

2015 VCE Chinese Second Language written examination report

General comments

Overall, students performed well on the 2015 Chinese Second Language examination. Most students planned their time effectively and demonstrated good skills in all language areas – listening, reading, translating and essay writing. A small number of students struggled, particularly with listening and reading comprehension.

Most students appeared to be quite familiar with the format of the examination and almost all responded in the appropriate language for each section. A few students did not read all the instructions carefully and wrote their responses in the incorrect place or in the incorrect language. Responses in the incorrect language received no credit. Students should remember that the amount of answer space given and the number of marks allocated should be used as a guide to the length of response required. Students should check to see if a question requires them to present their answer in point form or in full sentences, as students are required to answer in full sentences in Chinese in Part B of Section 1 – Listening and responding and Section 2 – Reading and responding. Students are reminded that they need to provide detailed information in their answers.

Many students understood the translation tasks well. However, some students seemed to understand the Chinese wording but were unable to translate it into appropriate English. Students should not translate word for word from Chinese but should attempt to understand the context of the passage.

The majority of students answered all questions satisfactorily in Section 2 – Reading and responding, despite some questions in this section requiring some analysis skills. However, quite a few students did not read the questions carefully and provided inappropriate or incomplete answers. It was evident that many students needed to improve their skills in analysing information and summarising as they copied out the whole paragraph or passage. Teachers and students must understand that analysis 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 only one sentence or paragraph, before beginning to answer the question. Students are also advised to consult their dictionaries as many responses contained spelling and grammatical errors. Students should not provide information beyond the scope of the question and should not include prior knowledge of the topic if it is not included in the texts.

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 read all the instructions carefully and did not correctly follow the requirements of the questions.

In Section 3, the majority of students chose Question 8, 9 or 10. Most students who chose Question 10 produced a good piece of writing, but quite a few students did not understand Question 9 fully as it required students to present Melbourne as the capital of sport in three different areas but not in three sporting events. Some students followed a format other than that required and their responses did not have an appropriate balance between breadth and depth. A

few students did not adhere to the formats required for the different writing styles and text types. Students should be advised to develop a plan before they start writing.

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 demonstrated their ability to summarise and analyse information. However, some students struggled to convey meaning in English or to provide 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 and 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 only on one aspect of the question and missed the rest of the details.

Text 1

Question 1

- A sweater/cardigan/jumper for the female's younger sister.
- A computer/laptop bag/case for the male's elder brother.

Text 2

Question 2a.

It is about Chinese migrants/settlers in Victoria in the early years/early Chinese migrants in Victoria.

Question 2b.

Wang Hua: opened the first Chinese restaurant in the city.

Li Lin: He was a famous/great doctor/medical practitioner in Chinese medicine.

Part B – Answer in Chinese

In this part of the examination students were required to demonstrate their capacity to understand aspects of a Chinese aural text by responding in Chinese. Most students showed a sound understanding of the content of the text.

Three marks were awarded for comprehension of the text and two marks were awarded for conveying information accurately and appropriately in Chinese.

Most students performed well in this part. However, students must ensure that they respond in complete sentences and their sentences should communicate their ideas in their own words. Some students answered in point form, taking extracts directly from the aural text. This did not allow them to demonstrate their ability to communicate fluently in the language and thus they were not awarded full marks. Students must ensure that they provide a full answer to each question.

Text 3

Question 3

因为墨尔本又安全又是个多元文化的城市；墨尔本也很漂亮，还有非常好的大学，他们在墨尔本已经也有了安娜这样的朋友。(Because Melbourne is a safe and multicultural city. Melbourne is also beautiful and has very good universities, and they could already have friends like Anna in Melbourne.)

Section 2 – Reading, responding and translating

Part A – Answer in English

Most students completed the questions relating to the comprehension of a Chinese reading text in this part of the examination. A number of questions were directly related to the content of the text, while other questions were deductive. 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 confused or misunderstood Question 4. In order to prepare for this part of the examination, students should 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 on the information provided in the text and not on prior knowledge.

Text 4

Question 4a.

- Body and soul
 - physical and psychological/mental/body and soul changes
- Study/Learning
 - pressure from parents/guardians
 - pressure from school
 - pressure from peers/classmates/schoolmates
 - pressure from themselves
- Making friends
 - Good friends would stimulate/help make them progress or improve.
 - Poor friends would make them follow bad examples/learn bad things/have a bad/negative impact/influence on them.

