CHINESE

Paper 9715/21
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- **Question 1** is a vocabulary recognition exercise, which requires candidates to find words or phrases from the first reading passage that are closest in meaning to those given in the question. Words that are not in the specified paragraphs of the passage are not acceptable.

- **Question 2** is a grammatical manipulation exercise. It requires candidates to rewrite the sentences using the given phrases without changing the meaning.

- **Question 3** and **Question 4** consist of a series of comprehension questions, requiring straightforward and specific answers. Candidates need to read the passages carefully and should answer using their own words based on the information given in the passages. No credit can be given for responses if candidates have lifted an entire unit of language unchanged from the original texts, or if they are based on candidates' general knowledge, or personal experience.

- **Question 5(a)** requires candidates to produce a summary of the information given in both passages, which this year were concerned with people improving their quality of life in modern society. **Question 5(b)** requires candidates to give their personal response to the material, which can be their own understanding, experience and opinion of the issues raised. Responses to **Question 5(b)** should be personal and not a mere repetition of the materials in the given texts. The whole response for **Question 5** is to be kept to a limit of no more than 200 characters.

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- consolidate knowledge of synonyms, conjunctions, linking words and question words
- read the questions carefully and provide answers based on the reading passages in the paper
- use their own words to answer questions rather than copying from the passages
- plan their time to ensure there is sufficient time to fully answer **Question 5**
- attempt every question in the paper, even those they feel less confident about

General comments

Most candidates understood the reading texts well and were able to offer accurate answers, with the majority of candidates also using their own words to answer questions. Most candidates were able to use varied vocabulary and complex structures to answer the questions. Questions were usually answered in full sentences rather than using bullet points.

Many good and clearly expressed responses to **Question 3** and **Question 4** were seen this year. Many candidates demonstrated their ability to rephrase information through using appropriate connectives, using synonyms, rearranging the word order and selecting the key information. It is important that candidates make sure they read the questions carefully before answering, ensuring that they understand what is required. This year some candidates did not gain all available marks as they had not fully covered all required elements.

Question 5 was generally well-answered this year. The majority of answers for **Question 5** kept within the character limit, showing an awareness of the task requirements.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Candidates handled this question very well, with the vast majority of candidates showing they had understood the vocabulary being tested and correctly locating the synonyms from Passage 1. To improve performance further, candidates need to better understand the function of the vocabulary they come across and analyse its position within the sentence.

(a) Overall, this question was well answered. A few candidates answered with 到头 which does not carry the same meaning as the required answer 到头来, and therefore could not be credited. It is important that candidates demonstrate genuine understanding of meaning and are reminded that the synonym may not be the same number of characters as the word in the question.

(b) Most candidates were able to supply the correct synonym 出色.

(c) This was answered correctly by most candidates.

(d) Candidates showed a good understanding of the word 辨别 and were able to identify 判断 as the synonym.

(e) Compared to other sub-questions in **Question 1**, some candidates found this question more challenging. It was common for candidates to omit 一笑 and just supply 微微; this changes the meaning completely and therefore could not be credited.

Question 2

Performance on this question was variable. Some candidates were able to demonstrate a very good understanding of the given grammatical structure and how to manipulate the sentence to use it correctly. In some cases, candidates changed the meaning of the sentence when they re-wrote it. In order to be awarded marks in this exercise, the original meaning of the sentence must be retained after the inclusion of the given structure.

(a) A lot of candidates found this question challenging, and were not sure how to handle the particle 啊. A common incorrect answer was 要是能买个大房子就好啊, which showed that those candidates understood the meaning of the structure 要是……就…… but were not sure how to make the relevant adjustment to the sentence when forming their answer.

(b) Performance on this question was high, with most candidates showing a strong understanding of 之所以.

(c) Most candidates were able to manipulate the sentence using 不一定. A small number of candidates produced answers such as 不一定掌握了信息就是赢家 which resulted in the meaning differing from the original sentence.

Question 3

Most candidates showed a good understanding of the reading passage about people's wishes for the new year and how Wang Li's wishes differed to other people. All candidates attempted all the questions. The strongest responses were those where candidates had read the passage and the questions carefully, paying attention to the mark allocation to ensure responses were full enough to gain all the available marks. In some cases, candidates relied heavily on lifting sections of text from the passage to use in their answers; in order to be awarded marks for the quality of language in this question, candidates must show evidence that they can produce written Chinese, either by writing in their own words or by manipulating the language used in the passage.

(a) Candidates handled this question with confidence and a large number of candidates secured the marks. However, it was evident that a few candidates misread the question as their answers outlined Wang Li's wishes for the new year instead of his colleagues, as the question asked.

(b)   There were some excellent answers to this question, demonstrating a clear understanding of the points required. Answers which had a clear link to show understanding of what free time/leisure is, such as 感受到闲暇、生活会变得轻松 were accepted. The most frequently omitted point was 不会遗憾时间都去哪儿了.

(c)   Most candidates were able to supply both reasons as to why people work hard.

(d)   This was well answered by most of the candidates.

(e)   This question drew mixed responses. Most candidates understood that some of Wang Li's colleagues agreed with him and some disagreed. Only the strongest responses acknowledged that there were some colleagues who thought his wishes was not achievable at all. According to the text, the goals were possible, but people could only achieve them when they retired 要到退休时才能实现.

(f)   This was a global question requiring candidates to consider the whole text and discuss the reasons for Wang Li's unique wishes. This was found to be challenging for some candidates. Weaker responses only stated that the new year wishes were special because they were different and needed to point out exactly *how* they were different. Answers such as 王力的愿望是针对社会现状的改变 were accepted because they clearly summarised Wang Li's sentiments. Answers such as 跟大家不一样 and 王力的愿望比别人的更难实现 did not address the reasons, and therefore could not be credited.

Question 4

The overall performance on this question was slightly better than for **Question 3**. Candidates generally understood the passage about the balance between work and leisure and managed to successfully rephrase answers instead of lifting language from the passage.

Some responses were very brief, only including key phrases or bullet points. When responses are presented in this way, it is difficult to assess the candidate's linguistic ability as so little language has been produced. This therefore has an impact on the Quality of Language mark awarded. Looking forward, candidates need to be reminded to read the questions carefully before answering to ensure they address the requirements in full.

(a)   Most candidates could identify the reasons for Xiao Liu's complaints, but where full marks were not awarded, this was usually because the reason 没时间消费 was omitted. Candidates needed to be careful that they were referring to the specific issues Xiao Liu was talking about, and those who answered with 无法保持工作与生活的平衡 were not credited as this was a more general statement from the author rather than coming from Xiao Liu's speech. Thus, it is important that candidates focus on the information closely linked to the question asked.

(b)   Most candidates answered this question well and gave full responses finding all 4 points. A minority of candidates needed to also include 在公司设立健身房 to get a full mark.

(c)   Many candidates scored full marks for this question. Weaker responses showed that the focus of the question, namely the impact on *interactions between people*, had been misunderstood; such responses needed to include the key concept of the interaction with others. For example, answers like 性情变得浮躁 or 常常不开心 could not be credited as they were about those people who were overloaded with work rather than how they interacted with others.

(d)   Candidates performed well in this question, with the majority scoring the full marks. 企业盈利 was occasionally missed by weaker candidates.

Please note that in **Question 3** and **Question 4**, candidates are not required to rephrase every word they take from the passages to use in their answers. Candidates may use the passages as support to retrieve some vocabulary but should not lift material from the passages indiscriminately or at length, as this does not show that they have fully understood either the passages or the questions. Although the mark scheme is presented in bullet point format, this is to show the key concepts required for each mark-bearing content point only. It is expected that candidates try to use full sentences when answering questions, as they need to

show they can use more complex structures accurately to reach the highest marking band for Quality of Language.

Question 5

Most candidates were able to successfully and skilfully summarise many relevant points from both passages about how people could improve their quality of life in modern society. Almost all candidates kept their answers to the required character limit.

Question 5(a) was well answered by most candidates, although no candidates scored full marks in this part. Some candidates needed greater focus on the question asked, avoiding digression; such responses were largely focused on ideas contradictory to what was required by the question, e.g. 现在人们的工作时长也慢慢被加长；长期的过度劳作使人们变得浮躁，失去耐心。

In **Question 5(b)**, there were some interesting and varied answers, excellent examples like 我觉得在现代社会人们要提高生活质量，首先要做到劳逸结合，合理地安排工作和休息的时间，把碎片时间都合理地利用起来 demonstrated candidates' ability to express their personal point of view whilst linking this to their understanding to the passages.

