

CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8681/21
Reading and Writing

Key Messages

- **Question 1** is a vocabulary recognition exercise, which requires candidates to find words or phrases from the first reading passage that are closest in meaning to those given in the question. Words that are not in the specified paragraphs of the passage are not acceptable.
- **Question 2** is a grammatical manipulation exercise. It requires candidates to rewrite the sentences using the given phrases without changing the meaning.
- **Question 3** and **Question 4** consist of a series of comprehension questions, requiring straightforward and specific answers. Candidates need to read the passages carefully and should answer using their own words based on the information given in the passages. No credit can be given for responses if they are identical to the original texts, or if they are based on candidates' general knowledge, or personal experience.
- **Question 5 (a)** requires candidates to produce a summary of the information given in both passages, which this year were concerned with how using mobile phones affects young people. **Question 5 (b)** requires candidates to give their personal response to the material, which can be their own understanding, experience and opinion of the issues raised. Responses to **Question 5 (b)** should be personal and not a mere repetition of the materials in the given texts. The whole response for **Question 5** is to be kept to no more than 200 characters.

General Comments

Most candidates demonstrated a very good understanding of the two reading passages and responded well to the questions asked. Some did an excellent job, responding to the questions fully, using clear expressions and giving focused answers.

The majority of candidates attempted to answer all questions and significant improvements were seen this year in candidates expressing responses to comprehension questions using their own words rather than copying large portions of language from the reading passages.

Many good and clearly expressed responses to **Question 3** and **Question 4** were seen this year. Many candidates demonstrated their ability to rephrase information through using appropriate connectives, using synonyms, rearranging the word order and extracting the key information. Care needs to be taken not to stray from the passages; candidates should ensure they are not changing the meaning of the information given in the passages in an effort to use their own words, as this may render the answer incorrect. Phrases such as, 方便, 快捷 do not need to be rephrased.

It was evident this year that most candidates were aware of the character limit stated in **Question 5** and endeavoured to keep their answers within that limit. It was also noticeable that **Question 5 (a)** was less well-answered than other questions on the paper. Candidates need to read the questions carefully, making sure they understand the specific focus of the task. Candidates could improve by working on writing summaries containing clear and informative sentences, rather than using up the character count on superfluous or irrelevant information.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Question 1

The overall response was good and most candidates successfully found the correct synonyms from the passage. A few candidates gave “悄悄地现身” instead of “悄悄地”, which is clumsy. Candidates need to be careful to extract the exact synonyms rather than the whole phrase. Quite a few candidates gave “谁也管不着” instead of “管不着”, which is not the same as required in part (e); Common incorrect answers like “过分依赖” were given for part (e) too.

Question 2

Most candidates handled this question well, with the majority answering (b) correctly, adding the conditional into the sentence in the right place. Furthermore, there was a strong performance seen in the answers to part (c). Answers such as “把听见的别人的手机铃声当作是自己的手机铃声” were accepted. The majority of candidates coped well with part (a), although some were not confident in using the structure, and simply inserted “被” into the original sentence without omitting “受到”. This made the sentence clumsy and therefore didn't score.

Question 3

Candidates performed well on this question and showed good levels of comprehension. Most candidates coped well with parts (d) and (e). In part (a), some candidates tried too hard to “re-phrase” “方便快捷” by giving “实用性” “小巧”, “容易使用” which did not quite deliver the full meaning of what is required. Where candidates did not score full marks, it was often because answers were not full enough for all marks to be awarded. Candidates should be reminded to take note of the mark allocation when they write their answers, in order to ensure that they provide sufficient detail to gain the maximum marks for each answer. For example, where a question is worth 4 marks, candidates need to provide 4 separate points in order to be awarded all marks. This issue occurred in relation to part (b) where a small number of candidates did not answer the question fully. In part (c), quite a few candidates managed to use their own words and wrote, for example, “上课时也可以瞄一眼”. Others responded with, “上课时也可以收到信息的提示……” or similar, and needed to provide a clearer answer which included the point that the messages could be reviewed during lesson time too, thus indicating freedom in terms of time.

Section 2

Question 4

Candidates gave a good performance on this question. Most gave full and clear answers, with (e) and (f) proving to be the most straightforward for candidates. In part (a), quite a few candidates only mentioned “寻求帮助”, and ignored the default function of a mobile phone “与家长保持联系” which meant they could not score both the available marks. Some candidates did not give full enough answers to be awarded all the available marks for parts (b) and (c). In part (b), quite a few candidates needed to include “与亲朋好友随时联系” to get the full 3 marks. In part (c), the majority of candidates covered the points about “好奇” and “心智不成熟”, but neglected to mention that “青少年常在安全的环境中使用手机, 没有意识安全会受到威胁”. In part (d), there were quite a few cases where candidates only extracted “结交有不良习惯的朋友” from the passage but did not specify “网聊”, which is the key part of the answer.

