

CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9868/12
Reading

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

Key messages

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

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

General comments

This reading paper consists of 40 multiple-choice questions.

Learners read a total of five texts, which varied in length and covered a range of topics, including festival traditions, educating rural children, perspectives on work and leisure, the importance of mothers and music therapy. The questions focused on different skills, such as understanding detailed information and identifying emotions and opinions – both explicit and implied.

To perform well on this paper, learners needed to demonstrate a strong grasp of vocabulary and language structures, as well as the ability to interpret ideas and draw conclusions from discursive texts.

It was encouraging to see many positive responses throughout the paper. The majority of learners showed a clear understanding of the assessment requirements and performed confidently.

Comments on specific questions

Questions 1–6

In this section, learners needed to read a medium-length passage about different attitudes towards Spring Festival traditions, then respond to six 4-option questions. The topic was very familiar to learners and the overall response was excellent. All questions were answered exceptionally well. Candidates were able to navigate through a range of complex ideas, authentic expressions and get to the answers with a high level of accuracy.

Questions 7–12

This section required learners to read a passage with six missing sentences. Learners chose the correct sentence from a choice of eight options to fill each gap. The passage described a student's determination to turn his own opportunity into a chance to help rural children. Using his limited resources, he aimed to create educational opportunities for children in rural areas.

Despite the high vocabulary demand of the passage, the vast majority of candidates responded exceptionally well, with very few selecting incorrect answers.

Questions 13–20

In this section, learners worked through four distinct texts, each presenting an individual's perspective on work and leisure. The section comprised eight questions requiring candidates to accurately match each viewpoint to its respective person. Most participants demonstrated strong reading comprehension and analytical skills, effectively navigating nuanced content. Performance was impressive, with 88–98 per cent of responses correctly identifying the matching viewpoints.

Questions 21–32

In this task, learners read a passage centred on the theme of 'mother', designed to assess their ability to apply a diverse range of vocabulary and grammatical structures accurately.

This section yielded the highest number of perfect scores, particularly in **Question 23, 24, and 25**. The remaining questions also achieved impressive accuracy rates, consistently exceeding 90 per cent. Candidates demonstrated a strong command of grammar and an extensive vocabulary repertoire.

The only notable challenge emerged in **Question 32**, where some learners appeared uncertain in distinguishing between the use of 甚至 (used to express progression in degree) and 以致 (used to indicate consequence, often negative). This suggests some ambiguity in grasping the nuance between intensification and causality.

Questions 33–40

In the final exercise, learners read an extended passage – 'an appointment with music'. To demonstrate understanding, they answered a series of multiple-choice questions designed to assess their ability to identify opinions and draw conclusions from both explicit and implicit content.

Despite this section being the most demanding in the entire paper, overall performance was excellent. **Question 37 and 38** saw perfect scores, while **Question 33, 35, and 39** achieved accuracy rates above 88 per cent.

A slight challenge arose with **Question 36**. Although the majority answered correctly, some candidates chose option **C**, overlooking the characters 个个 which suggested that *everyone* can sing and dance. The original text clarified that *some* were singing and *some* were dancing, making option **C** inaccurate.

Question 39 asked, 'What inspiration does the performance bring to other young people?' Over 17 per cent of candidates, including some stronger candidates, selected option **A**: 'The performers are very brave.' However, the correct answer was option **B**: 'The performers could be good examples for other young people to follow.' While option **A** acknowledges the performers' bravery, it does not address the inspirational aspect required by the question. Option **B** better captures the idea of influence and positive role models, making it

more aligned with the intended focus. Candidates are encouraged to read the question carefully to ensure their answers reflect the specific purpose it is assessing.

CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9868/22
Writing

Key messages

In order to score the highest marks for responses, 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 quality of work produced in this year's examination was commendable. The majority of candidates demonstrated strong linguistic proficiency, employing a broad vocabulary, complex sentence structures and a wide range of cohesive devices. Most candidates completed all tasks efficiently and within the allotted time.

Centres should be congratulated for their teaching. Top-performing candidates stood out for their focused and well-organised responses. Their responses reflected clear comprehension of the task, effective use of idioms and authentic expressions and logically developed arguments supported by relevant examples. These responses were enriched with sensory details and personal insights, drawing readers into the experience. Attention to detail, evident through careful proofreading, further enhanced the clarity and originality of their writing.

