

# 2018 VCE Chinese Language, Culture and Society written examination report

## General comments

The 2018 Chinese Language, Culture and Society examination was the first examination for the study.

Students attempted all sections of the examination. The responses showed various levels of knowledge and skills. Students performed best in Part A of the Listening and responding section and Section 3 – Culture and society in Chinese-speaking communities, and performed least well in Part B of the Listening and responding section. Students should use the reading time to familiarise themselves with all questions.

For Part A of Sections 1 and 2, some students took notes in Pinyin but did not use them to produce meaningful English or Chinese responses. Students should use dictionaries to correct the writing of characters. Unless otherwise instructed, students were expected to write in full sentences.

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 – Answer in English

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. However, some students wrote answers in the note-taking space and did not transfer them to the answer space, so they could not be awarded any marks. Some students included their own knowledge, which resulted in irrelevant responses. Others mistook the different tones of a character in spoken Chinese, such as answering Question 1a. with ‘younger brother bought a painting’ (画, fourth tone) rather than the correct answer of ‘flowers’ (花, first tone). Some confused 唱 (sing, fourth tone) with 茶 (tea, second tone).

Many students were better able to pick up key nouns than verbs in sentences. Verbs in Chinese do not represent a time tense. Students needed to listen for the grammatical particles to decide the

time of the action. This resulted in errors that reflected a misunderstanding of the time tense of an event. For example, Ms Li asks Sandy ‘你参加学校的合唱队吗?’ (Will you join the school choir?), which is an inquiry about the possibility of a future action (rather than questioning Sandy about a past action as in ‘参加了...吗?’). Many students took notes of ‘school’ and/or ‘choir’, but answered Question 2a. in the past tense as ‘Because Sandy did not participate in school choir/activities’, which did not convert to ‘参加...吗?’ (will ... join) accurately. For Question 2c., students had to translate the verb 交 in 交朋友 as ‘to make (friends)’ or ‘to meet new (friends)’, rather than ‘seeing’ or ‘meeting’ (existing friends).

### Text 1

#### Question 1

Family member	Contribution
mother	made birthday noodles
father	gave a red pack/red pocket (with money inside)
older brother	gave a Chinese book
older sister	gave a sweater
younger brother	bought some flowers

### Text 2

#### Question 2a.

Because Ms Li wants Sandy to join the school choir.

#### Question 2b.

- He is learning Chinese from Monday to Friday.
- He does shopping and homework on Saturdays.
- He also works in the city on Sundays.

#### Question 2c.

- He likes his job.
- He can practise his Chinese (at work).
- He can make friends/meet new friends (at work).

#### Question 2d.

Ms Li advised him:

- to sleep well
- not to get sick
- that he does not need to join the school choir.

## Part B – Answer in Chinese

Students were expected to answer Questions 3a. and 3b. in full 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. However, it is suggested that students 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.

### Text 3

#### Question 3a.

- 中国人都会打(all Chinese can play table tennis)
- 天天都打 (they play every day)
- 在哪儿都打 (play everywhere)
- 男的可以打, 女的也可以打 (men can play, women can also play)
- 是很好的运动 (is good exercise)
- 很有意思 (is interesting/fun)

#### Question 3b.

- 他(喜欢)看乒乓球赛 (he [likes] to watch table tennis games)
- 他常常和朋友说乒乓球运动 (he often talks about table tennis with his friends)
- 他买了很多乒乓球的书 (he bought a lot of books about table tennis)
- 他想学打乒乓球 (he wants to learn table tennis) or 让兰兰教他打乒乓球 (let Lanlan teach him table tennis)

## Section 2 – Writing in Chinese

Students were expected to provide responses in Chinese based on a given text. Students could add information to support the key points from the text, such as 做志愿者 (doing volunteer work) to show 有爱心 (being a caring person). 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 letter format. These students were capable of manipulating Chinese authentically. In this case, using respectful language when writing to a future employer was more desirable, using 您 instead of 你 for instance.

