

May 2014 subject reports

Chinese B

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 26	27 - 43	44 - 58	59 - 73	74 - 87	88 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 24	25 - 39	40 - 53	54 - 68	69 - 82	83 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

May 2014 is the second year of the new assessment. Candidates have performed their orals at a good competent level. Teachers have gained experience in applying the new assessment criteria and increased their understanding of the requirements of the individual oral. Teachers have followed fairly closely, the guidance given in the Subject Guide.

A good rapport was shown between the teachers and candidates during their discussions following the individual orals. The range and suitability of the work submitted on the whole was appropriate and mostly fulfilled the expectations of the component requirements. Both the candidates and the teachers have carried out their tasks according to the requirements. Some candidates demonstrated a very strong level of language proficiency, as detailed in the feedback to each individual centre. It could be questioned, whether Chinese B provides sufficient academic challenge for these candidates as the authenticity shown in their speech

patterns and use of the language is that of a native speaker. The type of topics and themes were well thought of and presented adequately. The prompts selected by the teachers were well planned and appropriately executed by the candidates.

In the first component of the individual oral, the candidate must show their productive skills through their presentations. Most candidates were able to complete their preparations within the prescribed timeframe. Presentations for discussion were produced based on a given photo prompt selected by the teacher. The presentations were all well executed. The candidates had prepared well for the examination. This is a clear indication that classroom activities have been appropriately implemented, with the aim to help candidates achieve the targeted results. Most candidates were successful in showing a high level of competence in their presentations. There was no issue with the topics selected and the content was usually appropriate. The individual oral has provided candidates with an opportunity to demonstrate their abilities, in presenting spontaneous verbal communication.

Although both teachers and candidates are still adapting to the new way of conducting the individual oral, the candidates have demonstrated the skills for handling their presentations and discussions. In fact, the new format has given candidates opportunities to not only produce their presentations with the help of the prompt to organize their thoughts, to speak logically and spontaneously, but also to engage in interactive and receptive practise by staying focused on the topic. In the second part of interaction, there is usually lively interaction of questions and answers in which most of the teachers played their role well by asking appropriate questions, first on the topic presented by the candidate, and then by asking a variety of questions. The interactions gave candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their interactive and receptive skills.

Questions asked by the teachers ranged from a wide range of topics. Candidates demonstrated their abilities in responding to various topics for discussion and they were well prepared. They knew how to conduct a flowing conversation by listening well and then answering the questions accordingly. The duration of the discussion was mostly done within the time frame of 5 to 6 minutes and gave adequate opportunity to candidates to interact well with the teacher.

Conduct of the Interviews

The new format of the IA, with the spontaneity of a prompt with subsequent preparation, has allowed for increased authenticity, in allowing candidates to present their individual orals without memorizing something written in prepared paragraphs. The results were satisfactory; almost all the individual orals were executed in good order, with coherent presentations and teacher candidate interactions.

According to the Subject Guide, candidates can write down some notes to help them form a logical presentation in an orderly manner. This has helped them in organizing their thoughts with adequate time to plan prior to the assessment. Teachers managed the timings of the presentations well and the discussion gave the moderator a good impression of the language proficiency of each individual candidate. There was little chance for rehearsed performances to take place within this new format.

There has been a clear improvement in the overall knowledge of the topics and themes selected by the teachers. They were varied and interesting, with a key focus on the language and culture learned. The candidates have actively participated in the dialogue with the teachers and were keen to express themselves with in-depth knowledge. All the content of these topics were suitable for candidates at this level and age bracket. It shows that the teachers have taken careful steps in preparing these exam materials and have taught their students well in preparation for the IA.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Productive skills

In this session, candidates have shown a very good command of the Chinese language, successfully completing every part of the task. They demonstrated fluency and clarity in presenting their desired content in response to the topic. The candidates responded to the prompts efficiently, in that they were able to identify the main theme of the topic and organized their presentations logically. Their presentations were mostly convincing and coherent. The language skills demonstrated were proficient with adequate use of correct and varied language structures. For many, their intonation was close to that of a native speaker, which can be a positive sign of a high level of proficiency. However, at the same time, it could also be an indicator that some candidates may possess too high a level of language proficiency, suggesting that they may be near native or native speakers of Chinese language. These candidates may be better placed in Language A. Overall; candidates have demonstrated a good command of language proficiency in their production of the presentation with a flow of coherent speech pattern. The level of accuracy was high and the pronunciation of words clear.

Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills

The candidates have all shown strong capabilities in understanding the original questions asked by the teachers. There is little hesitation from the candidates in responding to the questions asked. Candidates have very good listening comprehension and they have also demonstrated strong abilities in interacting with the teachers in conducting meaningful conversations. Most of the candidates were ready and eager to answer the teacher's questions with ease. They were spontaneous, well versed and highly communicative. There was little hesitation in the tone of their responses.

The register and style of presentation were usually appropriate, with most candidates showing strength in in-depth discussions on any of the five option topics: cultural diversity, customs and traditions, health, leisure, science and technology. Teachers had planned well the presentation prompts ahead of time; there was little evidence of time wastage in carrying out the individual orals, with the teachers knowing what they were going to ask the candidates in the interactive period. The candidates all responded well to the teachers' questions.

At higher level, not only did the candidates carry out conversation with simple and straightforward ideas, they also conducted in a coherent manner, quite in-depth discussions involving complex ideas and personal opinions. Sometimes, candidates engaged in debatable

discussions in which they needed to prove their points of view with logical and valid rationales. Their competent level was demonstrated through natural flowing communication patterns.

Another new phenomenon in the new individual oral is the fact that candidates not only need to show their interactive skills but also their receptive abilities. This means that they really need to fully understand what is being asked, or said, and demonstrate their good comprehension through their interactive skills. This requires them to carry out a flowing conversation not only with adequate, but also sharply focused dialogue with the teacher. They will need to respond well to the teacher's questions by speaking clearly and intelligently to show their points of views. It is during these conversations that candidates truly show their communication abilities. It is definitely a trend worthy of encouraging and supporting.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Placement of candidates is important since the higher level candidate may be measured against their overall abilities in their competence in both the verbal communication productive skills as well as interactive and receptive skills. However, their placement should also reflect their background, namely that they should be placed in this category only if they are true learners of Chinese as a second language.
- Candidates should be taught planning skills for organizing their ideas within a short period of time. Presentations should be produced in a sequential and logical manner. The ideas should be logical even though a candidate may have a great imagination. Candidates should learn to think calmly and use a systematic approach when conducting their presentations.
- In preparation for the final assessment, brief note-taking skills are useful, as this will help candidates to think clearly and focus upon specific areas in their presentations within the specified time limit (15 minutes).
- Candidates should learn to look at different photo prompts and practise coming up with a thread of well thought out ideas for their presentation content; the writing down of logical bullet points for the purpose of presenting their ideas clearly is useful here.
- Emphasis should be placed on spontaneity and a natural flow of individual oral presentations in a coherent and clear natural manner.
- Planning skills should be practised of how to: start, develop the main ideas, build into a climax and come to a good conclusion in the presentations.
- Practise interactive skills by conducting questions and answers on a regular basis with various topics from the options; practise receptive skills by listening to teachers' presentations, topics for discussions and media materials.

- Draft a reasonable oral practice timeline, based on a balance of the four language acquisition skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking.
- Implement classroom practice with long-term planning to allow future candidates to receive continuous support.
- Combine classroom teaching with hands-on exercises such as frequent individual presentations; pair work; small group projects; tutorials and topic research and discussions.
- Find suitable authentic learning materials from various sources in addition to mainstream classroom teaching materials.
- If possible, arrange for immersion sessions, field trips locally, or out of city/country immersion programs to enhance candidates' language skills in a cultural environment where the language is spoken.
- Explore various venues / mechanism of improving teaching methodologies by using a variety of textbooks, media information, websites and live resource materials.
- Be more receptive to new technologies, but at the same time, be careful not to be too distracted by electronic gadgets.
- Encourage future candidates to choose a topic on Chinese language and culture about which they are genuinely interested, but make sure it is focused and manageable.
- Keep practising and encourage candidates to actively involve themselves in student-centred activities by stimulating independent thinking.
- Finally, be open to candidates' ideas and encourage creativity.

