

MANDARIN CHINESE PRINCIPAL COURSE

Paper 9778/01

Speaking

Key message

- Candidates are reminded that their prepared topic must relate to the Chinese-speaking world

General comments

Most candidates performed well in this year's examination, revealing the excellent effort put in by both the Centres and the candidates themselves. The majority attempted to use a wide variety of Chinese idioms to express their thoughts and opinions to good effect, which was pleasing to see.

As specified in the notes for Candidates, the prepared topic must relate to the history, current affairs or culture of the Chinese-speaking world. In a small number of cases, candidates only managed to mention China shortly before they brought their Presentation to an end. Encouragingly, however, more candidates chose topics which were fully relevant to the Chinese-speaking world this year than in previous sessions.

In preparation for the Speaking test, it is always good practice for teachers to cover a wide range of possible questions on the chosen topics with the candidates. However, when a Visiting Examiner asks a question for which a candidate really has no answer they may reply 对不起，我对这方面比较没有研究. This will be a clear signal to the Visiting Examiner to move on to an area of discussion with which the candidate is more familiar and saves precious time.

On the administrative side, Centres must ensure they submit their completed Prepared Topic Submission Forms in good time to allow Visiting Examiners the chance to provide feedback on any unsuitable or insufficiently worked-out topics and to prepare properly for the tests. Candidates and Centres are reminded of the need to provide sub-headings for their chosen topics.

Generally speaking, the sound quality of the recordings was of a high standard. Centres are kindly asked to ensure any background noise is kept to a minimum so that the whole examination can proceed without interruption and candidates can give their best without running the risk of being distracted.

Comments on specific sections

Section 1 – Prepared Topic Conversation

The vast majority of the candidates delivered well-prepared Presentations on their chosen topics which lasted no longer than the length prescribed in the syllabus.

The Speaking Examination is the opportunity for the candidate to show the Examiner what he/she can do; the practice and preparation before the examination with the candidate's own teacher should focus on this. Topics should be carefully chosen; a topic should interest the candidate but also be well within their linguistic reach.

Some Centres submitted similar topics for their candidates. This practice is strongly discouraged as it almost invariably has an inhibiting effect on their performance, especially in the case of more able candidates. Instead candidates should choose a topic of genuine personal interest to them as this will boost their motivation to increase their linguistic range and relevant vocabulary.

After the candidate finishes his/her Presentation, the Examiner will usually say 好, 现在我来问你一些问题 before beginning to ask questions.

Centres are reminded that their primary role is to help candidates prepare well, not only in terms of topic content and coverage but also in terms of acquiring a suitable linguistic range and accuracy, including good use of conjunctions, correct word order and appropriate timeframes etc. The best conversations occur when candidates can respond to open-ended questions on a variety of levels.

It is good practice to encourage candidates to conduct their own research on their chosen topic and for the candidate and the teacher to think of at least ten questions which a Visiting Examiner might ask and to consider also answers which could be given to these questions.

Section 2 – General Conversation

When the conversation on the prepared topic reaches the end, the Examiner will usually say 现在我们讲一讲其它的题目 to signal to the candidate that the General Conversation is about to start.

Generally speaking, the candidates were more confident in this part of the test this year, particularly when discussing the three basic topic areas of Family, Young people and Education. They understood and coped well with most of the questions, including those that may not have been expected.

Centres had also prepared their candidates well by training them how to stay calm whenever difficult questions arose, with candidates often asking the Examiner to re-phrase a misunderstood or more complex question. The technique of asking the Examiner to rephrase was often used to good effect, allowing candidates to buy a bit more time to process the question and to formulate a better answer than they might have otherwise been able to provide. Nevertheless, Centres are reminded of the need to help candidates prepare for challenging and unexpected questions from Visiting Examiners, who are instructed to ask a variety of questions on all six topics.

Concluding remarks

The speaking test is mostly led by the Examiner, but the candidate should do most of the talking – the Examiner will be flexible enough to adapt questioning to a candidate's line of thought, so that a proper conversation ensues. If a candidate has areas of a topic where he/she feels particularly confident, it is up to the candidate to try to respond to questions in such a way as to be able to steer the discussion.

Candidates are reminded not to be concerned if their answer to a question is factually untrue or does not really reflect what they think; the Examiner is only interested in the level of their Chinese and will not judge them on their opinion or knowledge of the facts.

