

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/11
Reading

Key messages

Candidates should read both passages and questions carefully before starting to write their answers. Candidates are encouraged to use their own words to answer questions in **Section 1**. Candidates should include valid points from both reading passages to answer the two bullet points in **Section 2** and should write in a summary style. Candidates should not write from personal experience or general knowledge and should write within the character limit expressed on the question paper.

In order to score well in either section, candidates need to:

- have an accurate understanding of the theme of the two reading passages
- understand, select and convey information from passages to specific questions
- analyse and evaluate what is relevant to specific purposes
- be able to explain the author's perspective
- understand how authors achieve effects or use language to influence the reader
- make accurate and effective use of grammatical structures, sentences and punctuation.

In addition, in **Section 1**, candidates are reminded to pay attention to the mark allocation to ensure that they develop their answers fully enough to score all available marks.

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

- extract points from the two reading passages
- order and present facts, ideas and opinions in own words in response to the two questions asked
- write in a summary style with logical linkage
- use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures and correct characters and punctuation.

General comments

Candidates generally responded well to this paper, showing their comprehension of the two passages and their sound level of linguistic competence.

Questions requiring simple and straightforward answers were generally done well, while answers to more stretching questions needed to contain more explanations written using language generated by the candidate rather than being copied from the passage. It is strongly recommended that candidates read the questions carefully before attempting to answer to ensure their answers are fully relevant. Candidates should also be reminded to use their own words to paraphrase the language given in the passage and should avoid lifting extended chunks of text. In most cases, where candidates rely heavily on lifting, it is not clear that they have understood the text and/or the question.

In order to make an improvement in future examinations **for Section 1**, candidates are advised to pay more attention to the requirements of the question and improve their analytical and summary skills.

In **Section 2**, candidates are encouraged to use their own words to summarise. Most candidates were aware that they needed to include points derived from the two passages. No credit can be given for points made from general knowledge of the subject matter. Successful candidates managed to keep their summary concise and precise, and within the character limit. In some cases improvements in technique could be made by avoiding repetition of information in the summary; this sometimes occurred this year where candidates included lengthy examples from the passages which used up character space. The best summaries had good linkage and a coherent writing style.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1, Question 1

Most candidates performed well, being able to answer the questions adequately, focusing on the key phrases and using their own words as and when required. Candidates are reminded to pay attention to the mark allocation to ensure that they develop their answers fully enough to score all available marks. A question worth 3 marks will require 3 distinct points.

It is important that candidates read both the reading passages and questions carefully to ensure that all relevant details are included in their answer. Candidates are reminded to use their own words as much as possible in order to gain higher marks for Accuracy. A small number of candidates lifted the wording of their answers from the text without any attempt at rephrasing or targeting the specific demands of the question.

- (a) This question asked candidates to explain the meaning of 'black spot' in life. Many candidates achieved full marks. A few candidates did not explain the meaning, but instead copied the whole sentence from the text, which contained extraneous information. Some candidates needed to include '小小' or '一点'.
- (b) This question was generally well-answered, though some candidates only mentioned one point. Candidates should be reminded to take notice of the number of marks per question as this will help them to focus their responses clearly on how to achieve these. A question worth 2 marks will require 2 distinct points.
- (c) Most candidates answered this question successfully, but some candidates did not read the questions carefully and mixed up this question with **Question (d)** and copied almost the whole paragraph.
- (d) As mentioned above, some candidates mixed up this question with **Question (c)**, but in general, the majority of candidates did well in this question.
- (e) Candidates answered this question well. A small number of candidates seemed to misunderstand the phrase '柳暗花明'.
- (f) This question was answered correctly by most candidates.
- (g)(i) This question was also well handled by candidates, with the majority of candidates achieving full marks. A significant number of candidates copied the whole paragraph 4, which would have been taken into account when awarding the Accuracy mark for this section.
- (g)(ii) This question tested candidates' analytical skills, which proved to be the most difficult question in **Section 1**. Only the strongest candidates managed to answer this question successfully, showing their ability to analyse the text and explain their ideas in their own words rather than only copying from the text.
- (h) This question also proved to be challenging for some candidates. It tested candidates' ability to summarise. Responses to this question produced a variety of performance. The strongest candidates demonstrated a high level of comprehension and analytical skill. They achieved full marks by summarising the text in their own words. Other candidates managed to identify one or two points from the passage.

Accuracy

Those candidates who achieved 5 marks for Accuracy in **Section 1** used clear and carefully chosen vocabulary and sentences with hardly any technical errors. Candidates should be aware that they need to generate some of their own language by paraphrasing or manipulating the original wording of the reading passage to demonstrate that they can write accurate Chinese. The highest marks for Accuracy were awarded to candidates who could show they are able to use their own language to answer questions, rather than lifting excessively from the reading passages.

Section 2, Question 2

Candidates were required to extract information from the two reading passages and use their own words to write a summary structured around the two bullet points given in the question paper. Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the passages and were able to identify and address key points accurately.

This year many candidates were awarded quite low marks for Content as they tended to elaborate excessively on a small number of points or wrote a more personal response describing their own experience. Candidates should be reminded that marks are only awarded for points drawn from the given two passages and not from general knowledge or personal experience. Some candidates needed to improve the structure and flow of the summary to avoid focusing too much on one or a few points, giving quotations and examples or lifting too much from the texts.

Candidates should be reminded that there are 15 marks for content in **Question 2**, which means that they need to include at least 15 distinct points and ideas from the two passages.

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

The strongest answers achieved high marks for style and organisation by candidates using their own language to produce a well-structured and focused summary. Candidates who exhibited excellent ability to insert transition words or sentences between each point selected from the passages also scored highly. Weaker responses often included a long, rambling introduction and conclusion, sometimes giving many quotations or examples or being repetitive.

