

CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8681/21
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- **Question 1** is a vocabulary recognition exercise, which requires candidates to find words or phrases from the first reading passage that are closest in meaning to those given in the question. Words that are not in the specified paragraphs of the passage are not acceptable.
- **Question 2** is a grammatical manipulation exercise. It requires candidates to rewrite the sentences using the given phrases without changing the meaning.
- **Question 3** and **Question 4** consist of a series of comprehension questions, requiring straightforward and specific answers. Candidates need to read the passages carefully and should answer using their own words based on the information given in the passages. No credit can be given for responses if candidates have lifted an entire unit of language unchanged from the original texts, or if they are based on candidates' general knowledge, or personal experience.
- **Question 5(a)** requires candidates to produce a summary of the information given in both passages, which this year were concerned with modern tourism from the point of view of both enjoyment and environmental protection. **Question 5(b)** requires candidates to give their personal response to the material, which can be their own understanding, experience and opinion of the issues raised. Responses to **Question 5(b)** should be personal and not a mere repetition of the materials in the given texts. The whole response for **Question 5** must be kept to the 200 character limit.

General comments

The majority of candidates demonstrated a very good understanding of the two reading passages and responded well to the questions asked. Some did an excellent job, responding to the questions fully, using clear expressions and giving focused answers.

In most cases, all questions were attempted by the candidates. Furthermore, most candidates used their own words to answer the questions rather than 'lifting' the original words from the texts.

Quite a lot of good and clearly expressed responses to **Question 3** and **Question 4** were seen this year. Many candidates demonstrated their ability to rephrase information through using appropriate connectives, using synonyms, rearranging the word order or carefully selecting the key information. It is important that candidates cover all the points required by the questions, and give full answers to gain all available marks. Candidates should be reminded to take note of the mark allocation; if a question has 3 marks, 3 distinct pieces of information will be needed. In some cases candidates had clearly understood the questions, but did not provide full enough answers to be credited with the full mark available.

It should be noted that marks are also available in **Question 3** and **Question 4** for Quality of Language. Whilst many candidates provided well-written responses, others gave answers in note-form or bullet points, which were fully credited for content, but may not have provided sufficient language to be placed in the higher bands in the Quality of Language category.

It was noticeable that the majority of answers for **Question 5** kept within the word limit this year. However, in general **Question 5(a)** was still less well-answered compared to other questions on the paper. Candidates can improve by working on the skills to summarise with clear but informative sentences. In some cases valuable character-space was taken up on items that were not relevant to the question.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Performance on this question was good and the vast majority of candidates were able to find the correct synonyms from the text and write them accurately. Many candidates gained full marks in this opening question, but if they did not, questions **(d)** and **(e)** were most commonly answered incorrectly. In those cases, candidates seemed to have guessed the answers, as the answers they provided did not have any link to the word given in the question.

Question 2

Most candidates managed to score the marks for **(a)** and **(b)**. Where **(a)** was not answered correctly, this was often when candidates showed interference from English, giving answers such as: ‘不仅它可以丰富人们的经历, 而且能让人们体验民俗’. For **(b)**, those candidates who used ‘是’ to replace ‘由’, did not show full understanding of the structure. Part **(c)** was the least well answered question, with several candidates simply keeping ‘不仅仅’ and ‘更’ in the sentence.

Question 3

Overall most candidates coped with this question and showed that they had understood the reading passage well. The majority of candidates were able to use the information from the texts to answer the questions. Where candidates did not score full marks, it was often because answers were not full enough for all marks to be awarded. Candidates should be reminded to take note of the mark allocation when they write their answers, in order to ensure that they provide sufficient detail to gain the maximum marks for each answer.

In part **(a)**, most candidates were able to secure full marks by paraphrasing the right information from the passage. In some cases, ‘解除疲劳’ was given instead of ‘压力’ which could not be credited. For part **(b)** some candidates managed answers like ‘在旅游中, 会有突发情况’ or ‘旅途中会有意外产生’ which demonstrated that they had understood the passage fully. Similarly, parts **(c)**, **(d)** and **(e)** were well answered.

Question 4

Most candidates performed well in this question. Part **(a)** was generally well-answered and most candidates managed to get two correct answers out of the three. In some cases, candidates answered the question in bullet point style, only giving fragments of information which didn’t give the full detail required by the question. Where candidates noted down ‘环保意识’, for example, in response to this question, the meaning was not clear enough and ‘人们的环保意识的觉醒’ was required for the mark to be awarded.

