2020 VCE Chinese First Language written examination report

General comments

In general, students performed well in the 2020 Chinese First Language written examination. Most students were able to attempt all the questions, which suggest that time was used effectively. A small number of students demonstrated excellent skills in language application. Others showed a lack of preparation, and some students did not attempt all the questions.

In Section 1 – Listening and responding, very few students answered all questions correctly or demonstrated very strong language skills. Most students could answer Questions 1a., 1b. and 1c. accurately. Some students had difficulty finding the correct answer for Question 1d. Question 1e. required strong summarising skills, and many students failed to identify key points from the listening dialogue to correctly answer the question. Some students did not use full sentences to answer questions and some used many incorrect Chinese characters. Students are advised to take detailed notes as this can be helpful in responding accurately.

In Section 2 – Reading and responding, some responses were accurate and included the relevant information, demonstrating a full understanding of the texts provided. A few students did not understand the task and could not extract information from the given texts accurately to complete the task. Low-scoring responses ignored either one or both texts or copied out part of the text and used it as a response without demonstrating any understanding of it. Many students found the key information needed but did not use the content appropriately to form an effective response. Many responses did not include precise or correct key sentences. Careful reading of the task and analysis of the texts provided is crucial to the satisfactory completion of the task.

In Section 3 – Writing in Chinese, most students chose Question 4, followed by Question 3 and Question 5. Some students chose Question 6 and very few chose Question 7, both of which required students to write an imaginative story. Some students who chose imaginative writing failed to produce a response that demonstrated the characteristics of the required text type. Most students showed clear understanding of text types, although some responses suggested that students were confused about them. A few students misunderstood Question 4, which required them to discuss the pros and cons of retirees moving to the countryside, and instead discussed the impact of such a move on the countryside.

Specific information

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1 – Listening and responding

The assessment criteria for this section were:

* the capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts
* the capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately.

Question 1a.

* 从空中鸟瞰形状如乌龟，南城门为乌龟头，城门外两眼水井象征乌龟的双眼， 东西各二的四座瓮城象征乌龟的四条腿，北城门为乌龟的尾部。(An aerial view of the ancient city of Pingyao from the sky shows it as tortoise-shaped. The southern entrance represents the tortoise’s head and the two wells outside the southern gate symbolise its two eyes. On the east and west sides are four small gates, two at each side, symbolising the four legs of the tortoise. The northern gate symbolises the tail of the tortoise.)
* 街道依照八卦方位规划，8大街、4小街、72巷，如同龟背上的纹路 (The streets are designed according to the orientation of the eight trigrams, with eight broad streets, four narrow streets and 72 alleys, like the patterns on a tortoise shell.)
* 城墙上72座敌楼，3000垛口 ，象征孔子72贤人和3000门徒 (The design of the ancient city, e.g. the 72 small pill boxes and 3000 battlements, resemble the 72 sages and 3000 disciples of Confucius.)
* 乌龟象征吉祥长寿，希望古城 坚固长久（金汤永固），人民世代幸福 (People at that time hoped that the ancient city would be like ‘a city made from gold [metal] and surrounded by boiling water’. The idea of a strong defensive capacity links to the fact that the tortoise is a long-lived animal – both the city and the tortoise can last for a long time.)

Question 1b.

* “日升昌” 成立于1823年，平遥第一家票号 ， 中国现代银行的鼻祖 (Established in 1823, ‘Ri Sheng Chang’ was the first credit institution at Pingyao. It was the originator of the modern bank in China.)
* 业务扩展到日本、新加坡、俄罗斯， 被称为“古代中国的华尔街” (Its business extended to Japan, Singapore and Russia. Therefore, it was called ‘The Wall Street of ancient China’.)
* 在“日升昌”的带动下平遥的票号业迅速发展， 鼎盛时多达22家，晚清时控制了中国50%以上的流通货币 (Led by ‘Ri Sheng Chang’, credit business at Pingyao boomed and, at its peak, there were 22 credit institutions. In the late Qing Dynasty, these credit institutions controlled over 50 per cent of China’s currency.)

Question 1c.

* 票号老板舍身取义， 带领232名镖师保回掌柜单传儿子，自己和镖师全部牺牲 (The boss of a credit institution gave his life for morality. In order for his head shopkeeper to continue his line, he led 232 armed escorts to save the shopkeeper’s only son. He and all the security guards sacrificed their lives [selflessly].)
* 平遥人一诺千金 、大义大德的精神。(The story reflects the spirit of the Pingyao people in their promise to uphold merit and virtue.)

Question 1d.

* 平遥人十分重视教育 // 重视传统 (People in Pingyao have been very serious about education and traditions.)
* 以传统精神闯天下，做官经商，创造奇迹，可歌可泣重情重义的精神 (The text also states that the scholars were later on successful officials and businessmen.)

Question 1e.

