

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/11
Reading

Key messages

When answering this paper, candidates need to remember to read the passages carefully before starting to write their answers. In **Section 1**, it is important to address the specific questions asked and in **Section 2**, it is important to keep to the recommended number of characters.

In order to score well in either section, candidates need to show that they can:

- understand and collate explicit meanings
- understand, explain and collate implicit meanings and attitudes
- select, analyse and evaluate what is relevant to specific purposes
- make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

In addition, in **Section 1**, candidates need to show that they can understand how writers achieve effects.

In **Section 2**, they will need to show that they can:

- order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- understand and use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- use language and register that is appropriate to audience and context.

General Comments

Candidates performed extremely well on this paper again this year, with almost all candidates demonstrating their mastery of the Chinese language as a communication tool. The majority of candidates showed that they had a thorough understanding of the passages in **Section 1**.

Section 2 requires candidates to write a summary of the two reading passages, focusing their response on the two bullet points mentioned in the question. This remains the most challenging part of the exam.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Question 1

(a)-(d) Most candidates answered these questions well

- (e) There were four marks available for this question. Candidates are reminded to take note of the mark allocation for each question, as four pieces of information were required in order to get all four marks here. A number of candidates did not include the fact that ‘上过大学的人更容易成功’ or ‘很多高管都受过高等教育’ in their answer.
- (f) A number of candidates missed the fact that ‘课堂上’ or ‘课内’ are important places where candidates gain knowledge and experience. It is important that candidates read both the text and questions carefully to ensure that all relevant details are included in their answer.

Section 2

Question 2

This section continues to be the most challenging to candidates. Most candidates showed that they had the linguistic ability to answer this question well, but candidates need to understand that their answers must be drawn from the key points made in the passages, and not from general knowledge or personal experience.

Candidates should be encouraged to re-read the two passages carefully before beginning to select the main points for inclusion in their summary. These points should then be used to construct an answer around the two bullet points given in the question. Excessive elaborations are discouraged, e.g. candidates were not expected to write at length on philosophical matters such as what makes a person 'whole'. Examiners are looking for a concise and coherent summary of the points that appear in the two passages.

Many candidates did manage to successfully identify the key points. Improvements could have been made if more time had been spent planning the essay before beginning writing. This helps to ensure that ideas are well grouped and that there is good linkage between paragraphs.

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/12

Reading

Key messages

When answering this paper, candidates need to remember to read the passages carefully before starting to write their answers. In **Section 1**, it is important to address the specific questions asked and in **Section 2**, it is important to keep to the recommended number of characters.

In order to score well in either section, candidates need to show that they can:

- understand and collate explicit meanings
- understand, explain and collate implicit meanings and attitudes
- select, analyse and evaluate what is relevant to specific purposes
- make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

In addition, in **Section 1**, candidates need to show that they can understand how writers achieve effects.

In **Section 2**, they will need to show that they can:

- order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- understand and use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- use language and register that is appropriate to audience and context.

General Comments

Candidates performed extremely well on this paper again this year, with almost all candidates demonstrating their mastery of the Chinese language as a communication tool. The majority of candidates showed that they had a thorough understanding of the passages in **Section 1**.

Section 2 requires candidates to write a summary of the two reading passages, focusing their response on the two bullet points mentioned in the question. This remains the most challenging part of the exam.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Question 1

(a)-(d) Most candidates answered these questions well

- (e) There were four marks available for this question. Candidates are reminded to take note of the mark allocation for each question, as four pieces of information were required in order to get all four marks here. A number of candidates did not include the fact that ‘上过大学的人更容易成功’ or ‘很多高管都受过高等教育’ in their answer.
- (f) A number of candidates missed the fact that ‘课堂上’ or ‘课内’ are important places where candidates gain knowledge and experience. It is important that candidates read both the text and questions carefully to ensure that all relevant details are included in their answer.

Section 2

Question 2

This section continues to be the most challenging to candidates. Most candidates showed that they had the linguistic ability to answer this question well, but candidates need to understand that their answers must be drawn from the key points made in the passages, and not from general knowledge or personal experience.

Candidates should be encouraged to re-read the two passages carefully before beginning to select the main points for inclusion in their summary. These points should then be used to construct an answer around the two bullet points given in the question. Excessive elaborations are discouraged, e.g. candidates were not expected to write at length on philosophical matters such as what makes a person 'whole'. Examiners are looking for a concise and coherent summary of the points that appear in the two passages.

