

MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0547/11
Listening

Key messages

This paper was found to be accessible to candidates, and the exercises worked well and discriminated across the full range of ability. Except for the last exercise, questions were objective, requiring non-verbal responses. The spoken Chinese in the examination gradually increased in terms of difficulty and length, and questions moved from testing candidates' ability to understand short factual information to, in the later exercises, testing their ability to understand and identify opinions, explanations in narrated accounts, and interviews. To do well in this examination, it is essential that candidates learn and are very familiar with the Defined Content for the syllabus. It is also essential that candidates do plenty of listening comprehension practice. To perform well in the last exercise that requires verbal responses, candidates also need to be able to write down their answers in characters or pinyin. These answers can be very short but straight to the point.

General comments

The number of excellent performances this year shows that centres recognise the importance of listening and responding skills, and that these skills are being well taught in many centres. In general, the topics and themes of the exercises were well within the knowledge and life experience of candidates from around the world.

The examination was a test of listening comprehension and visuals were used wherever possible. Candidates from most centres had been well prepared for the examination and were usually well aware of the requirements. It is helpful for candidates to acquire the habit of reading rubrics carefully and following the instructions. During preparation, centres should ensure that candidates clearly understand the rubrics, as such familiarity can only aid and reassure them in the examination.

It should be remembered that when responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, if a candidate makes two choices whether in pencil or ink, the mark cannot be awarded. Answers which candidates do not wish the Examiner to consider must be clearly crossed out.

Candidates should also be warned that they must tick the number of boxes stated in the rubric, such as in **Question 16**. For **Question 16**, it is also advisable that when ticking their choices, candidates put their ticks in the little boxes next to the letters rather than the pictures themselves.

For **Questions 11 – 15** and **Questions 17 – 21**, candidates were required to write the correct letter in the appropriate box. Candidates are advised to write their chosen letters in the boxes in clear handwriting.

For **Exercise 2** in **Section 3**, Examiners do not expect complete sentences in response to these questions. Candidates are allowed to write their answers in either Chinese characters or pinyin, whichever enables them to express what they want to say more clearly and correctly. A response written in Chinese characters or pinyin that have minor inaccuracies can be accepted, provided that the response's meaning remains clearly correct according to the recording. It would also be beneficial to the candidates if they can keep their answers clear and straight to the point. This can reduce the risk of adding extra material, which can invalidate an otherwise correct response.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1 – 5

Candidates generally did well on this exercise, which tested the comprehension of very short recordings of one or two sentences. Most candidates scored 5 or 4 marks and performed excellently on **Question 3**.

In this exercise, more mistakes were seen with **Question 1**, **Question 2** and **Question 4** and quite often **B** was selected incorrectly for those questions.

Exercise 2 Questions 6 – 10

This exercise featured a short conversation about what Wang Shan did yesterday. Generally speaking candidates performed very well on **Question 6** and **Question 10**.

More mistakes were seen with **Question 7**, **Question 8** and **Question 9**. They include selecting **C** or **B** for **Question 7**, selecting **A** for **Question 8** and selecting **C** or **A** for **Question 9**

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 11 – 15

This exercise tested the candidates' comprehension of a short description from the speaker of her plan for the next five days

Generally, candidates performed well in this exercise.

There were a variety of mistakes made as well. **Question 12**, **Question 13** and **Question 14** proved to be more challenging. The more frequently seen mistakes include incorrectly selecting **G** or **D** for **Question 12**, selecting **C**, **E** or **D** for **Question 13** and **C** or **G** for **Question 14**.

Exercise 2 Questions 16

Candidates heard a conversation between Li Ming and a holiday village receptionist. Li Ming had just arrived and he was trying to find out what the holiday village had to offer to its customers.

Candidates generally performed well on this exercise and many achieved 4 or 5 marks.

Most candidates correctly chose **C** and **F**. Among the mistakes made, **G** and **I** were often missed and **E** and **H** were the incorrect choices that were often selected.

With this exercise, candidates are advised to make all 5 choices to their best understanding and not to tick more than 5 boxes. It was very pleasing to see that this year all candidates carried out the exercise in accordance with this principle.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 17 – 21

This exercise featured five friends talking about what they might do to celebrate the New Year.

On the whole, candidates did very well with these questions.

Question 18 and **Question 21** proved to be more challenging in this exercise. Some candidates selected **C**, **E** or **A** instead of the correct choice **G** for **Question 18**; some candidates selected **E**, **C** or **G** instead of the correct choice **A** for **Question 21**.

Other mistakes made in this exercise include selecting **G** instead of the correct answer **F** for **Question 19**.

Exercise 2 Questions 22 – 25

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Anna, an exchange candidate from Europe.

As intended, this final exercise, targeted to test the top-level IGCSE listening skills, elicited the widest range of performance. There were some very accessible questions, affording even the weakest candidates the opportunity to score one or two marks, but there were also questions to challenge the most able candidates.

Question 22 required candidates to state what course Anna was studying in Shanghai.

This was a straightforward question. Most candidates responded to this question very well or gave answers that were acceptable. Responses like ‘中国学’ or ‘zhong guo wan xue’ were not accepted.

Question 23 asked candidates to state where Anna had learnt Chinese.

Again was a straightforward question. Most candidates answered this question well or gave answers that were acceptable. As required in the Question Paper, responses to **Question 22** to **Question 25** should be in Chinese characters or pinyin. Responses in English ‘Malaysia’ were not accepted here.

Question 24 asked candidates to list the two things that Anna did in Shanghai besides taking lessons at school.

Many candidates did really well producing excellent answers or responses that might have some minor inaccuracies in character writing or pinyin spelling but adequately demonstrated sufficient understanding of this part of the interview.

Unaccepted pinyin spellings include ‘wu shi’, ‘wo xu’ and ‘guan zhue’.

Question 25 asked candidates to state when Anna’s parents would come to China..

The key word here was ‘春节’. Again, many candidates produced excellent answers or responses that might have some minor inaccuracies in character writing or pinyin spelling but adequately demonstrated sufficient understanding of this part of the interview.

Unacceptable responses to this question include ‘kun jie’ and ‘qu jie’.

On the whole, candidates faced up to the challenges in this last exercise with most candidates achieving 3 or more marks.

MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0547/12
Listening

Key messages

This paper was found to be accessible to candidates, and the exercises worked well and discriminated across the full range of ability. Except for the last exercise, questions were objective, requiring non-verbal responses. The spoken Chinese in the examination gradually increased in terms of difficulty and length, and questions moved from testing candidates' ability to understand short factual information to, in the later exercises, testing their ability to understand and identify opinions, explanations in narrated accounts, and interviews. To do well in this examination, it is essential that candidates learn and be very familiar with the Defined Content for the syllabus. It is also essential that candidates do plenty of listening comprehension practice. To perform well in the last exercise that requires verbal responses, candidates also need to be able to write down their answers in characters or pinyin. These answers can be very short but straight to the point.

General comments

The number of excellent performances this year shows that centres recognise the importance of listening and responding skills, and that these skills are being well taught in many centres. In general, the topics and themes of the exercises were well within the knowledge and life experience of candidates from around the world.

The examination was a test of listening comprehension and visuals were used wherever possible. Candidates from most centres had been well prepared for the examination and were usually well aware of the requirements. It will be helpful if candidates get in the habit of reading rubrics carefully and following the instructions. When preparing their candidates, centres should ensure that candidates clearly understand the rubrics, as such familiarity can only aid and reassure them in the examination.

It is worth noting that when responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, if a candidate makes 2 choices whether in pencil or ink, the mark cannot be awarded. Answers which candidates do not wish the Examiner to consider must be clearly crossed out.

Candidates should also be warned that they must tick the number of boxes stated in the rubric, such as in **Question 16**. For **Question 16**, it is also advisable that when ticking their choices, candidates put their ticks in the little boxes next to the letters rather than the pictures themselves.

For **Questions 11 – 15** and **Questions 17 – 21**, candidates were required to write the correct letter in the appropriate box. Candidates are advised to write their chosen letters in the boxes in clear handwriting.

For **Exercise 2** in **Section 3**, Examiners do not expect complete sentences in response to these questions. Candidates are allowed to write their answers in either Chinese characters or pinyin, whichever enables them to express what they want to say more clearly and correctly. A response written in Chinese characters or pinyin that have minor inaccuracies can be accepted, provided that the response's meaning remains clearly correct according to the recording. It would also be beneficial to the candidates if they can keep their answers clear and straight to the point. This can reduce the risk of adding extra material, which can invalidate an otherwise correct response.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1 – 5

This exercise tested the comprehension of very short recordings of one or two sentences. Candidates generally did well on this exercise, although some candidates seemed to be unfamiliar with some of the tested vocabulary. Most candidates scored 5 or 4 marks and performed excellently on **Question 1**, **Question 3** and **Question 5**.

In this exercise, **Question 4** proved to be the most challenging. Many candidates selected **B** or **A** instead of **C**. Other mistakes include selecting **C** instead of **B** for **Question 2**.

Exercise 2 Questions 6 – 10

This exercise featured a short conversation about what Wang Shan did yesterday. Generally speaking candidates performed very well on **Question 6**, **Question 9** and **Question 10**.

Common mistakes made include selecting **B** for **Question 7** and **Question 8**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 11 – 15

This exercise tested the candidates' comprehension of a short description of a candidates' dormitory explaining what is available on each floor.

In general candidates performed very well in this exercise. **Question 13** and **Question 14** proved to be more challenging. Some candidates incorrectly chose **G**, **E** or **B** for **Question 13** and **D** or **F** for **Question 14**.

Amongst other mistakes in this exercise, a few candidates selected **B** as their answer to **Question 11**.

Exercise 2 Questions 16

Candidates heard a conversation between Mali and her friend. Mali had just arrived in Sichuan and was discussing with her friend the things she might do while in Sichuan.

Candidates generally performed well on this exercise and many achieved 4 or 5 marks.

Most candidates correctly chose **G** and **I**. Among the mistakes made, **A** and **B** were often missed and **F** and **H** were often the incorrect choices selected.

With this exercise, candidates are advised to make all 5 choices to their best understanding and not to tick more than 5 boxes. It is very pleasing to see that this year all candidates did the exercise in accordance with this principle. There were a few cases where candidates selected fewer than 5 choices.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 17 – 21

This exercise featured five friends talking about their plans for the coming weekend.

Candidates generally performed well on this exercise and many achieved 4 or 5 marks.

Question 18 and **Question 20** proved to be the most challenging in this exercise. The most common mistakes were selecting **F** or **B** for **Question 18** and selecting **B** or **G** for **Question 20**.

Exercise 2 Questions 22 – 25

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Zhang Yue from the Sunflower Dance Team

As intended, this final exercise, targeted to test the top-level IGCSE listening skills, elicited the widest range

of performance. There were some very accessible questions, affording even the weakest candidates the opportunity to score one or two marks, but there were also questions to challenge the most able candidates.

Question 22 required candidates to state where in China the Sunflower Dance Team came from.

This is a straightforward question and the correct answer ‘杭州’ is in the core vocabulary list of the syllabus. Most candidates responded to this question well or gave answers that were acceptable.

There were many cases where pinyin spellings were far off from the requirement, e.g. ‘han zu’ and ‘hen zhong’ instead of ‘Hang Zhou’. There were also cases sometimes completely wrong characters were used e.g. 周 instead of 州, and 航, 行 or 坑 instead of 杭. In such cases, marks were not awarded.

Question 23 asked candidates to list the two types of dance that the Sunflower Dance Team performed.

Most candidates answered this question well or gave answers that were acceptable.

There were cases where pinyin spellings were far off from the requirement, e.g. ‘ming zi wu’ or ‘nin zu wu’ instead of the required ‘min zu wu’, and ‘xie dan wu’ and ‘xian zai wu’ instead of the required ‘xian dai wu’. Sometimes completely wrong characters were used, e.g. ‘民施舞’ or ‘明族舞’ instead of the required ‘民族舞’, and ‘现代伐’ or ‘现待’ instead of ‘现代’. In such cases, marks were not awarded.

