2024 VCE Chinese First Language written external assessment report

General comments

The 2024 VCE Chinese First Language written examination assessed students’ knowledge and skills in using written language. The examination has three sections.

Students of 2024 demonstrated a sound understanding of the requirements of this written examination. The majority of students attempted all questions within the 120-minute examination time and performed well. Only a very small group of students did not complete all tasks. A few students left Question 2 half complete.

In Section 1 – Reading, listening and responding, the majority of students performed well, especially in Questions 1a. and 1b. A small group of students responded in point form instead of paragraphs in Questions 1b., 1c. and 1d. Another small group of students included Pinyin in their responses. There was a considerable amount of character errors in students’ responses. Students are advised that Section 1 is not a dictation task; it requires students to demonstrate their ability to identify and integrate information. Responses must directly address the topic in complete paragraphs, and paragraphs should be logically structured with smooth development. Students are advised not to copy sentences and paragraphs from the original texts.

Responses that scored highly demonstrated:

* an excellent understanding of the written and audio texts
* an excellent understanding of the questions
* the ability to identify relevant information and ideas from both texts
* the ability to integrate information and ideas
* excellent linguistical control by using a broad range of sophisticated vocabulary and maintaining a high degree of grammatical accuracy.

Responses that did not score well:

* lacked a full understanding of the written and audio texts
* lacked a full understanding of the questions
* lacked sufficient information from both texts
* lacked integration and synthesis of relevant information and ideas from both texts
* lacked coherence and logic
* included character and grammatical errors
* presented in a mixture of characters and Pinyin
* were not completed.

In Section 2 – Reading, listening and creating text, there was a noticeable improvement in student performance with regard to personal writing style. Most students demonstrated a good understanding of the stimulus texts. The features of personal writing style and diary entry were addressed well. However, many students found it challenging to produce a new text by correctly using and integrating the information provided. Many students were unable to develop ideas based on evidence from the two texts. A small group of students copied the information from the stimulus texts in their response. Students are advised to carefully analyse the task and to identify the key requirements before responding. These key requirements include context, purpose, audience, writing style and text type. Students are advised that organisation and synthetisation of the information must adhere to the purpose of the task, and argument development should be reasonable, organised and logical. The language used should meet the requirements of the task. Copying information without proper integration/synthetisation must be avoided.

Responses that scored highly demonstrated:

* excellent understanding of the task requirements
* excellent understanding of the stimulus texts
* the ability to identify relevant information and ideas from both texts
* the ability to synthesise information and ideas from both texts
* the main characteristics of personal writing style
* the ability to create a strong sense of context and situation through a good understanding of the main characteristics of personal writing style and diary entry
* an excellent linguistical control by using a broad range of sophisticated vocabulary and maintaining a high degree of grammatical accuracy.

Responses that did not score well:

* lacked a full understanding of the task requirements
* lacked a full understanding of the stimulus texts
* lacked sufficient information from both texts
* lacked integration and synthesis of relevant information and ideas from both texts
* lacked understanding of the main characteristics of personal writing style
* were written in the wrong writing style
* lacked coherence and logic
* heavily relied on the language from the stimulus texts
* presented character and grammatical errors
* presented in a mixture of character and Pinyin
* were not completed.

In Section 3 – Writing in Chinese, there was a choice of two tasks. The majority of students selected Question 3, evaluative writing. Students are advised to pay extra attention to the context, purpose, audience, writing style and text type.

In Question 3, students were expected to write a blog post to evaluate the pros and cons of self-driving cars. The majority of students demonstrated a good understanding of the requirements of the task and met the requirements satisfactorily. The main characteristics of evaluative writing and blog articles were well presented in students’ responses; however, many students’ responses lacked depth and breadth in content. Students were able to provide a number of convincing arguments throughout the response but were unable to extend their ideas in a sophisticated way.

Responses that scored highly demonstrated:

* excellent understanding of the task requirements, including the purpose
* the ability to present important aspects of the argument and discuss them objectively
* the use of evidence to support the contrasting sides or alternatives
* good understanding of the main characteristics of the evaluative writing style and blog article text features
* excellent linguistical control by using a broad range of sophisticated vocabulary and maintaining a high degree of grammatical accuracy.

Responses that did not score well:

* lacked a full understanding of the task requirements
* included minimal information and ideas
* lacked understanding of the main characteristics of the required writing styles and text features
* were written in the wrong writing style
* lacked coherence and logic
* included character and grammatical errors
* used a mixture of character and Pinyin
* did not complete the question.

In Question 4, students were expected to write a school newspaper article to persuade their fellow students to support the campaign on restricting overpackaging of products. The majority of students demonstrated a good understanding of the requirements of the task and met the requirements satisfactorily. The main characteristics of persuasive writing and school newspaper article were well presented in students’ responses. A small group of students misread the question; their writing was focussed on products with overpackaging rather than raising awareness to support the campaign of restricting overpackaging.

