

CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8238/12
Listening

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

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper candidates should:

- listen carefully to the recordings in each exercise and select the correct answer for each question
- listen carefully to the recordings to avoid the distractors present in the different options given for each question
- read the questions and the options given carefully and provide the answers based on what is meant in the recordings, avoiding word spotting or word matching.

The level of demand present, on this year AS Listening paper, was appropriate and adequate for this level. The majority of candidates performed well. However, candidates need to pay attention to turning points present in the different exercises to be more effective when selecting their answers.

General comments

This is the second year that the AS Chinese Language Listening exam has been sat. There was an increase in the number of candidates entered for the exam, as one hundred and seventy candidates took the exam, which is 24 per cent more than in the previous year. On average, 70 per cent of the candidates selected the correct answers for each question. They dealt with distractors very well, showing a good understanding of the vocabulary used and hardly had any guessing work, apart from **Question 31**.

Question 2 and **Question 4** tested key information and main ideas of a wide range of vocabulary and language structures, however, only about half of the candidates have successfully provided the correct answers, which was a lower rate when compared with the other questions from **Questions 1–8** section.

Comments on specific questions

Questions 1–8

This section included topic areas such as food, sales, sports programme and fashion shows which were all very familiar and close to candidates.

Apart from **Question 2** and **Question 4**, all the other questions in **Questions 1–8** section were mostly well answered by candidates, which proved not to be as challenging to candidates, despite the use of two text-based distractors.

Despite the words 荤菜素菜 in distractor **A** being the same as the ones in the recording for **Question 2**, a quarter of the candidates opted for option **A** rather than the correct option **C**, which were re-phrased from the words present in the recording. The same situation appeared in **Question 4**, where option **B** 节庆表演 was a text-based distractor, but about 30 per cent of candidates chose this option and only 52 per cent selected the correct answer **C**, which was a synonym from ‘lucky draw 抽奖活动’ in the recording. Centres should train their candidates to not just match the words they hear from the recording but train them to interpret the meaning behind what is said.

Questions 9–14

This exercise presented six people talking about their gap year experience in China. There were eight options, which meant that two extra options were serving as distractors. Although, each correct answer could also act as distractor for other testimonials. These questions were more challenging than **Questions 1–8**, as they were testing stated and implied opinions, but candidates did very well and around 60 per cent of the candidates selected the correct answers apart from **Question 13**, where only 43 per cent answered correctly and 28 per cent of candidates had chosen **C** 很后悔做了间隔年, which included the word ‘regret’, which was stated in the recording but also served as a distractor.

Questions 15–20

Candidates needed to complete a short, paraphrased passage, by filling in six gaps with one of the three options provided for each gap. As in **Questions 1–8**, this section of the exam was intended to test key information and main ideas of a wide range of vocabulary and language structures. Although implied meaning has not been tested, different vocabulary and sentence structures appeared on the paper, when compared with the ones in the recording. Over 60 per cent of the candidates chose the correct answers in all questions, apart from **Question 16** where only 45 per cent answered correctly, as some candidates did not pay attention to option **B**, where 世界 was a synonym of 全球 in the recording.

Questions 21–30

This exercise presented an interview to a middle school student. Each question had three different options, where candidates had to select the correct one. Apart from listening to main ideas and opinions of a wide range of vocabulary and language structures, implied information was also tested in this section, which raised the level of difficulty of the exercise. Most candidates did very well in these questions which was focussing on environmental issues. This exercise demonstrated that candidates were well prepared and were also familiar with the topic.

Questions 31–40

This final section focused on a speech about AI with some technical concepts and information about the development of AI. Although this speech had a longer listening time when compared with previous exercises, it also tested more implied meaning, where candidates managed to perform very well. However, they have found **Question 31** challenging, which tested implied meaning, as candidates could not hear the same words in the options as the ones from the recording. Very few candidates chose the correct answer **B** and most of them opted to choose option **A**, as it included the same word 盒子 as in the recording. Candidates need to pay attention to all that is said in the recording and be extremely careful when they process the information.

In regard to the final **Question 40**, option **B** was the correct answer, which was meant to test implied meaning from the monologue in the recording. However, only 55 percent of the candidates chose it correctly, while 35 per cent of the candidates chose the text-based distractor **C**. It is important that candidates focus on understanding what is being said, instead of trying to match the words with the ones mentioned in the options. This can lead to choosing the wrong option mistakenly due to some of the options using text-based distractors.

CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8238/22
Reading

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

Key messages

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

- demonstrate genuine understanding of the passages
- read the questions carefully and provide answers based on the texts, rather than using 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

The reading paper consists of 40 multiple-choice questions on different types of texts.

The passages range from a variety of length and complexity, featuring notices, advertisement, messages, newspaper articles, etc. They included topic areas covering views on homework, the autumn season, work and leisure and the future of audio books and web literature. The emphasis of the questions moves from assessing candidates' ability to understand main points and key information, to identifying emotions, opinions and attitudes and also arguments and conclusions from discursive texts.

The vast majority of learners understood the requirements of the specification very well and applied their skills accordingly. The questions are set at a level that learners of all abilities are challenged. There are many positive responses across centres and all learners attempted all questions.

Comments on specific questions

Questions 1–6

This section consists of six short independent texts and each one of these has a 4–option question. Candidates are expected to understand main points and key information from these texts. The overall responses were positive. Higher ability candidates demonstrated that they could identify the correct answers, while some weaker candidates seemed distracted by details that were irrelevant to the questions.

For **Question 1**, some candidates selected option **D** which indicated reliance on word spotting rather than a clear understanding of meaning. **Question 2** showed some unfamiliarity with authentic expressions like 上火 and 解暑, both related to heat, which led some candidates to mistakenly choose option **B** (rain) and **C** (cool), that despite being mentioned in the text, they were irrelevant when choosing the correct answer to the question. For **Question 3**, the overlooking of the time phrase 午饭后 (after lunch) made some candidates choose option **B** (shopping centre) instead of the correct answer **C** (the Great Wall). For **Question 4**, candidates who chose option **A** (lively) or option **B** (humorous) missed the detail that the current tenants are both tidy, making option **C** the correct choice. **Question 5** revealed some guessing or word spotting, as some candidates chose option **B** (doctor, not mentioned in the text) or option **C** (businessman), failing to connect 管理账目 in the text with 会计 (accountant) in option **A**. In **Question 6**, some candidates chose option **B** (by motorbike) instead of option **D** (by subway). This suggests that candidates were unfamiliar with the vocabulary 地铁 and 单位 present in the text.

Questions 7–14

The texts in this section consisted of four people's opinions on school homework. The questions tested specific understanding of main points, specific details, attitudes and arguments. They also assessed the ability to infer and draw conclusions.

In **Question 7**, candidates struggled to identify 有把握 and 自信 as synonyms, which led to incorrect choices. **Question 8** was well answered, with over 78 per cent accuracy. Unfamiliarity with terms like 成绩 in **Question 9**, 一拖再拖 in text **D** and 优先 in **Question 10** hindered candidates' understanding and led to unsuitable answers. **Question 11** proved that many candidates miss the connection between the 明白哪里不足 in the question and the 暴露问题 in the text, resulting in random guesses. Similarly, in **Question 12**, the unfamiliarity with 解释 and 讲评 affected their performance. **Question 13** revealed over-reliance on word spotting, as candidates matched 课余时间 without grasping the deeper meaning of 合理地管理时间 and 有效地利用课余时间. In **Question 14**, although candidates recognised individual characters, authentic expressions such as 在意 and 改作业 proved to be unfamiliar in context.

Questions 15–20

In this sentence completion exercise, candidates read an article about the leaves in autumn. Candidates are required to read in detail and match sections or elements of the text to the options to complete the statements accurately. Two extra options served as distractors.

Candidates need to understand the key points, specific details, attitudes and arguments within the text. They also need to have the ability to infer and draw conclusions. The responses to **Question 15**, **Question 17**, **Question 18**, and **Question 20** were encouraging, showing a solid understanding of the text. In **Question 16**, some candidates demonstrated some unfamiliarity with the expression 擦肩而过, which led them to overlook the correct answer, option **F**. For **Question 19**, the correct answer is more implied than stated directly and required some deeper interpretation.

Questions 21–32

The purpose of this question is to test candidates' ability to apply grammatical usage in context. The text focused on work and leisure topic. The overall performance of candidates was strong.

