

CHINESE LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

Paper 9868/11
Reading (Multiple Choice) 11

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



CHINESE LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

Paper 9868/12
Reading (Multiple Choice)

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

Key messages

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates 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 consisted of 40 multiple-choice questions.

Candidates read five texts in total of differing lengths and featuring topics ranging from green tourism, human kindness and views on education to the revival of traditional Chinese culture and family relationships. The emphasis of the questions moved between assessing the candidates' ability to understand detailed information and identify emotions and opinions which are stated or implied in texts. To do well on this paper, candidates needed 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 candidates understood the requirements of the specification very well and performed exceptionally well.

Comments on specific questions

Questions 1–6

In this section, candidates needed to read a medium-length passage about green travel, then respond to six four-option questions. The passage was more informative than narrative and candidates needed to pick up on crucial details in the text. The overall results were excellent. For **Questions 1, 3 and 5**, more than 80 per cent of candidates scored the mark. For **Question 2**, word spotting between the text and options **A, B and D**, such as 计划 and 文化活, led to over 30 per cent of candidates choosing these distracting options instead of the correct option **C**. For **Question 4**, as many as 35 per cent of candidates struggled to detect the nuance in meaning between 往往会雇佣 in the text and 有更多工作机会 in the options, hence choosing **C** instead of the correct answer **A**. For **Question 6**, nearly 20 per cent of candidates noticed 意识 in the text and in option **B** but overlooked 只是第一步, which makes option **B** incorrect.

Question 7–12

This section required candidates to read a passage with six missing sentences. Candidates chose the correct sentence from a choice of eight options to fill each gap. The passage narrated an event that happened on a cold evening. All questions had a very high success rate with very few candidates selecting the wrong answer. Over 85 per cent of candidates answered this whole exercise correctly.

Questions 13–20

Candidates needed to read a text about four different people's views on education. There were eight questions in this section and each represented one of the four people's views. Candidates had to match each view to the right person. Candidates performed well in **Questions 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 19**, achieving over 83 per cent accuracy. For **Question 18**, word spotting of 精英 in text **C** led to 73 per cent of candidates selecting **C**, which was the wrong answer. This popular misconception perhaps suggests that candidates are not familiar with the word 精英. For **Question 20**, the question asked who advocated independent thinking. Many learners overlooked 独立 in the question and chose **B** instead of the correct option **C**. Once again, candidates are reminded to read the questions carefully.

Questions 21–32

This exercise required candidates to read a passage about the revival of traditional culture and it tested candidates' ability to apply a range of vocabulary and grammar structures appropriately.

The majority of candidates demonstrated secure understanding of a range of vocabulary and grammar structures and performed well on the whole throughout the exercise with a success rate of over 75 per cent.

Questions 33–40

In this final exercise, candidates had to read a longer passage about a father who accompanies his daughter to dance classes. Candidates needed to demonstrate their understanding of the text by answering a set of four-option questions. These questions tested 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 was the highest across the whole paper, candidates rose to the challenge and performed very well.

For all questions in this exercise, with the exception of **Question 39**, over 82 per cent of candidates selected the right answer. For **Question 39**, the majority of candidates did not seem to be familiar with the idiom 实至名归 in option **C**. This resulted in the majority opting for **A** or **D**, which were not correct.

CHINESE LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

Paper 9868/13
Reading (Multiple Choice)

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

Key messages

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates 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 consisted of 40 multiple-choice questions.

Candidates read five texts in total of differing lengths and featuring topics ranging from travel, how to deal with falling and views on family planning to protecting the Earth and remembering a loved one. The emphasis of the questions moved between assessing the candidates' ability to understand detailed information and identify emotions and opinions which are stated or implied in texts. To do well on this paper, candidates needed 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 candidates understood the requirements of the specification and performed very well.

