VCE Chinese Language, Culture and Society (Units 3 and 4: 2023–2027)

School-based Assessment report

This report is provided for the first year of implementation of VCE Chinese Language, Culture and Society study design and is based on the School-based Assessment Audit and VCAA statistical data.

All official communications regarding the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Chinese Language, Culture and Society (2023–2027) are provided in the [*VCAA Bulletin*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx) and [Notices to Schools](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/schooladministration/notices/Pages/index.aspx). It is recommended that teachers subscribe to the [*VCAA Bulletin*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx) to receive updated information regarding the study. Schools are required to alert teachers to information in the [VCAA Bulletin](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx) and Notices to Schools, especially concerning assessment schedules. Important administrative dates and assessment schedules are published on the School administration page of the *[VCAA Website](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/schooladministration/Pages/Index.aspx)*.

General comments

The VCE Chinese Language, Culture and Society Support materials provide teaching and learning advice for Units 1–4.

School-assessed Coursework must comply with the study design and the VCE assessment principles.

The School-based Assessment Audit revealed that teachers in most schools had a good understanding of the study design. All schools that were audited devised their own unique School-assessed Coursework tasks that were tailored to their specific cohort of students. In most cases, students were provided with the best possible opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the key knowledge and key skills. It was very pleasing to see that, when designing tasks, teachers in some schools collaborated with colleagues, and most teachers did cross-marking with colleagues either in their own schools or in other schools.

The responses to the audit questionnaire also indicated that schools spread out the assessments evenly across the school terms to enable students to have adequate time to develop and extend their skills and build up knowledge for the assessments. The majority of schools had appropriate authentication and moderation procedures in place.

Where audit submissions were found not to be meeting VCAA assessment standards and requirements, this was due to the following assessment principles not being met:

* VCE assessment should be valid and reasonable
* VCE assessment should be equitable
* VCE assessment should be balanced
* VCE assessment should be efficient

Schools are reminded that the assessment principles are published by VCAA. Teachers should abide by them when setting outcome tasks.

Schools should also be aware that Outcome 1, Area of Study 1 in both Unit 3 and Unit 4, is from the Culture and Society in Chinese-speaking Communities strand. Each outcome has a prescribed topic, as outlined on page 10 of the study design. These outcome tasks should relate to the prescribed texts that are published on the VCAA list. Students may also draw on texts from outside the prescribed list in this area of study.

Both Outcome 2 of Area of Study 2 and Outcome 3 of Area of Study 3 in Unit 3 and Unit 4 are from the Chinese Language strand. Each outcome should focus on a subtopic provided in the table on page 11 of the study design, giving students a range of opportunities to expand their vocabulary and grammatical knowledge of Chinese language and to develop their skills in listening, speaking, viewing, reading, and writing in Chinese.

For Outcomes 2 and 3 in Unit 3 and Unit 4 in the current study design, teachers have flexibility in selecting the specific topic and subtopic that will be the focus for each of the outcomes and its associated assessment. These prescribed topics and suggested subtopics are listed on page 11 of the study design. It is advised that a variety of topics and subtopics be covered across the teaching and learning program so that students are exposed to a range of appropriate stimulus texts in the target language to expand their knowledge of the Chinese language and culture, and to further develop their receptive skills and productive skills.

Support materials for planning, teaching, and learning and assessment are available from the [VCAA Website](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/schooladministration/Pages/Index.aspx).

Specific information

Unit 3 – School-assessed Coursework

Outcome 1

Discuss, in English, the influence of one or more of the three major Chinese philosophies on an aspect of the Chinese-speaking world, making reference to text(s) studied.

**Task type options**

* An essay, written analysis or report in English

The strand for Area of Study 1 is Culture and society in Chinese-speaking communities. For Area of Study 1 of Unit 3, the prescribed topic is Chinese Philosophies and their impact on Chinese society.

The School-based Assessment Audit found that the assessment tasks provided students with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of the area of study. They were encouraged to draw on their knowledge of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism studied in Unit 1 and Unit 2, and to investigate and analyse aspects of Chinese culture illustrated in the prescribed texts.

However, the audit revealed the following concerns:

Quite a number of schools indicated in their tasks that students were only required to refer to the prescribed texts in their analysis or report. According to the study design (Page 32), students may also draw on texts from outside the prescribed list in this area of study.

In a small number of schools, the Outcome 1 task appeared to be very broad and general, and it was not explicitly indicated to the students that they were expected to discuss the influence of one or more of the three major Chinese philosophies. Teachers are required to develop unique School-assessed Coursework tasks that include a specific task prompt. Tasks must be tailored to each student cohort, and they must be different each year to prevent authentication problems from arising.

Other schools offered students two choices of the assessment task and the options were not comparable in scope and demand. For example, there were schools that offered one very general, broad task option, and the other option included very specific information, such as a quote from one of the prescribed texts in the task. This could compromise the assessment principle that VCE assessment should be equitable. Teachers should be aware that it is not a requirement to offer students a choice of School-assessed Coursework tasks. In some instances, providing one single School-assessed Coursework task may be preferable.

