Statistics

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Listening section

Task 1

Suggested responses

Question 1

What did the two speakers see? Why did the female speaker express concern at what they saw? Explain using information from the conversation.

The speakers saw lots of people doing morning exercises.

The female speaker expressed some concern at this because she had heard that morning wasn’t the best time for exercise as the quality of air in the morning was not at its best. She argued that this was because the oxygen in the morning air had been reduced during the night when the plants consumed instead of producing oxygen. She was concerned because she thought people were breathing in large amounts of poor quality air during their exercise, which might do more harm than good.

Question 2

What did the two speakers do about what they saw? Why? Explain using information from the conversation.

They did nothing except leave the area, probably because they didn’t know what they could do as they couldn’t understand why people seemed unaware of the problem with air quality early in the morning.

Comments

Most candidates responded quite well to the questions in this task.
Task 2

**Suggested responses**

**Question 1**

*According to the speakers, why is it that Chinese people at first refuse to accept gifts?*

When Chinese people select gifts, they spend a lot of time selecting gifts that are high in quality and price. They believe that only expensive and quality gifts are presentable and capable of expressing appropriate feelings. Traditionally, Chinese people at first refuse to accept gifts because they assume that the same efforts have been put into buying gifts as they would do.

**Question 2**

*Where do you think the Chinese saying (from the last sentence in the conversation) may have originated? Explain using information from the conversation.*

The Chinese saying means ‘small gifts, great friendship’. It is rather contradictory to what Chinese people do in reality. They spend a lot of time selecting quality and expensive or unique gifts, which is by no means ‘small gifts’. On the other hand, people from the West usually use wine, chocolates or flowers, things that are not regarded as overly expensive, as gifts. Therefore, the so-called Chinese saying ‘small gifts, great friendship’ appears to be more suited for the Western culture and therefore could have originated from the West.

**Comments**

Most candidates responded adequately to this task. To achieve a better result, candidates needed to justify their responses with references to information in the texts rather than their own personal experiences or assumptions.

Task 3

**Suggested responses**

**Question 1**

*What was written in the will? Do you believe it was the original will? Justify your opinion using information from the story.*

The will stated: ‘Of all my possessions, my son is free to select one item. The rest will go to the servant who has looked after me for many years.’

I believe it was the original will for the reasons below.

- The millionaire was worried that his illness might not allow him to wait for his only son to come back and he might have to ask his servant to pass on his will to his son. He knew his servant was shrewd and cunning and would want his possessions after his death. So he worded the will in such a way that the servant would be happy to pass it onto his son.

- There was no indication in the text to clearly suggest that the millionaire was sure that his son would be able to keep the family possessions safe. However, it could be assumed the son could do so because he was a businessman and the only son of the millionaire. He would want to keep the family possessions. Also, it was possible that the millionaire and his only son understood each other very well.
Question 2

What was the decision made by the millionaire’s son? Do you think it was a wise decision? Explain your opinion using information from the story.

The millionaire’s son chose to keep the servant. It was a wise decision. As said in the will, the servant was given everything apart from one item chosen by the millionaire’s son. In the past, the relationship between a master and a servant was owning and being owned. Therefore, the servant was part of the millionaire’s possessions. By choosing to own the servant, the millionaire’s son actually owned the whole lot of his father’s possessions. It was a very wise decision, and possibly the one his father had expected him to make.

Comments

Most candidates responded adequately to this task. To achieve a better result, candidates needed to demonstrate comprehensive understanding of the text. They needed to identify each character’s intentions and attitudes. In addition, arguments or conclusions needed to be appropriately supported by information from the texts.

In general, candidates should identify and understand the key words in questions. While they should justify their responses with information from the texts, candidates also need to understand the subtleties in the given texts and respond accordingly. 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 2013, 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 the speaking section topic several weeks before the assessment date and required to research and prepare a 2–3 minute speech on the topic. Candidates were able to take notes written on one double-sided palm card into the examination room and refer to them as they presented their speech.

There were two tasks in this section.

Task 1

Each candidate presented their speech in Chinese to an examiner. A demonstration of relevance, logic and organisation at a high level was expected. Many 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

If you were invited to a meal by a friend in the country mentioned in the text, how would you need to behave?

