2022 VCE Chinese Language, Culture and Society written external assessment report

General comments

Most students attempted all sections of the 2022 Chinese Language, Culture and Society written examination. The responses showed various levels of knowledge and skills.

In 2022, students performed best in Section 2 – Writing in Chinese. Students showed a wide range of knowledge and skills in Section 1 – Listening and responding in both Chinese and English and Section 3 – Culture and society in Chinese-speaking communities in English. Students who scored highly were able to elaborate on original ideas and give in-depth analysis on the topics in this section.

Students should use the 15-minute reading time to familiarise themselves with all questions. They are also expected to be able to use dictionaries for unfamiliar Chinese vocabulary efficiently.

For Part A of Section 1, it is recommended to take notes while listening rather than write the answers. Most students used the space provided to take notes; however, some students took notes in Pinyin, but did not manage to convert them to meaningful English or Chinese responses. Students should use dictionaries to correct the writing of characters whenever time allows for Part B questions.

Students are encouraged to respond to all questions. Unless otherwise instructed, students are expected to write in full sentences for Part B of Section 1 (Text 3).

Most students responded to length in Section 2. All students attempted to provide a response in Section 3. Students who scored highly demonstrated sound knowledge and skills in both the Chinese and English parts of the examination.

Specific information

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual 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 – Listening and responding

Part A

Most students responded to all questions for Texts 1 and 2. Students who scored well demonstrated their capacity to understand, convey and rearrange information accurately from Chinese into English.

It is important for students to take notes when listening to texts. Most students were able to capture and convey key information for all texts, but some students missed key information or did not make the right connection on important points’. For example, in responses for Text 1 most students could not make the link of ‘球场’ as a ball court, or when both speakers say ‘也’ (again) it means something that they have in common. In Text 2, most students were able to hear the types of sports as tennis and soccer, but some students didn’t distinguish training from competitions in their responses.

Text 1

Question 1a.

* They both like sports/exercise.
* They are both interested in Tai Ji.

Question 1b.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Time of day | Activity | Location |
| Jack | evening/night | jogging/running | sports ground / stadium / ball court / court |
| Ms Wang | morning | playing Taiji | park |

Text 2

Question 2a.

* She’s had soccer training after school every day for the last two weeks.
* Her soccer squad will attend the soccer championship/game/match/competition

Question 2b.

* He has tennis training.
* An American tennis star / famous US player / celebrity player was invited to coach them on Saturday.

Question 2c.

* Lili will go to watch Ming Zhang’s tennis game/match/training.
* Lili and Ming Zhang will go to play karaoke, in city/downtown after the tennis training on Saturday.
* Ming Zhang will pick up Lili from her home/house/place after the tennis training on Saturday morning.

Part B

Students were expected to answer all questions in complete Chinese sentences. Students who scored highly demonstrated the capacity to accurately organise the information with linking words/phrases, relevant content and accurate use of grammar. Many chose to include the rephrased question at the beginning of the response. Students are advised to address only the key words from the question in their answers. Students who rephrased the full question in Chinese could have better used the time to check the accurate spelling of the Chinese characters in their answers with a dictionary. Practice in the use of a bilingual dictionary is strongly recommended.

Text 3

Question 3a.

在中国茶的种类有：红茶、白茶、绿茶和花茶 ([the types of tea in China include] black tea, white tea, green tea and flower tea)

Question 3b.

* 泡茶要用开水 (use boiling water when making tea)
* 喝茶时，可以喝热的 (tea could be hot for drinking)
* 也可以喝冷的 (tea could be cold for drinking)

Question 3c.

* 在家/工作场所/茶馆 (People often drink tea at home or at the workplace or tea house.)
* 周末/假期 (People go to tea houses with their family or friends during the weekend or the holidays.)
* 可以喝茶、吃茶点/点心/小吃 (In the tea house, they can not only drink tea, but also have pastries/refreshments.)
* 还可以聊家常/聊天，听音乐 (But also they have a good natter with each other [family and friends] and listen to music.)

Question 3d.

茶也可以送给亲朋好友/送礼给家人朋友/作为礼物 (Tea can be given as a gift to relatives and friends.)