Question 24 asked candidates to state who taught Zhang Yue dancing.

This was a straightforward question. The key word here was ‘舞蹈演员’. Most candidates responded to the question well in Chinese characters or in pinyin showing that they understood this section of the recording. Unaccepted responses to this question include ‘wu tao ren’ and ‘舞导员’.

Question 25 required candidates to state what else Zhang Yue planned to do in London besides dancing.

Many candidates did really well producing excellent answers or responses that might have some minor inaccuracies in character writing or pinyin spelling but adequately demonstrated sufficient understanding of this part of the interview.

Unacceptable responses to this question include ‘买里物’, 买扎物 and ‘卖礼物’.

On the whole, candidates faced up to the challenges in this last exercise with most candidates achieving 3 or more marks.

MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0547/13
Listening

Key messages

This paper was found to be accessible to candidates, and the exercises worked well and discriminated across the full range of ability. Except for the last exercise, questions were objective, requiring non-verbal responses. The spoken Chinese in the examination gradually increased in terms of difficulty and length, and questions moved from testing candidates' ability to understand short factual information to, in the later exercises, testing their ability to understand and identify opinions, explanations in narrated accounts, and interviews. To do well in this examination, it is essential that candidates learn and be very familiar with the Defined Content for the syllabus. It is also essential that candidates do plenty of listening comprehension practice. To perform well in the last exercise that requires verbal responses, candidates also need to be able to write down their answers in characters or pinyin. These answers can be very short but straight to the point.

General comments

The number of excellent performances this year shows that centres recognise the importance of listening and responding skills, and that these skills are being well taught in many centres. In general, the topics and themes of the exercises were well within the knowledge and life experience of candidates from around the world.

The examination was a test of listening comprehension and visuals were used wherever possible. Candidates from most centres had been well prepared for the examination and were usually well aware of the requirements. It will be helpful if candidates get in the habit of reading rubrics carefully and following the instructions. When preparing their candidates, centres should ensure that candidates clearly understand the rubrics, as such familiarity can only aid and reassure them in the examination.

When responding to questions requiring only one choice as the answer, if a candidate makes two choices whether in pencil or ink, the mark cannot be awarded. Answers which candidates do not wish the Examiner to consider must be clearly crossed out.

Candidates should also be warned that they must tick the number of boxes stated in the rubric, such as in **Question 16**. For **Question 16**, it is also advisable that when ticking their choices, candidates put their ticks in the little boxes next to the letters rather than the pictures themselves.

For **Questions 11 – 15** and **Questions 17 – 21**, candidates were required to write the correct letter in the appropriate box. Candidates are advised to write their chosen letters in the boxes in clear handwriting.

For **Exercise 2** in **Section 3**, Examiners do not expect complete sentences in response to these questions. Candidates are allowed to write their answers in either Chinese characters or pinyin, whichever enables them to express what they want to say more clearly and correctly. A response written in Chinese characters or pinyin that have minor inaccuracies can be accepted, provided that the response's meaning remains clearly correct according to the recording. It would also be beneficial to the candidates if they can keep their answers clear and straight to the point. This can reduce the risk of adding extra material, which can invalidate an otherwise correct response.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1 – 5

Candidates generally did well on this exercise, which tested the comprehension of very short recordings of one or two sentences. Most candidates scored 5 or 4 marks and performed excellently on **Question 1**, **Question 2** and **Question 3**.

Mistakes include selecting **B** for **Question 4**, and **C** for **Question 5**.

Exercise 2 Questions 6 – 10

This exercise featured a short conversation about what Wang Shan did yesterday. Candidates performed very well on **Question 8**, **Question 9** and **Question 10**.

Mistakes include selecting **C** or **B** for **Question 6** and selecting **C** for **Question 7**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 11 – 15

This exercise tested the candidates' comprehension of a short weather forecast.

Candidates generally performed very well in this exercise. No mistake was seen on **Question 11**. Some candidates incorrectly chose **F** or **B** for **Question 12**, **A** for **Question 13**, **B** for **Question 14** and **F** for **Question 15**.

Exercise 2 Questions 16

Candidates heard a conversation between Dawei and a teacher. Dawei was at a summer camp in China talking to a teacher there regarding what he might do at the summer camp. Candidates generally performed very well on this exercise and many achieved 4 or 5 marks.

Most candidates correctly chose **C**, **D** and **H**. Among the mistakes made, **F** and/or **A** were missed and **E** and/or **G** were the incorrect choices selected instead.

With this exercise, candidates are advised to make all 5 choices to their best understanding and not to tick more than 5 boxes. It is very pleasing to see that this year all candidates did the exercise in accordance with this principle.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 17 – 21

This exercise featured five friends talking about what they enjoy doing

On the whole, candidates did very well with these questions. All candidates answered **Question 17** and correctly.

Mistakes include choosing **G** for **Question 18**, **B** or **C** for **Question 20**, and **F** for **Question 21**.

Exercise 2 Questions 22 – 25

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Zhang Yue, the winning long-distance runner in the University candidates' Sports Competition.

As intended, this final exercise, targeted to test the top-level IGCSE listening skills, elicited the widest range of performance. There were some very accessible questions, affording even the weakest candidates the opportunity to score one or two marks, but there were also questions to challenge the most able candidates.

Question 22 required candidates to state the university that Zhang Yue was attending.

Most candidates responded to this question well or gave answers that were acceptable.

Unacceptable responses include pinyin spellings such as 'ren nin', 'ren nian' and 'ren ying' instead of the correct spelling 'ren min', and 'da xi' instead of the correct 'da xue'.

Question 23 asked candidates to state what course Zhang Yue was studying.

Again most candidates answered this question well or gave answers that were acceptable.

Responses such as '公 cheng' were not awarded any mark.

Question 24 asked candidates to list the other two things that Zhang Yue enjoyed doing besides running and studying.

Most candidates did really well producing excellent answers or responses that might have some minor inaccuracies in character writing or pinyin spelling but adequately demonstrated sufficient understanding of this part of the interview.

Spelling 'dian nao' as 'dian niao' was the most common mistake made while answering this question.

Question 25 asked candidates to state what work Zhang Yue planned to do in the future.

Most candidates responded to this question well or gave answers that were acceptable. Rejected spellings include 'jian du shi'.

On the whole, candidates faced up to the challenges in this last exercise with most candidates achieving 3 or more marks.

MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0547/21
Reading

Key messages

In order to perform well for this paper, candidates should:

- study and consolidate the entire vocabulary list for defined content
- consolidate common key question words, time phrases, synonyms and antonyms
- have a plan on timing for each question, depending on the complexity of the questions
- read the questions carefully and provide answers based on the content of the paper rather than making assumptions or guesses
- provide an answer for short-answer questions – brief answers with clear content are sufficient
- demonstrate genuine understanding of a passage. Random lifting cannot result in any mark
- attempt every question in the paper, even the questions they feel less confident about.

General comments

Many candidates appeared well prepared for the examination and demonstrated a high level of competency, despite the interruptions all schools have had this year. It was very pleasing to see some excellent responses to this paper.

Generally speaking, the difficulty of questions increases through the paper. However, the accuracy of answers is largely related to whether candidates can comprehend the key words or not. For instance, **Questions 4, 11 and 16** appeared to be quite challenging. All the vocabulary in the prescribed minimum core vocabulary list must therefore be studied thoroughly.

Looking forward, more attention is to be paid in learning the key question words, such as what, when, where, how, how long and why, as these will help candidates to understand the questions and locate answers correctly. Candidates should also be aware that marks will not be awarded when the characters they write mean something totally different from the required answer.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1: Questions 1 – 5

Candidates demonstrated confidence in this exercise and the questions were generally well answered. **Question 2** was the best answered question in the exercise, which proved candidates were more familiar with time/numbers in Chinese. **Questions 1, 3 and 5**, were answered correctly by majority of the candidates. **Questions 4** was more challenging with some wrong answers, and even some of the stronger candidates answered incorrectly. This is probably because the vocabulary for ‘牙疼 toothache’ was less commonly seen. Therefore, candidates would benefit from being familiar with all the words and phrases in the prescribed vocabulary list.

Exercise 2: Questions 6 – 9

From the answers, it was obvious that the topic of hobbies and activities had been well studied as most candidates answered **Question 6, 7 and 9** accurately. This is strong evidence of excellent practice of the required vocabulary. A number of candidates gave incorrect answers to **Question 8**, as ‘排球 volleyball’ seemed unfamiliar to some of them. This may be because other activities were more popular in the areas where candidates reside.

Exercise 3: Questions 10 – 12

These multiple-choice questions require candidates to read the sentences in the box and choose the correct answer according to the questions. In general, responses by candidates across the ability range were of a good standard. The vast majority of candidates answered **Question 10 and 12** accurately as, in general they know the topic of weather and food well. **Question 11** proved to be more challenging, it might be because many candidates did not associate the phrase ‘玩游戏 play games’ to the playing card in option A and assumed it was doing housework, consequently often choosing the incorrect answer D instead.

Section 2

Exercise 1: Questions 13 – 16

This exercise requires candidates to show comprehension of a short passage and choose the correct words from a given table to complete sentences. Some distractors were included in the passage, hence careful reading is required. A vast majority of the candidates responded very well to the questions and scored marks in **Question 13, 14 and 15**. For **Question 16**, a fair number of candidates gave either ‘运动 sports’ or ‘难 hard’ as an answer, therefore, not gaining a mark.

Exercise 2: Questions 17 – 24

In this exercise, candidates were requested to read a passage of Chinese and to answer questions regarding it. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. The passage took the form of a letter from Xiao Zhang to his/her friend Xiao Wang about his/her trip to Hong Shan.

A very brief answer was required, but provided that the correct answer appeared, additional material copied from the text can be tolerated, unless contradictory or incomprehensible. The quality of written Chinese is considered only for the purposes of communication.

The responses were of a good standard and candidates handled most questions well throughout this exercise. A long lifting occurred in **Question 17** as a few candidates copied the whole first sentence from the passage. The extra information, ‘今天才回信，请原谅 sorry I only replied to you today’ made the answer invalid. ‘红山回来’ is also a common wrong answer as it reads as ‘Hong Shan came back’, which is not what the question required. Candidates must read the passage carefully when answering questions to avoid missing the key concept in the answers, for instance, in **Question 20**, quite a few candidates wrote ‘从上下带上来’, without ‘必须’, however, ‘必须 must’ is an essential part in the passage. Therefore, ‘必须从上下带上来 must be brought from the bottom of the mountain to the top of the mountain’ is required to be awarded the mark. The accuracy for **Question 21 and 23** was the best in this exercise compared to other questions. This demonstrated that candidates mastered numbers and times very well. The question where candidates frequently encountered difficulty was **Question 24**. It asked what the tour guide thought of Hong Shan. Quite a few candidates copied the sentence after the direct quotation mark in the passage, which is part of the tour guide’s talk, ‘红山美不美，全看你两条腿 Hong Shan is beautiful or not, it would depend on your two legs’, whilst the correct answer was in the second part of the speech. More thorough understanding would have helped to tackle this question better.

Section 3

Exercise 1: Questions 25 – 28

In this exercise, candidates were set the task of reading an extended passage in Chinese and then answering the multiple-choice questions. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. **Question 26 and 27** were well answered and a majority of the candidates

scored the marks. For **Question 25**, typical wrong answer is option A, it was probably because ‘第一名 first place’ appeared before ‘有好成绩 has good outcome’, several candidates thought ‘第一名 first place’ was the correct answer as they ignored the negative wording ‘没有’. **Question 28** was the most challenging question in this exercise as the majority of the candidates were confused by the synonyms ‘乡下 and 农村’ which both mean ‘countryside’. This shows the importance of candidates spending time in consolidating synonyms when preparing for the examination.