Comments on specific questions

Questions 1–6

In this section, candidates needed to read a medium-length passage about travelling home for the Spring Festival, then respond to six four-option questions. Candidates were familiar with the topic and the overall level of response was excellent. For **Question 1**, 15 per cent of candidates seemed to assume **A** was the answer based on their own experience, but in fact **A** was not mentioned in the text at all. Candidates should take care to root their chosen answers in the text rather than their own personal experiences or general knowledge. For **Question 2**, 18 per cent of candidates chose **C** instead of the correct option **B**. In these cases, the eagerness to get home as soon as possible seems to have been misinterpreted as having not been home for a long time. **Questions 3, 4, 5** and **6** were answered exceptionally well.

Question 7–12

This section required candidates to read a passage with six missing sentences. Candidates chose the correct sentence from a choice of eight options to fill each gap. The passage dealt with what to do after a bad fall. Candidates again appeared to be familiar with the topic. Candidates responded very well to all questions with very few making a wrong choice.

Questions 13–20

Candidates needed to read a text about four different people's views on family planning. There were eight questions in this section and each represented one of the four people's views. Candidates had to match each view to the right person. For **Question 14**, the word 依然 seems to have been misunderstood by 18 per cent of candidates, who chose **A** instead of **B**. For **Question 15**, nearly one third of candidates chose **B** instead of **D**. **B** focused on the spending behaviour from the parents' point of view and **D** from a child's point of view. The question was about a child's view; hence **D** is the correct answer. **Questions 13** and **16–20** had a very high success rate with over 90 per cent of candidates gaining the marks.

Questions 21–32

This exercise required candidates to read a passage about protecting the Earth and it tested candidates' ability to apply a range of vocabulary and grammar structures appropriately.

In this section, there was a success rate of 100 per cent for many of the questions (**Questions 24, 27, 31** and **32**) while the rest of the questions were answered correctly by over 90 per cent of candidates.

Question 33–40

In this final exercise, candidates had to read a longer passage about remembering a loved one. Candidates needed to demonstrate their understanding of the text by answering a set of four-option questions. These questions tested 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 was the highest across the whole paper, candidates performed very well.

For **Questions 33, 34, 36, 37** and **39**, the success rate was 90 per cent. For **Question 35**, many candidates explained the meaning of 舒了一口气 instead of what was asked in the question, hence choosing option **D**. There were also quite a few candidates who chose option **C** which explained the situation after the quote, but not the quote itself. For **Question 38**, more candidates chose option **D** rather than **B**, which was the correct option. The focus was on 交谈 in the text and 交流 in the option, but candidates did not seem to pay close attention to who or what was communicating with whom: 书本.....和造访的人交谈 (books communicate with people) was in the text whereas 书本们.....交流 (books communicate among themselves) was in the option. For **Question 40**, a few candidates chose option **A**, perhaps because they were not familiar with the term 待人处事.

CHINESE LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

Paper 9868/21
Writing 21

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



CHINESE LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

Paper 9868/22
Writing 22

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

Despite the fact that this is the first year of the syllabus, most candidates performed well in this paper. They demonstrated their ability to answer the questions by producing well-structured and detailed responses. Many candidates used complex Chinese sentence patterns and extensive vocabulary, such as connective words, idioms or well-known sayings to showcase their language proficiency and to support their points.

Towards the top of the range, candidates displayed an in-depth knowledge of the topic and a clear understanding of the issues involved. Ideas were well organised and arguments competently illustrated with relevant examples. A coherent structure was demonstrated with a logical progression of ideas leading to an effective conclusion.

Candidates scoring in the intermediate mark range had a solid understanding of the subject matter. However, these candidates should take care not to drift away from a descriptive to a narrative response in **Question 2**. Weaker candidates should focus on fully understanding the question and broadening their range of topic-specific vocabulary. They should also take care to avoid character and grammatical inaccuracies and reliance on pinyin.

