Statistics

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Listening section

Task 1

Suggested responses

Question 1

*Did the customer receive good service? Support your response with information from the conversation.*

Yes, he did. Firstly, he was given a long list of food to choose from. The food included steamed buns with a variety of fillings and several stir-fries dishes. Secondly, the owner of the restaurant was very nice to him. She brought his order very quickly and told him to enjoy the food.

Question 2

*Why did the customer think he had made a mistake with his order? Support your response with information from the conversation.*

It was because he believed that the 12th bun was all he would have needed. He regretted that he had ordered too much. In the story, he told the owner that if he had known the 12th bun would be the one to make him full, he wouldn’t have needed to eat the previous 11 buns.

Question 3

*Do you agree that the customer made a mistake? In your response, make a comparison with your 12 years of schooling.*

No. The previous 11 buns had made it possible for him to feel full when he was eating the 12th bun. Without them, he would have still been feeling hungry. The same principle applies to the 12 years of education. Without the previous 11 years of schooling, students wouldn’t be able to cope with what is expected of a Year 12 student.
Comments

Most candidates responded adequately to this task. To achieve a better result, candidates needed to identify the key words in each question and match them with information provided in the given text. They needed to justify their responses with reference to information in the texts.

Task 2

Suggested responses

Question 1

What is remarkable about the Chinese seismograph?

(Note: A seismograph is a machine that automatically records the intensity, direction and duration of an earthquake.)

It was the world’s first, over 1700 years earlier than the one developed in Europe.

Question 2

How do we know that the seismograph worked? Explain using information from the conversation.

The seismograph looked like a giant wine jar with eight dragons on it. The dragons’ heads faced east, south-east, south, south-west, west, north-west, north, and north-east respectively. There were also eight bronze toads on the floor, each with its mouth open directly under a dragon’s mouth. There was a bronze ball in each dragon’s mouth. The ball would fall into the toad’s mouth if there was an earthquake in that direction. One day, Zhang told the Emperor that there had been an earthquake north-west of the capital as the north-west dragon on the seismograph had dropped its bronze ball. He was not believed as no-one had felt anything. Three days later, someone came to report that there had been an earthquake north-west of the capital.

Question 3

Was the woman interested in what she was told? Justify your response with information from the conversation.

Yes, she was as she kept saying things like “That’s really interesting” and “That’s really amazing.” She wanted to see the seismograph but, when told that there was only a model in the Chinese History Museum in Beijing as the original seismograph had got lost, said she was happy to see the model.

Comments

Most candidates responded quite well to the questions in this task.
Task 3

Suggested responses

Question 1

*Summarise how the speaker became the owner of a company.*

After his graduation from university, he couldn’t find a job and he became very depressed. One day, he saw an elderly man smashing the clayware that had just been made. He was puzzled and went up to ask why. The man told him that the clayware was faulty because he hadn’t managed the heat well enough. When the speaker reminded him that he had put lots of effort in making them, the man replied that he believed the next lot would be much better. As he watched the man start again from the beginning, he realised that to become successful he needed to start at the bottom and learn the job from the beginning. He then rushed home to take his luggage and join the would-be construction workers. After experiencing more setbacks and disappointment, he was finally employed as a labourer on a construction site. Years later, after he had gained much experience, he established his own company.

Question 2

*What is the purpose of the speech? Support your response with information from what has been said.*

He was speaking to a group of graduates. By telling them how he became successful, he encouraged the graduates to always keep their dreams and determination alive and to work towards their dreams (to not give up), no matter how rough the path to success might be. He said he owed his achievements to the elderly man. The man’s determination to make better clayware, even though that meant starting again from the beginning, inspired him. Despite the fact that he was already a university graduate, he became a labourer on a construction site. After years of hard work, he finally became the owner of a company.

Comments

Most candidates responded adequately to this task. To achieve a better result, candidates needed to distinguish main points from subsidiary ones and to identify the speaker’s intention and attitudes. In addition, arguments or conclusions needed to be appropriately supported by information in the given text.

Candidates needed to identify and understand the key words in questions. They also needed to justify their responses with reference to information in the texts. Candidates generally also needed to improve their English language literacy. Although minor spelling or grammatical errors do not affect the overall grade awarded for the Listening section, candidates’ results were affected if their responses could not be fully understood.

Speaking section

In 2012, all candidates were required to present a prepared 2–3 minute speech in Chinese to an examiner. The majority of candidates were individually assessed in person, with the remaining candidates assessed during individual telephone conversations. Candidates were sent information on four topics several weeks before the assessment date and required to research and prepare a 2–3 minute speech on each topic. Candidates were able to take notes written on
one double-sided palm card for each topic into the examination room and refer to them as they
presented one of their four speeches.

There were two tasks in this section.

**Task 1**

Each candidate presented a speech. (The examiner selected the topic). A demonstration of
relevance, logic and organisation at a high level was expected. Most candidates performed well in
this task, with appropriate and clear divisions of introduction, development and conclusion
evident.

**Task 2**

Candidates were required 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 well in this task.

Candidates should ensure they understand the Speaking section task instructions and respond
accordingly.

**Reading section**

**Task 1**

*Suggested responses*

**Question 1**

*What are the two points of view presented in the article?*

The first point of view is that money is everything. With money comes material enjoyment, health and *happiness*.

