

Examiners' Report

GCE O Level Chinese (7609)

June 2006

delivered locally, recognised globally

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Section A: General Comments

The pattern of entry remains generally the same as the previous years except for increased entries from centres in Ireland and International Schools in Hong Kong and China.

The majority of candidates found the paper fairly accessible and a good proportion of candidates performed well and scored high marks. The general language skills of the candidates this year remained comparable to that of previous years. A few candidates performed extremely well achieving very high marks (over 90) performing extremely well.

Question 1

Only very few candidates were not able to produce a clear and coherent translation. Most common mistakes and/or omissions came from words such as:

- Philosophy
- university campus (university building, garden, etc.)
- afternoon (raining 下午 for 下雨)
- elite university (English university – 精英 for 英國) .

Some candidates translated ‘The University of Beijing’ as ‘ a university in Beijing’; ‘not long time ago’ as ‘ a long time ago’ and ‘increase’ for ‘develop’. Those mistakes were due to either lack of knowledge in English or just carelessness.

Question 2

This passage is about traffic problems and the safety in driving a car. More able candidates were able to translate this passage comprehensively enough to achieve high marks. However, less able candidates made mistakes due to their poor reading comprehension in English, candidates are advised to read the passage twice before starting to translate it. Many candidates used English structure phrases in Chinese sentences, particularly with the if clause in the last sentence of the passage. Common mistakes included ‘traffic’ translated as ‘traffic jam’ and pedestrians translated as ‘pets’ or ‘disabled people’.

Question 3

There were five sentences in English to be translated into Chinese testing candidates' communication skills as well as their knowledge of the Chinese Language. Candidates experienced problems translating the first three questions and found the last two sentences extremely challenging. Blank spaces were left, their answers were completely inaccurate or translated the sentences in written Cantonese dialect style.

Please see below further comments regarding this question:

- The term 'Human Rights Act' proved very challenging and was translated by some candidates as:
 - Copy rights
 - The Rightists
 - Human power
 - Art exhibition
 - Human lantern (Human lights)
 - Drama of Shakespeare (Hamlet)
- 'no matter how cheap' was translated as 'no matter how many potato chips'
- 'first come first serve' as 'first class seats'
- 'came into force' as 'finished', 'under control', 'using force', 'became violent', 'under pressure', 'caused debate' or 'be opposed'.
- 'He was advised by the doctor that he should do more exercise' was translated as 'He was a new doctor and need more practice (exercise)' or 'He was advised to go to see a doctor'.

Question 4

In this section candidates were asked to write in Chinese either an essay or a letter. However, a few candidates wrote the composition in English and scored no marks for it. Candidates should read the question carefully and make sure they answer in the correct language. Candidates cannot be awarded marks if they use the wrong language. Some used a lot of Chinese phonetics (pinyin) instead of the Chinese characters and this resulted in very poor marks.

Candidates who chose the letter may have thought this to be the easiest option. However, they found difficulty to produce a sophisticated content in the style required. Other reasons for scoring low marks was the misunderstanding of the task, errors in grammar and syntax, and the using of wrong Chinese homonym characters.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this year candidates' had a similar standard comparing to last year, in both Chinese and English.

Centres should advise candidates to read the questions more carefully during the examination and in preparation for the examination one should practice more on the skill of translation and composition.

GRADE BOUNDARIES

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade	76	61	46	41	34

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.
