

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/11

Reading

Key messages

Candidates need to remember to read the passages carefully before starting to write their answers. In **Section 1**, it is important to address the specific questions asked and in **Section 2**, it is important to extract valid points from the two reading passages to answer the two bullet points in a summary style.

In order to score well in either section, candidates need to show that they can:

- understand and collate explicit meanings
- understand, explain and collate implicit meanings and author's perspective
- select, analyse and evaluate what is relevant to specific purposes
- make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

In addition, in **Section 1**, candidates need to show that they can understand how writers achieve effects or use language to influence the reader.

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

- order and present facts, ideas and opinions in response to the two questions asked
- understand and use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- use language and register that are appropriate to audience and context.

General Comments

Candidates generally responded very well to this paper, with almost all candidates demonstrating their mastery of the Chinese language as a communication tool. The majority of candidates showed that they had a thorough understanding of the passages in **Section 1**.

Section 2 requires candidates to write a summary of the two reading passages, focusing their response on the two bullet points mentioned in the question. This remains the most challenging part of the exam.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Question 1

The majority of candidates answered the questions in this section well. Candidates are reminded to pay attention to the mark allocation to ensure that they develop their answers fully enough to score all available marks. A question worth 3 marks will require 3 distinct points. Rephrasing the same point in three different ways will not achieve this aim.

It is important that candidates read both the reading passages and questions carefully to ensure that all relevant details are included in their answer. Candidates are reminded to use their own words as much as possible to show that they have understood the texts and tasks, and are strongly discouraged from copying sections from the passage word-for-word.

- (a) (i) (ii) Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (b) Candidates were asked to explain the term, “谦谦君子”. Both the original meaning of this term and the meaning in the context of the passage were accepted.
- (c) (i) (ii) Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (d) The majority of candidates managed to identify “盲目相信书本/不会批评性思考问题”. In order to gain the full 2 marks, candidates also needed to mention “太听老师的话/言听计从”. Candidates needed to ensure that they answered this question using the information given in the text, rather than answering the question according to their personal experience.
- (e) Most candidates managed to say “大家的潜力都很大”, but only a few also included the first point, “大家的智力差不多”. The contrast between similar intelligence and enormous potential is key in this question.
- (f) Most candidates only scored one mark. In order to gain both marks, candidates needed to include “人和番茄一样/比喻/对比” and “可以挖掘出潜力”.
- (g) Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (h) Many candidates found this question challenging. Most candidates mentioned “名人的事例”, and only the stronger candidates managed to include “名人的话/名言”.
- (i) Almost every candidate answered this question correctly.

Section 2

Question 2

In **Question 2** candidates are required to extract information from both passages and to use this information to write a summary structured around the two bullet points given in the question paper. Many candidates managed to identify the key points successfully and showed that they had the linguistic ability to answer this question well. Candidates should be reminded that their answers must be drawn from the points made in the reading passages, and not from general knowledge or personal experience; marks are only awarded for relevant points which have been found in the passages.

Candidates are reminded to respond in a summary style; answers presented as several bullet points in a list are likely to be placed in the ‘poor’ category for Style and Organisation. Candidates need to demonstrate good linkage between sentences in order to score highly in this category.

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

This section continues to be the most challenging to candidates. Improvements could be made by spending a short amount of time planning the summary before beginning writing. This helps to ensure that ideas are well grouped, that answers are not repetitive and that paragraphs follow on from each other in a logical and coherent way.

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Paper 0509/12

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FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

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Section 1

Question 1

The majority of candidates answered the questions in this section well. Candidates are reminded to pay attention to the mark allocation to ensure that they develop their answers fully enough to score all available marks. A question worth 3 marks will require 3 distinct points. Rephrasing the same point in three different ways will not achieve this aim.

It is important that candidates read both the reading passages and questions carefully to ensure that all relevant details are included in their answer. Candidates are reminded to use their own words as much as possible to show that they have understood the texts and tasks, and are strongly discouraged from copying sections from the passage word-for-word.

