

Chinese

2018 Senior External Examination: Assessment report

Statistics

| Year | Number of candidates | Level of achievement | | | | |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-----|----|----|-----|
| | | VHA | HA | SA | LA | VLA |
| 2018 | 250 | 112 | 131 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 2017 | 236 | 44 | 163 | 25 | 4 | 0 |
| 2016 | 223 | 87 | 116 | 14 | 6 | 0 |
| 2015 | 233 | 90 | 121 | 21 | 1 | 0 |
| 2014 | 201 | 68 | 99 | 32 | 2 | 0 |

The *Chinese Senior External Examination* consisted of two components: an oral examination and a written examination.

Oral examination

Candidates sitting the oral examination were individually assessed by a marker. Candidates were sent topic information before the assessment date and were required to research and prepare a speech of 2–3 minutes in length, and respond to questions from the marker afterwards. A demonstration of relevance, logic and organisation at a high level was expected.

The oral examination consisted of two tasks.

Comments

Task 1 (Responses in Chinese)

The majority of candidates performed very well in this task, with appropriate and clear divisions of introduction, development and conclusion evident. However, students should focus more on tone and expression with speech tone. To improve achievement levels, candidates could include more formal language structures, complex vocabulary and less colloquialisms, and remember to maintain the format of a speech that includes an introduction, body and conclusion.

Task 2 (Responses in Chinese)

Candidates were required to respond spontaneously to questions from the marker. This task gave candidates the opportunity to express themselves on a variety of themes and topics from the syllabus. The majority of candidates performed very well in this task.

Written examination

The written examination consisted of three sections: Listening, Reading and Writing. It assessed knowledge and skills demonstrated by candidates in spoken and written texts.

Listening

The Listening section consisted of two tasks.

Suggested responses

Task 1 (Responses in English)

Question 1

Summarise the conversation in one or two sentences.

This conversation is about a mother and her Year 12 son. They talk about what the son should study at university.

The mother hopes that her son will have a good job and a decent salary in the future, suggesting being a doctor, lawyer, engineer, architect or accountant.

This son disagrees with his mother. He does not want to study medicine because he doesn't like blood or open wounds. He also does not want to be a lawyer because he feels that lawyers need to keep lying to make money. He believes that a high salary is not the most important aspect of a job. He considers working happily in a career he is interested in to be more important.

Question 2

Evaluate the opinions presented in the text. Justify your answer with reference to the text.

Answers may vary, e.g. The mother says that having a high-profile profession that is highly respected in society is important, but the son says that liking your job is more important. I identify with the son's opinion. As long as you have a stable income in a job you enjoy, you will be happy.

Task 2 (Responses in English)

Question 1

Identify the speaker's profession and the purpose of their speech.

The speaker is a tour guide and he is describing today's itinerary.

Question 2

Which option does the speaker emphasise? Justify your answers with reference to the text.

The speaker mentioned the following places: safari park, botanical gardens, national park and science museum. The speaker emphasises the national park as he said that this forest reserve is the largest national park in the Southern Hemisphere. Along the way, participants can also see spectacular canyons, and they can enjoy 360-degree views from the top of the mountain. He also says that it is the biggest highlight of today's itinerary.

Comments

Most candidates responded well to the questions in both tasks. They generally demonstrated an effective grasp of the main ideas and the ability to distinguish gist from detail. The candidates were able to identify the speaker's general intentions and attitudes when explicitly expressed.

However, to achieve an A standard, candidates need to be able to infer the speakers' intentions and attitudes and draw appropriate conclusions from the evidence of the text, e.g. the response to Task 1 Question 2 and Task 2 Question 2. Candidates should focus on the task instructions and what the question is asking them to do.

Reading

The Reading section consisted of two tasks.

Suggested responses

Task 1 (Responses in English)

Question 1

Explain the decision the old carpenter makes at the start of the story.

The carpenter decided to retire after he worked for his employer for nearly 40 years. He wanted to spend the rest of his life with his wife in a relaxing lifestyle.

Question 2

What mistake did the old carpenter make?