Question 21 was well answered, with the majority of candidates clearly understanding the difference between option **C** 发现 and option **D** 体现. **Question 22** revealed to be more challenging as some candidates seemed to be unfamiliar with the contexts that require the use of 就. **Question 23** demonstrated that most candidates had a secure understanding of the 被 structure. In **Question 24**, the use of the four-character idiom 呼朋唤友 caused some confusion among weaker candidates. **Question 25** was answered well, with an accuracy rate of 75 per cent. Many candidates correctly identified 行 as a measure word in **Question 26**. However, **Question 27** showed that many candidates did not recognize the idiom 高手云集. In **Question 28**, although options **A**, **C**, and **D** were all plausible, the context made option **A** the only correct choice. **Question 29** was well handled, indicating a good understanding of a broad vocabulary range. **Question 30** required candidates to understand the specific usage of each term. The context made option **B** 开辟 (to create a space or path) the correct answer. In **Question 31** and **Question 32**, many candidates demonstrated a solid grasp of the 当……时 and 即便 structures.

Questions 33–40

In this concluding task, learners are required to read an extended passage about the future of audio books and web literature. To show their understanding, candidates must respond to the multiple-choice questions that offer four possible answers each. These questions are designed to assess various dimensions of understanding, including main points, specific details, attitudes and arguments and their ability to infer and draw conclusions. Despite the exercise presenting a higher level of difficulty, candidates have performed well, displaying impressive reading comprehension and analytical skills.

In **Question 39**, many candidates selected option **C**, almost as many as the ones selecting the correct answer, option **D**. This suggested some confusion around the term 鉴赏力, which refers to the host's personal appreciation or evaluative ability. However, the question asks, 'How does the host promote the development of web literature?' – making option **D**, which focuses on selecting and showcasing web literature works, the correct choice.

CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8238/32
Writing

Key messages

In this paper, candidates need to answer to two questions: **Question 1**, which is compulsory, and either **Question 2** or **Question 3**, which have an argumentative or discursive focus. Candidates must not answer both **Question 2** and **Question 3**, they must choose only one.

Question 1 is a functional writing task. Candidates are expected to respond to four bullet points using a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures, paying particular attention to the convention and register of a letter.

For tasks focused on argumentation or discussion, **Question 2** and **Question 3**, candidates should construct a logical sequence of arguments and support them with detailed examples. It is essential for candidates to consider and evaluate various perspectives and opinions related to the topics of either task.

General comments

Overall, the candidates' performance has improved this year. Many candidates were well-prepared and achieved high marks, which demonstrated a very good performance.

In **Question 1**, there was a good coverage of all the four bullet points, a good use of a range of structures and good grammar. Candidates proven that they were more aware of the use of formal writing.

A significant proportion of candidates selected **Question 2**, while fewer opted for **Question 3**. Candidates who performed at the highest levels demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the tasks, employing a broad range of linguistic structures to organise their responses logically and with clarity. Their arguments were fully supported with a variety of facts, ideas and opinions.

Candidates achieving scores within the mid-range exhibited a sound grasp of the subject knowledge; however, their responses displayed less focus on articulating opinions directly related to the main issues.

Weaker candidates occasionally showed a lack of understanding of the tasks and encountered some difficulties in formulating appropriate responses in Chinese. Only a small number of candidates did not fully comprehend the questions, resulting in responses that deviated from the topic and, consequently, loss of marks.

Generally, candidates understood the topic from the questions they selected and responded well, showing a good ability to compose the essays with well-planned written structures: including a brief introduction, using clear and consistent paragraphs, developing coherently the argument and finalising with a clear conclusion.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

请写一封信给海洋环保专家，说你想邀请他/她来学校的主题班会上演讲。在信中，你必须包括以下几点：

- 你对海洋污染的担忧
- 白色垃圾对海洋生物的危害
- 希望他/她谈的话题，为什么
- 学生在会后将获得哪些益处。

Compared to previous series, more candidates used the correct letter format, and the greetings and endings were generally appropriate. Very few candidates had problems with the register, format or conventions. Candidates were more aware of the appropriate level of formality. Most candidates were able to address to the majority of the bullet points present in the question.

However, some candidates seemed to have misunderstood ‘白色垃圾’ (white pollution) as general waste. As a result, instead of writing about the harm to marine life, they focused on pollution and environmental protection more broadly. Candidates must read the question carefully to fully understand what is being requested from them.

Section B

Question 2

近年来，越来越多的人选择吃素食。他们中的一些人觉得自己的生活方式对健康和保护环境都有好处。请给当地报社写一篇文章，谈谈你是否同意这个观点，为什么？

This was a popular question as more candidates chose this question and most of them demonstrated a good understanding of the topic. Many responses mentioned that a plant-based diet not only benefits physical and mental health but also has a lower environmental impact due to its relatively low energy consumption in production. Some more insightful individuals even suggested that governments around the world should act to promote vegetarianism, helping citizens to recognise the importance of protecting our planet and ensuring environmental sustainability.