- (a) There were two marks available for this question, one for literal meaning and one for extended meaning. Many candidates answered this question fully, while some candidates missed out the literal meaning of the phrase.
- (b) Most candidates managed to gain the first two marks. The third mark “己不正，何以正人” indicates the example that one sets to others, and a number of candidates missed the mark by giving the answer “做人一定要走得直，行得正”.
- (c) Many candidates answered this question correctly. Weaker candidates needed to include “有了正直，一个人的能量可以发挥出双倍或多倍的效力”.
- (d) Candidates are clearly directed in this question to answer from the first part of the paragraph. This question required candidates to draw similarities between the concepts in English and Maths and a person with integrity. Candidates needed to give a definition of 正直 in both subjects and elaborate integrity as a virtue of a person. Candidates are reminded of the need to read and follow the instructions carefully.
- (e) (f) Most candidates answered these questions well.
- (g) This question proved to be challenging to many. It required candidates to use the information given in paragraph 5 (President Lincoln’s example) to explain how someone with integrity faced challenges in life. Two marks were awarded for the mindset of “内在的平静/坦然” and following the truth “伴随真理”. Weaker answers were characterised by the copying of sentences from the paragraph or by candidates using their own general knowledge, which could not be credited. It is important that candidates read both the passage and questions carefully to ensure that all relevant details are included in their answers.
- (h) Most candidates answered this question well. A small number of candidates did not manage to identify the correct subject “人们”.
- (i) Many candidates answered this question correctly. A number of candidates only managed to identify one of the two points “正直意味着遵从自己的良知” or “成功与世俗的衡量标准毫不相干”.

Section 2

Question 2

In **Question 2** candidates are required to extract information from both passages and to use this information to write a summary structured around the two bullet points given in the question paper. Many candidates managed to identify the key points successfully and showed that they had the linguistic ability to answer this question well. Candidates should be reminded that their answers must be drawn from the points made in the reading passages, and not from general knowledge or personal experience; marks are only awarded for relevant points which have been found in the passages.

Candidates are reminded to respond in a summary style; answers presented as several bullet points in a list are likely to be placed in the ‘poor’ category for Style and Organisation. Candidates need to demonstrate good linkage between sentences in order to score highly in this category.

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

This section continues to be the most challenging to candidates. Improvements could be made by spending a short amount of time planning the summary before beginning writing. This helps to ensure that ideas are well grouped, that answers are not repetitive and that paragraphs follow on from each other in a logical and coherent way.

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/21

Writing

Key Messages

When answering a question from **Section 1**, candidates need to remember to present an argumentative or discursive piece of writing. When answering a question from **Section 2**, candidates need to provide a description or narration, depending on the topic set.

To score well in either section, candidates need to:

- have an accurate understanding of the topic in order to produce a focused and relevant response
- present facts, ideas and opinions in a clear logical manner and with complexity in an argumentative piece
- describe a person, an object, a scene, or an image in an effective manner and with sufficient details in a descriptive piece
- tell a story of an event or an incident, be it real or imagined, with complexity, tension and climax in a narrative piece
- demonstrate that they can use a wide range of sophisticated structures and expressions appropriately
- articulate genuine personal experience (where necessary)
- express what is thought, felt or imagined
- address the specific topic that they have chosen and ensure that their answer is relevant
- make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

General Comments

The majority of candidates performed well in this year's examination. Many candidates were able to use their own life experience or their interests to produce structured responses with a good range of vocabulary. Most candidates were aware that responses should be between 400 and 600 characters in length, and were able to write this within the allotted time.

This year candidates choosing to answer narrative or descriptive topics performed slightly better than those opting for an argumentative/discursive topic, although the full range of performance was seen across both sections.

The best argumentative compositions were characterised by the presentation of well-structured and convincing views and used sophisticated and appropriate expressions. The strongest responses of a narrative nature told interesting stories of adventures, giving lots of detail and using vivid expressions. High-scoring descriptive responses to **Question 5** often presented beautiful images of the morning dew, often also giving a symbolic message.

Candidates should be reminded to read the questions carefully, and should not choose to write on a topic if they have not fully understood the exact meaning or requirements of the question. There were some examples this year of responses which did not focus on the question asked, and therefore could not score highly. **Question 3**, for example, asked candidates to write about their views on the policy that the use of mobile phones is prohibited by pupils at school. Some candidates constructed responses about the pros and cons of mobile phones in general without putting the discussion in the school context.

Candidates are also reminded that they should not regurgitate sample texts or model answers that they have previously learnt by heart. It is important for candidates to express their own views in their own words, and to ensure that they are answering the question given on the question paper.

Content & Structure

Content: The best answers this year contained very vivid descriptions, touching narratives and effective and convincing arguments. Some very creative and interesting answers were produced, with some candidates managing to write from an unusual or interesting perspective.

