

Chinese (continuers)

2014 Chief Assessor’s Report

# Chinese (continuers)

# 2014 Chief Assessor’s Report

## Overview

Chief Assessors’ reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

## School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

The moderators found that in most cases the subject outline and application of the performance standards were followed well. Most students’ work was of a good standard, demonstrating good depth and breadth of responses to the various tasks. Some students were able to demonstrate responses that were consistently relevant to context, purpose, audience, and topic. Depth and breadth in the treatment of the topic and content was very detailed and varied. Most students also used an extensive range of complex linguistic structures and features. Information and ideas were also organised logically and coherently.

Task design must allow students to demonstrate their learning at the highest level of achievement. Some tasks prevented students from being able to do this. For the text analysis tasks, higher-level questions are needed to allow the most able students to demonstrate the extent of their capacity to interpret meaning.

Most topics studied were appropriate and interesting. In general, the length of tasks including text production was appropriate, but there were a few with either insufficient or excessive word counts. The most successful students were able to demonstrate their learning at the highest levels of achievement and benefited from effective task design that enabled that to occur.

Not all folio tasks are required to be taken under test conditions. Having at least one task that allows drafting, for example Text Production, may provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate evidence of their learning to a higher level.

The Interaction task should allow students the opportunity to showcase their level of language skills in response to higher order questioning, such as through giving their own opinions and engaging in discussion with the interlocutor/teacher.

Teachers are reminded that the analysis and reflection questions in the Text Analysis task provide students with a significant opportunity to demonstrate their learning in relation to the Interpretation and Reflection criterion.

Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study

The in-depth study for this year was generally of good quality in terms of both the depth of the studies and the breadth of the topics. Students showed great capability and skill in coping with this assessment type.

Although oral tasks were generally well done, students need guidance in selecting a topic that is appropriate to their proficiency and is not too broad. It is also important that students receive support on how to meet performance standards for reflection at the highest level of achievement. Regarding written tasks, students need to be supported in ensuring that ‘audience for task’ is understood and applied in order to achieve higher standards. To foster in-depth research, teachers should ensure that the selected topic is of interest to the student (not just to the teacher). Some students did not have task design and task topic/title for their in-depth study tasks. It is important to have a title/topic to guide students, teachers, and moderators as they look through the work. Students should use the oral and written tasks to examine different aspects of the topic. The audience, purpose and contexts for the oral and written tasks should be different.

Some common grammar errors (measure words, time, joining words) are still present, such as 三个天; 我们一起照相这个美好的回忆; 我认识去年; 给我一个答电话.

## External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination

### Oral Examination

In 2014, most students were well prepared for their oral examination and demonstrated high achievement. There were some problems with students selecting in-depth study discussion topics that were not appropriate for their language level, either because their language skills did not enable them to adequately cope with the topic or, conversely, because the topic did not enable some students with high levels of language skills to do themselves justice.

### Section 1: Conversation

In general, students were well prepared for the conversation. Students with more sophisticated language skills were able to elaborate on the questions that were asked, even for closed questions. Some students needed to convey more depth in their answers and opinions, and others required prompting before delivering more extended answers. Teachers are encouraged to prepare their students by encouraging them to extend their answers in response to questions.

Most students demonstrated a sound understanding of the examiner’s questions and provided relevant answers.Most students were able to express themselves well by conveying meaning accurately and appropriately through manipulation of an extensive range of complex structures. Structuring was mostly good with conversations flowing quite well from one point to the next, but teachers should continue to encourage more complex sentence structures through frequent use of conjunctions. Sentence structure was sometimes weak, particularly in the ‘subject + time + place + action’ sequence.

The more confident students could maintain the flow of the conversation by responding using complex sentences with elaboration. Most students dealt with topic shifts quite well.