It is important that candidates learn to distinguish the differences between 的、地 and 得 in their essays to improve language accuracy in future series. Whilst Examiners observed a good number of candidates demonstrating an understanding of idioms and making a concerted effort to incorporate them, it is essential that candidates work on their skills and adjust their expression by using alternative vocabulary that they are confident in and can correctly write in Chinese.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

出生在海外的孩子一定要学习他们父母的第一语言。你同意吗？请讨论。

Content

Most candidates agreed with the viewpoint stated in the question. Interestingly, their supporting reasons were similar. They explained why those children should learn their parents' first language for communication and cultural reasons, as well as from a future career perspective. Wording like 归属感、认同感、语言是文化的桥梁 etc. was commonly seen. Candidates who excelled for content fully developed the idea that children who were born abroad should learn their parents' first language with a wide range of supporting evidence and examples. Weaker candidates could improve by providing arguments with more detail and illustrative examples, and giving a conclusion.

Quality of Written Communication

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、最后 or 第一、第二、第三 etc. 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. However, incorporating less common vocabulary would further enhance the quality of writing.

A very small number of candidates need to be reminded to use the correct full stop punctuation mark in their essays. Instead, they used a dot as a full stop, seemingly influenced by their native language.

Question 2

描写你在火车站送别友人时的场景及感受。

Content

The vast majority of candidates chose this question over **Question 3**. Those who scored high marks effectively used descriptive language to capture various elements at the train station, such as what people were doing, people's actions and emotions, the waiting area, platform, café and restaurant at the station. These candidates skilfully employed rhetorical devices like similes and hyperbole to create an immersive effect, which contributed to their high scores in language. On the other hand, some candidates misunderstood the requirements of the task as they focused on narrating a story about their best friends. As a result, a large amount of their response was irrelevant, which impacted their scores for both content and linguistic range.

Quality of Written Communication

The majority of candidates effectively employed a variety of descriptive language to depict images and sensory details, such as a baby crying, public announcements and passengers chattering etc. Some good descriptions like this were seen frequently: 即将夺眶而出的泪水, 眼泪如泉眼般止不住地往下流. A small number of candidates needed to pay more attention to properly structuring their essays into paragraphs to avoid turning their writing into large, unbroken blocks of text that made their points unclear or even ambiguous at times.

Clear handwriting is highly 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

“看着他/她严肃的表情, 我忍不住‘扑哧’一下笑出了声。”以这句话为开头写一篇记叙文。

Content

This question tested the candidates' ability to write a narrative essay. It was less popular among candidates compared to **Question 2** and those that did choose it seem to have found it challenging. Candidates managed to narrate events but often lacked an impressive central idea or convincing and engaging features suitable to the task. Responses often narrated an event, which lacked a clear plot, and had no climax. Therefore, candidates should carefully plan the plot of their narrative essay to make the experience convincing and engaging, no matter whether the story is real or imaginary.

Quality of Written Communication

Overall, the level of linguistic proficiency for this question was not as high as that of the other questions. Errors like 温茅 instead of 温柔, 青况 instead of 情况 and 荒张 instead of 慌张 were observed. Clear handwriting is strongly recommended as illegible characters can hinder comprehension and disrupt the flow of a sentence. Candidates should avoid relying exclusively on commas throughout entire paragraphs or mistakenly replacing commas and full stops with dots. Furthermore, the use of speech marks requires more attention. The importance of proper use of punctuation in order to improve language accuracy cannot be underestimated.

Learning points and advice for centres

- Candidates need to start off on the right foot by first fully understanding the task. Good exam technique, such as underlining key words in the question and practising under timed conditions, should help reinforce good habits and improve marks.
- To demonstrate sound subject knowledge, candidates need to think through their response before starting. This usually means focusing on the key points raised by the question and presenting a competent argument that can stand up to scrutiny. When properly assembled, such responses tend to flow, have no ambiguity and lead the Examiner through the argument in a persuasive manner.
- Good responses will be replete with well-chosen vocabulary and show a certain depth. Hybrid language, e.g. use of pinyin and/or English will not be considered an acceptable substitute.
- Time set aside for checks on spelling and punctuation should be factored into each response.



CHINESE LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

Paper 9868/23
Writing 23

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 overall performance was excellent despite the fact that this is the first year of this syllabus. The majority of candidates were very well prepared for the examination and the level of linguistic ability shown by some candidates was outstanding. Many candidates also thoughtfully structured their responses into well-organised paragraphs.