Please note that in **Question 3** and **Question 4**, candidates are not required to rephrase every word they take from the passages to use in their answers. Candidates may use the passages as support to retrieve some vocabulary, but should not lift material from the passages indiscriminately or at length, as this does not show that they have fully understood either the passages or the questions.

Question 5

Many candidates were able to successfully and skilfully summarise a range of relevant points from both passages. However, very few candidates secured the full mark for **Question 5**. It was quite common for candidates to repeat the question at the start of their summary, thus wasting 20-30 character spaces which could have been used to express personal views in **Question 5 (b)**.

Part of this exercise is to show an ability to summarise, and so it is important that the points are presented clearly and succinctly. Candidates should be reminded that for **part (a)** they need to use the information given in the passages to construct their summary, concentrating on the question asked. This year, several candidates discussed aspects of the topic gleaned from their general knowledge of the subject area, rather than extracting key points from the passages. This approach cannot be rewarded as it does not show any skill of summary writing, which is what is being tested here.

Many candidates gave convincing personal responses in **Question 5 (b)**, expressing different opinions and giving examples. Weaker candidates only focused on a single issue or gave limited ideas.

Where candidates did not do as well, it was usually for one of the following reasons:

- not referring to the information in the reading passages for the summary element
- giving a response to **(a)** that was too detailed, and did not leave enough space to express personal views or experiences in the answer to **(b)**
- writing a general summary of the two reading passages rather than answering the specific question asked

CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8681/22
Reading and Writing

Key Messages

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- **Question 3** and **Question 4** consist of a series of comprehension questions, requiring straightforward and specific answers. Candidates need to read the passages carefully and should answer using their own words based on the information given in the passages. No credit can be given for responses if they are identical to the original texts, or if they are based on candidates' general knowledge, or personal experience.
- **Question 5 (a)** requires candidates to produce a summary of the information given in both passages, which this year were concerned with how the development of the digital technology and Internet impact on the communication amongst people. **Question 5 (b)** requires candidates to give their personal response to the material, which can be their own understanding, experience and opinion of the issues raised. Responses to **Question 5 (b)** should be personal and not a mere repetition of the materials in the given texts. The whole response for **Question 5** is to be kept to no more than 200 characters.

General Comments

Most candidates demonstrated a very good understanding of the two reading passages and responded well to the questions asked. Some did an excellent job, responding to the questions fully, using clear expressions and giving focused answers.

The majority of candidates attempted to answer all questions and significant improvements were seen this year in candidates expressing responses to comprehension questions using their own words rather than copying large portions of language from the reading passages.

Many good and clearly expressed responses to **Question 3** and **Question 4** were seen this year. Many candidates demonstrated their ability to rephrase information through using appropriate connectives, using synonyms, rearranging the word order and extracting the key information. It is important that candidates cover all the points required by the questions, as some able candidates did not give full enough answers to pick up all the available marks.

It was evident this year that most candidates were aware of the character limit stated in **Question 5** and endeavoured to keep their answers within that limit. It was also noticeable that **Question 5 (a)** was less well-answered than other questions on the paper. Candidates need to read the questions carefully, making sure they understand the specific focus of the task. Candidates could improve by working on writing summaries containing clear and informative sentences, rather than using up the character count on superfluous or irrelevant information.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Question 1

The vast majority of candidates were able to find the correct synonyms from the text and write them accurately. A very small number of candidates gave “提出” or “改进” instead of “挖掘” for part (b). Incorrect answers like “而言并非” or “并非” were sometimes seen for part (d).

Question 2

Most candidates demonstrated confidence and a secure understanding of the “是...的” structure in part (a). They were able to manipulate the sentences in a variety of ways, retaining the original meaning. Only a few candidates omitted “几乎” in their answer, which altered the original meaning. The majority of candidates coped well with part (b). Some candidates were not confident in using the structure, and simply inserted “被” into the original sentence without re-arranging the subject. In part (c), a number of candidates kept “甚至” as well as adding the conjunction “不仅...而且...”, which could not be credited.

