



GCSE

CHINESE (SPOKEN MANDARIN)

8673/SH: Speaking (Higher)

Report on the Examination

8673

June 2022

Version: 1.0

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General Comments

This was only the second year of the specification for the GCSE award in Chinese Speaking since its implementation in 2019. Due to the impact of COVID-19, teachers and students have experienced two years of centre assessed grades (CAGs) and teacher assessed grades (TAGs), with speaking endorsements replacing formal speaking assessments. Following this hiatus, teachers and students in 2022 were once again able to prepare for the spoken language to be assessed in the normal way through formal speaking tests, as was the case in 2019. Without a doubt, this style of testing encouraged a more authentic approach to speaking compared with the speaking endorsements of 2020 and 2021.

As in 2019, there was a very positive response to this specification: another successful year. The performance of the paper in the light of students' responses demonstrated that centres continued to have a good understanding of the established specification and its effective implementation. It was very pleasing to see a significant increase in the number of schools that entered students for AQA GCSE Chinese compared to previous years. This increase reflects the ongoing encouraging situation for Chinese language teaching and learning.

On the whole, centres coped very well with the requirements of the specification, with many well-conducted tests seen. The format of the normal GCSE Chinese speaking test continued to allow all students to demonstrate a level of oral proficiency that was commensurate with their ability. In particular, most schools that had used this specification in the past administered and carried out the tasks to a much higher standard this year, which indicated that they had heeded the report provided by AQA based on the conduct of the exams in 2019, and that teachers had taken on board the advice and suggestions given. While reflecting on this positive aspect, it is also worth noting that in a minority of cases the specification requirements were not correctly followed, which resulted in some disadvantage to students. Therefore, the following report is provided, aiming to give a comprehensive overview of the 2022 GCSE Chinese speaking test, both in terms of teacher conduct and student performance. It will highlight best practice, as well as signposting areas for improvement for 2023 and subsequent years.

Tier of Entry

Following on from advice given to centres in 2019, it was pleasing to note that most Higher tier students performed in a way that justified their tier of entry. However, there were still a small number of students who would have been better suited to Foundation tier. Centres are advised to make judicious entry decisions that will allow students of all abilities to perform confidently and reach their full potential.

Quality of Recording

Generally, tests were well administered by the centres with very clear recordings and accurate information given on the Attendance Record form, all of which contributed to a more efficient marking process. Centres should, however, be aware that it is imperative that the speaking test is conducted at a suitable venue and that a quality recording device is used. Although this was usually the case, there were some instances where external background noise and/or poor quality recordings affected the audibility of what the students said, all of which made marking a very difficult exercise for the examiners. In a minority of cases, examiners had to report to AQA instances of unclear recordings, in the hope that improvements to the quality of the recordings could be made. However, this was not always possible and in some cases the recordings of students were not clearly audible, the teacher's voice was much louder than the student's, or there was a lot of background noise, all of which made it extremely difficult for the examiners to work out

what the students were saying. When background noise in all its forms (school bell, mobile phones, paper flipping, etc.) became intrusive, this created severe delays and inefficiencies in examiners' marking. Centres are reminded to be aware of extraneous noise issues and to avoid this happening again in future years. Centres are also reminded that they should not stop or pause the recording at any time during the test.

Teacher Conduct

Test Routine Procedures

It was pleasing to note that there has been an overall improvement in the conduct of the tests compared to the first year of this specification, with the vast majority of teachers adhering closely to the guidelines laid out in the *Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations*. The introductory information for each test was concisely, clearly and effectively articulated. However, it is worth reminding teachers that at the start of each candidate's test, the student's candidate number and candidate name should be announced by the teacher and not by the student. There were some cases where teachers did not announce each section of the test: Role-play number; Photo card number; Conversation theme 1; Conversation theme 2. Occasionally, the candidate number was wrongly given by the teacher and this caused confusion and delay in the marking process.

The prescribed combination of Role-play, Photo card and General Conversation given in the sequence chart was adhered to by the vast majority of teachers. Unfortunately, there were a small number of instances where the wrong combination of Role-play card, Nominated Theme and Photo card was used, resulting in the theme of the Photo card being duplicated in the General Conversation, or, at times, only one Theme being covered in the General Conversation. In such cases, the maximum mark for Communication that can be awarded is 5 out of a possible 10.