Most candidates were aware that the response should be around 250 characters in length, whilst others produced free-style and excessively long responses. Anything written in excess of 300 characters is disregarded, which can lead to content points not being rewarded if they appear after the character limit. Part of this exercise is to show an ability to summarise, and so it is important that the points are presented clearly, precisely and succinctly.

Most candidates were able to use clear and appropriate language in writing the summary. In order to achieve a mark within band 5 (excellent) for Accuracy, candidates need to choose both vocabulary and sentences with greater care. Weaker responses were characterised by the use of simple vocabulary and sentence structures with some technical errors.

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

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/12
Reading

Key messages

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In order to make an improvement in future examinations **for Section 1**, candidates are advised to pay more attention to the requirements of the question and improve their analytical and summary skills.

In **Section 2**, candidates are encouraged to use their own words to summarise. Most candidates were aware that they needed to include points derived from the two passages. No credit can be given for points made from general knowledge of the subject matter. Successful candidates managed to keep their summary concise and precise, and within the character limit. In some cases improvements in technique could be made by avoiding repetition of information in the summary; this sometimes occurred this year where candidates included lengthy examples from the passages which used up character space. The best summaries had good linkage and a coherent writing style.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1, Question 1

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It is important that candidates read both the reading passages and questions carefully to ensure that all relevant details are included in their answer. Candidates are reminded to use their own words as much as possible in order to gain higher marks for Accuracy. A small number of candidates lifted the wording of their answers from the text without any attempt at rephrasing or targeting the specific demands of the question.

- (a) This question asked candidates to explain the meaning of 'black spot' in life. Many candidates achieved full marks. A few candidates did not explain the meaning, but instead copied the whole sentence from the text, which contained extraneous information. Some candidates needed to include '小小' or '一点'.
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Section 2, Question 2

Candidates were required to extract information from the two reading passages and use their own words to write a summary structured around the two bullet points given in the question paper. Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the passages and were able to identify and address key points accurately.

This year many candidates were awarded quite low marks for Content as they tended to elaborate excessively on a small number of points or wrote a more personal response describing their own experience. Candidates should be reminded that marks are only awarded for points drawn from the given two passages and not from general knowledge or personal experience. Some candidates needed to improve the structure and flow of the summary to avoid focusing too much on one or a few points, giving quotations and examples or lifting too much from the texts.

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The strongest answers achieved high marks for style and organisation by candidates using their own language to produce a well-structured and focused summary. Candidates who exhibited excellent ability to insert transition words or sentences between each point selected from the passages also scored highly. Weaker responses often included a long, rambling introduction and conclusion, sometimes giving many quotations or examples or being repetitive.

Most candidates were aware that the response should be around 250 characters in length, whilst others produced free-style and excessively long responses. Anything written in excess of 300 characters is disregarded, which can lead to content points not being rewarded if they appear after the character limit. Part of this exercise is to show an ability to summarise, and so it is important that the points are presented clearly, precisely and succinctly.

Most candidates were able to use clear and appropriate language in writing the summary. In order to achieve a mark within band 5 (excellent) for Accuracy, candidates need to choose both vocabulary and sentences with greater care. Weaker responses were characterised by the use of simple vocabulary and sentence structures with some technical errors.

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FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/13
Reading

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General comments

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In order to make an improvement in future examinations **for Section 1**, candidates are advised to pay more attention to the requirements of the question and improve their analytical and summary skills.

In **Section 2**, candidates are encouraged to use their own words to summarise. Most candidates were aware that they needed to include points derived from the two passages. No credit can be given for points made from general knowledge of the subject matter. Successful candidates managed to keep their summary concise and precise, and within the character limit. In some cases improvements in technique could be made by avoiding repetition of information in the summary; this sometimes occurred this year where candidates included lengthy examples from the passages which used up character space. The best summaries had good linkage and a coherent writing style.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1, Question 1

Most candidates performed well, being able to answer the questions adequately, focusing on the key phrases and using their own words as and when required. Candidates are reminded to pay attention to the mark allocation to ensure that they develop their answers fully enough to score all available marks. A question worth 3 marks will require 3 distinct points.

It is important that candidates read both the reading passages and questions carefully to ensure that all relevant details are included in their answer. Candidates are reminded to use their own words as much as possible in order to gain higher marks for Accuracy. A small number of candidates lifted the wording of their answers from the text without any attempt at rephrasing or targeting the specific demands of the question.

- (a) The majority of candidates achieved full marks. In cases where only 1 mark was scored, candidates usually needed to also include the interpretation of ‘自尊心’ or ‘精益求精’.
- (b) This question was well handled by most candidates. A small number of candidates needed to include details like ‘每周’ or ‘到工厂’.
- (c) (i) This question asks candidates to identify the quality checks needed. Most candidates were able to identify and convey the information from the text to gain full marks. Some candidates did not include the first point in their answer, which was ‘亲自带着电机专家从日本赶到工厂检查’.
- (c) (ii) Most candidates answered this question successfully, including an analysis of the ways that the product manager dealt with the problems.
- (d) (i) Candidates were required to quote 3 words or phrases from the passage to describe the work of the Ramen chefs. Marks could only be awarded for the particular words or phrases. This question required careful reading on the part of the candidate, and weaker responses tended to be too general, quoting large chunks of text where a precise phrase was needed.
- (d) (ii) This question tested candidates’ ability to summarise and proved to be a clear differentiator for strong candidates, who were able to successfully classify from which aspects ‘拉面师傅’ exhibits the craftsmanship. Weaker responses to this question often contained copied material from the passage. This question required a global reading of the passage, selecting the appropriate information from different sections, and only the strongest candidates answered it well.
- (e) This question also tested candidates’ ability to summarise. Responses to this question produced a variety of performance. The strong candidates demonstrated a high level of comprehension and analytical skill. They achieved full marks by summarising the text in their own words. Other candidates managed to identify one or two points from the passage.