Many candidates successfully answered part **(b)** in their own words, giving answers such as, ‘绿色餐厅只提供有机食品/绿色食品’, and ‘几乎不使用一次性餐具’; some even managed to avoid using the same vocabulary as the passage in examples like ‘很少使用一次性餐具’ or ‘使用可回收的餐具’. Candidates needed to use a verb in their answers to provide clear linkage with the question asked. For example, green restaurants *avoid using* disposable tableware. Giving ‘disposable tableware / ‘一次性餐具’ as an isolated answer did not show clear comprehension. Candidates needed to give specific answers like ‘有机食品’ or ‘无公害食品’ or ‘绿色食品’ rather than quite general answers like ‘只提供健康食品’.

In parts **(c)** and **(d)**, the majority of candidates performed well. Candidates needed to include the key points ‘步行’ or ‘骑马’ in part **(c)**, which not all managed. In part **(d)**, the majority of candidates answered well, giving the key points, ‘使用当地原材料’ and ‘包含文化内涵’. Where candidates were not awarded three marks, this was sometimes because they provided points such as ‘小批量生产’ instead of ‘具有独特性’. Part **(e)** was the best answered part in **Question 4** with most candidates identifying the correct points.

Please note that in **Question 3** and **Question 4**, candidates are not required to rephrase every word they take from the passages to use in their answers. Candidates may use the passages as support to retrieve some vocabulary, but should not lift material from the passages indiscriminately or at length, as this does not show that they have fully understood either the passages or the questions. Although the mark scheme is presented in bullet point format, this is to show the key concept required for each mark-bearing content point

only. It is expected that candidates try to use full sentences where possible when answering questions, as they need to show they can use more complex structures accurately to reach the highest marking band for Quality of Language.

Question 5

Many candidates were able to successfully and skilfully summarise a range of relevant points from both passages.

Those candidates who secured high marks for **Question 5(a)** understood that they needed to cover the topic of modern tourism from the perspective of *both* pleasure *and* environmental protection. The majority of candidates tended to focus more on environmental protection, which if answered fully provided ample scope to score highly. Candidates should be reminded that part of this exercise is to show an ability to summarise, and so it is important that the points are presented clearly and succinctly.

Many candidates managed to give some convincing personal responses in **Question 5(b)**, writing about their own experiences and opinions with interesting insights and examples. Some of the responses included: examples of travelling abroad, experiences in travelling on their own or with family/friends etc.

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Candidates need to be aware of the need to keep to the limit of 200 characters for both parts of the question. Anything in excess of 200 characters is disregarded by Examiners, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for **part (b)**.

Where candidates did not do as well, it was usually for one of the following reasons:

- not referring to the information in the reading passages for the summary element
- giving a response to **(a)** that was too detailed, and did not leave enough space to express personal views or experiences in the answer to **(b)**
- writing a general summary of the two reading passages rather than answering the specific question asked.

CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8681/22
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- **Question 1** is a vocabulary recognition exercise, which requires candidates to find words or phrases from the first reading passage that are closest in meaning to those given in the question. Words that are not in the specified paragraphs of the passage are not acceptable.
- **Question 2** is a grammatical manipulation exercise. It requires candidates to rewrite the sentences using the given phrases without changing the meaning.
- **Question 3** and **Question 4** consist of a series of comprehension questions, requiring straightforward and specific answers. Candidates need to read the passages carefully and should answer using their own words based on the information given in the passages. No credit can be given for responses if candidates have lifted an entire unit of language unchanged from the original texts, or if they are based on candidates' general knowledge, or personal experience.
- **Question 5(a)** requires candidates to produce a summary of the information given in both passages, which this year were concerned with changes in rural life in China. **Question 5(b)** requires candidates to give their personal response to the material, which can be their own understanding, experience and opinion of the issues raised. Responses to **Question 5(b)** should be personal and not a mere repetition of the materials in the given texts. The whole response for **Question 5** must be kept to the 200 character limit.

General comments

The majority of candidates demonstrated a very good understanding of the two reading passages and responded well to the questions asked. Some did an excellent job, responding to the questions fully, using clear expressions and giving focused answers.

In most cases, all questions were attempted by the candidates. Furthermore, most candidates used their own words to answer the questions rather than 'lifting' the original words from the texts.