Candidates tended to produce very convincing arguments when they felt very strongly about a topic, as in **Question 3** about the use of mobile phones in school. Most candidates were able to present a balanced view in a clear logical manner using relevant examples, with some also managing to explore the issue from different perspectives.

Candidates need to be aware that in order to score highly in narrative writing like **Question 8** 我的一次冒险经历 complexity, originality and detail are required. Weaker responses to this question often consisted of a flat story line full of clichés and with little detail or complexity.

Structure: In general, candidates showed awareness of the need to structure their writing appropriately. Most of the essays contained a clear progression of ideas, argument or story line. Very occasionally, some essays were too short, with two or three very short paragraphs of less than 100 characters in total. When the answers are excessively short, there is not enough material to show any development of ideas or present a clear description of a person, an object or event.

Most candidates were able to use paragraphs appropriately. Others needed to improve the structure of their essays to avoid including too many ideas in a single middle paragraph. This was seen in weaker responses and resulted in an unbalanced structure consisting of a one-line introduction and conclusion and a long paragraph in the middle.

Relevance is of crucial importance in this paper. In a small number of cases candidates had written excessively long essays, including material irrelevant to the question. Being able to write in a concise manner when required is an important skill.

Style & Accuracy

Style: Many candidates were able to produce sophisticated pieces of writing, with an excellent range of vocabulary, complex sentence structures and very good organisation of ideas.

The majority of candidates were able to write fluently, using a good range of structures and expressions. Weaker candidates could improve their writing by avoiding clichés, repetition of content and ideas, and by trying to introduce more variety in the expressions they use.

Excessively colloquial expressions should also be avoided in answering questions in this paper.

Accuracy: Most candidates demonstrated a high level of linguistic competence and showed they had a good grasp of Chinese grammar and a wide range of vocabulary at their disposal.

Some candidates' use of Chinese structure showed interference from English grammar. For example, 他清楚地介绍各种材料和他有条理地煮出美食. Unlike the English 'and', the Chinese '和' is not used to link clauses or verbal phrases.

The work of the strongest candidates was characterised by the ability to use sophisticated structures and expressions effectively. Some weaker candidates attempted to use set phrases in their work, but this is only effective when they are used appropriately.

Punctuation occasionally presented a problem for some candidates. Improvements could be made with the use of full stops and commas; these cannot be used at the beginning of a line and candidates are reminded that the Chinese full stop is a small circle and not a solid dot.

The incorrect use of characters remains an area where improvements could be made. These could be reduced in some cases with more careful checking of work and a better understanding of characters that share the same pronunciation but with different meaning (homonyms). For example: 终于 (not 中于); 时候 (not 时后); 车厢 (not 车箱); 比比皆是 (not 笔笔皆是).

Candidates are reminded that whilst both simplified and full form characters are perfectly acceptable, it is good practice to be consistent and avoid mixing the two systems within the same piece of writing.

Finally, candidates are reminded to write clearly to ensure that the Examiner can read their script and fully credit them for what has been written.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Question 1

The topic of this question was very relevant for candidates and many candidates successfully presented a balanced view on the relationship between strong academic achievement and future success. Many of them provided their definition of what it meant to be successful and argued that good exam results could not guarantee a successful life. They convincingly argued the role of other important character traits as well as opportunity and luck. Many gave examples of their own experience or those of historical figures. Weaker answers were characterised by under-developed or repetitive arguments.

Question 2

Candidates were expected to discuss the saying 'no pain, no gain'. Relatively few candidates chose this question but those who did gave competent responses with convincing arguments. Strong candidates also quoted famous sayings and used them effectively.

Question 3

This was by far the most popular choice. Candidates were expected to comment on a policy in some schools that prohibits mobile phone use by pupils during the school day. This was a topic that candidates clearly felt very strongly about and most of them were able to present their views in a logical manner with clear progression. Weaker responses tended to be repetitive and lacked focus.

Question 4

Candidates were expected to discuss the responsibilities and obligations of a young person. The few who chose this provided a satisfactory answer that was coherent and logical.

Section 2

Question 5

Candidates were expected to write a descriptive piece about morning dew. Only a small number of candidates chose this topic but the standards achieved were high. The language was often sophisticated, creating vivid and beautiful images.

Question 6

In this question, candidates were expected to write about 一个珍惜时间的人. The best responses told touching stories with a lot of detail and human interest.

Question 7

Many candidates chose this topic and a variety of performance was seen. At the top end, answers were very interesting; many candidates wrote touching stories about feeling homesick while being away from their family. It was evident that some candidates had not fully understood the meaning of 无奈 so they simply wrote about a Chinese New Year's Eve. Weaker responses were characterised by the use of very simple language and limited ideas.