Accuracy

Those candidates who achieved 5 marks for Accuracy in **Section 1** used clear and carefully chosen vocabulary and sentences with hardly any technical errors. Candidates should be aware that they need to generate some of their own language by paraphrasing or manipulating the original wording of the reading passage to demonstrate that they can write accurate Chinese. The highest marks for Accuracy were awarded to candidates who could show they are able to use their own language to answer questions, rather than lifting excessively from the reading passages.

Section 2, Question 2

Candidates were required to extract information from the two reading passages and use their own words to write a summary structured around the two bullet points given in the question paper. Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the passages and were able to identify and address key points accurately.

Many responses started with the interpretation of ‘匠人气质’. The majority of candidates managed to include 9 to 12 points in their summary. Responses that were awarded low content marks tended to include

excessive elaborations on a small number of points or the introduction of candidates' own ideas. Candidates should be reminded that there are 15 marks for content in **Question 2**, which means that they need to include at least 15 distinct points and ideas from the two passages.

Candidates should be reminded that marks are only awarded for points drawn from the given two passages and not from general knowledge or personal experience. Some candidates needed to improve the structure and flow of the summary to avoid focusing too much on one or a few points, giving quotations and examples or lifting too much from the texts.

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

The strongest answers achieved high marks for style and organisation by candidates using their own language to produce a well-structured and focused summary. Candidates who exhibited excellent ability to insert transition words or sentences between each point selected from the passages also scored highly. Weaker responses often included a long, rambling introduction and conclusion, sometimes giving many quotations or examples or being repetitive.

Most candidates were aware that the response should be around 250 characters in length, whilst others produced free-style and excessively long responses. Anything written in excess of 300 characters is disregarded, which can lead to content points not being rewarded if they appear after the character limit. Part of this exercise is to show an ability to summarise, and so it is important that the points are presented clearly, precisely and succinctly.

Most candidates were able to use clear and appropriate language in writing the summary. In order to achieve a mark within band 5 (excellent) for Accuracy, candidates need to choose both vocabulary and sentences with greater care. Weaker responses were characterised by the use of simple vocabulary and sentence structures with some technical errors.

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

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/21
Writing

Key messages

The eight questions in this paper are divided into two sections: argumentative or discursive writing in **Section 1** and descriptive or narrative writing in **Section 2**. Candidates need to write in the appropriate style according to the question chosen.

To score well in either section, candidates need to:

- have an accurate understanding of the question in order to produce a focused and relevant response
- demonstrate original thinking
- demonstrate that they can use a wide range of sophisticated structures and expressions appropriately
- express what is thought, felt or imagined clearly and effectively
- avoid clichés and articulate genuine personal experience, when appropriate
- make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures and punctuation

Candidates should also strive to achieve the following in each essay genre:

- In an argumentative piece, candidates need to present a clearly stated view with supporting ideas and evidence in the form of facts or examples. These should be structured in a logical and progressive manner with sufficient maturity and complexity.
- In a discursive piece, candidates need to present a balanced view with opinions from more than one perspective. The arguments should be developed with supporting evidence from all sides and structured in a logical and progressive manner with sufficient maturity and complexity.
- In a descriptive piece, candidates need to describe a vivid scene in an effective manner and with sufficient detail.
- In a narrative piece, candidates need to tell a story (real or imagined) which includes complexity, tension and climax.

General comments

The majority of candidates performed well in this year's examination. Many candidates were able to present a complex argument or a balanced view on their chosen question. Candidates choosing to write narrative or descriptive essays were often very original or imaginative in their description of a specified scene or in their account of an experience or a story. Many candidates were able to produce a well-structured response to the chosen topics and demonstrated an assured use of language throughout, with a high level of fluency and sophisticated use of language. Nearly all candidates were able to produce a complete piece between 400 and 600 characters within the allotted time.

The full range of performance was seen across all four types of writing. More candidates chose to write on the topics in **Section 2** than those in **Section 1**, and candidates in general showed more confidence when writing on the descriptive and narrative topics than the argumentative and discursive topics. Candidates should be advised to read the questions carefully before choosing which question to answer to ensure they understand the chosen question fully.

Candidates in general need to recognise the difference between argumentative writing and discursive writing. Argumentative compositions are expected to display a clear opinion on a topic. The strongest argumentative essays were clearly focussed on a particular viewpoint and presented a consistently persuasive argument. Strong answers were also characterised by the use of sophisticated structures, appropriate expressions and the presentation of a well-structured and convincing argument. Successful discursive essays presented a balanced view from more than one perspective. Many strong candidates who

chose the discursive topics were able to present a balanced and objective examination of the topic, without it being expressly neutral. Weaker answers needed to discuss or acknowledge both sides of the debate to achieve marks in the higher marking bands. A well-organised structure, including an introduction to the topic and the discussion of each issue in a separate paragraph, was usually produced in a good discursive writing piece. Such essays showed evidence of some pre-writing planning. In order to score in the higher bands in these genres, some candidates would benefit from constructing a brief plan to outline the essay, and ensure a strong question focus to avoid writing irrelevant material, and maintain a logical structure.

In general, candidates who wrote descriptive compositions were aware that the focus should be on description instead of storytelling. Strong responses frequently presented a vivid picture and created a complex atmosphere or tension and often also included lots of carefully chosen details and sensory information, which helped make the picture clear and realistic to readers. Weaker essays in this genre needed to improve the descriptive skills by applying various devices, vivid details and creating atmosphere.

