

Chinese A1

Overall grade boundaries

Grade:	E	D	C	B	A
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 15	16 - 22	23 - 28	29 - 36

The range and suitability of the work submitted

It was evident that due to the dutiful guidance provided by the supervisors at school, most of the candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the demand of the exercise and completed it in accordance with the regulations. However, while their essays were regarded as appropriate regarding the treatment of their respective topics and their academic writing, there were few of them which were marked as truly inspiring and insightful. A small number of essays received a penalty as their choice of topic was unsuitable for this group.

Candidate performance against each criterion

As in the past, the essays' marks scored were widely ranged. While some of them were awarded almost the highest marks possible, some others were judged as mediocre against each of the assessment criteria. Choice of the research question in particular proved crucial in determining the final result of their research.

Criterion A: research question

The suitable topics chosen were related to both the nature and the scope. This session, most of the candidates were successful in selecting a literary aspect of the work concerned and identified its cultural and aesthetic significance for their essay. This has enabled them to give an efficient treatment within the length permitted. Some others however failed to achieve a good mark on this criterion, as they either could not formulate the question clearly and specifically in the early part of the essay, or chose a topic which is not literary in nature, and/or is intellectually over-demanding for them to handle, particularly when considering the time/word constraints.

Criterion B: introduction

Provision of the candidate's insight into the reason why the topic is chosen and its possible academic worth is crucial for him/her to gain a good mark for this criterion. Many candidates displayed their awareness of such a demand and responded rather well. However there were some of them who either totally ignored the element or failed to do so convincingly.

Criterion C: investigation

As usual, most of the candidates were awarded a 3, as they collected relevant and sufficient sources according to their plan for the research. Some failed to make use of the secondary sources to support their own arguments. Consequently, sometimes analysis was based on the primary texts solely and did not concern other related sources, or, if when they did, did not do so critically.

Criterion D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

Candidates generally demonstrated a similar level of performance here, as they demonstrated a good knowledge of the literary text(s) and the reference was detailed and thorough. However, how to locate their study within the proper "academic context" still appeared to be beyond their capability in most cases. The essays with a rather broad topic were judged less favourably, as their investigation was rather general and lacked a depth and focus, with a largely descriptive approach.

Criterion E: reasoned argument

Many candidates this session demonstrated sound organization of their discussion around a central argument which tended to give a clear and well-developed structure. There was still a big number of them to just manage to list the material or use not closely related subtitles to present their ideas.

Criterion F: application of analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject

In many essays, the candidates treated their material with care and gave a detailed investigation into it. Some candidates tended to do this in a descriptive fashion which has made the discussion less effective than needed.

Criterion G: use of language appropriate to the subject

Candidates in general showed good communication skills and chose an appropriate register for literary discussion. Due to their careful editing and proofreading, typographical and other errors were hardly present in essays and as a result, their overall arguments were presented with fluency.

Criterion H: conclusion

Most of the candidates attempted to link the conclusive remark to their preceding discussion, and some of them were even able to present some new issues that were worth investigating in the future. Some weaker candidates however failed to provide meaningful summary based on the examination, or repeated the points that were already made in the introduction. A few of them even included new matters which were not related to the research at all.

Criterion I: formal presentation

For most essays, the candidates achieved a relatively good mark, as they met the official requests regarding the word limit, provision of references/bibliography and other elements in a consistent fashion and followed the convention of academic writing.

Criterion J: abstract

Many candidates lost one or two points on this criterion as a result of failing to include the required three elements, especially that of the conclusion.

Criterion K: holistic judgement

A big number of the essays were awarded a 2, primarily due to their choice of the research question which did not give enough scope to display their intellectual insightfulness and creativity.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

- Schools should make sure that candidates understand the aims and objectives of this exercise and pay close attention to each of the general rules of the EE as outlined in the guide.
- Supervisors should give candidates advice on how to select the appropriate subject/topic and to formulate a manageable research question. Such a selection should present an opportunity for students to engage in an in-depth study of the topic, reflect their personal interest and allow them to display personal insight.
- Supervisors need to remind candidates of presenting their ideas in logical way. During the essay writing process, candidates analyze, synthesize and evaluate the information gathered in relation to the question and display the qualities of critical thinking and personal engagement.