

CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9868/11
Reading

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9868/12
Reading

Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key
1	B	11	E	21	C	31	D
2	D	12	D	22	A	32	C
3	C	13	C	23	B	33	B
4	A	14	D	24	B	34	D
5	D	15	B	25	A	35	A
6	C	16	A	26	D	36	B
7	H	17	B	27	A	37	C
8	G	18	A	28	B	38	A
9	A	19	D	29	B	39	B
10	C	20	C	30	C	40	C

Key messages

In order to perform well on this paper, learners should:

- demonstrate genuine understanding of a passage
- read the questions carefully and provide answers based on the texts in the paper rather than using their own experiences or assumptions
- differentiate between synonyms, vocabulary and language structures within the context
- attempt every question in the paper, even the questions they feel less confident about.

General comments

This reading paper consists of 40 multiple-choice questions.

Learners read five texts in total. They are different in lengths and cover topics such as growing vegetables in city apartments, a special interview, different views on fitness, internet celebrity brands to calligraphy. The emphasis of the questions moved between assessing learners' ability to understand detailed information and to identify emotions and opinions which are stated or implied in texts. To do well on this paper, learners need to demonstrate a good understanding of a wide range of vocabulary and language structures and to understand ideas and conclusions in discursive texts.

It was pleasing to see so many positive responses throughout the paper. The majority of learners understood the requirements of the specification very well and performed exceptionally well.

Comments on specific questions

Questions 1–6

In this section, learners need to read a medium-length passage about growing vegetables in city apartments, then respond to six 4-option questions. As this text is informative rather than narrative, learners need to make sure they do not miss crucial details in the text. Learners performed very well overall. **Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6** all achieved above 84 per cent accuracy. **Question 5**, quite a few candidates, including higher ability ones, overlooked crucial details such as 最重要的是 ('the most important thing is') in the text and 最大的 ('the biggest') in the question, which point directly to option **D**.

Question 7–12

This section requires learners to read a passage with six missing sentences. Learners must select the correct sentence from a choice of eight options to fill each gap. The passage narrates a special interview. All questions were accessible to candidates of all abilities and they responded extremely well with very few making a wrong choice. This part achieved the highest accuracy rates of the whole paper with above 84 per cent accuracy.

Questions 13–20

Learners need to read a text about four different people's views on fitness. There are eight questions in this section, and each represents one of the four people's views. Learners must match each view to the right person. Learners performed strongly in **Questions 13, 14, 17, 19 and 20**, achieving over 82 per cent accuracy. In **Question 15**, candidates relied on the word spotting of 结合 ('combine') without paying attention to the precise context. The text mentions 把休闲和健身结合 ('combining leisure and fitness'), which led some to incorrectly select option **A**. The question specifies 线上线下结合 ('combining online and offline'). This is only evidenced in Passage **B**, where 线上平台和健身房合作 ('cooperation between online platforms and fitness centres') is described. In **Question 16**, some overlooked the keyword 提倡 ('to promote') in the question. Only Passage **A** explicitly promotes all form of fitness. Passages **B** and **C** mention different fitness forms, but these are merely stated, not promoted. In **Question 18**, candidates were distracted by Passage **D**, which also mentions fitness 计划 ('plan'). The speaker in Passage **D** does not emphasise its importance, so it cannot be the correct answer. Only Passage **A** explicitly highlights the importance of following a gradual improvement plan.

Careful reading of both questions and texts remains absolutely crucial.

Questions 21–32

This exercise requires learners to read a passage about internet celebrity brands, and it tests learners' ability to apply a range of vocabulary and grammar structures appropriately.

The majority of learners demonstrated secure understanding of a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures and performed soundly throughout the exercise. This is reflected in the responses to most of the questions. However, some did not pay attention to details and failed to select the right option. In **Question 23**, a number of candidates did not pay close attention to the surrounding text, selecting options that were grammatically acceptable but contextually inappropriate; only option **B** conveyed the intended meaning. Similarly, in **Question 25**, many candidates misinterpreted the role of celebrity status, assuming it served to intensify popularity and thus choosing option **C** (突出). This was a misconception, as the correct answer was option **B** (代表): internet celebrity brands represent popularity rather than promote it.

Question 33–40

In this final exercise, learners need to read a longer passage about the writer's mother who did calligraphy. Learners must demonstrate their understanding of the text by answering a set of four-option questions. These questions test their comprehension and ability to identify opinions and draw conclusions from both explicit and implicit information. Despite the fact that the level of demand in this exercise is the highest of the whole paper, learners rose to the challenge and performed strongly.

In **Questions 33, 34, 36 and 37**, candidates performed very well, with accuracy rates above 91 per cent. By contrast, **Question 35** revealed a common oversight: many failed to notice the wording 根据第三段 ('according to paragraph 3') in the question, selecting option **C** – the mother sees calligraphy as something to be shared and enjoyed with her daughter. While this sentiment may be implied elsewhere, it is not reflected in paragraph 3, which instead conveys that calligraphy was a luxury in the mother's busy life. In **Question 38**, a few candidates wrongly chose option **D**, which was illogical, as one is unlikely to regard a notebook (笔记本) as a 非常贵重 ('very extortionate') gift. In **Question 39**, many opted for option **C** – use calligraphy to convey belief – a plausible but textually unsupported interpretation. The correct answer was option **B**, evidenced in the passage's reference to 流传千年的字句 ('works passed on from thousands of years ago'). Finally, in **Question 40**, some candidates selected option **A** based only on the first half of the final sentence. The intended meaning lies in the second half, which naturally leads to option **C**.

CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9868/13
Reading

Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key
1	B	11	G	21	B	31	A
2	D	12	H	22	A	32	D
3	B	13	C	23	D	33	C
4	C	14	D	24	B	34	D
5	A	15	B	25	C	35	A
6	C	16	A	26	A	36	D
7	C	17	D	27	C	37	B
8	E	18	C	28	D	38	B
9	A	19	B	29	B	39	A
10	B	20	B	30	C	40	C

Key messages

In order to perform well on this paper, learners should:

- demonstrate a clear and accurate understanding of the passage
- read the questions carefully and provide answers based on the texts in the paper rather than using their own experiences or assumptions
- differentiate between synonyms, vocabulary items, and language structures within their contexts
- attempt every question in the paper, including those they feel less confident about.

General comments

This reading paper consists of 40 multiple-choice questions.

Learners read five texts in total. They vary in length and feature topics ranging from environmental protection and vocational study to weekend pastimes, beachcombing and imported honey. The emphasis of the questions moved between assessing learners' ability to understand detailed information, identify emotions and opinions which are stated or implied in texts. To do well on this paper, learners need to demonstrate a good understanding of a wide range of vocabulary and language structures and to understand ideas and conclusions in discursive texts.

It was pleasing to see so many positive responses throughout the paper. The majority of learners understood the requirements of the specification very well and performed strongly.

Comments on specific questions

Questions 1–6

Learners read a medium-length passage reflecting on environmental protection and answered six four-option questions. The topic was familiar, and overall performance was excellent. In **Question 2**, some candidates misidentified the cause of the mess, focusing only on the permitted activities, 露营 and 放鞭炮, leading them to options **A** or **C**. Responses to all other questions were outstanding.

Question 7–12

Candidates read a passage with six missing sentences, selecting from eight options. The text focused on vocational study as an alternative path to academic study in secondary education. The topic resonated strongly with candidates, and overall responses were excellent, with only a few incorrect choices.

Questions 13–20

Candidates read a text presenting four people's weekend activities and answered eight matching questions. **Questions 13–19** were answered very successfully by most candidates. In **Question 20**, however, over 70 per cent chose the distractor (option **A**), overlooking that option **A** refers to leisurely eating with friends. Candidates are reminded to compare details carefully, especially when similar opinions appear across different passages.

Questions 21–32

Candidates read a passage on beachcombing, testing their ability to apply vocabulary and grammar appropriately. In **Question 22**, several candidates selected option **C** 必经之路, which is grammatically correct but contextually inappropriate in this passage. In **Question 27**, option **C** 装, meaning 'to disguise/pretend', caught some candidates off guard because of its less familiar usage. In **Question 28**, although both **C** 胆怯 ('cowardly') and **D** 小心 ('carefully') seemed plausible, only **D** was correct, as there was no evidence in the text to support **C**. All other questions were answered with over 90 per cent accuracy.

Question 33–40

Candidates read a longer passage on imported honey and answered four-option comprehension questions requiring the analysis of explicit and implicit information. Despite the highest level of demand in the paper, performance was excellent. In **Question 35**, many candidates, including higher ability ones, incorrectly chose option **D**, overlooking that the questions following 顺理成章的事儿 were from the writer, who judged the price unreasonable (option **A**). Despite an unfamiliar topic and challenging vocabulary, candidates performed strongly, achieving over 84 per cent accuracy on all other questions.

CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9868/21
Writing

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9868/22
Writing

Key messages

In order to score the highest marks for essays, candidates are expected to communicate information, opinions, arguments and creative ideas clearly and effectively, with support/justification, as well as use text conventions and register appropriate to the given purpose and audience. Furthermore, they should organise ideas into coherent text by using a range of cohesive devices and paragraphing where appropriate, and employ a wide range of vocabulary and grammar effectively and accurately.

General comments

The performance in this component was very positive. The narrative essay, **Question 3**, was the more popular choice over the descriptive essay, **Question 2**. Overall performance on the compulsory discursive essay, **Question 1**, was fairly stable, while responses to **Question 2** and **Question 3** showed some variation depending on candidates' individual strengths.

A large number of the highest performing candidates demonstrated a strong command of both content and language, particularly through effective communication, accurate and fluent language use, and well-organised essays. Some candidates incorporated a wide range of grammatical structures, used less common or more complex vocabulary, and applied idiomatic expressions appropriately. These features clearly reflected a high level of linguistic ability.

Candidates whose essays fell within the middle range of marks generally showed a sound grasp of the subject matter; however, they sometimes struggled to convey this knowledge effectively in writing. Their work often lacked clarity of expression or failed to maintain a sufficiently precise focus on the specific question.