Centres should be congratulated for their great input into this. The top performers demonstrated their expertise through focused and well-structured answers, using a broad vocabulary and supporting their responses with logical arguments or controlled descriptions or narrations, relevant examples, sensory details, rich experiences and persuasive conclusions. These candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the task and exhibited diligence, particularly with regard to checking their work.

Candidates scoring in the intermediate mark range had a solid understanding of the subject matter. However, these candidates should work on effectively communicating this knowledge in writing as sometimes there is a lack of clarity in expression or insufficient focus when addressing the question.

Weaker candidates could improve by adopting a more appropriate style for their chosen task, i.e. making a distinction between the descriptive and narrative tasks, and by better developing their ideas. Linguistically, there was also an overreliance on pinyin in some cases.

A small number of candidates wrote overly long sentences with insufficient punctuation and many misused the structural particles 的、地 and 得 in their essays. Candidates should be aware of the distinct functions of these particles and how to use them correctly. Additionally, they need to be reminded of the importance of proper punctuation in writing.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

孩子的早期教育决定了他们未来的竞争力。你同意吗？请讨论。

Content

Candidates who excelled in the content section showcased a thorough and insightful understanding of how a child's early education relates to their future competitiveness. They articulated well-reasoned arguments on why early education can or cannot shape future success, offering perspectives that went beyond the expected level of knowledge for their age. By contrast, some candidates successfully highlighted the significant influence of early education on future competitiveness but did not adequately explore why it might not be a determining factor, limiting the effectiveness of their arguments. Moreover, many candidates placed excessive emphasis on the importance of early education, without sufficiently addressing its direct

connection to future competitiveness as outlined in the question. Less successful responses often strayed from the core topic, focusing instead on defining what makes early education 'good'. These essays could achieve higher marks by including stronger arguments, more detailed analysis and illustrative examples.

Quality of Written Communication

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. However, incorporating less common vocabulary would further enhance the quality of writing.

Whilst most communication was clear and relevant, a very small number of candidates attempted to include idioms or traditional sayings but were unsuccessful, often due to incorrect characters or inappropriate usage. For instance, '早期教育培养学习能力与兴趣。孔子曰'学而不思则惘，思而不学则怠。'学习是人生的重要组成部分。' The quote from Confucius did not establish any connection or relevance within this sentence. Common character-writing errors included: 导至、目地、既使、陪养、未来。 Clear handwriting is also strongly encouraged as illegible characters can obscure meaning and disrupt the flow of a sentence.

Another 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 encouraged to ensure clarity and coherence in writing.

Question 2

描写你夏夜漫步海边的情景。

Content

Many candidates chose this question and numerous responses demonstrated a solid understanding of the task, providing vivid descriptions of the seaside scenery on a summer night. The strongest responses included highly detailed descriptions, rich with imagery and sensory details, such as what the candidates could see, smell, touch and hear. These descriptions allowed readers to clearly visualise the scene.

However, some candidates appeared to lack imagination or personal experience of walking by the seaside on a summer night, resulting in less convincing and somewhat unnatural descriptions. Additionally, a few candidates made forced or unnatural attempts to attribute emotions to the scene or setting, which disrupted the flow of the description. The weakest responses deviated from the task by narrating a story rather than focusing on describing the experience of walking by the seaside on a summer night.

Quality of Written Communication

Most candidates demonstrated a mature command of language and were able to organise their essays with appropriate paragraphing. High marks were awarded to those responses that used a wide range of complex structures and appropriate vocabulary, as well as demonstrated a high level of accuracy in grammar, characters and punctuation. Some common mistakes in character usage appeared in the responses, such as 脸腴、波光鳞鳞 and 以经。 Additionally, some candidates attempted to use descriptive language but often selected inappropriate vocabulary, for example 虫声习习。

Again, clear handwriting is highly encouraged. Candidates should pay close attention to writing characters legibly as unclear handwriting can hinder the clarity of the sentence and disrupt the flow of the writing.

