

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/11
Reading

Key messages

As first language learners, candidates need to demonstrate a good level of reading comprehension and linguistic competence.

In order to score well in either section, candidates need to:

- have an accurate understanding of the theme of the two reading passages
- understand, select and convey information from passages to specific questions
- analyse and evaluate what is relevant to specific purposes
- be able to explain the author's perspective
- understand how authors achieve effects or use language to influence the reader
- make accurate and effective use of grammatical structures, sentences and punctuation.

In addition, in **Section 1**, candidates are reminded to pay attention to the mark allocation to ensure that they develop their answers fully enough to score all available marks.

In **Section 2**, candidates need to show that they can:

- read the questions carefully and follow the instructions to do what is asked
- extract all available points from the two reading passages for each question and avoid focusing only on a small number of points
- order and present facts, ideas and opinions in own words in response to the two questions asked
- write in a summary style with logical linkage
- express the ideas given in the passage without copying examples directly from the text or writing from their own knowledge or experience
- use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures and correct characters and punctuation.
- keep within the word limit

It is important that candidates plan what they are going to write to ensure that they can make enough separate points to score well in the summary question. They also need to remember to spend time proofreading their writing to check for any mistakes and technical errors.

General comments

The language level of candidates this year was very good. Questions which required more explicit and straightforward answers were generally handled well, while the answers to more stretching questions sometimes needed to contain more analysis and clearer explanation expressed in the candidate's own words. In a small number of cases it was evident that candidates had not read the two passages and questions carefully before starting to write their answers.

Candidates should be reminded to use their own words to paraphrase the language given in the passage and should avoid lifting extended chunks of text. In most cases, where candidates rely heavily on lifting, it is not clear that they have understood the text and/or the question.

In order to make an improvement in future examinations for **Section 1**, candidates are advised to pay more attention to the requirements of the question and improve their analytical and summary skills.

In **Section 2**, candidates are encouraged to use their own words to summarise, but should also ensure that the points they make are rooted in the information given in the two passages; no credit can be given for

demonstrating general knowledge on the topic. Most candidates understood that the summary should be written in prose, rather than being presented as a list of points. In some cases, candidates need to improve their summary style, using writing techniques to remain concise and within the word limit, and avoid any repetition. In the summary, candidates need to include enough separate points relating to the question, as each relevant point is awarded 1 mark. Once again this year some candidates included a smaller number of points with extended explanations. This should be discouraged, as this type of response to the summary question is unlikely to score highly for content. Candidates should identify valid points from *both* reading passages when answering the summary question in **Section 2**. The most successful candidates managed to keep their summary concise and precise, and within the character limit, with good linkage and a coherent writing style.

In both sections, candidates should strive to use clear and carefully chosen language and varied sentence structures, vocabulary, and correctly written characters.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1, Question 1

Most candidates were able to show a good level of comprehension, answering more straightforward questions well. Stronger candidates showed they could analyse and summarise the information provided in the passage with clear and well-chosen language. Candidates are reminded to take the time to read the questions carefully to ensure they provide a full enough answer to score all available marks.

- (a) This question required candidates to use their own words to explain in general terms how the author used the technique of comparison to exemplify loneliness. The majority of candidates were able to identify the author's comparison of the bustling city and desolate desert. Only a small number of candidates mentioned the other comparisons of physical and psychological distance, and the language and effect of communication. Copying the whole sentence could not be credited.
- (b) Candidates needed to include two points from the text which showed why the TV / Radio are important to Parisian commuters, and many handled this well. Some candidates scored only one mark due to missing the key word '陪伴/旁边' out in the second point.
- (c) (i) This question asked candidates to identify and express two views given in the paragraph on the social concept of '以群体文化为主'. The majority of candidates wrote about the emphasis on interpersonal relationships, but only the stronger candidates were also able to identify the point that 'loneliness is not accepted in mainstream society'.
- (ii) This question proved to be challenging, as many candidates explained the literal meaning of the word '离经叛道' without considering its meaning within the context of the passage. Only a few candidates mentioned that individual solitude or isolation was generally not accepted by society, where '群体文化' is considered to be the mainstream.
- (iii) Most candidates answered this question successfully, and gained full marks by including an analysis of the two sides of the relationship between society and individual.
- (d) This was a very well answered question. Most candidates received full marks by including three aspects that people would be affected by if they did not have an opportunity to face loneliness at some point. Only a small number of candidates did not manage to include the third point about 'spiritual fulfilment'.
- (e) (i) This question tested candidates' ability to understand the methods used by the author to achieve a particular effect. This was found to be quite challenging. Some candidates were able to identify '引用' or '举例'; only the strongest candidates managed to also identify '类比'. Weaker responses were characterised by the copying of whole sentences mentioning the methods used.
- (ii) This question required candidates to quote from the extract of the poem given in the passage. Marks were only awarded for the exact words, rather than extended quotes.
- (f) This question required a global response, testing candidates' ability to summarise based on their understanding of the whole passage. The best responses showed a high level of comprehension