A minority of the weaker candidates were unable to perform at the same standard. There was a noticeable increase in sentences lacking a clear subject or containing an ambiguous subject in the writing as well as a lack of concrete examples in their responses which weakened otherwise logical arguments.

The uses of 的, 地, and 得 still require attention. It is important that candidates are advised not to focus solely on producing long or overly complex sentence structures; instead, they should ensure logical coherence between clauses. Furthermore, proofreading work after writing in the examination to avoid careless mistakes and omissions would be beneficial.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

在职场上，能力比机会更重要。你同意吗？请讨论。

Content

Very strong performances were seen during marking. Most candidates argued either skills or opportunities were more important than the other, and some candidates thought both were equally important. A large number of candidates did very well in this question. It was evident that those candidates who achieved higher marks produced responses in which all information was fully relevant to personal skills compared to opportunities at the workplace. Complex ideas were fully developed, with a wide range of well-selected relevant examples and justifications. Responses were detailed and discursive in nature, demonstrating an assured and natural writing style that was highly appropriate to the task.

Candidates who scored slightly lower marks, in general, expressed clear views in their writing, identifying relevant ideas but tended to get lost when arguing their points. Examples include candidates beginning with talking about skills as more important than opportunities but ending up by giving more examples in favour of the importance of having opportunities. Furthermore, the lack of an effective or clear conclusion impacted the quality of the writing of those candidates who sometimes muddled up their viewpoints.

Quality of Written Communication

As in previous years, it was encouraging to see that a considerable number of candidates demonstrated deliberate organisation in their responses, structuring their essays into clear paragraphs and introducing ideas with phrases such as 首先、其次……, 一方面…… and 另一方面……. Many also effectively summarised their arguments in the concluding paragraph using expressions like 总而言之 or 综上所述. It was encouraging to see fluency and smooth transitions in most responses.

Strong answers explored features of family relationships or education that facilitate friendship, such as: 你不但需要强大的知识储备和学习能力, 而且需要有过人的能力 ('not only do you need a strong foundation of knowledge and the ability to learn, but also exceptional ability'). Furthermore, some high-scoring essays often referenced well-known figures or stories to support arguments, such as '伯乐与千里马' ('Bo Le and the Thousand-Li Horse') and 伯牙子期 ('Bo ya and Zi Qi') to convey the idea of talent and the one who recognises it.

Whilst most communication was of very good quality, some common errors were noticed, such as 公作 (should be 工作), 位值 (should be 位置), 既使 (should be 即使), 经力 (should be 经历), 厉害 (should be 厉害), 仅管 (should be 尽管) and 时后 (should be 时候). Another recurring issue noted was the increasing misuse of punctuation. Some candidates used only commas throughout an entire paragraph, while others incorrectly replaced commas and full stops with dots. Proper punctuation usage should be emphasised to ensure clarity and coherence in writing.

Question 2

描写一个你理想的居住环境。

Content

Fewer candidates opted for this question than **Question 3**. Overall performance on this question was slightly weaker than on **Question 3**. Higher-scoring responses included detailed descriptions of candidates' ideal living environments, ranging from bustling cities and seaside locations to the countryside. These candidates demonstrated good control over scene development and incorporated rich sensory details, such as birds singing, flowing rivers and the scent of plants. Such descriptions effectively created vivid and engaging settings for the reader.

While many candidates demonstrated these strengths, some attempted to describe both the exterior environment and the interior setting within the same response. For example, candidates wrote about the surrounding natural landscape as well as the house itself. This broad focus sometimes resulted in less detailed writing, with ideas that were not fully developed. In addition, a number of responses relied mainly on visual description, with less attention given to other sensory aspects, which limited the overall depth and impact of the writing.

Quality of Written Communication

Most candidates showed an excellent command of language and organised their essays well, using appropriate paragraphs. Top-scoring responses featured a variety of complex sentence structures, suitable vocabulary, and a high degree of accuracy in grammar, characters and punctuation. Effective responses used sensory details (sight, sound, smell) to create a vivid atmosphere. Good imagery description included: 如同一幅铺开的油画倾泻而下的蓝从天际洒向大海 ('like an unfurled oil painting, cascading blue poured from the horizon into the sea') and 像踩在了软绵绵的棉花糖上似的 ('as if stepping on soft, fluffy marshmallows'). Whilst it was pleasing to see excellent writing, there were some errors in character usage.

Clear handwriting continues to be strongly encouraged. Candidates should pay closer attention to writing characters legibly, as unclear handwriting can hinder the clarity of the sentence's meaning and disrupt the flow of the writing.

Question 3

“远处传来的熟悉而动听的歌声不禁让我想起了她/他。”以这句话为开头写一篇记叙文。

Content

The outcome on this question was more positive than on **Question 2**. Most candidates wrote about an old friend, neighbour, teacher or a member of their own family, while some candidates narrated an encounter with a stranger. Many strong responses were seen during marking. Candidates who achieved higher marks demonstrated an excellent command of narrative writing, effectively recounting real or imagined events with strong control over structure and development.

While most candidates adopted a narrative style, many responses were less fully developed and lacked engaging narrative features. In several cases, the absence of a clear climax or conflict resulted in conclusions that felt unearned or anticlimactic. In addition, a small number of candidates carelessly omitted the required opening sentence, an issue that could have been easily avoided.