Question 3

A strong performance was seen on this question. The majority of candidates were able to carefully select relevant information from the reading passage to answer the questions. Where candidates did not score full marks, it was often because answers were not full enough for all marks to be awarded. Candidates should be reminded to take note of the mark allocation when they write their answers, in order to ensure that they provide sufficient detail to gain the maximum marks for each answer. In several cases, candidates only gave partial answers to parts (a) and (c). Candidates performed extremely well in parts (b) and (d). Nearly all candidates covered “邮件” and “网上聊天” for part (b). Candidates coped well with part (e), with the vast majority of candidates capturing the key concept. A few candidates responded with “没有时间” instead of “在短时间内”, which could not be rewarded as the meaning conveyed something different to what was required.

Section 2

Question 4

The majority of candidates coped with this question well, particularly in answering parts (c), (d), (e) and (g). In part (a), most candidates mentioned “与亲友保持联系”, but some needed to also include “同意他出国” to score all the available marks. Many candidates showed a good understanding of the well-known Chinese saying in part (b). Others seemed to find this quite challenging, and struggled to explain it in their own words. The following incorrect answers were commonly seen: “一个电话或网上一点” or “离得很近”. Candidates needed to mention that it was modern technology which made it possible to feel like ‘far-away neighbours’ as well as the distance between people living in different parts of the world. In part (f), a few candidates responded with “接受指导” forgetting to mention the advantage of “being able to stay at home”. Candidates should also note that “自身的水平” is different to “自身的能力”.

Please note that in **Question 3** and **Question 4**, candidates are not required to rephrase every word they take from the passages to use in their answers. Candidates may use the passages as support to retrieve some vocabulary, but should not lift material from the passages indiscriminately or at length, as this does not show that they have fully understood either the passages or the questions.

Question 5

Many candidates were able to successfully and skilfully summarise a range of relevant points from both passages. However, very few candidates secured the full mark for **Question 5**. It was quite common for candidates to repeat the question at the start of their summary, thus wasting 20-30 character spaces which could have been used to express personal views in **Question 5 (b)**.

Part of this exercise is to show an ability to summarise, and so it is important that the points are presented clearly and succinctly. Moreover, the question requires the candidates to summarise “the changes in communication”; some candidates focused their effort on discussing the benefit and detriment of modern technology in general, resulting in some irrelevance.

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Candidates need to be aware of the need to keep to the limit of 200 characters for both parts of the question. Anything in excess of 200 characters is disregarded by Examiners, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for **part (b)**

Many candidates managed to give some convincing personal responses in **Question 5 (b)**, writing about their own experiences and opinions with interesting insights and examples. Others just managed to rephrase some of the points from **Question 5 (a)** and added hardly any of their own ideas.

Where candidates did not do as well, it was usually for one of the following reasons:

- not referring to the information in the reading passages for the summary element
- giving a response to **(a)** that was too detailed, and did not leave enough space to express personal views or experiences in the answer to **(b)**
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CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8681/23
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Question 2

Most candidates handled this question well, with the majority answering (b) correctly, adding the conditional into the sentence in the right place. Furthermore, there was a strong performance seen in the answers to part (c). Answers such as “把听见的别人的手机铃声当作是自己的手机铃声” were accepted. The majority of candidates coped well with part (a), although some were not confident in using the structure, and simply inserted “被” into the original sentence without omitting “受到”. This made the sentence clumsy and therefore didn't score.

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Section 2

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Candidates gave a good performance on this question. Most gave full and clear answers, with (e) and (f) proving to be the most straightforward for candidates. In part (a), quite a few candidates only mentioned “寻求帮助”, and ignored the default function of a mobile phone “与家长保持联系” which meant they could not score both the available marks. Some candidates did not give full enough answers to be awarded all the available marks for parts (b) and (c). In part (b), quite a few candidates needed to include “与亲朋好友随时联系” to get the full 3 marks. In part (c), the majority of candidates covered the points about “好奇” and “心智不成熟”, but neglected to mention that “青少年常在安全的环境中使用手机, 没有意识安全会受到威胁”. In part (d), there were quite a few cases where candidates only extracted “结交有不良习惯的朋友” from the passage but did not specify “网聊”, which is the key part of the answer.

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Part of this exercise is to show an ability to summarise, and so it is important that the points are presented clearly and succinctly. Candidates should be reminded that for **part (a)** they need to use the information given in the passages to construct their summary, concentrating on the question asked. This year, several candidates discussed aspects of the topic gleaned from their general knowledge of the subject area, rather than extracting key points from the passages. This approach cannot be rewarded as it does not show any skill of summary writing, which is what is being tested here.