There were many excellent narrative responses presenting a complex and sophisticated structure, with the best essays also using devices such as flashbacks, time lapses, etc. to add interest. The style of writing was mature, and lots of appropriate descriptions were included to serve the narrative purpose. Weaker narrative responses were often characterised by plain language, narrating everyday happenings or unlikely un-engaging events. They needed to build up tension and climax and develop character and plot during the process of narrating the story.

Style and accuracy

Style: Many candidates were able to produce a sophisticated piece of writing with an excellent range of expressions, complex sentence structures and very good organisation of ideas. They were able to write fluently, using a good range of structures and expressions. Weaker answers were characterised by repetitive language, sometimes using colloquial expressions excessively. Such answers needed to include a greater complexity of ideas and more variety in vocabulary and expressions. Candidates could improve by being more careful and precise in their use of expressions to ensure that they are used in an appropriate manner.

Accuracy: Most candidates demonstrated a high level of linguistic competence and a good grasp of Chinese grammar. Their use of structures was assured and their use of expressions appropriate in tone and register. Some candidates' use of Chinese structure showed interference from English grammar, for example, 和 was incorrectly used to link clauses.

Most candidates were confident in their use of punctuation and knew that full stops and commas should not be used at the beginning of a line. The majority of candidates also wrote the Chinese full stop correctly as a small circle and not a solid dot. In some cases, candidates used too many commas, with full stops only appearing at the end of each paragraph.

Candidates need to make sure that they are writing the correct character to express the intended meaning. Many candidates were able to showcase a wide range of vocabulary using a variety of characters. Others could improve by reducing the amount of incorrectly used characters in their compositions. Such errors could be reduced with more careful checking of work and a better understanding of characters that share the same pronunciation but with different meaning (homophones/homonyms). Candidates are reminded that whilst both simplified and full form characters are acceptable in this paper, it is good practice to be consistent and avoid mixing the two systems within the same piece of writing. Finally, candidates are reminded to write clearly and legibly to ensure the Examiner can read their scripts and fully credit them for what has been written.

Content and structure

Content: The most successful answers this year contained effective and convincing arguments, a moving story or vivid descriptions. Stronger answers were characterised by the use of sufficient detail, clarity of expression and fluency of style. Some excellent essays contained well-balanced arguments, imaginative stories with originality, or vivid descriptions from a fresh perspective.

Candidates were more likely to produce very convincing arguments when they felt strongly about a topic, as in the case of **Question 2**: 青少年应该多参加课外活动. Stories that were based on candidates' own experience tended to be convincing and touching, as in the case of **Question 7**: 那夜我无法入眠.

Structure: In general, candidates showed awareness of the need to structure their writing appropriately. Most compositions contained an effective introduction, followed by a progression of ideas, argument, storyline or description of a scene and used clear paragraphs. Weaker responses were characterised by the inclusion of too many ideas within a single paragraph, without an appropriate conclusion.

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

Comments on specific questions

Section 1: Discussion and Argument

Question 1

“滴水之恩，涌泉相报”。从**正反**两个方面谈谈你的看法。

Candidates were expected to develop a coherent discussion on this topic using arguments both for and against. The best responses often used a well-organised structure and developed arguments in a logical manner. Compositions frequently started by introducing the topic, ‘A drop of water shall be returned with a burst of spring.’ Stronger candidates were able to apply many relevant ancient sayings, historical facts and current social affairs to support their opinions and produce a convincing discussion. Others produced a more unbalanced discussion and needed to discuss both sides of the topic.

Question 2

青少年应该多参加课外活动。从**正反**两个方面谈谈你的看法。

This was one of the most popular topics in **Section 1** as it was a very relevant topic to candidates’ daily life. The majority of candidates choosing this topic were able to provide a balanced discussion and produce a well-organised structure. Many candidates listed the advantages of participating in extra-curricular activities and mentioned that taking part in extra-curricular activities may reduce their study time or lead students to go astray. Improvements could be made in some cases by providing a wider range of supportive examples and engaging in more in-depth discussions to answer the question.

Question 3

放弃也是一种选择。你为什么**同意或者不同意**这个观点？

The majority of candidates presented a clear opinion on the topic, ‘Giving up is also an option’. The strongest candidates were able to produce a well-organised structure and build-up a logical argument, focusing on why it is sometimes wise and acceptable to ‘give up’ and why under some circumstances it isn’t. They managed to ensure that each stage of the writing linked together logically. Some candidates needed to better understand the keywords of the topic as it was evident that they struggled to interpret the critical concepts of ‘放弃’ and ‘选择’. Some responses could have been improved by providing more in-depth discussion to make the writing more persuasive, as they relied solely on their daily experience to provide examples and support their arguments.

Question 4

拼搏要量力而行。你为什么**同意或者不同意**这个观点？

Fewer candidates chose to answer this question, but those who did generally presented a convincing opinion on the topic and wrote in a focussed way. Some compositions were successfully defined and developed within the area of study experience or career development, which conveyed candidates’ strong feelings on this topic. Stronger candidates were able to combine their own experience with the deeds of others, historical events or ancient sayings, to build up a well-organised structure to discuss the relationship between ‘achieving goals’ and ‘capability’. Weaker answers were often characterised by more clichéd responses and needed to show a deeper level of consideration.

Section 2: Description and Narrative

Question 5

描写春运期间一个火车站忙碌的景象

The majority of candidates choosing this topic managed to successfully create a vivid picture of a train station during the transport peak period of Spring Festival. Many excellent responses captured the essence of that special period and conveyed the complex atmosphere with a range of details. There was often a story involved but candidates managed to retain a focus on description instead of storytelling. Some candidates

communicated the scene from the perspective of hearing, vision or touch, to make a busy and vivid picture for readers. Some weaker candidates swayed too heavily towards a narrative piece, and omitted the descriptive detail needed.