Cambridge Pre-U Mandarin Chinese is an examination for foreign language learners. Therefore, native speakers of Mandarin who have a well-prepared topic may, in all likelihood, score maximum marks. However, it is the standard required for the foreign language learner which will be borne in mind by the Examiner as the testing and marking of candidates takes place.

MANDARIN CHINESE PRINCIPAL COURSE

Paper 9778/02

Listening, Reading and Translation

Key message

- Centres are advised to make sure candidates are aware of the demands of the rubric and advise them to read and adhere to the instructions.
- Centres are advised to prepare candidates by studying past papers.
- Challenges with regards to tone recognition can be overcome through solid preparation and increased exposure to the spoken language, e.g. by making use of the numerous online resources available.
- Candidates should avoid overreliance on dictionaries in the Reading section as this can waste valuable time and obscure their comprehension of the source texts.

General comments

Candidates were generally better prepared this year, resulting in fewer basic errors being made. Credit needs to be given to Centres and candidates alike for having taken previous recommendations for improvement on board.

In spite of the improved performance, the general advice remains the same as in previous years: Centres must ensure their candidates are aware of the demands of the rubric and the instructions. Some very basic errors could be avoided this way. The best way of training exam technique is for candidates to study and complete past papers and for teachers to mark mock exams and provide individual feedback.

Tone recognition is one of the most challenging aspects of learning Chinese for non-native and native speakers alike. Practice and perseverance are paramount in this regard. Although some persistent errors remain, the improved performances in the *Listening* section suggest tone recognition is being practised and revised better at Centres than in the past, which is very encouraging.

Centres are reminded to warn candidates about the limitations of using a dictionary and to encourage them to rely more on the linguistic knowledge they have acquired and on their common sense. Some answers in the Reading and Translation sections relied heavily on literal translations or dictionary definitions which were often irrelevant in the context in which the words were used in the stimulus texts, rendering some responses ambiguous or unclear.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 – Listening

In general, candidates performed very well in the Listening section this year.

Exercise 1 (pinyin with tones) was competently dealt with by a large majority of the candidates. Those who did not do as well tended to find the following challenging:

- initials – differentiating between ‘q’ (qián) and ‘t’(tián)
- finals – e.g. differentiating between nǚ and nǔ
- tones – specifically 2nd and 3rd tones, e.g. 以前 (yǐ qián).

Candidates are to be congratulated on their very good performance in **Exercise 2**. The vast majority did not lose any marks, although a small number ticked only one box for **Question 5** instead of two boxes as instructed.

The performance in **Exercise 3** was more mixed. **Question 6** and **9** were well answered, although some candidates mistakenly answered ‘food’ instead of ‘product’ (产品≠食品). In **Questions 7** and **9**, a number of candidates lost marks due to lack of precision. Some, for example, answered ‘waste’ instead of ‘waste disposal’; similarly, a number of candidates answered ‘packaging’ rather than ‘beautifully-packaged products’.

Examiners were very pleased to see some outstanding performances in response to **Exercise 4**, especially considering this has proven to be a demanding task in the past. Candidates are reminded of the need to provide their response in continuous prose instead of using bullet points.

Section 2 – Reading

Most candidates performed well in **Question 11**, although some candidates selected ‘old-fashioned’ instead of ‘faded’ clothes for 洗得发白的旧衣服. It is worth mentioning that there was one instance where an answer had been shortened from ‘taking a taxi’ to ‘taxi’ for the third gap, which meant the mark could not be awarded.

Examiners are pleased to note that reading text (b) was competently handled this year. However, Examiners would like to reinforce that candidates should provide comprehensive answers to Reading questions, as some responses lacked precision and the necessary detail. For example, in response to **Question 17**, some candidates merely answered ‘phone’ or ‘computer’. Similarly, ‘update (micro)blogs/twitter’ was the correct answer to **Question 20**, not ‘go on Weibo’.

Section 3 – Chinese sayings (chengyu)

The majority of candidates provided accurate responses. A very small number of candidates appeared to rely on their dictionary for each character. As a result, some candidates answered ‘sit in well see sky’ for ‘坐井观天’ and ‘paper on army’ for ‘纸上谈兵’ and misunderstood the meaning of the sayings.

Section 4 – Translation

Examiners noticed a marked improvement in the Translation part of the question paper. There were 19 marks available for this 16-mark task. This meant that even if candidates struggled with one or two areas a score of full marks was still achievable.