Responses in the intermediate score range revealed that candidates had a sound understanding of the task, though the overall execution was occasionally inconsistent. Common issues included a lack of clarity or precision in expression, drifting off-topic, and minor errors in grammar, structure and punctuation. While not severely detrimental, these issues affected the coherence and persuasiveness of their writing.

Weaker candidates often faced challenges such as confusing narrative and descriptive formats, presenting underdeveloped ideas, and using incorrect or miswritten characters. Though these errors did not always obscure meaning, they indicated a need for greater attention to accuracy. Frequent misuse of structural particles 的、地、得 and long, poorly punctuated sentences also hampered clarity, suggesting a need for targeted instruction in these areas.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

在团体比赛中，团体合作比个人能力更重要。你同意吗？请讨论。

Content

Candidates who excelled in the content section showcased a thorough and insightful understanding of teamwork versus individual ability. These candidates addressed the central issue from a very clear standpoint. Some good examples included 我认为在完成团体比赛中，团队之间的集体合作比个人能力更重要 or 对于在团体比赛中，团队合作比个人能力更重要这一说法，我非常不认同。我认为，团队合作能力和个人能力在团体比赛中是同样重要的。Furthermore, they constructed well-reasoned arguments using a combination of logic, theory, evidence and personal experience. Lots of examples were provided, such as references to debating competitions, singing contests, football matches, tug of war competitions, basketball

matches, video gaming, relay races etc., which enhanced the persuasiveness of their arguments and justification.

Some candidates demonstrated a general understanding of the topic and made attempts at structured argumentation, often beginning with a clear viewpoint. However, their focus sometimes wavered due to the inclusion of irrelevant details or an overreliance on personal anecdotes without deeper critical engagement. Weaker responses frequently lacked depth and elaboration, with limited or absent concrete examples and occasional misinterpretation of the core question. Structural issues such as unclear paragraphing, weak coherence and grammatical errors were also evident in several scripts.

Quality of Written Communication

Most candidates adhered to the structural conventions of argumentative essays and employed cohesive devices to maintain clarity. Additionally, some displayed varied sentence structures and rhetorical devices like proverbs or quotes, such as, 三个臭皮匠，顶个诸葛亮；众人拾柴火焰高；众人一心，其利断金 etc. to enrich their essays. Furthermore, a range of excellent vocabulary and phrases were seen frequently, for example, 团结就是力量；孤掌难鸣；缺一不可；相辅相成 etc. which added nuance and depth. Effective use of connectives like 首先, 其次, 最后, 综上所述, 总的来说 etc. contributed to logical sequencing and improved readability.

However, issues with written expression were evident in varying degrees. These included inconsistent use or overuse of idioms, awkward phrasing and imprecise sentence boundaries. Common errors were in the use of 的, 地, and 得, as well as punctuation lapses, which impacted fluency and clarity in several responses. Some candidates also used pinyin in places instead of characters or struggled with character accuracy, further detracting from readability.

Continued emphasis on grammar, sentence construction and stylistic appropriateness, alongside vigilant proofreading, would help all candidates sharpen their written communication skills and elevate the overall quality of their work.

Question 2

描写一个千人婚宴的场景。

Content

This question was chosen by fewer candidates compared to **Question 3**. This was possibly due to uncertainty about how to approach the idea of 'a wedding ceremony' and 'a thousand people'. While the task proved more challenging for some, it offered a unique opportunity to showcase descriptive writing skills. There were some very successful, vivid depictions of a large-scale wedding feast through the use of rich, sensory language. Strong responses stood out for their sensory details, such as reference to sight, sound and smell, which brought the scene to life. In addition, some candidates employed figurative language, such as similes, to enhance imagery. One good example read: 我从来 没见到过这么热闹的场景, 耳边是持续不断的碗筷杯子的敲击声, 仿佛向我宣告着宾客们正一口接一口地享受 着桌上的美食; 整个宴厅都弥漫着美食的香味, 同时也参杂着一缕淡淡的花香。

Some candidates could improve by avoiding simply giving a personal narrative, focusing too narrowly on a specific bride or emotional backstory, for example. Some candidates only focused on visual descriptions, overlooking the use of other sensory details such as sound, smell and touch, which are essential for creating an immersive scene. A number of responses shifted into narrative writing rather than maintaining a purely descriptive focus, moving away from the intended genre. Candidates need to be reminded to stay focused on the descriptive side of the writing if they choose this question.