Quite a lot of good and clearly expressed responses to **Question 3** and **Question 4** were seen this year. Many candidates demonstrated their ability to rephrase information through using appropriate connectives, using synonyms, rearranging the word order or carefully selecting the key information. It is important that candidates cover all the points required by the questions, and give full answers to gain all available marks. Candidates should be reminded to take note of the mark allocation; if a question has 3 marks, 3 distinct pieces of information will be needed. In some cases candidates had clearly understood the questions, but did not provide full enough answers to be credited with the full mark available.

It should be noted that marks are also available in **Question 3** and **Question 4** for Quality of Language. Whilst many candidates provided well-written responses, others gave answers in note-form or bullet points, which were fully credited for content, but may not have provided sufficient language to be placed in the higher bands in the Quality of Language category.

It was noticeable that the majority of answers for **Question 5** kept within the word limit this year. However, in general **Question 5(a)** was still less well-answered compared to other questions on the paper. Candidates can improve by working on the skills to summarise with clear but informative sentences. In some cases valuable character-space was taken up on items that were not relevant to the question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The overall response was good and the vast majority of candidates were able to find the right synonyms from the passage and write them accurately. Part (e) was the best answered question and candidates were clearly familiar with this vocabulary item. In part (a), candidates sometimes put 很丑 instead of 丑陋; they needed to remember that 很 is an adverb used to describe the adjective 丑陋, thus, 很丑 could not be correct. For (b), candidates occasionally wrote 更加, or 添, which could not be credited. In part (c), some candidates found it difficult to associate 忽略 with 轻视, and instead gave 忽视 which is not in the passage. Candidates need to be aware that the synonyms must be taken from the reading passage in the location given; candidates cannot be credited for coming up with their own synonym, outside of the passage. Where incorrect answers were given for part (d), 不文明, 靠拳(头), 骂街, and 不文明现象 all appeared in candidates' answers.

Question 2

Most candidates managed to score the marks for (a) and (b). Those candidates who succeeded in placing the tested structures at different places in both sentences demonstrated that they had fully understood the structures and knew how to use them correctly in the context. In part (c) candidates needed to include the model verb after 才, or remember to include 先.

Question 3

The reading passage about the changes in rural life in China was generally well-understood, and most candidates were able to selectively use information from the texts to answer the questions. Where candidates did not score full marks, it was often because answers were not full enough for all marks to be awarded. Candidates should be reminded to take note of the mark allocation when they write their answers, in order to ensure that they provide sufficient detail to gain the maximum marks for each answer.

In part (a) most candidates included 丑陋 in their answers, and managed to rephrase the other key points. In some cases candidates gave 简陋 as one of the characteristics of rural housing, which was too general to be credited. Candidates needed to include 漏雨 in their answer to be credited with the third mark, as answers such as 遇上下大雨, 还要到房顶上添些茅草, were not sufficient enough.

In part (b), candidates needed to include a modifier in their answer to indicate that the living environment had improved, e.g. 大力 before 植树造林, or 积极 before 处理生活垃圾. Part (c) was very well answered. Occasionally a very small number of candidates needed to include either 外界 or 贸易 to achieve full marks. The vast majority of candidates responded well and performed strongly for part (d). Where candidates did not gain full marks, this was sometimes because they had treated 科学致富 as a separate point, or did not cover the point about 文明礼貌.

Part (e) required candidates to look at the whole article and give a global response, which resulted in a mixed performance. Many candidates were able to answer this part with concise, accurate language. Weaker answers were characterised by irrelevant responses, or straightforward repetition of the text without a clear link to the question.

Question 4

The majority of candidates performed well in the question, and in most cases they were able to use their own language to answer the questions. As in **Question 3**, candidates should always remember that the marks allocated to each question – (2), (3) or (4) – are a reliable guide as to how many pieces of information are being sought. Sometimes candidates did not include enough distinct points to access all marks available.

For part (a), some candidates needed to include '收入' instead of 进城打工.

For part (b) there were some excellent answers, such as '跟风', '跟着潮流走', '羊群心理', which demonstrated that candidates had thoroughly understood the passage. Candidates needed to include the concept of 'joining the flow'; only mentioning 跟着走 was not sufficient. In addition to this, not all candidates realised that '就业' is not the same as '挣钱'.