Quality of Written Communication

Many candidates were able to organise their essays into paragraphs and demonstrated a good level of narration, using a wide range of complex sentences and vocabulary. Some high-achieving candidates demonstrated effective paragraphing, logical sequencing and a strong command of varied sentence structures, all of which contributed to the fluency and engagement of their writing. Numerous examples of excellent vocabulary and phrasing were observed, such as: 历历在目; 思绪被拉回到现实; 像冲破云层得强光一样照亮着我; 唯有悦耳的歌声在耳边回荡, 我的理智渐渐被杂乱无章的情绪淹没.....; 电话那头安静得像一滩死水 etc.

However, in some cases, repetitive or flat sentence patterns resulted in a monotonous tone throughout the response. A few candidates also displayed a limited range of vocabulary, occasionally relying on repetitive or overly simplistic phrasing, which affected the overall expressiveness of their work. Additionally, while some candidates maintained a high degree of grammatical accuracy and secure punctuation usage, there were instances of frequent use of pinyin and recurring character inaccuracies.

Learning points and advice for centres

- Read each question carefully to ensure full understanding of the tasks before writing. If time permits, drafting a brief outline of the essay can be very helpful.
- Respond directly and clearly to the question, avoiding broad or lengthy introductions and any unfocused material at the start of the essay.
- Organise the essay effectively, keeping it relevant to the topic, presenting ideas in a logical and coherent manner, and maintaining a clear focus throughout, supported by appropriate examples.
- Allow time for proofreading, as thorough checking can significantly reduce errors in character formation, grammar and punctuation.
- Ensure that characters are written clearly and legibly.

CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9868/23
Writing

Key messages

In order to score the highest marks for essays, candidates are expected to communicate information, opinions, arguments and creative ideas clearly and effectively, with support/justification, as well as use text conventions and register appropriate to the given purpose and audience. Furthermore, they should organise ideas into coherent text by using a range of cohesive devices and paragraphing where appropriate, and employ a wide range of vocabulary and grammar effectively and accurately.

General comments

This was another successful year as the overall performance was very positive. There was clear evidence the majority of candidates were very well prepared for the examination as the level of the linguistic ability shown by some candidates was outstanding. A considerable number of candidates structured their responses thoughtfully into coherent paragraphs, making effective use of cohesive devices. The number of candidates who chose **Question 3** was slightly higher than those who chose **Question 2**.

The top performers showed strong command of the paper. Their work was focused and well structured, displaying wide-ranging vocabulary and supporting points with logical arguments, well-controlled descriptions or narratives, relevant examples, sensory details, rich experiences, and convincing conclusions. These candidates clearly understood the task and wrote with diligence.

Those candidates whose essays fell within the middle range of marks generally showed a sound grasp of the subject matter; however, some struggled to convey their knowledge effectively in writing. Their work often lacked clarity of expression or did not maintain a sufficiently precise focus on answering the specific question.

The weaker candidates struggled with grammatical accuracy and appeared to repeat simple sentence structures or have limited lexical variety. A number of responses drifted away from the topic. Furthermore, some candidates' work was characterised by using an inappropriate style for their chosen task, i.e. failing to differentiate descriptive from narrative essays and a lack of development of ideas. Linguistically, pinyin was used frequently in these responses.

An increasing number of candidates struggled to distinguish clearly between the correct uses of 的, 地 and 得. This indicates a need for more targeted practice in applying these grammatical structures accurately. Additionally, they need to be reminded of the importance of proper punctuation in writing.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

父母不可能成为孩子的好朋友。你同意吗？请讨论。

Content

Candidates who performed well showed a clear and insightful understanding of why parents may or may not become good friends to their children. They argued that parents who were close to their children understood them the best, and could offer unconditional support, especially if they set aside authority, treated children equally, supported their interests and communicated in a kind manner. Others convincingly disagreed,

pointing to fixed differences such as roles, age gaps and generational divides. Strong responses were supported by varied evidence, justification and examples, which was pleasing to see.

By contrast, some weaker candidates identified relevant ideas but lost focus on the central question, shifting instead to general parent–child relationships. Moreover, some candidates focused too heavily on discussing the advantages and disadvantages of parents becoming friends with their children, without sufficiently exploring whether it is possible for parents to become their children’s friends as the question required. Some essays also lacked coherence and depth, which reduced the effectiveness of their arguments to achieve higher marks.

Quality of Written Communication

During marking, it was encouraging to see that a considerable number of candidates demonstrated deliberate organisation in their responses, structuring their essays into clear paragraphs and introducing ideas with phrases such as 首先、其次 or 然而. Many also effectively summarised their arguments in the concluding paragraph using expressions like 总而言之 or 综上所述. It was encouraging to see fluency and smooth transitions in most responses.