Many candidates gave convincing personal responses in **Question 5 (b)**, expressing different opinions and giving examples. Weaker candidates only focused on a single issue or gave limited ideas.

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- writing a general summary of the two reading passages rather than answering the specific question asked

CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8681/31

Essay

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title with which they feel most comfortable;
- provide a clear focus by structuring the relevant information in a logical manner;
- organise the argument coherently in an essay format;
- write accurate Chinese, using complex sentence structures;
- show their awareness of using idioms and employ a wide range of vocabulary.

General comments

The performance of candidates was generally good this year. The majority of candidates were able to justify their opinions with two or three supporting points and produce a clear essay structure. The level of linguistic ability demonstrated by many candidates was very good and showed a confident use of complex sentence patterns and a wide range of vocabulary. Candidates should be reminded of the importance of taking note of the instructions before commencing the exam and read all questions carefully as soon as the exam starts.

The work of stronger candidates was characterised by sound knowledge of their chosen topic and an ability to effectively organise their ideas and arguments. These candidates often managed to successfully illustrate their ideas with relevant examples. Furthermore, they were able to produce a coherent essay structure with a logical progression of ideas leading to a sound conclusion.

Weaker answers sometimes showed a misunderstanding of the question or a key word in the question. Candidates should be advised that if they are not certain of the meaning of a question, they should avoid choosing that question, even though they may have sound knowledge of that topic. Candidates must respond to the actual title set; essays addressing the general topic area will not score highly.

Improvements could be made in the following areas:

- Understanding of questions. Candidates should be advised to read all questions with great care and choose a question where they are confident of the meaning and vocabulary. To have a good understanding of a question is the starting point of producing a good essay.
- Relevant content. Candidates are advised to provide a clear opinion on the question chosen and make a detailed argument supported with relevant examples. Candidates should avoid relying too heavily on personal experience and should rather use reasoned arguments to back up their opinions.
- Essay structure. A clear structure with a purposeful introduction, argument and conclusion is required. Candidates should avoid using a single paragraph.
- Accurate language. Candidates should be aware that their essays must be written in Chinese characters and no credit can be given for using pinyin or English. Candidates should use vocabulary for which they know the Chinese characters, even if this places limits on what they can express. Candidates should be encouraged to show their ability by using a wide range of sentence patterns and extensive vocabulary.
- Use of punctuation. Candidates need to be able to use appropriate punctuation confidently.

1 生活

Some excellent essays were produced in response to this question, covering a wide range of aspects of modern life including new technology, communication via internet or mobile phone, internet shopping, food delivery and working at home. Many answers also contained good examples to support the arguments given. It was evident, however, that some candidates had misunderstood the key word ‘宅男宅女’ (people who would rather stay at home and excessively use the computer/internet rather than go out and interact with other people) and presented a discussion about the equality of women and men, which is irrelevant to the question asked. Candidates should be advised to choose a question where they are certain they understand what is being asked.

2 法制

This was the most popular question among candidates. The majority of candidates put forward a balanced argument on the importance of law and morality in keeping society ‘safe’. Stronger candidates were able to offer good examples to support their opinions. The work of weaker candidates was characterised by one-sided arguments on the side of either law or morality.

3 健康

Of those candidates who chose this question, some successfully analysed the phenomenon of memory-enhancing drugs and provided clear opinions on the subject. Others needed to examine the topic more fully and to stay focussed on the question asked. In some cases, candidates drifted into an essay about how to stay healthy, which did not answer the question.

4 就业

A relatively smaller number of candidates opted for this question. Stronger answers included discussion of the impact on society that migrant workers working in the city have in general, both positive and negative. These included migrant workers’ contribution to the development of cities and their work-ethic, as well as problems associated with the growing population in cities and the pressure this puts on housing, traffic, health care and insurance.

5 科技

This question was not answered by many, but those who chose to answer on this topic showed a sound understanding of the issues. Most candidates discussed the advantages and disadvantages of cloning technology and were able to use a good range of language and examples in their arguments. There was evidence of pre-learnt material being employed, which should be avoided. Weaker answers showed a lack of knowledge of cloning technology which resulted in somewhat simplistic arguments.

CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8681/32

Essay

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title with which they feel most comfortable;
- provide a clear focus by structuring the relevant information in a logical manner;
- organise the argument coherently in an essay format;
- write accurate Chinese, using complex sentence structures;
- show their awareness of using idioms and employ a wide range of vocabulary.

