

2016 VCE Chinese Second Language Advanced written examination report

General comments

Overall, students were well prepared for and performed well in the 2016 Chinese Second Language Advanced written examination. The majority of students made good attempts at each question and completed the questions in all sections of the examination.

Students are reminded that when completing the examination, it is imperative that they read the questions very carefully, taking particular notice of the key words in order to provide relevant and comprehensive answers. It is also very important to read the texts in Sections 2 and 3 thoroughly to obtain a complete and accurate understanding. For most students, the level of difficulty of the reading texts in this year's examination was quite reasonable. However, many students missed out on marks due to careless mistakes. For example, some students used Lin Daming by mistake as an example when answering Question 4b. They assumed Lin Daming was Chinese, and therefore was from a Chinese family that placed great emphasise on Easter, illustrated a cultural influence. They missed the fact that Lin Daming used the term 'we Americans' when talking about giving each other Easter eggs.

In Section 3 – Writing in Chinese, many students demonstrated their ability to use sophisticated vocabulary and idiomatic expressions, and complex grammatical structures, and had good control of syntax. Most students also showed familiarity with the conventions of the text type. Some students seemed unfamiliar with the kinds of writing required. When organising ideas and information, students need to be mindful of the syntactic and lexical features that contribute to a logical structure.

Specific information

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1 – Listening and Responding Part A – Answer in English

Most students handled this section confidently; however, a large number of responses did not score full marks because they did not include sufficient information. In Question 1a., for example, it was insufficient to just say Li Hua is taller but thinner than Li Ming. Some students got the two people mixed up. Many students did not make use of the note-taking space provided on the examination. Students are reminded that note-taking is an important strategy to ensure that all details and relevant information are included in their answers.

Text 1

Question 1a.

Li Hua is a bit taller but much thinner than Li Ming.

Question 1b.

Li Hua is half an hour/30 minutes older than Li Ming.

Text 2

Question 2a.

The strong wind and heavy rain caused the delay.

Question 2b.

The passengers can surf the internet, and have some snacks and drinks.

Students were not penalised for grammatical and spelling mistakes if key information was not affected by such mistakes.

Part B – Answer in Chinese

In this section students were required to demonstrate their full understanding of the spoken text by responding to the question in Chinese characters. Students needed to write grammatically correct full sentences as full marks could not be awarded to responses that included incorrect sentence structures, errors in character writing and incomplete sentences. Many students' listening skills were of a high standard and their capacity to understand general and specific aspects of the texts was very good. There were, however, still a significant number of responses that did not include all of the important details. Students should ensure that they answer the questions as comprehensively as possible. For example, in Question 3, students needed to include 'use more rainwater in the garden', as just answering 'use rainwater in the garden' was not sufficient.

Text 3

Question 3

人们要节水，因为澳大利亚多年来很少下雨，水也很贵。(There has been very little rain in Australia for many years and water is very expensive.)

人们洗澡时间不能很长，在花园里多用雨水才能节水。(To save water, people need to avoid taking long showers and use more rainwater in the garden.)

Section 2 – Reading, responding and translating

Part A – Answer in English

Many students struggled to achieve high marks in this section. Students were required to read comments made by four people in a chat room about celebrating various festivals. Students with high-scoring responses not only demonstrated excellent skills recognising Chinese characters but also their accurate understanding of the task. Responses that did not score well either contained incomplete information or a misunderstanding of the question. For example, in Question 4a., Ma Li mentioned that 'people shopped for presents'. However, an answer such as 'people went shopping' was accurate but not complete, and a large number of students could not distinguish between 'activities' and 'purpose of the activities' when selecting information to complete the task. For example, going to your parents' house and eating all day long are activities for Chinese New Year celebrations, but many students listed them as the purpose. In Question 4c., some responses provided only a translation of the expression 休养生息, but did not refer to the text to justify the explanation.

Text 4**Question 4a.**

Name	Activities that people do during the festival(s)	Purpose of the activities
Li Ying	eating and drinking	to celebrate Chinese New Year and Christmas/spending time with family members
Lin Daming	giving people coloured eggs	wishing that they have many children and that they are happy
Chen Long	- getting up early on the first day and extending New Year greetings - going to parents' house early and eating all day on the second day - sleeping in on the third day	- to have a good start to the year - family reunion - recuperating/resting to build strength
Ma Li	shopping for presents to give to family and friends	being happy

Question 4b.

Li Ying's family live in China (or are Chinese) and they celebrate Chinese New Year; however, they also celebrate Christmas.

Question 4c.

It means to recuperate and build up strength/regain energy. After all the eating and visiting, people need to sleep in.

Students were not penalised for grammatical and spelling mistakes if key information was not affected by such mistakes.

Part B – Answer in Chinese

In this section of the examination, students were awarded marks for comprehension, for their capacity to convey information in Chinese and their use of the Chinese language. Overall, students completed this section very well, with many achieving full marks. It is important for students to read the questions carefully to achieve high scores. In Question 5a., some students responded only to 'What is Dawei doing in China?', but did not supply an answer to the first part of the question, 'Who is Dawei?'.

Text 5**Question 5a.**

大卫是一个澳洲人，他在中国教英语/做英语老师 (Dawei is an Australian. He taught English in China/was an English teacher.)

Question 5b.

