

2019 VCE Chinese Second Language written examination report

General comments

Many students responded well to all sections of the 2019 VCE Chinese Second Language written examination. Students generally demonstrated a sound knowledge and understanding of Part A of Section 1, and Part A and B of Section 2, but quite a few students did not score high marks for Part B of Section 1 and Part C of Section 2.

In Section 1, students exhibited good comprehension skills and an ability to identify most of the required information from listening to the text. Students are reminded to respond specifically to the key words in the questions; For some students, responses indicated that their listening comprehension was good but they 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 read questions carefully and respond specifically to what each question is asking.

In Section 2 – Reading, responding and translating, it appeared that some students did not understand the questions fully and provided inappropriate or incomplete answers. Students are reminded to practise analysing and summarising information, 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, in order to provide the correct response.

It appeared that some students found the translation tasks difficult. Some students seemed to understand the Chinese wording but were unable to translate it into appropriate English. Students should avoid translating word for word from Chinese.

Students are advised to consult their dictionaries when answering questions, as many of the responses contained spelling mistakes and grammatical errors that could have been avoided. It is important that responses are based on the text provided, and that students do not include information that is irrelevant.

In Section 3 – Writing in Chinese, responses generally included the correct register, format and style. Some students did not read all aspects of the task carefully and did not correctly follow the requirements of the question.

In Section 3, most students chose Question 9, 10 or 11. Most students who chose Questions 10 and 11 produced a good piece of writing, although some were constrained by their limited vocabulary and struggled to express themselves fully. Quite a few students did not read the task for Question 9 carefully; it required students to introduce an amazing multicultural event, not write about the Chinese-speaking competition.

In terms of content, in each of the five writing tasks, some students did not provide adequate depth in their responses. 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 the 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.

The girl is unable to get out because no one is allowed to get on or off there as there is a traffic light.

Question 1b.

The girl doesn't need to pay the extra two dollars and be dropped off/get off at the next intersection (exit).

Text 2

Question 2a.

The two reasons are that:

- They need more exercise.
- They can swim and play water polo in the new swimming pool, and Xiaoying loves water polo.

Question 2b.

The final arrangement was to meet at the swimming pool at 10 am tomorrow.

Part B – Answer in Chinese

Students were required to demonstrate their understanding by listening to a text and responding in Chinese. Many students were not awarded full marks because their responses were not expressed fully in Chinese, although they 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.

Students must ensure that they respond in complete sentences when required and that their sentences communicate their ideas in their own words. Some responses included answers 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.

- 在将来的学校里，从事教学工作的是电脑，不是老师。(In schools of the future, the teaching is done by computers, not teachers.)
- 学生上课就是进行各种各样的活动，有脑力的，也有体力的。(The students will do all sorts of activities, including both physical and mental activities.)

Question 3b.

- 学生每天的作业就是发明新的活动，在第二天的课上完成。(Students' everyday homework will be to create new activities for them to complete in class the next day.)

Section 2 – Reading and responding

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.

Some students confused or misunderstood Question 4b., which required them to describe Xiaowang based on the information given in the reading text.

In order to prepare for this section of the examination, students should read the questions and think through their answers carefully. When preparing for the examination, students 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.

There are only five people in the travel group, including his family members and other two foreigners.

Question 4b.

- age 30+ years
- tour guide
- easy-going, generous / natural / warm-hearted / passionate / enthusiastic
- humorous/ knowledgeable/ talkative/ storyteller
- his English is not very good

Question 4c.

- singing and dancing show/song and dance performance

- beautiful/pretty costumes
- excellent performance

Question 4d.

- by plane (to China)
- by car (between different destinations)

Question 4e.

- He recognised one of the scenic places, as it had appeared in a movie.
- He visited many famous places.
- He walked on the famous glass bridge.
- He conquered his fear of heights.
- He tried the local cuisine, which he enjoyed a lot.

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 are given in both Chinese and English.

Text 5

Question 5a.

他俩都喜欢唱歌，在同一个合唱团。(They all love singing as they are in the same choir.)

Question 5b.

因为他们的合唱团在去年的比赛中得了第一名。

(Because the choir won in the competition last year)

他们的音乐老师很高兴。

(and the music teacher was very happy.)

Question 5c.

- 大山(最)擅长球类运动。(Dashan is very good at ball games.)
- 因为他篮球、网球和水球都打得很好。(He can play basketball, tennis and water polo very well, and)
- 他还是篮球队队长。(He is the captain of the basketball team.)

Question 5d.

每星期六上午和玛丽打完网球后，他们一起吃午饭，一起看电影 (After playing tennis with Mary on Saturday mornings, they had lunch and then watched a movie together.)

Part C – Translation

Many students found the translation of some proverbs to be challenging. Some students seemed to have a good comprehension of the passages in Chinese but did not express the meaning well in

English. Students are reminded that Chinese and English are different in terms of syntax and expression, and they should avoid translating word-for-word from Chinese.

Question 6

The following is a suggested translation.

Chinese people often like to use idioms / idiomatic phrases when they speak/talk and write. Most of these idioms only have/consist of four characters, but they have deep/profound/significant/far-reaching meanings. Most idioms are associated with/have something to do with/are related to/are linked with historical stories such as “only the heaven and the earth know”/“the heaven knows and the earth knows”/“The sky knows and the earth knows”/“Secrets safe”. Some use directional words such as/like (for example, e.g.) “south of the sky and north of the earth”/“far apart”/ “everywhere”/ “all over the place”; and some also use numbers to describe things like “one horse goes first”/“take the lead”. Some are understood as soon as people read/hear them, such as “black and white are obvious/different/distinct/clear”. There are others which look/appear to be/seem to be easy but the meanings are difficult to guess/understand, such as “three long and two short” “unexpected misfortune/mishap”.

Question 7

Section 3 – Writing in Chinese

This section assessed 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 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

Audience: oneself

Type of writing: personal

Responses may have included information about the teacher’s:

- personality
- experience in learning Chinese
- teaching style/method.

Question 9

Text type: script of speech

Audience: audience at the competition / judges of the speaking competition

Type of writing: informative

Responses were to be presented in the form of a speech, addressed to an audience and judges, and be informative.

Students may have included information about:

- the history of the cultural event
- the atmosphere of the event
- activities/highlights of the event.

Question 10

Text type: newspaper article

Audience: readers of the local newspaper

Type of writing: evaluative

Responses were to be presented in the form of a newspaper article, addressed to the readers of the local newspaper, and use an evaluative approach.

Students may have included responses about the:

- pros: efficient, trendy, unique experience
- cons: costly, lack of interaction.

Question 11

Text type: formal letter

Audience: the manager of a big department store

Type of writing: persuasive

Students may have argued that they are:

- hard working/reliable
- on a lower salary than their peers
- popular with customers.

Question 12

Text type: story

Audience: judges of the writing competition

Type of writing: imaginative

Students may have written about almost anything, starting with the prompt provided in the task.