Once the test has begun, procedural matters should be announced succinctly in the target language. Transitions between sections of the test should be very clear. There is no need for any use of English during the tests: each new section should be introduced in Chinese, for instance by using a sentence such as '第一部分, 角色扮演卡片 1, 我是你的朋友。'; to indicate to the candidate that s/he should begin his/her Photo card task, the teacher can say '现在进入第二部分, 图片会话/or 看图会话卡片 E。照片里有什么?'; to indicate the transition from the Photo card task to the General Conversation a sentence such as '现在进入第三部分, 普通会话 1, 你选的是主题 2.....' can be used. It is particularly important to announce the change of theme during the General Conversation, e.g. 普通会话 2, 主题是.....'.

This year it was pleasing to see that the vast majority of teachers did very clearly indicate the transition from one section to the next in the target language as suggested above. Many centres are to be commended for their well-organised test procedures and consistent way of conducting the test for each student. However, in a minority of cases, English was still used to indicate the start of each section of the test. In some cases there was no transition to indicate the change of theme in the General Conversation. Teachers are reminded that, for the benefit of students and examiners, they should clearly signal the transition to the second theme of the General Conversation in the target language after the discussion of the first (nominated) conversation theme has concluded.

Teachers are reminded that the students' language should not be corrected during the test, nor should they be given any key vocabulary; in such cases, no credit can be given for a student's subsequent response.

Students are expected to use repair strategies, if needed, throughout the test. An aspect of this is to ask for clarification or repetition. Many teachers had taught their students phrases such as ‘请再说一遍。’. When students asked in English for a question to be repeated, the subsequent response was credited for Communication, but, in the case of the Role-play and General Conversation, it could contribute to a lower mark for Use of language.

At times, while the student was still trying to answer a question, the teacher moved on to another question and did not allow the student sufficient time to complete their answer. Teachers needed to be a little more patient in allowing the students some thinking time and letting them complete their answer before moving on to the next question. On some occasions, teachers altered the questions on the Role-play cards and Photo Cards, or accidentally skipped a question, which not only confused candidates but also disadvantaged them by leading to a loss of marks.

It is most important that teachers thoroughly understand the *Instructions for the conduct of the exams* and ensure that they are applied correctly. Please note that the title of this Specification is **GCSE Chinese (Spoken Mandarin)**. Centres are reminded that the test must be conducted in **Mandarin** Chinese only, and not in any other Chinese dialect, e.g. Cantonese. A test conducted in a different language or dialect cannot be accepted.

Teacher-examiners should at times pay more attention to their own pronunciation and tones when asking students questions in order to ensure that they convey the message accurately. On occasion, mispronunciation on the part of the teacher actually altered the meaning of the question, which had the potential to disadvantage students.

Timings

Timings were usually appropriate for the tier, but in a significant number of centres this was not the case.

There is no fixed time for the Role-play task, however most students completed this section within the suggested 2 minutes for Higher tier. Hesitant delivery and repetition sometimes led to overlong Role-plays. Occasionally, teachers gave overly lengthy responses to students' questions, which should be avoided. This also applies to the General Conversation section.

Most students completed the Photo card task comfortably within the time limit at both tiers. At Higher tier, where the time limit is three minutes, there were some cases where not all five questions were asked within the time allowed. This was occasionally due to very slow delivery by the student, but more often the result of an overlong and repetitive type of answer in response to the first question, 'Describe the photo'. The problem was at times also caused by teachers not strictly adhering to the five questions in the Teacher's Booklet, but instead asking supplementary follow-up questions.

At both tiers, most teachers adhered to the minimum and maximum timings for the General Conversation. Some failed to reach the minimum time per theme for Higher, i.e. two and a half minutes. There were also some occasions when the minimum time requirement was not met for both of the themes. This impacted on the mark awarded for Communication. Teachers are reminded that it is vital to allocate the time for the two themes appropriately. Centres are advised to note that the timing of each General Conversation theme starts immediately after the first question on that theme has been asked. Anything said by the student beyond the maximum time limit (three and a half minutes) is disregarded for assessment purposes.

Conducting the Role-play Task

In the Role-play, the prescribed wording in the Teacher’s booklet was adhered to by most teachers. In a minority of cases, however, teachers rephrased the script, which invalidated any subsequent response by the candidate. Centres are reminded that teacher-examiners must adhere precisely to the script. They may change the target language script given only if the candidate’s response makes the wording of the script invalid. Teachers may repeat a question, but they should not rephrase any questions. It was noted that some teachers repeated questions too many times, or rephrased questions, sometimes even supplying key vocabulary in the question. Other teachers waited too long when students were clearly unable to answer. On some occasions teachers kept repeating ‘还有吗?’ in order to elicit further details, when in fact the student had already given sufficient information to answer the question, which confused the students and could even result in incorrect answers.