General comments

The performance of candidates was generally good this year. Most candidates seemed well-prepared for the examination and were successful in demonstrating their ability in the subject. The majority of candidates were able to justify their opinions with two or three supporting points and produce a clear essay structure. The level of linguistic ability demonstrated by many candidates was very good and showed a confident use of complex sentence patterns and a wide range of vocabulary. A small number of candidates were also able to demonstrate a good use of idioms in their responses.

The work of stronger candidates was characterised by sound knowledge of their chosen topic and a clear understanding of the issues involved. These candidates showed an ability to effectively organise their ideas and arguments and to write using sophisticated language. These candidates often managed to successfully illustrate their ideas with relevant examples. Furthermore, they were able to produce a coherent essay structure with a logical progression of ideas leading to a sound conclusion.

Weaker answers sometimes showed a lack of knowledge of the chosen topic and included irrelevant information. Language was sometimes too casual with much inaccuracy. In some cases it was evident that candidates had misunderstood the question or a key word in the question. Candidates should be advised that if they are not certain of the meaning of a question, they should avoid choosing that question, even though they may have sound knowledge of that topic.

In some cases, candidates could have improved their essay structure by ensuring that they evidenced the necessary components of a competent piece of work, i.e. introduction, argument and a relevant conclusion. It is important for candidates to think about the connection between the points offered in their essays and the wording of the question in order to maintain relevance to the question and to develop their argument persuasively and coherently.

Candidates should be reminded of the importance of taking note of the instructions before commencing the exam and read all questions carefully as soon as the exam starts. It is also recommended that candidates make a brief draft/note on the key points they want to make before starting to write.

Improvements could be made in the following areas:

- Understanding of questions. Candidates should be advised to read all questions with great care and choose a question where they are confident of the meaning and vocabulary. To have a good understanding of a question is the starting point of producing a good essay.
- Relevant content. Candidates are advised to provide a clear opinion on the question chosen and make a detailed argument supported with relevant examples. Candidates should avoid relying too heavily on personal experience and should rather use reasoned arguments to back up their opinions.

- Essay structure. A clear structure with a purposeful introduction, argument and conclusion is required. Candidates should avoid using a single paragraph.
- Accurate language. Candidates should write in a style appropriate for a formal essay; in some cases candidates employed a chatty and overly casual style, which is not recommended. Candidates should be aware that idioms only enhance their writing if they are used appropriately. Candidates should be encouraged to show their ability by using a wide range of sentence patterns and extensive vocabulary.
- Use of punctuation. Candidates need to be able to use appropriate punctuation confidently. In some essays this year, no commas were used at all and full stops were the only form of punctuation used throughout the written piece. Candidates should be reminded to use the Chinese full stop, rather than just a dot.

1 生活

This question was answered by the highest number of candidates, but did not produce many high-scoring essays. Most candidates discussed the reasons behind teenage obesity, such as over-eating, poor diet and/or lack of exercise. The overuse of technology and pressures from school were also cited. In order to reach the highest marking bands, candidates also needed to produce detailed, well-illustrated arguments, maintaining relevance to the question. In some cases the problem of obesity in general was discussed, without a focus on teenagers. Weaker answers generally needed a greater depth of argument.

2 法制

A smaller number of candidates opted for this question, and performance was wide-ranging among those who did. Opinions were clearly and equally divided on this topic; while some essays explained the positive points of having a death penalty, others passionately argued the reasons why it should not exist. Stronger answers were characterised by discussion of both sides of the argument followed by a clear conclusion outlining the candidate's own opinion supported by relevant examples. Weaker answers were often overly emotional without a coherent structure. Some candidates focused heavily on the history of the death penalty, which was not necessary.

3 健康

This question was the second most popular option. Some outstanding essays were produced in response to this question. Some pieces showed a clear definition of health products, followed by a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of health products, the danger from 'fake' products, the over-promotion of health-products in the media and how to keep healthy. Such critical analysis was very impressive. Weaker candidates sometimes lost focus by moving on to talk about how to keep fit in general and did not respond to the question directly, while a further small number of candidates had misunderstood the term for 'health products' entirely.

4 就业

This question had a clear relevance and was thus answered by a good number of candidates. Some candidates were able to analyse the increased number of university graduates and the shortage of job opportunities in the current world, as well as the reasons why graduates cannot find employment: these included over ambitious expectations, arrogance, and lack of job experience. Some candidates tended to focus too heavily on the current job-market in general rather than the issue of unemployment amongst university graduates. A small number of candidates argued that university graduates can find jobs as long as they work hard.