The second point of view is that money is useful, but it is not everything. There are things in life that are important but cannot be bought with money.

**Question 2**

*How does the writer convince the reader of their point of view? Support your response with information from the text.*

The writer argued that money is useful but is not everything. There are many very important things in life for which money is powerless. To support this argument, the writer told a story he or she had read. A group of European tourists in Africa saw an elderly man making straw hats under a tree. A French businessman went to ask the elderly man how much a hat was. Ten pesos was the reply. The businessman then asked if the man would like to become a millionaire by making one hundred thousand identical hats. The elderly man declined his request, saying he would be bored making so many identical hats. He didn’t want money if it didn’t make him feel happy, no matter how much money there might be. The writer then listed a range of things where money appears useful but powerless. Examples include: money can buy food but not appetite, medicine but not health, beds but not sleep, houses but not family harmony, paper and pens but not ideas or understanding, books but not wisdom, entertainment but not enjoyment, expensive jewellery
but not kind hearts, obedience but not loyalty, flattery but not respect and nuclear weapons but not peace.

**Comments**

Most candidates responded adequately to this task although many simply translated the text. To achieve a better result, candidates needed to identify the key words in questions, address them and use appropriate information in their responses. They also needed to justify their responses with reference to information in the texts. Simply translating information did not receive full credit.

**Task 2**

**Suggested responses**

**Question 1**

What did each artist paint?

The first artist painted a monastery/temple in the mountains.

The second artist painted a mountain range and the corner of a monastery/temple visible from behind a mountain.

The third artist painted many mountain peaks behind a forest. He also painted a little bridge over a stream and a zigzagged path in the forest. A young monk carrying water was shown walking towards the mountains.

**Question 2**

Which painting was regarded as the best? Why do you think it was chosen as the winning picture? Support your response with information from the text.

The third painting was regarded as the best. It was the one best suited to the Chinese saying: “Paintings in poetry and poetry in paintings.” It was the only painting which allowed viewers to use their imagination — the mountain peaks behind a forest, the zigzagged path in the forest and the young monk carrying water suggested there was a monastery in the mountains.

**Comments**

As in Task 1, most candidates responded adequately. To achieve a better result, candidates needed to justify their responses with reference to information in the texts.

**Task 3**

**Suggested responses**

**Question 1**

Why did Li Xiaolong lose his job?

Li Xiaolong lost his job because the company he was working for suffered a slump in market conditions. The company had to reduce the size of the office and staff to save resources. Li Xiaolong was among the staff members retrenched.
Question 2

*What happened to Li a year later? Why do you think that was the case? Explain your response with information from the text.*

A year later, Li Xiaolong received a phone call from the company where he used to work. They wanted him to return to work as a sales manager, for two main reasons. Firstly, when he was working for the company, he was hardworking and contributed greatly to the profit of the company. Secondly, he was an honest man. When he received his final pay before leaving the company, he noticed an extra ¥5.00 in his pay.

He returned it to the company before leaving. Therefore, when the company was booming again, they were very happy to have Li Xiaolong back.

Question 3

*What does the title mean? Do you think the title is referring to Li, the company or both? Explain your response with information from the text.*

The title means wealth and valuable assets. In my opinion, this title should refer to both Li Xiaolong and the company. As Li Xiaolong was hardworking and honest, he was a valuable asset to the company. On the other hand, the company would become prosperous again by re-employing staff like Li Xiaolong.

Comments

Again, most candidates responded adequately to this task although many simply translated the text in their response. To achieve a better result, candidates needed to identify the most suitable information from the given text to address the questions. Simple translation of the text did not receive full credit.

Candidates should ensure they understand the assessment criterion. They should also practise how to best respond to questions — identifying the key words in questions, understanding their meaning and effectively using the appropriate information from the given texts to support their opinions or conclusions. Translations do not necessarily provide appropriate responses. Candidates generally also need to improve their English language literacy. Although minor spelling or grammatical errors will not affect the overall grade awarded for the Reading section, candidates’ results will be affected if their responses cannot be fully understood.

Writing section

Task 1

*Write a review for a magazine about a movie, TV series or variety show you have watched. In your review, you will need to give reasons for your recommendations.*

All candidates responded to this task and many responded quite well. However, articles for publication usually have titles, content is often divided into paragraphs, and the language used is generally formal — yet most candidates neglected these conventions.
Task 2

Write a description for a local Chinese newspaper of a party or special occasion you have attended or heard about. Include details of the purpose, time, venue, participants, food, drink and activities.

Most candidates responded adequately to this task. To achieve a better result, however, candidates needed to fully understand the task. They needed to follow the conventions for publication such as titles, audience, choice of language and paragraphing. Candidates also needed to organise their ideas logically and demonstrate their knowledge of a variety of appropriate expressions.

Advice to prospective candidates

Prospective candidates should ensure that they have a good understanding of:

- the terminology used in the task suggestions in the syllabus
- the task instructions in each section of the examination paper
- how to identify key words in the questions of each task and respond accordingly
- how to use information from a given text effectively to support their opinions or conclusions in responses to the Listening and Reading sections.

Candidates also need to:

- express themselves clearly in English in responses to the Listening and Reading sections
- write in paragraphs and include more than one or two full stops in an article of 200–300 characters.