The majority of candidates secured full marks for part (c). A number of candidates lifted the sentence, ‘有的工作环境很恶劣’, directly from the passage. Candidates need to be reminded that they will not be credited for lifting a whole unit of meaning unchanged from the original text, as stated in the rubric.

Overall, part (d) was the best-answered in this question. Most candidates were able to identify the correct key points, although ‘给家人建起小楼房’ was sometimes omitted. In a small number of cases, ‘楼房’ was incorrectly copied as ‘数房’ and candidates are reminded to take care and check what they have written to avoid this type of mistake. A small number of candidates wrote ‘改善居住条件’ or ‘居住环境更好’, which was not explicit enough.

Many linguistically competent candidates performed well in part (e). Weaker answers often showed difficulty in identifying the correct verb and noun.

Please note that in **Question 3** and **Question 4**, candidates are not required to rephrase every word they take from the passages to use in their answers. Candidates may use the passages as support to retrieve some vocabulary, but should not lift material from the passages indiscriminately or at length, as this does not show that they have fully understood either the passages or the questions. Although the mark scheme is presented in bullet point format, this is to show the key concept required for each mark-bearing content point only. It is expected that candidates try to use full sentences where possible when answering questions, as they need to show they can use more complex structures accurately to reach the highest marking band for Quality of Language.

Question 5

Many candidates were able to successfully and skilfully summarise the relevant points from both passages.

Candidates who paid careful attention to the question which had been asked, and focused their attention on specific details of the changes in rural life in China had little difficulty in noting many of these and scored good marks.

In order to achieve high marks for **Question 5(a)**, candidates needed to discuss the details given in passage 1, such as planting trees, using clean energy and actively dealing with everyday waste, rather than just talking in a broad sense about changes in the environment. Weaker responses tended to be unbalanced, sometimes drawing all points from Passage 1 and not including information from Passage 2 at all. In some cases, candidates concentrated on the idea of government intervention, but needed to go further into the actual changes this resulted in to pick up content marks.

In order to write within the specified character limit, candidates should refer closely to the two passages, using concise language to cover the key points coherently, rather than using longer sentences to illustrate those points.

Question 5(b) provides candidates with the opportunity to develop their personal ideas and viewpoints on the topic covered in the texts. The ideas expressed by candidates were varied and interesting, responding to the issues raised in the passages. Whilst this part allows candidates to talk more flexibly on the topic, candidates should remember that **Question 5(a)** *must* use the information given in the passages to construct their summary, concentrating on the question asked. This year, several candidates discussed aspects of the topic gleaned from their general knowledge of the subject area, rather than extracting key points from the passages. This approach cannot be rewarded as it does not show any skill of summary writing, which is what is being tested here.

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Candidates need to be aware of the need to keep to the limit of 200 characters for both parts of the question. Anything in excess of 200 characters is disregarded by Examiners, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for **part (b)**.

Where candidates did not do as well, it was usually for one of the following reasons:

- not referring to the information in the reading passages for the summary element
- giving a response to (a) that was too detailed, and did not leave enough space to express personal views or experiences in the answer to (b)
- not giving any key points relating to **Question 5(a)**, but writing the entire piece as a personal response, as expected in **Question 5(b)**.

CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8681/23
Reading and Writing

Key messages

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- **Question 5(a)** requires candidates to produce a summary of the information given in both passages, which this year were concerned with the Spring Festival migration. **Question 5(b)** requires candidates to give their personal response to the material, which can be their own understanding, experience and opinion of the issues raised. Responses to **Question 5(b)** should be personal and not a mere repetition of the materials in the given texts. The whole response for **Question 5** must be kept to the 200 character limit.

General comments

The majority of candidates demonstrated a very good understanding of the two reading passages and responded well to the questions asked. Some did an excellent job, responding to the questions fully, using clear expressions and giving focused answers.

In most cases, all questions were attempted by the candidates. Furthermore, most candidates used their own words to answer the questions rather than 'lifting' the original words from the texts.

Overall **Question 3** and **Question 4** were well-answered this year. Many candidates demonstrated their ability to rephrase information through using appropriate connectives, using synonyms, rearranging the word order or carefully selecting the key information.

It should be noted that marks are also available in **Question 3** and **Question 4** for Quality of Language. Whilst many candidates provided well-written responses, others gave answers in note-form or bullet points, which were fully credited for content, but may not have provided sufficient language to be placed in the higher bands in the Quality of Language category.

