

Chinese (Background Speakers)

2011 Assessment Report



Government
of South Australia

SACE
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CHINESE (BACKGROUND SPEAKERS)

2011 ASSESSMENT REPORT

OVERVIEW

Assessment reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 1: Folio

There are three assessment tasks in this part: Interaction, Text Production and Text Analysis. Most teachers designed four or five tasks for this assessment type, which provided students with opportunities to demonstrate that they had met the performance standards in this assessment type.

Interaction

The most popular categories in the oral assessment within the Folio were PowerPoint presentations and responses to questions, discussions, and interviews.

The most successful responses demonstrated a clear idea of the context, purpose, and audience of texts, and this understanding influenced the way responses were structured and the language that was used. Such responses made great efforts to engage and interact with the audience and to demonstrate enthusiasm for and interest in the topic. These responses also demonstrated competence in the relevant assessment design criteria (Ideas and Expression) by expressing opinions in response to open-ended questions, without the student relying too much on a script.

Students are cautioned to avoid repeating rehearsed information on a topic. They should aim to fully explain information they refer to and to analyse the topic. Students should be ready to respond confidently and at some length to unscripted questions and comments, and good preparation will help with this.

It is important for students to engage in the interaction tasks such as the discussion, and teachers should take care to allow students to do most of the talking and to have the opportunity to expand on their answers. If a student sets up a presentation task with little or no interaction with others, this could make it more difficult for them to demonstrate that they can use strategies to initiate and sustain communication (specific feature E2).

Text Production

Responses were more successful when they were based on a specific contemporary issue. Such responses indicated that teachers had focused on one text type and had explicitly taught the language and structure that related to the text type.

The most successful responses met the task requirements of addressing an issue as specified in the subject outline. Responses that were based on recount of, for example, a film's plot, or that offered information on a topic without considering different perspectives, tended to be less successful.

The most effective responses conveyed an opinion about the issue as well as providing information, and demonstrated students' ability to build on information and ideas from the text(s) to form and express their own opinions.

Text Analysis

In the most successful responses, students analysed and explained the context, purpose, and audience of the texts. They responded to question(s) in their own words and with appropriate textual references to support their opinions. In the less successful responses, students identified the key issue but did not incorporate examples effectively from the text(s) in support of their own views.

It is important that teachers make clear to students the requirements set out in the subject outline, and that they provide opportunities for students to fulfil these requirements. In some text analysis tasks students were able to compare the perspectives, ideas, and opinions in the text(s) on the topic, so that students were able to demonstrate their learning in the assessment design criteria for this task, Evaluation and Reflection. Text analysis tasks which gave opportunity to analyse linguistic, cultural, and stylistic features also provided evidence of learning for specific feature ER2.

Assessment Type 2: In-Depth Study

Students carried out an in-depth study of a contemporary issue of their choice. It is appropriate for teachers to advise students on suitable issues for the in-depth study, but the study must be a product of independent study. Students should participate as much as possible in selecting their own topic or aspect of a topic. If the teacher chooses the topic of the in-depth study, then each student should research a different aspect of the topic.

Students who focused on a specific topic of interest or relevance to them tended to do well in this assessment type, while it was more difficult for students to demonstrate a high level of performance against the Ideas criterion when they chose broad and general topics.

The most effective responses in Chinese analysed findings from a variety of sources and synthesised information well, including correctly referenced quotes and elaborating on the ideas of others in the student's own words. By contrast, presenting a series of quotes without analysis and evaluation of the information, ideas, or perspectives in the materials tended to be a less effective approach.

Students who achieved high marks in the oral task presented their research for the in-depth study in a spontaneous and independent way, without relying too much on pre-prepared answers or a script. Successful oral tasks demonstrated analysis and

comprehensive knowledge and allowed the student to draw out their opinion about the issue they chose.

Different requirements (context, audience and purpose) should be used for both the oral and written responses in Chinese. Using the same or similar requirements for both tasks inevitably results in information and ideas that are common to both, and this limits students' opportunity to meet the learning requirements.