Exercise 2: Questions 29 – 36

In this final exercise, candidates were asked to read an extended passage in Chinese, and to demonstrate their understanding by answering short-answer questions referring to it, also in Chinese. The questions were asked in the same order as the information was presented in the passage. A small number of candidates decided not to attempt certain questions, in particular **Questions 35** and **36**. Candidates are advised to make an attempt at answering these questions rather than omitting them entirely. As this is the final exercise, both the passage and questions became more difficult.

Even though there were some excellent responses, such as **Question 32**, generally speaking, candidates found this exercise very challenging.

For **Question 29**, most candidates were able to locate where the answer was in the passage, however, a few candidates lost marks by lifting extra characters from the text, answers like, ‘为保护环境、保护环境做出努力’ caused confusion when putting the answers back in the question. A significant number of candidates encountered difficulty with **Question 30**. This question asked why Bai Lan wanted to study marine biology, the key concept is ‘对海很感兴趣 interested in the sea’. There were quite a few candidates gave ‘却对海很感兴趣 as the answer. With the extra character ‘却 but’, it made the answer incomprehensible; also lifting such as, ‘白兰从小住在山区, 却对海很感兴趣 Bai Lan grew up in the mountain range, however, she is interested in the sea’ did not present a genuine understanding. Similarly, quite a few candidates wrote ‘所以爷爷常常开车带她去 therefore, grandad often drives her to go to the seaside’ whilst the **Question 31** asked how Bai Lan went to the seaside and the correct answer ‘爷爷开车带她去 granddad drove her’ was in the sentence, what those candidates actually wrote was in the form of answering a ‘why’ question rather than ‘who’. More careful lifting is required for **Question 33** as candidates whose answers were not worthy of a mark often added extra character(s) in their responses, which made their answers incomprehensible. For **Question 34**, quite a few candidates got confused between ‘弟弟 younger brother’, to ‘志愿者 volunteer’ as most candidates thought the distractor ‘弟弟 younger brother’ was the answer.

Candidates must remember to write characters correctly. There were a few occasions where the candidates added or missed strokes to/from characters resulting in a different meaning. This subsequently affected the comprehension.

MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0547/22
Reading

Key messages

In order to perform well for this paper, candidates should:

- study and consolidate the entire vocabulary list for defined content
- consolidate common key question words, time phrases, synonyms and antonyms
- have a plan on timing for each question, depending on the complexity of the questions
- read the questions carefully and provide answers based on the texts in the paper rather than using guesswork
- provide an answer for short-answer questions, brief answers with clear content are sufficient
- demonstrate genuine understanding of a passage. Random lifting cannot be rewarded
- attempt every question in the paper, even the questions they feel less confident about.

General comments

On the whole, candidates appeared well prepared for the examination despite the interruptions all schools had this year. There were many excellent responses to this paper and few candidates left questions unanswered. Amongst the responses, some candidates chose to respond to the question in full sentences, using their own words; others gave concise answers. All of these were pleasing to see in this year's examination.

Looking forward, more attention should be paid in learning the key question words, such as what, when, where, how, how long and why, as these will help candidates to understand the questions and locate answers correctly. Furthermore, when candidates use short answers to answer **Exercise 2, Questions 17 – 24** and **Question 29 – 35**, it is essential the written phrases make sense and the lifted section fits the purpose.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1: Questions 1 – 5

The questions in this exercise were very well answered, especially **Questions 1, 2 and 3**. **Questions 4 and 5** were answered less accurately. For **Question 4**, quite a few candidates did not seem to understand the character '脚 foot', resulting in the wrong answer being chosen. The other three options were chosen so it seems they guessed rather than mistaking the character for a different character. **Question 5** was a little challenging because the word '杂志 magazine' did not seem to be understood by some candidates.

Exercise 2: Questions 6 – 9

All the questions were very well answered. Most candidates have excellent understanding of the vocabulary required in the questions and were able to match the pictures to the key words correctly. Amongst them, **Question 7 and 9** were answered very well, as almost all candidates secured the marks.

Exercise 3: Questions 10 – 12

All three questions were correctly answered by most of the candidates across all ability levels, **Question 10** in particular. **Question 11** was proven to be quite challenging, as more candidates did not understand the verb '逛 stroll' or the noun '街 street'. Consequently, they either did not understand the question and were unable to provide the correct answer or vice versa. A very small number of candidates were unsure of the meaning of '糖果 sweets' for **Question 12**.

Section 2

Exercise 1: Questions 13 – 16

The performance in this exercise was the strongest compared to other questions in the paper. Nearly all candidates gave correct answers to these questions, this demonstrated excellent understanding of the passage and the related key vocabulary in this exercise, which was great to see.

Exercise 2: Questions 17 – 24

In this exercise candidates were required to read a passage in Chinese and to answer subsequent questions.

The passage was a letter from Xiao Zhang to his friend Xiao Wang about his three-week trip to Beijing. Brief and accurate answers were sufficient, providing the answer was clear; additional material copied from the text was acceptable, unless it was contradictory or made the answer incomprehensible.

Overall, the majority of candidates responded to the questions in this exercise very well, especially **Question 17, 20, 21 and 22**. **Question 19 and 23** showed inconsistencies in the answers given. Most candidates attempted almost all questions, only a few left questions unanswered. In addition to this, it was very pleasing to see that the vast majority of candidates made sure they used the correct pronouns in their response, replacing first person '我 I' with third person '小张 Xiao Zhang or 他 he', when lifting the materials from the passage.

Apart from the long lifting listed in the Mark Scheme, errors also occurred due to lack of genuine understanding with lifted materials containing unrelated information. It seemed that a few careless mistakes occurred as '天 in 天安门广场' for **Question 18** was missing, with only '安门广场 or 安门' being written. A very small number of candidates included the past time frame particle 了 in the answer '了天安门广场', which resulted in losing the mark. For **Question 19**, typical incorrect answers are, '西北郊区参观、去北京西北郊区'. Similarly, in **Question 23**, candidates seemed to be able to locate where the answers were in the passage, however, a lack of understanding of the preposition '对面 opposite' within the context lead to wrong answers like '北京大 学对面的一家餐馆、对面的一家、他们去大学对面的'.

In order to handle this exercise well, candidates need to be familiar with all the key question words as mentioned in the general comments. They also need to read the passage carefully and locate the answers precisely as additional information may cause ambiguity.

Section 3

Exercise 1: Questions 25 – 28

In this exercise, candidates read an extended passage in Chinese and then answered multiple choice questions. Voluntary work was featured in the texts. All candidates, regardless of their ability level, attempted all four questions.

Questions 25 and 27 were the best performed questions in this exercise. **Question 26 and 28** were a little challenging to some candidates. For **Question 26**, option B '马来西亚 Malaysia' appears after '选择 to choose' and '志愿者 volunteer', therefore, candidates mistook it as the correct answer. This suggests that the candidates did not fully understand the passage as they did not manage to distinguish the distractor from the correct answer option C '非洲 Africa'. In the passage, the wording in option B '交到很多好朋友 made lots of good friends appeared after '非常快乐 very happy', therefore, a few candidates chose it as the answer for **Question 28** despite the fact '没' to express negative was there.

Exercise 2: Questions 29 – 35

In this final exercise, candidates read an extended passage in Chinese and demonstrated their understanding by answering a number of short-answer questions in Chinese. The content of the passage referred to how Mark changed his views about environment.

Lots of good answers were seen in this exercise though some candidates found this exercise more challenging than others in the paper. A small number of candidates left some questions blank.

For **Question 29**, the majority of the candidates secured the mark, a few candidates gave answers such as '环境问题不太关心' without the coverb '对', causing ambiguity. For **Question 30**, a common incorrect answer was '用一次就扔了' get rid of them after one use'. Quite a few candidates lost marks in **Question 31** and **34** by lifting excessively from the passage, e.g. wording such as 学校花了很多钱 or 虽然比赛很重要 was unrelated to the answer, careful lifting of the details was required in this exercise. For **Question 32**, although '大学表演系的学生' was accepted, candidates were expected to present a good level of grammar accuracy in their responses. Compared to the rest of the questions in this exercise, a very large number of candidates managed to secure the mark for **Question 33**, which was very positive. Responses for **Question 35** were mixed. Whilst most candidates gave the correct answer '绿色服装比赛', a few candidates wrote answers like 学校的环保小组、除了组织回收日、节水日活动 etc., which appeared to be randomly lifted around the key concept. Answers like '绿色服装'、'服装比赛' partially answered the question, which makes it more regrettable.

Candidates must remember to write the characters correctly, there were a few occasions where the candidates added extra strokes or missed strokes to the character, resulting in a different meaning, affecting the comprehension.

MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0547/23
Reading

Key messages

In order to perform well for this paper, candidates should:

- study and consolidate the entire vocabulary list for defined content
- consolidate common key question words, time phrases, synonyms and antonyms
- have a plan on timing for each question, depending on the complexity of the questions
- read the questions carefully and provide answers based on the texts in the paper rather than making assumptions
- provide an answer for short-answer questions – brief answers with clear content are sufficient
- demonstrate genuine understanding of a passage. Random lifting cannot result in any mark
- attempt every question in the paper, even the questions they feel less confident about.

General comments

The number of the candidates who took this paper was very small compared to previous years. The strong performance this year shows that teachers have prepared their candidates well, despite the interruptions all schools have had. It was noted that all the questions were attempted.

Generally speaking, the difficulty of questions increases through the paper. However, the accuracy of answers is largely related to whether candidates can comprehend the key words or not. For instance, **Question 5** and **12** appeared to be more challenging. All the vocabulary in the prescribed minimum core vocabulary list must therefore be studied thoroughly.

Looking forward, more attention is to be paid to learning the key question words, such as what, when, where, how, how long and why, as these will help candidates to understand the questions and locate answers correctly. Candidates should also be aware that marks will not be awarded when the characters they write mean something totally different from the required answer.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1: Questions 1 – 5

The questions in this exercise were generally answered well, especially **Question 2** which was answered consistently, as almost all candidates scored the mark. **Question 5** proved challenging for some candidates. This was probably because candidates were less familiar with the characters of ‘杯子 cup’.

Exercise 2: Questions 6 – 9

The performance in this exercise was the best compared to other questions in the paper. Only a couple of candidates found ‘刷牙 brush teeth’ unfamiliar. All candidates gave correct answers to **Questions 7, 8** and **9**. This demonstrated excellent understanding of the related key vocabulary to the pictures in this exercise, which was great to see.

Exercise 3: Questions 10 – 12

Candidate responses across all ability ranges were of an excellent standard in tackling this exercise. Every one secured marks on **Questions 10** and **11**. **Question 12** proved to be more challenging as some candidates did not recognise the word ‘滑板 skateboard’ in the text and used their background knowledge to choose the answer.

Section 2

Exercise 1: Questions 13 – 16

This exercise required candidates to read a short passage in Chinese and choose the correct phrases to complete sentences. Candidate responses were generally good, particularly for **Questions 13, 15** and **16**, which were answered accurately. A couple of candidates chose ‘公共汽车 bus’ instead for **Question 14**.

Exercise 2: Questions 17 – 24

In this exercise candidates were required to read a passage in Chinese and to answer subsequent questions. The passage was a letter from Xiao Liu to his friend Xiao Ma about his two-week trip to the United States. Brief and accurate answers were required. However, provided that the answer was accurate, additional material copied from the text was acceptable, unless it was contradictory or made the answer incomprehensible.

Most candidates identified the key information as required by the questions, and performed very well in this exercise. The quality of written Chinese was only considered for the purposes of communication. Inaccuracies in Chinese characters were tolerated, provided that the message was clear and that the answers given did not have a different meaning, which might cause confusion in comprehension of the message. All the questions were attempted.

Overall, the majority of candidates responded to the questions in this exercise very well, especially **Questions 21, 23** and **24**. Hardly any candidates made a mistake, which was great to see.

