

CHALLENGE EXAMINATION SPECIFICATIONS

LANGUAGE GRADE 11

COMPONENTS OF THE EXAMINATION

The examination consists of:

- i. an audio component (25% — 30 minutes*)
 - ii. a reading component (25% — 50 minutes*)
 - iii. a writing component (25% — 50 minutes*)
 - iv. an oral component (25%)
- *times are approximate*

Students should be prepared to spend the day at the evaluation centre.

1. Audio Component

This section will contain a number of authentic works in cultural contexts of communication on CD (e.g., newscast, commercials, weather forecast, short segment from a documentary or a show, school announcements, conversation, story etc.)

- Questions will be in Multiple Choice format

2. Reading Component

This section will contain a number of different types of authentic texts (reading for different purposes – e.g., TV Guide, advertisement, note, longer information passage, creative work, letter, newspaper/magazine article).

The texts may be informational, narrative and/or creative (literary).

- Questions will be in Multiple Choice format

Please note: In Mandarin Chinese, students will have a choice of doing the exam in traditional characters or simplified characters. Students will also be expected to read and write pinyin.

3. Writing Component

This section will contain writing tasks of approximately 75 to 200 words (depending on the task and the language being evaluated). Here students will have to show their ability to work with different linguistic and stylistic elements appropriate to expressing meaning at the grade 11 level. (A holistic Multiple Choice language element section may be included.)

Please note: In Mandarin Chinese, students will have a choice of doing the exam in traditional characters or simplified characters. Students will also be expected to read and write pinyin.

4. Oral Component

In this section the student will be expected to:

- a) sustain a 3 to 5 minute conversation in the target language with a partner
- b) respond orally to a number of interview questions.

Information about the conversation:

You will be asked to converse for 3 to 5 minutes with a partner who will be assigned to you on the day of the examination. You and your partner will receive a card that describes a common life situation. You will have a minute to clarify the task if necessary; then you and your partner will have 6 to 8 minutes to prepare. During the preparation time, you should work together to create a framework for your conversation and decide on your ideas. The examiner will mark your conversation using the attached scale.

This activity gives you the opportunity to demonstrate your achievement of the following outcomes:

- express plans, goals and intentions in the short and long term;
- interact effectively and with some spontaneity, in the target language, in familiar situations drawn from real life.

During the examination you will be expected to:

- participate spontaneously in a simulated conversation;
- use your skills and knowledge to develop the conversation;
- interact, responding to cues and supporting your partner.

Your conversation does not have to be dramatic; you can speak normally as you would in any conversation.

Tips for the conversation activity

(Grade 11)

- Use preparation time to brainstorm ideas and possible vocabulary.
- Clarify with your partner what your roles or ideas are before you start.
- Listen to your partner for clues during the conversation.
- If you don't understand what your partner is saying, ask a question or say: "I don't understand" or "Can you repeat that please?" (in the target language).
- Paraphrase when necessary — summarize what your partner has said in your own words to check that you understood.
- If you get stuck, turn your partner's last statement into a question.
- Try to keep the conversation going. The more you both talk, the better your scores are likely to be.
- Work together. Help each other. This examination is about communication.
- Don't hesitate to help (or rescue) your partner. That is part of effective communication.
- You will lose marks if you dominate the conversation and do not give your partner a chance to talk.

RATING SCALES:

You will be evaluated on the basis of the following rating scales:

Grade 11 Oral Rating Scale:

excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• message is clear; includes relevant and appropriate details• interacts spontaneously; language flows easily• expression, intonation help make the meaning and feelings clear• uses a variety of strategies to sustain interaction (e.g., may include supporting/rescuing others)• attempts complex structures and language to make meaning precise• may include errors in tense or structure; these do not reduce the effectiveness of communication
very good	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• message is clear; includes relevant and appropriate details• may be hesitant; uses some strategies to sustain interaction (e.g., may support others)• expression, intonation are appropriate• uses appropriate structures and language to convey meaning;• may include errors in word choice, idiom, tense and structure, but these do not reduce the effectiveness of the communication
satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• message is understandable; includes some detail• sustains some interaction; may be hesitant with frequent short pauses• some appropriate expression, intonation to support meaning• uses basic structures and language• may include errors in word choice, idiom, tense and structure that weaken but do not prevent communication
minimal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• basic message is understandable by teacher but may be extremely difficult for peers; little detail or elaboration• interaction is hesitant with frequent pauses or breaks; these often extend to the point where little or no communication is taking place• may use expression and intonation to support meaning in places• uses simple, basic structures and language; repetitive• errors in word choice, idiom, tense and structure disrupt communication
weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• part of basic message can be understood by teacher; little or no detail or elaboration• may speak infrequently and briefly; little or no communication is taking place (e.g., responses may be unrelated to questions); frequent extended pauses or breaks• repeats a few simple patterns and expressions; may use English words and phrases• errors prevent communication
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• student does not contribute to the conversation or discussion; message is unintelligible, inappropriate, and/or not primarily in the target language

Holistic Scoring Guide for Writing (Grade 11)

<p>excellent</p>	<p><i>The writer displays a good level of competence in handling the language</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minor weaknesses in mechanics do not impede the overall communication • sentences are controlled and varied in structure • there is some subordination • organization is good, though not flawless • vocabulary is reasonably sophisticated, and expression for the most part idiomatic • verb tenses, if applicable, are correctly formed and appropriate to the writer's intentions
<p>very good</p>	<p><i>The writer is on topic, and clearly expresses his or her ideas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the message is clear • organization is defined but conventional • some attempt to use more interesting structures has been made, although expression is simplistic • reasonable control of verb tenses and idiom is demonstrated despite frequent errors in usage and mechanics (especially in agreement, syntax and pronouns)
<p>satisfactory</p>	<p><i>The writer's response is appropriate to the task set but is at times unclear</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paper is simplistic and formulaic, and may stray off topic • structures are bland but the mechanical errors do not impede communication • some control of verb tenses (if applicable) and idiom is demonstrated • vocabulary, although correct, is predictable
<p>minimal</p>	<p><i>The writer does not achieve, in an effective manner, a response appropriate to the task set</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the composition may lack any discernible or sufficient development, resulting in a rambling, disjointed piece of writing • mechanical errors are numerous, and may impede communication • idiomatic expression is either absent or so limited that it does not enhance the writing • vocabulary is generally simplistic
<p>weak</p>	<p><i>Although the writer reveals a serious lack of control over idiom and expression, he/she has made an attempt to respond to the prompt</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the writing may tend to be repetitive and limited to 1 or 2 ideas • sentences may be very simple or the syntax may be weak • frequent errors in syntax, spelling and vocabulary choice impede the flow of ideas, as the writer barely communicates his/her ideas and intentions • English words may be used, revealing effects of direct translation from English to target language
<p>0</p>	<p><i>A paper at this level conveys little or no sense of purpose, development and control</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • too deficient in length to evaluate • errors make the paper unintelligible • no discernible grasp of idiom