### Section 2: Discussion

There was a good range of topics with some students demonstrating that they had extended themselves beyond the subject outline. Some topics were more suitable than others. The narrower, more specific topics made it difficult for the students to demonstrate their language skills and for the examiners to formulate relevant questions. Examples of topics that were too narrow were superstition and sport movie study, whereas examples of good topics were Beijing, Qin Shi Huang, terracotta warriors, and weddings. Most students were well prepared and had adequate evidence and material to support their topic. Students need to be prepared to discuss each dot point, not just provide a single-sentence statement about it.

Ideas were mostly relevant. Some students were better prepared and had a greater range of vocabulary to draw from. The best prepared students had clearly done a great deal of work and had a thorough understanding of their topic. Other students had chosen topics that were inherently shallow, which limited their ability to demonstrate depth of knowledge.

For ‘Expression’, most students used a good range of connective devices and conversation flowed appropriately. Some students lacked the vocabulary to elaborate on their responses, and made mistakes when using 比, for example, ‘A 比B一样’. Information and ideas were usually organised appropriately in the Discussion. Students should always take opportunities to use more complicated words and phrases to demonstrate the depth of their expression and try to use more sophisticated structures to enable them to demonstrate their capabilities. There was a tendency to a greater frequency of pauses to process information in the Discussion than there was in the Conversation. In the Discussion, there was also a tendency towards short answers which in some cases were limited to yes/no responses. Students should be encouraged to extend their answers whenever they can.

The greatest spread of responses was in regard to reflection. It is important that students talk from the perspective of alternative views. The better students were able to express what they learned from their research and how this helped them with their understanding of the topic of their choice.

It is recommended that students bring supporting materials (usually photographs) into the examination as these may assist the examiner to help make the student feel more at ease and provide extra stimulus for discussion.

### Written Examination

On the whole, the listening and reading sections of the written examination were handled well, with the majority of students demonstrating a high level of achievement and showing a highly developed ability to extract specific pieces of information from the texts. Some students answered only one part of the questions.

It is advisable that students receive guidance on how to plan their use of time during the examination.

### Section 1: Listening and Responding

The mean mark for Question 1 was 93.57%. Most students correctly specified that the announcement was made in the morning. Most students correctly specified two or more items that were discounted. However, some students used only general categories for the goods, for example, electronics.

The mean mark for Question 2 was 77.19%. Most students were able to correctly identify that teams were made up of students from the same year level and that training took place between 3:00 and 4:45 each Wednesday afternoon. To do well in this question, students needed to be explicit about the method the coach expected the students to use to inform him that they would be absent (which was by email), not just write that they had to send a message.

The mean mark for Question 3 was 83.15%. Most students understood that the most interesting experience during Sophie’s visit was her stay in the school dormitory, but the stronger students gave evidence to support that statement, such as the fact that Sophie and the Chinese students played together, ate together in the school canteen, and experienced Chinese high school friendship. Similarly, most students were able to name two of the foods that Sophie liked to eat, but some students failed to address the first part of the question which was about the type of food she preferred. Students were generally able to specify two of the activities that Sophie’s class and the Chinese students did together.

The mean mark for Question 4 was 82.75%. The majority of students were able to give at least two reasons to explain Peter’s mother’s concern and two reasons why Peter liked Ling Ling. However, a number of students mistakenly deduced that Ling Ling was Peter’s girlfriend. Some students failed to mention Peter’s emotional state, but most students recognised that Peter felt unhappy, sad, frustrated, or angry. Most students were able to provide evidence from the text to justify Peter’s feelings. The marker advised that students need to be instructed to respond to these types of questions using emotive words and phrases.

The mean mark for Question 5 was 83.04%. The intention of the telephone message was evident to most students, as was the type of shoes that students were instructed to wear. The stronger students provided a justification for their conclusions.

### Section 2: Reading and Responding Part A

Text 1 (Question 6): Part A was well done and most students scored more than 50% of the marks. However, some students based their answer for Part B on their own knowledge of Chinese New Year rather than on the information provided in the text. Just under half of the students scored full marks for Part C because they provided good justification for their answers, but on the other hand this was the only part of Question 6 for which some students scored zero.