5 科技

This question was not answered by many, but amongst those who did, performances were strong with some excellent essays. The majority of candidates seemed to be knowledgeable about the subject and provided detailed arguments on the impact of nuclear power on our lives, including its environmentally-friendly features, its ability to produce vast amounts of electricity, as well as nuclear weapons and the safety issues.

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Occasionally responses simply explained what nuclear power is and a small number of candidates presented generalised arguments on technology, and needed to focus more on the exact question asked.

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Paper 8681/33
Essay

Key messages

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- provide a clear focus by structuring the relevant information in a logical manner;
- organise the argument coherently in an essay format;
- write accurate Chinese, using complex sentence structures;
- show their awareness of using idioms and employ a wide range of vocabulary.

General comments

The performance of candidates was generally good this year. The majority of candidates were able to justify their opinions with two or three supporting points and produce a clear essay structure. The level of linguistic ability demonstrated by many candidates was very good and showed a confident use of complex sentence patterns and a wide range of vocabulary. Candidates should be reminded of the importance of taking note of the instructions before commencing the exam and read all questions carefully as soon as the exam starts.

The work of stronger candidates was characterised by sound knowledge of their chosen topic and an ability to effectively organise their ideas and arguments. These candidates often managed to successfully illustrate their ideas with relevant examples. Furthermore, they were able to produce a coherent essay structure with a logical progression of ideas leading to a sound conclusion.

Weaker answers sometimes showed a misunderstanding of the question or a key word in the question. Candidates should be advised that if they are not certain of the meaning of a question, they should avoid choosing that question, even though they may have sound knowledge of that topic. Candidates must respond to the actual title set; essays addressing the general topic area will not score highly.

Improvements could be made in the following areas:

- Understanding of questions. Candidates should be advised to read all questions with great care and choose a question where they are confident of the meaning and vocabulary. To have a good understanding of a question is the starting point of producing a good essay.
- Relevant content. Candidates are advised to provide a clear opinion on the question chosen and make a detailed argument supported with relevant examples. Candidates should avoid relying too heavily on personal experience and should rather use reasoned arguments to back up their opinions.
- Essay structure. A clear structure with a purposeful introduction, argument and conclusion is required. Candidates should avoid using a single paragraph.
- Accurate language. Candidates should be aware that their essays must be written in Chinese characters and no credit can be given for using pinyin or English. Candidates should use vocabulary for which they know the Chinese characters, even if this places limits on what they can express. Candidates should be encouraged to show their ability by using a wide range of sentence patterns and extensive vocabulary.
- Use of punctuation. Candidates need to be able to use appropriate punctuation confidently.

1 生活

Some excellent essays were produced in response to this question, covering a wide range of aspects of modern life including new technology, communication via internet or mobile phone, internet shopping, food delivery and working at home. Many answers also contained good examples to support the arguments given. It was evident, however, that some candidates had misunderstood the key word ‘宅男宅女’ (people who would rather stay at home and excessively use the computer/internet rather than go out and interact with other people) and presented a discussion about the equality of women and men, which is irrelevant to the question asked. Candidates should be advised to choose a question where they are certain they understand what is being asked.

2 法制

This was the most popular question among candidates. The majority of candidates put forward a balanced argument on the importance of law and morality in keeping society ‘safe’. Stronger candidates were able to offer good examples to support their opinions. The work of weaker candidates was characterised by one-sided arguments on the side of either law or morality.

3 健康

Of those candidates who chose this question, some successfully analysed the phenomenon of memory-enhancing drugs and provided clear opinions on the subject. Others needed to examine the topic more fully and to stay focussed on the question asked. In some cases, candidates drifted into an essay about how to stay healthy, which did not answer the question.

4 就业

A relatively smaller number of candidates opted for this question. Stronger answers included discussion of the impact on society that migrant workers working in the city have in general, both positive and negative. These included migrant workers’ contribution to the development of cities and their work-ethic, as well as problems associated with the growing population in cities and the pressure this puts on housing, traffic, health care and insurance.

5 科技

This question was not answered by many, but those who chose to answer on this topic showed a sound understanding of the issues. Most candidates discussed the advantages and disadvantages of cloning technology and were able to use a good range of language and examples in their arguments. There was evidence of pre-learnt material being employed, which should be avoided. Weaker answers showed a lack of knowledge of cloning technology which resulted in somewhat simplistic arguments.