In the case of two-part questions, e.g. those requiring an opinion and a reason, most students responded very well, using the conjunction word ‘因为’ to give a justification immediately after expressing an opinion. It is good practice to prompt the students by repeating ‘为什么?’ to elicit a missing justification to ensure that the task is fully completed.

Teacher-examiners are reminded that, when conducting the Role-play, they should relay the script in the Teacher’s Booklet accurately and precisely, in order not to disadvantage candidates.

Conducting the Photo Card Task

The questions in the section focus on a specific topic and invite students to first describe the contents of the photo and then present their own ideas and opinions. The ability to develop responses is one of the criteria necessary for achieving the upper bands of the mark scheme.

Overall, this section was well conducted by the vast majority of teachers. The five prescribed questions were asked in the order given in the Teacher’s Booklet. The three-minute maximum time for Higher tier was adhered to, and the time allowance proved ample for students to provide developed answers to all five questions. However, some significant issues occurred in a small number of centres which need to be addressed for the benefit of future candidates.

Centres are reminded that, unlike in the Role-play section, in the Photo card task a question may be paraphrased. When considering any paraphrasing of Photo card questions, the exact original meaning of the question must be maintained. This can be achieved through the substitution of an individual word with a synonym or, in some cases, with the use of a different language structure. However, no additional elements, which aim to clarify the question further, are permitted. During the test, teachers generally made minor changes to the script, without altering the meaning, which was acceptable. However, at times some questions were significantly changed, alternative questions were asked, a question was omitted, or the answer was supplied to the student by providing a choice question; for example, following Question 4 in Photo card G, ‘你小的时候喜欢什么宠物?’, adding ‘小狗还是小猫?’. All of these situations disadvantaged the students concerned, and as a result students’ responses could not be credited. Furthermore, the addition of supplementary questions by teachers sometimes meant that not all of the questions in the Teacher’s Booklet were asked within the prescribed maximum time allowance, preventing students from achieving the highest marks.

Centres are reminded to follow the *Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations* where it states: *No supplementary questions must be asked.* Teachers are reminded to also keep to the appropriate timing: three-minute maximum time for Higher tier.

Conducting the General Conversation

In general, this part of the test was far more spontaneous than the other two sections. The students were provided with sufficient opportunities to show their full potential in responding to all the questions, including producing at least one question for the teacher to answer during the General Conversation. However, there are some areas which need to be improved and also some good practice which should be commended.

First of all, teacher-examiners are particularly reminded that:

- a) The General Conversation section is a dialogue, not a presentation or monologue. Teachers should be aware that a presentation is not an acceptable format for this section of the test. At times, at the beginning of the nominated theme, students were asked to give a self-introduction ‘先说一说你自己。’ which led to a significantly prolonged monologue and seriously affected the mark for Spontaneity.
- b) While it is fine to make use of the example questions in Part 3 of the Teacher’s Booklet, it is important to make sure that the questions selected belong to the correct theme. For example, if the students is currently being asked questions on Theme 1, then example questions taken from the booklet must also correspond to Theme 1. Occasionally questions were randomly selected by teachers from a theme other than the one currently being discussed, which confused the students and led to lower marks for Communication.

At Higher tier, the questioning techniques were generally very good, allowing students to give developed and complex responses and use different time frames. Many teachers conducted their tests well and asked different questions to different students, tailoring the questions to their students’ abilities and interests. Unfortunately, there were some teachers who had a set list of questions per topic and kept to that list for all students, no matter what their ability. This usually had a negative effect on students’ marks, especially for the least able, who were unable to answer the more difficult questions. When moving from one theme to another, most teachers did as requested and indicated the change of theme on the recording, as discussed in the section above: **Test Routine Procedures.** This was helpful for the student and also for the examiners. Timings were usually good. The total timing for the General Conversation at Higher tier is between five and seven minutes. However, the time spent on each theme is equally important. If a student spent less than two and a half minutes on one or both themes, there was a deduction of two marks for Communication.