and analytical skill. Those candidates who were able to successfully achieve full marks managed to summarise the relevant points from the text in their own words. Weaker responses relied heavily on lifting material directly from the reading passage.

Accuracy

Those candidates who achieved 5 marks for Accuracy in **Section 1** used clear and carefully chosen vocabulary and sentences with hardly any technical errors. Candidates should be aware that they need to generate some of their own language by paraphrasing or manipulating the original wording of the reading passage to demonstrate that they can write accurate Chinese. The highest marks for Accuracy were awarded to candidates who could show they are able to use their own language to answer questions, rather than lifting excessively from the reading passages.

Section 2, Question 2

Candidates were required to extract information from the two reading passages and use their own words to write a summary structured around the two bullet points given in the question paper.

Candidates should be encouraged to re-read the two passages carefully before beginning to select the main points for inclusion in their summary and to plan the summary before writing. Excessive elaborations are discouraged; examiners are looking for a concise and coherent summary of the points that appear in the two texts.

Responses to this question produced a variety of performance. Strong candidates demonstrated a high level of comprehension and were able to write in a good summary style, selecting appropriate points from both passages. Weaker responses often consisted of a long, rambling introduction and conclusion; such responses often also included lots of examples or repetitions, and a lack of focus.

Candidates should be reminded that there are 15 marks for content in **Question 2**, which means that they need to include at least 15 distinct points and ideas from the two passages.

Most candidates were aware of the character limit and were able to write a well-structured and focused summary in their own words. Candidates should be reminded that anything written in excess of 275 characters is disregarded, which can lead to content points not being rewarded if they appear after the character limit.

Most candidates were able to use clear and appropriate language in writing the summary. In order to achieve a mark within band 5 (excellent) for Accuracy, candidates need to choose both vocabulary and sentences with greater care. Weaker responses often lifted a lot of language directly from the reading passages, and therefore did not show how well candidates were able to express themselves in their own words. In some cases, a number of technical errors were also present, or less formal language used, which would have been taken into account when awarding the Accuracy mark.

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/12
Reading

Key messages

As first language learners, candidates need to demonstrate a good level of reading comprehension and linguistic competence.

In order to score well in either section, candidates need to:

- have an accurate understanding of the theme of the two reading passages
- understand, select and convey information from passages to specific questions
- analyse and evaluate what is relevant to specific purposes
- be able to explain the author's perspective
- understand how authors achieve effects or use language to influence the reader
- make accurate and effective use of grammatical structures, sentences and punctuation.

In addition, in **Section 1**, candidates are reminded to pay attention to the mark allocation to ensure that they develop their answers fully enough to score all available marks.

In **Section 2**, candidates need to show that they can:

- read the questions carefully and follow the instructions to do what is asked
- extract all available points from the two reading passages for each question and avoid focusing only on a small number of points
- order and present facts, ideas and opinions in own words in response to the two questions asked
- write in a summary style with logical linkage
- express the ideas given in the passage without copying examples directly from the text or writing from their own knowledge or experience
- use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures and correct characters and punctuation.
- keep within the word limit

It is important that candidates plan what they are going to write to ensure that they can make enough separate points to score well in the summary question. They also need to remember to spend time proofreading their writing to check for any mistakes and technical errors.