### Part A

#### Text 4

#### Question 4

For this question, students had to write a letter to their future employer to provide information about oneself as the suitable candidate for the advertised job. It needed to include an address, a greeting, body content, a farewell, a sign off and a date. The aim was to convey information from the writer to the reader as clearly, comprehensively and accurately as possible. Students responded to the following points in the advertisement:

- 高中毕业学历以上 (qualifications with secondary school certificate and above)
- 有爱心 (a caring person)
- 会说中文和英语 (can speak both Chinese and English)
- 星期六下午4.00–5.00有空 (4.00–5.00 pm on Saturday afternoons)
- 从2018年11月30日开始工作 (can start work from 30 November 2018)
- 教过中文 or 相关经验 (have taught Chinese or other relevant experience)

Students were awarded marks for addressing the above main points. Most students were able to use several grammatical structures and sentence patterns. Signposting phrases and linking words, for instance 首先 (firstly), 其次 (moreover), 最后 (at last) and 所以 (therefore), were also commonly used. Many effective expressions were used in responses, such as 我今年上大学二年级 (I am attending the second year of university this year) and 我从11月开始每天下午都有空 (I am free every afternoon from November) as a response to the required working hours.

## Part B

For Part B, students were expected to produce a piece of writing with their original ideas. Students who scored highly were awarded marks for the relevance, breadth and depth of their content. Most students were able to produce a structured piece with an appropriate sequence. 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

Students were required to write a journal entry reflecting on the relationship with an important person in their life. This journal entry needed to be a record of events or personal reflections, thoughts and feelings.

This question required students to create a sense of personality for the writer through personal and informal writing. Emotive language was often included. Most students demonstrated a good understanding of the task requirements. Many wrote about family members or friends and included the reasons why their relationships were important to them.

High-scoring responses included reasons for the journal entry. For example, outlining that it was this person's birthday, so that the author was reminded of the importance of their relationship. Many of the responses were broad and general, such as 我们都喜欢运动 (we both like sports). High-scoring responses also supported ideas with events that happened on the day to be relevant to the task requirement (a journal entry), for example 我们去看了比赛 (we went to watch a game). Students were expected to sequence ideas between sentences and paragraphs.

### Question 6

Students were required to write the script of a dialogue that takes place in 2080 between a businessman and his office robot. The script needed to include a title and content. The register or style needed to suit a script of a dialogue.

There were few responses to this question but the quality of responses was impressive. High-scoring 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 reading texts. Question 7 required students to analyse a given passage regarding guanxi and make links with Unit 3 prescribed texts, while Question 8 required the students to analyse the link between Da Ming's personal struggles and social change in China and contemporary Chinese cultural values based on the film '*Shower*', which was a prescribed text for Unit 4. Most students responded to Question 8.

### Question 7

Students were expected to explain their understanding of guanxi with reference to the given passage and Seligman's text. It was important for students to understand the basic concept of guanxi and its impacts on people's life in China based on the prescribed text. Students who scored highly were able to analyse the given passage comprehensively, including discussions of the nature of guanxi as 'networks of patronage and mutual back-scratching', how the father 'learned to

play that game himself' and the reasons/meanings behind the jade bracelet being given and returned. The main points discussed by students included:

- guanxi is a connection between two people with a give-and-take arrangement (mutual back-scratching)
- people are expected to build guanxi as the first priority when trying to accomplish tasks (a local property developer angling for a contract)
- guanxi offers people access to goods, services and power (how local officials won their positions and the property development contract)
- the currency of guanxi is normally favours, gift-giving and face-giving, but not cash (a hamper of fruit and the jade bracelet)
- the privacy of building a guanxi between two stakeholders (the jade bracelet was buried in the bottom of the hamper)
- how guanxi can be cultivated by material means (the interactions among stakeholders through gift-giving)
- building guanxi network with significant people can increase one's social capital (father learned to play that game as he rose higher in the ranks).

While most students successfully explained the concept of guanxi and its importance in China's business activities, many failed to further interpret why the father returned the bracelet to the property developer. Possible arguments could have been:

- two individuals or units in guanxi need to have a balanced relationship
- the non-cash favours still have a price. When the price is too high, the Chinese will not accept the gift, i.e. the guanxi relation is not formed.