In some School-assessed Coursework tasks submitted for the audit, the instructions for the students lacked sufficient detail. For example, students were not told if they were allowed to bring in any notes or materials studied, and the length of the task was not clearly indicated to the students.

A few schools asked their students to write an analysis/report of 800–1000 words in 60 minutes. This may have been difficult for the less able students and could have caused undue stress.

In the above cases, the audit panel provided the schools concerned with detailed feedback and supported the schools to revise their tasks accordingly.

Assessment

Schools indicated that they used the VCAA performance descriptors for Outcome 1 as published in the Support materials on the VCAA website.

Outcome 2

Use information from spoken texts to respond to specific questions in writing in Chinese.

**Task type**

* Listen to spoken texts in Chinese and use the information obtained to answer a series of questions in Chinese.

Many schools showed an awareness that this assessment is different from the one in the previous study design and the allocated mark is 15/50 of Unit 3. They designed appropriate tasks based on a selected subtopic published in the study design (page 11) and in line with the VCE assessment principles.

Problems that arose in the outcome tasks are as follows:

* Some schools still assessed students according to the previous study design and included a speaking component in the assessment. This made the task invalid.
* A number of schools covered more than one subtopic in the assessment and the spoken texts that were used as stimulus texts came from different subtopics. The study design (page 33) states that ‘In this area of study students access information from a range of short, spoken Chinese texts on a selected subtopic’ (singular). Assessing students on more than one topic and subtopic risks requiring students to revise an excessive amount of vocabulary and grammar for the outcome task. The students in these schools were over assessed. It is important that assessment aligns with the VCE assessment principle that assessment should be efficient.
* In a small number of submitted School-assessed Coursework tasks, questions were phrased in Chinese only. The school was asked to add the English phrasing of the questions along with the Chinese. If questions are not provided in both languages, it is not possible to determine that the assessment being undertaken is valid and that the relevant key knowledge and key skills are being assessed appropriately.

Where tasks did not meet the requirements of the study design and the assessment principles, schools were asked to revise the tasks and submit them as further evidence.

Assessment

In most cases, teachers indicated that they used the VCAA published performance descriptors in the Support materials for Outcome 2. A few schools marked the outcome with their own marking scheme which was based on the VCAA assessment descriptors. Some schools indicated that they used the VCAA descriptors for the assessment and they allocated specific marks to the individual questions. However, the sum of the allocated marks was not equal to the 15 marks set in the study design and in the VCAA published performance descriptors. No explanation was provided regarding how the allocated marks were to be converted.

Outcome 3

Read two written texts on a selected subtopic and respond in Chinese.

**Task type**

* Answer questions on the texts in written Chinese.

AND

* Write a 100 to 150-character informative report or informative article on the selected subtopic.

Most of the Outcome 3 School-assessed Coursework tasks submitted for the audit were designed in line with the requirements of the study design. Schools selected the two stimulus texts that focused on a subtopic from the table of prescribed topics and suggested subtopics on page 11 of the study design.

However, the school-based assessment audit found that a small number of schools chose texts from different subtopics. Teachers should note that the two texts should cover the one topic and subtopic. Page 34 of the study design states ‘read two written texts on a selected subtopic’ (singular). The School-assessed Coursework task should reflect students’ learning in the unit of work taught at the time and the topic chosen is required to match those listed in the table on page 11 of the study design. This is to ensure that assessment tasks are not excessive in their scope and that consideration of student workload is given.

In addition, some schools only allocated 60 minutes for students to complete the task that requires students to read two texts, answer a series of questions in Chinese and then complete the piece of informative writing. The audit panel was concerned that this was too big a task for students to complete in this timeframe. This may have caused undue stress, and the assessment principle of efficiency may have been compromised.

Some schools chose texts that included many Chinese characters that went well beyond the Character List published in the study design (refer to pages 12 – 25). Less able students would find it hard to obtain the required information to respond to the questions correctly.

In some of the tasks that were submitted for the audit, the task prompt in the second section of the assessment did not clearly enough indicate to students the writing style they were required to produce. Schools are reminded that the piece of writing students are required to produce in their response is informative and the text type can be a report or an article.

Assessment

Teachers from the audited schools indicated that they used the VCAA published performance descriptors in the Support material for Outcome 3. However, quite a few schools also allocated specific marks to the individual questions. A few schools did not provide information on how they converted their allocated marks to the questions worth 15 marks in the VCAA assessment descriptors. Students should be informed of how the two marking schemes are to be converted or used together to reach the final mark.

Specific information

Unit 4 – School-assessed Coursework

Outcome 1

Investigate the impact of social and economic development on contemporary Chinese values and produce a written response in English with reference to text(s) studied.

**Task type options**

* An essay, written analysis or report in English.

The School-based Assessment Audit demonstrated that while all schools audited showed a very good understanding of the task type and its relevance to Unit 4 Area of Study 1, some schools submitted outcome tasks that were required to be revised for the following reasons:

The instructions for the students lacked details. Students were not informed clearly enough about the task conditions, such as the length of the task or whether they were allowed to bring in notes or other materials.