Many candidates did manage to successfully identify the key points. Improvements could have been made if more time had been spent planning the essay before beginning writing. This helps to ensure that ideas are well grouped and that there is good linkage between paragraphs.

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/13
Reading

Key messages

When answering this paper, candidates need to remember to read the passages carefully before starting to write their answers. In **Section 1**, it is important to address the specific questions asked and in **Section 2**, it is important to keep to the recommended number of characters.

In order to score well in either section, candidates need to show that they can:

- understand and collate explicit meanings
- understand, explain and collate implicit meanings and attitudes
- select, analyse and evaluate what is relevant to specific purposes
- make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

In addition, in **Section 1**, candidates need to show that they can understand how writers achieve effects.

In **Section 2**, they will need to show that they can:

- order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- understand and use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- use language and register that is appropriate to audience and context.

General Comments

Candidates performed extremely well on this paper. Almost all candidates demonstrated their mastery of the Chinese language, and the overall level of language proficiency was higher than that of previous years. The majority of candidates showed that they had a thorough understanding of the passages, although improvements could still be made when questions ask for detailed answers requiring several points to be made.

Section 2 requires candidates to write a summary of the two reading passages, focusing their response on the two bullet points mentioned in the question. This remains the most challenging part of the exam.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates answered this question well.
- (b) Most candidates answered this question well.
- (c) (i) There were two marks for this question, and thus two separate points needed to be made. A number of candidates only made one point, and did not say that ‘母亲不让父亲对谈家桢施以拳脚’.
- (ii) This question was generally well answered.
- (iii) A considerable number of candidates did not understand the word ‘知了’ and so gave ‘知’ as their answer, which could not be credited.

- (iv) This question proved to be difficult for a number of candidates. Some candidates did not understand the difference between ‘密码’, ‘秘密’ and ‘奥秘’. Some also wrote ‘密蜜’ which was not correct.
- (d) (i) This question was generally well answered.
- (ii) Two separate points were required in order to gain the full two marks here. Several candidates only made one point, and candidates are reminded to look at the mark allocation for each question.
- (iii) This question was generally well answered.

Section 2

Question 2

This section continues to be the most challenging to candidates. Most candidates showed that they had the linguistic ability to answer this question well, but candidates need to understand that their answers must be drawn from the key points made in the passages, and not from general knowledge or personal experience. Candidates were not, for example, expected to describe details of Tan Jiazhen’s life that were not covered in the text.

Candidates should be encouraged to re-read the two passages carefully before beginning to select the main points for inclusion in their summary. These points should then be used to construct an answer around the two bullet points given in the question. Excessive elaborations are discouraged. Examiners are looking for a concise and coherent summary of the points that appear in the two passages.

Many candidates did manage to successfully identify the key points. Improvements could have been made if more time had been spent planning the essay before beginning writing. This helps to ensure that ideas are well grouped and that there is good linkage between paragraphs. This year, some excessively long essays were also seen, containing much repetition, which is not desirable. Better planning could also help to avoid this.

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/21

Writing

Key messages

When answering a question from **Section 1**, candidates need to remember to present a discussion or argument. When answering a question from **Section 2**, candidates need to provide a description or narration, depending on the topic set.

To score well in either section, candidates need to:

- order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- demonstrate that they can use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- articulate experience (where necessary)
- express what is thought, felt and imagined
- address the specific topic that they have chosen and ensure that their answer is relevant
- make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

General comments

Material: The majority of candidates performed well on this paper. Most wrote good quality essays and adhered to the required number of characters. The best answers contained very vivid descriptions, touching narratives and effective and convincing arguments. Some very creative and interesting answers were produced, with some candidates managing to write from an unusual or interesting perspective, or use humour effectively in their writing. Although relatively few chose to do descriptive writing, most of the work produced was of a good standard, reflecting a firm grasp of the genre on the part of these candidates.

Structure: in general, candidates showed awareness of the need to structure their writing appropriately. Most of the essays contained a clear progression of ideas, argument or story line. Very occasionally, some essays were too short, of a single paragraph of around 120 characters. When answers are excessively short, there is not enough material to show any development of ideas or to present a clear description of a person, object or event.