### Question 8

Students explored a range of context ideas, demonstrating their understanding of social changes in China from a variety of perspectives and approaches. Students who scored highly produced insightful and logical responses, with direct evidence from the prescribed text, offering plenty of scope for conceptualisation of the conflict between traditional and contemporary Chinese cultural values. Students should have chosen strong and substantial themes and examples from the film to support their ideas. Circumstantial details from the film were not enough to fully support an argument.

Students should always include information that is relevant to the question and avoid pre-learned information that is beyond the scope of the question. A high-scoring interpretation was that Da Ming's personal struggles were caused by the integration experience when individuals were influenced by very different cultural values. Many students misunderstood the bathhouse as representing 'underdeveloped' or 'rural/regional' lifestyle compared to Shenzhen as the superior urban lifestyle. An oversimplified understanding of China's social change reflecting its evolutionary needs to turn rural villagers into industrialised urban residents was not relevant.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response. It is a thorough discussion that uses the prescribed text well. It explains how social changes caused Da Ming to struggle to maintain relationships with his father and find a balance between familial and husband–wife relationships. However, other high-scoring responses included more breadth in the discussion, including Da Ming's struggles with his old and new identities, and the impacts of Da Ming's personal decisions. Nevertheless, this piece shows close meaningful textual analysis and develops a sustained argument.

*In the film 'Shower', the personal conflicts in Daming's life is microcosmically representative of the contemporary social changes in Chinese society. His struggles in the film often embody a disparity between traditional and contemporary values as he is forced to adhere to the unfamiliar lifestyle of his old hometown. He is internally conflicted in his relationship with his*

*father as he endeavours to mend their relationship, which simultaneously finding difficulty in advancing his relationship with his wife.*

*As Daming leaves his hometown to pursue his individualistic career dreams, he embodies the contemporary change to a more self-oriented China, resulting in the estrangement of his father. His father is presented as a traditional man who celebrates and adheres to traditional notions of community-living, with a strong emphasis on the Confucian value of Ren, defined as benevolence in relationships. His role as the host and owner of the bathhouse, a place of sanctuary for a myriad of interpersonal relationships, symbolises him as China's traditional emphasis on collectivism. Contrarily, Daming symbolises China's more recent move toward individualism as children are more commonly moving out of their family homes to pursue their careers. This dramatic contrast between old and new values can be seen in the juxtaposition between the modern, individual showers at the beginning of the film and the later intimate, public nature of the bathhouse. Thus, in Daming becoming estranged to his father, he embodies the conflict between remaining true to traditional values of community and contemporary notions of individuality.*

*Furthermore, in Daming's attempts to reconcile his relationship with his father, it becomes evident the disjunction between traditional frugality and contemporary consumerism. Daming, once realising the degree of estrangement with his father, attempts to amend the distance between him and his father through a material gift of a technologically advanced automatic massage machine. He gifts this to his father as a means of healing their estrangement, however fails to realise the importance of slowly developing relationships, and especially developing oneself through the Confucian teaching of self-cultivation. Though the father accepts the gift, he reverts back to hand massages as values the importance of person-to-person relationships over the conspicuous consumption present in modern-day China. Therefore, Daming's attempt at mending a broken relationship through a materialistic gift conveys the emphasis placed on material goods in China today, which contrasts to the traditional importance of frugality and self-cultivation.*

*Daming's difficulty in maintaining his relationship with his wife at the end of the film also portrays the conflict between filial piety in China as a child, and the move toward emphasis on husband to wife relationships. In finding out Erming is disabled, Daming's wife breaks off communication indefinitely, and Daming is conflicted between returning home to his wife and staying to look after Erming. There is a conflict between the relationships (from the Five Relationships) of Older brother and younger brother was more greatly emphasised than that of husband and wife, however in contemporary values, that of husband and wife has increased. Thus, Daming's conflict between choosing to stay with his brother or his wife symbolises China's change in the importance of filial relationships and relationships by marriage.*

*Ultimately, in the film 'Shower' Daming embodies the social changes in China from traditional values to more contemporary values through his personal struggles within his relationships.*