Question 3

记述一次游戏中你反败为胜的经历。

Content

A large number of candidates also chose this question. Most of them were able to clearly describe their experience of turning defeat into victory in a game. The highest quality responses were engaging and

convincingly narrated, with features appropriate to the question. Weaker candidates could improve by focusing less on the defeat and thereby dedicating more time to presenting the victory.

Quality of Written Communication

The majority of 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. Candidates should be discouraged from writing very lengthy narrative essays which significantly go beyond the recommended character count as this often leads to repetition. As for the other questions, similar language issues were observed in this question. Some common mistakes in character usage appeared in the responses such as 我们没有胜算可严; 我们队到达场管后; 我们较尽脑汁 etc. Clear handwriting is strongly recommended as illegible characters can hinder comprehension and disrupt the flow of a sentence. Some candidates relied exclusively on commas throughout entire paragraphs, while others mistakenly replaced commas and full stops with dots. The importance of proper use of punctuation in order to improve language accuracy cannot be underestimated.

Learning points and advice for centres

- Candidates need to start off on the right foot by first fully understanding the task. Good exam technique, such as underlining key words in the question and practising under timed conditions, should help reinforce good habits and improve marks.
- To demonstrate sound subject knowledge, candidates need to think through their response before starting. This usually means focusing on the key points raised by the question and presenting a competent argument that can stand up to scrutiny. When properly assembled, such responses tend to flow, have no ambiguity and lead the Examiner through the argument in a persuasive manner.
- Good responses will be replete with well-chosen vocabulary and show a certain depth. Hybrid language, e.g. use of pinyin and/or English will not be considered an acceptable substitute.
- Time set aside for checks on spelling and punctuation should be factored into each response.

CHINESE LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

Paper 9868/31
Literature 31

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



CHINESE LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

Paper 9868/32
Literature 32

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 better this year compared to last year. This can be attributed to the teachers' comprehensive training and the candidates' diligent preparation.

Most candidates demonstrated a detailed understanding of the Chinese texts, with many also showcasing their knowledge of literary techniques in their responses. They displayed a thorough grasp of the characters and content, often going beyond the plot to discuss the social, political, and historical contexts in China at the time. This familiarity with the broader social background enriched their analysis, particularly in responses that delved into the underlying themes of the works.

Candidates generally recognised the importance of focusing their responses on the text itself, analysing the plot or characters with appropriate illustrations. However, some essays could have been strengthened by the judicious use of brief, well-chosen quotations to support their points. Candidates are encouraged to select a brief quotation to illustrate their point and then explain how it supports their discussion, avoiding lengthy descriptions or excessive narration that substitute plot development for character analysis.

On the other hand, some candidates appeared unfamiliar with the works, leading to numerous errors in their retelling and analysis of the plot, or they directly quoted long passages without any analysis or reflection on the entire text. Therefore, it is advisable for candidates to choose questions based on texts they have thoroughly read and studied to avoid significant mistakes in their answers.

Most candidates were able to respond in an academic essay style, with a clear structure that included a brief introduction, a well-organised main body and a conclusion, all presented in clear paragraphs. Although linguistic accuracy was not assessed in this paper, effective and clear communication remained essential.

Candidates were expected to be familiar with the examination requirements, which were detailed in both English and Chinese on the front page of the question paper. This was the first year the new 9868 syllabus was used. The exam required candidates to answer two questions: one from **Section A** and one from **Section B**. Candidates generally followed the rubrics and instructions effectively. However, a few candidates

answered three questions or responded only to questions from either **Section A** or **Section B**. Most responses were clearly labelled according to the questions on the scripts.

The most successful responses were those that demonstrated evidence of pre-essay planning and good time management. Each essay was marked out of 20, so it was important for candidates to allocate enough time to answer both questions equally well.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

顾城: 《顾城的诗》 (Selected poems by Gucheng)

Only a few candidates chose this question, but those who did performed well. Most were able to analyse the emotions conveyed in the poem in detail. Stronger candidates focused on the word 'complex' and incorporated poetic imagery and other unique artistic techniques for a deeper analysis, showcasing their strong ability to interpret poetry. Some weaker candidates, however, appeared to struggle to accurately understand the poem.