Style: A number of examples of sophisticated pieces of writing were seen, with an excellent range of vocabulary, complex sentence structures and very good organisation of ideas.

The majority of candidates were able to write fluently, using a good range of structures and expressions. Weaker candidates could improve their writing by avoiding repetition of content and ideas, and trying to introduce more variety in expressions used.

Accuracy: Most candidates demonstrated an excellent grasp of Chinese grammar and a wide range of vocabulary.

Candidates also need to improve their use of the 把-sentence structure, (e.g. 我把水向那团微小的火种泼去, rather than 我向那团微小的火种用水泼去) and their use of the comparison structure, (e.g. 跟门一样高 or 比门还高 rather than 他的身体巨大, 比门一样高).

The incorrect use of characters can be reduced in some cases with more careful checking of work. Some errors included either the addition of, or omission of a stroke in a character, e.g. 今 instead of 令. Candidates can improve their understanding of the use of homonyms, as this was an area which once again seemed problematic, e.g. 公司 (not 工司), 责备 (not 责被).

Candidates are reminded that whilst both simplified and full form characters are perfectly acceptable, it is good practice to be consistent and avoid mixing the two systems within the same piece of writing.

Candidates should also be reminded to read the rubric carefully: this year once again, some candidates answered two questions rather than one. It was also evident this year that a few candidates struggled to complete their essays in the given time.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Candidates were expected to discuss their view on the saying, “a fall in pit, a gain in your wit”. Stronger essays managed to focus on both aspects of the question, giving examples of their own experience or from historical figures. Weaker answers were characterised by one-sided or under-developed arguments.

Question 2

Candidates were expected to discuss their view on the “Elite Schools Complex”. This was a popular choice and produced some very strong answers. Most candidates had a lot to say, reflecting their own choice of high schools and/or universities and the experiences of their peers. The majority of candidates succeeded in developing their argument in a logical and coherent manner.

Question 3

This question required candidates to discuss their view on this philosophy of life: “be strict and disciplined with the self but be tolerant and lenient with others”. Whilst many candidates developed the topic well, some focussed too heavily on just one aspect of the question and thus produced an unbalanced essay.

Question 4

Candidates were expected to discuss their view on students taking part in work experience. This was also a popular choice. Most candidates produced well supported arguments, and many took the view that such work experience would help them be more “world-wise”, find out their areas of interest, and also appreciate the hard work of their parents. Other students expressed concern and were worried about safety. Occasional candidates also discussed how such time could be wasted if not managed well. Overall, the quality of answers to this question was very high.

Section 2

Question 5

This was also a popular choice. Candidates were expected to write about their neighbour(s). Most candidates tackled the topic well, with some producing touching stories of the kindness of their neighbours. Some candidates traced how a small misunderstanding with their neighbours had blossomed into a strong friendship. Weak answers tended to be very simple in structure and repetitive in content and language.

Question 6

Very few candidates chose this question. Candidates were expected to write about a treasure island. Some stronger candidates managed to take a less literal interpretation of the treasure island. The weaker answers tended to read more like a travel brochure.

Question 7

Candidates were asked to write about an embarrassing experience. The best candidates presented a carefully balanced story with well-managed climaxes; weaker answers were characterised by a very flat narrative, using very simple language and with limited ideas.

Question 8

Candidates were expected to describe some scenery of mountains and rivers. Some candidates wrote about their holidays in the mountains while others described the environmental destruction to their once favourite holiday resort. The very weak answers were excessively short - only one or two short paragraphs.

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/22

Writing

Key messages

When answering a question from **Section 1**, candidates need to remember to present a discussion or argument. When answering a question from **Section 2**, candidates need to provide a description or narration, depending on the topic set.

To score well in either section, candidates need to:

- order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- demonstrate that they can use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- articulate experience (where necessary)
- express what is thought, felt and imagined
- address the specific topic that they have chosen and ensure that their answer is relevant
- make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

General comments

Material: The majority of candidates performed well on this paper. Most wrote good quality essays and adhered to the required number of characters. The best answers contained very vivid descriptions, touching narratives and effective and convincing arguments. Some very creative and interesting answers were produced, with some candidates managing to write from an unusual or interesting perspective, or use humour effectively in their writing. Although relatively few chose to do descriptive writing, most of the work produced was of a good standard, reflecting a firm grasp of the genre on the part of these candidates.

