Chinese A Literature

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 20	21 - 37	38 - 49	50 - 61	62 - 73	74 - 84	85 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 19	20 - 36	37 - 49	50 - 61	62 - 71	72 - 82	83 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25	26 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As in the past, most schools chose the classical literature for this part of the programme. The material submitted by most schools was classical poetry for the Individual Oral Commentary (IOC) and other genres of classical literature for the Individual Oral Presentation (IOP). Such a choice of passages and works across schools has proved helpful for moderators to judge the sample candidates' performance evenly. A small number of schools used a combination of classical and modern/contemporary literary works for this component. While most schools followed closely the regulations on this component, a few schools still seem to have failed to

understand the specific nature and request of the IOP and carry out the exercise accordingly. As a result, their candidates' IOP was very much like their IOC. Regarding the provision of passages, the length as well as the difficulty level varied among the schools. Some of the subsequent questions provided by some schools after their candidates' commentary were rather limiting and not inspirational.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

In general, candidates performed strongly in this area, due to their solid and detailed understanding of the poem. Some of them even related the chosen piece to the whole work, so that their commentary revealed some deep and comprehensive interpretation. In contrast, other candidates' approach to the given piece was usually descriptive and rather superficial.

Criterion B

A large number of candidates showed an adequate awareness and appreciation of the poetic devices employed by the poet and their effect. Yet, this was still a weak part of their discussion of the piece. Their analysis of the literary features and their impact on the creation of specific meaning was overall barely satisfactory and needs to be further elaborated.

Criterion C

While some candidates displayed a clear sense of structure in organizing their commentary, which helped them to discuss their piece in a logical and coherent fashion, many others failed to do so. They either could not link different sections smoothly or simply adopted as an easy or elementary option the linear approach to interpreting the poem.

Criterion D

Most of the candidates made relevant reference to the work concerned in answering the teacher's questions and demonstrated a good degree of confidence in understanding the main issues addressed in the work.

Criterion E

The candidates generally understood the teacher's questions and responded in a confident and proper manner. However, while some candidates displayed their critical reading of the text and provided their personal opinion, several candidates could not carry out a meaningful discussion with the teacher.

Criterion F

It was clear that the stronger candidates were prepared prior to the exam and therefore performed well in relation to this criterion. They showed care with the choice of register and terminology and expressed their ideas with clear, precise and fluent language. There were only a small number of candidates who seemed to have encountered minor problems in

finding a suitable and smooth register for their commentary. A few candidates sounded as though they were reciting from prepared notes.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should make sure they understand correctly and follow closely the regulations for this component in terms of providing the passage and the guiding questions and conducting the subsequent discussion; they should also pay attention to the administrative and clerical issues. Teachers should avoid providing the same passage to a small number of candidates repeatedly and they should take care to offer passages of an appropriate length and level of difficulty.

- Teachers should guide candidates to pay close attention to the literary techniques and their impact on the reader, and display their personal response to the issues as portrayed by the writer.

- Teachers should help candidates to build an appropriate structure for their commentary, organise the material in a logical and coherent fashion and deliver it with an appropriate register.

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 23	24 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The majority of the schools followed the regulations closely and conducted this component properly. There was a wide range of works selected from part 2 of the syllabus (mostly classical literature and one modern work). Most schools chose extracts that were of an appropriate quality and level of challenge. The guiding questions were also generally appropriate and clear. The teachers' marking was as a whole consistent and acceptable. Most schools submitted their samples by the due date.

However, some schools did not keep the recording of their candidates' commentaries within the time limit. The longest recording received was more than 12 minutes and the shortest one was only five minutes. One school did not have guiding questions.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the context of their extract, providing sufficient awareness of its significance in relation to the whole work. However, some weak candidates showed vague awareness of the connection between the extract and the whole work.

Criterion B

A large number of candidates gave consideration to the literary features of the extract, and most candidates were able to engage in a thorough and mature analysis about the effect created. The weaker ones, in contrast, managed to concentrate on narration of the plot or summary of the main ideas of the extract. They seemed to find it difficult to give adequate attention to the literary features and their personal argument was generally absent from the discussion.

Criterion C

The majority of the candidates were able to introduce the work, engage in some discussion with examples from the passages and conclude the commentary. However, some candidates displayed a rather vague sense of structure for their commentary, which often lacked a noticeable framework and purpose, and thus they failed to give their analysis a clear focus and basically relied on paraphrasing of the extract.