Question 2

老舍: 《龙须沟》 (*Longxu Gou* by Laoshe)

This was a very popular question. Most candidates were familiar with the plot and used specific examples to analyse the differences between the mother and daughter. Stronger candidates not only provided accurate interpretations of the characters' traits but also connected their analysis of the two figures to the broader social changes, demonstrating an understanding of the author's intent and the theme of the work. Weaker candidates focused more on describing the characters' thoughts and actions but could improve by clearly identifying their personality traits.

Question 3

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

This was another popular question. Most candidates were able to analyse Yin Xueyan's character by examining the symbolic meanings of red and white. Stronger candidates delved deeper, using the contrast between the two colours and relevant references to discuss the complexity of Yin Xueyan's character (her coldness and allure, her divine perspective and that fact she is also a symbol of desire) and connecting the use of colour with the character's portrayal and the interpretation of the theme. However, some candidates provided a more superficial analysis, such as focusing only on Yin Xueyan as a symbol of death, which simplified the meaning of the two colours, and did not fully grasp the rich meaning of the character. Weaker candidates should try to avoid focusing on narration to the detriment of analysis.

Section B

Questions 4 and 5

西西: 《我城》 (*Wo Cheng* by Xixi)

Question 4

Very few candidates chose this question. Those who did were able to analyse the title *My City* by linking it to the author's identity and the social context, demonstrating an understanding of the author's intent, including themes of belonging and responsibility toward the city. However, some candidates would do well to provide more detailed analyses, using supporting evidence from specific examples in the novel.

Question 5

No candidates answered this question so a comment on candidate performance is not possible.

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 one of the most popular questions. Strong answers were detailed and well-organised, analysing the reasons for An Ran's rejection from multiple perspectives, such as her personal characteristics, her classmates' views, her teacher's reactions and social values. This demonstrated a clear understanding of the author's intent behind designing these plot elements. Weaker candidates provided more plot descriptions and some attributed the reasons for An Ran's failure entirely to her own personal qualities. Their analysis was somewhat one-sided, which also reflected a limited understanding of the theme.

Question 7

Fewer candidates chose to answer this question compared to **Question 6**, but they generally performed well. Stronger candidates provided a comprehensive discussion, analysing the experiences and emotional journeys of An Ran and An Jing. They examined how the story portrayed the breaking away from old values, behavioural norms and moral codes through various events in the school and family contexts. Additionally, they analysed the author's use of artistic techniques, such as symbolism and contrast, to further deepen the analysis of this issue. These responses demonstrated a thorough understanding of the text and a nuanced interpretation of its themes. Weaker candidates could improve by focusing their analysis on the breakthrough of old values and concepts in order to avoid straying from the main topic.

Questions 8 and 9

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

Question 8

No candidates answered this question so a comment on candidate performance is not possible.

Question 9

Most candidates' responses showed a good understanding of the characters and the storylines. Stronger candidates were able to analyse the issue based on the personalities and thoughts of the two individuals, providing appropriate examples to support their viewpoints. Their responses were well-organised with a clear structure. They also managed to connect the emotional dilemmas faced by the characters to the themes of the work, demonstrating a deep understanding of the text. Weaker candidates, although familiar with the plot, tended to have a more one-dimensional understanding of the characters.

CHINESE LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

Paper 9868/33
Literature 33

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

On the whole, candidates performed well in this series. They demonstrated a strong level of ability, reflecting their insightful analyses and creative expression. Their comprehensive grasp of key aspects of the texts and exam expectations, combined with their proficient use of various answering strategies, highlights their commitment and the significant effort their teachers have devoted to their training.