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms

There were instances of candidate names and/or candidate numbers incorrectly entered on the 2/BIA forms. In future please take time to double check these forms to ascertain the accuracy of such data.

Photographs chosen for part 1 were generally appropriate and interesting, but, in a few cases the captions provided were somewhat too general. For this purpose please use words that simply and directly convey what the photographs are supposed to represent.

In part 2, only one question should be asked at a time (except where questions take the form of “Do you think/know/like, etc. ...?” these elicit yes/no responses, which may be immediately followed by “Why?”) and make sure that the questions are comprehensible to candidates.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The material received reflected well the candidates' varying abilities in speaking the language. The photographs used in the assessment process had been well-chosen and were most helpful in: enhancing the candidates' performance, stimulating them to talk freely and intelligently about: their daily activities, their significant experiences at school and at home, their social engagements and their understanding of the world at large, as well as their thoughts and feelings about themselves and people around them.

Candidate performance against each criterion

A large number of candidates, exhibited in their presentation, an ability to express themselves clearly and thoughtfully, thanks in particular to the photographs provided. Weaker candidates were mostly hampered by limited vocabulary, and to a lesser degree, deficient grammatical knowledge. Systematically incorrect pronunciation of certain speech sounds can largely be attributed to interference from candidate's mother tongue. Despite these obstacles, most candidates appeared to be satisfied with what they had learned about the language and the culture behind it. Interactions between teachers and candidates were on the whole amicable and spontaneous, suggesting a harmonious and rewarding relationship between teacher and learner.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Encourage future candidates to work with their classmates and get talking partners among them so that they can articulate their oral skills in Mandarin beyond the classroom.
- Let them be aware of the abundant Chinese language materials available online – films, videos, newscasts, etc.

Higher level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

General comments

The written assignment component has undergone review, and a new written assignment specification and assessment will be in place from the May 2015 session onwards. Please see the Language B Subject Guide (first examinations 2015) for details.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

In general, the written assignments submitted were of good quality.

Candidates have chosen from different aspects of the literary work to complete their assignments, which have been creative and satisfactory. Creative use of the literary texts was made in various ways. The most common choices of the assignments included: a diary of a character, an interview with a character, a different ending of the story. However, when candidates chose to write an imaginative piece of work, the connection with the original text was not always strong, thus were often awarded only 3-4 marks for Criterion B. Providing an alternative ending to the literary work was less successful than other formats because candidates would fail to capture the author's writing style and diction. The key point is for candidates to show their understanding of the original work through their assignment.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Language

The level of language used in the assignments ranged from adequate to effective. Most candidates used a wide range of vocabulary accurately. Homophone misplacement, or character errors were still common even when the use of a dictionary is permitted.

There was a very high percentage of work where the language proficiency was extremely high. Perhaps, these candidates would find a Language A course more enriching and challenging.

Criterion B: Content

The most successful assignments were written with care to show a close connection with the literary text. Less successful assignments had little connection or reference to the literary text.

Several candidates wrote an additional end chapter. These candidates successfully imitated the author's writing style, connected with a keen observation on the subtlety in the literary text. Some wrote personal diary entries about the study of the literary text by re-telling the plot, which could achieve high marks in Criterion B.

Criterion C: Format

Most candidates achieved good marks, if they were clear in their rationale about the text type they planned to use and produced the same text type with the appropriate conventions. To a large extent, most candidates were able to use the conventions of their chosen text type appropriately and effectively.

In some cases, candidates specified a certain text type in their rationale and then produced another. If candidates failed to specify the text type in their rationale and the assignment did not show recognizable conventions of a particular text type, the mark awarded for Criterion C would be limited.