Criterion D

The majority of candidates demonstrated a good level of preparation for this component and therefore their use of language was generally clear and appropriate. However, some candidates seemed to struggle to find an appropriate choice of words to deliver their ideas.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- First and foremost, it is crucial that teachers have a clear and precise understanding of the nature and requirements of this component and the regulations for the IOC, in particular the rules regarding the selection of the extract, the guiding questions and the time allocation.

- Teacher should provide as many opportunities as possible throughout the course to develop the skills necessary for this component; sufficient time could be spared to allow some work in class on the IOC. In this way, candidates can learn how to provide a clear focus for the commentary as well as the depth of analysis expected.

- Teachers should instruct candidates on the importance of addressing all the criteria and structuring their commentary in a clear and convincing way. They should encourage candidates to pay adequate attention to the literary features of the works and express their appreciation of the author's feelings as well as the effects created by the literary

techniques.

Higher and standard level written assignment

Higher Level component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20	21 - 25

Standard level component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20	21 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

In general, the quality of the written assignments in the May 2014 examination session was similar to that of the May 2013 examination session.

Many candidates had a clear understanding of the nature of the assignment and were able to follow instructions correctly and meet expectations satisfactorily. The cover pages were in order. No major irregularities in that regard were reported from the examiners.

While few of the assignments were awarded more than 22 marks, there were also very few that scored lower than 12 marks. Schools with a larger number of candidates continued to produce good quality assignments and the standard seems to be increasing steadily. The language used in finishing the assignments was usually of good to very good quality. It is evident that many schools and candidates paid special attention to presentation and proofreading.

There was a wider range of works represented in the written assignments submitted for the May 2014 examination session. The reflective statement and topic selection were perhaps the two areas in which candidates made obvious improvement compared to the May 2013 examination session. Some schools chose new works for the candidates to study in part 1 of the syllabus; as a result, the assignments displayed a greater degree of originality.

However, it was evident that candidates from larger schools tended to choose similar topics and to present their argument in a similar way. There were signs of "over-coaching" and a

uniformed approach among teachers from some schools. This is worrying, and in some cases problematic, because it is crucial that the assignment be the independent work of the candidate.

The four-staged process of conducting the assignment encourages candidates to pay attention to context when it helps to inform interpretation within their literary essay. This continues to be challenging for many candidates. Picking a suitable discussion topic is important to success. Weaker candidates continue to tend to choose topics which lack a clear focus or provide only vague treatment of poorly defined topics, making it difficult for them to provide detailed evidence and make a convincing analysis.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

Performance in relation to this criterion was varied. Some candidates demonstrated good understanding of cultural and contextual elements in their reflective statement. But in many cases such an element was absent. Instead of focusing their effort on the study of historical and cultural context in which the works created, many candidates tended to focus on what the works are about and the literary techniques employed by the writers.

Also, many candidates placed a narrow emphasis on the historical and cultural elements in the works, instead of also focusing on the historical and cultural contexts in which the work was created and how knowledge of this impacted their understanding. This explains in part why many candidates failed to receive full marks for this criterion.

Criterion B

Many candidates performed well in relation to this criterion. Their assignments demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the work studied. In fact, the main overall strength of the written assignments in the May 2014 examination session is that the candidates showed mastery of the content of the literary works.

Some candidates could present their detailed knowledge about the literary work but then struggled to show their ability to do literary criticism and display their insights into the significance of such details.

Also, many candidates could not establish a close link between their knowledge and understanding of the work with the topic they chose. As a result, paraphrasing without purpose was often observed. Topic selection and literary treatment within the assignment still seem to pose a challenge for many candidates. This explains in part why relatively few candidates earned full marks for this criterion.

In general, examiners felt that there were too many assignments that were similar to each other. While this may demonstrate study of what has been presented and discussed in class, good written assignments must move beyond what has been learned in order to provide individual insights.

Criterion C

Many candidates demonstrated their appreciation of how a writer's literary choices shape meaning. Many could also provide detailed accounts of how language, structure and style were used in the works and the effects created. However, it was still challenging for many to understand fully the effects of the writer's choices. Some candidates tended to focus on very small objects in the texts (e.g., the moon, clouds, fog, horses, walls, windows) and then launch into elaborate investigations of them. This approach often led to superficial comments with overstretched and unconvincing interpretations.