Responses that scored highly demonstrated:

* excellent understanding of the task requirements, including the purpose
* the ability to convince, encourage and move the audience through a good understanding of the main characteristics of the persuasive writing style and school newspaper article text features
* the ability to convey highly relevant and significant information
* excellent linguistical control by using a broad range of sophisticated vocabulary and maintaining a high degree of grammatical accuracy.

Responses that did not score well:

* lacked a full understanding of the task requirements
* included minimal information and ideas
* lacked understanding of the main characteristics of the required writing styles and text features
* were written in the wrong writing style
* lacked coherence and logic
* included character and grammatical errors
* used a mixture of character and Pinyin
* did not complete the question.

Specific information

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1 – Reading, listening and responding

Students were assessed on the following criteria in Section 1:

* the capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts
* the capacity to identify and integrate relevant information and ideas from the texts
* the capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately.

Question 1a.

Students were expected to:

* use point form to respond to the question
* include a quality required for mastering calligraphy and an example for each point
* demonstrate adequate and relevant information
* logically arrange information
* use smooth and accurate expression.

Relevant information that could have been included:

* 勤学苦练：东汉书法家张芝临池学书，洗涤练字布帛而将整个池水染黑 (diligence/hard-working: Dong Han dynasty calligrapher, Zhang Zhi, practiced calligraphy beside a pond and turned the entire pond to black from rinsing the inked cloth that he used to write the calligraphy in the water.)
* 善于观察感悟：唐代“狂草”书法家张旭通过观摩担夫争道而体会出书法布局 (observation and transferring skills: Tang dynasty Cao-styled calligrapher Zhang Xu learnt the layout of the calligraphic characters from observing the body movements of two porters encountering each other on a narrow road and sorting out how to get passing.)
* 虚心求教：柳公权师拜无臂叟 (humbleness: Liu Gong Quan learnt his calligraphy skills from an armless man humbly.)
* 不为逆境所拘：颜真卿自幼家贫，即使只能用黄泥习字，却不坠青云之志，打下扎实功底，终成一代书法大家 (persistence: Yan Zhen Qing was born in a poor family, however, he never gave up on pursuing his dream. Even though he could only use the mud as the ink to practice his calligraphy, he was not constrained by the external environment.)

Question 1b.

Students were expected to:

* use paragraph form to respond to the question
* demonstrate adequate and relevant information
* arrange the information logically
* use smooth and accurate expression.

Relevant information that could have been included:

* 留学生们：可以得到新的启发，可以从一个全新的角度继续学习体验并传承自己的传统文化 (Students can get new inspiration for building on continuation of heritage under a completely new context.)
* 因为留学生在本国学习文化时总有一种“不识庐山真面目，只缘身在此山中”的感觉 (They can inherit their original culture from a new perspective because international students can feel they are not being able to see the whole picture because they are in the picture when learning something like Chinese calligraphy in China.)
* 可以成为具有海纳百川有容乃大品质的全球公民，因为多元文化社团提供了多种文化交汇的平台 (One can become a global citizen with the quality of embracing all cultures and being open-minded, as multicultural clubs provide a platform for diverse cultural exchanges.)

Question 1c.

Students were expected to:

* use paragraph form to respond to the question
* demonstrate adequate and relevant information
* arrange information logically
* use smooth and accurate expression.

Relevant information that could have been included:

* 情感的自然流露：《祭侄文稿》体现了颜真卿的一腔悲痛，人们在墨迹斑斑的《祭侄文稿》中看到血泪斑斑的家国历史（来自图片---字帖上的涂改是情绪的展现即可）；《兰亭集序》是王羲之兴之所至，即兴之作，表达人生意义的思考 (expression of emotions: <Ji Zhi Wen Gao> shows Yan Zhen Qing’s deep emotion/sadness/sorrow as there are plenty of corrections / changes of the ink / the ink becomes darker and the characters messier. Similarly, <Lan Ting Ji Xu> contains the author’s emotions. <Lan Ting Ji Xu> is a piece of improvisation by Wang Xi Zhi.)
* 内容饱满：《祭侄文稿》内容充沛，从细数爱侄美好品德和生前事迹，转入悲叹安史之乱让一个本有大好前程的年轻生命戛然而止；《兰亭集序》文笔灿烂，描写了文人墨客齐聚一堂修稧诗文的场景 (rich content: <Ji Zhi Wen Gao> has rich content that started with the list of the good qualities of Yan’s nephew, then turned to talking about how tragic it was that the war destroyed the young person who was supposed to have a bright future. <Lan Ting Ji Xu> not only talked about the process of all the artists getting together and creating the artworks, but also provided the author’s insight into the meaning of life.)
* 书法技艺：在众多的书法字体中《兰亭集序》《祭侄文稿》都是以行书的流畅一气呵成，列历代书法作品之最，后代无法企及/超越 or《祭侄文稿》行书技法高超，有“天下第二行书”之称；《兰亭集序》书法技艺独步天下，被誉为“天下第一行书” (outstanding calligraphical skills: <Ji Zhi Wen Gao> demonstrates outstanding Xing-styled calligraphical skills. <Lan Ting Ji Xu> demonstrated an outstanding level of calligraphic skills. When people analyse and trace the calligraphic characters of <Lan Ting Ji Xu>, they find that the strokes in many characters appear to be broken but have a unique connection. We cannot see the strokes connected but we can feel they are joined.)

