Statistics

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Listening section

Task 1

Suggested responses

Question 1 (Content)
He wanted to know about the library as he was a new student from overseas.

Question 2 (Content, Deduction, Recognition and appreciation)
He was very well treated, friendly and informative. He was informed that he could find all kinds of books on the first floor, in Chinese or in English, which he could borrow or read in the library. He could read a variety of magazines, in Chinese or in English, or search on the internet in the reading room located on the ground floor. He could also find videotapes or DVDs on the ground floor where there was a viewing room. He could borrow them or view them in the library. He was also informed how many resources he could borrow and how long he could keep them at a time.

Question 3 (Content, Deduction)
Not just then. He could only read and view resources in the library because he hadn’t yet been issued a borrowing card to take them away. As he didn’t have his passport on him, he couldn’t have the borrowing card issued to him until at least next time when he brought in his passport.

Comments
Most candidates responded to the questions of this task quite comfortably. However, quite a few candidates simply translated what they heard, which only met the Content part of the criterion. Some candidates wrote only a brief summary without details. It was difficult to understand some responses due to the use of fragmented English or unclear handwriting.
Task 2

*Suggested responses*

**Question 1 (Content, Deduction)**

Zhang Hai is the interviewee, who is going to study medicine at the School of Medicine at Oxford University.

**Question 2 (Content)**

He had had a number of choices since childhood as to what to do when he grew up. He had wanted to be a policeman when he was in kindergarten. Thanks to his mother’s encouragement, he became interested in drawing and painting during his primary school years. When he was in junior high school, he suddenly became interested in mathematics. When he was in senior high school, he changed his interest to medicine which he believed to be a challenge, and decided to further his medical studies at university.

**Question 3 (Deduction, Recognition and appreciation)**

His mother had a lot of influence on him when he became interested in drawing and painting at primary school. In terms of studying medicine at university, the only influence Zhang Hai’s parents might have had on his decision is their supportive attitude towards his choice. Although they would like Zhang Hai to work in their profession, his father being a professor in literature and his mother being an artist, they wished him the very best in his studies and work in medicine.

*Comments*

Most candidates responded quite well to the questions in this task.

**Task 3**

*Suggested responses*

**Question 1 (Content)**

It is a program on the environment.

**Question 2 (Content, deduction)**

The issue raised is “white pollution”, which is pollution caused by plastic rubbish. It is raised because plastic rubbish is becoming a serious environmental problem. Plastic is cheap to produce and very useful in our daily life. It is seen and used everywhere but is very harmful to the environment. It can cause damage to the soil, the air and the sea, which are vital to the lives of human beings and animals.

**Question 3 (Content, Recognition and appreciation)**

The speaker used research results to persuade the audience to use less or no plastic in order to protect the lives of human beings and animals. She argued that research has suggested that it takes approximately 200 years for buried plastic bags to degrade, and they pollute the soil during the degrading process. If plastic bags are burned, they produce poisonous smoke and gas which
lingers for a very long time. If they are disposed of in the sea, fish, birds and other animals might die and the sea will be polluted as a result. She urges everyone to do their bit to reduce “white pollution”.

**Comments**

Most candidates were able to respond to the questions in this task. However, many candidates simply wrote down all the information they heard rather than selecting the more relevant information to suit the given scenario, e.g. Question 2 and Question 3. Once again, some candidates were let down by their use of fragmented English or unclear handwriting.

Prospective candidates should ensure they have an appropriate understanding of the elements in the syllabus assessment criterion, e.g. content, deduction, recognition and appreciation. Candidates are also advised to improve their English language literacy. While candidates may not be marked down for English spelling or grammar errors per se, their results will be affected if responses include unclearly expressed understanding of the texts due to an inadequate command of English.

**Speaking section**

In 2009, all candidates were required to speak directly to an examiner. The majority of candidates were individually assessed in person, with the remainder assessed during individual telephone conversations.

There were two tasks in this section.

The first task used a visual stimulus for a specific context. Candidates were given five minutes to prepare notes and at least two minutes to present their response. A demonstration of logic, organisation and relevance was expected. While most candidates were able to perform this task, only a relatively small number of candidates approached the task appropriately with the clear divisions of introduction, expansion and conclusion required in a speech.

The second task was to respond spontaneously to any questions from the examiner. This task provided candidates with the opportunity to express themselves on a variety of themes and topics based on the syllabus. Most candidates performed adequately in this task.

Prospective candidates should ensure they have an appropriate understanding of the Speaking section task instructions and respond accordingly.
Reading section

Task 1

Suggested responses

Question 1 (Content)

Today’s young people find lots of time for browsing on the internet, playing on the game machine, watching TV or DVDs, talking on the phone and listening to music, but find no time for or interest in reading, writing and other basic learning such as mental arithmetic.