Some weaker candidates tended to focus on only one aspect of the question, either the benefits to physical health or the environmental protection. Others attempted to discuss both sides but struggled to balance the arguments effectively. Candidates should carefully plan their essays and make sure all the required content is covered.

Question 3

根据一份工作满意度的调查，年轻人普遍认为理想的工作必须符合工资高、福利好的条件。请给学生报社写一篇文章，谈谈你是否同意这个看法，为什么？

This question was chosen by fewer candidates; however, it elicited some very strong responses. Some candidates began their answers by defining what an ideal job was and went on to clearly explain the concrete benefits that a high salary and good benefits could bring to young people. These candidates demonstrated a good level of deep thinking and maturity beyond their age. Some of the stronger candidates even explored the importance of personal interests and passions in the process of choosing a career. In their analysis, candidates used relevant examples to make their essays more persuasive.

Familiarising with the format of emails and letters in Chinese is crucial for candidates, as it enables them to grasp the correct structural elements and conventions found in both formal and informal communications. Understanding standard greetings, closings and layouts allows candidates to communicate their ideas clearly and in a culturally appropriate manner.

It is also vital to train candidates to pinpoint key words within the bullet points, as this skill helps ensuring their answers remain relevant and directly address to the question. By refining their ability to identify these essential terms, candidates can structure their thoughts in a more logical way, resulting in responses that are both coherent and to the point. This practice aids them in maintaining focus and thoroughly addressing to the central issues, which in turn strengthens the persuasiveness of their essays.

Teachers can support candidates by encouraging them to centre their responses around the key words in argumentative and discursive tasks from the beginning. By doing this, candidates are more likely to build and

maintain a focused argument throughout their essays, regardless of the evidence they choose to include. Highlighting the significance of key words helps candidates to organise their essays more effectively, ensuring that their writing remains relevant, coherent and convincing.

CHINESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8238/04
Speaking

Key messages

For Examiners

Familiarisation with Test Format

Examiners must ensure thorough understanding of the test format and the syllabus guidance well in advance of the speaking test period. This ensures a fair and consistent delivery of the Speaking test.

Allocation of Conversation Task Cards

Examiners should allocate the Conversation Task Cards in advance, using the randomisation table. If a presentation overlaps with a Conversation Task Card's topic, they must move to the next card on the randomisation table sequence.

Recording of Tests

Examiners should ensure that they record the entire test, from the beginning until the end, without any stops, including the five-minute preparation period for the Conversation Task Card. The recording environment must be quiet, with no background noise that can affect the students' performance.

Presentation

Examiners must allow candidates to present their work without any interruption, unless necessary. Examiners should also clearly indicate the start of the follow-up discussion.

Follow-Up Discussion

Examiners must ask open-ended questions that promote extended responses and opinion justifications that can explain candidates' reasoning on the content of the presentation. Examiners should be careful and avoid asking questions to candidates that lead to repetition of what they have already said in their presentation.

Question Adaptation

The questions provided in the Teacher's Notes for each Conversation Task Card are only suggestions. Examiners can rephrase or adapt the Conversation Task Card questions to suit candidates' understanding while ensuring prompt coverage.

Time Adherence

Test must adhere to the right timings set out in the syllabus. Examiners must monitor the required timings, including the four-to-five-minute follow-up discussion, the full five-minute preparation and the four-minute Conversation Task Card discussion.

Language

Following the initial introduction, the entire test must be conducted in Mandarin Chinese.

For Candidates

Presentation Preparation

Candidates must choose topics of their own personal interest and balance factual content with personal insights and opinions.

Language Use

Candidates must use a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures. This helps to communicate clearly and access higher mark bands.

Discussion Participation

Candidates must engage actively in both Follow-up and Conversation Task Card sections. They should justify their own opinions and extend their answers thoughtfully.

Task Card Planning

Candidates must allocate enough preparation time to all four prompts, especially Prompt 3 and Prompt 4 which often require deeper thoughts on the topic.

Note-Making Strategy

Candidates can make brief, structured notes during preparation. They should use linking words and varied structures to enhance coherence in their speech.

General Comments

This year's speaking tests were conducted with increasing consistency and confidence across centres. Candidates spoke enthusiastically on topics of personal interest, and many demonstrated thoughtful preparation and a clear sense of structure.

Examiners who responded flexibly and attentively to candidates' answers were especially effective in encouraging natural and fluent conversations. Interactive, well-paced discussions helped candidates to access the upper mark bands and demonstrate their full range of language skills.

Conduct of the test

Most examiners conducted the tests in line with the syllabus guidance. Candidates were generally well supported and had ample opportunities to demonstrate their abilities.

While the majority of centres followed timing guidelines closely, a few inconsistencies were observed, particularly in the Conversation Task Card section. Continued focus on full preparation time (5 minutes) and balanced discussion duration (per prompt) will further enhance candidates' performance. The Conversation Task Card section occasionally overran, particularly on reaching Prompt 4. Follow-up discussions were sometimes too brief, which may have prevented candidates to further demonstrate their language skills.

Examiners should ask concise and clear questions to enable candidates to demonstrate their speaking ability effectively. Examiners showed good understanding of how to support candidates, often adjusting their approach to help candidates give their best performance while following the exam rules.

Some questions in the Conversation Task Card section could be rephrased. Sometimes unfamiliar vocabulary created challenges for candidates. Rewording these phrases can help candidates to better comprehend the question itself. For example, instead of asking ‘未来慈善无国界吗？’, an easier version might have been ‘你觉得未来国家之间会有更多的慈善帮助吗？’. While examiners may adapt the questions to help candidates to engage with the task, it is important to ensure that the revised version of the question still allows the candidate to address the prompt fully and meaningfully.

Internal moderation

In centres with multiple examiners, the coordinating examiner must ensure consistent application of the mark scheme by all examiners. If any adjustment to marks is required during the internal moderation, this should be clearly noted on the Working Mark Sheet.

Application of the mark scheme

The mark scheme was generally well understood and applied accurately. Reduction in marks were usually due to limited justification of opinions. On the other hand, increase in marks reflected clear and confident communication, particularly in discussions, and a strong use of varied vocabulary – especially during the Presentation.

Comments on Specific Questions

Presentation

In this section candidates chose a diverse range of topics, many of which were well-structured and thoughtfully developed. The most successful presentations combined factual content with personal reflections and made effective use of a wide range of vocabulary and expressions. A variety of topics are listed here as example.

Culture and customs: 春节, 元宵节, 上元节, 文化遗产, 红包, 历史人物, 四大发明

Technology: 数字媒体, 在线娱乐, 支付宝, 人工智能和职业选择

Social issues: 女权, 代沟, 心理健康, 山寨产品

Youth life: 学校生活, 毕业旅行, 教育方式, 年轻人沉迷电子游戏

Cities: 上海, 重庆

Follow-Up Discussion

Many candidates chose presentation topics that were personally meaningful or closely related to their interests, which allowed their knowledge and enthusiasm to come through clearly during the follow-up discussion with the examiner. The vast majority of examiners successfully avoided closed questions that tend to elicit one-word or very brief answers, such as ‘红包里面有什么?’ Instead, they asked open-ended and logically connected questions that encouraged candidates to expand on their ideas and justify their opinions — for example, ‘你更喜欢电子红包还是传统红包? 为什么?’

Conversation Task Card

This part of the Speaking Test involves an interactive conversation based on a scenario with four prompts listed on each Conversation Task Card. Candidates have 5 minutes to prepare the task, which should be included in the recording without any pauses. The conversation should last around 4 minutes.

During the five-minute preparation time, it is recommended that candidates write down key opinions and points of justification for all four prompts. They should also prepare lists of good vocabulary and complex structures as reminders during the conversation.

For the Conversation Task Card 3, Prompt 1, ‘the advantage of overtime,’ one examiner asked, ‘Why do people do overtime?’ This resulted in a response about being forced by employers, which, unfortunately, did not address to the intended focus on advantages. It is important that, when suggested questions are not used, examiners ensure their own questions still enable candidates to address to the prompt effectively.

Candidates are encouraged to manage their preparation time carefully to ensure they have enough time to plan for all four prompts – especially Prompt 3 and 4, which often require more complex reasoning.

Examiners should also ensure that a question relating to Prompt 4 is asked before the four-minute mark, so that candidates have sufficient time to fully address to the prompt. This enables candidates to demonstrate their opinions and justifications, and complete all prompts required to reach higher mark bands.