Questions 17, 18, 19, 20 and **22** were a little challenging for candidates as not everybody secured full marks.

In **Question 17** for instance, the key question words were ‘多长时间 how long’. The question asks how long Xiao Liu went on holiday. A common incorrect answer was ‘美国玩了两个星期’ which reads as ‘United States played two weeks’. Although the wording ‘两个星期 two weeks’ which is the correct answer was included, it provided a completely wrong answer without ‘在 at’ in the sentence. Candidates need to make sure the meaning is clear when answering a question. For **Question 18**, a typical wrong answer is ‘酒店的时候’. By missing the key character 到, candidates lost one mark.

Section 3

Exercise 1: Questions 25 – 28

It was pleasing to see that all candidates, regardless of their ability level, attempted the four questions for the exercise. Candidates read an extended passage in Chinese and answered multiple-choice questions. This passage introduced two brothers, Zhang Hai and Zhang Yang. The performance for **Questions 25, 26** and **28** was very good, and the performance for **Question 27** was exceptional as all candidates scored the mark. A number of candidates had difficulty with **Question 26** as ‘工程师 engineer’ appeared before ‘科学家 scientist’ in the text in Zhang Hai’s speech. Therefore, some candidates chose the incorrect answer A ‘工程师 engineer’ without noticing the subject ‘我 I’ is before ‘科学家 scientist’. For **Question 28**, answers were a little mixed. All three options appeared in the text, therefore, it required candidates’ ability of understanding the whole sentence Zhang Yang said in order to find ‘帮助别人 help others’ as the correct answer.

Exercise 2: Questions 29 – 34

In this final exercise, candidates read an extended passage in Chinese and demonstrated their understanding by answering a number of short-answer questions in Chinese. The content of the passage referred to a weekend Chinese school and a candidate Lin Mei.

As this is the final exercise, both the passage and questions became more difficult. There were some very good responses and it was pleasing to see all the questions were attempted by the candidates, despite the fact that a few candidates found this exercise challenging. **Question 32** was the best answered in the exercise but the performance was a little inconsistent in the rest of the questions. For instance, for **Question 29**, excessive lifting impeded candidates in scoring because no mark was awarded for answers like ‘下午一点上课， 四点下课 start lesson at 1 pm and finish school at 4 pm’. For **Question 30**, quite a few candidates put ‘不在市中心 not in the city centre’ or ‘在周末上课 have lessons over the weekend’ as answers, which was not what was required from the text. Similarly, for **Question 31**, those candidates who only answered ‘喜欢中国明星 like Chinese celebrity’ did not demonstrate their genuine understanding of the text and, as a result, could not be awarded the mark. **Question 33** seemed to be quite challenging. This was possibly due to candidates missing out the key words ‘最喜欢 most favourite’ in their answers, and only writing ‘中国明星写的 written by a Chinese star’ which is not clear enough.

Candidates must remember to write the characters correctly. There were a few occasions where the candidates added extra strokes or missed strokes to the character, resulting in a different meaning. This subsequently affected the comprehension.

MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0547/03
Speaking

Key messages

- The June 2021 session was the last year of the current syllabus. From June 2022 the new style 0547/03 speaking paper will be used. Although the observations below refer to the current and last year of the syllabus, there are still some areas to reflect on that will be useful when conducting future speaking tests.
- **Please read the Paper 3 (Speaking) *Teachers' Notes* booklet that accompanies the candidate cards each year to be fully aware of the requirements of the test. For further information, visit the School Support Hub area of the Cambridge website <https://schoolsupporthub.cambridgeinternational.org/>**
- To score high marks, learners need to show consistent ability to use a variety of structures, opinions and precise vocabulary, particularly in the Conversation sections. The teacher/Examiner needs to ask open questions that give learners the opportunity to show this range of vocabulary and structures, including past and future time frames.
- The Speaking test should be conducted entirely in Mandarin Chinese. There should be no use of English in the test. Only Mandarin Chinese should be used in the transitions between sections of the test.

General comments

Most centres administered and carried out the tests very well. In order to give learners the best possible chance, teacher/Examiners should ensure they have read the *Teachers' Notes* booklet carefully so that both the tests and the relevant administration are carried out correctly. Please carefully read the Mark Schemes on page 14 – 15 of the *Teachers' Notes* so that candidates are accurately marked.

The Moderator's Report for the centre should also be consulted.

Clerical checks

In most centres, the addition and transfer of marks was accurate. In some centres, however, a number of errors were found. It is essential that the addition of marks on the Working Mark Sheet as well as the transcription of the total marks onto the computer mark sheet are checked to ensure learners receive the correct marks. It is advisable for more than one person in the centre to check these numbers.

• **Sample size**

Many centres managed to select a good recorded sample which covered **evenly the full spread of performance** in the centre.

It is helpful to the Moderator if **asterisks (*)** are put on the Working Mark Sheet to indicate the learners who have been included in the recorded sample, particularly in centres with many learners.

Centres using more than one teacher/Examiner should include samples from each one in an appropriate proportion. Each teacher/Examiner should complete and sign his/her own Working Mark Sheet.

• **Recording quality and presentation of the sample**

They should always be saved onto a CD or USB as an .mp3 file. Please do not put sticky labels on the CD as these can easily become detached and make the CD unplayable.

Speaking tests should be conducted in a quiet place, away from any noise causing disruption. In a small number of cases, learners and/or the teacher/Examiner were not always clearly heard. If an external microphone has been used for recording, please make sure that it is nearer to the learner than to the teacher/Examiner. The recording should be checked at intervals by the teacher/Examiner to ensure that it is clear and there are no extraneous noises. Please ensure you have checked that all the recordings are present and can be played before you send the recording to Cambridge.

The recording should not be stopped during the three parts of each candidate's speaking exam. The learners should be introduced by name and learner number by the **teacher/Examiner**, not by the learners themselves.

The tracks on CDs should be labelled using the convention specified in the *Teachers' Notes*: centre number_learner number_examination number_component number, e.g. **PQ123_0001_0547_03**. Labelling them as 'Track 1', 'Track 2' etc. is not helpful when finding individual learners. A card stating which learners appear on each CD must be enclosed, *not glued or stapled*, with each CD.

- **Internal Moderation in centres**

In most cases, centres had adopted a thoroughly professional approach to Internal Moderation and had carefully documented their procedures for achieving consistency. It was clear that in many centres great efforts had been made to cross-check the standard applied by different teacher/Examiners and to ensure that marks awarded followed a single rank order before they were submitted to Cambridge.

In a small number of cases centres provided insufficient evidence of the Internal Moderation procedures followed, merely writing different marks next to the original marks on the Working Mark Sheet. Some justification of why the adjustment was made must be included in the documentation.

Details of the centre's Internal Moderation procedures must also be sent to Cambridge, as specified on the 'Cover sheet for moderation sample'.

The coordinating teacher/Examiner is responsible for checking that the mark scheme has been applied consistently by all of the teacher/Examiners in the centre. If a particular teacher/Examiner's marking is judged by his/her colleagues to be out of line with the other marking at the centre, all the marks for learners examined by that teacher/Examiner must be checked and adjusted accordingly before paperwork is submitted to Cambridge.

- **Transitions between sections of the test**

It is very important to indicate the transition between the different parts of the test. In some cases there was no transition indicated between the Topic Conversation and the General Conversation. At times it was difficult to ascertain whether the teacher/Examiner had simply forgotten to conduct the General conversation, thus affecting the learner's overall mark. There is no need for any use of English during the tests: each new section can be introduced in Chinese, for instance by using sentences such as 现在进行情景对话 A/现在进入第二部分/现在进行自由对话 吧 and so on.

- **Working Mark Sheets**

This year some incomplete Working Mark Sheets were submitted. These should be filled in with learners' full names, correct candidate numbers, the numbers of their Role Play cards, and signed and dated by the teacher/Examiner.

It is helpful to the Moderator if asterisks (*) are put against the names of the learners who are included in the recorded sample, particularly in centres with many learners.

- **Dispatch of the sample**

Please ensure that the CDs are well packaged. CDs are particularly vulnerable to damage in transit, and need to be carefully packed in strong containers, ideally in a plastic case inside a padded envelope. A few centres sent their CDs in flimsy plastic or paper pockets. **Avoid using staples** to attach the centre label to the soft plastic cover of the CD, as it can damage the surface of the CD and hence the recording.

Comments on specific sections

1. Role Plays

Overall, the Role Plays were conducted very well. Teacher/Examiners are reminded of the need for careful preparation before the test. Please read the role play questions exactly as they are. Marks can only be awarded for completing the tasks as presented on the Role Play cards. Centres are reminded that for some tasks a short response may be sufficient to attract a mark of three.

Please **record the number of the card given** to each learner in the space provided on the Working Mark Sheet.

The situations at the start of each role-play should be read aloud in Chinese by the teacher/Examiner before commencing the test. This is reassuring for the learner, and establishes that he/she is playing a role, not merely answering for him- or herself. **The introduction should not be read in English.**

Learners should avoid answers in the Role Plays which are formulaic or neutral, such as 对了 'yes' or 不知道 'I do not know', as they give no indication that the learner has understood the question.

The question words which caused difficulty in the Role Plays in the June 2021 session were 多大? *how old?*, and 多长时间? *how long?*

Specific feedback on each question:

A Role Plays

- ***You are planning to go to a park in Beijing with a friend***

Weaker learners found it difficult to answer the following: 去 [北海 / 中山] 公园要多长时间? *How long will it take us to get to (Beihai/Zhongshan) park?*

- ***You are talking to your friend about your pet.***

The question 它多大? caused some confusion as some learners answered with reference to size rather than age.

- ***You are a traveller at a railway station. A ticket-seller is asking you questions.***

Weaker learners found it difficult to answer the following: 你几月几号去 (place)? *What date are you going to (place)?* and 你打算在 (place) 呆软卧 / 硬卧多长时间? *How long are you planning to stay at (place)?* Some candidates were also unclear about the vocabulary 软卧 / 硬卧 *soft/hard sleeper*.

B Role plays

- ***You have just arrived at an airport in Guangzhou. You run into a friend. He/she is asking you questions.***

Weaker learners found it difficult to answer the following: 你觉得广州的机场怎么样 *What do you think of Guangzhou airport?* and 在广州, 你想参观哪些地方? *What places do you want to visit in Guangzhou?* Some candidates were also unclear about the vocabulary 纪念品 *souvenir*.

- ***You are talking to your friend about your experience of learning Chinese.***

Weaker learners found it difficult to answer the following question: 你觉得汉语最大的困难是什么? *What is the hardest part of learning Chinese?*

- ***You have just arrived at a new school. Your PE teacher is asking you questions.*** Weaker learners found it difficult to answer the following: 你以前参加过哪些体育活动? *In the past, what PE activities have you taken part in?*

2. Topic Presentation and Topic Conversation

The standard of work in this section covered the full range of performance.

Topics chosen

Many learners chose, *My Hobbies, My Pet, My Family, School Life or My Holiday.*

More unusual topics included: ***Street fashion, Brazil, My favourite singer, Chinese Festivals.***

Timing Please note that the **Topic Presentation and Topic Conversation should last a total of about five minutes**. In some centres much less time than this was allowed, and their learners were thereby disadvantaged.

Topic Conversation

In some centres it was evident that the opening sections of the Topic Presentation had been memorised: this type of rote learning misses the point of the Speaking Test, and will not allow learners to show the full range of their ability in Chinese. Learners should be encouraged to speak spontaneously, and not to memorise speeches.

The teacher/Examiner should listen carefully to the learners' presentations, and then lead them skilfully through the Topic Conversation by asking appropriate questions, allowing them both to develop their topic, offer opinions and to demonstrate their language skills. In the Topic Conversation, the teacher/Examiner should not ask questions, which require candidates to merely repeat information from the Topic Presentation. Learners must be given the opportunity to answer unexpected questions to score high marks.