Strong answers explored elements of family relationships or education that facilitate friendship, such as: 相较于同龄人, 父母更有可能理解并帮助孩子发展个人兴趣爱好……增加了两者之间的共同语言’ (‘compared to peers, parents are more likely to understand and help children develop personal hobbies…… increasing the common language between the two’). Furthermore, some high-scoring essays often referenced well-known figures or stories to support arguments, such as 《傅雷家书》 (‘Fu Lei’s Family Letters’), 孟母三迁 (‘Mencius’ mother moves three times’), or the relationship between pianist Lang Lang and his father.

Whilst most communication was of very good quality, some common errors were noticed, such as: 烦恼 (should be 烦恼), 关点 (should be 观点), 既使 (should be 即使), 隔核 (should be 隔阂), 性趣 (should be 兴趣), 仅管 (should be 尽管), 严厉 (should be 严厉). Another recurring issue noted was the increasing misuse of punctuation. Some candidates used only commas throughout an entire paragraph, while others incorrectly replaced commas and full stops with dots. Proper punctuation usage should be emphasised to ensure clarity and coherence in writing.

Question 2

新款手机上市了, 请你描写当天旗舰店里的场景。

Content

Almost half the candidates chose this question, and numerous responses demonstrated a solid understanding of the task, providing vivid descriptions of the flagship store scene on the day the new phone was released. The overall performance was very good though the question appeared to be more challenging than the narrative question. On the one hand, the Examiners could see the strongest responses included highly detailed descriptions, rich with imagery and sensory details, such as what the candidates could see, smell, touch and hear in a busy mobile phone shop. These descriptions allowed readers to clearly visualise the scene in the store. On the other hand, many weaker candidates turned the task into a narrative, focusing on personal experiences such as buying a phone or travelling to the shop. Others described only the crowd outside, rather than the scene inside the store, which the question required. Candidates should focus on a wide range of sensory impressions rather than purely visual details to improve their responses.

Quality of Written Communication

Most candidates showed an excellent command of language and organised their essays well, using appropriate paragraphs. Top-scoring responses featured a variety of complex sentence structures, suitable vocabulary and a high degree of accuracy in grammar, characters and punctuation. Effective responses used sensory details (sight, sound, smell) to create a vivid atmosphere. Good imagery description included: 嘈杂的声音偶尔伴随导购时隐时现的介绍, 如同魔音般绵绵不断地进入耳朵 (‘the noisy sounds occasionally accompanied by the sales person’s intermittent introduction, entering the ears like a magic sound’) and 豆大的汗珠从头上滑落 (‘bean-sized beads of sweat rolled down from the head’). Whilst it was pleasing to see some excellent writing, there were some errors in character usage this year.

Again, clear handwriting is strongly encouraged. Candidates should pay closer attention to writing characters legibly, as unclear handwriting can hinder the clarity of the sentence's meaning and disrupt the flow of the writing.

Question 3

“傍晚，回到家里，我试着梳理白天发生的那出人意料的一幕。” 用这句话开头续写一篇记叙文。

Content

The number of candidates who chose this question was slightly higher than those who chose **Question 2**. Similarly, lots of strong responses were seen during marking. These pieces demonstrated a clear and well-structured narrative arc, effectively foregrounding the element of the 'unexpected event (出人意料的事情)' through engaging plots, vivid characterisation and well-executed climaxes. Successful candidates used the prescribed opening sentence purposefully to establish context and frame the narrative as a reflective surprise.

Some candidates were unable to gain higher content marks because they simply retold events without explaining what made the event unexpected, or their narratives lacked a clear climax or a logical development leading to the unexpected moment. Weaker responses also struggled to maintain a consistent focus on the storyline.

Quality of Written Communication

Successful candidates effectively utilised sophisticated narrative techniques including episodic development, temporal manipulation through flashbacks and strategic information revelation. These compositions maintained strong verisimilitude through plausible plot construction, vivid scene-setting and well-paced climactic sequences that organically grew from established narrative elements. Sentences like, 我的心就如同凛冽的寒风刮过，泛起层层涟漪。白天那出人意料的一幕，就像是一根尖尖的刺，深深地刺入我的心 ('my heart felt as though it were swept by a bitter, icy wind, sending ripples through it. The unexpected scene from earlier that day was like a sharp thorn, piercing deeply into my heart') demonstrated the candidates' skills in writing.

There were some responses which progressed in linear fashion without strategic deployment of suspense or development. The defining requirement of 'unexpectedness' was often inadequately realised, with outcomes either written too early or lacking sufficient novelty to meet the requirement of the question. Some responses failed to establish clear causal relationships between events, diminishing the narrative impact and overall coherence.

Learning points and advice for centres

- Read each question carefully before writing, ensuring a full understanding of the tasks. If time permits, drafting a brief outline of the essay can be very helpful.
- Respond directly and clearly to the question, avoiding broad or lengthy introductions and any unfocused material at the start of the essay.
- Organise the essay effectively, keeping it relevant to the topic, presenting ideas in a logical and coherent manner, and maintaining a clear focus throughout, supported by appropriate examples.
- Allow time for proofreading, as thorough checking can significantly reduce mistakes in character formation, grammar and punctuation.
- Ensure that characters are written clearly and legibly.

CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9868/31
Literature

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9868/32
Literature

Key messages

- Candidates should read the rubric carefully to understand the format and structure of the paper. Only two questions should be answered, one from **Section A** and one from **Section B**. Candidates should write the question number in the left margin of the answer booklet.
- Each question in **Section A** includes a passage from one of the set texts. This is a stimulus passage, and to answer questions fully, candidates need to go further than simply relating their answers to the given passage. They should be able to identify the significant issues raised in the selected passage and reflect the text as a whole.
- Candidates need to read the questions carefully to ensure they fully address all aspects of the question asked. An element of evaluation and analysis of the text is needed to reach the higher marking bands; a simple re-telling of the story is not required.
- The questions are best answered using a clear essay structure with different paragraphs containing an introduction and a conclusion. The use of carefully selected quotations from the texts helps candidates to illustrate the points they wish to make or to develop their argument. Candidates should be encouraged to show analysis of the texts in their answers, commenting on the author's use of descriptive and expressive techniques.
- Candidates need to answer two questions in two hours, and time management is crucial.
- Handwriting must be legible.

General comments

This year, candidates performed as well as in previous years. Overall, the general level was stable with most candidates demonstrating steady preparation and a good grasp of the Chinese literary texts.

Almost all candidates were aware of the question format and requirements: they seemed to answer one question from each section as required. Responses were generally clear and well-presented. A few candidates did not adhere to the rubric and answered more than two questions or attempted all questions from a single section, and this prevented them from reaching the top marks.

Good answers were those that had a clear plan and demonstrated good time management. Candidates who gave equal time to each essay were able to build a solid argument. On the other hand, a very small number of candidates produced extremely brief responses, which significantly restricted the quality of their work.

Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of their selected texts, with knowledge of principal characters, themes and narrative progress. Many responses went beyond simple recounting of events and attempted to engage with the texts analytically. Some candidates made effective use of social, political and historical context to support their discussion, particularly when exploring thematic concerns. Stronger candidates demonstrated a more confident grasp of literary techniques and were able to construct balanced, well-supported interpretations that addressed the specific demands of the questions.

Although knowledge of the texts was generally secure, some candidates succumbed to description at the expense of focusing on analysis. In these cases, not all responses demonstrated close reading of the text or responded to the key terms in the question. Better adherence to the practice of brief, select quotations followed by explanation would improve the analytical rigour of the responses. These candidates would benefit from more skilful reading of the question and from an unswerving focus on analysis throughout their response, where their contextual knowledge is used to support rather than substitute analysis.

Teachers are encouraged to support students in developing clearer analytical planning, understanding the questions clearly, and using textual evidence and background knowledge to support their ideas.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

顾城：《顾城诗选》(Selected poems by Gu Cheng)

This question was not hugely popular and only a small number of candidates attempted it. Some candidates demonstrated detailed understanding of the poems but did not focus sufficiently on the use of personification. Stronger responses selected appropriate examples of personification from the given poem and from Gu Cheng's other poems, analysing how this technique contributed to meaning and thematic development. Weaker responses showed limited understanding of personification, with examples that were inaccurate or not relevant to the question.

Question 2

老舍：《龙须沟》(*Longxu Gou* by Laoshe)

This was the most popular question. Most candidates showed good familiarity with the character of Zhaodaye and were able to discuss his integrity and sense of justice in response to the question. Stronger responses presented a clear and well-organised analysis, drawing on examples such as his resistance to the old government and criminal forces, his support for neighbours, his role in resolving conflicts, his guidance of Gouzi, and his leadership in contributing to the new society. These answers effectively linked Zhaodaye's actions to broader social change and thematic concerns. Weaker responses tended to rely on narrative description, with limited analysis of how these events reflected Zhaodaye's character or their wider significance.

Question 3

白先勇：《台北人》(*Taipei Ren* by Bai Xianyong)

This question was less frequently chosen, but the overall quality of responses was good. Most candidates addressed the question by referring to key events, including Wu Zhuguo's experience of living and teaching abroad, where he focused only on the glories of the High Tang period, and his reluctance to defend students during discussions of the May Fourth Movement. Stronger responses linked these events to the wider social and historical context, analysing the contrast between Wu Zhuguo's earlier ideals and his later sense of disillusionment, thereby demonstrating a deeper understanding of his character.

Section B

Questions 4 and 5

西西：《我城》(*Wo Cheng* by Xixi)

Question 4

This question was chosen by very few candidates, so overall performance could not be reliably assessed. High-quality responses would be expected to analyse the story from the perspective of the mischievous children, highlighting the lively language, imaginative descriptions and the way the narrative softens the sense of tragedy.

Question 5

This question was attempted by very few candidates, so overall performance could not be reliably assessed. High-quality responses would be expected to focus on the following aspects: a love of life, the pursuit of ideals, enthusiasm for exploring the wider world, and attachment to and affection for one's hometown. Strong answers would also analyse how this depiction of young people contributes to the expression of the work's central themes.

Questions 6 and 7

铁凝: 《没有纽扣的红衬衫》 (*Meiyou Niukou de Hongchenshan* by Tie Ning)

Question 6

This was a popular question. It required candidates to address two key points: Wei Wan's differing attitudes towards her students and what these reveal about the features of her character. Stronger responses offered a comprehensive analysis, discussing not only her attitude towards Anran but also her treatment of Zhu Wenjuan and Mi Xiaoling. By comparing these examples, candidates were able to provide accurate insights into Wei Wan's personality and thought. Weaker responses were less comprehensive, often focusing only on Anran or providing incomplete or inaccurate analysis of Wei Wan's character.

