

2018 VCE Chinese Second Language written examination report

General comments

In the 2018 VCE Chinese Second Language written examination, the majority of students responded well to all sections. They demonstrated a sound knowledge and understanding of the examination structure and the different types of writing required, as well as their ability to convey that understanding through their written responses.

Students provided responses for all sections of the examination. They exhibited good comprehension skills and an ability to identify most of the required information from the listening and reading texts and translation. However, students should take more care and respond specifically to the key words in the questions, as at times students understood the oral and written text but did not provide all the points required for the answer or provided an answer in response to the wrong question. Students should also ensure that they do not give the same answer to two different questions.

In Section 2 – Reading, responding and translating in particular, quite a few students did not read the questions carefully and provided inappropriate or incomplete answers. It seems that many students need to improve their skills in analysing information and summarising, rather than copying out the whole paragraph or passage. Students need to 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.

Many students understood the translation tasks well and produced good versions. 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.

Students are advised to consult their dictionaries when answering questions, as many of their responses contained spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. It is important that students do not provide information beyond the scope of the question and that they do not include information that is not relevant.

Most students performed well in Section 3 – Writing in Chinese. They completed the questions in the correct register, format and style. Some students did not read all the instructions carefully and did not correctly follow the requirements of the question.

In Section 3, the majority of students chose Question 8, 9 or 10. Most students who chose Questions 8 and 9 produced a good piece of writing, though some were constrained by their limited vocabulary and struggled to express themselves fully. Quite a few students did not understand Question 10; it required students to present people's different views on the advantages and disadvantages of having a gap year for students who have graduated from high school, not just their own opinions. In that case, it would have been a piece of personal writing.

In terms of content, in each of the five writing tasks some students displayed a loss of balance between breadth and depth. In addition, a few students did not adhere to the format required, such as the different writing styles and text types. Students are advised to develop a plan before they start writing.

Specific information

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have indicated. 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 seemed to have trouble conveying their meaning in English. 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 on only one aspect of the question and missed the rest of the detail.

Text 1

Question 1a.

Her pen pals (from Italy, America and France)

Question 1b.

They are Christmas cards.

Text 2

Question 2a.

She came first in the 100-metre sprint/race/short distance.

Question 2b.

- She came second in the 50-metre sprint/race/short distance, which is faster than in the previous year.
- They also won the 100-metre relay.

Part B – Answer in Chinese

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

Marks were awarded for comprehension of the text and for conveying information accurately and appropriately in Chinese.

Most students did well in Part B; however, students must ensure that they respond in complete sentences and that their sentences 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. Students need to ensure that they provide a full answer to each question.

Text 3

Question 3a.

- 她来一年多了，都没去过动物园 (She has never been to the zoo, even though she has lived here for more than a year.)
- 还有她要去看上个月(刚)出生的小象。(She really wants to see the baby elephant that was born last month.)

Question 3b.

- 因为安娜的家离电车站有点远/安娜坐电车去动物园不太方便。(Anna's house is quite far from the tram stop/it is not that convenient for Anna to go to the zoo by tram.)
- 因为小明可以开车带她去动物园。(Because Xiaoming offers to drive her there.)

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. Section 2, Part A was based on one text in Chinese. 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 4d., which required students to describe what activities people can engage in on level 1 and level 3.

In order to prepare for this section of the examination, students should read the questions carefully and think through their 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, especially if they are not key words in the text, but students should try to understand the main idea of the passage. Students are also reminded that all answers must be based on the information provided in the text.

Text 4

Question 4a.

- it is old
- 800 square meters (big, large)
- it has three levels

Question 4b.

- They both have small rooms.
- They are for members only.
- The food is good/better.
- They are a bit pricey/expensive.

Question 4c.

- Customers going to the second level are businessmen.

- Customers going to the third level are mostly scholars/learned men (persons)/men of letters /writers and painters/artists.

Question 4d.

Level 1:

- (Drink tea), listen to singers
- people can watch plays, people can sing with their friends

Level 3:

- writers write while drinking tea
- painters paint while drinking tea

Question 4e.

- People can drink a variety of famous teas.
- People can eat delicious snacks/dim sims/desserts.

Part B – Answer in Chinese

This part of the examination assessed students' understanding of 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. Some students lacked the skills needed to analyse and summarise the text, and 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.

- 他们可以和中國朋友交流/說漢語/學漢語。(They can talk to Chinese friends, such as Make and Aimei.)
- 他們喜歡/熱愛中國文化，比如書法和中國菜。(They love Chinese culture, such as calligraphy and Chinese dishes.)
- 他們可以聽和唱漢語歌。由中國朋友 (They can listen to and sing Chinese songs. Have Chinese friends.)

Question 5b.

- 他們是馬麗和大為。(They are Mali and Dawei.)
- 他們都認為說漢語很有趣。(Both think that speaking is fun.)
- 學漢字不容易/有點難。(Learning characters is hard.)

Question 5c.

- 他們是馬麗，山本和愛美。(They are Mali, Shanben and Aimei.)
- 馬麗現在是一個服務員，將來想當廚師。(Mali is a waitress now, but wants to become a chef.)
- 山本，現在是商店店員，將來想當經理。(Shanben is a shop assistant, but wants to become a manager.)
- 愛美，現在是空姐，將來想開網店。(Aimei is a flight attendant, but wants to do online sales.)