Section 2 – Writing in Chinese

Part A

Question 4

Students were expected to write a report for their Chinese teacher about a Chinese New Year evening party they plan to attend, based on the information in Text 4. The majority of students showed their capacity to understand and convey some key information from the given text. Responses that scored highly were structured, covering most of the key customs outlined in Text 4 with a clear, informative writing style. These students were capable of manipulating Chinese effectively and organising information in a simple yet logical way.

Suggested points students may have included in their response:

* 时间、地点：星期六晚上、墨尔本公园 (The time is suitable as it is on Saturday evening.)
* 活动：中国乐队表演、民族歌舞、书法比赛、拿红包等 (Lots of activities including Chinese musical band performances, folk singing and dancing, calligraphy competition, having red packs with money in them etc.)
* 着装：最好穿红色的衣服 (Clothes: best to wear red.)
* 吃的：年糕、饺子、鱼、包子、春卷、炒面、中国茶和水果 (Lots of delicious food including sticky rice cakes, dumplings, fish, buns, spring rolls, fried noodles, Chinese tea and fruit etc.)
* 交通 (transport information)
* 门票 (ticket information).

Part B

For Part B, students were expected to produce a piece of writing in Chinese. More students chose Question 5 (journal entry) than Question 6 (imaginative story). Students who scored highly were awarded marks for the relevance, breadth and richness of the content. Most students were able to produce a structured piece with interesting details. Various techniques were used, such as variation in sentence length, quotes and emotional language (e.g. effective use of interjections). Responses that scored highly included engaging details of their experience for Question 5 and inspiring ideas for Question 6. However, greater attention is needed to improve the accuracy and appropriateness of grammar and the range of vocabulary. No marks were awarded for content in the responses that was irrelevant to the task requirements.

Question 5

For this question, students were required to write a journal entry reflecting on their experience of working in a supermarket on a casual basis for two years. Features of a journal entry include recording of the work experiences, personal reflections, thoughts and feelings at particular times. Possible content that students may have included is what they did at the supermarket, memorable experiences or how they kept a balance between study and work, as well as the impact of the work experience on their life.

Most students demonstrated a good understanding of the task requirements, and many were able to describe their casual job and reflect on their personal experiences with interesting details. Responses that scored highly demonstrated the students’ ability to produce a sophisticated personal writing piece. Some students wrote a list of the benefits of working part-time, which was not relevant to the question.

Question 6

Students were required to write an imaginative story about a day they spent inside their favourite computer game. Responses were expected to address a magazine audience with a brief description of the computer game. Students who scored highly produced a structured piece with some interesting, inspiring and authentic ideas, which demonstrated the students’ thoughts on certain social issues.

Section 3 – Culture and society in Chinese-speaking communities in English

In Section 3, students were expected to respond in English, analysing and evaluating information from prescribed texts according to the questions. A similar number of students chose Question 7 and Question 8. Students who scored highly performed well in the critical analysis of ideas and extensive arguments relevant to the task, as well as in the effective selection and use of relevant material and appropriate examples to support their response. Marks were awarded for developing a coherent and well-reasoned response that addressed the specific demands of the task.

Question 7

Students were required to explain how the concept of *guanxi* and/or *mianzi* relate to the image, as well as explore how these concepts are influenced by Chinese philosophy. Students who scored highly were able to respond to all task requirements and identified the characteristics of the *guanxi* and/or *mianzi* presented in the image, such as the collective interests, the individual and organisational *mianzi* and/or the social hierarchy of the *guanxi* network. They developed their arguments with logic and built their analysis with accurate reference to the prescribed text. Responses were structured according to several logical frameworks, which reflected various approaches to interpreting the concept and its cultural roots.

Most students were able to identify several key features of the concept of *guanxi* and/or *mianzi* with examples from the image or from the prescribed text. Some students recognised the values and applications of *guanxi* in social networking and achieving individual/organisational success. However, a few students only provided an informative piece explaining the image rather than an analysis of how traditional philosophies influence those concepts. It is important for the students to read the question carefully and address all task requirements.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response that demonstrates a meaningful analysis of the question. It is an effective discussion that builds a good foundation by using the cultural reference from the prescribed text. It shows in-depth understanding of Chinese culture with an accurate explanation of key concepts. It explains how Confucianism has significantly shaped people’s social lives, and created the ideal harmony with social hierarchy and the *guanxi* network in Chinese communities.

