

Chinese (background speakers)

2013 Chief Assessor's Report



Government
of South Australia

SACE
Board of SA

CHINESE (BACKGROUND SPEAKERS LEVEL)

2013 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

There are three assessments in this part: interaction, text production, and text analysis. Most teachers designed four or five tasks for this assessment type, which provided students with more opportunities to demonstrate that they had met the performance standards in this assessment type.

Interaction

The role of teachers in the interaction task is very important as they must ask questions that stimulate an interesting discussion and provide the students with the opportunity to expand upon their answers. It is important for teachers to be engaged in the interaction tasks, for example, during discussions care should be taken to give students the opportunity to expand on answers. It might make it difficult for students to demonstrate achievement at the highest level for the performance standard E3 (Use of strategies to initiate and sustain communication) if they just set up a presentation task with limited or no interaction with others.

The most successful students demonstrated a clear idea of the purpose, audience, and context of their texts, and this understanding influenced the way the text was structured and the language that was used. They also demonstrated competence in the Ideas and Expression performance standards by expressing opinions in response to open-ended questions without over-reliance on a script.

The less successful students were mainly rehearsing general information on the topic, i.e. with less explanation of the information they referred to and less analysis of the topic. Some students need more confidence and preparation to respond at some length to unscripted questions and comments.

Text Production

Responses appeared to be more successful when they were based on a specified contemporary issue and teachers focused on one text type and explicitly taught the language and structure relating to this text type. Successful responses were achieved when the question was more specific than 'Write an essay on...' or 'Write a response to...'

The most successful responses met the task requirements of:

- addressing an issue as specified in the subject outline. It appeared less sufficient to provide, for example, a recount of a film, or information on a topic without considering different perspectives
- conveying an opinion about the issue, as well as providing information. The better responses were from students who were able to use information and ideas arising from the text(s) to form and express their own opinions.

Text Analysis

It is important that teachers are very 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 text/s on the topic so that students were able to demonstrate their competence in the essential part of this assessment — Evaluation and Reflection performance standards.

The most successful students were able to analyse and explain the content, purpose, and audience of the texts. They responded to question/s in their own words and with appropriate textual references to support their opinions. The less successful students identified the key issue but were not able to incorporate examples from the text/s effectively in supporting their own views.

Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study

Students were required to carry out an In-depth Study (IDS) of one contemporary issue of their choice. While it is appropriate for teachers to advise on suitable issues, the IDS must be a product of independent study and not a response to a topic taught to the whole class.

Students who focused on a specific topic that was of interest or relevance to them had more success. Some students chose broad and general topics, making it difficult for them to demonstrate the Ideas performance standards to a high level. The better Chinese written responses were able to analyse findings from a variety of sources and synthesise the information. Better responses correctly referenced quotes and the ideas of others and these were then elaborated upon in the student's own words. Responses were less successful when presented as a series of quotes without attempts to analyse and evaluate the information, ideas, or perspectives.

Students who achieved a high standard in the oral task were able to present or discuss the process of their IDS research in a spontaneous and independent way without over-reliance on pre-prepared answers or reading from a script. Successful oral tasks demonstrated analysis and comprehensive knowledge of the issues as well as their own opinions. The same requirements should not be used for both the oral and Chinese written responses. Using the same or similar requirements for both tasks is problematic, as there is almost inevitably some crossover of information and ideas between the two tasks which would limit students' opportunity to meet the requirements.

For the completion of the English responses, the most successful students obviously had a clear idea of what they wanted to achieve in this assessment. They focused on certain aspects and elaborated in detail with analysis or explanation of the process

they employed, examples of their practices, and so on. Some less successful responses did not appear to have a clear purpose other than to present some general information of the topic or simply describe the process of their research. In addition, a 7-minute time limit is set for the oral task in Assessment Type 2. A number of oral tasks were substantially longer than this. Students should be encouraged to keep within the time limit as anything longer than this may not be listened to at moderation. Similarly, all written tasks for the In-depth study have a word limit, and anything over the limit may not be assessed against the performance standards.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 3: Examination

Oral Examination

The mean mark was 18.43/30.

The overall performance of students in this area was satisfactory this year. The majority of students demonstrated evidence of a thorough learning process, had a good understanding of the various contemporary issues, and were well prepared for their discussions in the oral examination. They thus achieved a satisfactory or higher result. However, some students failed because their performances did not reach the requirements of the subject.