Question 7

This question was more frequently chosen, and most candidates were able to analyse the reasons for Anran's parents' quarrels by considering their personalities, life views and beliefs, particularly their differing perspectives on marriage and education. Stronger responses went further by exploring how their personal experiences and changes in society influenced their conflict, demonstrating a clear understanding of the author's intentions. Weaker responses tended to focus on only one reason without sufficient development or attributed the quarrel solely to one character.

Questions 8 and 9

钱钟书: 《围城》 (*Weicheng* by Qian Zhongshu)

Question 8

This question was attempted by very few candidates, so overall performance could not be reliably assessed. High-quality responses would be expected to use specific examples to analyse both Li Meiting's hypocrisy, vulgarity and greed, and Fang Hongjian's rejection of worldly pragmatism and hypocrisy. Strong answers would also consider how the depiction of these two intellectuals relates to the work's central themes.

Question 9

This question was attempted by many candidates. Stronger responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the satirical and humorous language features of the work, selecting relevant examples from the text and analysing the use of artistic techniques such as metaphor, rhetorical questions, irony and contrast. These answers also considered the effects of such techniques on the reader and linked them to the work's central themes. Weaker responses tended to focus on narrative summary rather than analysing the language features.

CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9868/33 Literature

Key messages

- Candidates should read the rubric carefully to understand the format and structure of the paper. Only two questions should be answered, one from **Section A** and one from **Section B**. Candidates should write the question number in the left margin of the answer booklet.
- Each question in **Section A** includes a passage from one of the set texts. This is a stimulus passage, and to answer questions fully, candidates need to go further than simply relating their answers to the given passage. They should be able to identify the significant issues raised in the selected passage and reflect the text as a whole.
- Candidates need to read the questions carefully to ensure they fully address all aspects of the question asked. An element of evaluation and analysis of the text is needed to reach the higher marking bands; a simple re-telling of the story is not required.
- The questions are best answered using a clear essay structure with different paragraphs containing an introduction and a conclusion. The use of carefully selected quotations from the texts helps candidates to illustrate the points they wish to make or to develop their argument. Candidates should be encouraged to show analysis of the texts in their answers, commenting on the author's use of descriptive and expressive techniques.
- Candidates need to answer two questions in two hours, and time management is crucial.
- Handwriting must be legible.

General comments

Overall, candidates performed as well as in previous years. Most candidates demonstrated a solid level of preparation, a sound understanding of the prescribed Chinese literary texts and appropriate familiarity with the examination requirements. The overall standard reflected consistent teaching and learning outcomes.

Most candidates followed the examination rubric correctly, answering one question from **Section A** and one from **Section B**, with responses generally clearly labelled. A very small number of candidates attempted three questions or answered questions from only one section, which had a negative impact on their performance.

Most candidates showed a secure understanding of their chosen texts, including key ideas, characters and themes. Many responses were relevant, focused and well structured, with appropriate textual reference. Some candidates were able to move beyond narrative summary, incorporating social, political and historical context to support their analysis. Stronger candidates demonstrated good awareness of literary techniques and offered balanced personal interpretations closely linked to the questions.

However, some responses relied too heavily on narrative retelling and did not fully address the analytical focus of the questions. Greater emphasis on precise question interpretation, the effective use of short, well-chosen quotations and the integration of contextual knowledge would help strengthen analytical depth.

Most responses followed an appropriate academic essay structure, including a brief introduction, a logically developed main body and a conclusion. The strongest responses showed evidence of planning and effective time management, with candidates allocating sufficient time to each question. A very small number of candidates wrote overly brief responses, which limited their achievement.

Teachers are encouraged to guide students in planning their responses, developing analytical breadth, and using historical and cultural context as an interpretive framework rather than a descriptive background.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

顾城：《顾城诗选》(Selected poems by Gu Cheng)

Not many candidates answered this question, although there were a few outstanding answers. While most candidates were able to discuss the contrast between light and darkness in Yidairen, fewer were able to fully address the focus of the question – namely, the tension between the ideal world the poet longs for and the reality he faces. Some candidates did not include a second poem as required, or referred to another poem but did not mention the title. A number of responses would have benefited from a better understanding of the historical and cultural background, which would have improved their depth and accuracy. Stronger responses demonstrated a solid understanding of the selected poems, drawing effectively on imagery, contrast and other literary devices to provide deeper interpretations. These candidates integrated contextual understanding to support their analysis and constructed coherent responses that moved confidently between the extract and other relevant poems.