Scott D. Seligman’s book ‘Chinese Business Etiquette: A Guide to Protocol, Manners and Culture in the People’s Republic of China’, examines the importance of succeeding in contemporary Chinese speaking communities. Thus, Seligman details the importance of guanxi and mianzi in climbing China’s competitive social hierarchy. Through Confucianism, Chinese people delineate the importance of hierarchy and harmony in society. Guanxi acts as a social network to grant people access to things that would otherwise be unattainable. Finally, harmony and balance can be conferred to society by understanding and upholding mianzi. In essence, Seligman’s book provides a guide to succeed in China’s culturally complex and unique society.

Confucianism delineates the importance of harmony and structure in society. Indeed, Confucianism should be seen less as a religion and more as a set of guidelines of morals and ethics that one can follow and apply in their everyday lives. By understanding the importance of Confucianism and society that stresses the collective view over personal desires, balance and harmony can ultimately be cultivated in society. Moreover, Seligman highlights the vital importance of both guanxi, meaning connections and relationships, and mianzi is to ensuring a stabilised society. Both of these concepts stress the importance of society as a whole as being hierarchical in nature, which is shown by the 5 fundamental relationships of ruler-subject, husband-wife, father-son, brother-brother and also friend-friend. In addition, the importance of mianzi to growing existing bonds, but also expanding and creating new bonds through kind and respectful gesture. Thus, Seligman details the influence Confucianism has had on Chinese speaking communities, as providing a basis for a harmonised and collective community.

Guanxi can strategically be used to climb the ladder of success in China. Indeed, the vast networks of relationships formed in China and cultivated due to the gifting of favours and fits, where money is rarely the currency used to form these new connections. As shown through the caption – ‘every outstanding person needs three others to succeed’ – it echoes the difficult barriers and long lines that exist in China, preventing people to succeed. For example, as Seligman explores, a friend of his recently returned to China and her friend point of action was to see where her old classmates were and more importantly, their position in society. From there, she could re-establish her guanxi networks by exchanging favours through a mutually beneficial relationship and thereby succeed. As shown through the visual, in her case, she metaphorically began to climb the varied ‘platforms’ in society through her connections that allowed her to succeed. Thus, guanxi finds expression in the importance of forming new relationships and connections is succeeding in China.

Finally, Seligman also illustrates the importance of mianzi is to forming these networks of relationships. As shown through the enthusiastic expression of the characters in the visual, Chinese people rarely shy away from helping others in their guanxi network. Specifically, this trust that is cultivated in the guanxi network is often cultivated by expressing one’s superiority, in terms of hierarchy, when compared to another inferior person in the relationship. For example, in China, students often conclude their letters to their professors with ‘Yours sincerely.’ This act not only creates an imaginary difference in social standing that the professor holds over the student, but also confers face to the professor who is depicted in a light of importance to the student. Thus, Seligman illustrates that this act can be seen as a gesture to form guanxi with the professor. Thus, by forming and maintaining guanxi, through mianzi, balance and harmony can be cultivated in society.

In essence, Seligman’s book underpins the importance of both guanxi and mianzi is to succeed in society. While Confucianism delineates the importance of harmony and balance to society, guanxi and mianzi provides practical ways to implement this in society. In essence, guanxi and mianzi both continue to find expression in Chinese people’s everyday lives, as it is a mean to succeed in Chinese speaking communities.

Question 8

This question required students to interpret the relationship between cultural value changes and social changes. Students were encouraged to identify, describe, explain and analyse the changes and continuities in cultural and social values. Students who scored highly were able to make further links and create their own interpretation of how social changes impact on cultural values, as well as structure and engage their arguments with different perspectives.

A high-scoring interpretation was able to provide a strategic overview of China’s social changes and dive into the changes in cultural values with empathy and critical thinking skills. Responses that scored highly focused on evidence of the impacts of social changes, such as community organisation, family structure and individual obligation. They evaluated the positive or negative nature of changes, as well as the long-term impacts on cultural values. Some students misunderstood the task requiring them to retell the story of the film, rather than provide analytical review of the impacts of social changes on cultural values. An oversimplified understanding of China’s social change, praising the younger generation’s industrialised commercial lifestyle, lacked enough depth to meet the requirements of the question.