Question 6

描写一个令人讨厌的人

Responses to this topic showed well-developed ideas and images of a person who annoyed others. Many candidates choosing this topic were able to describe a person with a wide range of details and conveyed this person's features from the perspective of appearance, movement, language, etc. Candidates needed to emphasise description rather than narrative. Some weaker candidates merely listed a series of points to show why this person was annoying or unpleasant, without the descriptive detail to create a vivid picture; others told a story about how the writer changed their negative attitude towards a person to one of love or respect, which digressed from the topic focus and again lacked sufficient descriptive elements.

Question 7

以“那夜我无法入眠... ..”为情境，写一个故事

This was a popular topic amongst candidates, in which they were expected to write a story with the scenario, 'I couldn't get to sleep that night...'. Some candidates successfully told stories based on their life experience. The strongest candidates created sophisticated atmospheres with adequate details and applied some devices, such as flashbacks, time lapses, etc. to make an effective climax. They were usually able to combine the narration and description harmoniously to vividly convey their feelings or emotions. Candidates should be reminded to avoid cliché in this topic. In a minor number of cases, candidates wrote irrelevant stories, only adding the sentence, 那夜我无法入眠 at the beginning and/or end of the composition. Candidates must retain relevance and focus on the topic of the essay title to score highly.

Question 8

以“一次不同寻常的会面”为题，写一个故事

Many good responses presented a story about 'an unusual meeting' by creating appropriate tension and excitement. Some excellent compositions had a complex plot and used sophisticated language to achieve particular effects and to create the climax. Candidates needed to focus on the keyword 'unusual' to convey how and why the meeting was special. Some pieces developed features of interest to the reader, but the climax was not managed effectively. Weaker answers were characterised by the use of quite plain language and/or a very straightforward story.

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/22
Writing

Key messages

The eight questions in this paper are divided into two sections: argumentative or discursive writing in **Section 1** and descriptive or narrative writing in **Section 2**. Candidates need to write in the appropriate style according to the question chosen.

To score well in either section, candidates need to:

- have an accurate understanding of the question in order to produce a focused and relevant response
- demonstrate original thinking
- demonstrate that they can use a wide range of sophisticated structures and expressions appropriately
- express what is thought, felt or imagined clearly and effectively
- avoid clichés and articulate genuine personal experience, when appropriate
- make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures and punctuation

Candidates should also strive to achieve the following in each essay genre:

- In an argumentative piece, candidates need to present a clearly stated view with supporting ideas and evidence in the form of facts or examples. These should be structured in a logical and progressive manner with sufficient maturity and complexity.
- In a discursive piece, candidates need to present a balanced view with opinions from more than one perspective. The arguments should be developed with supporting evidence from all sides and structured in a logical and progressive manner with sufficient maturity and complexity.
- In a descriptive piece, candidates need to describe a vivid scene in an effective manner and with sufficient detail.
- In a narrative piece, candidates need to tell a story (real or imagined) which includes complexity, tension and climax.

General comments

The majority of candidates performed well in this year's examination. Many candidates were able to present a complex argument or a balanced view on their chosen question. Candidates choosing to write narrative or descriptive essays were often very original or imaginative in their description of a specified scene or in their account of an experience or a story. Many candidates were able to produce a well-structured response to the chosen topics and demonstrated an assured use of language throughout, with a high level of fluency and sophisticated use of language. Nearly all candidates were able to produce a complete piece between 400 and 600 characters within the allotted time.

The full range of performance was seen across all four types of writing. More candidates chose to write on the topics in **Section 2** than those in **Section 1**, and candidates in general showed more confidence when writing on the descriptive and narrative topics than the argumentative and discursive topics. Candidates should be advised to read the questions carefully before choosing which question to answer to ensure they understand the chosen question fully.

Candidates in general need to recognise the difference between argumentative writing and discursive writing. Argumentative compositions are expected to display a clear opinion on a topic. The strongest argumentative essays were clearly focussed on a particular viewpoint and presented a consistently persuasive argument. Strong answers were also characterised by the use of sophisticated structures, appropriate expressions and the presentation of a well-structured and convincing argument. Successful discursive essays presented a balanced view from more than one perspective. Many strong candidates who

chose the discursive topics were able to present a balanced and objective examination of the topic, without it being expressly neutral. Weaker answers needed to discuss or acknowledge both sides of the debate to achieve marks in the higher marking bands. A well-organised structure, including an introduction to the topic and the discussion of each issue in a separate paragraph, was usually produced in a good discursive writing piece. Such essays showed evidence of some pre-writing planning. In order to score in the higher bands in these genres, some candidates would benefit from constructing a brief plan to outline the essay, and ensure a strong question focus to avoid writing irrelevant material, and maintain a logical structure.

In general, candidates who wrote descriptive compositions were aware that the focus should be on description instead of storytelling. Strong responses frequently presented a vivid picture and created a complex atmosphere or tension and often also included lots of carefully chosen details and sensory information, which helped make the picture clear and realistic to readers. Weaker essays in this genre needed to improve the descriptive skills by applying various devices, vivid details and creating atmosphere.

There were many excellent narrative responses presenting a complex and sophisticated structure, with the best essays also using devices such as flashbacks, time lapses, etc. to add interest. The style of writing was mature, and lots of appropriate descriptions were included to serve the narrative purpose. Weaker narrative responses were often characterised by plain language, narrating everyday happenings or unlikely un-engaging events. They needed to build up tension and climax and develop character and plot during the process of narrating the story.