Most centres handled the transition from the Topic Conversation to the General Conversation well, but some centres did not make clear the ending of the Topic Conversation and the start of the General Conversation. This can be done by saying '现在进入第三部分。'

Time-frames: The teacher/Examiner must include questions **both** about the **past** (e.g. *When did you begin to...?*) **and** about the **future** (e.g. *When do you plan to...?*).

Learners who do not produce both past and future time-frames could not be awarded more than 6 marks out of 15 for Language Scale (b). See pages 9, 10 and 15 of the *Teachers' Notes*.

In answer to a question such as *How long (a time) did you do (an action)?* saying a length of time such as 三年 is not by itself sufficient to show that a learner can convey a past time-frame meaning. In such a case, a **verb is also required**, for example 我学了三年了。

Teacher/Examiners should ask more questions, until learners have showed they can convey meaning using **both past and future** time frames successfully.

3. General Conversation

Timing: Please note that **the General Conversation should last about five minutes**: in some centres much less time than this was allowed, and their learners were disadvantaged. In most cases, however, it was carried out well.

The General Conversation should be based on the individual learners' responses and so should not be over-rehearsed or prepared beforehand. Please note that **two or three** of the Defined Content topics should be covered during the General Conversation. It is better to ask questions in depth on a few topics rather than a large number of unrelated questions.

Time-frames: The teacher/Examiner must include questions **both** about the **past** (e.g. *When did you begin to...?*) **and** about the **future** (e.g. *When do you plan to...?*).

Learners who do not produce both past and future time-frames could not be awarded more than 6 marks out of 15 for Language Scale(b). See pages 9, 10 and 15 of the *Teachers' Notes* booklet.

MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0547/41
Writing

Key messages

- It is essential that candidates learn and are very familiar with the Defined Content for the syllabus which enable candidates to understand the scenarios.
- Familiarise with question words, e.g. 什么 what, 哪里/儿 where, 几/多少 how many, 为什么 why, 怎么(样) how, 哪个 which, 谁 who, 什么时候 when, 几点 what time, 多长时间 how long.
- Familiarise with the words which have appeared in examinations several times e.g. 东西, 参观, 参加, 跟。。一起, 好处, 坏处, 应该, 开始, 。。的时候, 给 someone.
- Elaborate with simple sentence structures to achieve the maximum 10 marks for communication for **Question 2**.
- Avoid using pinyin and English in **Question 1 + 2**

General comments

Over half of the candidates understood the question type well and produced enough details and additional information for **Question 2** and **3**. Some candidates used more complex structures and more difficult characters which reflected their true linguistic ability. It was pleasing to see that the topics were accessible to the big part of candidates and there were a number of excellent performances from centres especially for **Question 1 + 2**.

It was pleasant to see a large number of candidates who were true learners and provided a detailed and expanded essay with plenty of extra information. Some candidates made mistakes in the grammar or vocabulary used, however, it was impressive that they attempted to tell interesting stories and justified their opinions with most easy characters written correctly.

Centres should be aware answers have to be relevant to the questions, and all the bullet points need to be addressed with as much relevant information as possible. Since this is a writing examination, Chinese characters should be used as standard, and both English and pinyin should be avoided. Fortunately, there were significantly less candidates memorising a big chunk of a general passage, e.g. about oneself or family, hobbies, etc. this year. Candidates should read the scenario and questions carefully, especially the tenses and key words which were all in the defined content booklet.

Candidates should circle which topic they attempted to write in **Section 2 Question 3** since there were 3 choices. Candidates did not need to copy out the questions, particularly for Question 3. Writing sentences that directly targeted the bullet points and expanded appropriately without the pre-existing information would have been the most efficient way to gain high marks.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Candidates were asked to list five things they might need for a Chinese New Year celebration. Most candidates were able to list food, drinks in general, such as 鱼、水果、汽水、水、果汁、肉 etc., easy and simple characters. Some candidates listed furniture, utensils and more Chinese New Year related words,

such as 碗、杯子、盘子、椅子、桌子、桌布、筷子、饺子、红包、压岁钱、灯、灯笼、气球、春联、糖果、瓜子、花生、烟花、鞭炮 etc. This showed that candidates have been taught well on topics and exam techniques. Easy and simple characters are rewarded the same marks as the complicated ones.

However, a small amount of the candidates answered in pinyin, which could not be awarded any marks. Other impressive answers included 漂亮的衣服、饮料、游戏、零食. Sadly, people e.g. 爸爸、妈妈、朋友 appeared in answers again this year, which could not be awarded marks since they are not things. The answer of music was tolerated this year.

If there were missing radicals or wrong radicals which created a new character with a different meaning, the mark could not be awarded. Candidates could improve on their accuracy of certain characters with correct radicals or correct suffix, e.g. 毛(帽)子、酉、朋友、香蕉(蕉)、平(苹)果、面(包)、果(汁)、饮(料)、两(肉)、新(衣)、毛(手)机 etc.

Question 2

This question requires candidates to write about their school. The overall performance in this question was good since the topic was very accessible and question words were easy to understand and there was plenty of scope to extend the answers. With guided questions, even weaker candidates could also produce some simple answers such as for **task 2**, simply replace the question word 几 to a number: 有六位老师. 国家 is a well-known word for candidates so a majority of candidates could write their own country in characters correctly for **task 1**. There were some excellent responses with complex structures in this section for **task 3** and **4**, such as 我的学校又大又美丽, 校园里有很多设施, 我常常跟朋友在操场上玩; 操场上摆满了各种各样的健身器材 or idioms 风景优美、丰富的教学经验、鸟语花香、世外桃源、参天大树 etc. However, simple structures and basic vocabulary are enough to score full marks in this section.

Some candidates did a good job expanding answers. For example, for **task 1**, some wrote 我的学校在马拉维, 学校很大, 男学生比女学生多 to add more details.

Task 5 should be answered in a future time frame which is similar in the past year, therefore, candidates tackled well for this question.

Candidates should be aware this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible and both English and pinyin should be avoided, especially for the key words. Pinyin and English words would not count towards the communication mark e.g. '我喜欢做 kan shu, da wangqiu he da lanqiu' could not be awarded marks for **task 4**.

Accuracy of language was generally good, simple and straight to the point answers were largely seen. Candidates should, however, be reminded to use varied sentence structures and avoid anglicised structures. There were some common grammatical errors appearing in responses and candidates could improve their performance by placing emphasis on the following:

- Character mistakes: e.g. 好元(玩)、力(九)位、中又(文)、去(法)语、课相(程)、投(设)池(施).
- Misuse of '是' with adjective: e.g. 校园是好; 我的老师是友好和高.
- Missing measure word: e.g. 有两卫生间; 有二十四中学生.
- Wrong words order: e.g. 看书在图书馆; 说英在我的学校.
- Misuse of verbs: e.g. 我喜欢做看书.

Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. With five guided bullet points in **Question 3**, candidates could opt for the one they felt most confident about. About similar numbers of the candidates opted for **Question 3 (a)**, **(b)** and **(c)**.

It was pleasing to see the improvement of understanding the rubrics this year and using varied timeframes. Most candidates covered all the bullet points but 多长时间 still seems a difficulty point for some candidates in **Question 3 (b) task 2**, 博物馆 may also cause problems for some candidates to comprehend the scenario in **Question 3 (a)**.

A few candidates copied all the task questions without answering them or simply took out the questions words and inserted with 很好 for 你觉得博物馆怎么样; 很多长时间 for 做了多长时间作业; 发生了一些事 for 后来发生了什么事. It should not be encouraged in the teaching practice and candidates should be encouraged to write more relevant information in greater detail for the tasks.

- (a) For 3(a), the task was to write a letter to their grandma about a museum visited recently. It seems strong candidates chose this task and covered all the bullet points very well. The word 博物馆 in the scenario maybe cause problem for weaker candidates so centre should advise candidates to get familiarised with the words on the Defined content for the syllabus. The questions words in the tasks were commonly used in the past paper and the candidates were well trained to deal with 'who', 'how', 'what', 'why' and 'how about' etc.

Task 1 was well attempted, with most popular choice of family members and friends which were easy to write. A few candidates even included very trendy language e.g. 高富帅 in their work to make their work more colourful.

Task 2 was easy for most of the candidates, but some weaker ones missed 坐在前面 means of transports.

Unsurprisingly, candidates were well trained in expressing opinions, e.g. **task 3** 'what did you think of the museum'. Apart from the common words such as nice, interesting, etc. basic adjectives, other adjectives to describe the museum e.g. 又好又热闹、十分有特色、漂亮风景、灯光柔和、充满智慧、博大精深、艺术珍品 were really impressive.

The character for advantages appeared in the past paper for many times, so candidates performed well for **task 4**. Idioms such as 开阔眼界、丰富见闻 etc. were seen in their work.

A majority of the candidates were able to answer **task 5** without any difficulties and used the future timeframe well. However, a few weak candidates, 打算什么时候 still caused confusing and they knew to use a time phrase to replace the question words 什么, but their manipulation of language e.g. 你明天算时候再去博物馆 could be improved.

The following tips can help candidates to achieve better results.

- Think about what they are able to write in Chinese rather than what they want or wish to write.
- Remember some sentence structures and use them in their writing.
- Try to use the sentences in the question, but do not copy word for word.

Characters and Grammar

Candidates showed a good knowledge of Chinese grammar. Some impressive examples are below:

- 因为路程较远, 我们选择了乘坐公共汽车, 大约一个半小时
- 这个博物馆特别有意思, 每一幅画都美极了
- 通过文物更好地学习历史, 了解文化差异, 还有时代的变换
- 票价不仅优惠, 而且在文物旁又有详细的解释说明

However, the most frequent errors were:

- Character mistakes: such as 朋 (明) 夫 (天)、气 (汽) 车、便 (且) 宜、文花 (化)、发名 (明)、知 (智) 慧
- Mistake of using '是': e.g. 博物馆是好
- Mistake of expressing when 什么时候: e.g. 我们五时候再去博物馆
- Missing verb: e.g. 我们二个车去的博物馆
- Wrong word order: e.g. 以后博物馆我吃苹果
- Anglicisation: e.g. 我们有很多玩儿

- (b) In 3(b), the tasks were to write an article about the candidates' views on homework. The evidence showed the candidates who opted to do this question were very familiar with this topic area and both strong and weak candidates chose this option. All bullet points were easy to follow and guided the candidates to write their answers and opinion fully.

Task 1 and **3** were well tackled since candidates only need to replace the question word in the task with the characters they wanted to write and no need to manipulate the sentence structures.

Although 多长时间 was appeared in the past paper several times, weaker candidates still seemed struggling to write correct answer for **task 2**. Some of them just took 多 out and inserted a number so the sentence structure was not correct. Centres are advised to train their candidates for this kind of challenge questions more thoroughly with detailed time expression e.g. 三个小时、四十分钟 etc.

Task 4 was 'what the benefits are of doing homework online' and most of the candidates did very well with justifications, e.g. 上网做作业又快又方便、少付钱 etc. There were some idioms to make the work very pleasant to read, e.g. 足足上网做了三个小时的作业 etc.

Task 5 was also an opinion question 'whether you think (candidates) should do homework at weekends and why'. Most candidates were able to justify their reasons e.g. 周末是给我们放松娱乐的时间、复习功课对我们有好处. More advanced answers such as 荒废学业 were impressive.