Another area where a deduction of marks was applied was when a student failed to ask the teacher-examiner a clearly understandable question. In such cases, there was a deduction of one mark. The question could be on either of the two themes covered in the General Conversation. The teacher-examiner is allowed to prompt the student to ask a question by saying 你有问题吗? or 你有问题要问我吗? Most teachers did this, but others did not. Very often the question was left to the very end of the test and, if this meant that the maximum time had been exceeded (three and a half minutes for Higher tier), a one mark deduction was applied for Communication. Teachers are advised to encourage students to complete this routine task early on in the conversation to ensure it does not fall outside the time allowed.

With regard to the Range and accuracy of language, capable candidates were able to achieve high marks by demonstrating their ability to incorporate more complex structures and a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. A set of utterances which is mainly error-free but very simple will not attract the highest marks. To achieve the higher ranges of the marking criteria at Higher tier successful use of ambitious structures and a wide range of vocabulary are required. Teachers are advised to encourage students of all abilities to use three time frames in the General Conversation in order to score a higher band mark for Range and accuracy of language.

The quality of pronunciation varied greatly between centres. Where poor pronunciation seriously hindered comprehension, this could also have an impact on the Communication mark. In terms of Communication, centres are reminded that marks are based on the amount of information successfully conveyed by the student. Marks also take into account any ambiguity introduced and reflect how much the student elaborated on their answers. More able students should be encouraged to develop their ideas and to produce longer sequences of utterances. There were some impressive, spontaneous conversations from the highest-achieving students, but some responses sounded heavily pre-learnt. At Higher tier in particular, this resulted in some more able students being awarded a comparatively low mark for Spontaneity and fluency.

An open-ended question such as ‘说说你去年的圣诞节是怎么过的。’ enabled more able students at this tier to give an extended response by narrating sequences of events. Closed Yes/No questions often are of very limited usefulness. In their questions, some teachers strayed beyond the theme being discussed. Teachers are advised to check which sub-topics fall within each theme in order to avoid this. As mentioned above in this report, where only one theme was covered in the General Conversation, or where the same theme was discussed in the Photo card task and then again in the General Conversation, a maximum of five marks only could be awarded for Communication.

It is not advisable to ask two or three questions in quick succession, without allowing students the chance to answer each question separately, since this makes it likely that candidates forget to include part of the answer, particularly less able students. It is worth reminding teachers again that where students engage in long monologues, spontaneity cannot be rewarded. Students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to respond spontaneously to questions and develop their answers, rather than relying heavily on pre-learnt responses.

Student Performance

Students mostly coped well with the requirements of the specification and much good language use was in evidence. At times, where inaccurate use of language or poor pronunciation and tones resulted in an unclear message, credit could not be given for that particular response.

Student Performance in the Role-play Task

It was pleasing to note that most students were able to access the bullet points and were able to formulate an appropriate and succinct response. Sometimes students did not address the tasks, but offered other, unrelated information, or did not answer the questions in a straightforward way, which showed that they were relying solely on pre-learnt responses.

The unprepared item, indicated by !, was difficult for some, but not as challenging as the ? item, which required students to ask the teacher a question. For some students, forming a question was the most challenging task in the Role-plays. The need for students to practise asking questions in class is important. It is worth noting that for the Task ? in the Role-play or in the General

Conversation, a follow-up question/an elliptical question, using ‘你呢?’ is acceptable, but only when there is an obvious context, where the meaning is clearly understandable from the previous sentence.

A significant number of students at both tiers did not take on board the scene-setting statement explaining where the Role-play was taking place, e.g. in Role-play 7, a transactional context ‘in a Chinese restaurant’, or in Role-play 9, ‘at a park’. Students need to understand the importance of carefully reading the Role-play scenario at the start of their preparation time. On some occasions, and at both tiers, students gave far more information than was necessary to accomplish the task, which is to be discouraged.

Specific Higher Tier Role-play Issues

In terms of Knowledge and use of language (KUL) for the Role-play overall, as in 2019 the use of the directional verb 来(come) still causes problems; in most cases 去 (go) was used instead of 来. Students should also take care when using the demonstrative adjectives 这 (this) and 那 (that), especially in transactional Role-plays such as Role-plays 7 and 9.

Below are those issues which appeared to be the most challenging for students. Tasks that are not mentioned were generally executed well, especially those which required opinions and justifications, although at times such responses were over-used and sounded pre-learnt ,e.g. ‘因为有意思, 因为有用,因为好玩儿, 因为对身体好’, etc..