Many candidates tended to paraphrase or cite parts of the work in order to form the main body of their assignment. Without adequate appreciation of language, technique and style in relation to the topic chosen, it is difficult to earn a high mark for this criterion.

Criterion D

Many candidates organized and presented their ideas in a clear and developed manner. Many could effectively integrate examples from the work to support their arguments.

With regard to formatting, footnoting, listing of references and printing, the production of the assignments was generally done to a good standard.

Criterion E

The presentation and the fluency of language in the assignments were usually of a good to very good standard. The choice of register, style and terminology were often appropriate. However, some candidates seemed to have problems expressing themselves clearly, the accuracy of their language being an impediment to comprehension for the examiners. Across the cohort of candidates, the level of language was very uneven.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- As the guide suggests, teachers should help candidates to consider meaningfully and convincingly the historical and cultural contexts of works studied in part 1 of the syllabus. Lack of historical knowledge and cultural awareness often prevents candidates from achieving high marks, especially for criterion A.

- It is essential that teachers do not 'over-teach' the texts (so that room is left for genuine candidate discovery) nor 'over-reach' when they are providing guidance. The guide is clear that teachers may only provide one general feedback to candidates on their written assignment, and they are not allowed to edit the assignments for candidates. Going beyond this is considered academic malpractice.

- If teachers have their candidates discuss what topics they wish to explore in their written assignment with the whole class, it is easier to avoid topics that are too obvious (because they come up too often), to encourage a wider range of choices, and to insist that if two or more candidates write about the same topic, they must work completely independently.

- Teachers should guide candidates away from topics that will most likely prove to be superficial or unconvincing.

- Pointing out that a large number of written assignments were done on a limited number of literary works, certain examiners wish to advise schools that while certain classics such as *A Doll's House* and *Jane Eyre*, are obviously worthy of study, it may be worth considering whether the written assignment, which is a component designed for candidate's to provide insight, is ideally suited for such works.

- Candidates should be given an opportunity to practice writing within the word count (perhaps using works from a different part of the syllabus) so that they can understand how narrow or broad their topic may be in relation to the word count. Also, teachers need to be very clear that the written assignment is to be completed within the prescribed word limit, as a penalty is applied when the word count is not respected

- Teachers should work with candidates on how to include formal citation and referencing before they embark on writing the assignment.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 18	19 - 20

General comments

The main theme of the passage chosen (whether the prose passage or the poem) was captured by most of the candidates. Because the theme was well understood, candidates generally were able to provide a solid and convincing analysis of the thought as well as the feelings that the author intended to deliver. As a result, a large number of candidates earned a very good or excellent score for their literary commentary.

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

In general, candidates were able to grasp the main message of the passage or the poem, due to their straightforward and obvious display. However, only a small portion of the candidates was able to demonstrate insight into the subtext of the passage chosen and engage in a critical and sophisticated exploration of it. While approximately half of the candidates showed their sensitivity to the literary devices employed by the author and the effect created, others

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only managed to show a rather vague awareness of them and thus provided a brief and superficial discussion. In addition, it was difficult for a large number of candidates to construct their ideas in a logical progression; most candidates chose to give a linear explanation of the passage chosen.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

In their commentaries, most candidates provided a detailed investigation into the meaning and significance of the passage chosen and made specific reference to it in order to support their argument. Their focus was normally on the major issues revealed in the passage. In analyzing the literary features, many candidates demonstrated adequate skills in applying the appropriate concepts and terminology to carry out a discussion. It was apparent that teachers paid adequate attention and provided guidance to candidates as to how language, structure, technique and style shape the meaning of the passage. Effective writing skills were also evident in many scripts.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

As in the past, the prose passage was a popular choice. In most cases, candidates' interpretation of the narrator's attitude toward life and stance on the relationship between the past and the present was detailed and accurate. The technical devices employed, such as personalization, metaphors, characterization, plot structure, as well as language, were given attention by many candidates in their discussion. The area which differentiated the very strong responses was the in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the multi-layered themes in the passage. The very strong responses included an analysis of the implication of the story as well as the narrator's understanding of the meaning of happiness as depicted in the latter part of the passage.