Characters and Grammar

Candidates showed a good knowledge of easy characters and basic grammar structures. There were some excellent responses with complex structures in this section, such as

- 虽然没有老师帮忙，因为是在上网做的，我可以找出我不了解的汉字
- 周末做作业能帮学生温习在课上教的课，这样就可以提高水平
- 学校不应该在周末给我们作业，因为我觉得周末是我自己的时间，我想跟我的朋友一起出去玩
- 周末的时候要能放心跟家人一起做你想做的事，比如你的爱好或者跟朋友聊天
- 上网做作业的好处很多，不仅可以防止抄作业，也能让老师及时知道作业的完成情况

The most frequent mistakes were:

- Character mistakes: e.g. 应该 (该)、汉 (汶) 字、完 (玩)
- Use 还是 instead of 或者 in a statement sentence: e.g. 可以去饭店吃饭还是打篮球
- Use of 上网 and 网上: e.g. 因为是在上网做的
- Wrong collocation of verb and noun: e.g. 更加课程的水平
- Anglicisation: e.g. 这是很方便
- Including questions words in the answer: e.g. 很多长时间
- Mistake of expressing length of time: e.g. 三长时间、三时间
- Missing word and use of 的、得: e.g. 另得东西

- (c) This year, option (c) was as popular topic as (a) and (b). The setting was writing a story when somebody took a photo of you while you were travelling abroad last year. **Task 1** was very familiarised to candidates so most of them could produce an answer. The most common stories were talking about friends or family members took photos of them in **task 3**. **Task 4** and **5** were the same as previous years so most of the candidates could write some describing words and finish the story successfully.

It was pleasing to see a coherent story line in this narrative writing, but a handful candidates could not elaborate due to limited vocabulary and sentence structures and used some Pinyin in their story.

Characters and Grammar

Some good examples with good idioms, details and structures were:

- 她有很多年没有看到我了，她说我长得很高了，比她要高了，所以她要拍一张照片跟我小时候比一比
- 我和我的朋友都不认识这个人，我们也不知道他为什么要给我们拍照片。我的朋友说应该去找警察

The most frequent mistakes were:

- Character mistakes: e.g. 饭馆 (馆)、明 (朋) 友、很 (很) 好、右 (友) 好、美国入 (人)、白 (日) 木 (本)、非 (北) jing
- Misusing of '是' with adjective: 中国是大; 他是很好大; 他是高
- Anglicisation: e.g. 我是法国人, 去中国住在
- Wrong word order: e.g. 我家喜欢节日在中文

MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0547/42
Writing

Key messages

- Avoid using pinyin or English for **Question 1**.
- Build on simple sentence structures to achieve the maximum 10 marks for Communication for **Question 2**.
- Avoid usage of Pinyin for **Question 2** which causes losing communication marks. Use synonyms to replace any characters candidates do not know.
- Read the scenario carefully for **Question 3** and answer all the questions and pay attention to different time frames.
- For **Question 3**, candidates must clearly state the option they have chosen- a, b or c on their answer.

General comments

The overall quality of response was very good in this last year of the current 0547 syllabus. Most candidates demonstrated a higher proficiency in Mandarin Chinese in terms of Communication, Accuracy of Characters, and Grammar and Structures. It was pleasing to see that the messages in last year's Examiner report were very well received and the centres followed the suggestions, which led to a good and consistent performance across all questions, especially the use of Pinyin and English, which significantly improved. Many candidates not only fully understood the requirements of the questions, but also gave additional information through using complex connectives, difficult and unusual characters for **Question 2** and **Question 3**. These candidates, who used such complex structures with difficult or unusual characters, even idioms, demonstrated a linguistic ability that was even higher than the level that this IGCSE required. It was pleasing to see that the paper was accessible to the majority of candidates and that there were a number of excellent performances from centres in the South East Asian regions.

Centres should be aware that answers must be relevant to the questions, and all the bullet points need to be addressed with as much relevant information as possible. Memorising a big chunk of a general passage e.g. about oneself or family, trips, daily routine etc. was much less evident than it had been previously. Candidates are reminded to read the scenario and questions carefully, especially the timeframes and key words which were all in the defined content booklet. Since this is a writing examination, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible and both English and pinyin should be avoided.

Candidates are not penalised for writing too much. Whilst there was no need for candidates to count the number of characters written (after they have achieved the minimum required characters), they are reminded that a composition requires a certain number of words to address all the bullet points in the question, and variety in vocabulary and sentence structures is rewarded. Therefore, a long but less varied essay will not be awarded as many marks as a shorter, more succinct one with greater variety and interest. Candidates are reminded, however, that if they write significantly fewer than 150 characters for **Question 3**, they will not produce enough evidence of their ability to gain access to the highest marks. However, in **Question 2**, candidates should understand the importance of elaboration with simple sentence structures to achieve the maximum 10 marks for Communication. Long sentences with many syntaxes will not necessarily score high marks.

Some candidates crossed out correct sentences and forgot to write them again when they produced the final draft, therefore, marks were lost. Candidates should check their work again after crossing out sentences and make sure that all the bullet points have been attempted and not be afraid to exceed the word limit.

Candidates should circle or write clearly which option they attempted to write in **section 2 Question 3** since there were 3 choices. They should write the story according to the scenario but there was no need to copy out the scenario lines. For the letter writing option (**a**), candidates needed to pay attention to whom they were supposed to write. Using the letter format was not essential to score a communication mark. The addressee and ending greetings were not included in the word count.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Candidates were asked to list five things they might see in a department store.

There were a lot of great answers including clothing items, food and drinks, stationery, furniture, electronic appliances, cutlery etc. and most candidates were able to list 电脑、衣服、篮球、书、书包、钱包、化妆品、毛笔、桌子、椅子 etc. This showed that candidates have been taught well on topics and examination techniques.

On the other end of the spectrum, a few wrote in pinyin or English entirely, thus no mark was rewarded. Verbs were not accepted e.g. 写、用. Candidates should be advised not to list more than two words with the same suffix in one category, e.g. 中文书、英文书 etc. which were only awarded maximum two marks.

Candidates are also suggested to avoid writing items that will logically not be seen as a thing in department store such as a place or people like 书店、工作人、娃娃 or things are invisible, e.g. 电、冷气、风.

Adding or missing strokes of the characters was tolerated but if there were missing radicals or wrong radicals which created a new character with a different meaning, the mark could not be awarded. The common mistakes when writing characters were: 经 (功) 课、手 (毛) 笔、船 (铅) 笔、坟 (文) 具、尺士、玩金 (具)、表 (衣) 服、家直 (具)、百 (桌) 子、尸 (尺) 子、椅 (椅) 子、书体 (本)、小兑 (说)、氏 (纸)、果斗 (汁)、洒 (酒)、坏 (杯)、电话 (话)、笨 (茶) 几、文且 (具)、文且 (具) 合 (盒)、具 in 文具 with two lines only. Candidate should think about what can successfully write in Chinese rather than what they necessarily want or wish to write.

Some candidates wrote characters with the same pronunciation instead of correct ones, e.g. 电气 (器)、手几 (机)、平 (苹) 果、时中 (钟)、马同 (桶).

A few candidates used pinyin rather than characters and even some English words e.g. 毛yi, 电nao which were not awarded marks.

Candidates must read the instructions both in Chinese and English carefully. If there is any doubt in the Chinese instructions, read the English ones and the example as a confirmation. There were a handful of candidates who did not read the questions carefully and wrote 手表 which was in the example.

Question 2

The question required the candidates to write about a newly-opened bookshop near where they live. The overall performance in this question was very good. Most of the candidates understood the questions very well, produced lots of detailed and interesting information for each task. Apart from addressing the bullet points, the candidates also provided extra information which could be awarded extra marks. However, candidates needed to be aware that extended sentences should be related to the tasks, not simply free elaboration. With guided questions, weaker candidates were able to produce some simple answers except for the fourth task 'how the staff in the bookshop are' and fifth task 'when you are going there next time.'

As in previous years, all candidates should be encouraged to use listing when possible, but no more than two lists in the whole question. Candidates should be reminded that pinyin or English is ignored during marking and this, in many cases, can render the communication before and after incoherent.

Some able candidates, despite scoring a full mark for the Language, did not manage to score full marks for the Communication as their sentences were very condensed and they did not give enough extra information

to be rewarded and it was unfortunately that potential marks were lost. Candidates should answer the questions one by one with short sentences rather than combining everything into one long sentence to cover several questions.

A few candidates who were concerned about the suggested word count deleted parts of what they had written, counted precisely and wrote down the exact number of characters they used. This ran the risk of not providing enough pieces of information in **Question 2** and losing communication marks. Candidates should not be concerned about the word count if the minimum word limit has been reached. It is shame to see some candidates crossing out correct sentences which contained more information due to fear of exceeding the word limit.

Communication:

For **task 1**, some candidates were confused about 买 and 卖 and wrote 我在书店卖了书和文具. A large number of candidates copied sentences from the scenario and simply changed the subject 你 to 我 as 我住的地方新开了一家书店, for which there was no extra information provided, so no mark could be given. Sentences with more detail, such as 最近我住的地方新开了一家书店 or 我家附近新开了一家书店 gained an extra tick 1 for **task 1**.

Task 2 was well answered and many candidates used a listing technique. Candidates are advised to follow the similar sentence patterns to the task when they answer the question e.g. 我常常和我的姐姐和妈妈一起去书店.

For **task 3**, a majority of candidates understood the question and could write different verbs e. g. 买书、看书、喝茶、和朋友聊天 etc., but some candidates often still use the verb 做 in the question and wrote 做画画、做看书 which affected their language marks. There are some excellent cases of additional information, such as 那儿有桌子和椅子, 所以我可以做作业 which helped to achieve high communication marks.

For **task 4**, there were an array of good responses and authentic expressions such as 态度很好、善良、开朗、勤劳、有礼貌、亲切、大方、有耐心、平易近人, 和蔼可亲, 助人为乐.

For **task 5**, a few candidates did not read carefully or understand the last bullet point about 'when', instead, they answered 'with whom', or 'will do what in the bookshop'. 下次我想去书店的餐厅; 下次我想去那里给工作人员吃水果; 下一次, 我想要带我的妹妹和妈妈到这间书店里看书; 下次我想和我的好朋友一起去看书店里的漫画; 如果有下次我想带来到这家举世无双的书店餐馆. Although the sentence with a future tense particle 下次、想、要 etc. and some sentences were considerably long with good vocabulary, they did not answer the question, so no communication marks were given.

In addition, some candidates used a duration of time word instead of a time phrase to answer **task 5** e.g. 下次我想二十六分去那里. There are also a few candidates misunderstood the word 那里 in the last bullet point, thinking it meant 哪里 (where) and answered a location they would like to go next, instead of 'when' they would like to go to the bookshop, thus communication marks could not be awarded.

Candidates should be reminded that a list could not score more than three marks. If one of the tasks was missing, the maximum communication mark was 9, no matter how many extra marks were gained from other bullet points. If two of the tasks were missing, the maximum communication mark was 8 and so on. Candidates should be aware that since this is a writing examination, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible and both English and pinyin should be avoided, especially for the key words, e. g. '书店里还有qian bi, 工作人员很 nice', meaning those sentences could not gain communication marks. They could be replaced by other easy words candidates know and use some words from the question, e.g. 书店里还有书, 工作人员很好.

Candidates should think about which characters they can write in Chinese rather than what they want or wish to write. For example, '您可以买书, ye 可以jie 那本书. 我喜欢 haoshu, the convenience' can be re-written as 您可以买书, 可以看那本书. 我喜欢大书.

Some good examples with good idioms, details and structures were:

- 那里卖各种各样的东西, 比如书、文具、唱片等等。

- 书店里的工作人员不仅友善，而且乐于助人。如果你找不到想要的书，他一定会帮你。
- 书店的工作人员平易近人，和蔼可亲
- 书店的工作人员都乐于助人
- 书店除了买各种各样的书以外，还卖文具，应有尽有。
- 书店里的东西放得井井有条
- 书店里有一张木桌和几张椅子，让我们安静地阅读。偶尔我们会购买一些我们喜欢的漫画和文具
- 我想到书店购买笔记本，因为家里没有空笔记本了。除此以外，我也想买一些有趣的小说和精致的文具送给我的朋友小明。
- 书店的环境非常适合学生温习功课，那儿也有几张桌子和椅子给学生谈天说地。店里的工作人员非常乐于助人，也时常把微笑挂在嘴边。

Language:

Candidates could improve on their accuracy of certain characters and some common mistakes were:

朋(明)天、作(昨)天、尸(尺)子、手(毛)笔、个(各)种个(各)样(样)、安安晴晴(静静)、完城(成)、坐(做)工(功)课、很有(友)好

Accuracy of language was generally good; simple and straight to the point answers were largely evident. Candidates should, however, be reminded to use varied sentence structures and avoid Anglicised structures. There were some common grammatical errors appearing in responses and candidates could improve their performance by placing emphasis on the following:

The most common mistakes were using ‘和’，‘是’ incorrectly.

