2020 Chinese (background speakers) Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2020 assessment cycle, gives 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, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

There are three assessments in this part: interaction, text production, and text analysis. Teachers designed three to five tasks for this assessment type, which provided students with the opportunities to address all of the specific features which are stated in the Performance Standards in the subject outline.

When designing assessment tasks for the Folio, teachers need to ensure that they provide the students with the opportunity to address all of the specific features (i.e. I1, I2, E1, E2, E3, IR1, IR2 and IR3) as stated in the performance standards in the subject outline.

Interaction

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated a clear understanding of the purpose, audience, and context of their texts, and this understanding influenced the ways in which the text was structured, and the language was used
* featured highly competent expression of opinions in response to open-ended questions, without being overly reliant on a script, particularly in the assessment design criteria of Ideas and Expression
* supported and justified their opinions with logical and coherent evidence
* created the desired interest, impact and engagement of the audience, through judicious use of language
* used highly developed and appropriate language
* employed a variety of communication strategies effectively.

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided general information on the topic, rather than detailed analysis and explanation of the topic
* needed more preparation to respond confidently, and in greater depth, to unscripted questions and comments
* required constant teacher guidance
* lacked evidence from a range of sources
* were based only on personal experience in the discussions.

Note: In discussions, care should be taken to give students the opportunity to expand on answers. Folio — Interaction tasks should have different content to the oral presentation tasks.

Text Production

The more successful responses commonly:

* were based on a specified contemporary issue, and the teacher had focussed on one text type and explicitly taught the language and structure relating to this text type
* were based on more specific questions than ‘Write an essay on …’ or ‘Write a response to ...’, and clearer instructions of a specific task (context, audience and purpose of writing) were given
* provided detail and justification of their ideas
* used a range of sophisticated expressions and appropriate cohesive devices
* fulfilled the task requirements of addressing an issue, as specified in the subject outline
* fulfilled the task requirements of conveying opinion about the issue, as well as providing supporting information
* utilised information and ideas arising from the text to form and express their own opinions.

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided, for example, a recount of a film, or information on a topic, without considering different perspectives
* stated what they had read and presented the data/information without adequate analysis
* bore limited relevance to the topic and purpose, with superficial expression of ideas, and a lack of detail
* were incoherent and poorly structured.

Text Analysis

The more successful responses commonly:

* analysed and explained the content, purpose, and audience of the texts
* responded to questions in the candidate’s own words, with appropriate textual references to support their opinions.

The less successful responses commonly:

* identified the key issue but did not incorporate examples from the texts effectively, when supporting the student’s own views.

It is important to be clear about the requirements as set out in the subject outline and give students opportunities to fulfil these requirements. Some good text analysis tasks allowed students to compare the perspectives, ideas, and opinions in the texts, thus demonstrating their competence in the essential part of this assessment — the Evaluation and Reflection assessment design criteria. It was difficult for students to demonstrate specific feature ER2 (Analysis of linguistic, cultural, and stylistic features) if the written task only required them to respond to a text. The Text Analysis task needs to be designed to give students the opportunity to analyse, evaluate and reflect on linguistic and cultural aspects, based on their research and learning.

Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study

Students were required to carry out an in-depth study (IDS) of one contemporary issue of their choice. There are three assessments for the in-depth study:

* an oral presentation in Chinese (5 - 7 minutes)
* a written response to the topic in Chinese (maximum of 1000 characters)
* a reflective response in English (maximum of 600 words).

The three assessments should differ in context, audience, and purpose, and be supported by evidence of research, text analysis and evaluation, and planning and preparation. While it is appropriate for teachers to advise on suitable issues, the IDS must be a product of independent study rather than a response to a topic taught to the whole class.