Text 2 (Question 7): Part A was well done and almost 50% of the students scored full marks for this question. However, the students found Part B of Question 7 to be the most difficult of the text questions and it was the only part of Question 7 for which some students scored zero. Some students appeared to have not understood the question, and a few students actually repeated their answers for Part A in Part B.

### Section 2: Reading and Responding Part B

Most students coped really well with the task, and quite a few students achieved an excellent standard. However, a small proportion did not complete the writing task. Students must not use more pinyin more often than characters in the response.

The ideas presented by most students were relevant to the context, purpose, audience, and topic, and both the depth and breadth of the content were generally very good, with elaboration of ideas and support for opinions. Most conveyed appropriate detail, ideas, information, and opinions, and created interest and engaged the reader. However, some students omitted key points. Expression was generally very good, and almost all students were able to vary their use of conjunctions when constructing complex sentences. A good number of students had no errors at all. For many students, when errors did occur, these were most commonly grammatical errors, particularly in the use of conjunctions and the use of English grammatical structures even though they were writing in Chinese. Most students used a structure in their answers that was similar to the structure in the questions, but it was encouraging to see that some very creative students chose to use their own structures and write in a sophisticated way.

### Section 3: Writing in Language

In this section, students are required to answer one question out of three options. The numbers were evenly spread: 32% students chose Question 9, 36% chose Question 10, and 32% chose Question 11. Question 11 was slightly less well answered than Questions 9 and 10.

The majority of the students understood the questions and handled the tasks very well. For the most part, the answers were directed to the appropriate audience (Questions 9 and 10) using appropriate text types. Most students expressed ideas that were relevant to the purpose. Weaker students still managed to express themselves using simple ideas that were mostly relevant to the questions. In the letter and speech questions, some successful students engaged the interest of the audience in their application/speech by directly referring to the audience. The depth of treatment of ideas, information, or opinions was generally very good, but a proportion of the students who answered Question 9 gave an unbalanced answer with too much emphasis on the benefits of the part-time job and too little on the different aspects of the job itself. A proportion of the students who answered Question 10 listed some of their skills but lacked persuasive language such as ‘您应该考虑。。。’; ‘我是最佳人选’; ‘我的技能可以使我成为好的学生领队。。。’. Students needed to provide their own opinions rather than simply make a list of the skills that they have.

Most students demonstrated the capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately. Students demonstrated a good grasp of various expressions with a good level of accuracy. Although some complex structures were used, structures were mainly basic, such as ‘虽然。。。但是’; ‘因为。。。所以。。。’; ‘除了。。。以外’. The tone of the language used in the writing of the formal letter was well managed, using 您，请. The students expressed themselves best in the dimension of coherence in structure and sequential order, using ‘第一，第二。。。最后’ or “首先， 其次，再次。。。’. Some students confused the diary and letter dates (the former being at the top and the latter at the bottom).

Overall, the students communicated their ideas very well using a good command of the language. There were a few linguistic errors, mainly related to the order of words and influenced by word order in English. There were also some inappropriate choices of words directly from a dictionary. For example, when writing the letter, ‘您好，向您申请当。。。’ was used at the beginning, ‘请您放心’ was mentioned in the middle by a few students, and ‘请您给我这个机会’ was used at the conclusion.

## Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks should be evident on all student school assessment work.

Most teachers closely adhered to the performance standards. It is important that a learning and assessment plan which includes a task sheet is submitted for moderation.

If the teaching and learning program differs from the learning and assessment plan, an addendum must be submitted in the moderation package.

When schools combine to form one assessment group, it is important that there is a common interpretation of the performance standards.

A wide variety of standards was presented for moderation. It was evident that teachers who had familiarised themselves with the Stage 2 subject outline and school assessment requirements had prepared their students well and based their assessment decisions appropriately on the performance standards. All teachers are advised to ensure that they are familiar with the current Stage 2 subject outline and school assessment requirements at the start of the school year.

The packaging and presentation of materials for moderation was generally well organised. Moderation of the school assessment resulted in confirmation of most grades.

Chinese (continuers)

Chief Assessor