- Wrong words order for time phrase: 我去书店下星期；我想跟爸爸去下个星期六；下次想和朋友一起去那儿当我有空时；一起和妈妈在后天去
- Wrong words order for place: 我可以读书在书店；我可以学习在书店里；一家咖啡店在里面书店；
- Wrong words order for with whom: 我常常去那里跟我的哥哥
- Use of 是 with adjectives: 书店是很好；书店的工作人员是很好；我家和书店是很近。
- Misuse of adjectives: 书店很高兴
- Missing measure word or wrong measure word: 五十学生和一百老师；他买三休书。
- Misuse of verbs: 我喜欢学书 or 我做书
- Use 和 to link two sentences: 书店很大和我常常去那儿；书店的工作人员很友好和放松的。下个星期五去书店看书和叫果汁来喝。
- Use of 也: 我和我的朋友常常去书店，也我的爸爸常常去
- Wrong sentence order: 我学到很多新的华文字从他们的文章。下次我想去那里下个月第一个星期六。
- Use of verbs: 在书店我可以看书、网上和朋友聊天。虽然我今天上午已经访问了书店买一本书。
- Use of 了: 我和我妈妈常常去新开了书店。
- Use a wrong time-frame: 下次我想作天去那里；下次我要上个周末去书店和朋友一起。
- Using comparison: 我觉得汉语比法语很难。
- Verb missing: 我和妹妹常常去书店。

Section 2

Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. The types of questions were similar to the previous ones in the past few years so the candidates were familiar with the approach.

Question 3 (b) ‘candidates’ views on studying abroad’ and **Question 3 (c)** ‘someone calling you when you were at a leisure centre last summer holiday’ seemed to be the most popular choices. Candidates chose **Question 3 (b)** perhaps due to familiarisation with the setting of school. **Question 3 (a)** ‘write about a new exhibition you visited recently’ seemed less popular perhaps due to not understanding of ‘展览’ in the question. Using the letter format was not as essential as it was in previous years to score a communication mark, therefore, additional and detailed information for the bullet points was required to score the full communication marks. The addressee and ending greeting are not included in the word count. It was heartening to see that candidates were writing more information relating to the bullet points rather than writing general opening and ending formalities e.g. ‘好久没有收到你的信了。你身体好吗？最近忙吗?’; ‘快给

我写信好吗？祝你身体健康，万事如意！’ which can be pre-learnt and would not attribute much to the final scores.

Most candidates demonstrated a higher proficiency in Mandarin Chinese in terms of Communication, Accuracy of the Characters and Grammar and Structures. There were many excellent essays showing great language skill and great abilities of creative writing.

The overall standard was high and many achieved full marks for the whole paper. Most candidates were able to communicate effectively in target language, and quite a few used more native speaker-like expressions or well-known Chinese idioms such as 有说有笑、一石二鸟、水可载舟，亦可覆舟. The topics and the questions are accessible to vast majority who have studied the course. Vast majority of candidates observed the rubrics and responded to each question accordingly. A rare few failed to write anything that was eligible or worthy of marks.

Many Chinese idioms were well used in essays: e.g. 各种各样、丰富多彩、人山人海、独一无二，开阔眼界、美味可口、不知所措 plus some advanced words: 环境保护、突飞猛进、志同道合、目不转睛、沟通技巧、增进互相的感情etc.

Candidates who scored highest tended to have a range of sentence patterns, and it was pleasing to see that 让，使，给，被，把 were used in some of the essays apart from sentence structures in **part 1** from the defined content booklet. Many candidates are able to use conjunction words and complex sentences, like 除了…还；如果…就；不但…而且…；虽然…但是…；又…又…

The following tips can help candidates to achieve better results.

- Think about what they are able to write in Chinese rather than what they want or wish to write.
- Remember some sentence structures and use them in their writing.
- Try to use the sentences in the question, but do not copy word for word.

Although the common mistakes, e.g. ‘是’ before adjective or ‘也’ before noun are still seen, these types of mistakes are much fewer in number.

Many candidates’ abilities for mastering long, complex sentences are impressive. Some candidates used ‘把’ in sentences. A few candidates responded to the questions in Pinyin only or made no responses to any questions.

(a) For **3(a)**, the task was to ‘write about a new exhibition you visited recently’. There were a number of excellently written works. Most candidates covered the bullet points very well and they were able to give justification for **task 2** ‘what you thought about the exhibition’ and **task 5** ‘why you would like to go to see an exhibition next time’.

I am pleased to see that most candidates improved on tenses for this question while a few occasionally missed **task 4** ‘when’ for a future tense time frame.

For **task 1**, a majority of candidates can specify what exhibition it is; handful candidates only copied from the scenario line 新的展览 which did not specify what it is thus no communication mark given. Some strong candidates were able to provide very specific or even sophisticated exhibition names such as 画展、电子游戏 or even 科技创新发明.

Task 3 ‘How the exhibition was different to the previous exhibition(s)’ 它和你以前看的展览有什么不同 was rather challenging for a few candidates. Some understood the meaning, but providing answers with correct sentence patterns seemed difficult. However, the majority were able to give detailed response with ideas clearly expressed.

Task 4, the vast majority gained a mark here, and it was very pleasing to see responses such as ‘……的时候，……以后’ instead of a straight forward time expression.

Characters and Grammar

Most candidates understood grammar very well and wrote sentences, even complex ones, correctly. Most essays showed that candidates have no problem using past, present and future timeframes e.g.

- 展览人山人海
- 我朋友的画我留下了非常难忘的印象，因为她画的花极其漂亮。
- 我觉得那个展览特别好，因为可以让更多人认识世界古代历史。
- 我觉得这是一个非常好的展览，因为可以让我更了解汽车。
- 虽然这次展览的举办方和我上一次参观的展览是一样的，但无法否认但是他们的确进步了很多。
- (篮球展览) ...这次的活动不仅人山人海，而且当时有几名家喻户晓的篮球员进行了篮球比赛，简直让观众们大饱眼福。如果有机会，下一次暑假我还想去看展览，因为我好怀念当时的情景。
- 我觉得这次画展非常盛大且有趣。画展里会有工作人员一一为顾客介绍每一幅画的画家和它的来源

Pinyin was used significantly less this year, however, there were a number of homophone or near homophone errors and characters with similar shape, such as 时后(候)、令(今)天、它(他)们、他门(们)、兑(说)、现(玩)、但时(是)、朋有(友)、月(明)天、亲(新)、央(英)国、文话(化)、星其(期)一、乞(吃)面包、洗毛(手)间

Although the majority of grammatical structures were used correctly and impressively, there were still some common mistakes as below:

- Use present tense throughout their writing.
- Use 了 and 过: 下次我想考元或了才在去看过那个展览。
- Use of verb: 我觉得那个展览对我很有意思; 我最近参观了一个展览。是来自北京高中生制造的。
- Misuse of 和, 也: e.g. 参观了一个展览和展览很有趣; 那个展览有很多的人, 和那个展览也有很少的房子。
- When a place word was involved in a sentence: e.g. 展览附近我家。
- Use of 是 with adjectives: 展览是很大
- Use of 比: 这个展览比以前的一样大; 这个展览比以前的一样; 我觉得现在的展览没有比以前的热闹了。
- Use of correct adjective: 我觉得那个展览很高兴。
- Wrong words order: 展览馆很近离我家

(b) The task was to express views on studying abroad. Most of the candidates opted in and those who answered this task generally did very well in Communication and Accuracy of language and Grammar. The vast majority responded well for **task 1** including applying past tense time frame. However, a few candidates misunderstood **task 1** and answered how many foreign candidates in their current school or where they are from and lost the communication marks. A few weak candidates wrote 很多人、少人 rather than a number in Chinese characters. Candidates are strongly recommended to write numbers in characters rather than numeral digits. For **task 2**, majority of candidates answered the question very successfully. Almost all were able to give at least one country's name with 美国、中国 the most popular. Similar to last year, it is very pleasing to see the majority of the candidates understood 好处 and 坏处 and produced the right reasons to back up their opinions. Candidates need only answer either advantages or disadvantages, but most of candidates managed very well with both aspects. However, simply writing 有好处和坏处 and not writing details cannot score marks. Candidates should be encouraged to answer the questions with greater details and follow the patterns and tense frames which will achieve better results in both communication marks and language marks. **Task 4** and **5** are very successful and convincing answers such as 我不知道要去那里, 但是我想去国外。

Characters and Grammar

The range of characters seemed very impressive. Candidates could expand the range of vocabulary and sentence patterns on different opinions. Some good examples were

- 很多学生觉得国外的环境又干净又宁静。
- 你不但可以学习那个国家的语言, 而且可以参观那个国家的名胜古迹。
- 你不但可以学截然不同的文化和历史, 而且可以吃各种各样色香味俱全的食物。国外学习让你开阔眼界。
- 在国外上大学, 可以找到志同道合的新朋友, 吃美味可口的国外食物

- 总的来说，去国外学习利大于弊
- 除了学习以外，你可以参观那国家的名胜古迹和吃美味可口的食物。
- 我打算去英国上大学，因为那里的教育质量很好
- 让学生开阔眼界、增长见闻、了解外国的文化、培养重要的生活技能、交很多志同道合的朋友
- 其中一个好处是可以体验不一样的生活，因为国外的学校拥有不同的学习环境、设备……这样，他们的沟通技巧可以变得更好。除了与新朋友沟通，学生也可以与新朋友一起庆祝各种各样的传统节日和增进互相的感情。
- 去国外学习的学生们不能常常回家陪伴父母，因为机票不便宜，所以他们一般只能在假期时回家。
- 中国的经济发展很快，所以爸爸要来找一个新的工作。他也要我学中国文化，因为学新的文化可以开阔眼界。

However, there were some common errors, namely:

There were a number of homophone or near homophone errors and characters with similar shape, such as 文花(化)、历史(史)、没友(有)、星期七(日)

- Place word was wrongly positioned: 你可以吃很多东西在别的国家; 他们去了在中国; 有很多好肉吃在中国; 我想学在日本的大学跟一起的朋友
- When mentioning doing something. With sb.: 我家人在英国, 我要住跟他们。
- Comparison sentence: 去外国学习有很多好处, 比坏处很多。
- Used future tense instead of past tense: 我们会有二十个人去国外留学。
- Use of 想 in the past tense: 我的学校有三十人想去过国外。
- Mixed up 学校 and 学生: 有些学校去马来西亚学习; 有二十个学校在国外学习过。
- Using the character 家 in all the names of countries: 中国家、英国家、美国家
- Use of 人 to describe countries: 很多人去了中国人、美国人。
- Use of 多 instead of 很多: 好处是可以见多朋友。
- Use of 哪 to respond to the question: 以后你打算在哪里上大学; 我想去哪个国家, 因为很好。
- Misused verbs: 我有英国学校我有心玩; 我是十五岁; 见面新朋友; 你不可以看你家人和朋友; 可以做很多新朋友
- Use of measure word: 我们学五们课。
- Misuse of 得: 我们玩的很开心
- Misuse of idioms: 学校总是有人山人海; 在自己国家的井底之蛙; 在国外没有朋友被吓得魂飞魄散,

- (c) This topic was the second most popular task that candidates attempted due to the similar patterns of the tasks which was to write about a story of 'what happened after you receiving a 'phone call in an amusement centre'. The candidates opted this option were very strong in language so the overall standard was high and very encouraging. There were some very creative, well-constructed and well-written interesting stories which successfully demonstrated their ability to communicate fluently, and with a high level of grammatical accuracy. A vast majority of the candidates observed the rubrics and responded to each question accordingly. The language proficiency of the candidates related to 3c was generally very good. Some were extremely good in all three areas (Communication, Accuracy of Characters and accuracy of Grammar and Structures). At the other extreme, some candidates needed to use Pinyin to make the whole story complete and coherent, but the numbers of Pinyin used were significantly less compared with previous year.