Question 8

This was the most frequently answered question in this section. Candidates were expected to write about their experience of an adventure. The best answers were interesting stories about an adventure which included many details, often highlighting a valuable lesson gained in the process in addition to the description of what happened. Strong candidates also managed to create a climax in the composition.

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/22

Writing

Key Messages

When answering a question from **Section 1**, candidates need to remember to present an argumentative or discursive piece of writing. When answering a question from **Section 2**, candidates need to provide a description or narration, depending on the topic set.

To score well in either section, candidates need to:

- have an accurate understanding of the topic in order to produce a focused and relevant response
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- make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

General Comments

The majority of candidates performed well in this year's examination. Many candidates were able to use their own life experience or their interests to produce structured responses with a good range of vocabulary. Most candidates were aware that responses should be between 400 and 600 characters in length, and were able to write this within the allotted time.

This year candidates choosing to answer narrative or descriptive topics performed slightly better than those opting for an argumentative/discursive topic, although the full range of performance was seen across both sections.

The best argumentative compositions were characterised by the presentation of well-structured and convincing views and used sophisticated and appropriate expressions. The strongest responses of a narrative nature told interesting stories of adventures, giving lots of detail and using vivid expressions. High-scoring descriptive responses to **Question 5** often presented beautiful images of the morning dew, often also giving a symbolic message.

Candidates should be reminded to read the questions carefully, and should not choose to write on a topic if they have not fully understood the exact meaning or requirements of the question. There were some examples this year of responses which did not focus on the question asked, and therefore could not score highly. **Question 3**, for example, asked candidates to write about their views on the policy that the use of mobile phones is prohibited by pupils at school. Some candidates constructed responses about the pros and cons of mobile phones in general without putting the discussion in the school context.

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Content & Structure

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The best argumentative compositions were characterised by the use of sophisticated and appropriate expressions and the presentation of well-structured and convincing views on the responsibility of grown-up children to provide for their aging parents. The strongest responses of a narrative nature told interesting camping stories or told of sad experiences, each using vivid expressions to make the composition convincing. Some excellent descriptive responses presented images of beautiful sunsets, with expressive language. Sometimes candidates even included appropriately selected lines from Tang poems.

Candidates should be reminded to read the questions carefully, and should not choose to write on a topic if they have not fully understood the exact meaning or requirements of the question. For example, in **Question 6** 一个倔强的人, candidates were expected to write about a stubborn or unyielding character. Instead, some candidates wrote about their hard working father or grandfather, confusing 倔强 with 坚强.

Content & Structure

Content: The best answers this year contained very vivid descriptions, touching narratives and effective and convincing arguments. Some very creative and interesting answers were produced, with some candidates managing to write from an unusual or interesting perspective.

Candidates tended to produce very convincing arguments when they felt very strongly about a topic, as in the case of **Question 4** about teenage addiction to online gaming. Most candidates were able to present their views in a clear logical manner using relevant examples, with some also managing to explore the issue from different perspectives.

Candidates need to be aware that in order to score highly in narrative writing like **Question 7** 第一次露营 complexity, originality and detail are required. Weaker responses to this question often consisted of a flat story line full of clichés and with little detail or complexity.

Structure: In general, candidates showed awareness of the need to structure their writing appropriately. Most of the essays contained a clear progression of ideas, argument or story line. Very occasionally, some essays were too short, with two or three very short paragraphs of less than 100 characters in total. When the answers are excessively short, there is not enough material to show any development of ideas or present a clear description of a person, an object or event.

Most candidates were able to use paragraphs appropriately. Others needed to improve the structure of their essays to avoid including too many ideas in a single middle paragraph. This was seen in weaker responses and resulted in an unbalanced structure consisting of a one-line introduction and conclusion and a long paragraph in the middle.

Relevance is of crucial importance in this paper. In a small number of cases candidates had written excessively long essays, including material irrelevant to the question. Being able to write in a concise manner when required is an important skill.

Style & Accuracy

Style: Many candidates were able to produce sophisticated pieces of writing, with an excellent range of vocabulary, complex sentence structures and very good organisation of ideas.

The majority of candidates were able to write fluently, using a good range of structures and expressions. Weaker candidates could improve their writing by avoiding clichés, repetition of content and ideas, and by trying to introduce more variety in the expressions they use.