Criterion D: Rational

In general, rationales were written well. A rationale should include: 1) a brief summary of the literary text and how the assignment connects with it, 2) introduction of the assignment, and 3) its aim and explain how to reach the aim. It is important to write a clear rationale.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should ensure that their candidates are fully aware of the requirements of the rationale.
- The rationale should serve as an introduction to the task. A clear rationale would include the details highlighted above.
- Candidates / teachers should be aware that by adopting a particular style from the literary text to write an assignment which has little connection to the original text is not recommended, as it cannot show an understanding of the literary text read.
- Candidates should choose a specific focus, or aspect, to write their assignment.
- Teachers should make sure that the same topic is not repeated by different candidates.
- Candidates should not copy large sections from the literary work. In such cases, the copied section will be deducted from the total word count, thus the total word count might fall below the required amount and result in a 1-mark penalty in Criterion A.
- It is recommended that the rationale be placed immediately after the coversheet and not at the very end of the assignment.
- Candidates should be made aware that they lose a mark from Criterion A if they write

less than the prescribed word limit. Also where an assignment exceeds the word limit, examiners will read only the first 720 characters.

Further comments

The overall quality of written assignments has improved. It is very encouraging that most candidates know how to write a clear and effective rationale. Teachers should spend more time on guiding candidates how to choose a suitable WA. Teachers should not set the task for candidates.

A good percentage of candidates performed extremely well. The evidence suggests that these candidates are most likely to be native speakers of Chinese. It is recommended that centres should follow IB recommendations closely to place future candidates in appropriate IB courses.

Standard level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

General comments

The written assignment component has undergone review, and a new written assignment specification and assessment will be in place from the May 2015 session onwards. Please see the Language B Subject Guide (first examinations 2015) for details.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Given that this is the second year of the written assignment component being included in the Language B program, for the most part, the teaching and the work produced is relatively good.

The range and suitability of work submitted was very wide, both in terms of source texts selected for candidates use and the assignments produced. Some source texts were of dissertation level difficulty and length, some others were poorly edited, or, overly short texts. Many candidates produced writing that were of highly educated, native speaker writing level quality, some candidate's writing skills were fairly inadequate. There were of course a good percentage of source texts and candidate writing that were appropriate for standard level. There are concerns of selected texts that were far too difficult and overly long, or short, which is beyond the candidate's ability to extract appropriate and relevant information and details to

be used in their writings. Another concern is the number of teachers who simply provided texts taken from textbooks, or past IB examination papers. The assessment requirements intends for teachers to guide candidates to acquire the skill to comprehend authentic writings and apply the reading in real-life communicative needs.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Language

Candidates' work demonstrated a wide range of language competence, from that of highly native level writing to the very weak. Some high performing assignments lost marks due to excessive copying of the source texts, without referencing, despite the fact that they were skilful in weaving together the copied texts. Use of formulaic language in certain text types is observed in some centres. Teachers should discourage formulaic language, but rather guide candidates to write creatively to reflect their own style and thinking.

Criterion B: Content

Most candidates used source text details in support of their new writing. Organization of the details is one area that can be further improved. Source text information should be appropriately referenced to avoid plagiarism. Assignments purely based on candidates own views on the issue/topic should be avoided. Some simply copied excessively, though put together quite skilfully, the candidates' own view are lost in the copying.

Criterion C: Format

The most popular text types used were diary, letters, email, interview and blog/web. For the most part, the conventions of the above text types were followed in terms of format and tone. However, candidates should remember: to apply paragraph indentation, no signature is needed in a diary; no date information is needed at the end of an email. If emails and blogs are to be the chosen text type, formal conventions of to/from, subject should be included for emails, and appropriate elements for blogs need to be present and clear as well.

Criterion D: Rationale

Although the required elements for the rationale are explicitly given in the Subject Guide: an introduction, aim(s), and how the aim(s) have been achieved, and about 120-character word count, this criterion appeared to be most problematic. In particular, the 120-character word count and explaining how aims have been achieved in relation to source texts. Simply stating "I chose to use text type X, because I can best express what goals I want to achieve, so I chose text type X" does not explain how aims have been achieved. Whereas, "I will discuss XX and use the YY information from source text A/B/C to explain how..." is more accurate in which readers can understand how the candidate plans to achieve the aims stated.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers, especially new teachers should familiarize themselves with the

requirements of this component. Networking between centres and use of the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC) can be helpful.