Quality of Written Communication

High-performing candidates were effective at choosing their vocabulary and skilfully created a vivid mood and sensory atmosphere in their writing. Many responses effectively employed literary devices, such as similes, personification and metaphor, for example: 阳光被五彩的玻璃切得细碎; 小草随风摆动, 那是生命的律动, 也仿佛是对这 神圣浩大的场面的赞叹; 香味在宴会厅里来回摇动, 仿佛要勾出人心里的馋虫一样. Such a wide range of vocabulary contributed to the linguistic range. However, some responses lacked variety in sentence structure, leading to repetitive or monotonous expression that diminished the overall impact of the description.

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

Question 3

“我已经迫不及待地想要开始第二次独自旅行了”, 以这句话为结尾写一篇记叙文。

Content

This was the most popular question among candidates and was appropriately aligned with the expected level of difficulty. As a narrative writing task, **Question 3** assessed candidates' ability to recount real or imagined events in a detailed, confident and natural style.

High-performing candidates produced clear and coherent narratives centred on their first solo travel experience with an effective climax, such as 顿时, 我动作僵住了, 浑身的血液像是凝固了, 我竟忘记了我的身份证! and often concluded with meaningful reflections on personal growth or aspirations for future travel. For example, 第一次出远门又是独自旅行的我, 一晚上经历了‘身在异乡为异客’和‘她想遇故知’的内心起伏后, 仿佛 成长了许多…… These stories were enhanced by such strongly conveyed and controlled narratives, which were also consistently developed.

Some candidates approached the task more as a descriptive travel log or itinerary rather than a narrative, which limited the development of plot and character. In several cases, the absence of a clear climax or conflict resulted in conclusions that felt unearned or anticlimactic. Additionally, a number of candidates either omitted the required closing sentence or inserted it in a way that felt forced or disconnected from the overall flow of the narrative.

Quality of Written Communication

The majority of candidates were able to organise their responses into paragraphs and demonstrated good narrative skills. Some high-achieving candidates demonstrated effective paragraphing, logical sequencing and a strong command of varied sentence structures, which contributed to the fluency and engagement of their writing. Lots of excellent vocabulary was seen, such as 像变魔法似的; 急得团团转; 恋恋不舍; 惊心动魄; 震撼人心 etc.

However, in some cases, candidates could improve by avoiding repetitive or flat sentence patterns which lead to a monotonous tone across the response. Some candidates could improve their range of vocabulary and rely less on repetitive or overly simplistic phrasing, which would improve the overall expressiveness of their work. In addition, there were some candidates that struggled to maintain a high degree of grammatical accuracy and secure use of punctuation.

Learning points and advice for centres

- Candidates need to start off on the right foot by understanding the task and focusing on exactly what they need to do. Practice of good exam technique, including the use of timed challenges and underlining key phrases in the question, should help to reinforce good habits and prevent the loss of marks in this area.
- To demonstrate sound subject knowledge, candidates need to employ a well thought-out approach to the task. This usually means focussing on the key issues at stake 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.

Cambridge International Advanced Level
9868 Chinese Language and Literature June 2025
Principal Examiner Report for Teachers

- Candidates should avoid repeating themselves or over-replying on idioms.
- Good responses will employ well-chosen vocabulary. 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 AND LITERATURE

<p>Paper 9868/32 Literature</p>

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

Most candidates performed at a level similar to last year, maintaining consistent preparation standards. The majority demonstrated a solid understanding of the set Chinese texts, effective use of examination strategies and clear familiarity with the requirements of the paper. This reflects the dedication of both teachers and students, which is highly commendable.

Many candidates moved beyond a literal reading of the texts, drawing on relevant social, political and historical contexts to enrich their thematic discussions. Most answers focused on the plot and the portrayal of characters, supported by examples. The most effective responses integrated short, well-chosen quotations to provide precise evidence, explaining their significance and linking them directly to the question. Some answers, however, relied too heavily on re-telling the story, which limited the depth of analysis.