It was noticeable that the majority of answers for **Question 5** kept within the word limit this year. However, in general **Question 5(a)** was still less well-answered compared to other questions on the paper. Candidates can improve by working on the skills to summarise with clear but informative sentences. In some cases valuable character-space was taken up on items that were not relevant to the question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The overall response was good and the vast majority of candidates were able to find the right synonyms from the passage and write them accurately. Most candidates secured the marks for all the questions. Parts (b) and (c) were sometimes answered incorrectly with ‘迁徙’ for (b) and ‘度过’ for (c) being the most common errors.

Question 2

Part (c) was the best-answered question across the range of candidate ability, showing that most candidates were familiar with this commonly used connective.

In part (a), in order to demonstrate understanding of the use of ‘直到……才……’ candidates needed to know that ‘在’ or ‘终于’ or both should not be kept in the sentence.

In part (b), a small number of candidates kept ‘像’ in the sentence as well as the phrase ‘跟……一样’. Some candidates provided answers like ‘一眼望不到头的车流，跟非洲草原上的迁徙一样壮观.’ Whilst this is one way the connective can be used, it alters the meaning of the original sentence as it focuses on the adjective ‘壮观’ rather than the noun ‘迁徙’. It is important that the meaning of the original sentence is retained when re-writing the sentences.

Question 3

In general, candidates performed well in this question. Most candidates were able to selectively use the information from the texts to answer the questions, using concise language. It was noticeable this year that bullet points were commonly used instead of full sentences to answer questions. In order to score highly for Quality of Language, candidates need to show evidence that they are able to use more complex structures in their answers, which is difficult to achieve if only giving very short bulleted responses.

Parts (c), (d) and (e) were generally better answered than parts (a), (b) and (f). In parts (a) and (b), there was ample opportunity for candidates to score well, as the text provided several examples which could have been selected to answer these questions. Weaker answers tended to lack detail, as seen in examples like ‘背着行李’ which did not reflect the vivid scene featured in the passage where ‘Xiao Liu could hardly move amongst the crowd with the very heavy luggage on his shoulder’.

In part (b), some able candidates demonstrated their excellent understanding of the texts by giving answers like ‘很期待因为这是他上大学后第一次回家过春节’ which was only alluded to in the text itself.

Part (f) required candidates to identify the social groups represented by those characters in the passage, e.g. ‘大学生’, ‘在国外工作的人’. Some candidates just provided the names of the characters, which could not be credited. Other common incorrect answers were, ‘摩托大军’ or ‘回家过年的人’.

Question 4

Performance in **Question 4** was generally better than in **Question 3**. Most candidates were able to show a thorough understanding of the reading passage. Parts (a) and (e) were the best answered parts in this question.

In part (b), candidates needed to be quite specific in their answers; examples like ‘城乡差距’, were considered too general to be awarded the mark. A small number of candidates wrote ‘一到春运期间就供不应求’; such answers needed to include the key element of the pressure caused during the spring festival migration. Candidates needed to explain the problems expressed in the passage, which answers such as ‘中国假期不健全’ or ‘假期安排不完善’, only partially managed. The fundamental issue which needed to be included was the Chinese *policy* for taking holidays.

In part (d), the majority of candidates secured both marks. Only a small number of candidates did not indicate the reunion with ‘家人’ as a key element of the spring festival and its migration.

In part (f), most candidates were able to identify the answers from the last sentence in the passage.

Please note that in **Question 3** and **Question 4**, candidates are not required to rephrase every word they take from the passages to use in their answers. Candidates may use the passages as support to retrieve some vocabulary, but should not lift material from the passages indiscriminately or at length, as this does not show that they have fully understood either the passages or the questions. Although the mark scheme is presented in bullet point format, this is to show the key concept required for each mark-bearing content point only. It is expected that candidates try to use full sentences where possible when answering questions, as they need to show they can use more complex structures accurately to reach the highest marking band for Quality of Language.

Question 5

Many candidates were able to successfully and skilfully summarise the relevant points from both passages.

Question 5(a) was found to be challenging by a number of candidates this year. Those candidates who managed to focus their summaries on the emotional impact of the Spring Festival migration were the most successful. Many answers tended to focus on more everyday, concrete points such as heavy luggage, the long journey home, the packed coach/the pressure on the transport system etc, and needed to relate these points more directly to Spring Festival.