Style and accuracy

Style: Many candidates were able to produce a sophisticated piece of writing with an excellent range of expressions, complex sentence structures and very good organisation of ideas. They were able to write fluently, using a good range of structures and expressions. Weaker answers were characterised by repetitive language, sometimes using colloquial expressions excessively. Such answers needed to include a greater complexity of ideas and more variety in vocabulary and expressions. Candidates could improve by being more careful and precise in their use of expressions to ensure that they are used in an appropriate manner.

Accuracy: Most candidates demonstrated a high level of linguistic competence and a good grasp of Chinese grammar. Their use of structures was assured and their use of expressions appropriate in tone and register. Some candidates' use of Chinese structure showed interference from English grammar, for example, 和 was incorrectly used to link clauses.

Most candidates were confident in their use of punctuation and knew that full stops and commas should not be used at the beginning of a line. The majority of candidates also wrote the Chinese full stop correctly as a small circle and not a solid dot. In some cases, candidates used too many commas, with full stops only appearing at the end of each paragraph.

Candidates need to make sure that they are writing the correct character to express the intended meaning. Many candidates were able to showcase a wide range of vocabulary using a variety of characters. Others could improve by reducing the amount of incorrectly used characters in their compositions. Such errors could be reduced with more careful checking of work and a better understanding of characters that share the same pronunciation but with different meaning (homophones/homonyms). Candidates are reminded that whilst both simplified and full form characters are acceptable in this paper, it is good practice to be consistent and avoid mixing the two systems within the same piece of writing. Finally, candidates are reminded to write clearly and legibly to ensure the Examiner can read their scripts and fully credit them for what has been written.

Content and structure

Content: The most successful answers this year contained effective and convincing arguments, a moving story or vivid descriptions. Stronger answers were characterised by the use of sufficient detail, clarity of expression and fluency of style. Some excellent essays contained well-balanced arguments, imaginative stories with originality, or vivid descriptions from a fresh perspective.

Candidates were more likely to produce very convincing arguments when they felt strongly about a topic, as in the case of **Question 2**: 青少年应该多参加课外活动. Stories that were based on candidates' own experience tended to be convincing and touching, as in the case of **Question 7**: 那夜我无法入眠.

Structure: In general, candidates showed awareness of the need to structure their writing appropriately. Most compositions contained an effective introduction, followed by a progression of ideas, argument, storyline or description of a scene and used clear paragraphs. Weaker responses were characterised by the inclusion of too many ideas within a single paragraph, without an appropriate conclusion.

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

Comments on specific questions

Section 1: Discussion and Argument

Question 1

“滴水之恩，涌泉相报”。从**正反**两个方面谈谈你的看法。

Candidates were expected to develop a coherent discussion on this topic using arguments both for and against. The best responses often used a well-organised structure and developed arguments in a logical manner. Compositions frequently started by introducing the topic, ‘A drop of water shall be returned with a burst of spring.’ Stronger candidates were able to apply many relevant ancient sayings, historical facts and current social affairs to support their opinions and produce a convincing discussion. Others produced a more unbalanced discussion and needed to discuss both sides of the topic.

Question 2

青少年应该多参加课外活动。从**正反**两个方面谈谈你的看法。

This was one of the most popular topics in **Section 1** as it was a very relevant topic to candidates’ daily life. The majority of candidates choosing this topic were able to provide a balanced discussion and produce a well-organised structure. Many candidates listed the advantages of participating in extra-curricular activities and mentioned that taking part in extra-curricular activities may reduce their study time or lead students to go astray. Improvements could be made in some cases by providing a wider range of supportive examples and engaging in more in-depth discussions to answer the question.

Question 3

放弃也是一种选择。你为什么**同意或者不同意**这个观点？

The majority of candidates presented a clear opinion on the topic, ‘Giving up is also an option’. The strongest candidates were able to produce a well-organised structure and build-up a logical argument, focusing on why it is sometimes wise and acceptable to ‘give up’ and why under some circumstances it isn’t. They managed to ensure that each stage of the writing linked together logically. Some candidates needed to better understand the keywords of the topic as it was evident that they struggled to interpret the critical concepts of ‘放弃’ and ‘选择’. Some responses could have been improved by providing more in-depth discussion to make the writing more persuasive, as they relied solely on their daily experience to provide examples and support their arguments.

Question 4

拼搏要量力而行。你为什么**同意或者不同意**这个观点？

Fewer candidates chose to answer this question, but those who did generally presented a convincing opinion on the topic and wrote in a focussed way. Some compositions were successfully defined and developed within the area of study experience or career development, which conveyed candidates’ strong feelings on this topic. Stronger candidates were able to combine their own experience with the deeds of others, historical events or ancient sayings, to build up a well-organised structure to discuss the relationship between ‘achieving goals’ and ‘capability’. Weaker answers were often characterised by more clichéd responses and needed to show a deeper level of consideration.

Section 2: Description and Narrative

Question 5

描写春运期间一个火车站忙碌的景象

The majority of candidates choosing this topic managed to successfully create a vivid picture of a train station during the transport peak period of Spring Festival. Many excellent responses captured the essence of that special period and conveyed the complex atmosphere with a range of details. There was often a story involved but candidates managed to retain a focus on description instead of storytelling. Some candidates

communicated the scene from the perspective of hearing, vision or touch, to make a busy and vivid picture for readers. Some weaker candidates swayed too heavily towards a narrative piece, and omitted the descriptive detail needed.

Question 6

描写一个令人讨厌的人

Responses to this topic showed well-developed ideas and images of a person who annoyed others. Many candidates choosing this topic were able to describe a person with a wide range of details and conveyed this person's features from the perspective of appearance, movement, language, etc. Candidates needed to emphasise description rather than narrative. Some weaker candidates merely listed a series of points to show why this person was annoying or unpleasant, without the descriptive detail to create a vivid picture; others told a story about how the writer changed their negative attitude towards a person to one of love or respect, which digressed from the topic focus and again lacked sufficient descriptive elements.