In the reflective responses in English, the most successful demonstrated that students had a clear idea of their goals. They focused on certain aspects and elaborated in detail with analysis or explanation of the process they employed, reflected on what they had learnt in relation to the issue or topic, and so on. These responses were successful because they went beyond general information about the topic or simple description of the process for the student's research.

Time limits apply to oral tasks in both assessment types, but this year a number of oral tasks were significantly longer than allowed. Students should be encouraged to monitor their work against time limits to ensure that all material can be listened to. Similarly, the written response has a strict character limit, and anything over this limit is not assessed against the performance standards.

Assessment Type 3: External Examination

Oral Examination

Overall students were successful in the oral examination this year. The majority of students demonstrated a good understanding of the various contemporary issues through their discussions in the oral examination, and achieved a satisfactory or higher result. A lack of study and preparation was evident in some cases.

The more successful students were able to demonstrate broad and deep knowledge about their research topics, including use of references and valid evidence to justify students' views. Their information, opinions, ideas, and perspectives were expressed clearly, logically, coherently, and insightfully.

Most students who performed at a more than satisfactory standard demonstrated a more than superficial understanding of the topics. They were able to demonstrate depth of knowledge and understanding on the topics they had studied. It was important to include references, provide evidence of learning, and justify own views.

Topics for the in-depth study this year were mostly appropriate and selected from the themes listed in the subject outline. The most popular topics were in the areas of youth issues, education issues, and environment issues. Very few topics were not suitable for study at this level.

Almost all students said that they had used the Internet to conduct their research, and some said that they asked friends or a family member. Some selected their resources from only one viewpoint and some appeared to have memorised information without full analysis or critique. Analysis and evaluation are important in demonstrating learning in relation to the assessment design criterion Evaluation and Reflection.

Pictures or diagrams may be used as supporting material but attention should be paid to ensure they are persuasive and/or helpful to the discussion.

Students are reminded to:

- complete the In-Depth Study Outline form in advance
- arrive on time for their oral examination
- allow time for a toilet break if needed, before the time of their examination.

Advice to Teachers

- Help students to select an appropriate topic.
- Teach students how to conduct research.
- Make sure that students really understand the topic/issue they study.
- Ask each student to fill in the In-depth Study Outline clearly and honestly.
- Remind students that examiners may not necessarily ask the questions listed on the In-depth Study Outline form.
- Use standard language, for example, the 'One Child Policy' is '独生子女政策' and not '一孩政策'.
- Advise students to arrive for their oral examination 15 minutes before their scheduled time.

Written Examination

Section 1: Listening and Responding, Part A

Performance in this section was disappointing, with most students at satisfactory or below, and this was the least successful section for most students. Students must focus on building their English skills, so that they understand the questions and are able to use English to express their thoughts clearly. This will also help them to provide accurate responses.

Nevertheless, a small number of students performed very well, demonstrating very good understanding of the text. Such students were able to respond to the questions using simple but efficient English vocabulary and grammar.

There were only a very few students who answered the questions in Chinese, for which they received zero as a result.

For Question 1(a), most students gave the correct answer. However, there were many incorrect answers, which was disappointing given that the question was straightforward.

Most students answered Question 1(b) incorrectly. The answer should have been straightforward to draw out from the text. However, some students only paid attention to the first half of the fairly long statement and missed the second half of the text. Consequently such answers were inaccurate.

For Question 1(c), most students did not fully understand the question. It appeared that they didn't know the meaning of the word 'concerns'. Many students answered 'the publishing house should..., they should...' Such answers missed the point of the question and lost marks.

Most students responded more successfully to Question 1(d). However, some provided only the general meaning of the phrases, which was only half of the requirement for this question, and missed the specific meaning in the context of the text.

To be effective in this section, students need to improve their English. They also need to improve their skills in handling the examination, for example, by reading questions carefully during the 10 minutes' reading time and by understanding what information they need to extract from the texts.

Section 1: Listening and Responding, Part B

Understandably, since there was no language barrier, most students achieved a higher mark in this part than in Section 1, Part A. They generally understood the texts and the questions well.

The more successful responses not only identified the information from the two texts, but offered the students' opinions logically and cohesively.