Question 5(b) provides candidates with the opportunity to develop their personal ideas and viewpoints on the topic covered in the texts and several candidates expressed their own personal experience of going home for spring festival or celebrating Chinese new year with friends. Only a small number of points relating to the emotions experienced by the migration or the festival were mentioned, and this was common in candidates' answers to **Question 5(b)**.

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Candidates need to be aware of the need to keep to the limit of 200 characters for both parts of the question. Anything in excess of 200 characters is disregarded by Examiners, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for **part (b)**.

Where candidates did not do as well, it was usually for one of the following reasons:

- having an imbalanced focus on part of the question;
- not referring to the information in the reading passages for the summary element;
- writing long sentences on a single point or idea rather than providing a range of points.

CHINESE LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8681/31 Essay</p>
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Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- read the question carefully and stay on task: candidates need to ensure that what they write is relevant to the specific requirements of the question asked, and not just the broad topic area;
- organise the essay structure to ensure it is focused, follows a logical argument, is well-illustrated and contains a demonstrable knowledge of advanced vocabulary;
- include an introduction, a balanced main body of argument and a logical conclusion that follows;
- demonstrate their own views without recourse to simple anecdotal experience;
- use logical structures to link the points in an argument with relevant examples;
- use a wide range of vocabulary in order to write using complex sentence structures.

General comments

The overall performance this year was good and showed that candidates could deal with material at this level. The full range of performance was seen, with some candidates showing a high degree of excellence and others who struggled to produce the level of written Chinese needed.

Good to excellent performance was characterised by strict adherence to the rubric; clear knowledge of the subject area and the ability to articulate comprehensive responses using appropriate language. This was commonly achieved by using a logical essay structure which flowed from start to end, was balanced and contained relevant examples culminating in a forceful conclusion.

Weaker responses often needed more focus on the task, as they tended to deviate from the requirements of the question. This sometimes occurred despite the candidate showing they have an obvious grip of the language and subject matter.

Improvements could be made in the following areas:

- Selection of essay title to answer: candidates should be advised to take the time to read through all the essay titles on the question paper carefully before selecting which title to respond to. They should choose a title with which they feel comfortable and which they are confident they fully understand. Examiners observed several instances of responses which showed that candidates had either misread and/or misunderstood the question they had chosen to answer.
- Essay formatting: candidates need to take care to use essay formatting correctly. Weaker essays were sometimes presented as a piece of narrative, or a simple block of text. It is expected at this level that paragraphing is used to create a clear essay structure.
- Knowledge of the topic area: candidates need to be careful not to simplify essays too much by relying heavily on personal experience rather than setting out more complex social issues. Candidates must show detailed knowledge of the topic area to reach the highest marking bands.
- Candidates need to show more awareness of basic grammar, like the use of 的、地、得.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 饮食

请谈谈快餐对年轻人健康的影响。

Candidates displayed sound knowledge about the features of fast food, i.e. how it can serve a positive purpose in terms of convenience in a fast-paced environment where young people's time is precious. Meanwhile, there was also superb knowledge shown regarding the detrimental impact the industry has had on health, e.g. obesity, type 2 diabetes, etc. Other candidates explored food safety concerns and questioned how accountable the industry really is. The strongest responses were from those candidates who did not solely focus on the food itself but explored the wider issues, employing sound arguments and complex language to make valid points.

Question 2 机会均等

“一个人的能力决定了他成功的高度。”你怎么看？

A smaller number of candidates opted for this question, although the overall performance of those that did was good. Most candidates provided a balanced account regarding the various factors influencing success. This included listing the various issues at play, such as personality traits that show an appetite for risk-taking, recognising opportunity, or ability to form long-term plans. Candidates also used contemporary and historic examples of successful figures to support their opinions.

Question 3 体育

请谈谈团队精神在体育中的重要性。

A large number of candidates selected this question and some outstanding performances were seen. Candidates were able to provide plenty of appropriate examples of team spirit in sporting events and how this collaborative aspect is vital for overall success. The standard was generally good and the subject engaging.