In this task, conveying the meaning is more important than word-for-word correctness and Examiners would like to remind candidates that dictionaries can sometimes distract candidates from the answer which would make the most sense in the context in which the word or phrase is used in the source text. For example, some candidates answered ‘save traffic fees’ instead of ‘save [on] travel expenses’, which made little sense. Mistakes such as this might have been avoided had the candidates read the sentence back and checked whether it made sense in the context of the rest of the text.

MANDARIN CHINESE PRINCIPAL COURSE

Paper 9778/03
Writing and Usage

Key messages

- In order for future candidates to improve their performance, they should work on their character strokes, consolidate their knowledge of basic Chinese grammar, expand their use of more complex sentence structures, and broaden their vocabulary well beyond GCSE level.
- When writing the letter, candidates should read the bullet points carefully, use a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures, paying particular attention to formal letter register.
- When writing the opinion essay, it is important for candidates to develop a series of coherent arguments supported by detailed examples. They should refer closely to the essay question at all times and include a brief and clear-cut introduction and a strong conclusion. Candidates will also find it helpful to draft a simple essay plan before they begin writing the essay itself.

General comments

There are three sections in this paper. **Section 1** tests candidates' knowledge of the radicals and strokes of Chinese characters, as well as grammar markers and measure words. **Section 2** tests candidates' ability to write a letter according to a series of specific bullet points. **Section 3** requires candidates to write an opinion essay on one of six topics. The total number of marks for the paper is 60. **Section 1** is marked out of 10, with 6 marks for the character exercises and 4 marks for the grammar exercises. **Section 2** is marked out of 20, with 5 marks for Communication and 15 marks for Language (5 marks for Accuracy of Characters + 10 for Accuracy of Grammar and Structures). In **Section 3**, the Opinion Essay is marked out of a total of 30, with 20 marks for Accuracy and Linguistic Range and 10 marks for Development and Organisation of Ideas.

This year, the overall standard was high. Candidates did very well in **Exercise 1, Questions 1(a) and (b)** and in addressing the bullet points and producing accurate characters in **Exercise 3** in **Section 2**. **Exercise 4** in **Section 3** was also well attempted.

Exercise 2, Question 2(d) proved the most challenging task in **Section 1**. In **Section 2**, candidates showed excellent ability in the use of structures and suitable vocabulary and in introducing and concluding a formal letter. Weaker candidates struggled with correct ways of asking questions. In the opinion essay (**Section 3**), all titles were chosen. Those candidates who showed they could manipulate a wide range of vocabulary, make proper use of more complex sentence structures, and develop a well-structured argument scored highly. Successful candidates furthermore read the chosen question carefully and included relevant arguments in their essays.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 – Radicals, stroke order and grammar markers

This year, almost all candidates were successful in identifying the radical and providing the stroke order for 客. Most candidates were also able to provide the stroke order for 购 without difficulties. 病 proved challenging for some, with 丙 causing the most problem – many wrote 人 after the stroke on top. One candidate ignored the simplified character given and wrote out the stroke order in traditional form, gaining no mark. **Exercise 2** proved challenging again this year, with only the strongest candidates gaining full marks,

with 正 (viii) causing the most problems, probably because this particular marker was not as commonly taught as other markers. More encouragingly, the marker normally regarded by teachers and students alike as one of the most difficult, 把 (ii), was correctly identified by many candidates, which was very pleasing to see. As in previous years, there seems to have been some guesswork from weaker candidates who would perhaps benefit from more practice completing cloze-type exercises. Candidates ought to revise all the common and non-common markers in a variety of different contexts, not just in straightforward sentences. For example, 都 is not necessarily always followed by a verb, nor is 的 always preceded by a pronoun. For indicating present continuous actions, all markers 正, 在, 正在, 着, 呢 should be learned properly, including their position in a sentence and how they can be teamed up with one another to different effect.

Section 2 – Letter writing

The standard of the letters was high. Most Centres are teaching candidates the correct opening and closing conventions of a letter in the formal register. Occasionally candidates missed out tasks – a small number of candidates appeared not to have read the instructions and ignored two bullet points. The standard of Chinese was generally good, with most characters being accurately written and complex structures being used successfully. More errors appeared in (iv), as it seemed that some candidates forgot the basic rules of question sentence structures and simply translated questions word by word from English, with little regard of the correct order of word in Chinese, e.g. 房间是什么? / 是房间大? / 在哪我会住? / 房间有大卧室吗? A few candidates asked no questions but expressed their wishes with phrases such as 希望 and 如果 and consequently gained no or very low marks. It was evident that some candidates relied on basic vocabulary and linguistic structures. Centres are therefore advised to train and encourage candidates to use more complex grammatical structures correctly in order to achieve the highest marks.

Section 3 – Opinion essay

The six topics proved to be equally popular this year. The essays were generally of a high standard and of an appropriate length, although there were a few which were one-third of the length required. The language used was generally accurate and a good range of complex structures was used. Most candidates organised their answers well and gave convincing examples. The most successful essays were suitably concise and at the same time comprehensive in relation to the demands of the question. In a few cases, candidates included irrelevant material or resorted to a more personal, narrative style which is more often than not inappropriate in an opinion essay.

- (a) Answered well by many able candidates. Others focussed on the advantages and disadvantages of the one-child policy, produced a series of undeveloped statements, or did not touch on the 'conflicts' mentioned in the question, thereby struggling to gain high marks.
- (b) Answered well by many candidates with many valid arguments on why friends of the same age make better listeners than parents, why it is useful to talk to teachers or parents in times of need and why some prefer to read or listen to music rather than talk to friends in times of stress.
- (c) Answered with variable success. Some candidates focused on academic pressure and others on family pressure but only referred to the specific task at the beginning and at the end of their essays, which meant they struggled to gain high marks.
- (d) Favoured by many candidates who gave some of the most interesting and thoughtful responses. This topic was clearly very close to the hearts of young people and most candidates had ample material to write about.
- (e) Answered with variable success. Able candidates showed impressive understanding of work experience in general. They also offered comprehensive advice on how a holiday should be planned and discussed the potential benefits of both working and relaxing. Weaker candidates struggled to express their opinions clearly and coherently. One essay described a family holiday in the sun with little reference to the question.
- (f) Able candidates tackled this question with flare and confidence, discussing many different aspects to good effect, including: locally grown food versus imported goods, holidays abroad versus holidays closer to home and aviation pollution. Some students unfortunately wrote about general issues to do with pollution and therefore struggled to gain high marks.

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Candidates should be reminded that they need to read through the different essay tasks carefully and only choose to a title they fully understand (titles are provided in Chinese and English) and on which they have most to say.

In order to score highly in this section, candidates are strongly encouraged to plan how to divide their essays into paragraphs with the main points/themes clearly shown. Candidates aiming at higher marks should also learn how to draw effectively upon more detailed examples/evidence/facts to illustrate the points they wish to make. In terms of Accuracy and Linguistic Range, candidates need to pay attention to the meaning of words in a specific context (not just to the primary definition in the dictionary), and to their control of conjunctions, prepositions and punctuation. They should trust their own knowledge rather than be over-reliant on the dictionary in the examinations.

MANDARIN CHINESE PRINCIPAL COURSE

Paper 9778/04
Chinese Culture

General comments

Overall the standard of essays was higher this year, with few entries from very weak candidates. It was pleasing to see many candidates with a firm grasp of the historical and geographical topics and literature they had studied and also the ability to write a cogent essay in response to their studies. However, some candidates were let down by their poor standard of English, which made it hard at times to understand what they were trying to say.

The term 'communist' was used quite loosely, sometimes seeming to mean little more than 'anti-Western'; a common fallacy seems to be that the Chinese Communists were fighting for a more 'equal' society. It was rare to find any awareness that the Cultural Revolution situation with respect to Western culture was not typical of China prior to 1956.

Candidates are required to answer two questions for this paper: one from the Topics in Chinese Culture section and one from Chinese Literature and Film. The answers are marked out of 30, with a mark out of 25 for content and a mark out of 5 for structure. In all cases, questions are open to interpretation; it is up to the candidates to develop an analytical response to the question with clear, specific examples/evidence (not generalized statements) to back up his/her argument. The mark scheme gives some indicative content for each question on the paper. However, there is often no right or wrong way to answer a question; it is up to the candidate to develop an argument and find evidence to support it. There were some very successful essays which demonstrated in-depth analysis backed up by specific reference. In general, candidates seemed to find **Section 1** – Topics in Chinese Culture – slightly more challenging.

Candidates should make sure they read the question very carefully before they start, making a careful assessment of what is asked for; they should write a plan before beginning to write.

Each essay should start with an introduction which should outline how the question is going to be tackled; giving away all the concluding points in the introduction to the essay should be avoided. Subsequent paragraphs should develop a clear argument/line of thinking with specific, relevant examples/evidence to illustrate the argument, which should always link to the question and essays should finish with a strong conclusion. The introduction and conclusion of the essay both need to be relevant and convincing; some good essays were let down by weak introductions or conclusions.

Essays should not be a descriptive list of facts or the story of what happened in a period of history, a novel or a film. Candidates obviously need to have a lot of facts at their fingertips, but then need to be in a position to manipulate those facts to demonstrate their deeper understanding and analytical capability in response to the question. Evaluation is the key. Organisation of material is vital and an appropriate style should be used. In the case of both novels and the film, candidates needed to have a good grasp of the Chinese history of the period in which they are set.

In order to be able to respond to these essay questions appropriately, candidates need to be exposed during their studies to a range of commentaries/view points about a particular topic and to have had the opportunity to discuss ideas with their teachers and other candidates to inform their interpretation of events or their interpretation of a book or film. It is only this exposure to a variety of views that will give candidates the ability to handle these essay questions with sufficient analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) There were many good answers. The chronology was accurate in most cases, but sometimes candidates strayed outside the period required by the question (1937–49). The successes of the CCP were well balanced with the many failings of the GMD during the Anti-Japanese War and the Civil War. Sometimes the balance between discussions of the various aspects of the period was not good, for example Yan'an and Land Reform were not always given enough attention. There were also some sweeping statements not always backed up by evidence. Weaker candidates seemed to conflate this period with the Korean War, the Great Leap Forward and the Great Famine which followed it, or even the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s.
- (b) This question also attracted many good answers, with detailed analysis of the issues, such as the role of propaganda, the 3 and 5 Anti campaigns, Land Reform and the role of the Korean War, improvements in education, health and the impact of reforms on women. The extent to which the entire population supported the CCP was asserted but sometimes with little evidence.

The best essays were well-informed about the CCP's organisation of Chinese society into *danwei*, the use of *dang'an* to make a 'highly compliant' 'society of informers', the rapid industrialisation via Five Year Plans and reforms of agriculture. The immense successes were contrasted with the large-scale killing of the regime's opponents. Some candidates seemed to have a low opinion of the peasants' ability as farmers.

Some candidates discussed policies which were implemented outside the period required by the question, such as the People's Communes and the Cultural Revolution.

It is important to pay close attention to all parts of the question, and one or two candidates failed to respond to the second part about how effective the transformation was, choosing instead just to describe events. When preparing for the examination, candidates should have practice in analysing or evaluating historical events rather than merely describing them. Other candidates did not understand the meaning of 'purposeful' which sometimes affected the direction of their argument.

Question 2

- (a) In general candidates balanced an account of the last 30 years with an assessment of future sustainability. In some cases, marks were lost due to a general lack of knowledge which meant that arguments were not illustrated as thoroughly as they could have been or that there was not a wide enough range of relevant points to push candidates into higher mark bands. A number of candidates successfully developed arguments around e.g. the urban-rural divide, falls in exports, resource scarcity and an ageing workforce.
- (b) Some candidates developed a sophisticated and interesting argument in which they pointed out that although poverty has been vastly reduced, there is still an extremely unequal distribution of wealth and clear urban-rural, East-West divides.

Question 3

- (a) In general candidates successfully included discussion of a number of different types of renewable energy, with some also referring to nuclear energy.

Candidates should be advised to be careful about contradicting themselves in the course of their argument.

Some candidates, while discussing a particular form of renewable energy, did not attempt to give examples to illustrate developments in the use of that energy in China, for example stating merely that China is now a major producer of solar panels.

Many candidates spent a long time discussing the Dongtan Eco-City project and how it could solve many environmental problems, only to have to end their argument by admitting that it still has not been built. Whilst brief mention of the project may have helped an argument, given that not only has it not been completed but it would also only affect a small part of China (although of course it

could inspire similar initiatives elsewhere in China), giving up too much space to this in the essay did not always serve some candidates' argument effectively.

Many candidates made good reference to dam projects, but in some cases they became overly fixated on one detail which only seemed partially relevant, for example how rotting fish were polluting the water from the dam or how noise pollution from dam building is a major issue requiring attention. While these could be valid points, candidates should always be careful to select the most relevant details and facts that will make their arguments as convincing as possible.

Some candidates chose to argue that renewables could do virtually nothing to solve China's environmental problems because so many of the problems – such as desertification and various water problems – have developed too far for renewables to offer any effective remedy. While there may be some validity to such arguments, if the entire essay only argues that nothing can be done because things have gone too far, it can come across as one-sided and too simplistic to warrant a high mark.

- (b) There were some very good essays on this important topic, with detailed discussion and a balanced approach to the complex issues. Sometimes the chronology was faulty.

Question 4

- (a) Candidates needed to make reference to 'Jasmine Tea' and one other story. One answer failed to say anything about 'Jasmine Tea'. The best candidates covered all aspects of the quotation in their answers, but others found this challenging.
- (b) The essays were often rather brief without much depth. In one case the candidate confused 'he' and 'she', which made it hard to follow. In general, candidates had read the question accurately and written about two male characters from two different stories. Candidates should be advised to think carefully before choosing which stories to use for a particular essay question, otherwise they can find themselves trying to force a difficult argument that does not read naturally and convincingly. Candidates are also advised to read the stories carefully and thoroughly when preparing for examinations as there were a number of errors regarding Zhenbao's attitude and behaviour that contradicted the actual text.

Question 5

- (a) There were some good answers but also some that were mainly narrative.
- (b) Most responses to this question were thoughtful and well argued. Huixian's battle with being Li Tiemei was well described, as was the contrast between the boat people and the land people. Many candidates struggled to relate the novel to its Cultural Revolution context in a meaningful way. In addition to describing Huixian's character, candidates variously illustrated how she serves to educate the reader about Dongliang (for example, his sexual maturation, lack of a mother figure), drew comparisons between Huixian and Dongliang and examined her connection with the theme of fate in the novel.

Question 6

- (a) The best essays were able to encompass the story in its historical context, but some struggled to show the power of literature. Some exaggerated the extent to which the books themselves allowed Ma, Luo and the Little Seamstress to 'escape the countryside and be freed for a better life'. Some claims were overstated and not justified by reference to the film, for instance 'literature sparked China's transition from tradition to modernity'.

However, in general, candidates successfully analysed the role of literature and argued that the film does testify to its liberating power, frequently referring to the examples of Ma's reading experiences and of the Little Seamstress's decision to leave for the city. In some cases, the word 'liberating' was interpreted literally to mean 'physically free'; this can bolster an argument if handled well, but candidates should be advised to practise thinking about the full extent of an essay question, in this case considering how literature might be mentally, emotionally, even 'spiritually' liberating.

Candidates should also check they understand the meaning of all the words in an essay question before choosing to answer it. One or two candidates did not grasp the meaning of 'testifies' which

had a slight impact on the direction of their arguments, though this did not, in general, significantly affect the marks awarded.

Candidates are advised to watch the film carefully and more than once, as often small inaccuracies were evident. It makes a better impression on the reader if details cited are true to what actually happens in the film and if characters are not muddled up or lumped together (for example, saying that 'Ma stays up all night reading Ursule Mirouet' shows greater attention has been paid to the film than saying, 'both the boys regularly stay up all night reading the French novels').

Some candidates successfully provided counter arguments, for example questioning whether the Little Seamstress is 'liberated' for the better, or whether her transformation leaves destruction behind, with no guarantee of happiness ahead. A few candidates discussed various other themes in the film at length in a way that did not contribute to their response to the specific question, which affected their overall mark for the essay.

- (b)** Some essays were very good, in dealing with the film as a love story but the discussion of cinematographic techniques was sometimes superficial. The treatment of the love story clearly touched many candidates. Some responded well to the lighting effects used and commented perceptively on the relative positions of the characters at key points in the film.

Many candidates highlighted the differences between each of the boy's relationship with the seamstress well, and some also touched on non-romantic love as playing a role in the film, for example, the love between the boys or the love of literature.

Given that part of the question refers to cinematographic techniques, in order for a candidate to access the higher marks, it was essential to refer to such aspects as lighting, individual shots or music. Candidates are advised to select the most relevant examples of cinematographic techniques, and avoid getting too caught up in analysing one seemingly irrelevant shot that may not serve the purpose of their argument as well as another one might. Watching the film carefully and repeatedly will help a candidate to perform substantially better than watching it once will.