General comments

The language level of candidates this year was very good. Questions which required more explicit and straightforward answers were generally handled well, while the answers to more stretching questions sometimes needed to contain more analysis and clearer explanation expressed in the candidate's own words. In a small number of cases it was evident that candidates had not read the two passages and questions carefully before starting to write their answers.

Candidates should be reminded to use their own words to paraphrase the language given in the passage and should avoid lifting extended chunks of text. In most cases, where candidates rely heavily on lifting, it is not clear that they have understood the text and/or the question.

In order to make an improvement in future examinations for **Section 1**, candidates are advised to pay more attention to the requirements of the question and improve their analytical and summary skills.

In **Section 2**, candidates are encouraged to use their own words to summarise, but should also ensure that the points they make are rooted in the information given in the two passages; no credit can be given for

demonstrating general knowledge on the topic. Most candidates understood that the summary should be written in prose, rather than being presented as a list of points. In some cases, candidates need to improve their summary style, using writing techniques to remain concise and within the word limit, and avoid any repetition. In the summary, candidates need to include enough separate points relating to the question, as each relevant point is awarded 1 mark. Once again this year some candidates included a smaller number of points with extended explanations. This should be discouraged, as this type of response to the summary question is unlikely to score highly for content. Candidates should identify valid points from *both* reading passages when answering the summary question in **Section 2**. The most successful candidates managed to keep their summary concise and precise, and within the character limit, with good linkage and a coherent writing style.

In both sections, candidates should strive to use clear and carefully chosen language and varied sentence structures, vocabulary, and correctly written characters.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1, Question 1

Most candidates were able to show a good level of comprehension, answering more straightforward questions well. Stronger candidates showed they could analyse and summarise the information provided in the passage with clear and well-chosen language. Candidates are reminded to take the time to read the questions carefully to ensure they provide a full enough answer to score all available marks.

- (a) This question required candidates to use their own words to explain in general terms how the author used the technique of comparison to exemplify loneliness. The majority of candidates were able to identify the author's comparison of the bustling city and desolate desert. Only a small number of candidates mentioned the other comparisons of physical and psychological distance, and the language and effect of communication. Copying the whole sentence could not be credited.
- (b) Candidates needed to include two points from the text which showed why the TV / Radio are important to Parisian commuters, and many handled this well. Some candidates scored only one mark due to missing the key word '陪伴/旁边' out in the second point.
- (c) (i) This question asked candidates to identify and express two views given in the paragraph on the social concept of '以群体文化为主'. The majority of candidates wrote about the emphasis on interpersonal relationships, but only the stronger candidates were also able to identify the point that 'loneliness is not accepted in mainstream society'.
- (ii) This question proved to be challenging, as many candidates explained the literal meaning of the word '离经叛道' without considering its meaning within the context of the passage. Only a few candidates mentioned that individual solitude or isolation was generally not accepted by society, where '群体文化' is considered to be the mainstream.
- (iii) Most candidates answered this question successfully, and gained full marks by including an analysis of the two sides of the relationship between society and individual.
- (d) This was a very well answered question. Most candidates received full marks by including three aspects that people would be affected by if they did not have an opportunity to face loneliness at some point. Only a small number of candidates did not manage to include the third point about 'spiritual fulfilment'.
- (e) (i) This question tested candidates' ability to understand the methods used by the author to achieve a particular effect. This was found to be quite challenging. Some candidates were able to identify '引用' or '举例'; only the strongest candidates managed to also identify '类比'. Weaker responses were characterised by the copying of whole sentences mentioning the methods used.
- (ii) This question required candidates to quote from the extract of the poem given in the passage. Marks were only awarded for the exact words, rather than extended quotes.
- (f) This question required a global response, testing candidates' ability to summarise based on their understanding of the whole passage. The best responses showed a high level of comprehension

and analytical skill. Those candidates who were able to successfully achieve full marks managed to summarise the relevant points from the text in their own words. Weaker responses relied heavily on lifting material directly from the reading passage.