Question 4 社会 and 经济发展

请谈谈人口老龄化给中国社会带来的影响。

Examiners noted a wide performance spectrum for this question. The most successful candidates cited the causes of the aging society, as well as listing the areas that are affected by it, e.g. medical costs, decline of productivity, and increased financial burden on the family, etc. Some candidates countered this and argued it brought more wisdom and experience to society. The strongest candidates provided strategies for dealing with this social issue, using a high level of detail and sound subject knowledge. Weaker responses were characterised by the use of simple statements of fact that the aging population was having a negative impact, and needed further elaboration. Some candidates intimated that for reasons of filial piety society had to accept this fate, but this argument often needed further exploration.

Question 5 生态保护

“发展旅游业必定会影响地方的生态平衡。”请讨论。

This was a popular topic which provoked a high level of debate in responses. The vast majority of candidates argued that the development of tourism would have a strong impact on the environment, with some stating environmental consequences were inevitable. Others developed this theme and considered the positives of the tourism trade, which included suggestions to tackle the environmental issue such as reinvesting the revenue generated. Some candidates also talked about the tourist trade itself being set up and run as an eco-friendly business in a bid to serve dual purposes. The most successful essays focused on these types of themes. Weaker essays tended to focus too narrowly on single issues, e.g. litter, or carbon footprint, etc., without expanding on the wider problems, and needed to examine more variables.

CHINESE LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8681/32 Essay</p>
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Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- read the question carefully and stay on task: candidates need to ensure that what they write is relevant to the specific requirements of the question asked, and not just the broad topic area;
- organise the essay structure to ensure it is focused, follows a logical argument, is well-illustrated and contains a demonstrable knowledge of advanced vocabulary;
- include an introduction, a balanced main body of argument and a logical conclusion that follows;
- demonstrate their own views without recourse to simple anecdotal experience;
- use logical structures to link the points in an argument with relevant examples;
- use a wide range of vocabulary in order to write using complex sentence structures.

General comments

The overall performance this year was good and showed that candidates could deal with material at this level. The full range of performance was seen, with some candidates showing a high degree of excellence and others who struggled to produce the level of written Chinese needed.

Good to excellent performance was characterised by strict adherence to the rubric; clear knowledge of the subject area and the ability to articulate comprehensive responses using appropriate language. This was commonly achieved by using a logical essay structure which flowed from start to end, was balanced and contained relevant examples culminating in a forceful conclusion.

Weaker responses often needed more focus on the task, as they tended to deviate from the requirements of the question. This sometimes occurred despite the candidate having a reasonable grip of the subject.

There were examples of students who employed a hybrid style where Chinese characters, pinyin and English were amalgamated. If candidates do not know the character for a particular vocabulary item, they are advised to use an alternative word, rather than writing it in pinyin or English.

Improvements could be made in the following areas:

- Selection of essay title to answer: candidates should be advised to take the time to read through all the essay titles on the question paper carefully before selecting which title to respond to. They should choose a title with which they feel comfortable and which they are confident they fully understand. Examiners observed several instances of responses which showed that candidates had either misread and/or misunderstood the question they had chosen to answer.
- Essay formatting: candidates need to take care to use essay formatting correctly. Weaker essays were sometimes presented as a piece of narrative, or a simple block of text. It is expected at this level that paragraphing is used to create a clear essay structure.
- Knowledge of the topic area: candidates need to be careful not to simplify essays too much by relying heavily on personal experience rather than setting out more complex social issues. Candidates must show detailed knowledge of the topic area to reach the highest marking bands.
- Candidates need to show more awareness of basic grammar, like the use of 的、地、得.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 饮食

请谈谈食品质量和安全的重要性。

This title was by far the most popular topic among candidates, with the majority showing sound knowledge of this subject. Most candidates successfully highlighted the importance of food safety and a nutrient-rich diet. The majority of candidates also used a wide range of language and examples to produce relevant and detailed pieces of information in their arguments. In some cases, the safety of food in general was discussed without a balanced focus on the quality of diet and/or the harmful or social impact. Weaker answers generally needed a greater depth of argument.

Question 2 机会均等

“家庭背景决定了一个人的人生起点。”你怎么看？

This was another popular question this year. Strong answers were characterised by a discussion of both sides of the argument followed by a clear conclusion outlining the candidate's own opinion supported by relevant examples. Most candidates, who agreed with the statement, explained that the factors involving family background could significantly impact on the starting point in life, and included factors such as: influencing the gap in academic achievement, being able to benefit from parent's social connections, having a greater chance of obtaining a well-paid job, etc. Weaker responses were commonly overly-focused on the impact on future life in general, instead of fully addressing the question about the determining of one's starting point in life.