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以“那夜我无法入眠... ..”为情境，写一个故事

This was a popular topic amongst candidates, in which they were expected to write a story with the scenario, 'I couldn't get to sleep that night...'. Some candidates successfully told stories based on their life experience. The strongest candidates created sophisticated atmospheres with adequate details and applied some devices, such as flashbacks, time lapses, etc. to make an effective climax. They were usually able to combine the narration and description harmoniously to vividly convey their feelings or emotions. Candidates should be reminded to avoid cliché in this topic. In a minor number of cases, candidates wrote irrelevant stories, only adding the sentence, 那夜我无法入眠 at the beginning and/or end of the composition. Candidates must retain relevance and focus on the topic of the essay title to score highly.

Question 8

以“一次不同寻常的会面”为题，写一个故事

Many good responses presented a story about 'an unusual meeting' by creating appropriate tension and excitement. Some excellent compositions had a complex plot and used sophisticated language to achieve particular effects and to create the climax. Candidates needed to focus on the keyword 'unusual' to convey how and why the meeting was special. Some pieces developed features of interest to the reader, but the climax was not managed effectively. Weaker answers were characterised by the use of quite plain language and/or a very straightforward story.

FIRST LANGUAGE CHINESE

Paper 0509/23
Writing

Key messages

The eight questions in this paper are divided into two sections: argumentative or discursive writing in **Section 1** and descriptive or narrative writing in **Section 2**. Candidates need to write in the appropriate style according to the questions chosen.

To score well in either section, candidates need to:

- have an accurate understanding of the question in order to produce a focused and relevant response
- demonstrate original thinking
- demonstrate that they can use a wide range of sophisticated structures and expressions appropriately
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General comments

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Candidates in general need to recognise the difference between argumentative writing and discursive writing. Argumentative compositions are expected to display a clear opinion on a topic. The strongest argumentative essays were clearly focussed on a particular viewpoint and presented a consistently persuasive argument. Strong answers were also characterised by the use of sophisticated structures, appropriate expressions and the presentation of a well-structured and convincing argument. Successful discursive essays presented a balanced view from more than one perspective. Many strong candidates who

chose the discursive topics were able to present a balanced and objective examination of the topic, without it being expressly neutral. Weaker answers needed to discuss or acknowledge both sides of the debate to achieve marks in the higher marking bands. A well-organised structure, including an introduction to the topic and the discussion of each issue in a separate paragraph, was usually met in a good discursive writing piece. Such essays showed evidence of some pre-writing planning. In order to score in the higher bands in these genres, some candidates would benefit from constructing a brief plan to outline the essay, and ensure a strong question focus to avoid writing irrelevant material, and maintain a logical structure.

In general, candidates who wrote descriptive compositions were aware that the focus should be on description instead of storytelling. Strong responses frequently presented a vivid picture and created a complex atmosphere or tension and often also included lots of carefully chosen details and sensory information, which helped make the picture clear and realistic to readers. Weaker essays in this genre needed to improve the descriptive skills by applying various devices, vivid details and creating atmosphere.

There were many excellent narrative responses presenting a complex and sophisticated structure, with the best essays also using devices such as flashbacks, time lapses, etc. to add interest. The style of writing was mature, and lots of appropriate descriptions were included to serve the narrative purpose. Weaker narrative responses were often characterised by plain language, narrating everyday happenings or unlikely un-engaging events. They needed to build up tension and climax and develop character and plot during the process of narrating the story.

Style and Accuracy

Style: Many candidates were able to produce a sophisticated piece of writing with an excellent range of expressions, complex sentence structures and very good organisation of ideas. They were able to write fluently, using a good range of structures and expressions. Weaker answers were characterised by repetitive language, sometimes using colloquial expressions excessively. Such answers needed to include a greater complexity of ideas and more variety in vocabulary and expressions. Candidates could improve by being more careful and precise in their use of expressions to ensure that they are used in an appropriate manner.

Accuracy: Most candidates demonstrated a high level of linguistic competence and a good grasp of Chinese grammar. Their use of structures was assured and their use of expressions appropriate in tone and register. Some candidates' use of Chinese structure showed interference from English grammar, for example, 和 was incorrectly used to link clauses.

Most candidates were confident in their use of punctuation and knew that full stops and commas should not be used at the beginning of a line. The majority of candidates also wrote the Chinese full stop correctly as a small circle and not a solid dot. In some cases, candidates used too many commas, with full stops only appearing at the end of each paragraph.

Candidates need to make sure that they are writing the correct character to express the intended meaning. Many candidates were able to showcase a wide range of vocabulary using a variety of characters. Others could improve by reducing the amount of incorrectly used characters in their compositions. Such errors could be reduced with more careful checking of work and a better understanding of characters that share the same pronunciation but with different meaning (homophones/homonyms). Candidates are reminded that whilst both simplified and full form characters are acceptable in this paper, it is good practice to be consistent and avoid mixing the two systems within the same piece of writing. Finally, candidates are reminded to write clearly and legibly to ensure the Examiner can read their scripts and fully credit them for what has been written.

Content and Structure

Content: The most successful answers this year contained effective and convincing arguments, a moving story or vivid descriptions. Stronger answers were characterised by the use of sufficient detail, clarity of expression and fluency of style. Some excellent essays contained well-balanced arguments, imaginative stories with originality, or vivid descriptions from a fresh perspective.

Candidates were more likely to produce very convincing arguments when they felt strongly about a topic, as in the case of **Question 2**: 只有逆境才能出人才. Stories that were based on candidates' own experience tended to be convincing and touching, as in the case of **Question 8**: 我的第一次社会实践.