Question 2

The poem's message and the poet's attitude toward changes were accessible to most candidates. In general, the candidates' interpretation was detailed and closely related to the poem. The technical elements, such as imagery, tone, structure and usage of colours were included in their discussion. Differences in the quality of candidates' understanding of the poem were evident in how they responded to the issue of tradition versus reform. As usual, most candidates constructed their commentary by sequential analysis of the poem, e.g. line by line, stanza by stanza. A large number of candidates failed to take into account the context of the poem and its significance.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should work with candidates to develop their knowledge of literary terms and concepts that are typical of the genre chosen, including their definition and function.

- Teachers should remind candidates to engage in careful reading of literary works in order to go beyond an understanding of the obvious message that the writer tries to convey, to achieving a proper interpretation of the underlying and extended meaning.

- Teachers should train candidates on how to communicate and construct their arguments in a coherent manner and encourage them to engage in a critical discussion of the given passage, instead of taking a purely descriptive approach.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 15	16 - 17	18 - 20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Most candidates adequately demonstrated their writing skills, literary knowledge and understanding in writing their guided literary analysis. The passages set for Paper 1 seemed accessible to most candidates. While very few candidates were awarded more 18 marks, those who earned fewer than 10 marks were also rare. The majority of candidates chose to write on the prose passage rather than the poem.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

Many candidates did well in understanding the prose passage and the writer's message. They identified the main literary features and commented accordingly. However, many candidates also failed to treat the passage holistically and perceptively. They tended to use certain formulaic approaches or "set" structures. This worked to some extent but generally it did not result in cogent and coherent arguments and interpretations.

Question 2

Most candidates paid sufficient attention to the literary devices. Many candidates offered

creative interpretations and did well to treat the poem as a poem. However, some candidates merely paraphrased the poem instead of analysing or interpreting it. Weaker candidates often approached the poem in the same manner that a prose passage would be approached, or they tried repeatedly to pin down a "meaning" without sufficient regard to the content of the whole poem.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

The majority of the candidates earned 3 marks or more for this criterion. Candidates did relatively well in understanding their chosen passage. Many candidates used relevant and sufficient details to support their understanding, but relatively few candidates were able to go beyond that to offer a convincing interpretation. Many candidates could identify the cause of the family tragedy and express empathy toward the narrator; however, few were able to go further to explore the traditional family virtues in this contemporary context. While the issue of generation gap was rightfully addressed by many candidates, the discussion often fell short as they were not able to take the analysis further by making reflective and critical comments. In general, there were plenty of good textual understandings but a lack of high quality interpretation.

As with the prose passage, most candidates who wrote on the poem demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of symbolism – in the case of the poem, the symbolism of the willow tree. Some candidates were able to discuss the feelings of the author and raise environmental issues. However, the implication of the ending of the poem was challenging for many candidates who did not do well on the interpretation of the final lines.

Overall, examiners observed too much paraphrasing and too little critical analysis in the Paper 2 scripts.

Criterion B

The prose passage was an excellent piece of writing, full of literary features which allowed candidates of varying abilities in literary analysis to comment. Many candidates offered their appreciation of how the writer's choices of language and structure contributed to creating literary effects. However, relatively few candidates could effectively link the literary techniques used in the prose to the creation of meanings. This explains in part why many scripts received 3 marks for this criterion instead of 4 or 5.

Writing a guided textual analysis on poetry appeared to be a difficult task for many candidates as evidenced by the rather low number of candidates who chose to explore the poem. Regrettably, many who did choose to write on the poem commented on it as if it were a prose passage. Candidates also often engaged in a line-by-line summary or paraphrase instead of focusing their efforts on the imagery, symbolism and the creativity of the language.

Criterion C

Many scripts were adequately organized and showed a good level of coherence and logical development. Many candidates responded well to the guiding questions. It is important to note that the guiding questions should not be regarded as the limits of candidates' responses and should not be seen as providing a rigid structure for organizing them. While it is a requirement that the guiding questions be answered, many candidates turned exclusively to answering these, resulting in scripts that appeared to be better suited for demonstrating comprehension rather than interpretation or analysis; such responses were usually too restricted to earn high marks.