Accuracy

Those candidates who achieved 5 marks for Accuracy in **Section 1** used clear and carefully chosen vocabulary and sentences with hardly any technical errors. Candidates should be aware that they need to generate some of their own language by paraphrasing or manipulating the original wording of the reading passage to demonstrate that they can write accurate Chinese. The highest marks for Accuracy were awarded to candidates who could show they are able to use their own language to answer questions, rather than lifting excessively from the reading passages.

Section 2, Question 2

Candidates were required to extract information from the two reading passages and use their own words to write a summary structured around the two bullet points given in the question paper.

Candidates should be encouraged to re-read the two passages carefully before beginning to select the main points for inclusion in their summary and to plan the summary before writing. Excessive elaborations are discouraged; examiners are looking for a concise and coherent summary of the points that appear in the two texts.

Responses to this question produced a variety of performance. Strong candidates demonstrated a high level of comprehension and were able to write in a good summary style, selecting appropriate points from both passages. Weaker responses often consisted of a long, rambling introduction and conclusion; such responses often also included lots of examples or repetitions, and a lack of focus.

Candidates should be reminded that there are 15 marks for content in **Question 2**, which means that they need to include at least 15 distinct points and ideas from the two passages.

Most candidates were aware of the character limit and were able to write a well-structured and focused summary in their own words. Candidates should be reminded that anything written in excess of 275 characters is disregarded, which can lead to content points not being rewarded if they appear after the character limit.

Most candidates were able to use clear and appropriate language in writing the summary. In order to achieve a mark within band 5 (excellent) for Accuracy, candidates need to choose both vocabulary and sentences with greater care. Weaker responses often lifted a lot of language directly from the reading passages, and therefore did not show how well candidates were able to express themselves in their own words. In some cases, a number of technical errors were also present, or less formal language used, which would have been taken into account when awarding the Accuracy mark.

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/13
Reading

Key messages

As first language learners, candidates need to demonstrate a good level of reading comprehension and linguistic competence.

In order to score well in either section, candidates need to:

- have an accurate understanding of the theme of the two reading passages
- understand, select and convey information from passages to specific questions
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- make accurate and effective use of grammatical structures, sentences and punctuation.

In addition, in **Section 1**, candidates are reminded to pay attention to the mark allocation to ensure that they develop their answers fully enough to score all available marks.

In **Section 2**, candidates need to show that they can:

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- write in a summary style with logical linkage
- express the ideas given in the passage without copying examples directly from the text or writing from their own knowledge or experience
- use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures and correct characters and punctuation.
- keep within the word limit

It is important that candidates plan what they are going to write to ensure that they can make enough separate points to score well in the summary question. They also need to remember to spend time proofreading their writing to check for any mistakes and technical errors.

General comments

Most candidates showed they had understood the two passages thoroughly, and were able to address the main ideas of the passages as well as the closer details. Some candidates still relied too heavily on copying extended sections of language from the text, and needed to produce responses which contained more analysis and clearer explanations expressed in the candidate's own words. In a small number of cases this year candidates seemed to interpret and base answers on their own personal experience, and should be reminded that this component is designed to test comprehension of the reading passages, therefore answers must be based on the information given on the paper.

The general standard of the summaries produced this year in **Section 2** was very good. Most candidates seemed well-trained, and knew that they needed to identify and draw the key points from both passages. Top candidates were able to present the points in a summary style within the word limit. Weaker candidates needed to be careful not to produce unbalanced pieces drawing too heavily from one passage at the expense of the other.

Candidates are encouraged to use their own words to summarise, but should also ensure that the points they make are rooted in the information given in the two passages; no credit can be given for demonstrating general knowledge on the topic. Most candidates understood that the summary should be written in prose, rather than being presented as a list of points.

The most successful candidates managed to keep their summary concise and precise, and within the character limit, with good linkage and a coherent writing style.