The tasks set by some schools were not in line with the requirements of the study design as students were asked to discuss and analyse the impact of social and economic development on contemporary Chinese culture instead of Chinese values. In a small number of School-assessed Coursework tasks reviewed by the audit panel, the wording for the task was not clear enough about the requirement that students write about contemporary Chinese values in their response. As the outcome statement in the study design is very general, teachers are required to develop a unique task for their students that provides a more focused and specific prompt.

A number of schools allocated 60 minutes plus 5 minutes for students to complete the task. The audit panel expressed concern that more time would be needed to provide students with adequate opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts and ideas conveyed in the texts studied, and to provide evidence or concrete information in their analysis. Key knowledge and key skills in this area of study should be considered when developing the assessment task.

A small number of schools designed their Outcome 1 task in such a way that students were required to respond to a visual stimulus. It is not a requirement for students to respond to an unseen stimulus for this outcome task, but, if using an image in this way, the panel advised that the question prompt should refer directly to the stimulus and clearly indicate to students how they are required to use it when developing their responses.

Assessment

Teachers indicated that they were using the VCAA published performance descriptors in the Support material for Outcome 1.

Outcome 2

Establish and maintain a spoken exchange in Chinese related to making arrangements and completing transactions.

**Task type**

* A two to three-minute role-play in Chinese.

This outcome requires students to develop the capacity to initiate, maintain and close an oral exchange on a subtopic from the table of prescribed topics and suggested subtopics on page 11.

The audit showed that some schools provided students with task choices that addressed a number of subtopics. While there is no problem with providing a choice of tasks, task options should all address the same topic and subtopic. Teachers are reminded to refer to Page 37 of the study design which states ‘subtopic’ (singular).

Allowing students to select from options that cover different topics and subtopics risks students being over-assessed, and if students have to revise an excessive amount of content in the lead up to the day of the assessment, they may be caused undue stress. Furthermore, there is a risk that task choices might not be comparable in scope and demand. When task choices are offered, they should fall under the same topic and subtopic.

A couple of schools designed the task as 3–4-minute role plays and, in some cases, students were required to cover knowledge from different subtopics in the role play. Both of these approaches risk over assessment.

In other audit responses, the scenario itself was not specific enough. The subject matter of the role play was very broad, and the scenario was very general, and the context required students to inform, rather than giving them an opportunity to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills related to asking for or giving assistance or advice, suggesting, explaining, agreeing or disagreeing, in order to make arrangements and complete a transaction.

Some schools set School-assessed Coursework tasks that did not include sufficient instructions to students. School-assessed Coursework tasks for this outcome should clearly state the roles of the students and teacher in the role play, and the cover sheet should state that the role plays will be recorded.

Assessment

Teachers indicated that they were using the VCAA published performance descriptors in the Support materials for Outcome 2.

Outcome 3

Use a written and a visual text about a selected subtopic to produce an extended personal or imaginative response in written Chinese.

**Task type options**

* An approximately 150-character response in Chinese.
* Select from: a letter, a story or a blog post.

It is worth noting that students must complete a personal or imaginative response on the basis of two stimulus texts: a written and a visual stimulus. These texts should refer to the same selected subtopic. The students are required to extract meaning from the two texts and respond in an extended written response in Chinese. The text type to be produced in the response is specified in the study design as either a letter, story or a blog post. Teachers should ensure students are taught the specific key knowledge and the key skills for the area of study. It would be beneficial to students to revise text type features and the characteristics of the writing styles at this time.

Teachers selected stimulus materials that were appropriate. Teachers are reminded that viewed texts need to be related to the subtopic and may include photographs, pictures, posters, films or film clips, captioned illustrations or maps.

The problems that appeared in the audit materials submitted are illustrated below.

The task conditions were not clear. It should be clearly indicated to students if they are allowed to bring in their dictionaries, and materials studied and/or prepared.

Some tasks that were submitted were not clearly worded and did not clearly instruct students to produce either personal or imaginative writing in the response. In some cases, tasks may have elicited an informative style of writing. Teachers are reminded to ensure that the purpose, audience, text type, style of writing and context is clearly stated in the question, to ensure that it will elicit the required style of writing. For guidance on the characteristics of the styles of writing, please refer to the document which can be downloaded from the Teaching and Learning section of the Support materials (scroll down to the bottom).

In some audit responses, when choices of the task were offered to students, they were not from the same subtopic. Schools must ensure that the assessment is equitable, and the assessment is efficient. It is not necessary to offer students a choice of task options. However, for teachers that prefer to provide a choice, all task options must be comparable in scope and demand. Students should not experience undue stress and they should be assessed on the same topic and subtopic that they studied in the lead up to the assessment.

Teachers are advised to develop question prompts for extended writing tasks that give opportunities for all students to demonstrate different levels of achievement. Question prompts should be accessible to the less able students but also provide ample opportunity to extend the more able students to demonstrate their skill in written Chinese.

In some cases, the length of time set for the task was too short. Some schools provided 60 minutes plus 5 minutes reading time, which may have caused students stress.

Assessment

Teachers indicated that they used the VCAA published performance descriptors in the Support materials for Outcome 3.