Structure: In general, candidates showed awareness of the need to structure their writing appropriately. Most compositions contained an effective introduction, followed by a progression of ideas, argument,

storyline or description of a scene and used clear paragraphs. Weaker responses were characterised by the inclusion of too many ideas within a single paragraph, without an appropriate conclusion.

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

Comments on specific questions

Section 1: Discussion and Argument

Question 1

谦虚是一种美德。从正反两个方面谈谈你的看法。

Candidates were expected to develop a coherent discussion about being modest, including both positive and negative arguments. Many candidates were able to display well-developed discussions from both sides and quoted relevant ancient sayings, historical facts and current social affairs to support their views. However, some scripts only mentioned one viewpoint on 'Modesty is a virtue', which led to an unbalanced essay. Others developed their essay around the point, 'you should be modest because ...' rather than discussing the benefits and downsides of being modest.

Question 2

只有逆境才能出人才。从正反两个方面谈谈你的看法。

This was one of the most popular topics in **Section 1**. The strongest essays presented a balanced and convincing argument from both sides of the topic, 'Only adversity produces talent'. The topic was quite relevant to the candidates' personal experience and common sense, so good responses displayed some vivid and relevant facts and examples to support their views. In some cases, candidates slipped into a more narrative style when supporting an example with a personal experience and need to be careful not to include unnecessary details. Weaker responses were characterised by developing a partial one-sided argument. Some candidates needed to fully understand the keyword 逆境, as occasionally candidates explained the adversity as the pressure from parents.

Question 3

习惯是从小养成的。你为什么同意或者不同意这个观点？

The majority of candidates presented a clear opinion on the topic, 'Habits are formed at a young age'. Candidates who achieved high marks responded well to the question with a clear structure and showed a logical progression of the argument. Improvements could be made in some cases by providing a wider range of examples and engaging in more in-depth discussion. Many candidates applied the supportive theory of 21-days in establishing a habit. Candidates needed to fully understand the keyword of the topic, 从小养成, to enable them to focus on cultivating an argument around establishing good habits *from a young age* instead of how to develop good habits in general.

Question 4

年轻人有个性是一种成熟的标志。你为什么同意或者不同意这个观点？

The strongest candidates organised their ideas in a clear and logical way and produced convincing arguments on the topic, 'Young people being individual is a sign of maturity'. They clearly explained and discussed the key words 'individual' and 'maturity' and the relationship between them. Weaker responses were characterised by a more loose structure or the use of colloquial expressions. In some cases, candidates needed to support their views more fully and avoid an over-generalisation of young people's behaviour.

Section 2: Description and Narrative

Question 5

描写家乡夜市的景象

Candidates were expected to write a descriptive piece about the night market in their home town. Many excellent scripts often used effective vocabulary and sophisticated language to create beautiful images and vivid visualisations. Some candidates successfully described a close-up scene to add more detail to the overall image. Candidates needed to read and understand the question carefully, as a small number of candidates misread/misunderstood the keyword, '夜市'. Weaker candidates showed confusion between the concepts of the 'night market' and 'night scenery in a city', and others included a more general description of

their hometown rather than focusing on the scenes and images at a night market. In some cases this resulted in a lot of irrelevant material in the writing.

Question 6

描写一个最熟悉的陌生人

The majority of candidates choosing this topic were able to produce a relevant response about the person with the emphasis on why the person was familiar, as well as unfamiliar, to him/her. Successful candidates were well acquainted with an effective range of descriptive vocabulary and complex sentence structures and the proper descriptive devices were applied to create atmosphere or tension. The picture of these people was often clear to readers and could draw the reader's attention. Candidates should be aware that this question should focus on description, not story-telling. Some weaker scripts focused on telling a story related to a familiar/unfamiliar person, instead of a description of this person with details. Scripts described a variety of people; in some cases the main character was a cleaner or a security guard helping people modestly, or a father who did not spend time with their children. Candidates needed to be careful not to lapse into cliché, making the whole piece seem less realistic and lacking the articulation of a genuine personal experience.

Question 7

以“假如我有超能力，我就……”为情境，写一个故事

Candidates were expected to write a story with the scenario, 'If I had a superpower ...' The most successful responses always told a story in a complex and imaginative manner, containing devices such as flashback and time lapse, and including necessary and appropriate details to build up the story. To tell this creative story attractively, the structure was often organised originally and the climax was managed carefully under the defined scenario. Candidates need to read and understand the question carefully. Some weaker candidates responded to the question as a reflective piece of prose instead of a complete story. They wrote about several scenarios, or listed a series of events or imaginative images, but did not manage to deliver a complete story with any plot development. In a minor number of cases, candidates wrote irrelevant stories, only adding the sentence, 'if I had a superpower, I would ...' at the beginning of the composition. Candidates must retain relevance and focus on the topic of the essay title to score highly.

Question 8

以“我的第一次社会实践”为题，写一篇文章

This was a popular choice and candidate performance on this question varied greatly. Candidates were expected to narrate their first social experience in the form of a story. Successful narratives were written with well-developed ideas using fluent language and interesting images. Strong candidates were able to highlight the most interesting part of the social experience, conveying their genuine personal feelings, and naturally expressing the significance of this experience. Candidates need to read the question carefully to ensure they produce relevant responses. Some candidates misinterpreted the question and wrote about the experience of a school trip to a nature park or an outdoor camping activity instead of a social engagement such as work experience. In some cases, candidates need to improve on building up an identified climax in a narrative task. Some weaker responses were characterised by a simple narrative with a beginning, middle and end of a social work day, consisting of simple everyday happenings, such as getting up, having breakfast, doing work and going home, etc.