* 父亲在那里照过相 or王老师要带学生们去山西交流，去平遥看文庙、镖局和日升昌 (The father took photos there, and Mr Wang and some classmates are going to Pingyao for an exciting trip. They will visit the temple, the escort agency and the credit institute.)
* 1997年被联合国列入《世界文化遗产名录》，是中国最大规模的城墙之一 (Pingyao was inscribed in the World Heritage List by UNESCO in 1997. It is one of the ancient walled cities in China.)
* 完整地保存明清时期的城墙、街道、民居、庙宇等古迹 ，是中国汉族古县城的典型代表。(The ancient city walls, streets, residential houses, temples etc. have been preserved and are intact. It is a typical ancient Han Chinese county in China.)
* 观看《又见平遥》大型实景演出，去感受平遥人一诺千金，义冠云天的大义大德，去体会那种超越生死的感动。(Watch the show Pingyao to understand the spirit of the Pingyao people in their promise to uphold merit and virtue.)

Section 2: Reading and responding

The assessment criteria for this section were:

* the capacity to identify and synthesise relevant information and ideas from the texts
* appropriateness of structure and sequence
* accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar (including punctuation and, where relevant, script).

Question 2

Students were required to prepare a script for a persuasive speech for a national speech competition, using the two texts provided. They were to write from the perspective of a university student in the Education Department on the topic ‘Education in the Humanities should be a key component of all school education’. The following are possible areas that could have been discussed in the speech.

* 注重人文教育能化人利国或周易名言 (Humanities education is good for a country and its people.)
* 注重人文教育的传统由来已久，得继承。(Chinese people have emphasised education in the Humanities for a long time.)
* 孔子认为，用“诗书礼乐”教育众生，社会就能达到和谐的状态。(Confucius stated that education in such fields as poetry and music will contribute to making the world harmonious.)
* 学校教育不仅是知识的传授，而是应该帮助学生实现个人与社会价值。(It is obvious that professional learning is not enough – students need to have an education in culture and traditions.)
* 学校人文教育应注重传统文化，陶冶情操，丰富社会实践活动。(Cultural and traditional education need to be promoted through rich and varied social activities.)
* 学校通过各种不同的方式/手段，创造高雅的文化氛围，注重学生广博文化知识的培养 以提升人的生命内涵。(People may think that vocational learning and an active life full of practical achievements is all that matters, but Chinese people have always valued many different kinds of learning and education in order to live a meaningful life.)
* 范仲淹努力学习的事例，通六经，立志天下 (The first example proving that an education in the Humanities is important is the example of Fan Zhongyan who studied very hard and deprived himself of many comforts in order to study and learn.)
* 范仲淹最终成为一代栋梁，写下了“先天下之忧而忧，后天下之乐而乐”的著名诗句。(After a great deal of effort, Fan Zhongyan became a scholar in the Humanities for the sake of his country.)
* 皇帝的例子：为人大须学问 (The second example can be seen in the life of a great emperor from the past who had won a great many battles. He believed that all people should gain knowledge.)
* “君臣父子，政教之道，共在书内” (He stated that learning is very important as valuable information on all kinds of significant personal and political issues can be found in books.)

Section 3: Writing in Chinese

Question 3

Students were required to write, from the perspective of a journalist, an evaluative article for an in-flight magazine. They were required to analyse the pros and cons of the increased popularity and expense of the tea ceremony.

Kind of writing: evaluative

Text type: article (for a magazine)

Audience: readers of an in-flight magazine

Responses may have included the following points.

Pros:

* Tea is a traditional product and a very popular drink.
* Drinking tea in a refined way continues this long tradition and also gives value to the beautiful objects from the past.

Cons:

* Every product and object – even essential items of food and drink – are being made part of a business.
* People are now spending huge sums of money on a small amount of tea.
* The money spent on these sorts of activities could be spent to improve the lives of individuals and groups.

正：

* 陶冶情操、健康生活、养生意识、中华文化传承

负：

* 攀比心理、浮躁 、附庸风雅、 商业炒作

Question 4

Students were required to write an evaluative report for Lifestyle magazine from the perspective of a journalist. They were required to discuss the pros and cons of more retirees choosing to leave the city for a more peaceful life in the countryside.

Kind of writing: evaluative

Text type: report (for a magazine)

Audience: general readers

Pros:

* saving public resources
* allowing the aged to enjoy the warmth of family life.

Cons:

* burdening their children
* intensifying family tensions.

正：

* 生活质量，生活幸福感；陶冶情操；降低生活成本

负：

* 与社会脱节，远离亲友，远离医疗设施

Question 5

Students were given the following scenario, ‘You are a scientist who has just participated in an action which stopped an asteroid from crashing into the Earth.’ They were required to give an account of their breath-taking experience in their work diary.

Kind of writing: imaginative

Text type: work diary entry

Audience: the self

Question 6

Students were required to write an imaginative autobiography from the perspective of a very smart dolphin who has experienced many miraculous events while living in the sea. The story was to be based on one of their most interesting experiences and be published in School Newspaper.

Kind of writing: imaginative

Text type: autobiography

Audience: readers of the school newsletter

Question 7

Students were required to write, from the perspective of a children’s literature writer, an imaginative story for their young readers based on a picture printed in the examination paper.

Kind of writing: imaginative

Text type: story

Audience: young readers