Structure: in general, candidates showed awareness of the need to structure their writing appropriately. Most of the essays contained a clear progression of ideas, argument or story line. Very occasionally, some essays were too short, of a single paragraph of around 120 characters. When answers are excessively short, there is not enough material to show any development of ideas or to present a clear description of a person, object or event.

Style: A number of examples of sophisticated pieces of writing were seen, with an excellent range of vocabulary, complex sentence structures and very good organisation of ideas.

The majority of candidates were able to write fluently, using a good range of structures and expressions. Weaker candidates could improve their writing by avoiding repetition of content and ideas, and trying to introduce more variety in expressions used.

Accuracy: Most candidates demonstrated an excellent grasp of Chinese grammar and a wide range of vocabulary.

Candidates also need to improve their use of the 把-sentence structure, (e.g. 我把水向那团微小的火种泼去, rather than 我向那团微小的火种用水泼去) and their use of the comparison structure, (e.g. 跟门一样高 or 比门还高 rather than 他的身体巨大, 比门一样高).

The incorrect use of characters can be reduced in some cases with more careful checking of work. Some errors included either the addition of, or omission of a stroke in a character, e.g. 今 instead of 令. Candidates can improve their understanding of the use of homonyms, as this was an area which once again seemed problematic, e.g. 公司 (not 工司), 责备 (not 责被).

Candidates are reminded that whilst both simplified and full form characters are perfectly acceptable, it is good practice to be consistent and avoid mixing the two systems within the same piece of writing.

Candidates should also be reminded to read the rubric carefully: this year once again, some candidates answered two questions rather than one. It was also evident this year that a few candidates struggled to complete their essays in the given time.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Candidates were expected to discuss their view on the saying, “a fall in pit, a gain in your wit”. Stronger essays managed to focus on both aspects of the question, giving examples of their own experience or from historical figures. Weaker answers were characterised by one-sided or under-developed arguments.

Question 2

Candidates were expected to discuss their view on the “Elite Schools Complex”. This was a popular choice and produced some very strong answers. Most candidates had a lot to say, reflecting their own choice of high schools and/or universities and the experiences of their peers. The majority of candidates succeeded in developing their argument in a logical and coherent manner.

Question 3

This question required candidates to discuss their view on this philosophy of life: “be strict and disciplined with the self but be tolerant and lenient with others”. Whilst many candidates developed the topic well, some focussed too heavily on just one aspect of the question and thus produced an unbalanced essay.

Question 4

Candidates were expected to discuss their view on students taking part in work experience. This was also a popular choice. Most candidates produced well supported arguments, and many took the view that such work experience would help them be more “world-wise”, find out their areas of interest, and also appreciate the hard work of their parents. Other students expressed concern and were worried about safety. Occasional candidates also discussed how such time could be wasted if not managed well. Overall, the quality of answers to this question was very high.

Section 2

Question 5

This was also a popular choice. Candidates were expected to write about their neighbour(s). Most candidates tackled the topic well, with some producing touching stories of the kindness of their neighbours. Some candidates traced how a small misunderstanding with their neighbours had blossomed into a strong friendship. Weak answers tended to be very simple in structure and repetitive in content and language.

Question 6

Very few candidates chose this question. Candidates were expected to write about a treasure island. Some stronger candidates managed to take a less literal interpretation of the treasure island. The weaker answers tended to read more like a travel brochure.

Question 7

Candidates were asked to write about an embarrassing experience. The best candidates presented a carefully balanced story with well-managed climaxes; weaker answers were characterised by a very flat narrative, using very simple language and with limited ideas.

Question 8

Candidates were expected to describe some scenery of mountains and rivers. Some candidates wrote about their holidays in the mountains while others described the environmental destruction to their once favourite holiday resort. The very weak answers were excessively short - only one or two short paragraphs.

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/23

Writing

Key messages

When answering a question from **Section 1**, candidates need to remember to present a discussion or argument. When answering a question from **Section 2**, candidates need to provide a description or narration, depending on the topic set.

To score well in either section, candidates need to:

- order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- demonstrate that they can use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- articulate experience (where necessary)
- express what is thought, felt and imagined
- address the specific topic that they have chosen and ensure that their answer is relevant
- make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

General comments

Material: The majority of candidates performed well on this paper. Most wrote good quality essays and adhered to the required number of characters. The best answers contained very vivid descriptions, touching narratives and effective and convincing arguments. Some very creative and interesting answers were produced, with some candidates managing to write from an unusual or interesting perspective, or use humour effectively in their writing. Although relatively few chose to do descriptive writing, most of the work produced was of a good standard, reflecting a firm grasp of the genre on the part of these candidates.