For **Question 5(b)**, candidates should try to keep their experience or opinions concise in order to allow them to express different views relating to the points from the texts. It does not matter if the opinions are positive or negative, it is more important that the candidate demonstrates their understanding of the topic discussed in the texts to give relevant responses to the question.

In order to score highest marks for language, it is essential that candidates remember to answer the question in a continuous prose style. Furthermore, candidates need to be able to show their capability of applying complex sentence structures accurately.

CHINESE

Paper 9715/22
Reading and Writing

Key messages

* **Question 1** is a vocabulary recognition exercise, which requires candidates to find words or phrases from the first reading passage that are closest in meaning to those given in the question. Words that are not in the specified paragraphs of the passage are not acceptable.

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* **Question 5(a)** requires candidates to produce a summary of the information given in both passages, which this year were concerned with how leisure activities can help individuals to develop. **Question 5(b)** requires candidates to give their personal response to the material, which can be their own understanding, experience and opinion of the issues raised. Responses to **Question 5(b)** should be personal and not a mere repetition of the materials in the given texts. The whole response for **Question 5** is to be kept to a limit of no more than 200 characters.

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* attempt every question in the paper, even those they feel less confident about

General comments

Most candidates demonstrated an excellent understanding of the two reading passages and responded well to the questions asked. The majority of candidates used their own words to answer questions, with some using sophisticated vocabulary and complex structures to show their competence in written Chinese. Furthermore, an increased level of accuracy was seen in responses across the whole paper and more and more candidates wrote in full sentences to answer questions rather than using bullet points or note form.

Many good and clearly expressed responses to **Question 3** and **Question 4** were seen this year. Many candidates demonstrated their ability to rephrase information through using appropriate connectives, using synonyms, rearranging the word order and selecting the key information. It is important that candidates cover all the points required by the questions, as some able candidates did not gain all available marks as their answers were not complete. Teachers should remind the candidates to take note of the mark allocation; for example, if a question has 4 marks, 4 distinct pieces of information will be required.

A strong performed was seen in **Question 5**. Most candidates were aware of the character limit for this question, and kept their responses within the stated 200 characters.

Cambridge Assessment
International Education

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Performance on this question was extremely high, with the vast majority of candidates showing they had understood the vocabulary being tested and correctly locating the synonyms from Passage 1. To improve performance further, candidates need to better understand the function of the vocabulary and analyse its position within the sentence. Candidates should be reminded that the synonym may not always be the same number of characters as the word in the question. Furthermore, candidates need to pay attention to the accuracy of their character writing in order to secure the marks.

(a) Most candidates could correctly identify 多种多样 as the synonym. Occasional incorrect answers included 丰富多彩.

(b) This question was very well answered, showing candidates had a good understanding of the vocabulary and the text.

(c) The majority of candidates supplied the correct answer 别致, although several incorrect answers were given as well, most frequently 重要.

(d) The tested word is quite commonly used vocabulary and the majority of candidates correctly identified 热门.

(e) Candidates performed well on this question. A reminder that attention to accuracy is needed in character writing as errors such as 没淮儿 caused ambiguity.

Question 2

The overall performance for this question was good. The majority of candidates re-wrote the sentences correctly using the structures given. In some cases, candidates changed the meaning of the sentence when they re-wrote it. In order to be awarded marks in this exercise, the original meaning of the sentence must be retained after the inclusion of the given structure.

(a) Most candidates were able to use the structure 既……又…… correctly to answer the question. Answers such as 人们做既消除身体疲劳，又帮助他们获得精神慰藉的活动 could not be awarded marks as the original meaning of the sentence had been changed.

(b) The 像 structure tested in this question is a commonly used structure, and the majority of candidates knew how to use it correctly. A few weaker responses retained 俨如 in the reworked sentence and so did not gain the mark. A small number of candidates needed to take greater care in the accuracy of their writing, as they wrote 风 as 冈.

(c) Most candidates knew how to use the 把……作为…… structure to manipulate the sentence correctly. Weaker responses were characterised by the inclusion of 把 at the start of the sentence, for example, 把体育健身活动作为人们休闲的重要内容. Others wrote 体闲 instead of 休闲 which impeded comprehension.

Question 3

A very strong performance was seen on this question and candidates demonstrated a thorough understanding of the reading passage about the different ways people choose to spend their leisure time. Responses which used a variety of vocabulary and a good range of linking words such as 首先…. . 其次……最后；第一，第二… to connect answers together, often scored well for quality of language.

(a) This question was the least well-answered amongst the sub-questions in this section. Stronger candidates understood that 休闲活动 was the subject of the question and organised their responses to focus on the benefits gained thorough leisure activities. Weaker responses simply lifted whole sections from the reading passage, without isolating the *improvements* to quality of life, as required by the question 做一些消除身体疲劳的运动；做一些帮助他们获得精神慰藉的活动.

(b)   The performance on this question was very good and the majority of candidates demonstrated a correct understanding of what was required. Some candidates gave 更独立 as an answer; the text describes travelling as helping with 自信 rather than 独立 and so this answer could not be credited.

(c)   This question was well-understood and well-answered. Amongst the three correct answers, 社区广场 and 体育场馆 were identified by most candidates, and 市中心 was usually understood to be an irrelevant answer and correctly omitted. Only the strongest responses included 野外/户外. The question asked candidates to say *where* people so sports activities, and some candidates confused the activity with the venue, mistakenly including, 野外徒步 or 骑自行车 in their answers.

(d)   There were some excellent answers to this question which showed genuine understanding of the reading passage. A lot of candidates also managed to answer using their own words. Those candidates who secured the marks fully understood the meaning of 收获了什么 as stated in the question and were therefore able to supply 学到了/学会了针灸. Answers like 学了针灸 were not precise enough to echo the definition of 收获. In some cases, candidates needed to be careful that their answers accurately reflected what was said in the text; answers such as 可以开诊所、有了新的工作机会、未来的新出路, for example, suggested that those things *would* or already had happened, whereas they are only given as possibilities in the passage.

Candidates need to be able to select and filter information in order to ensure their answers are relevant to the question asked. Several responses to this question simply listed all possible points, and in some cases the inclusion of an incorrect answer may invalidate a correct answer. In this case, answers like 治好了奶奶的病 invalidated 治好了朋友的病 because it did not demonstrate clear understanding.

(e)   This was a global question that required candidates to identify from the whole passage the three types of leisure activity people do, i.e. travelling / sports / study or professional development. Most candidates were able to supply the correct answers and only a very small percentage of candidates missed the point about 学习 thinking it was 业余爱好型. In some cases answers were too specific, e.g. giving 学针灸 rather than 学习型.

Question 4

Performance on this question was generally better than for **Question 3** and most candidates showed that they had understood the reading passage about Chinese calligraphy well. Some interesting language was used in the answers provided, including a good selection of linking words.

(a)   The majority of candidates tackled this question confidently. It is important that candidates read the question carefully and give answers which make sense grammatically as well as logically; answers such as 书者的人文修养 and 书者的个性 were not a good fit to the question.

(b)   This was the best performed sub-question of **Question 4**. Most candidates were able to find all three points; weaker responses occasionally gave 协调能力, which was not credited.

(c)   Most candidates gave detailed answers and also managed to rephrase the wording of the text to gain both points. Some excellent answers demonstrated clear understanding and included a high level of language, such as 因为想要学好书法，需要仔细地分析琢磨字的结构，运笔时也要脑、眼、手相互协作来控制轻重缓急，环环相扣，十分复杂，所以说书法是一项精细的活动. Answers like 运笔需要身体协调 did not include sufficient detail from the passage to secure the mark.

(d)   Candidates answered this question very well and only a small number of candidates mistook 书卷气息 to be a type of personality trait, instead of the correct answer, 沉稳.

(e)   Candidates generally dealt with this question successfully, with most managing to locate the answer 书法是一种动与静的结合. Quite a lot of responses included what the 'expert' said: 剧烈的健身运动不适合老年人; this was irrelevant to the task, and so should have been filtered out of answers.

(f) The majority of candidates were able to grasp the key concept of the question and focused on issues such as 占用太多时间、墨水弄脏衣服 and 学费, therefore gaining full marks. A few candidates answered with 学习问题 rather than 书法学习占用学生学习时间, which did not address the question precisely. 学习问题 could relate to many issues associated with learning, but the specific issue which parents have to consider is that time taken practising calligraphy conflicts with academic study. A few candidates answered 学生年龄问题 as in the original article 由于学生太小 was mentioned, but this was not something which caused parents concern according to the article.

