2020 VCE Chinese Language Culture and Society written examination report

General comments

Most students attempted all sections of the 2020 Chinese Language, Culture and Society written examination. The responses showed various levels of knowledge and skills.

Students performed better in Part A of Section 1 compared to Part B and showed a wide range of knowledge and skills in Section 3.

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

For Part A of sections 1 and 2, 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.

Unless otherwise instructed, students were expected to write in full sentences for Part B of Section 1 and all tasks for Section 2.

All students attempted to provide a response in Section 3 and students who scored highly demonstrated sound knowledge and skills in both the Chinese and English components.

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 been included. Unless otherwise stated these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A

Students responded to all questions for Text 1 and most students responded to all questions for Text 2. Students who scored well demonstrated their capacity to understand and convey 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 made the wrong links among key information. For example, in responses for Text 2, some students matched food items with the wrong geographic group. Students are also advised to use the second round of the listening to self-correct and capture further information. For example, in Text 3, the male speaker mentioned that he could teach English because he was 澳大利亚人 (Australian) and he could teach driving because he had been driving for five years; some students captured the key phrases of 澳大利亚 (Australia) and 五年 (five years), then responded as if the male speaker had lived in Australia for five years.

Question 1a.

An example of a correct response is as follows.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Chinese city visited by Tom | Tom’s observation about the city’s residents |
| Beijing | Like/enjoy going to the park every day |
| Shanghai | Like to shop (buying things) |
| Xi’an | Like/enjoy eating snacks |

Question 2a.

An example of a correct response is that people on the south side of the Yangtze River are called ‘southerners’ and the ‘northerners’ are those on the north side of the Yangtze River.

Question 2b.

An example of a correct response is:

* One group (southerners) likes:
* rice
* fish and
* green vegetable (Chinese cabbage).
* The other group (northerners) likes:
* noodles
* buns
* dumplings
* meat.

Part B

Students were expected to answer all questions in full Chinese sentences. High-scoring responses demonstrated the student’s capacity to accurately organise 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 the answers. Students who rephrased the full question in Chinese could have 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.

Question 3a.

An example of a correct response is:

* 杰克是在中国学习的学生
* Jack is a student studying in China.
* 杰克来中国学习一年多了。
* Jack has been in China for more than a year.
* 杰克的钱用完了。
* Jack has run out of money.
* 他在找工作。
* He is looking for a job.

Question 3b.

An example of a correct response is:

* 小美的朋友在找一位家教
* Xiao Mei’s friend is looking for a tutor.

杰克能教英语和开车

* Jack can teach English and driving.

Question 3c.

An example of a correct response is:

* 杰克能教英语，因为他是澳大利亚人
* Jack can teach English, because he is an Australian.
* 他能够教开车，因为他已经有五年开车的经验了
* He can teach driving as he has five years’ experience of driving.
* 小美朋友住的地方不远/很近，离杰克只有15分钟的车程
* Xiao Mei’s friend lives not far from Jack, only 15 minutes away by car.
* 小美会给她的朋友杰克的电话号码
* Xiao Mei will pass Jack’s phone number to her friend.

Section 2 – Writing in Chinese

Part A

Question 4

Students were expected to write a personal journal entry in Chinese based on the given text. The majority of students showed their capacity to understand and convey information from the given text, while students who scored highly were able to create a logically structured response with a clear personal writing style. These students were capable of manipulating Chinese effectively and included their reflection on the different opportunities that have become available to Chinese athletes as stated in the question.

Suggested points students may have included in their response:

* 1949年以前，国家没钱，几乎没什么运动可参与
* Before 1949, the country had no money, almost no sports were available.
* 1978年以前，只有乒乓球运动
* Before 1978, only ping-pong sport was available.
* 1990年以前，可以参加各种球类活动
* Before 1990, could attend various ball games.
* 1990年以后，国家、全民开始重视体育运动，举办全国运动会，很多运动员参加国际运动会
* After 1990, both the state and all the people started to pay importance to sports, running national sports games, many athletes being able to attend global sports games.

