequence would have improved the quality of many essays. It is not intended that this essay should be written as a dialogue.

MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/42
Continuous 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.

There is no need for candidates to be unduly concerned about forgetting how to write the occasional character. The questions are intended to enable candidates to show what they know and the guidelines are deliberately left as open as possible in order to allow candidates to choose the vocabulary that they wish to use. They should, therefore, avoid embarking on topics for which they know very few of the characters involved.

Candidates should write compositions which have a short introduction and ending with proper paragraphing and punctuation. Letters should have an appropriate beginning and ending and should also be punctuated correctly. Punctuation and paragraphing add clarity to a piece of writing and ensure that the Examiner does not have to 'guess' the meaning that the author intended.

General comments

The general standard of candidates' work was high. Many candidates used a wide range of vocabulary (including idioms and 成语), appropriate sentence structure, verb complements and comparisons in their letters and stories about the crowd at the shopping centre. They were interesting and lively to read and showed that the candidates had been very well prepared for the examination and had revised very well, paying attention to the letter form (for **Question 1**) and showing good understanding of the tasks.

As in previous years, for each essay, the Mark Scheme was divided into marks for Relevant Communication (5 marks), Accuracy of Characters (5 marks), Accuracy of Grammar and Structures (10 marks) and Impression (5 marks).

The examination rubric asks for 150 characters for each essay i.e. about 300 characters in total for the 2 essays. Candidates were not penalised for writing too much. Whilst there is no need for candidates to count the number of characters written, it should be remembered that variety of vocabulary and sentence structure 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. Candidates writing significantly fewer than 150 characters per essay cannot gain access to the highest marks.

If pinyin is used at all, it must have the correct tones in order for it to be given any credit. A small percentage of candidates wrote their whole essay in pinyin or used words in English interspersed throughout their essays; this must be avoided.

Overall, the effort made by the candidates and the effectiveness of their teaching showed through and was impressive. The majority of candidates attempted to answer both questions with success including the seemingly weaker candidates. Most candidates were mindful of the need to cover all the bullet points and used the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge. Conjunctions were used well; it is always useful for candidates to be taught to use 因为...所以, 先...然后..., 虽然...但是... etc. Many seemed able to use

一.....就....., 不但.....而且....., 不仅.....还....., 除了.....还....., 连.....都....., 如果.....就....., 一边.....

一边....., 越来越....., 又.....又.....comparison..., etc.

The essays of many candidates displayed an impressively wide range of characters.

For both essay topics, characters with the same sound but different meanings (别字) were a problem for some candidates, along with characters being written incorrectly (错字).

The main common errors in character-writing are listed as follows:

- 电影, 球, 场
- 高心 instead of 高兴。
- 应刻 instead of 应该
- 鸡饭- 鸡 was written with the radical 女

Quite a number of candidates made errors when writing the characters listed below:

- 时后 instead of 时候
- 有明 instead of 有名
- 令天 instead of 今天
- 我两 instead of 我俩
- 兴高彩列 instead of 兴高采烈
- 非种 instead of 分钟
- 但心 instead of 担心
- 长成 instead of 长城
- 分享 instead of 分享
- 到地 instead of 地道
- 看发 instead of 看法
- 采 instead of 菜
- 这到 instead of 知道

小笼包, but many wrote 小龙包 instead.

Some candidates chose 1b, but wrote 生体健康, instead of 身体健康。

There were a few candidates mixed up 多 with 都。They wrote 很都 instead 很多。

The most common error was the use of ‘逛’。A good number of candidates did not seem to understand what ‘逛’ means, as seen in the examples below:

‘到逛商场以后, 我看到我的朋友。’

‘逛商场是一个好玩的地方。’

Candidates showed a good knowledge of Chinese grammar. There was particular improvement in basic sentences like 我很忙, 我很好。Weaker candidates still have a tendency to insert 是。

There was good use of structure and idiom, although candidates need to make sure that they know how to use idioms correctly. The most frequent problems were:

1. Confusion over the use of 的, 得 and 地 – although this had again improved over previous years
2. Misuse of 所以: some candidates used 所以 as the equivalent ‘so that’ in English. For example 你要好好安排时间, 所以你有时间运动。你要好好安排时间, 这样一来才有时间运动 would be more authentic Mandarin.
3. Some phrases or words of place and time were at the end of sentence but not before the verb, e.g. 打篮球在体育馆
4. Measure Words
5. The usage of 还是/或者; 也/和。Candidates often used 和 to link sentences
6. The usage of 会/可以/能