Question 2 (Content)

Students’ writing ability is declining. There are a lot of spelling and grammatical mistakes in their homework. Students’ ability for mental arithmetic is also declining. Some high school students do not know their multiplication tables and quite a number of high school students are not able to solve very simple mathematical problems without a calculator.

Question 3 (Deduction, Recognition and appreciation)

I think the writer could be an educator, or a parent, or any adult who has valued basic learning and has concerns as well as an understanding of the challenges young people face today. The writer suggests that students should read more and spend considerable time on learning the basics which will be beneficial to them in the long term. The writer also suggests that, while students may enjoy what modern technology has brought to them, they should not allow these distractions to interfere with their normal studies.

Comments

All candidates responded to the questions in this task. However, many candidates simply wrote seemingly relevant information from the text rather than selecting more appropriate information for the given scenario, e.g. Question 1 and Question 2. Quite a number of candidates did not support the conclusion they made in Question 3 with relevant information from the article.

Task 2

Suggested responses

Question 1 (Content)

He is not very tall but is very plump, weighing approximately 60 kg at the age of 10.

Question 2 (Content)

He eats a lot and he eats all day long. At breakfast, he usually has corn porridge, milk, bread, sausages and fruit. At lunch, he has a pre-packed lunchbox from the school canteen as well as two ham and cheese sandwiches and two cans of coke. At dinner, he has fried chicken drumsticks and French fries. Before bed, he will eat more snacks such as chocolate, biscuits, crisps and sweets.
Question 3 (Deduction)

The comment suggests that Ma Xiaoli has become a living symbol of his name, the opposite of his parents’ initial intention. In Chinese, “xiao” is often used for endearment in a name while it means “small or little” in English and “li” means strength in English. The name “Xiaoli” suggests his parents’ expectation of him in life — being strong. As Ma Xiaoli continues to gain weight with all the food he has eaten, he continues to lose physical strength. He finds it hard to run or to play ball games. He even finds it hard to walk. He indeed has very little strength, as his name literally suggests, which is contrary to his parents’ expectations of him.

Question 4 (Recognition and appreciation)

The writer lists the food Xiaoli eats each day, which is mostly unhealthy, and the amount he eats. The writer also describes how Xiaoli looks now and how much physical ability he has lost as a result. By doing so, the writer hopes to persuade young readers to eat sensibly in order to maintain their health.

Comments

All candidates responded to the questions. However, a number of candidates didn’t demonstrate full understanding of the content, e.g. Question 2.

Task 3

Suggested responses

Question 1 (Content, Recognition and appreciation)

She was unhappy about her life at home. The possible reasons are as follows.

- She didn’t have her natural mother as her father brought home a young woman who was to be her stepmother.
- Her father seemed to be a rather bossy person, telling her to call the young woman he brought home “mother” at their first meeting.
- No-one in the family seemed to care much about her. During a rainy day when all her classmates were taken home by their parents, she had to wait until the rain stopped and then went home alone.

Question 2 (Content, Deduction)

The news that her stepmother had been injured on the way to pick up the writer from school in the pouring rain changed the writer’s attitude towards her stepmother.

- She no longer felt the pleasure she had felt before when seeing her stepmother lying on the hospital bed.
- Her eyes blurred with tears when she heard the news.
- She dashed back to her stepmother’s bedside and cried out to her — Mum.
- She learned sign language in order to communicate with her stepmother.
Question 3 (Content, Deduction, Recognition and appreciation)

She has been very nice to her stepdaughter. She didn’t mind that the writer didn’t call her “mother” as she was told to do. Although the writer wasn’t friendly to her, she still went to pick her up from school in the pouring rain, when she was involved in an accident. She has even decided not to have a child of her own but to treat the writer as her own child.

Comments

Most candidates were able to demonstrate their understanding of the surface meaning of the text but were less successful in identifying the text’s more subtle information, which was required for deduction, recognition and appreciation.

Prospective candidates should ensure they have an appropriate understanding of the elements in the syllabus assessment criterion, e.g. content, deduction, recognition and appreciation,

Candidates are also advised to improve their English language literacy. While candidates may not be marked down for English spelling or grammar errors per se, their results will be affected if responses are not clearly expressed owing to an inadequate command of English.

Writing section

Task 1

Visual stimulus was used for this task. Most candidates were able to respond, although many did not appear to have read the task carefully. As a result, they did not address the audience required, or the task, or did not use the stimulus. In addition, many candidates did not have a title for their article or write in paragraphs or use punctuation correctly.

Task 2

All candidates responded to this task. However, many candidates were not able to clearly specify the events they were writing about or explain the importance of these events. Consequently, they produced a piece of less relevant writing. In addition, many candidates did not write in paragraphs or use punctuation correctly.

Prospective candidates should ensure that they have:

• an understanding of the terminology used in the task suggestions in the syllabus
• an understanding of the task instructions in the examination
• the ability to write simplified characters for at least those listed in the syllabus
• the ability to write in paragraphs and have more than one or two full stops for an article of 200–300 characters.