Please note that in **Question 3** and **Question 4**, candidates are not required to rephrase every word they take from the passages to use in their answers. Candidates may use the passages as support to retrieve some vocabulary but should not lift material from the passages indiscriminately or at length, as this does not show that they have fully understood either the passages or the questions. Although the mark scheme is presented in bullet point format, this is to show the key concepts required for each mark-bearing content point only. It is expected that candidates try to use full sentences when answering questions, as they need to show they can use more complex structures accurately to reach the highest marking band for Quality of Language.

Question 5

The majority of candidates were able to successfully and skilfully summarise many relevant points from both passages. Almost all candidates kept their answers to the required character limit. The most successful responses were those which paid careful attention to the question which had been asked and focused on the details about how individuals benefited from doing different leisure activities.

Question 5(a) was well answered by most candidates. The best responses were those which fully addressed the question and stayed focussed on the topic. Some candidates effectively integrated their own ideas for **Question 5(b)** within the summary task **Question 5(a)**. Weaker responses to **Question 5(b)** tended to echo the points already covered in **Question 5(a)** rather than developing a personal response including their own points of view.

For **Question 5(b)**, candidates need to bear in mind that it is important to give varied and interesting ideas linked to the question. It does not matter if the opinions are positive or negative, it is more important that the candidate demonstrates their understanding of the topic discussed in the texts to give a relevant response to the question.

In order to score high marks for language, it is essential that candidates remember to answer the question in a continuous prose style. Candidates need to be able to show that they can use complex sentence structures accurately.

CHINESE

Key messages

- **Question 1** is a vocabulary recognition exercise, which requires candidates to find words or phrases from the first reading passage that are closest in meaning to those given in the question. Words that are not in the specified paragraphs of the passage are not acceptable.

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- **Question 5(a)** requires candidates to produce a summary of the information given in both passages, which this year were concerned with the advantages of taking part in sports activities. **Question 5(b)** requires candidates to give their personal response to the material, which can be their own understanding, experience and opinion of the issues raised. Responses to **Question 5(b)** should be personal and not a mere repetition of the materials in the given texts. The whole response for **Question 5** is to be kept to a limit of no more than 200 characters.

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- use their own words to answer questions rather than copying from the passages
- plan their time to ensure there is sufficient time to fully answer **Question 5**
- attempt every question in the paper, even those they feel less confident about

General comments

Most candidates showed they had understood the reading passages and offered accurate answers. Candidates were generally able to use varied vocabulary and complex structures to answer the questions. Most candidates answered questions by writing in full sentences, using their own words with only a minority relying on lifting from the text or writing using bullet points or note form.

Many good and clearly expressed responses to **Question 3** and **Question 4** were seen this year. Many candidates demonstrated their ability to rephrase information through using appropriate connectives, using synonyms, rearranging the word order and selecting the key information. It is important that candidates make sure they read the questions carefully before answering, ensuring that they understand what is required. This year some candidates did not gain all available marks as they had not fully covered all required elements.

Question 5 was generally well-answered this year. The majority of answers for **Question 5** kept within the character limit, showing an awareness of the task requirements.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was very well-answered, and candidates showed their wide knowledge of vocabulary. The majority of candidates were able to identify the correct synonyms in the text and write them accurately.

Candidates should be aware that the synonyms have to be located in the paragraph stated in the question as a very small number of candidates supplied answers found in other parts of the text.

(a) Most candidates answered this question correctly. In some cases candidates could not be awarded the mark due to inaccuracies in character writing, for example in answers like 以住. Whilst minor errors in transcription are tolerated, marks cannot be awarded if inaccuracies lead to another character being created with a different meaning.

Candidates handled questions **(b)**, **(c)**, **(d)** and **(e)** confidently. The vast majority of candidates secured marks, with only a few seemingly guessing answers, as incorrect answers seemed to be very varied and random, such as 站满、毅力、踏上 and 锋利.

Question 2

Candidates handled this question very well and most candidates demonstrated a very good understanding of how to use the given structures. Once again, where marks were lost this was sometimes due to inaccuracy in character writing which either caused ambiguity, impeded comprehension or changed the meaning of the sentence.

(a) Candidates seemed familiar with the 只有……才…… structure and most were able to secure the mark.

(b) The performance on this question was very strong and most candidates used the 连……都…… structure correctly.

(c) The majority of candidates demonstrated they could manipulate the sentence using the 把 structure. However, a small number of candidates did not seem to be sure about the word order and common incorrect answers included 他会把第一个母亲登山的照片晒出在网上.

Question 3

A strong performance was seen on this question, with most candidates showing a thorough understanding of the text on extreme sports. The majority constructed their answers from their own words or manipulated the language of the text.

Candidates showed skill in selecting the relevant information from the text to answer the questions and discarding incorrect or irrelevant information. Where candidates did not score full marks, it was often because answers were not full enough for all marks to be awarded. Candidates should be reminded to take note of the mark allocation when they write their answers to ensure that they provide sufficient detail to gain the maximum marks for each answer.

(a) Most candidates successfully located the three answers spread throughout the first paragraph, demonstrating good understanding. Weaker responses sometimes included answers such as 游戏球拍, which is a type of equipment rather than a way of exercising.

(b) This question was very well handled by many candidates.

(c) Most candidates secured one mark in this question. To gain both marks, candidates needed to have a deep understanding of the text, inferring the views of Xiao Ming's parents from what they said; only the strongest candidates managed this. Some candidates simply copied 感到头疼 from the text, but this was not creditable as it is not a view or opinion. It is important that candidates read the question carefully to make sure they know what is required. For this question, any wording which conveyed disapproval was acceptable, such as 不理解.

(d)   Performance on this question was generally high, and some good answers were seen, e.g. 李沛想去北极游泳是为了圆自己想在七大洲五大洋游泳的梦，李沛认为去北极游泳可以锻炼身体，可以考验自己的毅力. Some candidates included 为了引起人们对地球变暖的关注, in their answers, which did not relate to Li Pei and so did not answer the question.

(e)   Performance on this question was mixed. The best responses were able to differentiate between the 'unexpected' dangers such as 舌头会被冻僵、像刀子一样锋利的冰渣儿到处都是 and the dangers which were known beforehand: 手脚会被冻僵、会遇到北极熊. Weaker responses were characterised by lifting indiscriminately from the texts and including incorrect answers which invalidated correct answers. Candidates need to demonstrate clear understanding by avoiding giving answers which are contradictory or ambiguous.

(f)   Most candidates were able to provide both reasons why Zhao Hua enjoyed mountain climbing.

(g)   An excellent performance was seen in this question and the majority of candidates gave accurate answers.

Question 4

Most candidates understood the text well and successfully rephrased their answers in their own words. All questions were attempted, and most candidates wrote in full sentences.

(a)   Some excellent answers were seen to this question. Where candidates did not gain full marks, this was sometimes because only partial answers were provided, such as, 在员工健身福利上每花一美元 or 企业就可以节省五美元, neither of which include the key concept 省钱. Candidates needed a thorough understanding of the final sentence in the paragraph to work out the key concept 提高生产率 and find the third point. Some candidates managed to 'locate' where the answer was in the paragraph, but produced answers such as 提高生产率 which did not fully convey the benefit described in the text.

(b)   Most candidates tackled this question well. Some candidates answered with 报销健身费 but did not specify gym membership, and so the answer was not precise enough to gain the mark.

(c), (d) and **(e)** There was a strong performance on all these questions with many candidates scoring full marks.

(f)   The majority of candidates secured at least one mark in this question by giving the key concept 由运动而受伤的人数有所增加. It was evident that some candidates did not fully understand the words 避免 and 负面影响 in the paragraph, and therefore gave the answer 避免过度运动导致疲劳, which led to misunderstanding.

Please note that in **Question 3** and **Question 4**, candidates are not required to rephrase every word they take from the passages to use in their answers. Candidates may use the passages as support to retrieve some vocabulary but should not lift material from the passages indiscriminately or at length, as this does not show that they have fully understood either the passages or the questions. Although the mark scheme is presented in bullet point format, this is to show the key concepts required for each mark-bearing content point only. It is expected that candidates try to use full sentences when answering questions, as they need to show they can use more complex structures accurately to reach the highest marking band for Quality of Language.

Question 5

Candidates found this question the most challenging part of the paper and there were very few responses which scored all ten marks. Some candidates were able to successfully and skilfully summarise many relevant points from both passages about the advantages of taking part in sports activities. Almost all candidates kept their answers to the required character limit.

Lower-scoring responses tended to write in depth on one or two points from the passages rather than summarising various points from the passages they had read. Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Candidates

need to be aware that they must provide 10 distinct points from both passages according to the question asked for **part (a)** and talk about their opinions or ideas in **part (b)**, all within the word limit of 200 characters.

For **Question 5(b)**, candidate need to remember that it is important to give varied and interesting ideas linked to the question. It does not matter if the opinions put forward are positive or negative, but value is given to the candidate demonstrating their understanding of the topic discussed in the texts and giving a relevant and personal response to the question.

In order to score high marks for language, it is essential that candidates remember to answer the question in a continuous prose style. Furthermore, candidates need to be able to show they are able to use complex sentence structures accurately.

CHINESE

Paper 9715/31
Essay

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- read the question carefully to ensure they have a clear understanding of the task before they begin writing. This will enable candidates to stay on track.
- structure the essay to ensure it is focussed, follows a logical argument and includes apt examples
- demonstrate knowledge of advanced vocabulary relating to the topic, show they can use idioms appropriately and write grammatically accurate Chinese
- write a response that is clearly relevant and relates to the specific question as set out in the paper
- leave time to proofread work; planning in time to check work through can greatly reduce the number of mistakes in both characters and grammar.

General comments

Candidates generally came into the exam adequately prepared. Higher scoring candidates whose essays stood out were able to transfer their subject knowledge in a focussed manner, concentrating on the key issues at stake and presenting a competent argument that could stand up to scrutiny. These candidates clearly understood the question and how best to answer it in a way which highlighted their abilities. This included presenting logical arguments and fitting examples, with apt vocabulary and proper use of language. These answers were as fluent as they were insightful, all of which made them strong candidates.

More average performances were associated with those candidates who, despite their apparent subject knowledge, either did not fully comprehend the task or lost track of their argument. The weakest responses were those lacking both subject knowledge around key areas, such as vocabulary, as well as those who could not present arguments on paper, or provide suitable detail and examples. Such responses tended to drift into more general discussion, simple listing of facts or narrow anecdotes.

Improvements could be made by addressing the below areas:

- Presentation of arguments: this requires the ability to focus on the issues at stake and form a cogent argument, namely, an introduction, both sides of the argument, then a conclusion. Answers should contain fitting examples and vocabulary that shows depth. When properly assembled, such responses tend to flow, have no ambiguity and lead the examiner through the argument in a persuasive manner.
- Attention to detail: work is sometimes submitted which contains careless errors that would have been picked up with more proofreading. Time set aside for checks on spelling and punctuation should be factored into each response.
- Strategies to overcome gaps in vocabulary: candidates should be reminded that the combination of pinyin and English should not be used when candidates lack vocabulary. Candidates should be encouraged to modify what they want to say and use alternative vocabulary which they are confident in using and that they know how to write correctly in Chinese

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

好习惯的培养应该从小开始。你怎么看？

This was the most popular topic amongst candidates this year. The majority of candidates were able to display excellent knowledge regarding the impact of fostering good habits.

Stronger responses were those that convincingly explained how good habits could benefit one's life in the long term by providing sound reasoning backed up by fitting examples. Weaker efforts here were from those who opted for a very narrow case, laden with anecdotal evidence and lacking any robust argument.

A number of candidates simply listed examples of good habits and bad habits, which meant that they did not score highly for Content. Such responses needed to also include an argument as to whether adopting those habits from a young age would bring any benefits, in order to address the requirements of the question. Hence, candidates should be urged to read questions with care and ensure answers relate to the specifics required rather than the general topic area.

Question 2

了解一个国家要先从饮食开始。请谈谈你的看法。

Most candidates were able to demonstrate good understanding around the cultural value of cuisine and how it represented a region or country. Strong responses showed geographical awareness regarding food, custom and tradition. Such responses laid out examples and argued that understanding its importance was paramount to understanding its people. While most answers were China-focussed, others highlighted similar phenomenon elsewhere. This also worked well. Weaker responses included those that attempted to lead an argument regarding fast food and how it had negatively impacted on some cultures, which did not effectively address the task as laid out in the question.

Question 3

有创意性的职业将永远不会被人工智能所代替。请讨论。

This was another popular and very well-answered question. The majority of candidates were knowledgeable about the subject matter and their enthusiasm for the task seemed to come across on paper.

The best responses delivered a passionate argument about the subject and how certain creative roles could never feasibly be undermined by AI, regardless of the fact AI continues to gather momentum across society. The top scorers provided potent examples to back up the profound reasoning, e.g. they looked at creative roles, such as artists and composers, and explained how the market for such talent remains as strong as ever as society relies on them for its cultural output. Though there were fewer weak responses, typical answers here tended to merely list certain roles that, they believed, could not be replaced by AI without offering much substance for that view.

Question 4

经济全球化增强了世界各国对彼此的依赖。你怎么看？

There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

Question 5

人们为了追求时尚而频繁地购买服装，这对环境有极大的危害。请讨论。

There was a modest take up for this question, although those that did so tended to score well. Candidates showed sound knowledge of the topic, with strong candidates able to approach the question with a focused and balanced argument. Such responses tended to posit the notion that it was illogical to pursue the fashions of the day if you were committed to protecting the environment. This included examples of waste and harmful by-products associated with the production of items, as well as views around inadequate measures to recycle unwanted materials. Other candidates were equally forceful when arguing to the

contrary and highlighting how fashion and sustainability don't need to be mutually exclusive. Weaker responses needed to address the apparent correlation between the demand for fashion and the environmental.

CHINESE

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Paper 9715/32
Essay
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Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- read the question carefully to ensure they have a clear understanding of the task before they begin writing. This will enable candidates to stay on track.
- structure the essay to ensure it is focussed, follows a logical argument and includes apt examples
- demonstrate knowledge of advanced vocabulary relating to the topic, show they can use idioms appropriately and write grammatically accurate Chinese
- write a response that is clearly relevant and relates to the specific question as set out in the paper
- leave time to proofread work; planning in time to check work through can greatly reduce the number of mistakes in both characters and grammar.

General comments

Performance on this paper was very high. Candidates seemed well-prepared and were able to demonstrate their subject-knowledge well. The best candidates were those that could showcase their knowledge through direct, focussed answers, using appropriate vocabulary and backed by logical argument reinforced with suitable examples. Suitable here means those that genuinely reflect the position and have impact on the argument. These students clearly understood the task in front of them and showed diligence when it came to matters such as proofreading.

The next layer of candidates were those who, despite showing subject knowledge, strayed away from the exam question and/or needed to ensure they completed all of what was required of them. The lowest scoring candidates were those who needed greater knowledge of the topic area, and particularly a greater breadth of topic-specific vocabulary. Some weaker responses needed to present more robust arguments or provide suitable detail and examples to score more highly.

It was noticeable again this year that where candidates had gaps in their vocabulary, they frequently resorted to using a hybrid of Chinese characters with pinyin or even English. In such situations, candidates should be encouraged to modify what they want to say and use alternative vocabulary which they are confident in using and that they know how to write correctly in Chinese.

Improvements could be made by addressing the below areas:

- Understanding the requirements of the task: candidates can set off in the wrong direction because they have not taken the time to assimilate the task's requirements. Taking time before they start writing often leads to a more focussed essay.
- Presentation of arguments: this requires the ability to focus on the issues at stake and form a cogent argument, namely, an introduction, presentation of both sides of the argument, then a conclusion. Answers should be forceful in argument and contain fitting examples and vocabulary that shows depth. When properly assembled, such responses tend to flow, have no ambiguity and lead the examiner through the argument in a persuasive manner.
- Attention to detail: work is sometimes submitted which contains careless errors that would have been picked up with more proofreading. Time set aside for checks on spelling and punctuation should be factored into each response.

Question 1

我们每天与手机朝夕相处。但是有人说，没有了手机，我们的生活会更充实。请讨论。

This was the most popular topic amongst candidates this year. Most candidates were able to display their excellent knowledge on the role that mobile phones play in our lives. Strong candidates provided detailed information on how people could improve their daily lives by embracing nature; discovering and developing more hobbies and spending quality time with family and friends after discarding their mobile phones which, they argued, was a source of addiction. Some candidates offered bold, or controversial viewpoints that mobile phones helped us achieve a more enriching and fulfilling life. These statements were well-argued and supported, earning high marks as a result.

Essays which were lower scoring for content often adopted an approach of simply listing the advantages and disadvantages of mobile phones, rather than offering any argument with substance. Hence, candidates should be urged to read the questions with care and ensure answers relate to the specific question rather than the general topic area.

Question 2

现代人饮食过度。你怎么看？

Fewer candidates chose this topic. The majority who did showed good knowledge of the issue regarding excessive food consumption. Stronger candidates were able to analyse and explain the reasons why such a phenomenon exists, for example, the improvement of living standards complete with food and choice abundance; or the fast pace of living leading to young people overly compensating for the stress they feel; people's curiosity stimulated by media influences through entertainment programmes such as *Man v Food*. Most candidates were able to demonstrate understanding of the impact of excessive food consumption on physical health as well as psychological wellbeing. Weaker responses tended to be vague, nonspecific and diverted onto discussions about the importance of healthy living and how best to balance nutrition. Such answers meant they did not score highly for content.

Question 3

有一技之长就能走遍天下。请谈谈你的看法。

This was a popular and well-answered question. The majority of candidates agreed that possessing a unique skill and talent is the foundation for being successful in the job market. The best responses showed careful analysis of the statement and strong argument on how a diverse skill-set can assist people to go further in this ever-changing society; these responses also provided potent examples to highlight their point, for example, looking at certain declining industries, geographical restrictions and new policy implementations.
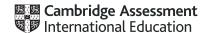
Question 4

请讨论贫富差距对社会稳定的影响。

Fewer candidates chose to answer this question. However, most answers contained a cogent argument, together with excellent examples: some historical events, and figures, were put forward to show that the wealth gap is dangerous and undermines the stability of society. Some candidates argued the opposite: that marginal disparity between rich and poor could be the source of motivation and that people from a humble background can aspire to be successful. Overall, this was a well-handled task.

Question 5

买二手物品既省钱又环保。你怎么看？

There were also a good number of candidates opting for this question. Most candidates showed sound knowledge of the topic of second-hand goods. Strong candidates were able to approach the question with a focused and balanced argument – that buying and selling second-hand goods is not only proven to be economical but also helps to preserve the environment. Such candidates provided rich reasoning and apt examples. Some candidates were able to elucidate a clear point of view but their response needed more evidence, or gave too much focus on how best to choose second-hand goods in order to prevent a potential financial loss. Weaker responses were sometimes one-sided, focussing on financial benefits and needed to also address the environmental impact to score more highly.

CHINESE

| Paper 9715/33 |
| Essay |

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- read the question carefully to ensure they have a clear understanding of the task before they begin writing. This will enable candidates to stay on track.
- structure the essay to ensure it is focussed, follows a logical argument and includes apt examples
- demonstrate knowledge of advanced vocabulary relating to the topic, show they can use idioms appropriately and write grammatically accurate Chinese
- write a response that is clearly relevant and relates to the specific question as set out in the paper
- leave time to proofread work; planning in time to check work through can greatly reduce the number of mistakes in both characters and grammar.

General comments

It was evident that candidates were well-prepared for this paper and this was reflected in the good overall performance this year. Candidates who excelled were those equipped with the knowledge and the ability to transfer it to paper in an examination environment. The best responses were those that set out logical arguments in a balanced manner, with rich vocabulary and meaningful examples to back up their viewpoint. Such responses tended to flow and avoided any ambiguity. Weaker responses were characterised by digression from the task and the inclusion of superfluous discussions. Some also relied upon more general discussion or on personal experience. In many cases, such responses also needed to demonstrate greater subject knowledge in order to score more highly.

Improvements could be made by addressing the below areas:

- Understanding the requirements of the task: candidates can set off in the wrong direction because they have not taken the time to assimilate the task's requirements. Taking time before they start writing often leads to a more focussed essay.
- Presentation of arguments: this requires the ability to focus on the issues at stake and form a cogent argument, namely, an introduction, presentation of both sides of the argument, then a conclusion. Answers should be forceful in argument and contain fitting examples and vocabulary that shows depth. When properly assembled, such responses tend to flow, have no ambiguity and lead the examiner through the argument in a persuasive manner.
- Attention to detail: work is sometimes submitted which contains careless errors that would have been picked up with more proofreading. Time set aside for checks on spelling and punctuation should be factored into each response.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

你怎样理解"好习惯造就好人生"？

The majority of candidates who chose to answer this question were able to correlate good habits with success in life. The best responses were those that went above the link between the simple cultivation of good habits and fulfilment. These answers delved into the inner drive that propels people through life and the necessary self-discipline it entails to succeed in life. Such answers included apt examples to argue their case. The slightly weaker responses were those that merely listed examples of good and bad habits and tentatively prodded around the question. Such answers needed to take a firmer stance one way or the other in order to meet the objective. A few candidates decided to turn the question on its head and question how good habits and/or a good life should be defined. Whilst this line of philosophical enquiry was interesting to read, such answers tended to stray too far from the task to score highly for content.

Question 2

饮食是架在不同文化之间的桥梁。你怎么看？

This was a popular question which seemed to elicit a wide range of responses. Some candidates demonstrated an extremely high level of knowledge and were able to provide in-depth detail about certain cultures, their cuisine and any significant connections between the two. The strongest responses were those that imparted the facts and figures with elegance; in some cases, this type of narrative flowed like a quality travel guidebook. The weaker responses were those that tended to focus on a very narrow subject, e.g. junk food, and how it had negatively impacted on some parts of society, such as in the US.

Question 3

有人说，工作能使你远离无聊与贫穷。请讨论。

This was the most popular question this year. The majority of candidates were able to outline their understanding of the two strands: the financial rewards that working brings and the fulfilment value. There was a wide range of responses, many written with enthusiasm and passion. The best answers were those that quickly established the interplay between employment and the poverty trap and then spent time elaborating on how work not just alleviates boredom but bring about a sense of self-realisation. Weaker responses were those that got side-tracked by discussions about the quality of work and lifestyle, e.g. how a work-related disputes negatively impact on a person.

Question 4

年轻人只有在大城市才能找到出路。请谈谈你的看法。

This was another popular question that was, on the whole, well-handled by candidates. The overall views were generally spilt with some believing the frontier cities provide the necessary platform for young people to kick start their lives and thrive. Other candidates argued vociferously that operating in a smaller pool can bring out the best in people, who would otherwise be downtrodden in the wider environment. Both positions were eloquently argued and supported by good examples. This was particularly pleasing for examiners.

Question 5

环境问题的解决离不开科技创新。你怎么看？

Few candidates opted for this topic. Strong candidates were able to provide detailed examples of instances where technology positively impacted on environmental concerns, e.g. the move towards paperless communications and the switch to renewable energy. This type of evidence put the candidates in a good position to score highly, especially for those that had the vocabulary to handle the subject matter. The weaker responses were those that merely listed the things we should do to protect the environment rather than focus on the specifics set by the task.

CHINESE

Key messages

* Candidates should read the rubric carefully to understand the format and structure of the paper. Only three questions should be answered, and these must all be on a different set text and must come from both *Section 1* and *Section 2*. Candidates should write the question number in the left margin of the answer booklet.

* In *Section 1* part (a), all subsections must be answered. When candidates answer **Questions 1**, **2** or **3 part (a)** in *Section 1*, they must answer both **(i)** and **(ii)**. A number of candidates this year could not be fully rewarded as they only answered subsections **(i)** or **(ii)**.

* **Part (a)** of each question in *Section 1* 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 consider how the issues raised in the selected passage reflect the poem/book as a whole. **Part (b)** of each question in *Section 1* should be answered with reference to the whole text.

* 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 in *Section 1* part (b) and *Section 2* 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 three questions in this examination, and so time management is important.

* Handwriting must be legible.

General comments

A good level of performance was seen this year, and in general, candidates seemed well-prepared. This year, it was evident that not all candidates were familiar with the requirements of the examination, and there were several examples of candidates answering the wrong number of questions or answering two questions on the same book. It is important that candidates are acquainted with the particular instructions for this paper in advance; details are given in both English and Chinese on the front page of the question paper and remain unchanged. Candidates should answer three questions in total (choosing either **(a)** or **(b)** in each case). They should answer one question from *Section 1*, one from *Section 2* and the third question from either *Section 1* or *2*. Each answer must be on a different text. Those who answered three questions from the same section or who answered both options on the same text were credited with the two highest marks only.

Most candidates showed detailed understanding of the Chinese texts and were knowledgeable about the characters and themes as well as the content. The strongest candidates were also able to demonstrate knowledge of literary techniques when responding to the questions. In a small number of cases evidence of unfamiliarity with the works showed up through misunderstandings, such as thinking that the Dayanhe is a river or not knowing the relationship between Niu Ben and Ma Rong, etc. Candidates are advised to choose questions based on the works they have read and studied to avoid major mistakes in answering questions.

Candidates not only discussed the plot of the story, but some were also able to show awareness of the social, political and historical context in China at the time. Familiarity with the social background of the play or poem was often present in those responses showing understanding of the underlying themes.

Most candidates were aware that the focus of responses should be firmly on the text itself and should analyse the plot or characters with illustration. A few responses became distracted by giving general information about the author's life or even relating elements of the texts to their own personal experiences, which is not necessary. Several essays would have benefited from a judicious use of well-chosen brief quotations from the texts to illustrate the points they were making. Candidates should avoid summarising or repeating the story but rather choose a short quote to illustrate the point, then go on to explain why the quotation or reference supports the argument / discussion running through the essay.

Most candidates were able to answer questions in an academic essay style with a clear essay structure, including a short introduction, the main body of the argument and a conclusion, using clear paragraphs. Although candidates are not assessed on their linguistic accuracy in this paper, candidates need to communicate clearly and effectively.

The most successful responses were those that showed evidence of pre-essay planning and good time management. Each of the three essays is marked out of 25, so candidates need to ensure they give themselves enough time to answer all three equally well.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

艾青诗选 (Selected poems by Ai Qing)

(a)   Most candidates could accurately identify the details used in Ai Qing's work, and the feelings that Dayanhe held towards him. Higher scoring responses also often included analysis of the literary techniques and their effects. Candidates should be reminded that only an extract of the poem is printed on the question paper, but the expectation is that they should construct their answers to show knowledge of the *whole* poem and not just the extract. Some weaker responses only commented on the selected part of the poem which limited the depth of their essay and led to very brief answers. Other responses showed that candidates had mistaken Dayanhe for a river which suggested unfamiliarity with the poem.

(b)   There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

Question 2

夏衍： 《上海屋檐下》 ('Shanghai wuyan xia' by Xia Yan)

(a)   Not many candidates chose to answer this question. Stronger responses managed to combine the identities, personalities and relationship between the characters to give a detailed analysis of the reactions and emotions they experienced when faced with their unexpected reunion. Some candidates attempted to analyse Lin Zhicheng's complex psychology and those who included a psychological analysis of Yang Caiyu often produced something incomplete. Such responses, for example, usually only discussed her guilt, and needed to also mention her new expectations for Kuang Fu or her mood on having difficulty choosing between two men for a more complete answer. Weaker answers tended to be largely descriptive and needed a sharper focus on the requirements of the question.

(b)   This question was not often chosen by candidates. Stronger candidates were able to conduct a detailed analysis of Shi Xiaobo's personality, psychological state and life experiences. Some also successfully analysed the character together with the social conditions in which she lived, relating her experience to the status of women in society at that time and interpreting the themes of the play. Weaker answers sometimes needed greater accuracy in the details provided, and a clearer understanding of the character.

Question 3

王安忆： 《本次列车终点》 ('Benci lieche zhongdian' by Wang Anyi)

(a)   This was a popular question. Most candidates understood why Chen Xin wanted to go back to Shanghai and could list the main reasons. Regarding the reasons for the change in Chen Xin's mood, stronger candidates were able to interpret Chen Xin's thoughts and ideas based on Chen Xin's experience and the social situation at that time, providing a clear analysis with detailed illustrations and convincing reasons. Weaker candidates often found it hard to provide an explanation for Chen Xin's changed mood.

(b)   Most candidates could describe Chen Xin's experience and the ideological and psychological changes he went through after returning to Shanghai; from this they often came to the conclusion that Shanghai was not Chen Xin's final destination. Strong candidates were able to put forward their own views with supporting evidence. Weaker candidates relied solely on expressing Chen Xin's thoughts by using the original text of the novel without expressing their own opinions.

Section 2

Question 4

张抗抗：《残忍》 ('Canren' by Zhang Kangkang)

(a)   The best responses to this question included a selection of suitable examples from the book which were used to conduct a comprehensive analysis and draw convincing conclusions. Such responses not only analysed the changes in Ma Rong's feelings and views towards Niu Ben, but also analysed the social reasons behind it, expressing a sound understanding of the author's intentions. Weaker answers tended to only base their analysis on Ma Rong's performance 20 years later, which does not give a full picture of their relationship. It was evident that some candidates were not familiar with the novel and did not understand the relationship between Ma Rong and Niue Ben, thinking that they were lovers or siblings. Candidates are advised to choose questions based on the works they have read and studied.

(b)   Some strong candidates wrote focused and well-structured essays with in-depth analysis. They analysed the injuries suffered by Yang Yang from the attitude shown towards her and the actions of Fu Zhenglian, the regiment headquarter and Niu Ben and Ma Rong; they also pointed out the social reasons that caused Yang Yang's tragedy and expressed how this reflected the social phenomenon of the special era. Weaker responses were often incomplete.

Question 5

韩少功： 《归去来》 ('Gui qu lai' by Han Shao Gong)

(a)   Stronger candidates were able to analyse the meaning of the title based on Huang Zhixian's possible educated youth experience, his experience in the village, the dislocation of his identity and self-reconstruction. Most candidates provided evidence for their arguments and also discussed the author's intent and the work's root-seeking theme. Some answers were well-focused although would have benefited from a more convincing conclusion. Weaker responses often spent too much time describing the storyline and needed to construct a more well-illustrated argument and conclusion.

(b)   Most candidates could point out that the villagers regarded Huang Zhixian as Ma Yanjing. Stronger candidates included suitable evidence such as the villagers' words, actions, and attitudes, to analyse Ma Yanjing's previous actions and experiences as well as his relationship with the villagers when he lived in the village, using this to explain the villagers' attitude towards Huang Zhixian. Weaker responses needed to provide more convincing rationale to support their views, with many low-scoring responses only briefly narrating some of the storyline.

Question 6

萧红：《手》 ('Shou' by Xiao Hong)

(a) This was a popular question, and most candidates showed a good understanding of the text. Some strong candidates produced impressive answers with well-structured and in-depth analysis of the character Wang Yaming. The best answers also demonstrated a sound understanding of author's intentions and of the underlying themes. Weaker answers were often characterised by a simple summary of the character, listing a few positive and negative traits. Some showed a somewhat simplistic or biased view, overemphasizing Wang Yaming lack of hygiene.

(b) Most candidates answered this question well. Strong candidates were able to conduct a well-focused and thorough analytical discussion. They concentrated on Wang Yaming's hands, discussing their role as a clue and symbolic meaning using rich examples to illustrate their points. They also compared Wang Yaming's hand with that of the headmistress and pointed out the theme of the work. Some weaker answers unfortunately missed the focus entirely while others only touched upon the theme superficially.

CHINESE

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Paper 9715/42
Texts
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Key messages

*   Candidates should read the rubric carefully in order to understand the format and structure of the paper. Only three questions should be answered, and these must all be on a different set text and must come from both *Section 1* and *Section 2*. Candidates should write the question number in the left margin of the answer booklet.

*   In *Section 1* part **(a)**, all subsections must be answered. When candidates answer **Questions 1**, **2** or **3 part (a)** in *Section 1*, they must answer both **(i)** and **(ii)**. A number of candidates this year could not be fully rewarded as they only answered subsections **(i)** or **(ii)**.

*   **Part (a)** of each question in *Section 1* 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 consider how the issues raised in the selected passage reflect the poem/book as a whole. **Part (b)** of each question in *Section 1* should be answered with reference to the whole text.

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*   Candidates need to answer three questions in this examination, and so time management is important.

*   Handwriting must be legible.

General comments

A high level of performance was seen this year, and candidates seemed well-prepared. This year, it was evident that not all candidates were familiar with the requirements of the examination, and there were several examples of candidates answering the wrong number of questions or answering two questions on the same book. It is important that candidates are acquainted with the particular instructions for this paper in advance; details are given in both English and Chinese on the front page of the question paper and remain unchanged. Candidates should answer three questions in total (choosing either **(a)** or **(b)** in each case). They should answer one question from *Section 1*, one from *Section 2* and the third question from either *Section 1* or *2*. Each answer must be on a different text. Those who answered three questions from the same section or who answered both options on the same text were credited with the two highest marks only.

Most candidates showed detailed understanding of the Chinese texts, and many were also able to demonstrate knowledge of literary techniques when responding to the questions.

Most candidates showed a thorough understanding of the characters and content of the texts. Candidates not only discussed the plot of the story, but some were also able to show awareness of the social, political and historical context in China at the time. Familiarity with the social background of the play or poem was often present in those responses showing understanding of the underlying themes. In a few cases

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understanding of the context was less secure, especially when analysing poetry, examples of which included misunderstanding Ai Qing's nanny Dayanhe to be a real river. Sometimes more contextual understanding was needed to enable full understanding and analysis, for example some candidates were not sure of the situation at the time Ai Qing's poems were written, which resulted in a misunderstanding of the theme. When candidates study the works, it is important and helpful to make sure they understand and consider the backgrounds of these works. Candidates are also advised to choose questions based on the works they have read and studied to avoid major mistakes in answering questions.

Most candidates were aware that the focus of responses should be firmly on the text itself and should analyse the plot or characters with illustration. A few responses became distracted by giving general information about the author's life or even relating elements of the texts to their own personal experiences, which is not necessary. Several essays would have benefited from a judicious use of well-chosen brief quotations from the texts to illustrate the points they were making. Candidates should avoid summarising or repeating the story but rather choose a short quote to illustrate the point, then go on to explain why the quotation or reference supports the argument / discussion running through the essay.

Most candidates were able to answer questions in an academic essay style with a clear essay structure, including a short introduction, the main body of the argument and a conclusion, using clear paragraphs. Although candidates are not assessed on their linguistic accuracy in this paper, candidates need to communicate clearly and effectively.

The most successful responses were those that showed evidence of pre-essay planning and good time management. Each of the three essays is marked out of 25, so candidates need to ensure they give themselves enough time to answer all three equally well.

Comments on specific questions
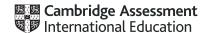
Section 1

Question 1

艾青诗选 (Selected poems by Ai Qing)

(a) This question was not chosen by many candidates, but those who did showed a good focus and understanding of the poem 《虎斑贝》 and were able to discuss and evaluate the given extract. Stronger candidates were able to explain the social/historical background clearly and point out that the image expressed the poet's reflection on the destiny of the individual (within a social context where resilience prevails over the hardships of personal lives.) Weaker responses tended to describe the appearance of the tabby shellfish and relied heavily on quotations from the poem.

(b) To answer this question, it is very important to choose the right poems. The key words in the question are 'natural phenomenon' and 'philosophy of life'. Strong candidates were able to analyse two self-chosen poems by the author with convincing examples, discussing the philosophy of life expressed in the poems and the inspiration to people. Lower scoring responses often included at least one poem that did not contain a 'natural phenomenon' or the main analysis was not focused on natural things. For example 《手推车》, which is clearly a man-made object, or 《大堰河——我的保姆》, which is about Ai Qing's nanny, not a real river.

Question 2

夏衍： 《上海屋檐下》 ('Shanghai wuyan xia' by Xia Yan)

(a) Most candidates performed well and the strongest responses to this question included detailed analysis of the causes of the tragedy covering both the background of the character and the social background at the time. Many candidates came to the clear conclusion that Huang Jiamei lied to his dad about his family having a good life in Shanghai, and many were able to use detailed illustrations to support their answers. Their responses also concluded that Huang Jiamei's current living conditions were due to his personality, health and background. Stronger responses went beyond the immediate material to discuss the deep social and personal problems which contributed to his current living conditions. Some weaker responses were too simplified in their approach, merely summarising the story or becoming repetitive.

(b)   Most candidates displayed a sound knowledge of the text and answers were mainly relevant. The best responses showed a good understanding of the lives of the five families described by the author and how by describing fragments of their lives he alluded to the turbulent years and social conditions at that time. Candidates managed to explore and elaborate on several relevant topics e.g., the social status of women, the embarrassing treatment of intellectuals, the experience and future of revolutionaries, and the hope for a bright future. Some weaker answers simply described each of the character's life struggles without relating them to the social circumstances.

Question 3

王安忆： 《本次列车终点》 ('Benci lieche zhongdian' by Wang Anyi)

(a)   Most candidates' responses showed a good understanding of the characters and the storyline. They could explain the difficulties Chen Xin had in finding a partner, identifying specific reasons, including money/house difficulties, age, the change in lifestyle, longing for true love and so on. Most candidates also understood that the conversation given in the printed extract was not a joke and explained this using the ambitions and attitudes of Chen Xin's mother and sisters-in-law. Stronger responses included a comprehensive analysis of the conversation, showing it to be a dispute between Chen Xin's sister-in-law and the mother over economic considerations and housing issues. Some responses which concluded that the mum and the sister-in-law were making a joke about his marriage or which thought the purpose of the conversation was to encourage him to marry, showed a weaker understanding of the conversation in context.

(b)   This was a very popular question. Most candidates successfully explained the meaning of 《本次列车终点》 by giving details of how Chen Xin wanted to come back to Shanghai, thinking it was his final destination only to find that he was in a new dilemma and a new stage of his life. Stronger candidates were able to organise their arguments, rather than just retelling the story. They could also point out the different possible implications of the 'destination' and demonstrated their sound understanding of the social background at the time and the author's intentions.

Section 2

Question 4

张抗抗： 《残忍》 ('Canren' by Zhang Kangkang)

(a)   Most candidates were able to summarise the key points of the relationships between Niu Ben and Ma Rong, and many also developed an insightful discussion of both characters and the similarities and differences in their 'cruelty'. Stronger responses included a more in-depth analysis of the characters' personalities and the psychological reasons and subtext behind their words. Some were also able to link the characters' behaviour to the social and historical context at the time.

(b)   This was another popular question. Most candidates discussed and evaluated relevant material and come to the clear conclusion that killing Fu was an act of fighting violence with violence, rather than justice. Many good answers provided a full and detailed analysis, concentrating on different aspects of the characters such as their personalities, actions and attitude to life. The best responses made strong and solid arguments using the themes of the text and independent judgements regarding the social background (i.e., the incompleteness of the law during the Cultural Revolution, the 'cruelty' of human nature, etc.) A number of candidates concluded the killing was justified with a fairly simple, black and white approach.

Question 5

韩少功： 《归去来》 ('Gui qu lai' by Han Shao Gong)

(a)   Many candidates understood that more than just a summary of the story was needed to answer this question fully. Stronger candidates demonstrated thorough preparation and sound knowledge of literary techniques. Some detailed responses summarised the psychological changes that Huang ZhiXian goes through and discussed that his experience as an educated youth made him feel particularly familiar with the village, and that the hidden memories were linked to dissatisfaction with reality which awakened his self-identity. Weaker responses were characterised by material
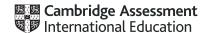
which needed more structure and focus and tended to drift into narration of the plot. Such responses needed to show understanding of the author's intentions to score more highly.

(b)   The majority of candidates were able to clearly demonstrate that there was a good relationship between Ma Yanjing and the village residents, illustrating this with many relevant examples. Stronger candidates could analyse the identities and feelings of both parties in detail, and the best responses could also make connections with the history of the educated youth era and the theme of root-seeking. Some weaker answers tended to consist of a long list of the encounters between Ma Yanjing and the villagers and needed to also include a commentary or explanation as to their relevance.

Question 6

萧红：《手》 ('Shou' by Xiao Hong)

(a)   This question was frequently selected by candidates. Most candidates were able to identify and extract some examples of the contrasts used in the story, with the contrast of Wang Yaming's hands and the headteacher's being the most commonly mentioned example. The strongest responses pointed out the role of contrast in the work and analysed the nature of the characters. They also included analysis of the social problems embodied in the use of contrast, such as class differences, stereotypes, and the intellectual class being too arrogant etc. Weaker responses either included examples which were not contrastive or needed to explain the purpose of such contrasts.

(b)   This was also a popular question. Most candidates showed a thorough understanding of the text and many good answers were seen. Some candidates discussed the reasons why Wang Yaming left her school from multiple perspectives, such as the bullying and discrimination from everyone in school and especially from the headmistress, personal study and health reasons and the financial difficulties of the family. Strong candidates understood the author's intentions and were able to conduct in-depth analysis according to the social situation and social problems of the time. Some weaker responses focussed too heavily on Wang Yaming's personal problems, criticising her poor grades, lack of hygiene, and for not understanding the concept of property rights, believing that these were the main reasons for her to leave the school; this showed that they had not fully understood the theme of the work.

CHINESE

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Paper 9715/43
Texts
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Key messages

- Candidates should read the rubric carefully in order to understand the format and structure of the paper. Only three questions should be answered, and these must all be on a different set text and must come from both **Section 1** and **Section 2**. Candidates should write the question number in the left margin of the answer booklet.

- In **Section 1 part (a)**, all subsections must be answered. When candidates answer **Questions 1**, **2** or **3 part (a)** in **Section 1**, they must answer both **(i)** and **(ii)**. A number of candidates this year could not be fully rewarded as they only answered subsections **(i)** or **(ii)**.

- **Part (a)** of each question in **Section 1** 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 consider how the issues raised in the selected passage reflect the poem / book as a whole. **Part (b)** of each question in **Section 1** should be answered with reference to the whole text.

- 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 in **Section 1 part (b)** and **Section 2** 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 three questions in this examination, and so time management is important.

- Handwriting must be legible.

General comments

A good level of performance was seen this year, with evidence of thorough preparation.

This year, it was evident that not all candidates were familiar with the requirements of the examination, and there were several examples of candidates answering the wrong number of questions or answering two questions on the same book. It is important that candidates are acquainted with the particular instructions for this paper in advance; details are given in both English and Chinese on the front page of the question paper and remain unchanged. Candidates should answer three questions in total (choosing either **(a)** or **(b)** in each case). They should answer one question from **Section 1**, one from **Section 2** and the third question from either **Section 1** or **2**. Each answer must be on a different text. Those who answered three questions from the same section or who answered both options on the same text were credited with the two highest marks only.

Most candidates showed detailed understanding of the Chinese texts and were knowledgeable about the characters and themes as well as the content. The strongest candidates were also able to demonstrate knowledge of literary techniques when responding to the questions. In a small number of cases evidence of unfamiliarity with the works showed up through misunderstandings, such as thinking that the Dayanhe is a river or not knowing the relationship between Niu Ben and Ma Rong, etc. Candidates are advised to choose questions based on the works they have read and studied to avoid major mistakes in answering questions.

Candidates not only discussed the plot of the story, but some were also able to show awareness of the social, political and historical context in China at the time. Familiarity with the social background of the play or poem was often present in those responses showing understanding of the underlying themes.

Most candidates were aware that the focus of responses should be firmly on the text itself and should analyse the plot or characters with illustration. A few responses became distracted by giving general information about the author's life or even relating elements of the texts to their own personal experiences, which is not necessary. Several essays would have benefited from a judicious use of well-chosen brief quotations from the texts to illustrate the points they were making. Candidates should avoid summarising or repeating the story but rather choose a short quote to illustrate the point, then go on to explain why the quotation or reference supports the argument / discussion running through the essay.

Most candidates were able to answer questions in an academic essay style with a clear essay structure, including a short introduction, the main body of the argument and a conclusion, using clear paragraphs. Although candidates are not assessed on their linguistic accuracy in this paper, candidates need to communicate clearly and effectively.

The most successful responses were those that showed evidence of pre-essay planning and good time management. Each of the three essays is marked out of 25, so candidates need to ensure they give themselves enough time to answer all three equally well.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

艾青诗选 (Selected poems by Ai Qing)

(a)   Most candidates were able to analyse the role of parallelism in this poem, and discussed the effect it had, such as increasing lyricism and rhythm and emphasising Ai Qing's love for Dayanhe. Many could also analyse the image of Dayanhe as expressed throughout the whole poem, pointing out that she is industrious, miserable, patient, selfless, and full of love. The highest scoring responses further analysed the theme of the work in the context of the social background, discussing the author's praise and sympathy for Dayanhe, and the resentment towards the old society that oppressed her. In some cases answers were too brief, and others mistook Dayanhe for a real river which reflects their unfamiliarity with the poem.

(b)   There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

Question 2

夏衍： 《上海屋檐下》 ('Shanghai wuyan xia' by Xia Yan)

(a)   Most candidates were familiar with the plot and could analyse the identity and characteristics of the families. The focus of **part (i)** was to analyse the advantages of staging the play by using a 'cross-section' of the house showing all the families at once. Stronger candidates were able to identify that it helps to show the overall situation of the five families and also helps to compare the differences of each family so that the contradictions brought out by the drama are more concentrated; they also discussed that it helps to better express the themes, etc. Weaker responses included insufficient analysis of the first question (**2(a)(i)**).

(b)   Well-prepared candidates who were familiar with the plot were able to identify specific examples in the play to discuss the theme of the work and to analyse the identity and living conditions of a family and as well as the social reality of China in 1930s. Some candidates managed to elaborate on a number of interesting topics, e.g. the social status of women, the experience and future of revolutionaries, and the hope for a bright future. Some weaker answers simply described one family's life struggles and needed to relate this to the social circumstances.

Question 3

王安忆： 《本次列车终点》 ('Benci lieche zhongdian' by Wang Anyi)

(a) This was the most popular question. Most candidates could use the extract to answer the question of why the brother and sister-in-law were panicking, and many could also analyse the contradiction between Chen Xin, his elder brother and younger brother. Stronger responses analysed each individual's attitude and state of mind in more detail and demonstrated an understanding of the author's intent. Some responses only analysed the problems between Chen Xin and his older brother, but did not mention his younger brother and work issues, which revealed gaps in their understanding of the work.

(b) Answers to this question were mainly relevant and solid. Most candidates composed their essays with a clear structure and were able to organise materials to support their opinions. They used appropriate examples to analyse the mother's personality, describing her traits as hard-working, loving and fair, and were also able to discuss her guilt towards Chen Xin and her not wanting to treat every child differently. Higher scoring essays were able to combine the historical situation of the educated youth and the social background at the time and point out that this movement not only affected every educated youth, but also their families.

Section 2

Question 4

张抗抗《残忍》 **('Canren'by Zhang Kangkang)**

(a) This was a popular question. Most candidates could usually come to a clear conclusion and were able to discuss the issue, identifying the two viewpoints, namely: (1) Fu Zhenglian's actions, i.e. that he was a man who had done all kinds of evil and should be punished, or (2). the way Niu Ben treated Fu Zhenglian, i.e. killing Fu is a fighting violence with violence, it is cruel and should not be done. The best responses also analysed the reasons for this phenomenon according to the social background, i.e. the incompleteness of the law during the Cultural Revolution, the 'cruelty' of human nature, etc. Weaker responses often needed a more solid and convincing argument and concentrated too much on 'stories'.

(b) Candidates generally performed well in this question. Stronger responses analysed Ma Rong's performance and different mentalities across the two different eras and concluded that he is also dark and cruel. Some also analysed the social problems in the two special eras in Chinese history, recognising the influences from the distortion of human psychology during the Cultural Revolution and the concept of money supremacy, as well as the suspicion and distrust between people during the period of reform and opening up. This reflects their deep understanding of the character, the associated social background and the author's intention. Weaker responses were not full enough and often only analysed Ma Rong during the later period.

Question 5

韩少功： 《归去来》 ('Gui qu lai' by Han Shao Gong)

(a) Some in-depth and high-level responses to this question were seen. Some excellent responses used detailed examples, connecting the history of the educated youth era with the theme of root-seeking, convincingly analysing the symbolism of the dirt road and this dream. Weaker responses concentrated too heavily on the difficulty of Huang Zhixian's identity and self-reconstruction, and the meaning of the dirt road and the dream were rarely mentioned.

(b) This was another popular question. Most candidates could draw a conclusion through the analysis of various plots in the work. Stronger candidates pointed out the key elements in the theme, e.g., the history of the educated youth era, root-seeking, the difficulty of identity and self-reconstruction, and also discussed the special writing style (magical realism). Weaker responses often contained personal speculation but needed more solid evidence from the text to support the conclusion.

Question 6

萧红：《手》('Shou' by Xiao Hong)

(a) This was another popular question. Most candidates demonstrated a solid understanding of the text and many of them answered very well. Candidates frequently included a discussion on the reasons for Wang Yaming's tragedy. Strong candidates understood the author's intentions and were able to conduct in-depth analysis according to the society and social problems of the time. Weak responses tended to rely on re-telling the plot and needed greater focus on the question.

(b) There were too few responses to this question to make a general comment appropriate.

萧红：《手》('Shou' by Xiao Hong)