Criterion D

Most candidates used clear and appropriate language, with a formal register and terminology suited to literary analysis. Very few scripts awarded 2 marks or fewer for this criterion. At the same time, several candidates struggled to make themselves understood because of the frequency of grammatical and other errors in language use. It was observed that even among the best written scripts there were many errors in the production of characters; in general there seems to be a significant difference between now and 5 years ago in terms of the quality of candidates' handwriting.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should encourage candidates to develop their personal interpretation of taught literary works so that they are capable of responding to unseen texts independently in examination conditions.

- Teachers should provide students sufficient opportunities to study poetry during the course so that they feasibly have the option of choosing this genre on Paper 1. There will always be a poem set for this paper.

- Teachers should remind candidates that paraphrasing without purpose is to be avoided at all times.

- Teachers should remind candidates that they must ensure that their comments about the effects of a writer's choices are linked to a discussion of the meaning in the passage.

- Teachers should not teach candidates there is a "standard structure" for every literary analysis. Responses that resemble a template limit the possibility of offering a persuasive interpretation.

- Teachers should provide candidates with adequate opportunities to practice their Chinese handwriting in both timed and untimed conditions, especially considering that 45% of the final grade of the course is associated with timed, handwritten assessments.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

General comments

Candidates generally followed the instructions for Paper 2 and demonstrated a solid understanding of the requirements of this component. More than half the scripts were considered good or very good; a very small portion of scripts were regarded either as inadequate or excellent.

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

As in the past, a rather large number of candidates found it difficult to give an in-depth and critical response to the key demand of the question concerned. When unpacking the implication of the question, they focused on some phrases or individual words and, based on that, they formulated their understanding of the demands of the question. This way of reading the questions affected the quality of candidates' answers as they only managed to engage in a simplified and straightforward investigation into the major issue. Some candidates also failed to make effective use of the prepared material, as the link between the prepared material about the texts studied and their treatment of the question was not totally convincing and relevant. Construction of the essay and a comparative appreciation of the literary features of the works in relation to the question continued to be the relatively weak areas in many scripts. Some candidates failed to organise their thoughts in a coherent manner, essentially presenting examples from the two or three works one after another as their response to the question.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

It was clear that most of the candidates had sufficient knowledge of the works studied to be applied in their answers. In terms of their communication skills, they used the language in an adequate fashion and their choice of register and phrases were in general appropriate and smooth.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

The questions on the novel and short story genres were almost equally popular among the candidates this session. Questions 10, 11 and 15 especially attracted a large number of candidates. In dealing with their chosen questions, candidates were normally able to grasp the main meaning of the questions and wrote on them in an adequate fashion. They were confident enough to find relevant examples from the works studied to support their argument. However, as mentioned above, their responses generally lacked sophistication and sufficient comparison between the works in relation to the question. Apart from that, a large number of candidates were unable to give sufficient analysis of the technical devices employed by the writers in relation to the question.

It is also worth noting that, while Questions 10, 11 and 15 proved to be accessible to most of the candidates, the wording of Questions 12 and 14 caused some difficulty for those who chose to answer them. In the case of the Questions 10, 11 and 15, the candidates showed no problem to focus on the major issue and to support their arguments with the examples from the works. In the case of Questions 12 and 14, most of the candidates attempted to define the meaning of the question, yet were somehow unable to address the issue implied in a satisfactory manner. Questions on poetry, prose and drama were also chosen by some candidates, yet the number in each case was very small.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should teach candidates the genre-related literary terms and expressions and encourage them to use these correctly in answering the relevant question.

- Teachers should urge candidates to build up a strong sense of planning for their writing, by unpacking carefully the demand of the selected question before they formulate their response. By doing so, candidates are better able to construct their papers with a focus and put forward their argument in a coherent and logical manner.

- Teachers should teach candidates how to appreciate the effects of the technical devices and styles employed by the authors and then provide an analysis of these in relation to the question chosen.

- Teachers should guide candidates on how to make a substantial link between the works studied in relation to the question.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

General comments

Candidates more frequently selected questions over the novel and short story, demonstrating that these remain the preferred genres in schools for teaching part 3 of the syllabus. Questions 10, 11, 13 and 15 were popular among candidates. There were only a small number of candidates prepared to do poetry or prose (*San Wen* in Chinese). No major complaints were forwarded to the principal examiner regarding the suitability of the questions. It seems most of the questions were clearly written, straightforward and easy to understand. Some examiners suggested that a few questions (such as question 3, 4 and 14) may have benefitted from a slight adjustment in terms of wording and expression.