Role Play 7

Task 1

In response to the question ‘你喜欢这家饭馆吗? 为什么?’, a short opinion and justification were acceptable. However, it was noted that the demonstrative adjective 这 was not used by many students. This is a transactional Role-play where the scene involves the student imagining themselves in a Chinese restaurant and talking to their classmate about food and eating out. Students are advised to read the rubric in English on the Candidate’s Role-play card carefully, so that they fully aware of what they are expected to do. This is especially true of the transactional Role-plays. Students should thoroughly understand the scene-setting statement which explains where the Role-play is taking place.

A similar situation also arose with Role-play 9, Task 1, when answering the question ‘你喜欢这个公园吗? 为什么?’

Task 2 ‘!’

Some students missed the superlative adjective ‘最’ when responding to the question ‘你最喜欢在哪儿吃饭?’. This also applied to other questions containing ‘最’, e.g. Role-play 11, Task 1 and Role-play 12, Task 2 ‘!’.

Task 4

In the question ‘你觉得今天的饭菜怎么样?’ the interrogative pronoun ‘怎么样’, which was being used to elicit opinions, was not well understood by some students.

Role-play 8

Task 5 ‘?’

Students were required to ask their Chinese friend if they celebrate Spring Festival/Chinese New Year. The major challenge for students in this task was the use of the words 庆祝 or 过 when forming the question.

Role-play 9

Task 1

As in Role-play 7, Task 1, the demonstrative adjective 这个 was not used by many students when responding to the question: ‘你喜欢这个公园吗? 为什么?’. Some students incorrectly responded with 我喜欢去公园, 因为……’.

Task 2 ‘!’

In the response to this question ‘你一般什么时候来这个公园?’ a surprisingly high number of students failed to use the verb ‘来’ to answer the question, using instead ‘去’. They either did not understand the significance of the verb ‘来’ here, or paid it no attention.

Role-play 11

Task 4

Some students did not answer the question: ‘你将来想学什么? 为什么?’, precisely enough, giving responses such as ‘我喜欢学中文, 因为……’ which failed to include an explicit future time reference as required by the question.

Role-play 12

Task 4

Some students were unfamiliar with the meaning of ‘兼职’ and could not respond appropriately.

Student Performance in the Photo Card Task

Generally, students seemed well prepared for this part of the test. Most students were able to give a reasonably well-developed response to the first prepared question ‘照片里有什么?’. In the case of less able students, this tended to take the form of descriptions of people in the photo. Almost all students were able to give personal opinions and reasons. There were a small number of cases where students spoke only briefly about the content of the photo before giving a personalised response that was irrelevant to the question. Understandably, responses to the three prepared questions were usually more developed than those to the two unseen questions. At Higher tier, however, many students successfully attempted to give developed responses to all five questions and were able to access the 13-15 band.

Specific Higher Tier Photo Card Issues

In order to score in the top band, students needed to answer all questions clearly and develop three (‘most’) answers by using at least three clauses. There was no extra credit given in this question for complex language, which is marked in terms of Communication only. Accuracy and pronunciation are, however, important factors in achieving clarity. Lower marks were mainly caused by students’ misunderstanding the questions, giving short answers, providing no response or an inappropriate response, lacking knowledge of vocabulary or linguistic structures, missing out an opinion and/or justification, serious pronunciation errors.

Photo Card

Photo Card G

Question 4

In the question: ‘你小的时候喜欢什么宠物?’, some students failed to identify the past time frame of 小的时候, and responded with answers such as ‘我有两只猫。’

Photo Card H

Question 4

Some students found the ‘how long’ question here challenging, (‘你昨天上网上了多长时间?’).

Photo Card I

Question 5

The last question ‘上个周末, 你的朋友去了哪儿?’ was intended to elicit a response in the third person, but this was not properly understood and limited information was conveyed.

Photo Card J

Question 3

This choice question ‘你觉得在家吃饭还是在饭馆吃饭更健康? 为什么?’ was understood by the majority of students, but justifications were not always provided.

Photo Card L

Question 4

The majority of students were able to cope well with the question ‘你在学校有什么压力?’. However it was noted that some students did not seem to understand the meaning of ‘压力’, and answered with ‘我有很多压力。’ without providing details of the kinds of pressure they experience.