Question 3 体育

“胜负不是体育的全部。”请讨论。

This was another well-answered question, with a large number of candidates arguing that winning a game is only part of doing sports and that other factors are also as important (fun, exercising, cooperation, friendship, etc.) In order to reach the highest marking bands, candidates needed, here, to produce detailed, well-illustrated arguments, maintaining the relevance to the question. Weaker responses tended to focus too heavily on personal experience rather than clear evidence.

Question 4 社会 and 经济发展

请谈谈中国“留守儿童”的现象。

A relatively small number of candidates opted for this question, and the performance for those who did was strong.

Most candidates successfully addressed the definition of ‘留守儿童’ as well as outlining the importance of this social issue.

Many candidates also expressed their sentiments regarding such a phenomenon, which was due to the gap between the rich and poor in China. They also provided some sensible recommendations on how to address such a social issue.

Question 5 生态保护

过度保护野生动物是否违背自然规律？请讨论。

The majority of candidates were able to outline the problems around wild animal protection, but only the strongest essays addressed the key characteristics, ‘过度’, in the question. Beside the analysis of the issues, the important vocabulary needed to aptly highlight the serious consequences of going against nature, for example 生态失衡、生态平衡破坏, was also needed to achieve the highest marks for content.

Weaker candidates here sometimes lost focus by moving on to talk about the importance of wild animal protection in general and did not respond to the question directly.

CHINESE LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8681/33 Essay</p>
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General comments

The overall performance this year was good and showed that candidates could deal with material at this level. The full range of performance was seen, with some candidates showing a high degree of excellence and others who struggled to produce the level of written Chinese needed.

Good to excellent performance was characterised by strict adherence to the rubric; clear knowledge of the subject area and the ability to articulate comprehensive responses using appropriate language. This was commonly achieved by using a logical essay structure which flowed from start to end, was balanced and contained relevant examples culminating in a forceful conclusion.

Weaker responses often needed more focus on the task, as they tended to deviate from the requirements of the question. This sometimes occurred despite the candidate showing they have an obvious grip of the language and subject matter.

Improvements could be made in the following areas:

- Selection of essay title to answer: candidates should be advised to take the time to read through all the essay titles on the question paper carefully before selecting which title to respond to. They should choose a title with which they feel comfortable and which they are confident they fully understand. Examiners observed several instances of responses which showed that candidates had either misread and/or misunderstood the question they had chosen to answer.
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Comments on specific questions

Question 1 饮食

请谈谈为什么绿色饮食越来越流行。

A small number of candidates selected this question. This subject also had significant disparity in performance. Although most candidates confidently dealt with the topic in terms of their knowledge around healthy living, some candidates discussed only what constitutes sound nutrition and not the wider ramifications adopting this lifestyle has. Some candidates probed issues such as food safety and trusting brands, while others examined the financial implications of adopting such a regimen. This type of performance generated the higher marks.

Question 2 机会均等

一个人的体貌对其就业有什么影响？

A small number of candidates opted for this task. This was a testing topic for candidates, as it required a rather subjective assessment. The result was a significant division of opinion. Some candidates argued strongly that physical appearance plays a key part in career success, depending on what that may constitute. For example, in the service industry it was argued it must play some role in an employer's decision-making process. While other candidates focused on the person's ability as the overall deciding factor. Some candidates brought up the notion that life can be unfair and that is the harsh reality of the world we live in; and others tried to highlight the idea that true talent cannot be held back. This resulted in some interesting debate among the papers.

Question 3 体育

“体育课应该是所有学生的必修课。”请讨论。

The vast majority of candidates opted for this question, the majority of whom displayed sound knowledge about the topic. This included convincing arguments showing the benefits of PE in a candidate's life, which included the obvious physical benefits from exercise as well as how it promotes collaborative skills, the ability to interact, and develops a keen sense of competitiveness.

Question 4 社会 and 经济发展

请谈谈民工给中国经济发展带来的作用。

This was the second most popular topic choice. Many candidates displayed in-depth knowledge on this subject. Almost all who opted for this question had a unified view regarding the key role played by the migrant population and its effect on modern-day China. An impressive standard of language was used, which included a high degree of sophistication. Overall, it was a question competently handled by the vast majority of the candidates.

Question 5 生态保护

如果你只能保护一种生物，那会是什么？为什么？

Too few candidates responded to this question to make any meaningful comments.