Students are reminded that it is important to:

- offer their own thoughts, with analysis or evaluation of the information
- use the information from both texts
- write to the required text type (for example, an article rather than a letter)
- use the correct structure for the response (for example, an essay structure rather than one long paragraph)
- use the correct characters.

Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part A

Students in this part generally performed well. Most students understood the text and the questions very well, although there were some questions they might find it difficult to answer, particularly if they had limited Chinese literary knowledge and accomplishment.

The most successful responses revealed an appreciation both of the text's ideological connotations and the literary techniques used in the text.

For Question 3(a) most students did not identify the intention of the author in quoting from ancient poetry.

In Question 3(c), some students confused the concepts of 修辞手法 and 写作手法; some identified the rhetorical devices without illustrating the beneficial effects they had on the text.

Students generally performed well in Questions 3(b) and (d) although few answers gained full marks.

Students are reminded to answer all questions and that some questions will be on the next page (look for the instruction 'Please Turn Over').

Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part B

Most students performed well in this part, similarly to Listening and Responding, Part B. They demonstrated a good understanding of the text and the issues, and formulated their opinions into a logical and cohesive essay.

To be fully effective in this section, students are reminded to:

- offer analysis and evaluation of the information, including their own thoughts
- respond to the text

- aim for depth in treatment
- use the information from the text
- focus on all relevant parts of the text (for example, on the characteristics of the generation born in the 90s *and* their job prospects)
- write to the correct text type (for example, an article, not a letter)
- include a title if appropriate to the text type
- use a clear structure and logical sequence (for example, paragraphs)
- use the correct characters.

Section 3: Writing in Chinese

Most students performed well in this part. They demonstrated a good understanding of the issues, and were able to formulate their opinions into a logical and cohesive essay. They were able to handle the text types competently and there were no obvious grammatical problems.

Almost 50% of students answered Question 5, with most responses in the satisfactory to excellent range. The most successful responses not only used correct logical structures, but also, most importantly, offered a clear view on the topic and explanations and justifications in the discussion. The less successful responses revealed that students did not fully understand the question: their opinions were neither completely relevant to the question nor clearly expressed and justified; and some strayed from the main point, for example, addressing women's liberation history in China rather than the specific matter of the question. Students are also reminded to use an appropriate style, and particularly to avoid falling into a casual style.

Responses to Question 6, 7, and 8 shared both the strengths and problems of the answers to Question 5.

For Question 6, the best responses put forward suggestions for changing the gap between the rich and the poor.

For Question 7, the fullest responses broadly and deeply discussed the impacts of China's economic growth on Chinese people's life, including discussion of whether the impacts were positive, negative, or both.

For Question 8, successful responses focused on the impact of the achievements of new Chinese migrants on Australia's social and economic development in the past 20–30 years.

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

All student work and supporting materials must be submitted as required.

There is no need to submit supporting materials, e.g. the texts studied for the in-depth study, the draft of the written tasks, and so on. Only evidence of students' learning will be used to moderate the assessment tasks.

It is vital that moderators are able to access and hear orals, as there is at least one oral task within each assessment type. Discs should be checked to make sure that moderators can access all material for the oral assessment. For more detail about how to prepare non-written materials, and submission of electronic files, refer to the subject operational information for this language (available under Key Materials on the Stage 2 subject page on the SACE website, www.sace.sa.edu.au).

A CD/DVD for each student, with oral tasks in a separate file (not in a continuous single file) is a good option for presentation of audio files. An alternative is to have a folder of tasks for each student on a single CD/DVD. In either option, a student's SACE number should be indicated clearly for each audio file.

A copy of the learning and assessment plan should be included in all cases, together with a complete set of task sheets. If there have been changes in the learning and assessment plan since it was approved, please use the addendum page of the learning and assessment plan to clearly indicate the changes made.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall it was clear that when students had a clear understanding of the requirements of the subject, and had been taught how to meet the requirements of the task, many were able to produce well-prepared written and oral responses.

Students must not write their names on examination papers, and teachers should remind their students of this requirement.

Chief Assessor
Chinese (Background Speakers)