When I’m invited to a meal, I would need to behave as follows:

• I would sit with people of the same sex/gender
• during the meal, I would eat moderately (i.e. not eat too much)
• I would use the cutlery careful, avoiding unnecessary noise
• when eating noodles or having soup, I would avoid slurping
• when I finished each course, I would place the cutlery side by side on the plate to be taken away
• I would respect their customs by drinking moderately and not urging other people to drink
• if it was a meal with a family, I would take carefully selected gifts and arrive slightly late.

Comments

Most candidates responded adequately to this task. To achieve a better result, candidates needed to identify the key words in questions, address them and use appropriate information from the text in their responses.

Task 2

Suggested responses

Question 1

Suggest a title (in English) for the text. Explain your title with reference to the text.

My suggestion for a title is ‘A Colourful Day of My School Life’. The text describes what happened during a day in the author’s school life and the impact on the author’s emotions. For example, the mathematics teacher announced that their group were to be leaders for the day and the author was overjoyed at the announcement. When told their music teacher was away sick and their class teacher would take the music lesson, the author was extremely disappointed. When the author received the quiz paper back after marking, and learned that they hadn’t done as well as they had thought, they were worried about telling their parents. Then, in the school canteen, the author found many of their favourite dishes for lunch and joy overtook their disappointment of the morning. The word ‘colourful’ is used to suggest both the variety of events in the day and their impact on the author’s changing emotions.
Question 2

Describe the writer’s personality. Justify your opinion with information from the text.

The emotional ups and downs indicate that the author is a young student. They wanted to be seen as important. This may well explain why they became overjoyed with the mathematics teacher’s announcement about being one of the leaders for the day. The student was also eager to please and wanted to do well at school. This may explain why they became worried when they found out that they had not done as well in the quiz as they had thought. When the author compared mathematics and music, describing numbers as boring and music notes as joyful, we can tell that they were also a fun lover. Finally, we may say that the author was a food lover — they could forget their disappointments when they saw their favourite food! Overall, the young student was quite a lovable student — wanting to be recognised as a good student while enjoying fun at school.

Comments

Most candidates responded adequately. To achieve a better result, candidates needed to identify and address the key words in questions and use appropriate information from the text and draw conclusions in their responses. Simply translating information did not receive full credit. Frequent spelling and grammatical errors affected a number of results.

Task 3

Suggested responses

Question 1

What is the issue discussed in the article?

The article discusses whether e-books enhance memory retention compared with hardcopy books.

Question 2

What is the writer’s view on this issue?

The writer’s view is that despite the popularity and convenience of e-books, their role in enhancing memory is less than positive.

Question 3

What information and arguments does the writer use to convince the reader?

The writer uses medical research to suggest that e-books are less effective in helping people to retain information. They cite an American neurologist’s findings which suggest that people reading text on a tablet found it difficult to remember the names of characters after one or two chapters while those reading a hardcopy book had no such difficulty. The neurologist also quotes suggestions from a Japanese hospital CEO that increasing numbers of people aged between 25 and 35, most of whom have been playing with electronic games, computers and mobile phones since childhood, are suffering from amnesia.

The writer also uses academic findings from an English university lecturer of psychology who said that people reading e-books during her experiment needed to refer back to some paragraphs several times to understand the information presented while very few people reading hardcopy
books needed to do so. The lecturer also suggested that people reading hardcopy books appeared to have a better understanding of the information than those reading e-books.

In addition, the writer argues that e-books lack indicators such as page numbers and illustrations which usually help the reader to retain information. The writer further argues that e-books can easily distract the reader’s concentration, particularly if there are games on the device.

**Comments**

As in Task 2, most candidates responded adequately. To achieve a better result, candidates needed to identify and address the key words in questions and use appropriate information from the text and draw conclusions in their responses. Simply translating information did not receive full credit. Frequent spelling and grammatical errors affected a number of results.

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 short article for a Chinese newspaper published in Australia about an overseas location that you believe the readers would find interesting.*

*Write about 200 characters in the spaces provided.*

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. A number of candidates also misinterpreted the task and their writing became irrelevant.

**Task 2**

*Australia has many education and employment options for students finishing Year 12.*

*Write to a Chinese friend overseas about some of these options.*

*Write about 300 characters in the space provided.*

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 this particular type of writing, such as audience, choice of language and paragraphing. Again, a number of candidates misinterpreted the task.
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 draw conclusions from given information in the Listening and Reading sections
- 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 sentences in an article of 200–300 characters.