It was clear that the majority of candidates studied their texts well and had done some level of preparation for this component. As a result, many candidates were able to identify the key demands of the questions and produce arguments efficiently with the support of textual evidence. While high quality writing was rare (few scripts were awarded 22 marks or more), there were also very few scripts awarded less than 12 marks.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

Most candidates had a good understanding and knowledge of the texts studied. Some candidates provided ample details and examples in terms of characters, plot and dialogue when supporting their argument. Many candidates demonstrated good knowledge and understanding and received a high mark for this criterion.

On the other hand, one of the common weaknesses among candidates was the lack of sufficient linkage between their knowledge of the work in relation to the question chosen. Many candidates did not pay sufficient attention to the question itself but were instead rather busy "off-loading" their pre-prepared remarks about works they had studied. As a result it was observed that candidates' knowledge of the works was not necessarily well connected to the question. While this is of course the major focus of criterion B, it is also mentioned in criteria A and C, and the purpose of this is to discourage pre-prepared responses.

Criterion B

The majority of the candidates were able to respond to the main demands of the questions with relevant ideas. They were able to support their ideas by providing textual evidence (to varying degrees of success). However, many candidates lacked sophistication in addressing the subtleties of the chosen question and did not respond to key terms in sufficient depth. It was evident that many candidates overdid their examination preparation with a mixed result. These "formulated approaches" may have provided the candidates with some safe and standardized answers, but it ultimately proved to be a limitation to candidates' ability to respond relevantly and carefully. Also, the demand to compare and contrast seemed to be challenging for some. Many candidates were not able to summarize their arguments in a comparative way while remaining relevant to the question.

Criterion C

Most candidates were able to identify different literary conventions used in the works. They could also provide examples to support their arguments. It is encouraging to see more and more candidates making the effort to establish connections between the literary conventions and the meaning created in the texts. However, it is also evident that many candidates lacked sufficient knowledge when discussing genre-related issues. They were not equipped to engage in the discussion of literary conventions with the appropriate degree of specificity, linguistic accuracy and conceptual understanding. Some candidates seemed to lack the ability to differentiate between literary conventions found in novels or short stories.

Criterion D

Many candidates were able to write well organized, coherent and developed essays. They presented their complicated ideas and responded to challenging questions in timed condition. In their essays, suitable structure and the development of ideas were often observed. Many candidates were able to make the arguments and knew how to support these with textual evidence. But at the same time, several candidates struggled to put their ideas together in a structured way and express them in a coherent and developed manner.

It appears that many candidates did not examine all aspects of the question chosen before beginning to write. As a result they missed parts of the question or did not answer the question in full.

Some candidates changed the language of the question when copying the original question onto their response sheet. This led to a change in the angle of the enquiry.

Candidates may use a minimum of one text by each author to respond to the questions. However, there were candidates who used only two very short poems or two very short stories as the basis of their discussion. This thin, narrow textual coverage could not support the scope of argument demanded by most of the questions.

Criterion E

Many candidates wrote with clear and varied language. Their grammar was accurate, their vocabulary was fairly effective, and their style appropriate to the task. However, some scripts were full of errors in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction. Some candidates had little sense of register and style. In general, candidates' handwriting is perhaps the most worrying aspect of the Chinese examination. Some handwriting was just too difficult for the examiners to read, let alone understand; what is illegible cannot be rewarded.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teacher should make sure that candidates fully understand the demands of the questions, such as genre conventions and the demand to compare and contrast. The focus of learning should be adjusted accordingly. Through genre studies, candidates need to learn not only know what the author's message is, but also how the author conveys the message through the particular genre; thus they will be able to consider more effectively the effects created.

- Teachers should ensure that poems and short stories chosen contain enough depth and sophistication for the demands of this component. Shortcuts in syllabus coverage are unlikely to lead to success.

- Teachers should make sure that candidates practice answering all parts of the question they choose, in order to avoid providing an incomplete response.

- Teachers should encourage candidates to think critically so that they are capable of formulating individual responses, rather than just repeating what has been said in class.

- Irrelevant paraphrasing cannot be rewarded. Teachers should provide candidates with exercises that help them to understand the difference between summary and analysis.

- Handwriting practice should be seen as one of the essential skills in learning Chinese. At least 45% of the final grade in Chinese A: literature consists of timed, handwritten assessment components.