- While the intention is good to provide the candidates with formulaic language and form sentences to begin and end a component of writing, teachers should expose candidates to and guide them to explore and practise different type of language that reflect the candidate's own style of writing.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 9	10 – 18	19 – 27	28 – 36	37 - 46	47 - 55	56 - 60

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

Some candidates appeared to find difficulty in understanding literary based vocabulary in Text A: question 8 and Text D: question 43.

Filling in the gap questions assessed in Text B, questions 18 to 21, were also challenging for some candidates.

For short-answer questions, some candidates made the mistake of copying the entire sentence or sentences. Consequently, the logic was incorrect, or the response did not directly answer the question. Examples of such questions are Text C: question 27, Text E: questions 50 and 51.

Some candidates completely ignored the content of the text and answered short-answer questions using their own words. In some cases, the logic was correct, but the message was not from the required content of the text, hence it was wrong.

Although somewhat challenging, the above are good ways to differentiate between candidate language proficiency levels.

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

- Understanding of key messages from texts is an area where candidates appeared to be well prepared. This was reflected in a relatively good performance in choosing correct descriptions/summary sentences and matching sentence

endings. Examples are Text A: questions 1 and 9, Text B: questions 12-14, Text D: questions 37 and 40-42, Text E, questions 56-57.

- Candidates did relatively well on the difficult questions of choosing the correct interview questions in Text C: questions 23-26.
- Gap-filling exercises: Text A: questions 6-7, Text B: question 20.
- General proficiency in reading comprehension was very impressive, which meant that candidates were generally well prepared to read to comprehend key information.

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

Strengths

- Candidates' ability to grasp key points in reading comprehension.
- Most candidates were well prepared and able to handle a variety of texts.
- Even though the modern poem was new this session, most candidates appeared to have handled it very well.

Weaknesses

- Some candidates found the literary text challenging, such as Text D, which conveyed subtle emotion and messages.
- Even though candidates have good general understanding of texts, some are less confident in responding to short-answer questions that require locating key information. Consequently, some candidates would copy an entire sentence, or sentences, which is not only unnecessary, but also causes the response to not be as succinct as required to answer the question.
- Some candidates left MCQs blank, rather than attempt the question in a logical way through careful elimination.
- Some candidates did not follow the question rubric carefully, for example, Text A: question 8, which asks for one example. However, some candidates gave three examples.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Apart from general comprehension of key messages from the texts, it is important to teach candidates skills to interpret words and phrases by looking at each character components and to work out meaning, or messages within context.
- It is also important to teach candidates to understand how sentences and paragraphs

are connected with different cohesive devices. These are important strategies to enhance interpretive skills.

- Broaden the range of vocabulary by challenging candidates about synonyms, antonyms and how each individual character contributes to the meaning of the word.
- During reading exercises, identify words with similar, but subtle differences and help candidates to distinguish between them.
- Expose candidates more to the language used by native speakers, for example, more sophisticated idioms and expressions, literary conjunctions, paragraph connectors.
- Candidates should familiarize themselves with literary texts and modern poems to get used to language subtlety and nuances.
- Teach candidates to follow instructions. If the question asks for one example, do not give three.
- For short-answer questions, candidates should answer with relevant information and not just copy the entire sentence or sentences.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 6	7 – 13	14 - 16	17 - 22	23 - 27	28 - 33	34 - 44

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

The majority of candidates appeared challenged by gap-filling exercises, Text A: questions 11-13. Another problematic area was identifying the synonym from the text, Text C: questions 19-22. A number of candidates wrote either a complete sentence, or only one Chinese character.

For short-answer questions such as Text B: questions 17 and 18, undue copying of the text is still an issue this session for some candidates, some copied the whole paragraph with the exact same wordings from the text for their answers.

As in previous sessions, a good number of candidates still struggled with true/false with justification questions. Many failed to earn marks for these questions because they did not follow both parts of the question rubric, which requires the correct true/false tick and an accurate quotation for the justification.

A number of candidates answered question 37 by referring to others part of the text instead of the required paragraph stated clearly on the examination paper. Some candidates gave the answers simply based on their own opinions and ideas of the issue without referring to the details from the text. Again, this was another clear example, that the candidate did not read the question rubric closely and carefully.

