

2017 VCE Chinese Second Language written examination report

General comments

Student performance in the 2017 VCE Chinese Second Language written examination indicated a high level of student understanding of the subject matter presented, and students demonstrated a good ability to convey that understanding through their written responses. Many students performed better in Section 2 – Reading, responding and translating and Section 3 – Writing in Chinese.

Part B of Section 1 – Listening and responding and Part C of Section 2 – Reading, responding and translating were the most challenging for students. Students need to regularly practise their listening skills during their years of learning the language and not just practise it in the lead-up to the examination. Practice in note-taking skills enables students to record all relevant information required in responses.

Many students answered all questions satisfactorily in Section 2 – Reading, responding and translating, despite some questions in this section requiring some analytical skills; however, quite a few students did not read the questions carefully and provided inappropriate or incomplete answers. It seemed that many students needed to improve their skills in analysing information and summarising, rather than copying out the whole paragraph or passage. Teachers and students must understand that analytical and evaluation skills, as well as comprehension skills, are required in this section. The questions in this section may require students to look at the whole passage – not just one sentence or paragraph – to gain the answer.

Students are also advised to consult their dictionaries when answering questions, as many of their responses contained spelling and grammatical errors. Students should not provide information beyond the scope of the question. Students also need to read each question carefully, provide all necessary information for the answers and write their answers in the correct space for answers. Students need good training and extensive practice in critically reading questions, producing appropriate answers and understanding the meanings between the lines.

The majority of students understood the translation tasks well and made good attempts at translating; however, some students seemed to understand the Chinese wording but were unable to translate it into appropriate English and some seemed to misinterpret the meaning of the Chinese passages due to their lack of Chinese knowledge and vocabulary. Students are advised that they should not translate word for word from Chinese.

Most students performed well in Section 3 – Writing in Chinese. They completed the questions in the correct register, format and style; however, some students did not correctly follow the requirements of the task. Students are reminded to read all questions and instructions carefully.

In Section 3, the majority of students chose Question 8, 10 or 11 for their writing task. A few students did not adhere to the different formats required for the different writing styles and text types. Students should be advised to develop a plan before they start the writing task.

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 Part A – Answer in English

Many students appeared to understand the two listening texts well and they demonstrated their ability to summarise and analyse information; however, some students seemed to have trouble conveying their meaning in English or providing all the information required. Students should use the reading time to focus on the questions in this section so they can predict what the listening texts might be about. Students should also learn note-taking skills so as to be able to provide as much relevant information as possible when answering each question. Most questions contained two or three aspects that needed to be answered, but some students focused on only one aspect of the question and missed the rest of the details.

Text 1

Question 1a.

The dog did not move and eat much for the last couple of days and slept day and night because it was not feeling well.

Question 1b.

The vet advised to let the dog sleep inside the house.

Text 2

Question 2a.

Any two of:

- The bullet train is cheaper.
- It is convenient as the train station is usually in the CBD.
- He doesn't have much luggage.

Part B – Answer in Chinese

In this part of the examination, students were required to demonstrate their capacity to understand aspects of a Chinese listening text by responding in Chinese. Marks were awarded for comprehension of the text and for conveying information accurately and appropriately in Chinese. Most students showed a sound understanding of the content of the text and did well in this part.

Students must ensure that they respond in complete sentences, when required, and their sentences should communicate their ideas in their own words. Some students answered in point form, taking extracts directly from the spoken text. This did not allow them to demonstrate their ability to communicate fluently in the language and thus they were not awarded full marks. In addition, some students wrote their answers under the wrong question. Students needed to ensure that they provided a full answer to each question.

Text 3

Question 3a.

妈妈担心小明没写完作文。爸爸马上就回家了，他看到小明玩电脑游戏会很不高兴。

(Mum is worried that Xiaoming has not completed his essay-writing and Dad is coming home soon and he is not going to be happy if he sees Xiaoming play computer games.)

Question 3b.

妈妈建议小明去公园走一走或听音乐。

(His mum suggested that Xiaoming should go for a walk in the park or listen to music.)

Section 2 – Reading, responding and translating

Part A – Answer in English

Most students successfully completed the questions relating to the comprehension of a Chinese reading text in this part of the examination. Part A was based on one text in Chinese. Students should be prepared to comment not only on the content of the text, but also on the purpose of the text and the type of audience it is addressing.

Some students misunderstood Question 4. In order to prepare for this section of the examination, students should read the questions carefully before giving an answer. They should also practise identifying and summarising the main points and ideas in the texts. It is not necessary to know the meaning of all unknown words if they are not key words in the text and students should try to understand the gist of the passage. Students are also reminded that all answers must be based only on the information provided in the text.

Text 4

Question 4a.

They went to a nursing home.

Question 4b.

The class:

- chatted/talked
- drew/painted
- made Christmas cards
- played games
- sang Christmas songs/carols.

Question 4c.

- Their children were very busy and could not visit them often.
- They missed their family.
- They were happy to see young people.

Question 4d.

- They both loved music and singing.
- Mary used to be a music teacher.
- Mary loved singing and writing songs.
- Lin Lan is a soprano/opera singer.
- Lin Lan wanted to become a famous singer and perform overseas.

Question 4e.