Question 4b.

The school should care about students' physical and psychological changes and should not give students too much pressure. Parents should communicate/talk/chat more with their kids and students themselves, and understand what they do.

Students need to work hard, aim high/make progress and understand what they are doing.

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 and 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.

这是学生上完美术课后记的笔记。(A student's art class notes.)

Question 5b.

中国画的对象有山水、花鸟和人物。(Chinese paintings usually depict scenery, flowers/birds and figures.)

Question 5c.

画面上又有画又有书法的画最好，因为如果没有漂亮汉字的中国画看上去就不那么完美。

(The best Chinese paintings are those with calligraphy, because a Chinese painting is regarded as incomplete without beautiful calligraphy.)

Question 5d.

中国画讲究用笔和用墨技巧，西方画很讲究颜色。

(Chinese paintings focus on the use of the brush pen and ink, while Western paintings stress the use of colour.)

Part C – Translation

Most students understood the translation passages well and conveyed the meaning of the passages accurately and fluently. Some students seemed to have 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

China has recently built 18 000 kilometres of high-speed railway system (Gaotie) in the short period of six years. Gaotie operates at more than 300 km per hour. There is also another kind of high-speed railway system, which runs at up to 200 km. It is called Dongche. It used to take about 15 hours from Beijing to Shanghai by train 20 years ago, but it only takes four and half hours now by Gaotie. There is a Gaotie in all large cities in China. The train stations are all in the middle of the city, making it more convenient than going by air. Gaotie is not only fast but also comfortable. You must take a Gaotie train if you travel in China.

Question 7

Xiao Ming,

You didn't come to school today. I phoned you several times, but there was no answer. Has anything happened to you? I came to visit you, to see what was happening with you at (your) home after school today. I also brought you your Chinese exercise book that our teacher returned to us. But no one answered the door. I am anxious about you. Would you please give me a call as soon as you see this note? Thanks.

Xiao Hong

10pm 7th July

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 between 200 and 250 characters in Chinese on one of the five questions. Each question 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 evaluative writing tasks.

Generally, students displayed 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 as required.

Of the three criteria in this section, students did not perform well against 'relevance, breadth and depth of content'. When selecting a question, students should choose one that is familiar to them and one that requires the kind of writing and text type that suits them best. The selected topic should be one that students have a good knowledge of, a good range of relevant vocabulary and one in which they are able to express themselves accurately.

Question 8

Students were required to prepare a speech to give at a final school assembly and include personal highlights of their secondary schooling. Responses could have included some of the following points.

- 朋友方面包括 (Friends)
 - 交了什么朋友，和朋友的关系，朋友对自己的影响等 (including what kinds of friends, relationship with friends and the influence of friends on you)
- 成就方面包括 (Achievements)
 - 学习、体育、音乐方面所取得的成绩及自己的感想 (including those achievements in study, sport, music, etc. and your reflections on them)
- 未来期望方面包括 (Aspirations)
 - 中学期间自己对未来的期望及感想 (including your aspirations during your secondary schooling and your reflections on them)

Question 9

Students were required to write a letter to a Chinese pen pal, informing them about Melbourne as the capital of sport.

- 运动设施 (sporting facilities)
- 各种大赛 (various games)
- 人们对体育的喜好 (people's fondness for sports)

Question 10

Students were required to write an article for a school magazine, encouraging fellow students to take public transport or to walk to school, rather than being driven by their parents.

- 现在的交通状况和影响 (current traffic situation and impact)
- 使用公共交通的好处 (advantages of using public transport)

- 不让父母开车送去上学的好处 (advantages of not being driven to school by parents)
- 走路上学的好处 (benefits of walking to school)

Question 11

Students were required to write a report to present to the city council, evaluating the different views on expanding the city centre.

- 适应人口增长的需求 (meet the demand of the population increase)
- 改善城市面貌 (improve the city's appearance)
- 破坏城市已有的特征 (damage the city's current features)
- 增加城市污染和交通堵塞 (increased pollution and traffic jams)

Question 12

Students were required to write a story for radio broadcast to describe people's life, work and study in an underwater world in the future.

- 新生活的特点 (features of people's new life)
- 工作方式的变化和效率 (changes in work habits and efficiency)
- 学习环境和方法 (new study environment and methods)