Although the majority of students performed at a satisfactory to good standard, their results were affected by a variety of issues. For example, some students were unable to demonstrate a depth of knowledge and understanding of the topics which they studied; some students were unable to refer to references, provide evidence of learning, and justify their views; some students were unable to express their opinions logically and coherently; and some students were unable to reflect on their study with insight.

The most successful students in this section showed that their topics were carefully chosen and their research was well planned and conducted. They demonstrated excellent knowledge about their research topics in both depth and breadth, and were able to use references and valid evidence to justify their views. Their information, opinions, ideas, and perspectives were expressed clearly, logically, and coherently. Their reflection on their study including their own values, beliefs, ideas, and practices was insightful.

The less successful students appeared to be lacking in diligent study and preparation. They were unable to respond well to examiners' questions or to provide any evidence of learning. Some students lacked either understanding about research, the knowledge and skills to conduct research, or the skills to select an appropriate research topic.

The IDS topics chosen by the students (or the teachers) this year were diverse and mostly appropriate. A lot of fresh, interesting and valuable topics were under the themes of 'China and the World' and 'Modernisation and Social Change'. However, a few topics such as 'Youth issues in China' were too broad and others were too specific, which limited the depth of students' study.

There were indications that some students did not research their IDS topics in enough depth. For example, some students said that they had done their research by watching TV or telephoning a friend in China, some students selected their resources from only one viewpoint, and some students appeared to have memorised information without further analysis or critique.

A few students brought pictures or diagrams as their supporting material, but generally these were not persuasive or helpful. Some of these were prohibited from being used because of a lot of information was written on them. Teachers must ensure that the students understand that this is not allowed.

Advice to teachers:

- help students select an appropriate and suitable topic
- teach them how to plan and conduct a research
- teach them how to select and use valuable and useful information in their study
- help students to complete the In-depth Study for Oral Examination form correctly and clearly.

Written Examination

Section 1: Listening and Responding, Part A

The mean mark for this part was 6.55/10.

Most of the students' performances in this section were satisfactory or higher, although it was challenging for the students due to English being their second language. Some of the students had difficulty in understanding the questions or were unable to use English to express their thoughts clearly. Their responses from these students were often not quite accurate, or even worse, completely wrong as they had misunderstood the question.

However, some of the students were very successful — 14 students gained full marks. They understood the text very well and were able to respond to the questions using simple but efficient English vocabulary and grammar structures.

Only very few students were unable to answer any of the questions or answered all of the questions incorrectly, and received zero as a result. A few students answered the questions in Chinese and they also received a zero for this section.

The majority of students were able to answer Question 1(a) correctly. However some answers were incomplete or incorrect.

The answers for Question 1(b) were disappointing — more than half of the students' answers were incorrect. Most of them misunderstood the question. Similarly, a lot of students answered Question 1(c) partially, while some students misunderstood the question and gave an incorrect answer.

Most the students were able to give the correct answer for Question 1(d). However, some students explained the meaning of the phrase but did not explain it in the context of the text. They lost a mark for this.

The clear indication is that to improve performance in this area, students need to improve their English, as well as their listening comprehension, analysis and

evaluation skills.

Section 1: Listening and Responding, Part B

The mean mark for this part was 9.58/15.

Most of the students understood the texts and the questions well and gained a satisfactory or higher result in this part of the examination. However, many of them failed to analyse and evaluate the texts they listened to.

The more successful students were not only able to identify the information from the two texts, but were also able to form their opinions into logical and cohesive writing.

Students lost marks for only repeating what was in the texts; not using the information from both texts; not analysing and evaluating the information; putting forward their own thoughts; using incorrect characters or Pinyin in their writing; and using the incorrect writing format.

Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part A

The mean mark for this section was 8.91/15.

The performances of the students in this part were fairly strong this year. Most students understood the text and the questions very well. Nevertheless, a few students struggled to achieve a satisfactory level.

The most successful students were not only able to appreciate the author's ideological connotations but were also able to identify and explain the literary techniques used in the text.

For Question 3(a), most students were able to explain the meaning of the phrases in the context of the text. However, some of them were only able to explain the meaning of the phrase and did not explain it in the context of the text, and they lost a mark for that.