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

For this session, the language proficiency level among candidates showed a big range, those with a higher proficiency level seemed to be able to handle the paper fairly well, they could anticipate and interpret the hidden meanings, or messages of the texts to reach the correct answers. Those with a lower language proficiency level answered MCQs with better success.

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

Text A

Question 1: Some candidates may have struggled with the meaning of “高密”. Some were able to interpret the meaning of the question by their overall understanding of the article, and/or guess the meaning of the vocabulary by referring to the example given in question 2.

Questions 2-5: These questions did not prove to be problematic as the majority of candidates were able to identify the correct answers.

Questions 6-8: Consistent with the performance of past session true/false with justification questions, a number of candidates scored zero marks because they failed to follow both parts of the rubric, which requires the correct tick and a quotation that is correct and succinct. Among these three questions, candidates seemed to have little difficulty with questions 6 and 7, while many could not provide exact and accurate justifications for question 8.

Text B

Question 9: A good number of candidates failed to identify the correct text type “游记” of the text, those who answered correctly may have used the process of elimination.

Question 10: This was mostly answered correctly by candidates.

Questions 11-13: Appeared to be the most difficult set of questions on the paper. Some candidates did not understand the details of paragraph two and were therefore unable to choose the correct answers.

Questions 14-16: Many candidates demonstrated little difficulty with this set of questions. Question 16 seemed to be the most challenging among the three, many candidates were unable to provide the full name of the building for the correct answer and for some others they copied whole sentences.

Questions 17-18: Many candidates provided the correct answer for question 17, while some others seemed to be confused with what the question asked.

Text C

Questions 19-22: Proved to be the most difficult set of questions for candidates. Many of the candidates appeared to not understand the questions rubric, which was not familiar to them. Some gave only one Chinese character for their answer as stated in the example. Questions 19 and 20 appeared to be more difficult than questions 21 and 22. Some of the weaker responses excessively copied a whole sentence without identifying the correct answer.

Question 23: Many candidates appeared to have little difficulty with this question. Most of them identified B and C as the correct answers, while a number of them failed to give A and H.

Questions 24-26: These questions did not prove to be problematic as the majority of candidates were able to identify the correct sentence endings.

Question 27: This question was well answered.

Question 28: This question proved to be challenging for many candidates who failed to understand the keywords “Cantonese” and “One” in the question.

Question 29: There was an error in this MCQ. There was no correct answer. This question was disregarded and the exam paper was assessed out of 44 marks during the grade award process.

Text D

Question 30: Many candidates were able to answer this question correctly.

Questions 31-34: Many candidates seemed to have little difficulty with these questions.

Question 35: H was a common wrong answer.

Questions 36-37: A good number of candidates did not follow the question rubric and ignored the question by providing answers and giving quotations from other contributor’s comments instead of the two stated in the question rubric. For question 37, some candidates provided answers based on their own opinions without referring to the details given in the text.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers are advised to work on broadening the range of vocabulary the candidates use and use different strategies to teach synonyms during daily reading practice.
- Teachers should advise candidates to follow all part of a question rubric. Candidates should answer the question asked. For example, in true/false with justification questions, tick the correct box and provide the accurate quotation. Additionally,

candidates should be reminded not to excessively copy from the text for their justification. Quotations should be brief and precise.

- Teachers should train and encourage candidates to make reasonable guesses even when they are not sure about the correct answer. They should try not to leave any questions unanswered.
- Teachers should familiarize candidates with a variety of text types during reading practice.
- Extensive reading of authentic materials from different Chinese speaking regions would be beneficial for candidates.
- Practise past examination questions in preparation for the actual examination.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 13	14 - 20	21 - 26	27 - 33	34 – 39	40 - 45

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

Section A

Question 3 (a blog) was the most popular task selected by candidates.

There was a clear division between candidates who appeared to have been actively taught how to address text types such as a speech, letter, email, interview or blog, and those who seemed to have no real idea about them. Teachers should familiarize candidates with the common text types listed in the Subject Guide.

Section B

This is an assessment that requires candidates to respond to a stimulus text provided. Candidates are to write a reasoned argument with details. There are specific skills required for this task, including the ability to formulate a viewpoint quickly and then explain it succinctly. The key point of a good response in this section is to respond to the stimulus text directly, and not to go off topic.