Most candidates demonstrated a detailed understanding of the Chinese texts, with many also showcasing their knowledge of literary techniques in their responses. They displayed a thorough grasp of the characters and content, often going beyond the plot to discuss the social, political and historical contexts in China at the time. This familiarity with the broader social background enriched their analysis, particularly in responses that delved into the underlying themes of the works.

Candidates generally recognised the importance of focusing their responses on the text itself, analysing the plot or characters with appropriate illustrations. However, some essays could have been strengthened by the judicious use of brief, well-chosen quotations to support their points. Candidates are encouraged to select a brief quotation to illustrate their point and then explain how it supports their discussion, avoiding lengthy descriptions or excessive narration that substitute plot development for character analysis.

On the other hand, some candidates appeared unfamiliar with the works, leading to numerous errors in their retelling and analysis of the plot, or they directly quoted long passages without any analysis or reflection on the entire text. Therefore, it is advisable for candidates to choose questions based on texts they have thoroughly read and studied to avoid significant mistakes in their answers.

Most candidates were able to respond in an academic essay style, with a clear structure that included a brief introduction, a well-organised main body and a conclusion, all presented in clear paragraphs. Although linguistic accuracy is not assessed in this paper, effective and clear communication remain essential.

Candidates were expected to be familiar with the examination requirements, which were detailed in both English and Chinese on the front page of the question paper. This was the first year the new 9868 syllabus.

The exam required candidates to answer two questions: one from **Section A** and one from **Section B**. Candidates generally followed the rubrics and instructions. However, a few still answered three questions or responded only to questions from either **Section A** or **Section B**. Most responses were clearly labelled according to the questions on the scripts.

The most successful responses were those that demonstrated evidence of pre-essay planning and good time management. Each essay was marked out of 20, so it was important for candidates to allocate enough time to answer both questions equally well.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

顾城: 《顾城的诗》 (Selected poems by Gucheng)

The vast majority of candidates paid attention to the requirements of the question. In addition to *Ganjue*, they were able to select another suitable poem and successfully elaborated on the literal meaning of the colour words. The most capable candidates not only connected the colour words to the emotions expressed by the poet but also explored the reasons behind the poet's choice of such imagery, linking it to the poet's psychological state and social context. Weaker candidates could improve by focusing on the analysis of the emotional aspect or by having a more accurate understanding of the content.

Question 2

老舍: 《龙须沟》 (*Longxu Gou* by Laoshe)

This was the most popular question in **Section A**, and many candidates answered it well. Most demonstrated a solid understanding of the background of the work and the author's intention. They effectively listed the traits of Liu Xunzhang and explained how the complexity of his character is shaped by his position and the societal context of the time, using appropriate examples from the text. Stronger candidates further connected these analyses to the overarching theme of the work, creating a more comprehensive response. However, some candidates' responses merely listed Liu Xunzhang's personality traits without exploring how these traits contribute to his complexity. There were also some misunderstandings, such as in the interpretation of Liu Xunzhang, or failing to read or fully understand the entire text and character, leading to incorrect analyses based on personal assumptions about the quoted text in the question or its characters.

Question 3

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

This was another popular question; however, there were relatively few high-scoring responses. Many candidates struggled to demonstrate an accurate understanding of the theme of the text or effectively present Qian furen's psychological changes during the banquet and the reasons behind them. Especially in the section where Qian furen recalls her past with Zheng Yanqing, which is the climax of her emotional changes, many candidates neglected to analyse this part. Stronger responses showed a good understanding of the text's background, the author's intentions and literary techniques. These candidates were able to focus on Qian furen's psychological changes, connected these changes to her interactions at the party and gave insights into the underlying personal and societal shifts. Some candidates were able to provide a detailed retelling of the text but unfortunately failed to focus their answers on Qian furen's psychological changes, which significantly affected their scores.

Section 2

Questions 4 and 5

西西: 《我城》 (*Wo Cheng* by Xixi)

Very few candidates chose to answer this question. This question had three key aspects: the child's perspective, social issues and providing two examples. Some strong candidates managed to address all parts of the question and demonstrated critical thinking. They successfully identified and connected the text to the social issues it reflects, such as the wealth gap, environmental pollution, educational pressure and social alienation, while also showing an understanding of the author's intent. However, weaker candidates, while able to point out certain social issues, would do better if they supported their points with appropriate examples, or provided an analysis from the child's perspective as required by the question. Other candidates needed to have a better understanding of the text.