北京的学校有大的教学楼和先进的电脑，而西北教学条件不太好。西北的孩子比北京的孩子能吃苦，他们每天上学要走两个小时的路，而北京大多数孩子是家长开车送。西北的孩子也认真听课，还喜欢问问题。(Schools in Beijing have large classroom buildings and advanced computers. The students in the north-west were not afraid of the hardship/they walked to school for two hours

every day, but most children in Beijing were driven to school by their parents. Children in the north-west were more studious and were keen to ask questions.)

Question 5c.

大卫将来还要回西北教书/那些可爱的孩子们，因为他在西北的一个月太有意义了/他太喜欢在西北教书了/他认为西北的孩子们太可爱了。(Dawei is going back to the north-west to teach/to teach those lovely kids, because that one month he stayed in the north-west was really significant/meaningful/he loved teaching in the north-west/he thought the students in the north-west were really lovely.)

Full marks could not be awarded to responses that were not written in full sentences or that missed required information.

Part C – Translation

The translation task presented a number of challenges to students. Chinese is a concise language compared with English, and therefore an English translation generally needs more words. Students needed to choose the most appropriate ones from the many different options in English. It is also helpful for students to know that when expressing complicated ideas, Chinese tends to put the emphasis on the last part of the sentence while English puts more emphasis on the first part. Students are also reminded to read through their translation to ensure technical accuracy, such as spelling, verb forms and endings.

Question 6

China has changed greatly over the last thirty-five years. Industry has grown rapidly, so have imports and exports. China is now the world's second-largest country for imports and exports. It is also the world's largest manufacturing centre. Last year, over 250 Chinese products, including mobile phones, bicycles, clothing and computers, etc., were number 1 in the world. More than half of the products in Australian stores are made in China. China has also made 30 million cars. These cars are very popular as they are both cheap and technologically advanced.

Question 7

There are more and more different kinds of television talent shows nowadays. Is it a good or a bad thing? People have different views on this. Some people think they are good because people have more programs to watch and their lives become more interesting. People can also gain more knowledge and become aware of events in other countries. In addition, these shows might offer people a chance to become famous. However, some people believe that it is bad, because some students may neglect their studies to pursue fame.

Section 3 – Writing in Chinese

This year, students attempted the full range of the essay topics provided, with Questions 8, 9 and 11 being the most popular. Many students demonstrated very good control of linguistic elements, with some showing great depth in writing skills. A small number of students struggled to complete the task and others displayed poor knowledge of character writing by using Pinyin (Chinese phonetic alphabet) for unknown characters. Although most responses followed the requirements regarding text type features, some did not observe Chinese conventions. For example, when writing the date, the year should be written first, followed by the month and then the day. A common problem faced by many students in the essay-writing task is keeping their writing focused on each main idea. Some responses presented clear ideas at the beginning of each paragraph through the use of a clear topic sentence; however, selecting highly relevant examples and

explanatory details to effectively support these main ideas appeared to be challenging. For example, in Question 8, an advantage of taking on leadership responsibilities might be 'learning to get along with different people', which is a very good point; however, it is not ideal if through supporting this proposition, the focus is shifted toward explaining the benefit of having such skills.

Question 8

Text type: script of a speech

Audience: Year 11 students

Type of writing: persuasive

Students were required to write a speech to encourage Year 11 students to run for student leadership positions. Points/responses students could have included were:

- 锻炼培养领导才能 (gain leadership experience)
- 学会和不同人交往/相处 (learn to get along with different people)
- 丰富学校生活 (enrich their school lives)
- 对将来走向社会有帮助 (help them settle into society in the future)

Question 9

Text type: letter

Audience: pen pal in China

Type of writing: informative

Students were required to write a letter to their Chinese penpal, telling him about the new shops, the food court and the entertainment facilities in a new shopping centre in Melbourne.

Points/responses students could have included were:

- 新商店：如服装店，连锁店，超市等 (new shops such as supermarkets or outlet chains)
- 小吃部：如西式快餐店和中式快餐店/餐馆等 (food court: western and eastern style, fast food)
- 娱乐设施：如电影院，游乐室等 (entertainment: cinemas and games rooms, etc.)

Question 10

Text type: article (magazine)

Audience: readers of travel magazine

Type of writing: evaluative

Students were required to write an article for a travel magazine to evaluate the impact of overseas tourism on Australia. Points/responses students could have included were:

- 带动澳洲经济发展/促进旅游业 (benefit economic growth/tourism)
- 促进文化交流 (promote cultural exchanges)
- 破坏自然环境 (environmental impact/damage)
- 造成景点的压力如拥挤，安全隐患等 (concerns for safety and overcrowding)

Question 11

Text type: journal entry

Audience: himself/herself

Type of writing: personal

Students were required to write a personal diary entry about their experience working in a company during the last three months. They needed to describe how they got the job, explain why

it ended today and recount one of the most meaningful events. Points/responses students could have included were:

- 怎么得到这个工作 (recounting how he got his job)
- 为什么今天结束 (explaining why it ended today)
- 最有意义的一件事 (describing one of the most significant experiences)

Question 12

Text type: story

Audience: pet owner

Type of writing: imaginative

Students were required to write a story in which they were a family pet who could speak and write in Chinese, and tell their owner about an unforgettable adventure they had. Points/responses students could have included were:

- 建立这一宠物的角色以及与主人的关系 (establishing the role/character of the family pet and relationship with the owner)
- 故事情节发展 (什么历险) (development of plot [i.e. an adventure])
- 说明为什么历险经历难忘 (explanation of why the adventure was unforgettable)