The more successful responses commonly:

* focussed on a specific topic that was of interest or relevance to the student
* analysed findings from a variety of sources and synthesised information (written responses in Chinese)
* used sophisticated linguistic structures and featured expressive communication
* consistently observed conventions of text types
* used appropriate referencing methods, correctly referencing quotes and the ideas of others, which were then elaborated upon in the student’s own words
* presented the process of their IDS research in a spontaneous and independent way, without over-reliance on pre-prepared answers or reading from a script (oral presentation in Chinese)
* demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the subject of the study, such as the different views of society on this issue, the points of contention, international views (e.g. compare the issue in China with different countries), etc.
* used surveys, statistical data, and examples to make their points more convincing
* presented a clear idea of what the student wanted to achieve in this assessment and provided insightful evaluation of the topics. They focussed on specific aspects, providing detailed analysis and/or explanation of how the texts studied informed their own understanding and perspectives on the topic (reflection in English).

The less successful responses commonly:

* chose broad and general topics, making it difficult for students to demonstrate the Ideas assessment design criterion to a high level
* presented data/information as a series of quotes without attempts to analyse and explain the information, ideas, or perspectives
* presented merely general information on the topic or simply described the process of their research rather than providing a personal reflection on cultural perspectives, or profound learning of the topic (reflection in English)
* were brief and superficial, only using simple sentence structures and vocabulary, thereby lacking clarity of expression.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination

Students undertake one 15-minute oral examination and a 190-minute written examination on the prescribed themes which are stated in the subject outline (pages 41-42).

Oral Examination

The most successful students:

* interacted on refreshing, meaningful, and interesting topics that were carefully chosen
* provided evidence of research that was conducted appropriately and thoroughly
* demonstrated an excellent knowledge and deep understanding of their research topics
* demonstrated excellent research skills such as analysis and data selection (selecting useful resources), logical reasoning, abstract summary, and conclusion
* interpreted experts’ theories accurately and used them as references to justify their views
* Expressed themselves clearly, logically, and coherently using sophisticated language (grammatical rhetoric and vocabulary) and fluency
* Provided a profound and insightful reflection on their study including their own values, beliefs, ideas, and experiences
* were confident and well prepared for the discussion (the oral examination).

The less successful students:

* lacked depth in the topic of their research — resulting in discussion of issues at a surface level
* lacked focus on the topic
* lacked the ability for comprehensive analysis and abstract summary
* selected an inappropriate research topic, e.g., the topics were either too broad or too narrow, which limited the content and the depth of the research
* were unable to provide an insightful and deep reflection on their learning
* were unable to explain their opinions clearly, logically, and coherently
* were unable to provide evidence of learning, e.g., resources studied, current situation of the issue in society, experts’ opinions on the issue
* lacked the knowledge and skills to conduct research
* responded without considering the questions being asked by the examiners
* gave memorised or rehearsed answers rather than spontaneous responses.

Advice for improvement

* carefully choose the topic
* develop research skills in how to conduct research (research methodologies), how to select valuable information, how to analyse information and how to draw a conclusion
* read experts’ and scholars’ books, articles, statements on the issue of your topic as much as possible, and use them to support your opinions
* develop language skills e.g. using communication strategies, using sophisticated linguistic structures and cohesive devices.

Written Examination

Section 1: Listening and Responding

Part A

Question 1(a)

The more successful responses

* displayed a comprehensive understanding of poverty alleviation targets which includes having an annual income of no less than 4000 yuan, ‘two no worries, three guarantees’ — no worries for food and clothes, and education, health care and housing are guarantees
* answered the question in English accurately.

The less successful responses

* were unable to fully identify the above points mentioned in the text
* did not demonstrate comprehensive analysis or abstract summary
* did not express their answers clearly or accurately in English
* answered the question in Chinese.

Question 1(b)

The more successful responses

* displayed comprehensive understanding of the phrase ‘千里之堤溃于蚁穴’ in the context of the interview by mentioning that “an anthill can destroy a great embankment” — a corrupt action can have significant impact on the effectiveness of poverty alleviation of China
* answered the question in English accurately.

The less successful responses

* did not fully understand the above points mentioned in the text
* did not demonstrate comprehensive analysis or abstract summary
* did not express their answers clearly or accurately in English
* answered the question in Chinese.