Features of a journal entry include recording of the events / personal reflections, thoughts and feelings at a particular time.

Part B

For Part B, students were expected to produce a piece of writing in Chinese. More students chose Question 5 than Question 6. Students who scored highly were awarded marks for the relevance, breadth and depth of the content. Most students were able to produce a structured piece with ideas sequenced appropriately. Various techniques were used, such as variation in sentence length, quotes and emotional language (e.g. effective use of interjections). However, greater attention is needed to improve the accuracy and appropriateness of grammar and the range of vocabulary.

Question 5

For this question, students were required to write an informative speech identifying the skills that are important for gaining employment. Most students demonstrated a good understanding of the task requirements, and many were able to list authentic skills that reflected their original understanding of the world of work in China. Some students were able to give further explanation of their claims and a few high-scoring responses included examples. Relevant skills provided in students’ responses include time management, organisation, language and social skills. High-scoring responses demonstrated the students’ ability to produce a sophisticated informative writing piece. Some students wrote in a personal style about their future aspirations, which was not an appropriate kind of writing for the response.

Question 6

Students were required to write an imaginative story for children about their experience on a remote island. Responses were expected to address the requirements of the task, such as no internet, mobile phones and no communication with outside world with details. Those who scored highly produced a structured piece with a clear storyline. Some responses included an interesting twist on the encounters on the island. These responses were meaningful, creative and focused.

Section 3 – Culture and society in Chinese-speaking communities

In Section 3, students were expected to respond in English, analysing and evaluating information from prescribed texts. More students chose Question 8 than Question 7. 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 explore how the notion of happiness is portrayed in Cao Yu’s play, *The Family,* which was the prescribed text for this unit, from the perspectives of the two characters, Juexin and Juehui. Students were required to include references to the text to show their knowledge of the text. They were also expected to make links with one of the major Chinese philosophies to demonstrate their understanding of happiness in the Chinese context. Key points to consider included:

* The concept of ‘happiness’ in Juexin’s understanding: Juexin feels ‘happy’ when he is loyal and obedient to his father, as Confucianism emphasises ‘Li’, which is interpreted as respecting the five key relationships of ruler to subject, father to son, husband to wife, elder to younger and friend to friend; he also feels ‘happy’ when his family operates in harmony and every member fulfils their own duty.
* The concept of ‘happiness’ in Juehui’s understanding: Juehui feels ‘happy’ when he has freedom; he rebels against the constraints of traditional practice; he also cannot bear the suffocating family hierarchy; he is a rebel to Chinese tradition from the perspective of Confucianism and prioritises individual happiness over family unity.

Most students were able to identify Juexin and Juehui’s differences in the story and use Confucianist concepts to interpret their decisions. Some students recognised Juexin’s sacrifice as his prioritising of collective happiness over individual desire. However, a few students confused Juehui with Jade or other characters. It is important for the students to pay attention to the Chinese names of the characters.

Question 8

Students were required to explore how technology is used as a symbol of change in Yang Zhang’s film *Shower.* Most students discussed a range of ideas in the text, demonstrating their understanding of social changes in China from a variety of perspectives and approaches, including the conflict between modern and traditional ways of social interactions, as well as individualism and collectivism. Students who scored highly produced insightful and logical responses, with a broad range of evidence from the prescribed text. Students needed to choose relevant themes and examples from the film to support their ideas; circumstantial details from the film were not enough to fully support an effective argument.