Student Performance in the General Conversation

It was pleasing to note that almost all students were able to use the target language to ask for a question to be repeated and to say that they didn’t understand. Most students were also able to ask the teacher-examiner a question as required by this section of the test. Many students performed well, including three time frames, which enabled them to achieve the higher bands for Range and accuracy of language.

There was a wide range in the quality of responses in the General Conversation, but the vast majority were able to score at least some marks. As in 2019, there was a pre-learnt feel to some of the conversations, but by and large, some spontaneity was maintained.

Specific Higher Tier General Conversation Issues

Generally, most students were well prepared for this part of the test and gave developed answers, particularly in response to prepared questions from the nominated theme. Opinions and justifications were regularly conveyed. On occasion, there was a large discrepancy between the responses conveyed on the nominated theme and those for the second prescribed theme. When this occurred, it inevitably impacted on the overall mark for Communication. Many performances were fluent, but not necessarily in an authentic way, suggesting although the pace of delivery was

sustained, that the material had been pre-learnt. The quality of pronunciation varied greatly. Where poor pronunciation seriously hinders comprehension, this could also impact on the Communication mark. With regard to Range and accuracy of language, high marks were achieved by more able students, demonstrating their ability to incorporate more complex structures and a wider range of appropriate vocabulary in their responses. Many students successfully demonstrated the use of three time frames. It is worth repeating here what was said in the previous year's report; it is a good idea for students to try to include three time frames in a single response in the General Conversation section, e.g. '你喜欢你住的地方吗? 我非常喜欢我住的地方, 因为这里很干净, 空气很新鲜。但是以前这里的环境不太好, 将来我想住在海边。'

In terms of the mark for Communication, the required length of the General Conversation is between five and seven minutes. Each theme must last for a minimum of two and a half minutes and, if one or both are under that time, there is a penalty of two marks for Communication. Such being the case, students should be encouraged to develop their responses by conveying additional information in order to meet the minimum time requirement.

It is also a requirement for students to ask the teacher-examiner a clearly understandable question, and this can occur at any time during this section of the test. If no question is asked, there is a deduction of one mark for Communication. Correct timings were generally observed, but many teacher-examiners only invited the student to ask a question at the very end of the General Conversation. By the time the student had responded, they were often out of time and hence incurred a one mark deduction in line with the mark scheme. Given this potential risk, it is recommended that students try to ask a question earlier in the test. Students in some centres should be commended for asking a question during the first (nominated) theme of the General Conversation, or even at the very beginning of this section. Some students generated a follow-up question by using a 'statement + 你呢?', for example, '你最喜欢跟谁一起度假?' '我最喜欢跟朋友一起度假, 你呢?' or '你喜欢喝什么?' '我喜欢喝中国茶, 你呢?'

Some students were able to deliver a reasonably fluent performance using rehearsed responses. However, balanced against this, was the lack of ability to interact spontaneously, meaning that the top mark of 5 in the category of Spontaneity and fluency could not be awarded to this level of performance.

In the light of students' responses, knowledge and skills regarding the time frames still need to be enhanced. In Chinese a verb does not inflect or change its form to indicate tense: therefore a time word or expression, or a time reference or context for the action of the verb must be clearly provided when referring to past, present or future events and actions. Modal verbs such as 想, 会, 打算, 计划, 希望 or 要 + verb, etc. can indicate future time reference. Aspectual particles/aspect markers can also be accepted for actions with different time references, e.g. verb + 过 or 了 can indicate past experience.

Questions words such as 什么时候 (when; at what time), 怎么/怎么样 (how/how about), 多久/多长时间 (how long), remain somewhat challenging for less able students.

Advice to teachers

Teacher-examiner Tester Performance records (TTPRs)

A *Teacher-examiner tester performance record* (TTPR) will be sent to some schools and colleges following the marking of the speaking tests. The information provided on the TTPR is intended to provide teacher-examiners with feedback on the conduct of the speaking tests, to inform the

conduct of future tests. It is not possible to provide more detailed feedback than the information on the TTPR form. Feedback is provided on the basis of need only and not for every teacher-examiner. Teachers who receive TTPRs are advised to read them carefully. If one is not received, it is still a very good idea for teachers to take a look at the blank TTPR sheet (available via the AQA website) to help them prepare for future tests.