Structure: in general, candidates showed awareness of the need to structure their writing appropriately. Most of the essays contained a clear progression of ideas, argument or story line. Very occasionally, some essays were written in a single paragraph, and could have been better organised into 2 or 3 smaller chunks designed to aid the development of the argument or story.

Style: A number of examples of sophisticated pieces of writing were seen, with an excellent range of vocabulary, complex sentence structures and very good organisation of ideas.

The majority of candidates were able to write fluently, using a good range of structures and expressions. Weaker candidates could improve their writing by avoiding repetition of content and ideas, and trying to introduce more variety in expressions used. Candidates should remember that the use of very colloquial expressions such as “我到市公所报到后，工作便要我抽兵种训练课目，结果，好死不死的抽到第二大敢死队” is not generally appropriate for a formal essay (unless the task specifically requires the use of such a register).

Accuracy: Most candidates demonstrated an excellent grasp of Chinese grammar and a wide range of vocabulary.

Candidates need to understand the different grammatical function of 的，得，地， e.g.

那时的自己，很调皮却很弱小，出去玩耍却时常弄得 (rather than 的) 伤痕累累。母亲总是温柔地 (rather than 的) and 安抚我，在小心翼翼地 (rather than 的) 为我上药。

The incorrect use of characters can be reduced in some cases with more careful checking of work. Some errors included either the addition of, or omission of a stroke in a character, e.g. 小 instead of 少. Candidates can improve their understanding of the use of homonyms, as this was an area which once again seemed problematic, e.g. 道德修养 (not 道德休养), 锻炼 (not 段练).

Candidates are reminded that whilst both simplified and full form characters are perfectly acceptable, it is good practice to be consistent and avoid mixing the two systems within the same piece of writing.

Candidates should also be reminded to read the rubric carefully: this year once again, some candidates answered two questions rather than one. It was also evident this year that a few candidates struggled to complete their essays in the given time.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Candidates were expected to discuss their view on the saying, “Modesty reaps benefit while arrogance invites ruin.” Stronger essays managed to focus on both aspects of the question, giving examples from the past as well as the present. Weaker answers were characterised by one-sided or under-developed arguments.

Question 2

Candidates were expected to discuss their view on the saying, “Close neighbours are better than distant relatives.” The majority of candidates succeeded in developing their argument in a logical and coherent manner. Stronger answers focused on the benefits of good neighbourly relationships, whilst others misunderstood the implied meaning of the expression, and talked at length about their distant relatives.

Question 3

This question required candidates to discuss energy saving and protecting the environment. Whilst many candidates developed the topic well, some focussed too heavily on just one aspect of the question and thus produced an unbalanced essay. Others could have improved by writing about how environmental issues could be dealt with from a personal point of view.

Question 4

This was a popular choice. Candidates were expected to discuss their view on the importance of academic study (reading books) and real life experience (travelling). Some chose the angle of “Reading ten thousand books is not as useful as travelling ten thousand miles”; while others took the perspective that both are equally important. Both perspectives produced some excellent essays. Weaker essays tended to be those containing very little about reading or travelling.

Section 2

Question 5

Candidates were expected to write about their pet. Most candidates tackled the topic well, with some producing touching stories and recounting sentimental memories of their pets.

Question 6

Candidates were asked to write about a happy summer; this proved to be a popular question. The best candidates presented a carefully balanced story with well-managed climaxes; weaker answers were characterised by a chronological list, more like a diary entry, using very simple language and with limited ideas.

Question 7

This descriptive essay required candidates to write about spring rain. Fewer candidates chose to write on this topic, but those who did produced work of an excellent standard, reflecting a good grasp of the genre. The best essays were those using sophisticated language to describe the beauty of the spring rain. Weaker answers were characterised by very straightforward stories or events, with unclear or irrelevant description.

Question 8

Candidates were expected to write about their Mother. Some very touching accounts were given, with flowing language describing candidates’ feelings towards their Mother. Some essays lost focus, and got caught up in a description of a single event, whilst others wrote about a grandmother or teacher instead.