7. Many candidates found it hard to use 了 correctly. Most candidates were able to use 了 correctly some of the time, but not all the time. Some candidates also found it difficult to use the aspect marker 过 correctly.
8. There was also occasionally an inversion of the time phrase e.g. 三点下午 instead of 下午三点.
9. Many candidates did not know that 'time how long' comes after the verb.
10. Some candidates should try to reduce the use of 有 when referring to a past time-frame i.e. 有做什么.
11. Time-frames remain a confusing area for quite a few candidates who wrote sentences like 'next week, I went' or 下星期我要去了北京。
12. There was some confusion between 在 and 再. For example, 我们在看了一下.
13. It is good to see many candidates using 成语 in their writing, though it has presented a bigger challenge to candidates in terms of how to get the word order correct when using 成语 in a sentence.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The majority of candidates chose the letter to their parents about the trip to a restaurant; they covered all the guidelines and wrote a suitable beginning and ending to their letters, thereby achieving the full 5 marks for Relevant Communication. Where they misunderstood or missed out one of the guidelines they only lost one mark for communication. This did not affect the other marks they attained. Some candidates could not access the highest marks because of a very limited variety of vocabulary and sentence structure. Using large chunks of pre-learnt material is to be discouraged, but if candidates have a few model sentences which they can merge seamlessly into the composition, then this is, of course, fine.

To gain higher marks, candidates could be encouraged to use other adjectives rather than repeating '很好' or describe more than one item of food that was eaten. They should try their best to attempt to write some more advanced adjectives/characters, whilst making sure that they are able still to write the simple ones correctly.

- (a) Candidates wrote some good letters, covering all the bullet points in excellent detail. A few candidates misunderstood the second bullet point about what the restaurant was like and others forgot to answer 'why' as well as 'what' is their favourite food. A few candidates used complex vocabulary and sentence structures well, but made mistakes in basic characters like 电视.
- (b) A few candidates answered **Question 1(b)**. The bullet point 作业太多了健康吗? caused some confusion to weaker candidates.

Question 2

Question 2 provided a platform for the candidates to demonstrate good story telling, developing interesting storylines from the original scenario. There were some excellent stories about the crowd at the shopping centre and what happened next. Weaker candidates misunderstood the task and only talked about shopping; they therefore lost communication marks for this. Some thought 发生了=发现 which was surprising, as this verb comes up regularly in the examination paper.

All candidates should remember that writing in Chinese still requires a story structure with a proper concluding paragraph rounding off events. The ability to use 了 and the ability to use time phrases with correct word order sequence would have improved the quality of many essays. It is not intended that this essay should be written as a dialogue.

MANDARIN CHINESE (Foreign Language)

Paper 0547/43
Continuous Writing

Key messages

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Candidates should write compositions which have a short introduction and ending with proper paragraphing and punctuation. Letters should have an appropriate beginning and ending and should also be punctuated correctly. Punctuation and paragraphing add clarity to a piece of writing and ensure that the Examiner does not have to 'guess' the meaning that the author intended.

General comments

The general standard of candidates' work was high. Many candidates used a wide range of vocabulary (including idioms and 成语), appropriate sentence structure, verb complements and comparisons in their letters and stories about a message received from a friend in the park. They were interesting and lively to read and showed that the candidates had been very well prepared for the examination and had revised very well, paying attention to the letter form (for **Question 1**) and showing good understanding of the tasks.

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Overall, the effort made by the candidates and the effectiveness of their teaching showed through and was impressive. The majority of candidates attempted to answer both questions with success including the seemingly weaker candidates. Most candidates were mindful of the need to cover all the bullet points and used the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge. Conjunctions were used well; it is always useful for candidates to be taught to use 因为...所以, 先...然后..., 虽然...但是... etc.

Many seemed able to use 一...就..., 不但...而且..., 不仅...还..., 除了...还..., 连...都..., 如果...就..., 一边...一边..., 越来越..., 又...又... comparison..., etc.

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- 兴高彩列 instead of 兴高采烈
- 非种 instead of 分钟
- 但心 instead of 担心
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- 分亨 instead of 分享
- 到地 instead of 地道
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7. Many candidates found it hard to use 了 correctly. Most candidates were able to use 了 correctly some of the time, but not all the time. Some candidates also found it difficult to use the aspect marker 过 correctly.
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9. Many candidates did not know that 'time how long' comes after the verb.
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