Question 5

This was the least popular question among candidates. Strong candidates summarised several traits of the character, such as diligence, self-discipline, kindness and having admirable aspirations, and then analysed each trait with relevant examples. The most exceptional responses went further by citing sentences and examples from the text to reveal Ah Fa's intrinsic qualities, connecting them to the work's themes and the author's intent, and exploring how she represents the youth demographic. Weaker candidates could improve by demonstrating a less one-sided analysis or a better understanding of the character.

Question 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 chosen by many candidates. This question aimed to assess the candidates' ability to interpret interpersonal dynamics in the narrative. Many candidates were able to identify and elaborate on some prominent traits of Wei Wan's character. However, some candidates did not approach the analysis from An Jing's psychological perspective, which made their responses more about analysing Wei Wan themselves rather than how An Jing perceives Wei Wan. This omission limited the depth of their responses and impacted their scores.

Stronger candidates went beyond surface-level descriptions of traits and delved into a more in-depth analysis from An Jing's perspective. These candidates not only listed Wei Wan's characteristics but also used specific examples to show how An Jing interprets these traits, thereby making their analysis more persuasive.

Question 7

This question was a popular choice among candidates. Stronger candidates effectively analysed the symbolic meaning of the red shirt, while also exploring Anran's personality and the societal stereotypes of young women during that era. They used Wei Wan and key events as examples to illustrate the conflict between the red shirt and the societal expectations and acceptance of the time. Additionally, some candidates addressed Anran's act of pointing out Wei Wan's mistake in class as an example of independent thinking and challenging authority, which added depth and relevance to their answers. However, some candidates merely identified the symbolic meaning of the red shirt without delving into why it was deemed problematic. Weaker responses would improve the depth of their response and demonstrate better engagement with the topic if they directly analysed the question rather than focusing on retelling the plot.

Questions 8 and 9

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

This was another popular question. Stronger candidates analysed multiple aspects of Fang Hongjian's character, effectively illustrating his 'complete uselessness' through specific examples from his academic pursuits, career, love life and marriage. When addressing the 'not disliked' aspect, candidates offered various perspectives, including Fang Hongjian's charm toward women, his moral integrity, kindness toward others and his fundamental sense of patriotism. These candidates presented their arguments clearly, demonstrating deep thought and insight into the character. However, it is worth noting that many candidates focused solely on the 'completely useless' aspect while neglecting any analysis of 'not disliked'. Some also misunderstood the question, attributing Fang Hongjian's 'uselessness' mainly to societal constraints that hindered his abilities. Additionally, some responses analysed the character through the lens of the three

'besieged fortresses' in the novel, which deviated from the prompt. Weaker responses would improve by avoiding simply recounting the story or relying on superficial labels to describe the character.

Question 9

Fewer candidates chose this question, but many strong responses were observed. Numerous candidates began their analysis by exploring Fang Hongjian's decision to reject Su Wenwan, noting that after losing Fang Hongjian, Su Wenwan's choices became limited, ultimately leading her to marry Cao Yuanlang. Stronger candidates were able to identify Su Wenwan's personality traits (e.g. arrogant, strong sense of self-respect, decisive) and psychological tendencies (e.g. enjoying the attention from men competing for her favour). They explained her behaviour and the social pressures she faced due to her age and educational background. These candidates further analysed how these traits influenced her choice of Cao Yuanlang, who actively pursued her, and explored how their personalities complemented one another. These responses were layered, offering detailed and insightful analysis. However, some candidates demonstrated a superficial understanding of the characters and plot, simply suggesting that Su Wenwan married Cao Yuanlang to take revenge on Fang Hongjian or because she was attracted to his wealth. Such misunderstandings lowered the overall quality of the responses.