Question 2

老舍：《龙须沟》(*Longxu Gou* by Laoshe)

This was the most popular question in **Section A** and, overall, candidates performed well. Most responses demonstrated a solid understanding of how the new society transformed individuals like Gouzi. Candidates were generally able to identify that key changes such as the stricter regulation of organised criminal groups, improvements to the local environment and ideological education reform provided people like Gouzi with a new path forward and led to the empowerment of ordinary people like Zhaodaye. Many also recognised that these broader social reforms created the conditions for personal transformation. A common difficulty was a tendency to rely on narrative retelling of the extract and description of related scenes rather than on focused analysis. Some responses relied on plot summary or focused only on Gouzi's behaviour in the old society, without analysing how the new society shaped his transformation. Other candidates listed the changes he underwent but did not explore the reasons behind them or the role of societal reforms.

Question 3

白先勇：《台北人》(*Taipei Ren* by Bai Xianyong)

This question attracted a good number of responses, and most candidates demonstrated a reasonable understanding of how marriage changed the lives of Doufuren and Qianfuren. Stronger responses showed a more balanced and insightful analysis. These candidates not only acknowledged the improvements in economic stability and social status brought about by marriage but also highlighted the emotional emptiness and spiritual dissatisfaction that followed. They were able to contrast the women's elevated social position with the lack of genuine fulfilment in their relationships. Some candidates perceptively linked these ideas to the broader themes of 'Life is a dreamlike journey' and the unpredictability of fate, demonstrating a strong grasp of the play's deeper meaning. Weaker responses tended to drift from the specific focus of the question. There was some misinterpretation of materialism being indicated by Madam Qian 'being born with a wrong bone' and limited reference to the rest of the text, which restricted the depth of analysis.

Section 2

Questions 4 and 5

西西：《我城》(*Wo Cheng* by Xixi)

Question 4

Very few candidates chose to answer this question. The majority of these candidates were able to comment on the general effect of personification such as to attract the reader's interest, but responses would improve by being backed up by specific, accurate examples from the text. Some candidates cited metaphors rather than instances of personification, suggesting a degree of uncertainty about the technique. High-quality responses should identify multiple examples of personification and analyse their purpose and effect within

the narrative. A stronger command of the text and its stylistic features is essential when answering questions of this nature.

Question 5

Few candidates chose this question, but many that did were able to analyse Abei's character by drawing on key episodes, examining his qualities from multiple perspectives. Stronger answers supported these traits with brief but relevant examples from the novel, showing how his behaviour at work and interactions with others revealed his reliability and quiet persistence. These candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of how Abei's experiences shaped his character and supported the thematic concerns of the text.

Questions 6 and 7

铁凝: 《没有纽扣的红衬衫》 (*Meiyou Niukou de Hongchenshan* by Tie Ning)

Question 6

This question was one of the most popular choices and was generally well answered. Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the father's complexity. They were able to describe the father's commitment to art, his refusal to be shaped by his environment and the positive influence he had on his daughter. These responses demonstrated sound understanding of his role in the novel. Stronger candidates offered a more rounded analysis, recognising not only his idealism and devotion to painting but also his contradictions – such as his underlying patriarchal mindset, moments of weakness and the pressures of the social background that shaped his behaviour. These answers presented a more nuanced and credible portrait of the character. Weaker responses tended to drift into discussing the father/daughter relationship or his approach to raising his daughters, echoing question focuses from a previous examination series. Some candidates also fixated on a single trait; this resulted in partial or incomplete analysis.

Question 7

This question proved challenging and overall performance was not as strong as for some other questions. Many candidates struggled to address both required aspects – growth and era-specific change – from the perspectives of Anran and her classmates. Candidates generally approached this question from Anran's perspective and were able to link her growth to broader social change. Stronger candidates supported their interpretations with appropriate examples and were able to show how the experiences of Anran and one or two more classmates such as Zhu Wenjuan and Mixiaoling together reflected broader social change. These answers more convincingly demonstrated how this group of young people, through their shifting values, aspirations and interpersonal relationships, embodied the transformation of their era. However, a common misconception was to treat this primarily as a character-analysis question, rather than focusing on how the characters' growth reflects shifts in the era.

Questions 8 and 9

钱钟书: 《围城》 (*Weicheng* by Qian Zhongshu)

Question 8

This question was chosen less frequently than **Question 9**, but the overall quality of responses was satisfactory. Most candidates were able to identify Fang Dunweng as a traditional and conservative father figure who places great importance on propriety, face and family reputation. Stronger responses presented a more nuanced and comprehensive analysis. These candidates not only commented on his attachment to old social conventions and his rigid expectations but also recognised features such as his sensitivity, pride and a distinctly male-centred worldview. Effective answers supported these points with relevant examples and explained the formative influences that shaped him. Weaker answers were one-dimensional in their analysis or, in some cases, misinterpreted information from the text.

Question 9

Many candidates answered this question. A common problem was that candidates did not directly explain why Fang Hongjian and Zhao Xinmei hold different views of Sun Roujia but only discussed their views. Many responses also focused on how Sun Roujia treats the two men differently, suggesting that her behaviour caused their differing opinions. This approach shifted the emphasis away from the question's central point.

Stronger responses discussed the contrasting views of Zhao Xinmei and Fang Hongjian by considering their personality traits, family backgrounds, growth experiences, circumstances and mindsets. Excellent candidates also used representative episodes to illustrate these differences, demonstrating strong understanding of literary techniques, authorial intention and historical context.