Question 1(c)

The more successful responses

* displayed comprehensive understanding of ‘这是一场艰难的战役‘ in the context of the text by mentioning that there are still over 70 million people living in poverty; their geographical distribution is very scattered; most of them are in remote areas that lack basic infrastructure
* answered the question in English accurately.

The less successful responses

* did not fully identify the above points mentioned in the text
* did not demonstrate comprehensive analysis or abstract summary
* did not express their answers clearly or accurately in English
* answered the question in Chinese.

Question 1(d)

The more successful responses

* displayed comprehensive understanding of what Professor Bi means when he says ‘让曾经贫困的人拥有点石成金的能力’ by mentioning that the government will build more infrastructure, build schools, organise training courses, help ethnic minorities to develop cultural tourism and that these initiatives will give once poor people the ability to get jobs, to make a better life for themselves.
* answered the question in English accurately.

The less successful responses

* did not accurately summarise Professor Bi’s views
* misinterpreted and/or misunderstood Professor Bi’s views
* lacked comprehensive analysis and abstract summary
* did not clearly express and explain their answers in English
* answered the question in Chinese.

Section 1: Listening and Responding, Part B

Question 2

The more successful responses

* demonstrated a thorough understanding of both arguments expressed in the two texts
* analysed, evaluated, compared, and contrasted both points of view on the Red Flag River Project from the two texts
* provided and justified their own opinion on the issue
* used the correct text type conventions (an article for an online magazine)
* expressed themselves clearly, logically, and coherently.

The less successful responses

* didn’t fully understand the issues that were presented in the texts
* simply repeated (or copied) what was in the texts without any analysis, evaluation, comparison or contrast of the opinions in the texts
* did not cover both sides of the argument
* did not present personal opinions
* used an incorrect text type (did not write an article or wrote in article form but without a title)
* lacked logic and structure in their writing
* did not demonstrate comprehensive analysis or abstract summary
* included information that was not relevant to the texts
* used incorrect characters, punctuation marks, paragraphs and/or formatting.

Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part A

Question 3(a)

The more successful responses

* interpreted and explained the meaning of the two idioms in the context of the text accurately by mentioning: 众矢之的 — describes Dama as a group that has been criticised by a lot of people in the society; 望而生畏 — describes how people feel disgusted when they see Damas.

The less successful responses

* misunderstood the idioms
* explained the idioms in the context of the text incorrectly
* were unable to convey their opinions/explanations clearly, logically or cohesively.

Question 3(b)

This question required students to have a good knowledge of Chinese rhetorical techniques and literary devices.

The more successful responses

* correctly identified three different types of literary device (which are metaphor, dual, quote, parallelism and rhetorical question) used in the text, and provided a comprehensive explanation/justification of their effect.

The less successful responses

* wrongly identified some of the literary devices
* explained their effect incorrectly.

Question 3(c)

The more successful responses

* were able to accurately analyse and summarise the author’s views on Dama by mentioning how the author sympathises with the group of aunts:
* labelling is wrong
* unfair to this age group and to individuals
* the things that Dama are accused of are also done by people of other ages and genders
* bad or illegal behaviour should be the responsibility of each individual, not a group
* conveyed their explanation clearly, logically and coherently with evidence from the text

The less successful responses

* misunderstood the author’s opinions
* Did not include comprehensive analysis and abstract summary
* did not present their opinions logically or cohesively
* did not use evidence from the text to support their answers

Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part B

Question 4

The more successful responses

* referred to the main points outlined in the text
* analysed and evaluated the different opinions mentioned in the text
* used the correct text type (letter to the editor)
* provided own opinion with justification/evidence/examples
* used complex grammar structures and sophisticated vocabulary to express their own views clearly, logically and cohesively