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

Section A

Candidates in general have demonstrated very high linguistic skills as well as maturity in their thoughts. In addition, they chose a topic suitable to their writing skills and knowledge. Thus, the outcome of the writing was quite satisfactory.

Section B

Most candidates were prepared to form a point of view to respond to the stimulus text and to make at least some attempt, to justify that point of view in logical and convincing ways. Quite a few candidates, however, failed to respond to the stimulus text directly, instead, they talked about discrimination extensively, and did not link their response to the stimulus.

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

Section A

Task 3 was the most popular, the topic may have been familiar about how to help students be healthy under pressure. Candidates may have also studied related issues under the option of health, or had a direct personal experience of being overwhelmed with school work.

Task 1

This was not a straight-forward topic to write convincing statements about how food was influenced under globalization and its pros and cons. The wide range of success indicated that some candidates did not have a clear way to provide detailed views on globalization.

Most scripts handled the text type competently, with a clear address to the teachers and fellow students at the beginning and a conclusion at the end. Some scripts made a token address to the audience at the start, but then failed to give a summary at the end.

A factor distinguishing the best scripts was the ability to provide clear and convincing statements on pros and cons of how food culture was impacted by globalization.

Task 2

Candidates who attempted this task generally handled it competently, possibly because the topic was easy to convey. However, some candidates failed to address the school leader with an appropriate title, and to use a more formal voice in the letter.

Task 3

This was the most popular topic. However, the majority of candidates failed to write conventions appropriate to a blog. Many scripts simply looked like an essay, or a guideline, and not a blog.

Task 4

Even though an interview may seem easy to write, many candidates wrote only a dialogue between the reporter and the parents. A good interview should provide a clear context at the beginning, informative content in a form of Q&A in the middle and where appropriate a conclusion at the end.

Task 5

E-mails are so common in our everyday life that candidates forgot to include conventions that are unique to e-mails, such as to, from, subject. As a consequence, many scripts did not look much different to a letter.

Section B

Candidates displayed a very wide range of approaches to the task, from: agreeing the central point of the stimulus text in detail, to agreeing generally with the central point, to using the stimulus text simply as a starting point for mitigating ideas. However, there were many cases where candidates failed to respond to the stimulus text directly, instead, they used the main theme of discrimination as the entry point to elaborate their responses. It is important that the response is focused and directly responds to the stimulus text and to not write off topic.

Unlike in Section A, there is no criterion for format in section B, so candidates do not need to pay much attention to text type conventions. Instead, a clear and logical argument addressing the stimulus text is critical to earn high marks.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates should select a topic that they understand and can write well, including using the appropriate conventions for the text type required, rather than selecting the most interesting topic.
- Candidates should be given many opportunities to develop their writing skills from vocabulary building, Chinese character writing, sentence structure expansion, and paragraph development.
- Candidates should be given an opportunity to explore a wider range of topics within the curriculum.

- Teachers should work on improving future candidates' written productive skills by improving their linguistic skills and widening their knowledge on the topics studied. This will allow candidates to communicate accurately and in depth in writing for a variety of purposes.
- Teachers should familiarize candidates with different text types listed in the Subject Guide.
- Ensure that candidates read the question fully and demonstrate their knowledge on style, register and proper format when responding to a particular question and text type.
- Teachers should provide enough opportunities in class for candidates to learn how to write a reasoned and logical argument responding to a stimulus text, such as a quotation, based on the core.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 – 12	13 - 16	17 – 20	21 - 25

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

It appeared that the candidates who chose tasks 3 and 5 experienced the most difficulties in fully understanding the tasks. Task 3 required candidates to write a blog to share their successful experience in staying healthy throughout the year. Many candidates wrote their blogs focusing on only one aspect, so although they showed a very good command of the language with a very clear detailed presentation, they still could not achieve high marks. Similarly, task 5 focused on taking the affirmative on choosing electronic textbooks over traditional paper textbooks. Many candidates compared the pros and cons of using electronic textbooks and quite a few candidates focused on discussing the pros and cons of using a computer, rather than taking an opinionated stance and supporting it.