Part C – Translation

Most students comprehended the translation passages well and conveyed the meaning of the 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

In recent years, when Chinese people buy things, eat at restaurants and travel, they have rarely used cash to pay. The most popular way of paying is to use a mobile phone. You only need to scan the phone and the payment is completed. This new method is both quick and convenient, and also very safe, because people don't need to carry cash anymore.

Question 7

The Delicious Chinese Restaurant in Melbourne is now hiring two delivery workers. Requirements are as follows:

You are at least 18 years old, male or female. You have at least high school education/certificate. Not only can you speak English and Chinese, but you also can ride a bike.

Working hours are every Monday and Wednesday evening and on the weekends.

Payment is twenty-five Australian dollars per hour.

If you are interested, please call Mr. Li before the 10th of this month.

Delicious Chinese Restaurant

1st May 2018

Section 3 – Writing in Chinese

This section assessed the students' ability to express ideas through the creation of an original text in Chinese. Student responses were assessed against 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 topics given. Each topic represented a different text type and style of writing (personal, imaginative, informative, persuasive and evaluative). All five questions were attempted, although there was a clear preference for the informative and evaluative 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, they should be aware that they need to provide all the features of the text type or writing style as required.

Students did not perform well on the criterion of 'relevance, breadth and depth of content'. Students should exhibit a good range of relevant vocabulary and express themselves accurately.

Question 8

Text type: diary entry

格式: 天气, 日期 (features of the text type: weather, date)

结构: 活动的起因, 发展、结果 (content: the cause, development and result of the activities)

Audience: oneself

Kind of writing: personal

- Students were expected to reflect on their most memorable experience with their host family in Beijing. This could have been an interesting outing/short trip, watching a unique performance with the family such as Peking Opera, an acrobatic show or a Chinese movie.
- Elements of personal language such as the use of first-person subjective/informal/familiar style/register; emphasis on opinions, feelings and impressions rather than factual, objective information.
- The diary entry needed to be appropriate for the audience: the writer themselves.
- The piece of writing needed to be clearly recognised as a diary entry through the use of some of the following: date, structure, opening, content, conclusion, register, style, layout.

Question 9

Text type: (informal) letter

格式: 收信人、祝颂语、写信人、日期 (features of the text type: receiver of the letter, salutation, author of the letter and date)

结构: 庆祝活动的三个方面 (structure: three aspects of the celebration)

Audience: penpal

Kind of writing: informative

- Students were expected to inform their penpal of ways in which Australia Day is celebrated in Australia. This may have included: the Australia Day Parade, a picnic or BBQ, watching a sporting match, a visit to the Governor-General's residence.
- The letter needed to be informative: objective style, structure and sequence to make the message clear and unambiguous, use of facts and examples.
- The letter needed to be appropriate for the audience: penpal.
- The piece of writing needed to be clearly organised as a letter through the use of some of the following: date, structure, opening, conclusion, register, style, layout.

Question 10

Text type: article

格式: 报纸名称、出版日期、题目、作者 (features of the text type: name of the newspaper, date of publication, title and author)

结构: 清晰列出争论的焦点, 至少两个好处和两个坏处的理由与说明 (structure: bone of contention, at least two points from each side)

Audience: readers of the local newspaper

Kind of writing: evaluative

- Students were expected to present appropriate advantages and disadvantages of taking a gap year before commencing tertiary education. Advantages could have included having a break, adjusting to/getting ready for university education, having an enriching experience, becoming independent. Disadvantages could have included graduating a year later than their peers/missing some opportunities, safety issues.
- As an evaluative piece of writing, students needed to provide a logical presentation and discussion of ideas, expand on important aspects of the issue. They could have used evidence to support contrasting sides, appealed to reason not emotion and created an impression of balance and impartiality.
- The article needed to be appropriate for the audience: readers of the local newspaper.

- The piece of writing needed to be clearly recognised as an article through characteristics such as topic, structure (introduction, body, conclusion), content, title, author (fictional name) register; style; layout.

Question 11

Text type: script of a speech

格式： 听众、自我介绍、演讲题目、提示演讲结束 (features of the text type: audience, introduction, speech topic, conclusion)

结构： 明确说明参加植树日的好处，鼓励同学们参加 (benefits of attending the Tree Planting Day, encouraging students to participate)

Audience: students attending the assembly

Kind of writing: persuasive

- Students needed to persuade their fellow students to participate in the celebrations of World Forest Day. They were expected to present convincing arguments such as gaining more awareness about environmental protection issues, making new friends and getting some exercise.
- Elements of persuasive language such as appeals, emotive language, anecdotes, repetition, etc, needed to be included.
- The speech needed to be appropriate for the audience: fellow students.
- The piece of writing needed to be clearly organised as a speech through the use of some of the following: title/topic, structure, opening, conclusion, register, style, layout.

Question 12

Text type: story

格式： 题目、作者 (features of the text type: title, author)

结构： 成为音乐家后的经历(三个方面) (aspects of being a musician)

Audience: teenage readers of magazine

Kind of writing: imaginative

- Students were expected to write a story based on a music lover who suddenly/unexpectedly achieves fame. They could have explained how the fame was achieved, described their new experience as a famous musician performing around the world/how they enjoyed their fame/ how their fame changed their lives or the lives of others.
- Elements of imaginative writing could have included the development of the plot and characters, descriptions of the setting and heightened drama.
- The story needed to appeal to its specific audience: teenagers.
- The piece of writing could be clearly organised as a story through characteristics such as title/topic, structure, content, author (fictional name), register, style, layout.