- that the class visit very often (the old people want them to go there often)
- that they spend Chinese New Year (Spring Festival) with the old people/celebrate Chinese New Year together in the future

Part B – Answer in Chinese

This part of the examination assessed students' capacity to understand general and specific aspects of the text and their capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately in Chinese. Most students provided the correct information to adequately complete all questions, although some students lacked the skills needed to analyse and summarise the passage; they simply copied one or two paragraphs as their response. Students should take advantage of the fact that the questions in this section are given in both Chinese and English.

Text 5

Question 5a.

- 小芳是一个导游/带游客的人 (Xiaofang is a tour guide)
- 她要带游客们去参观北京的一条有名的文化街 (she is going to take some tourists to a famous cultural street in Beijing)

Question 5b.

- 因为这个地方有很长的历史 (四百年的历史) (long history/400 years of history)
- 有些名人住在这里 (some famous people used to live here)
- 还有很多的店, 比如很多书店和古玩店 (there are a lot of shops such as bookshops and antique shops)
- 可以看到书法家写字 (you can watch calligraphers writing Chinese characters)

Question 5c.

- 小芳是一个灵活的人/很周到的人/有历史知识的人/乐于助人的人 (Xiaofang is a flexible/thoughtful person/or a person with a good knowledge of history/willing to help others)
- 因为她给游客们选择自己参观或者和她一起参观 (as she gives the tourists the choice between walking with her or walking alone)
- 她也对历史和其他方面都很了解 (she also knows historical facts and other things really well)
- 小芳也知道很多/知识很丰富 (Xiaofang is also a knowledgeable person)

Part C – Translation

Most students comprehended the translation passages well and conveyed the meaning of these passages accurately and fluently. Some students seemed to have a good comprehension of the passages in Chinese but had poor expression in English.

Students are reminded that Chinese and English are different in terms of syntax and expression and they should not translate word for word from Chinese.

Question 6

Deng Xiaoping is a well-known person in China. He is closely linked to the development during the last 30-plus years in China. Chinese people have had a better life under his leadership, to the extent that many of them have purchased apartments and cars. Meanwhile, China was implementing a policy of opening its door to other countries. Consequently, people from different countries were keen to become not only business partners but also friends. More and more Chinese people were able to go overseas to travel. Many people believe that his position in Chinese history is irreplaceable.

Question 7

China has produced many famous tennis players during the last two decades, but not many people know exactly how these players grew/became famous/became the way they are today. Wang Ming, the tennis coach of Beijing Sports School, said it is the result of more than 10 years of

training; some even took 20 years of training before they became famous. These players start training at the Sports School when they are very young. They train every morning, in addition, they have cultural lessons in the afternoon, followed by physical/fitness training. In general, their growth has a lot to do with their hard work/dedication.

Section 3 – Writing in Chinese

This section assessed students' ability to express ideas through the creation of an original text in Chinese using the following criteria:

- relevance, breadth and depth of content
- appropriateness of structure and sequence
- accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar.

Students were required to write 200–250 characters in Chinese on one of the five topics given. Each topic represented a different text type and style of writing (personal, imaginative, informative, persuasive and evaluative). All five questions were attempted by students, although there was a clear preference for the informative and persuasive writing tasks.

On the whole, students displayed a good knowledge of the different characteristics of the text type and the style of writing they chose; however, students must be aware that they need to provide all the features of the text type or writing style.

Of the three criteria in this section, students did not perform well against 'relevance, breadth and depth'. Students should have a good knowledge of, and a good range of, relevant vocabulary about the selected topic, and it should be a topic in which they are able to express themselves accurately.

Question 8

Students were required to write a reply letter to their penpal in China, telling them about one of their most unforgettable school camps.

Text type: letter – address, date, salutation, greeting, body (content), farewell, signing off (fictional name), register, style, layout

Audience: penpal in China

Type of writing: personal

Responses could have included some of the following points.

- why students participated in the camp/background information about the camp (who, where and when, etc.)
- what they did that made the camp unforgettable
- what they learnt/gained from this camp.

Question 9

Students were required to write an informative article for a Chinese newspaper, informing readers about three aspects of Melbourne's tram restaurant that make it an interesting experience.

Text type: article (newspaper) – title, content, author (fictional name), register, style, layout

Audience: readers of Chinese newspaper

Type of writing: informative

Responses could have included some of the following points.

- the journey/scenery for the tram ride
- the food served

- the history of trams in Melbourne

Question 10

Students were required to write a report for a business magazine, evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of working from home.

Text type: report – title, content, author (fictional name), register, style, layout

Audience: readers of business magazine

Type of writing: evaluative

Responses could have included some of the following points.

- Advantages – any two of:
 - freedom/being your own boss
 - flexibility in terms of working hours and deadlines
 - being environmental friendly/cost effective/no traffic jams
- Disadvantages – any two of:
 - hard to get help straight away/lack of direct interaction/social isolation
 - too much pressure in terms of finance
 - not very good for long-term career prospects

Question 11

Students were required to write the script of the speech that they would give at the next school assembly, persuading students to participate in the local fundraising run.

Text type: script of a speech – title/topic, structure, content, register, style, layout

Audience: students at the school assembly

Type of writing: persuasive

Responses could have included some of the following points.

- good exercise
- donation will help others
- good way to get involved in contributing to the society/for a good cause

Question 12

Students were required to write a story for their school magazine about Mingming's day without wi-fi.

Text type: story – title/topic, structure, content, register, style, layout

Audience: students

Type of writing: imaginative

Responses could have included some of the following points.

- establishment of the role/character
- development of the plot (more time for deep reflection, experiencing a remarkable thing that you normally would not do, the feeling of isolation, etc.)