Communication

Most candidates answered **task 2 + 3 + 4** without any difficulties. However, some able candidates missed **task 1** 'what you were doing at that time' and did not write a specific game, thus lost a mark. A handful of weak candidates did not respond to the fifth task 后来发生了什么事 and just wrote 后来发生了好事 or 后来发生了大事 which demonstrated they did not understand the task and could not write a complete story.

Task 3 was tackled well. Some candidates even managed to create a suspense by saying: 我不知道是谁 to start with.

Task 4 responses contained some very creative reasons such as 猫不见了; 爸爸出车祸了; 妈妈进医院了. It is a relief to know they all have a happy ending.

For the last task, some responses wrote 后来发生了我的爷爷救活了。 If there is a result to complete the story, there is no need to include 后来发生了 in the sentence.

Candidates scoring highly were those who wrote a good story using a wide variety of vocabulary and sentence structures. Candidates are advised not to copy out the scenario line before starting their story, nor write too much for the pre-setting of the story. It is very pleasing that pre-learnt passages were rare this year.

Here are some very good examples:

- 这个娱乐中心很适合当放松的地方，里面很干净每天都有人打扫。
- 虽然我还是想和朋友们玩，但是弟弟对我来说是很重要的人，所以我跑了回家看弟弟怎么样。
- 我非常不知所措，不知道如何是好。
- 我觉得娱乐中心很好玩，能放松心情。有非常多设施，非常适合同学们在那里团建
- 娱乐中心人山人海，非常地热闹。我觉得如果不小心就会迷路。
- 当我们抵达时，只见那里人山人海。幸亏我们在网上预购了门票，不然我们就得排队排到太空去。……在坐摩天轮欣赏四周的环境的那一瞬间，我的电话铃声响起。我把视线放在屏幕的时候，发现是爸爸给我打的电话。
- 我们被一个五颜六色的木马吸引了眼球，弟弟便吵着要到木马上去玩。突然，我的手机响起来了。原来打算不接的我，看到是妈妈的来电便不自觉地接了起来…
- 不得不说这是我有生以来见过最大且最完美的娱乐中心，因为哪儿有许多稀奇古怪的设施。真不愧是我国最高级的娱乐中心。
- …终于我找到弟弟了。了解事情的原因后才知道他和妈妈吵架，才赌气离家出走。我松了一口气，便拉着他回家。

Characters and Grammar

The common mistakes were: wrong characters e.g. 元（玩）、票（漂）亮 etc.

The most common grammar errors were:

Less cases to use present tense throughout the writing which is very good compared with the previous year, **Question 3** was recounting a past event so the whole story should be in past tense setting.

- Misuse of 和、也 and 是: e.g. 也他喜欢玩游戏；娱乐中心很大和很好玩；娱乐中心是大
- Mixed up 的/得/地: 我们很开心得说话；我害怕的接起电话。
- Use of idioms in wrong place: 突然，我的五颜六色和可爱的朋友李明打电话。
- Wrong syntax: 那时候，我正在和我的女友打小篮球。
- Wrong sentence order: 我很喜欢玩在娱乐中心和我的朋友。
- Misuse of verbs: 我打我的电话我的妈妈；我在做手机
- Misuse of adjective: 我觉得那里很美，很兴趣

MANDARIN CHINESE (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0547/43
Writing

Key messages

- It is essential that candidates learn and are very familiar with the Defined Content for the syllabus which enable candidates to understand the scenarios.
- Avoid usage of pinyin for **Question 2** which causes losing communication marks. Use synonyms to replace the characters should candidates not know.
- Familiarise with questions words, e.g. 几/多少 how many, 为什么 why, 怎么 (样) how, 哪个 which, 什么时候 when, 几点 what time, 多长时间 how long.
- Elaborate with simple sentence structures to achieve the maximum 10 marks for communication for **Question 2**.

General comments

Most candidates understood the question type well and produced enough details and additional information for **Question 2** and **3**. A majority of the candidates used more complex structures and more difficult characters which reflected their true linguistic abilities. It was pleasant to see that the topics were accessible to the majority of candidates and there were a number of excellent performances from centres especially for **Question 1, 2** and **3b + 3c**.

Question 3c was a popular choice and it was impressive that candidates attempted to tell interesting stories and justified their opinions with a range of characters.

Centres should be aware answers have to be relevant to the questions, and all the bullet points need to be addressed with as much relevant information as possible. Since this is a writing examination, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible, and both English and pinyin should be avoided.

Candidates were not penalised for writing too much. Whilst there was no need for candidates to count the number of characters written after they have achieved the minimum required number of characters, some candidates crossed out correct sentences to avoid exceeding the word limit. It should be remembered that a composition requires a certain number of words to address all the bullet points in the question, and variety of vocabulary and sentence structures are rewarded. Therefore, a long but less varied essay will not be awarded as many marks as a shorter one with greater varieties and interests. Candidates should, however, be reminded that if they write significantly fewer than 150 characters for **Question 3** they will not produce enough evidence of their ability to gain access to the highest marks.

Candidates should circle which topic they attempted to write in **section 2 Question 3** since there were 3 choices. Candidates did not need to copy out the questions, particularly for **Question 3**. Writing sentences that directly targeted the bullet points and expanded appropriately without the pre-existing information would have been a much more efficient way to gain higher marks.

It is interesting to see that rote learning by memorising a big chunk of a general passage, e.g. about oneself or family, hobbies, etc. has reduced significantly this year. Candidates should read the scenario and questions carefully, especially the tenses and key words which were all in the defined content booklet.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Candidates were asked to make a list in Chinese of 5 things you can take onto an aeroplane. Most candidates were able to list book, bag, food, drinks, clothes, mobile phone etc. However, a small amount of the candidates answered in pinyin, which could not be awarded any marks. Sadly, people e.g. 爸爸、妈妈、朋友 appeared in answers again this year, which could not be awarded marks since they are not things.

If there were missing radicals or wrong radicals which created a new character with a different meaning, the mark could not be awarded. Candidates could improve on their accuracy of certain characters with correct radicals or correct suffix, e.g. 毛(手)机、面巴(包)、机漂(票) etc.

Question 2

This question requires candidates to write about clothes shopping. The overall performance in this question was good since the question words were easy to understand and there was plenty of scope to extend the answers. With guided questions, even weaker candidates could also produce some simple answers. There were some excellent responses with complex structures in this section, such as ‘首先。。其次；因为。。所以；不但。。而且’. However, simple structures and basic vocabulary are enough to score full marks in this section.

Some candidates did a good job expanding answers. For example, for bullet point 1, some wrote ‘一般我会去购物中心买衣服。一般去几家不太贵的店，所以衣服的质量还不错，也好看’ to add more details.

Task 3 and 4 were tackled very well with lists such as 衬衫、裙子、外衣, more advanced words and sentences including ‘我喜欢买春天的衣服因为颜色特别好看；小时候，我喜欢绿色，但现在我越来越喜欢红色；我什么衣服都喜欢买，没有最喜欢的’ etc.

Task 5 included a future time phrase which is similar in the past year, therefore, candidates tackled well for this question.

Candidates should be aware this is a writing exam, Chinese characters should be used as often as possible and both English and pinyin should be avoided, especially for the key words. Pinyin and English words would not count towards the communication mark e.g. ‘我常常去 cheng shi 买衣服’ could not be awarded marks for **task 1**.

Accuracy of language was generally good, simple and straight to the point answers were largely seen. Candidates should, however, be reminded to use varied sentence structures and avoid anglicised structures. There were some common grammatical errors appearing in responses and candidates could improve their performance by placing emphasis on the following:

- Character mistakes: e.g. 商点(店)、外以(衣)、朋(明)天、经(红)色、篮(蓝)色、作(昨)天、朋又(友)、朋有(友)。
- Misuse of ‘是’ with adjective: e.g. 去商店是有意思。
- Wrong words order: e.g. 我最喜欢买衣服的 hong 色。
- Missing verb: e.g. 我很喜欢中国买衣服。
- Misplaced 也: e.g. 也裙子很便宜。

Question 3

Candidates were asked to choose one of the three options to write about. With five guided bullet points in **Question 3**, candidates could opt for the one they felt most confident about. About same numbers of the candidates opted for **Question 3 (b)** and **(c)**. No one opted for **(a)**.

It was encouraging to see the improvement of understanding the rubrics this year and using varied timeframes. Most candidates covered all the bullet points and it is pleasing to see ‘多长时间’ had been recognised in **Question 3 (b) task 4**. In **Question 3 (c) task 5** ‘后来发生了什么事’, there were many

coherent stories rather than merely wrote ‘后来发生了好事’ which often appeared in the answer in the previous year.

- (a) For 3(a), the task was to write a letter to your penpal about a performance you recently took part in. No one chose this option. It could be because 演出 is a slightly difficult word in the scenario, even though it is in the Defined Content for the syllabus
- (b) In 3(b), the tasks were to write an article about candidates' views on a healthy life-style. The evidence showed the candidates who opted to do this question were very familiar with this topic area. All bullet points were easy to follow and guided the candidates to write their answers and opinion fully. Sentence structure for **task 2** ‘what type of diet you think is healthy’ seemed a bit difficult to understand, but most of candidates can write 多喝水、吃菜 etc. Sports and providing healthy food and drink were the most popular answer for **task 5** ‘what the school can do in order to make candidates healthier’ and it was well justified.

Task 1 and 3 were in past timeframe, many candidates applied the tense correctly.

Task 4 was answered very well with justifications, e.g. 要是你们不做运动，你们可能就会很胖了；均衡的生活；这意味着，学生们选择他们最喜欢的运动。

Characters and Grammar

Candidates showed a good knowledge of easy characters and basic grammar structures. There were some excellent responses with complex structures in this section, such as

- 我觉得健康的饮食是没有油的饮食，而且自己做的饭也是很健康的
- 学校需要做健康的饭给学生
- 有的人觉得肉比较健康，相反，我觉得蔬菜和水果比肉更健康
- 如果他们每天做适宜的运动，我认为他们会更健康
- 除了这个方法以外，学校也可以少给学生们饮料，因为饮料对身体健康不太好

The most frequent mistakes were:

- Wrong character: e.g. 泳(水)果
- Misuse of comparison ‘比’: e.g. 哥哥很好比我打篮球；面包比水果不健康
- Use of 和 to link 2 sentences: e.g. 我的哥哥是运动员，和他很喜欢做多运动
- Anglicisation: e.g. 健康是小的；我们可以是健康
- Missing measure word: e.g. 六多长时间
- Missing words: e.g. 朋友喜欢吃多饭；不吃多饭

- (c) This year, option C was as popular as B. Candidates wrote a story about what happened after discovering there was no more trains while they arrived at a train station. The most common stories were talking about plans to go to school, home, shop or party for **task 2**. The main reason for **task 3** was due to heavy rain, staff illness and faulty train. Solutions for sorting out the problem were either walking back to home, taking taxi, parents picking up etc.

It was pleasing to see a coherent story line in this narrative writing for most of the candidates. Only few candidates could not elaborate due to limited vocabulary and sentence structures.

There were some excellent responses with complex structures in this section, such as

- 我一下子灵机一动，又跑回火车站
- 他看起来又饿又辛苦
- 月饼总得送出去，不然会坏掉
- 清洁工很感动，说他第一次见到如我一样的好心人

Characters and Grammar

The most frequent mistakes were:

- Timeframe and particle incorrect: e.g. 明天有火车了