A small number of candidates appeared unfamiliar with the works, leading to factual errors or a failure to address the question directly. It remains essential that candidates choose questions on texts they have read and studied thoroughly, and that they prioritise the main characters named in the question while using secondary figures to support the argument where appropriate.

Most answers followed a clear academic structure with an introduction, a logically developed main body and a conclusion. While linguistic accuracy was not assessed, clarity and coherence in written expression remained important. The majority adhered to the examination requirements, answering one question from **Section A** and one from **Section B**, and labelling their responses clearly. A small number attempted extra questions or did not format their responses as instructed.

The strongest performances showed evidence of pre-writing planning, focused analysis and the use of critical rather than purely descriptive language.

Teachers can support candidates by:

- encouraging practice in question analysis, including identifying key terms and planning a brief outline before writing
- supporting deeper engagement with the texts through additional reading and focused discussion of literary features
- providing structured writing practice, helping students use quotations effectively and refine their analytical expression
- reminding candidates to manage their time carefully, follow the rubric and format their responses clearly.

Teachers are also reminded that there is no requirement for candidates to study all the texts on the set text list as they can choose to answer the questions on the texts that they studied in the exam. Teachers and candidates may study all the texts if they wish and if they wish to have a greater choice of questions in the exam, but if teaching time is limited, it may be sensible to focus study on one text from **Section A** and one text from **Section B**.

Overall, this year's performance was consistent with previous years, and with targeted refinements in textual precision and analytical depth, further improvements are well within reach.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

顾城：《顾城诗选》(Selected poems by Gucheng)

Strong answers to this question began by clearly identifying the theme of loneliness in the poem *Wo shi yizuo xiaocheng*, showing how Gu Cheng conveys isolation through imagery, symbolism and tone. These candidates then extended their discussion by referring to at least one other poem, such as *Jianli* or *Yuan he Jin*, comparing how loneliness is portrayed across texts. They demonstrated an understanding of Gu Cheng's poetic techniques – such as metaphor, personification and contrast – and how these create a sustained mood of solitude and disconnection.

Some weaker candidates, however, struggled to interpret the poem accurately. Their analysis relied on repetitive language and focused only on the extract, offering a narrow or single perspective. In some cases, answers analysed only *Wo shi yizuo xiaocheng* and did not make the required comparisons with other poems.

Question 2

老舍：《龙须沟》(*Longxu Gou* by Laoshe)

This was the most popular question in **Section A**. Most students identified financial pressure and different attitudes towards family responsibilities and work as the main causes of conflict between the two characters. They analysed the resulting misunderstandings and personality clashes. A few candidates went further, noting that government negligence and social injustice were the root causes of the problems faced by lower-class people. These answers were well-structured, discussing each reason and supporting points with quotations and examples from the text. Some responses focused on only one aspect, looking either at personality conflicts or social background, and did not give a full analysis. Weaker candidates often just listed or paraphrased the text, without providing proper analysis.

Question 3

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

This was another popular question in this year's examination. Most candidates understood that Mrs Qian was reluctant to take the stage because of her past experiences. While many mentioned the apparent reason of her hoarse voice, only a few explored the deeper cause: her past betrayal by her sister and lover, which left her unwilling to perform. Outstanding answers went further, noting that her theatrical past was no

longer a source of pride but a reminder of societal decline and personal misfortune. They connected their discussion to the author's view of the displaced elite in old Shanghai and Taipei, as well as the author's concern over the decline of traditional culture, demonstrating an understanding of both the author's intention and the work's theme. Some students, however, focused mainly on describing the passage and did not link it to her past experiences, resulting in a discussion that was narrow and superficial.