General

- Ensure that the test is conducted throughout in **Mandarin** Chinese; both the teacher-examiner and the student should only speak Mandarin Chinese and no other language or dialect, e.g. Cantonese.
- Do a short test recording before the first student's test to check recording levels and clarity.
- Position the microphone or digital recorder so that it picks up both voices clearly.
- Make sure that your own and the students' mobile phones are switched off (not just on silent) before the recording begins. Students should not have access to their mobile phones during the preparation time or during the exam, in accordance with examination regulations.
- Do not shuffle papers or move items around on the desk during the test. Such distracting practices can be unsettling to the student. With regard to recordings, any extraneous noise produced can obscure utterances.
- The Instructions for the conduct of examinations document is available via the AQA website. It is *essential* that you follow the instructions in that document.
- In the Instructions document, you are told how to introduce each student in English. This is what you should say at the start of the recording for every candidate:
GCSE Chinese examination, June (*year of exam*). Centre number ____, candidate number ____, candidate name ____. Role-play number ____, Photo card letter ____, General Conversation theme chosen by candidate Theme (1, 2 or 3).
- Everything said by the teacher-examiner must be clearly audible. Instances of whispering will be referred to AQA.
- After you have introduced each student, their Role-play, Photocard and nominated theme *in English* (as detailed above), then use Chinese throughout the rest of the exam
- Please use an appropriate Chinese translation for English terms e.g. 'Role-play card: 角色扮演卡片; Photo card: 图片会话/or看图会话卡片; theme: 主题; topic: 话题'.
- Respond positively to what students say, even if it is not very good. It will encourage them during the rest of the test.

Role-play

- Keep to your script as laid out in the Teacher's Booklet. Not to do so will mean that the student's response will receive a mark of 0 for Communication for that task.
- If you see that a student is starting to give the wrong answer to your question, stop him/her immediately and repeat the question. Once the student has completed an incorrect answer, a mark of 0 for Communication is given for that task, even if you repeat the question and a correct answer is subsequently given.
- If a student asks you to repeat a question you may do so. If a student provides no answer, you may also repeat the question before moving on.

Photo card

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- You may paraphrase a question, provided the meaning of the original question is maintained. However, be careful to ensure that this is the case or the student's reply will not be credited.
 - Ask all five questions in the Teacher's Booklet, but do not ask any additional questions.
 - Keep an eye on the timing. If a student's replies are very long and it looks as though you may not be able to ask the final question within the three-minute maximum time, it may be better to interrupt a student's answer and move on to the next question.
 - In a two-part question in an unprepared task, ask the first question, wait for an answer, and then ask the second question. Failure to do so in the unprepared task almost invariably leads to the student having to ask for the question to be repeated.

General conversation

- Encourage students to vary their language structures and vocabulary as much as possible, including a range of opinion words, adjectives, time expressions, verbs, modal verbs, conjunctions and the like to enhance communication skills and enrich conversation content.
- Train students to give and justify opinions without necessarily being asked to do so. This can form the basis of different starter activities in classroom settings.
- Be sensitive to the ability of the students – someone who struggles to describe his/her town is not going to be successful at discussing more challenging aspects of the topic, for example the impact of global warming.
- Try to ask students questions that reflect their interests. Don't ask all students identical questions.
- In order to achieve a greater sense of spontaneity in the conversation, follow up a student's response by asking about what they have just told you.
- Keep a close eye on the time. If one of the themes lasts for less than 2'30", there is a deduction of two marks for Communication.
- The maximum length of the General Conversation is seven minutes (max. 3'30" per Theme). Everything after that will *not* be marked.
- Remember to prompt the student to ask you a question if they don't do so without being asked. It is better to get them to ask you the question during their nominated theme so that you don't forget to do it later on. Alternatively, encourage students to ask the question early on during the General Conversation, to ensure that it does not fall outside the time allowed.
- If the first question the student asks you makes no sense, get them to ask you another one.

Advice to students

- Use the 12 minutes preparation time wisely. You can write down exactly what you are going to say in the Role-play tasks and in response to the three questions on the Photo card.
- For the Photo card questions, try to prepare answers of at least three sentences, using a verb in each one, and including opinions and justifications.
- Listen carefully to the questions that your teacher asks you for the unprepared questions in the Role-play and Photo card sections, as well as to all questions in the General Conversation.
- You can ask for a question to be repeated in any part of the test, but make sure you ask in Chinese. You could say '请再说一遍。', for example.

Closing remarks

Overall, well done. We thank teachers and centres for their hard work and effort this summer to provide their students with a positive experience and the opportunity to achieve in this qualification. Best wishes to all students who will participate in this specification next year.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.