The less successful responses

* simply repeated (or copied) what was in the text without any analysis of the issue
* did not refer to the information from the text
* did not include comprehensive analysis or abstract summary
* were not relevant to the question
* did not put forward their own understanding of and opinion on the issue
* used an incorrect text type (not a letter to the editor)
* used clumsy grammar structures and inaccurate vocabulary

Section 3: Writing in Chinese

Question 5

The more successful responses

* demonstrated a thorough understanding of the issues by discussing several ways that social media impacts young people’s interpersonal relationships, e.g. positive or negative or could have aspects of good and bad
* provided a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the issues with justifications
* provided recommendations /conclusions
* used the correct text type conventions (an article for a university magazine)
* used complex grammar structures and sophisticated vocabulary to express their thoughts clearly, logically and coherently.

The less successful responses

* expressed ideas that were not quite relevant to the question
* showed a lack of knowledge and understanding of the issue
* lacked comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the issue
* lacked depth: their thoughts were at a superficial level
* did not stick to the point
* points were not clearly, logically or coherently expressed or justified
* used an incorrect text type, (did not write an article or wrote in article form but without a title)
* lacked accuracy and appropriateness of expression (e.g. no complex grammar structures or sophisticated vocabulary; incorrect paragraph structure; incorrect characters; etc.).

Question 6

The more successful responses

* demonstrated a thorough understanding of the issues related to the education reform, in particular the demand for talent in the future
* provided analysis and discussion on the reforms - should focus on cultivating the talents required in the fourth industrial revolution, characterised by the internet and artificial intelligence
* were able to explain what skills are required for the future and why Chinese educational reform should focus on these skills – how this would benefit China and Chinese people
* used the correct text type conventions (a letter to the person in charge of the Education Department in China)
* used complex grammar structures and sophisticated vocabulary
* expressed their thoughts clearly, logically and coherently.

The less successful responses

* expressed ideas that were not quite relevant to the question
* showed a lack of knowledge and understanding of the topic
* showed a lack of depth — their thoughts were at a superficial level
* did not stick to the point
* included opinions that were not clearly, logically and coherently expressed or justified
* used an incorrect text type (e.g. an article instead a letter)
* lacked accuracy and appropriateness of expression (e.g. no complex grammar structures or sophisticated vocabulary; incorrect paragraph structure; incorrect characters; etc.).

Question 7

The more successful responses

* demonstrated a deep understanding of the meaning “We should look at society with tolerance, acceptance of differences, and with rational thinking”
* provided a clear stance on how they feel about the phrase with examples and made comparisons to justify their view
* provided reasons why they feel strongly about this phrase and what it means for society
* used the correct text type conventions (a diary entry)
* used complex grammar structures and sophisticated vocabulary to express opinions clearly, logically and coherently.

The less successful responses

* expressed opinions that were not quite relevant to the question
* showed a lack of knowledge and understanding of the topic
* showed a lack of depth: the discussion was at a superficial level
* did not stick to the point
* used an incorrect text type (not a diary entry)
* gave opinions that were not clearly, logically and coherently explained or justified
* lacked accuracy and appropriateness of expression (e.g. no complex grammar structures or sophisticated vocabulary; incorrect paragraph structure; incorrect characters; etc.).

Question 8

The more successful responses

* demonstrated a thorough understanding of the importance of sharing Chinese culture with the world by analysing and evaluating different perspectives as to why it is important
* explained and justified their opinions with examples and evidence
* provided some suggestions on how to share Chinese culture with the world effectively
* used the correct text type conventions (a speech)
* used complex grammar structures and sophisticated vocabulary to express their thoughts clearly, logically and coherently.

The less successful responses

* showed a limited knowledge and understanding of the topic
* were not quite relevant to the question
* did not stick to the point
* showed a lack of depth — their thoughts on the issue were at a superficial level
* expressed opinions that were not clearly explained or justified
* used an incorrect text type (not a speech)
* did not present their ideas logically and coherently
* lacked accuracy and appropriateness of expression (e.g. no complex grammar structures or sophisticated vocabulary; incorrect paragraph structure; incorrect characters; etc.).