The employer asked the old carpenter to build one more house before he left. The carpenter agreed. Since he was leaving, he did not do his best to build the new house. He crafted the house roughly and cut corners at times. When he finished building the house, the employer gave the new house to the carpenter as a gift, which made the old carpenter feel very ashamed and regretful. He wished he could start all over again.

Question 3

What is the meaning or moral of the story? Justify your response using evidence from the text.

This story tells us that our life is a big project and we are the carpenters. We are paving the concrete for our foundations, building the framework for our walls, and laying bricks in our lives each day. Our attitude towards our everyday tasks will determine what kind of house we will live in later. We should drive each nail into the woodwork with our best efforts.

Task 2 (Responses in English)

Question 1

Identify the issue mentioned in the email.

Amanda's mobile phone was confiscated by her mother because she overused it in her daily life. She will not get the phone back unless her school results improve.

Question 2

Discuss whether or not you agree with Amanda’s mother’s decision. Justify your response using evidence from the text.

- Agree answer:
 - Amanda’s mum has a point taking Amanda’s phone away. Amanda needs to avoid using her mobile phone as it may distract her from study and worsen her academic performance.
 - Mobile phone addiction is a serious problem, especially if it is affecting her grades. Amanda plays games on her mobile phone in the middle of night. This seems to be a sign of addiction.
 - Without her phone, she will be more serious and focused on her studies.
 - It is also bad for her eyesight.
- Disagree answer:
 - It is part of everyday life to use mobile phones in modern society. Without it, she cannot contact her friends for help with homework or her parents while she is out.
 - As Amanda says, it is inconvenient. She can only contact her friends by email.

Question 3

What advice would you give Amanda? Justify your response using evidence from the text.

Study hard and improve your grades, especially subjects that you are falling behind in. When you get your phone back, use the phone responsibly. Stop playing games or watching movies too much, especially so late at night.

Comments

Most candidates responded to the questions well in both tasks. They demonstrated an effective grasp of the main ideas and the ability to generally distinguish gist from detail. They could identify the general purpose of the text and the writer’s attitudes when explicitly expressed.

Candidates would improve their achievement level by drawing conclusions and making decisions based on more comprehensive analysis. They generally identified and translated from the text but did not make inferences based on the text. Candidates should focus on the task instructions and what the question is asking them to do.

Writing

The Writing section consisted of two tasks.

Task 1

On 1 July 2018, the Queensland Government banned single-use plastic bags. Create a magazine article to inform Chinese speakers in Queensland of:

- these changes
- useful strategies
- the effects on the environment

Write about 300 characters in the space provided.

Task 1 (Responses in Chinese)

- Many candidates did not cover the second point — useful strategies.
- Some of the candidates did not have a title for their article.
- The majority of candidates did not write an article to inform the reader; they simply wrote about the impact of using plastic bags.

Task 2

A Chinese-speaking friend, Lili, is curious about how you spend your end-of-year holidays. Write an email including:

- a brief description of activities
- celebrations and their preparations

Write about 200 characters in the space provided.

Task 2 (Responses in English)

- Some of the candidates, instead of writing about an upcoming holiday, wrote about a holiday from the past.
- A small number of candidates did not stick to the email format.

Comments

Most candidates responded well to both tasks. They generally followed the instructions of the tasks and responded accordingly. More attention is required when understanding the tasks, and demonstrating the correct characters, register, paragraphing and punctuation.

Recommendations

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 or elements in the questions of each task and respond accordingly
- how to draw conclusions from given information in the Listening and Reading sections
- how to identify and use relevant information from a given text to support their opinions or conclusions in responses to the Listening and Reading sections
- how to distinguish information from a given text and from common sense or personal observation in response to the Listening and Reading sections.

Candidates also need to:

- strengthen their own understanding of the English language (e.g. vocabulary and tense) to identify or determine the information required in their responses to the Written sections
- express themselves clearly in English (e.g. spelling and grammar) in responses to the Listening and Reading sections

- follow appropriate writing conventions where necessary, such as titles, paragraphs and punctuation in all Written sections.
- access timetabled and structured Chinese learning experiences as described in Section 7.2 of the syllabus.