Excessively colloquial expressions should also be avoided in answering questions in this paper.

Accuracy: Most candidates demonstrated a high level of linguistic competence and showed they had a good grasp of Chinese grammar and a wide range of vocabulary at their disposal.

The work of the strongest candidates was characterised by the ability to use sophisticated structures and expressions effectively. Some weaker candidates attempted to use sophisticated vocabulary, but did not always manage to use it appropriately. For example, in describing the excitement of the news of an imminent camping trip, a candidate wrote:

‘那时，每个人都幸灾乐祸，因为那将是我们第一次露营。’

Using 幸灾乐祸 in this way shows the candidate hadn't fully grasped the meaning of the phrase.

Most candidates were able to produce grammatically correct sentences. Some candidates needed to pay more attention to 方位词 phrases. For example, some candidates missed out all the underlined nouns of locality: 在树林里，在草地上。

Occasionally candidates confused the different ways of negation in Chinese grammar. For example, writing 这也是我第一次会有五日不见到父母, instead of 见不到。

Punctuation occasionally presented a problem for some candidates. Improvements could be made with the use of full stops and commas; these cannot be used at the beginning of a line and candidates are reminded that the Chinese full stop is a small circle and not a solid dot.

The incorrect use of characters remains an area where improvements could be made. These could be reduced in some cases with more careful checking of work and a better understanding of characters that share the same pronunciation but with different meaning (homonyms). For example: 决定 (not 绝定); 各种 (not 个种).

Candidates are reminded that whilst both simplified and full form characters are perfectly acceptable, it is good practice to be consistent and avoid mixing the two systems within the same piece of writing.

Candidates should also be reminded to read the rubric carefully: this year once again, a small number of candidates answered two questions rather than one.

Finally, candidates are reminded to write clearly to ensure that the Examiner can read their script and fully credit them for what has been written.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Question 1

This was the second most popular choice in this section. The majority of candidates presented well-developed and convincing arguments, often quoting well-known sayings. Improvements could have been made in some cases by providing a wider range of examples and engaging in more in-depth discussions to answer the question.

Question 2

Candidates were expected to comment on the statement that men don't normally cry. This was not answered by many, but those who did were able to develop a clear and logical argument. In a small number of cases, candidates tried to present a balanced view, but ultimately did not succeed in giving a convincing argument either way. Such pieces could be improved by better planning to ensure that the arguments have a clear development and a convincing conclusion.

Question 3

Candidates were expected to express their opinion on the benefit of mastering a foreign language. Performance was varied. Whilst most candidates were able to develop their ideas using examples, these were not always relevant to their argument.

Question 4

This was by far the most popular choice in this section. Candidates were expected to express their opinion on the phenomenon of teenage addiction to online gaming. Most candidates dealt with the topic well, producing convincing arguments from very interesting perspectives, including the psychological, physiological and social effects of online gaming. Some chose to focus their discussion on the effect of addiction rather than online gaming and did a good job in presenting a coherent and logical argument.

Section 2

Question 5

Responses to this question produced a variety of performance. Some strong candidates employed very sophisticated language and produced a descriptive literary piece with a strong moral message. Others used techniques such as comparing old age to sunset. Weaker responses were characterised by long and irrelevant stories which lacked focus, and only made reference to sunset at the end of the piece, without linking it properly to the rest of the composition. Several candidates confused sunset with sunrise and described a beautiful sunrise by the sea or in the mountains.

Question 6

It was evident from the responses seen that many candidates choosing this question had not fully understood the meaning of the characters. They were expected to describe a stubborn or unyielding personality. Instead, some candidates wrote about their hard working father or grandfather, confusing 倔强 with 坚强. Some candidates managed to describe an interesting character, but did not include the personality trait 倔强, which was the key word in the question.

Question 7

This was the most frequently answered question in this section and a variety of performance was seen. Many candidates did not seem to understand the word 'camping'. Instead they wrote about their first school trip or first picnic with no mention of camping. Weaker responses tended to focus too heavily on the reason for the trip and the excitement and preparations, without saying much about the camping itself. The best

responses told a gripping story about the camping experience, with lots of details and vivid descriptions of the setting, the characters, the problems and the solutions.

Question 8

This was also a popular choice and most candidates produced satisfactory answers. Candidates were expected to write an essay about a sad experience that led to bitter tears. Some candidates wrote extremely convincing stories including a twist which allowed the reader to feel the regret and the pain of the author. Others needed a tighter focus or better development of the story line to score a high mark.