Question 1d.

Students were expected to:

* use paragraph form to respond to the question
* demonstrate adequate and relevant information
* arrange information logically
* use smooth and accurate expression.

Relevant information that could have been included:

* 有人认为练好书法需要经年累月练习雕琢、已经不再适应这个快节奏的时代 了；有人认为书法追求平淡天真的美，练习时需要凝神静气，书法能帮助我们感悟宁静致远的境界 (Some people argue that Chinese calligraphy required years of hard work and practice, which made it unfit for the current fast-paced society.)
* 历代书法巨匠的作品是宝贵的文物以及精神财富 (Chinese calligraphy is a precious cultural relic and spiritual wealth.)
* 书法蕴藏了中国的文化和思想，这种艺术形式能能陶冶性情、塑造品格 (Calligraphy helps us understand the meaning of the proverbs: we learn the heart of the author when seeing his/her hand-writing of characters; e.g. Yan Zhen Qing’s Kai-styled characters show his personality.)
* 中国人运用黑白线条创造出独特的视觉艺术空间，酣畅淋漓地表达内心的情感和思考 (Chinese people convey their internal emotions and thoughts through the visual space created by the black lines and white paper.)
* 书法内涵丰富：笔法包括逆锋起笔、中锋行笔、回锋收笔；楷体字方正雄浑、工整得体；书写中可以断笔，但气韵相连，一气呵成 (Calligraphy contains Chinese culture and wisdom. This art can shape people’s personalities and refine their inner world.)
* 书法让人体会“见字如见人”：颜真卿具有代表性，颜体圆厚质朴的线条中暗藏锋芒，这也是颜真卿人格、为人、为官的真实写照;《祭侄文稿》体现了质朴的真情 (The characters written by calligraphers, stroke by stroke, reflect the author’s personality and temperament, which cannot be duplicated.)
* 书法家一笔一划写出的汉字，横竖撇捺之间透出来的都是个性和气质，具有不可复制性；这份独一无二的美感以及趣味是千篇一律的电脑打字永远无法实现的 (Calligraphy is rich: the brush technique includes techniques like nifeng (starting with a reverse stroke), zhongfeng (using the centre of the brush) and huifeng (finishing with a rounded stroke). Kai style characters are square, bold, neatly arranged and graceful. While writing, strokes may be broken, but the overall flow remains connected, creating a sense of unity and coherence.)

Section 2 – Reading, listening and creating text

Students were assessed on the following criteria in Section 2:

* the capacity to identify, integrate and synthesise relevant information and ideas from the texts
* appropriateness of structure and sequence
* accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar (including punctuation and, where relevant, script)

Question 2

Students were expected to respond to the question by using the following:

* text type: personal diary entry
* kind of writing: personal
* audience: self, uses first person
* purpose of writing: writes to self; expressing true personal feelings, reflections, inner-world growth; writes naturally, sincerely and in a straightforward, non-peachy style
* content: information must come from two texts and be relevant and logically arranged to fit the purpose of writing
* language: meets the task requirements, smooth and accurate expression.

Characteristics of personal writing:

* creates a sense of the person/personality of the writer in the reader’s mind
* establishes a relationship between the writer and the reader
* usually employs first and/or second person; subjective; informal, familiar style/register; often includes emotive language
* emphasises ideas, opinions, feelings and impressions, rather than factual, objective information
* uses the act of writing to help the author understand and unravel his/her own feelings or ideas
* may, in certain contexts, use contracted language, such as is used in speech.