Regarding format, the blog in task 3 and the debate in task 5 appeared to be challenging for some candidates. Quite a few candidates mixed the format in task 4 with a letter instead of an e-mail.

As for meeting the criteria, overall, candidates performed lower in criterion B as they did not successfully interpret the tasks, and often confused themselves with the point of view.

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

It appeared that most of the candidates were well prepared to produce comprehensible messages with adequate command of language, despite not always being able to produce the supporting details according to the task requirements.

Most candidates performed well on the topics of cultural, leisure and science and technology. They demonstrated a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of the topics and generally met the format and length requirements.

Task 1 and 4 appeared straight forward for candidates to address. For task 1 most candidates could focus on comparing the similarities and differences of different festivals in two countries. For task 4, the vocabulary required seemed more fundamental for candidates. Candidates were able to give good suggestions of what need to be seen or done if their friend was visiting their hometown. It appeared that this task related to one's own experiences, which made it easier for candidates.

Candidates were more prepared for some types of writing such as writing a normal essay (task 1) and writing a letter (task 4). However, they did not distinguish the finer details in the corresponding message, such as the difference between an e-mail and a letter. Candidates were better prepared on format this year. For example, when they chose to write a blog, most of them wrote a topic and a date, an improvement compared with last year. As for criterion B: It can be shown from candidates' writing that almost all of the topics were covered from previous years. Most candidates could therefore develop their ideas with some details.

Out of criterion A, B and C, candidates appeared to have done better in criterion C in terms of understanding the format of the text required. Although candidates are sometimes unfamiliar with the overall text format, they were able to distinguish from the targeted audience and their own point of view.

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

Task 1

Most of the candidates who chose this task were able to provide the supporting details to meet the requirements of the task. This topic is about traditional culture and most candidates seemed to have been well-prepared. As a result, it was easier for them to have ideas and a lot of supporting details. The format and the register also appeared easy for candidates. However, some candidates may have thought that it is not necessary to write a title for this kind of task.

Task 2

Compared to other tasks, not many candidates chose this topic. The candidates usually performed well on this question because the topic was relevant to their daily life, so they easily came up with the supporting ideas. However, quite a few misunderstood the task requirements and focused wrongly on the environmental issue rather than the theme “customs and traditions”. Despite this, most candidates did very well on the format. Although quite a few candidates wrote it as a speech, which was not what the question asked.

Task 3

Many candidates chose this task. However, most of the candidates did not provide the necessary details with regard to how to lead a healthy life throughout the entire year. Candidates were able to list ways to improve their health, however, were not able to express how they planned to be healthy for the entire year.

Task 4

Most of the candidates chose this task. It appeared to be the most straight-forward topic because of its relevance to their interests on giving suggestions on what to see and what to do in their hometown. As a result, it appeared easier for them to have ideas and develop them coherently. Most candidates were familiar with the format of an e-mail, but still quite a few candidates wrote it in a letter format. Most candidates were able to use the informal register and address the audience very well.

It was difficult for some candidates to substantiate their ideas with good supporting details. If the candidate only wrote about very common places to see and things to do that one can do anywhere, then they would not achieve high marks for criterion B.

Task 5

Most of the candidates could give sound reasoning of the affirmative using the electronic textbooks over the traditional paper textbooks. The challenges of this task appeared to be the format and the understanding of the task. It required candidates to give arguments in affirmative, on a debate to choose electronic textbooks over traditional paper ones. Quite a few candidates only compared the pros and cons about these two choices.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Registration and tone serving different purpose should be a focus of teaching.
- Teach correct format structures of emails, letters, blogs.
- Teach the differences of writing an article for a school magazine versus a speech to schoolmates. An article, essay, or blog all need a title.
- Future candidates should examine the topic very carefully and analyse the request of a

topic before writing.

- Emphasize that candidates should not write too much Pinyin or English.
- Practise using conjunctions and paragraphing.
- Practise tasks that appeared in previous examination papers to help candidates to gain confidence in writing compositions.
- Give candidates access to the assessment criteria detailed in the Subject Guide so that they can familiarize themselves with what is required.