



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2012**

Chinese (Mandarin)

46704

(Specification 4670)

Unit 4: Writing

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

On the whole, teachers administered and carried out the Chinese Writing controlled assessments very well this summer. There was strong evidence that the majority of teachers understood the requirements of the specification and applied the assessment criteria correctly. It was pleasing to see a wide range of tasks, covering different contexts, in this year's examination.

Overall, the standard of work submitted is varied, ranging from short responses with simple sentences and occasional opinions, through to detailed and generally accurate responses using a variety of vocabulary, structures and time references/tenses.

A very small number of schools did not submit complete tasks/documentation and a couple of schools' self designed tasks did not give students much flexibility to develop. All of these factors could affect students' marks. Teachers should be aware that there is a great deal of help available during the preparation, teaching and assessment of the Writing tasks through e-AQA, via the website:

www.aqa.org.uk/e-AQA

Administration

Schools' administration was generally excellent. Tasks were despatched on time with the relevant forms included and correctly completed. However, teachers should note the following: tasks should be sent to the correct AQA examiner. Some schools sent their Writing tasks to the Speaking moderator, and vice versa. Teachers should ensure that the task titles have been written in all the appropriate places and that the work itself has been labelled 'Task 1' and 'Task 2'. Teachers do not need to attach a Task Sheet to each piece of work. Where a number of students have done the same task, submission of one copy of each task is sufficient. Teachers are reminded to indicate on the reverse of the Candidate Record Form if a Task Planning Form has been used or not.

Teachers are encouraged:

- to collate each student's work – ie the two tasks - together with the Candidate Record Form and the Task Planning Form. The use of treasury tags to keep portfolios together is preferred, as paper clips and plastic wallets cause significant handling problems
- to make sure the examiner receives the full Controlled Assessment Task Sheet relevant to the student or group. Marking cannot begin until the examiner knows what the students are writing about. There were task titles missing this year, which delayed marking
- to remind students to write neatly, as poor handwriting can affect marks if work is incomprehensible
- to send the work in the same order as students appear on the Attendance List, as for a terminal examination paper
- to check that the students have correctly filled in and signed the Candidate Record Form and (if used) the Task Planning Form
- to adhere to the deadline of 7 May, by which all materials should be sent to the AQA examiner

Task Titles

A wide range of titles were used this year, with teachers devising imaginative and interesting tasks for students. Task titles and bullet points should always be in English.

Many teachers chose to use AQA exemplar tasks. Teachers who designed their own tasks mostly gave students scope to develop their answers, using different time references/tenses rather than the default one, which was an improvement compared to last year.

Teachers are reminded that for Writing, the title is the task and that the bullet points are there as a guide and are not compulsory. Titles chosen often had a profound effect upon the outcome. A general title (My Holidays, My Home and Local Area, My Lifestyle, My Free Time) is likely to be most successful, since the piece of writing will be assessed according to its relevance to that title. Students need to be reminded that everything they write must be relevant to the title. Where titles were broad, students were able to write relevant and detailed responses.

The most popular titles related to Holidays, School, Home and Environment, Healthy Lifestyles, Free Time and Life of a Celebrity. Some students who thought they were expected to address all the bullet points could not always address them effectively. Teachers are encouraged to contact their Controlled Assessment Adviser if any advice or support is needed or if they would like tasks checking. Details of Controlled Assessment Advisers can be checked with the MFL subject team using the MFL mailbox: mfl@aqa.org.uk and details are sent out in September of each year.

Task Planning Forms

Visuals are no longer permitted on the Task Planning Forms and it was pleasing that all schools adhered to this. Once again, many students did not use a Task Planning Form as it is optional. Those students who did use the Task Planning Form were able to produce good pieces of work, suggesting that the Task Planning Form is helpful. In order to maximise students' performance, teachers could advise them to use the Task Planning Form according to their ability. Moreover, teachers are reminded that task titles need to be on the Task Planning Forms. Only a very few number of students exceeded the maximum of 40 words/characters, which was really good to see.

There were very occasional cases where students had written sentences on the Task Planning Form and had simply put a line or cross through them - this is not acceptable. Teachers should make sure the Task Planning Forms are produced according to the requirements of the specification.

Drafts

Once again, a number of things need to be emphasised:

- Students are not *required* to write a draft at Stage 2
- If a draft is produced, it must be done under direct teacher supervision, must **not** be commented upon and must be kept in school. This also applies to partially-completed drafts

- At Stage 2, students have access to all resources (**except the teacher**) to assist their planning and preparation. This may include, from Stage 1, their own (corrected) written work, worksheets, text books, on-line resources (other than translation software) etc. All of this is potentially accessible, within the 6 hours, in school and at home.

Use of Dictionaries

As might be expected, effective use of bilingual dictionaries was variable. It is advised that students are trained in the use of bilingual dictionaries in order to avoid misuse and potential loss of marks.

Word-Processed Work

It is permissible to word process one of the two Writing tasks. Due to the characteristics of the input methods available, AQA accepts all input methods providing it does not produce a complete sentence.

Assessment

Content

Students were able to produce relevant, detailed pieces of work. They were less successful when the tasks included bullet points not totally relevant to the title. In addition, a small number of schools could have made their students more aware of the assessment criteria, as some lost marks for having written something irrelevant to the task, which did not allow them to demonstrate their true ability.

Range of Language

Students were well-prepared and there was effective use of a variety of tenses, including complex structures and sentences and a range of connectives. As mentioned previously many students managed to develop their answers using different time references/tenses rather than the default one. However, there were errors in word order, tense formation, inappropriate use of conjunctions and adjectives.

Accuracy

Most students produced work that was generally accurate. The main errors were in relation to tense formation, minor mistakes in character writing and omissions of verbs including particle for indicating action completed in the past, which often impeded communication. More commonly, students made mistakes due to the influence of their mother tongue. An issue for some students was that they could not remember characters. Students should be reminded of the effective use of the Task Planning Form.

Advice to Students

Below is some advice you may wish to pass on to your students:

- Once the title of your task is known and your teacher has given you the bullet points to use in your task, think carefully about how you intend to write about each one and prepare to write an appropriate amount, as clearly and accurately as you can.
- Using a variety of vocabulary and structures will improve your mark. Express opinions clearly and, when you can, justify these opinions by giving a reason. It also helps if you can use different time references to say what you did in the past and/or what you are going to do or will do in the future.
- You are allowed to use a Task Planning Form on which you may write up to 40 characters or 40 words in English and you may use this form at Stage 3 (once it has been checked by your teacher to ensure you have not included too much information eg full sentences). Be sure to write characters or spell words accurately on this sheet so that they will be accurate when you write up your piece of work. It might be wise to include the same order of bullet points on your Task Planning Form as the teacher gave you on the Task Sheet and then jot down a few characters/words next to each one. If you are worried you may forget what the character means, you could write the English translation next to it, as long as the English word is included in your final count. Remember, no complete sentences are allowed on the Task Planning Form.
- You are allowed to use a dictionary when you write up your piece of work. You should use this to look up occasional words but do not waste too much time looking up lots of words; you only have 60 minutes and you need to write as full a response as you can.
- Be sure that everything you write is relevant to the title.
- Try to write as much as you can about each bullet point but keep an eye on the clock and remember it is the quality not quantity of what you write that will help you to succeed. If you follow the order of the bullet points provided, this should bring a well-organised structure to your piece, but if time is running out you might choose to round off the piece neatly even if you have to cut short what you were intending to write.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below:

UMS conversion calculator: www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion.