

2015 NCEA Assessment Report

Chinese Level 3 91533, 91536

Part A: Commentary

Comment on the overall response of candidates to 2015 examinations for all achievement standards covered by this report.

The papers were of high quality and provided opportunities for candidates to draw upon factual information as well as implied meanings of the listening and reading passages to demonstrate their language understanding, cultural knowledge, express opinions, make inferences and draw conclusions.

The listening and reading passages effectively met the proficiency descriptors embedded in The New Zealand Curriculum at Levels 7 and 8, allowing candidates to identify either linguistic or cultural forms at this level or enabling them to respond critically to texts.

The questions and resource materials provided ample opportunities for candidates to analyse how the texts are organised for different purposes and audiences and allowed access to cultural knowledge and meanings as the papers consisted of different text types and topics. Often there are no “model answers” to questions. Instead, candidates were invited to make their own judgements based on the information presented in the texts and justify their own opinions.

It must be clarified yet again that when asked to provide evidence from the text to support or challenge a given statement, candidates must not simply copy or translate directly a section in the passage without providing any inferential responses in their own words.

The duration of the exam was longer than expected. While the pauses allowed candidates time to write answers as they listened to the passages, some candidates were under time pressure. This can be found from some incomplete answers in section (c) of Question Four. Despite the fact that the exam was long, the level of language used in the listening passages was appropriate.

Overall, the listening paper reflected the requirements of Curriculum Level 8 in that it developed candidates' ability to explore, justify and challenge conflicting viewpoints. Critical thinking skills were encouraged in this paper, including analysing information, making judgements and giving advice. The listening paper also stressed the importance of relating to others as a key competency through topics that challenge gender and cultural stereotypes. The paper promoted social and cultural understandings of New Zealand and Chinese societies.

In reading, Question One allowed a range of responses from candidates asking them to analyse the resource material provided in regards to short term and long term impacts of sporting events. This question provided opportunity for candidates to consider points of views in regards to benefits and some possible negative effects of sporting events, hence allowing varied perspectives embedded in excellence to be presented. The question was clear and asked candidates to justify their answers providing evidence. However, a large number of native speakers did not always fully reach this potential by using the text resources. It is apparent that candidates still need to be reminded of the expectations at this level and to ensure they use resource evidence to support their conclusions or inferences or points of views. They also need to remember to expand on details and consider varied points of views, advantages and disadvantages in their answers if aiming for higher grades. This problem occurred despite the need to refer to texts being explicit in the paper.

The context and content of Question Two allowed access to the cultural and language knowledge expected at this level and allowed insights into cultural practice in regards to ways of speaking, problem solving and conflict resolution. The question provided sufficient opportunities to reach a range of performance levels. Candidates however did not always fully select sufficient details to support the writers' implied meaning for the second part of the question to distinguish Merit and Excellence or expand on their inferences etc. A high number of candidates only considered Lanlan's views as a point of reference and did not consider the effects of Lanlan's actions on her boyfriend or such behaviour in general in society. Again candidates need to demonstrate the ability to link evidence to conclusions, inferences, other points of views or varied views embedded in texts to reach the highest level of achievement.

Question Three was a highly effective question meeting the standard objectives excellently in asking candidates to clarify ideas, information and opinions in the texts. The topic was interesting and reflected an issue of current social interest –the cultural phenomena of “whitening” that made the news in 2015 in regards to Chinese beach goers. The questions requirements allowed differentiation between Achieved, Merit and Excellence. It allowed

candidates to draw conclusions and inferences from the text through evaluating information and justifying their position. Excellence candidates were able to demonstrate thorough understanding through fully selecting details and considering points of view and linking them to cultural or societal knowledge. Many native speakers did not read the Chinese question correctly thus limiting their achievement grade.

Although the exam instructed candidates to refer and use resource material in answers, some candidates inadequately referred to text details, correctly deriving inferences or conclusions without evidence. Candidates in programmes need to be reminded and teachers need to highlight to candidates in order to achieve excellence they need to expand on relevant information and varied perspectives from the texts with supporting detail and show understanding of the implied meanings or conclusions, where relevant, within the texts with supporting details. This requirement of parameters should not have to be highlighted with each question but be expected as part of candidate practice.

In the future exam papers will be set according to the assessment specifications which will be based on the following guidelines. Teachers and candidates in programmes should develop an awareness of these in order to achieve the standards to the best of candidates' abilities.

Listening

- Candidates will be able to complete the whole paper within one hour. There will be approximately 45 minutes of listening time and 15 minutes to complete the writing.
- Topics will continue to raise and challenge social awareness.
- Language used to construct listening passages will be at curriculum level 8, and this may mean that sentence structures might be artificial to enable second language learners to access the passages.
- Questions will be constructed to scaffold candidates' understanding and enable candidates to provide holistic understanding of the overall passage.
- Candidates will continued to be required to express and justify their own ideas and opinions of the scenarios presented in passages.
- Passages and questions will be constructed in a manner that requires candidates to use and identify the linguistic and cultural forms that guide interpretations and enable them to respond critically to texts.
- Words in the texts that are not in the NCEA Level 3 Chinese Appendix for external assessment will be glossed only if they are essential to understanding of the texts and answering of the questions.
- Passages will be of varied text types and for different purposes.
- Passages will contain expressions that will communicate cultural meanings.
- Passages will contain scenarios that requires candidates to analyse how the Chinese culture is organised for different purposes and audiences.

Reading

- Passages will contain scenarios that will invite candidates to make inferences, draw conclusions, express and justify their own opinions, and challenge those of others.
- Passages will be of a suitable length that enable candidates to demonstrate understanding of a variety of extended written and/or visual Chinese texts.
- Words in the texts that are not in the NCEA Level 3 Chinese Appendix for external assessment (not prescribed vocabulary list) will be glossed only if they are essential to understanding of the texts and answering of the questions.
- Candidates at Level 3 may be expected to make informed guesses about unfamiliar words using context and prior knowledge.
- Topics will not be prescribed but will relate to both concrete and abstract matters of social interest that may develop a line of argument.
- All passages will be at the same level of complexity that provide opportunities for achieving at all levels. Complexity may refer to idea development or language construct.

Assessment schedules will reinforce a holistic approach consistent with The New Zealand Curriculum. They will show what is required of candidates to demonstrate understanding and respond critically to spoken and written texts; and also present assessment criteria, grade score evidence statements and possible indications of levels of achievement (A,M,E). that are by no means prescriptive or exhaustive.

Part B: Report on standards

1. Assessment Report for 91533: Demonstrate understanding of a variety of extended spoken Chinese texts

Achieved	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Achieved commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summarised the overall passage without providing specific evidence from the passage to support the argument • made meaning of some of the sentences in the listening passage with largely correct information • understood the gist or some implied meanings of the text without being able to develop explanatory answers and provide sufficient supporting evidence from the passage • attempted most questions or parts of questions • identified basic vocabulary and valid information which demonstrated understanding of the spoken passages • made sense of some information that they heard without making connections of the information from the overall passage • provided comprehensible answers.
Not Achieved	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failed to show efforts or did not attempt most of the questions, even though some implied meanings were identified • showed limited or no understanding of the passages • misread or misinterpreted questions • did not provide sufficient details or information from the text to demonstrate understanding of the basic meaning of the passages • had some lexical information which was logically inconsistent indicating misunderstanding of the gist of the passages • were unable to provide comprehensible responses • provided irrelevant information to texts or questions.
Achieved with Merit	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Achieved with Merit commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided some or most examples from the whole passage to justify their viewpoints, without indicating the implied meanings, conclusions, expanding on the citations using own words • misread parts of the questions, even though implied meanings or conclusions were thoroughly discussed • were able to communicate their clear understanding of the spoken texts unambiguously • demonstrated a sound language and cultural knowledge at curriculum level 8 • provided the required details with some elaboration • made sense and connections of the information that they heard from the overall passage.
Achieved with Excellence	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Achieved with Excellence commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elaborated on the details they heard with reference to the implied meanings or conclusions • demonstrated thorough understanding of the questions and the spoken passages with supporting evidence from the overall passages • showed excellent language and cultural knowledge at curriculum level 8 • showed clarity and consistent quality in their answers with clear and well-formed language • provided responses which showed ability to interpret texts and draw meaningful, sensible and inferential conclusions • were able to read questions carefully and answer in full without including irrelevant information • selected and expanded on, with supporting details, relevant information, ideas and opinions from the texts to show understanding of the implied nuances and meanings.

Standard specific comments	<p>It is note-worthy that over 70 percent of the candidates took notes and answered the exam in Chinese or in combination of English and Chinese. The high percentage of Chinese used in the exam indicates the possibility of a large pool of heritage speakers of Chinese who sat the exam. It is dubious the benefits of native speakers sitting an exam designed for second language learners, thus strongly recommended that a separate achievement standard for heritage speakers be developed.</p> <p>The listening paper was in line with the vision, principles and values of the New Zealand Curriculum. In order to maximise candidates' chances of achieving this standard at a higher level, teaching programmes must also be aligned to the New Zealand Curriculum. The language and cultural knowledge, as well as the application of the key competencies are all considerations for course and assessment design.</p>
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2. Assessment Report for 91536: Demonstrate understanding of a variety of extended written and/or visual Chinese texts

Achieved	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Achieved commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided answers that showed understanding of meanings conveyed in the texts and often provided limited details • answered questions but showed some errors in the answers in regards to some aspects • answered questions but did not fully explain or justify their answers • showed inconsistent understanding or evidence across texts and questions.
Not Achieved	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answered only one or two questions whilst not providing sufficient evidence • lacked sufficient language skills to enable them to make meaning of the texts and respond appropriately to questions • answered in one sentence type responses.
Achieved with Merit	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Achieved with Merit commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrated in-depth and clear understanding of the texts of main ideas • understood different perspectives and viewpoints in the texts and selected relevant evidence • supported consistently their answers with relevant information though not always addressing all parts of the question consistently often through misreading some key words • showed the ability to draw conclusions from information in the texts but did not always fully explore all points of view, consequences or aspects.
Achieved with Excellence	<p>Candidates who were assessed as Achieved with Excellence commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrated thorough through understanding through expanding on relevant information needed for each question • considered varied and different perspectives showing understanding of inferences written in the texts and subtle details • showed understanding of intercultural knowledge and were to evaluate and contrast possible points of views expressed in texts. • made accurate conclusions and cultural inferences based on the texts and fully integrate comprehensive evidence to support them.
Standard specific comments	<p>Within this cohort, there are high numbers of native speakers who are able to meet the standards requirements. Some were limited by not fully taking time to read bilingual questions carefully. Of the candidates who sat 492 or 63% answered in Chinese. However it is likely that this figure is still higher as it is likely that some native or heritage speakers also preferred to answer in English. Many candidates, (native speakers in particular) failed to meet excellence due to not selecting a range of evidence to support their answers or by failing to expand on their answers, or to consider or evaluate different consequences, impacts, points of view and perspectives. This skill set is embedded in the standard's level of achievement and should not have to be explicitly repeated with each question and is a skill that needs to be highlighted to learners in the teaching sector as the registered standards are clear in what is required at each level of achievement at Achieved, Merit and Excellence.</p>