For Question 3(b), some students were able to understand (interpret), analyse, and explain the author's ideological connotations and express their opinions by using their own words. However, the question asked 'why' not 'how', so a lot of students who simply put the author's words in the space as their answer without any explanation lost marks.

Students generally performed well in Question 3(c). It was a straightforward question and the answer was clearly indicated in the text. Most students were able to give the correct answer. However, some students were unable to give a complete answer or gave an incorrect answer.

A few students did not answer Question 3(c) due to overlooking the instruction 'PLEASE TURN OVER'. It was pity that they lost 5 marks for this.

Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part B

The mean mark for this part was 10.04/15.

The majority of students performed well and achieved a satisfactory or higher result in this part of the examination.

The most successful students were not only able to identify the issue, but were also able to analyse and evaluate the issue from the text and formulate their opinions into their writing logically and cohesively.

Less successful students lost marks for a variety of reasons as per below:

- not responding to the text
- not using the information from the text
- misunderstanding the text
- not focusing on the topic
- restating (copying) what was in the text
- a lack of in-depth treatment — not analysing, not evaluating the information, putting forward their own thoughts
- not stating their personal opinions clearly
- using the wrong specification (writing an article instead a letter as they were required to do)
- writing a long paragraph that had no structure or logical sequence and was not cohesive
- using incorrect characters or Pinyin.

Section 3: Writing in Chinese

The table below shows the mean score for each question.

Question	Themes	Text Type	Mean
5	Modernisation and Social Change	An article for a magazine	18.72/30
6	China and the World	A diary entry	15.89/30
7	Modernisation and Social Change	An essay	15.89/30
8	The Overseas Chinese-speaking Communities	A speech	17.18/30

About 54% of students answered Question 8, 24% of students answered Question 5, 13% of students answered Question 6, and 9% of students answered Question 7.

The majority of students performed well in this part and achieved a satisfactory or higher result. They demonstrated a good understanding of the issues, and were able to formulate their opinions into text clearly, logically, and cohesively. However, a small number of students struggled to reach a satisfactory level.

The most successful students were commonly not only able to meet the specifications with the correct logical structures but also, most importantly, they had a clear view with deep understanding on the topic, were able to use references, and offered explanations and justifications in their discussion.

Although some students were able to use good writing skills to discuss the topics that they chose, they were unable to provide a deep discussion on these issues. For

example, for Question 5, some students talked about education issues and reforms in China, but failed to discuss this in a global context. Although 54% of students chose Question 8, only a few were successful. This was mainly because most of these students failed to demonstrate a deep understanding of the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, and answered in a very superficial way.

The less successful students lost their marks for a variety of reasons as per below:

- they misunderstood the question
- their opinions were not quite relevant to the set question
- they had a lack of knowledge and understanding about the topics
- their responses lacked depth — their thoughts on social issues were at a superficial level
- their opinions were not clearly expressed and justified, and some of them did not keep to the point
- they did not focus on the impact of the Internet and foreign words on Chinese language and culture
- they used the wrong specification (e.g. writing an article instead a diary entry)
- they wrote long paragraphs with no logical structures
- they used incorrect characters or Pinyin.

Teachers are advised to:

- make sure that students really understand the topic/issue they studied throughout the year
- remind students to check questions and pages carefully, making sure not to miss any question or page
- remind students to read the questions carefully, making sure not to misunderstand the questions and tasks
- remind students not to write their names on the examination papers.

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

There is no need to submit the supporting materials, e.g. the texts studied for the IDS or the draft of the written tasks. Evidence of students' learning will only be sought from the assessment tasks.

It is vital that moderators are able to access and hear the orals, as there is at least one oral task within each assessment type. Teachers should refer to the information about preparation of non-written materials and submission of electronic files on the SACE website, and submit work in accordance with these instructions.

Teachers should check discs before they are sent in for moderation to make sure that all orals are able to be accessed by moderators.

A good option for presenting audio files is submitting a CD/DVD for each student with oral tasks in separate files (i.e. not in a continuous single file). An alternative is to have a folder of tasks for each student on a single CD/DVD. In either option, students' SACE registration number should be indicated clearly for each audio file.

A copy of the LAP should be included with each school package, together with a complete set of task sheets. If there have been changes in the LAP since it was approved, the addendum should also be included. If there is work missing for any reason, teachers must complete a 'Variation' form and include it with the moderation materials.

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