Relevant information that could have been included:

* 时刻努力，充满热情：哪怕行至水穷处，也仍然保有盎然的生机 (Even when you may have no road to go, you will always be full of vitality.)
* 学会抗压，调整心态：面对纷繁复杂的世界，仍能顶住压力，正直立身 (In the face of the complex world, one can still withstand the pressure and remain a noble person.)
* 学会适应，厚积薄发 (Be resilient to pressure and able to accumulate as much as possible but to release a little at a time.)
* 现实世界的重压和虚拟世界的推送纵横交错，无时无刻不在疯狂挤压心灵空间 (Resilience, simply put, is the ability to effectively adjust your mindset to cope with and solve problems in the face of external stress and challenges.)
* 本该留给自己的空间被各种信息和情绪占满，身体虽有休憩之地，心灵却无栖息之所 (Fulfilling young people’s innermost space with understanding and forgiveness.)
* 对学业倾注热情，学海无涯，以乐作舟，面对惊涛骇浪，仍能扬帆远航 (No matter how the world changes, they will always have a safe place. In this way, in the face of difficulties and adversity, there is more confidence in the heart.)
* 让心灵注满理解和包容 (Guide young people to develop a passion for learning, so even if there is no end to the sea of learning, they can also use joy as their boat to travel through. When facing challenges, they can still progress.)
* 抗压力: 面对外界的压力和挑战，有效地调整心态，克服焦虑，去应对和解决问题 (The pressure of the real world and the push of the virtual world crisscross all the time, frantically squeezing our mental space.)
* 学会屏蔽无用信息，减少互联网的使用，适当放空自己。保持心灵的坚韧与洁净 (The space that should be reserved for themselves is filled with all kinds of information and emotions, and although the body has a place to rest, the mind has no place to settle.)
* 不论外界如何变化，内心总有一个避风港,面对困境逆境，内心就多了一份底气 (Young people should learn to block out useless information, reduce the use of the internet, and meditate appropriately, to maintain a peaceful and quiet mind.)

Section 3 – Writing in Chinese

Students were assessed on the following criteria in Section 3:

* relevance, breadth and depth of content
* appropriateness of structure and sequence
* accuracy of vocabulary and grammar (including punctuation and, where relevant, script)
* range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar.

Question 3

Students were expected to respond to the question by using the following:

* text type: blog
* kind of writing: evaluative
* audience: blog readers
* purpose of writing: to evaluate the pros and cons of self-driving cars
* content: relevant and logically arranged to fit the purpose of writing
* language: meets the task requirements, smooth and accurate expression.

Characteristics of evaluative writing:

* aims to reach a conclusion through the logical presentation and discussion of facts and ideas
* presents two or more important aspects of an issue or sides of an argument and discusses these rationally and objectively; uses evidence to support the contrasting sides or alternatives
* uses objective style; appeals to reason not emotion; creating an impression of balance and impartiality is essential
* often includes expressions of cause, consequence, opposition and concession.

Possible pros that students could have included:

* 世界经济转型 // 第三空间的新概念 // 环境：促进节能，减少碳排放 // 为更多的人群提供出行选择，有助高龄人士，残疾人士，弱势群体提高生活质量 (global economic transformation / new concepts in the ‘Third Space’ / environment: promoting energy conservation and reducing carbon emissions / providing more travel options for a broader population, which helps improve the quality of life for elderlies, disabled individuals, and other vulnerable groups.)

Possible cons that students could have included:

* 安全隐患：锂电池，方向盘 // 社会风气：攀比之风 // 行业危机 // Ai 衍生的人类危机 // 环境 (safety risks: lithium batteries, steering wheels / social climate: trend of unhealthy competition and comparison / industry crisis / human crisis arising from AI / environment.)

Question 4

Students were expected to respond to the question by using the following:

* text type: school newsletter article
* kind of writing: persuasive
* audience: school students and teachers
* context: raising awareness, focusing on practical approaches/solutions
* purpose of writing: to persuade school students and staff to support the campaign
* content: relevant and logically arranged to fit the purpose of writing
* language: meets the task requirements, smooth and accurate expression.

Characteristics of persuasive writing:

* aims to convince readers about an idea, opinion or a course of action in order to achieve a desired outcome
* persuasive techniques chosen are influenced by the nature of the target audience; that is, the language (vocabulary, sentence structures, style/register), structure and sequencing of the piece are framed with the particular audience and purpose in mind
* requires choice of the best word, so range of vocabulary and dictionary technique are important
* sometimes uses exaggeration, extravagant language and humour to create a conspiratorial relationship between the writer and the reader
* often uses the second person for direct address and appeal
* sometimes employs direct speech and questions to intensify the relationship with the audience.

Possible points of view students could have included:

* 培养社会责任感 // 有利环保 // 有助树立正确的价值观, 杜绝攀比的不正之风 // 增加约束 // 从我做起，提出确实可行，行之有效的建议 (fostering a sense of social responsibility / beneficial for environmental protection / helping establish correct values and eliminating unhealthy competition and comparison / stepping up restrictions; starting with oneself, put forward practical and effective recommendations.)