Students should always include information that is relevant to the question and avoid pre-learnt information that is beyond the scope of the question. A high-scoring interpretation was to explore how technology is used as a symbol of change from different perspectives presented in the film, rather than the cause of China’s social changes. High-scoring responses recognised the director’s praising of the traditional community lifestyle and intentions to stimulate the audience’s reflection on their own life choices. Some students misunderstood the task as to identify technology used in the film that caused conflicts. An oversimplified understanding of China’s social change reflecting its evolutionary needs to turn slow-paced community living into industrialised commercial lifestyle lacked depth.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response and close meaningful textual analysis. It is a thorough discussion that uses the prescribed text well and explains how the director uses symbolism. There were other high-scoring responses that discussed in more detail how technology is used as a symbol to show changes in people’s social behaviour, economic environment and moral standards:

*The film ‘Shower’, directed by Zhang Yang, explores the ways in which China’s economic reform in the 90s has catalysed China’s race for modernity, showcasing the nation’s shift away from deeply ingrained traditional culture towards modern ideologies. Set against the backdrop of rapid economic development, the film accentuates the divide among old and new values, juxtaposing the notion of traditionality against advanced, fast-paced technology characterising modern society. As the vision of modernity envelops the nation, a wave of new technology is depicted as a symbolism for the inherent disconnectedness of younger generations, revealing the individualistic ideals that diverge from collectivistic attitudes ingrained in older generations. The rise of new values is also portrayed through further use of technological goods, accentuating a larger emphasis on materialistic ideal perpetuated by rising capitalism that is creeping into the nation. Furthermore, the growing focus on technology represents China’s move to a more self-oriented culture, resulting in a loss of familial values intrinsic to Chinese families.*

*The advanced technology depicted in the film serves to be a representation of the divergence between modern and traditional beliefs, contrasting the individualistic nature of modern generations against the appreciation of human interactions held by conservative generations. As the nation gravitates towards the idea of economic progression, bathhouses appear to be less appealing to younger generations who strive for a fast-paced lifestyle facilitating the pursuit of wealth and career success. This is revealed through He Zheng’s vision of individualised automated shower cubicles where he is depicted to be showering in, expression. This is then followed by a scene portraying Lao Liu and his customers enjoying the convivial nature of the bathhouse. Through the juxtaposition of the two contrasting scene, Zhang Yang seek to illustrate that individualistic nature and coldness of modern societies, which is radically different from the ‘family-life’ community of the traditional bathhouse. By doing so, he highlights how modern society are characterised by growing indifference to anyone but themselves, showcasing the shift from an appreciation of interpersonal relationships and cultivating bonds with surrounding people to one of modern loneliness and solipsism. This increasing focus on oneself delineates the sense of detachment prevailing in modern society, marking a divisive change from the ebullient, homely and community-like nature of traditional society.*

*Additionally, the rising capitalism driving the newfound appreciation for technology underscores the acquisitive nature of younger generations, promoting materialistic values that precedes the preservation of traditional Chinese culture advocating frugality. In the film, Daming’s detachment from his family is drawn upon through the tension surrounding him and his father, Lao Liu. In an attempt to mend their dysfunctional relationship, Daming presents his father with an electrical massager, showing a larger focus on using material goods – in this case, technology – as means of cultivating relationships. Daming’s fixation on the electrical massager exposes his disregard for using traditional ways to create a bond with his father. Instead of embracing the Confucian value of “Ren”, which advocates benevolence amongst relationships, the act of turning to materialistic means suggests that he neglected to care deeply for his father who was aging and needed an extra hand to maintain his treasured bathhouse. This highlights the deviation from generational values of cultivating relationships and a rising era of materialism that results in the loss of traditions.*

*Furthermore, China’s progression towards modernity is underpinned by ideals of a self-oriented life, displaying the rift in familial bonds. In a scene whereby Daming receives a call from Shenzhen, he is depicted to step away from his family for a while, only to lose his chance covey his last words to his dying father. His shift in attention away from his father to his technology showcases the disruptive nature of technology, causing a divide in families. The call from Shenzhen symbolises the extent to which the era of modernity has stripped him away from his sense of duty – a Confucian teaching of “filial piety”. Through this, Zhang Yang accentuates how modern technology serve to be reflective of the change on values held by society, revealing the prioritisation of modernity over age-old traditions inherent to traditional Chinese families.*

*Through the film ‘Shower’, Zhang Yang seeks to encapsulate the changes enveloping China as a consequence of the nation’s rapid modernisation that threatens to Chinese traditions and culture, replacing them with new beliefs and attitudes detrimental to the preservation of the past.*