In both sections, candidates should strive to use clear and carefully chosen language and varied sentence structures, vocabulary, and correctly written characters.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1, Question 1

- (a) This question was well-handled by most candidates, who were able to locate the information from the passage relating to the reasons why the author preferred not to travel with a lot of luggage.
- (b) This question proved to be quite challenging for some candidates. Candidates were asked to use their own words to explain how the items given by the mother demonstrated her love for her child. Candidates needed to use skills of analysis and inference, and the strongest answers showed the ability to interpret the deeper meaning of the items, and to use this to infer in which way they showed the mother's affection for her child. Weaker candidates frequently just copied out the relevant sentences, and this alone did not fully answer the question asked.
- (c) The majority of candidates interpreted the meaning of '塞' accurately, but the interpretation of the phrase '穿越星际' produced a more varied performance. Candidates needed to identify that the author used exaggeration to emphasise a long distance or a long time-span. Many candidates managed to include one of the key words '距离远' or '时间长' and were awarded a mark. Weaker responses tended to include some irrelevant information about analysing the author's writing technique, which was not required for this question.
- (d) This question was well answered by most candidates, who mentioned what the mother saw/discovered and her reaction(s). Weaker responses were characterised by reliance on lifting chunks of language from the text or focussing on what the author did about the clothes instead of what the mother did and felt. A small number of candidates over-interpreted the situation, giving drawn-out explanations about the mother making her child feel guilty about not making full use of things that she gave, which were not needed for this question.
- (e) This question required candidates to analyse the change in the mother's attitude by providing examples from the text. Many candidates found this question challenging and variety of performance was seen. Candidates with strong analytical skills were able to summarise two key attitude changes and quoted two corresponding examples from the passage. A number of candidates either missed out points / examples or mismatched the points and the corresponding examples.
- (f) The majority of candidates answered this question very well and were able to use the keyword '老' or its equivalent.
- (g) Another well answered question. Almost every candidate identified and quoted three action verbs from the passage successfully. A small number of candidates could not be awarded the marks here due to writing the wrong characters for the key words; candidates should be reminded to take care in the accuracy of their writing and to check through their answers.
- (h) This question asked candidates to identify the difference between the mother's smile as described in the 3rd and 5th paragraphs. Most candidates displayed a good understanding of the mother's feelings, but some did not manage to describe it accurately. Answers like 'a fake smile', 'a pretend smile' or 'a forced smile' could not be credited. However, the description of the second smile was found to be less challenging. Most candidates were able to describe mother's smile as 'genuine', 'happy', 'satisfying' or 'comforting'.

Accuracy

Those candidates who achieved 5 marks for Accuracy in **Section 1** used clear and carefully chosen vocabulary and sentences with hardly any technical errors. Candidates should be aware that they need to generate some of their own language by paraphrasing or manipulating the original wording of the reading passage to demonstrate that they can write accurate Chinese. The highest marks for Accuracy were awarded to candidates who could show they are able to use their own language to answer questions, rather than lifting excessively from the reading passages.

Section 2, Question 2

Candidates were required to extract information from the two reading passages and use their own words to write a summary structured around the two bullet points given in the question paper.

Candidates should be reminded that there are 15 marks for content in **Question 2**, which means that they need to include at least 15 distinct points and ideas from the two passages.

Most candidates were aware of the character limit and were able to write a well-structured and focused summary in their own words. Candidates should be reminded that anything written in excess of 275 characters is disregarded, which can lead to content points not being rewarded if they appear after the character limit. Only a few candidates wrote excessively long pieces this year.

The most successful candidates not only demonstrated their ability to produce a summary within the word limit, but also produced a fluent, well-structured summary, expressing themselves in their own words with excellent linkage. However, some candidates needed to improve on structure to group ideas orderly as well as the flow of the summary with assured use of own words. A significant number of candidates this year produced responses which contained considerable lifting of information from the texts without organising the points or writing in their own words. This does not show the ability to summarise in their own words nor does it demonstrate candidates' ability to use the language skilfully.

Most candidates were able to use clear and appropriate language in writing the summary. In order to achieve a mark within band 5 (excellent) for Accuracy, candidates need to choose both vocabulary and sentences with greater care. Weaker responses often lifted a lot of language directly from the reading passages, and therefore did not show how well candidates were able to express themselves in their own words. In some cases, a number of technical errors were also present, or less formal language used, which would have been taken into account when awarding the Accuracy mark.

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/21, 22 and 23
Writing

Paper 2 is not currently available. This will be accessible as soon as possible.