

CHINESE AND CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8681/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

The majority of candidates performed well or extremely well on this paper. They engaged with the texts and were able to show good understanding of the information and ideas these contained. Although the quality of language demonstrated in written responses was generally good, there was some inappropriate use of expressions and grammatical structures.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a), (c) and (d) were usually answered correctly by candidates. (b) and (e) proved more demanding.

Question 2

Candidates had few problems coping with (c). In (b) not all candidates used the required words while answers to (c) were sometimes awkward.

Questions 3 and 4

Although the majority of candidates were able to show good levels of comprehension, there was a tendency for some to answer questions from general knowledge. These reading comprehension questions are intended to test the extent to which candidates have understood the texts on the question paper. Therefore marks are only awarded for information taken from these texts.

It is important that candidates try, wherever it seems reasonable, to use their own words when phrasing their answers and avoid merely lifting chunks from the original text. In some cases answers were unnecessarily long-winded: candidates should ensure that they select the information they need to reply to each question and then produce focused answers.

Question 5

There were many excellent answers, where candidates were able to draw material from both texts in response to the summary element and add to this a convincing personal response.

Where candidates did not do as well, this was usually because they did not write a summary as required for (a) – instead they discussed their own ideas on the subject – or because they failed to provide the personal opinions required by (b).

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Essay

General comments

This session saw an increase in the number of candidates entering for AS/A level Chinese, but this did not affect the standard which remained high.

In general, as far as Content was concerned, candidates produced essays which were detailed, clearly relevant and well illustrated, as well as coherently argued and structured. In terms of Language, candidates demonstrated a confident use of complex sentence patterns. Language was generally accurate and candidates made use of an extensive vocabulary, also displaying a good sense of idiom.

The recommended word length is 250-400 characters and it is therefore important for candidates to produce work that focuses on the issues they want to discuss in a precise way. There was a tendency, occasionally, for candidates to write lengthy introductory paragraphs and then run out of steam, resulting in essays that were very uneven in terms of Content.

One or two candidates produced work that consisted of a series of bullet/numbered points: such work does not constitute an essay and the practice is to be discouraged.