Section B

Questions 4 and 5

西西:《我城》(*Wo Cheng* by Xixi)

A few candidates chose **Question 4**. Unfortunately, many candidates struggled with this question and simply re-told the plot or copied from the text. These candidates could improve by showing evidence of more critical analysis. Some responses listed a few social phenomena to discuss 'the modernization process of Hong Kong', but the arguments would have been stronger if more examples had been given that were better connected to the broader social changes. Among the few excellent answers, candidates reflected deeply on Hong Kong's modernisation, showing the shift from tradition to modernity through character experiences and scene descriptions. They analysed the city's development in areas such as urban construction, communication technology and cultural identity, illustrating how characters like A Guo, A Fa and Mai Kuaile experienced both the opportunities and anxieties brought by modernisation. Some responses also discussed environmental issues, unemployment and the difficulties faced by the elderly, giving a more comprehensive analysis.

A few candidates chose **Question 5**. Most responses would have been better if they had explained or discussed the impact of the examples they listed. Others could have improved their responses by connecting their points on patriotism and urban life more closely with the text. Excellent answers explored how different young characters expressed their love for Hong Kong through actions, values and personal dedication. Candidates analysed how A You's homesickness, A Fa's commitment to improving the city and Mai Kuaile's daily efforts together showed a multi-faceted love for the city. They explained that this love was not romantic idealism, but a concrete desire to protect, build and belong to the city. A deeper understanding of the work's themes and the author's intention, rather than relying on one or two isolated quotations, would have strengthened responses.

Questions 6 and 7

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

Question 6 was the most popular question in **Section B** and many candidates performed well. Excellent answers first described Wei Wan's critical views on Anran and then analysed Anjing's thoughts and actions to show that she does not fully agree with Wei Wan's judgement. These responses discussed multiple events, such as the red shirt, Anran's social interactions with classmates and criticisms directed at her, showing a clear understanding of the author's intention in designing these plot elements. Candidates supported their arguments with appropriate textual evidence. A few outstanding answers went further, tracing the impact of the Cultural Revolution on both characters and exploring how the red shirt symbolised this generation's search for identity. They analysed how the social environment influenced individual judgement. However, many students would have scored higher marks by demonstrating greater understanding of Anjing's inner hesitation and conflicting emotions while observing Anran, which would have avoided one-sided answers. Some candidates mistakenly assumed that Anjing agreed with Wei Wan's viewpoint, while others could have focused on more than one example and addressed other key points.

Fewer candidates chose **Question 7**. The better responses analysed the two distinct parenting styles in the novel and their impact on Anjing's and Anran's growth. They highlighted the mother's conservative and strict discipline, the father's supportive and gentle encouragement and the father's own conservative side, especially regarding Anjing's boyfriend. Candidates used examples to show how these differences reflected broader changes in Chinese society and ideology after the Cultural Revolution, such as the father's support for creativity and the mother's concern for reputation. They connected these observations to the thematic significance of the work, demonstrating a clear understanding of both textual details and the overall theme. Weaker candidates often focused only on specific examples, with limited independent analysis. Some did not describe the two parents in a balanced way or misinterpreted their characters and motives, for example, depicting the mother in a one-dimensional, authoritarian manner.

Question 8 and 9

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

Question 8 was another popular question. Most candidates showed a good understanding of the story's plot. Excellent answers clearly analysed both the personal and external reasons for Fang Hongjian's departure from Sanliu University. These included his personality, abilities, educational background, marriage, personal ideals, social pressure and the complex relationships among the university staff. Responses were well-organised and structurally sound. Candidates also connected Fang Hongjian's career difficulties to broader themes, such as social decline and the frustration of intellectuals, showing a deep understanding of the text. Weaker responses, while familiar with the plot, needed more complete analysis. Many simply summarised Fang Hongjian's employment experiences without examining the reasons for his departure, or attributed his failure only to personality flaws, overlooking the social critique in the novel.

Fewer candidates chose **Question 9**. Successful responses defined the concept of vanity and demonstrated how it appeared in different characters. Candidates carefully analysed vanity in love and marriage, as well as in academic and career pursuits, focusing on key characters and supporting their points with textual evidence. Answers were well-structured and connected to the work's themes, showing a deep understanding of the text. Outstanding candidates went further, examining how the author used literary devices such as irony, metaphor and character dialogue to reveal vanity. Some weaker candidates confused vanity with hypocrisy, leading to inaccurate interpretations. Others focused only on Fang Hongjian or overemphasised minor characters, showing limitations in selecting appropriate material and responding fully to the question.