

# CHALLENGE EXAMINATION SPECIFICATIONS

## LANGUAGE GRADE 12

### 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 12 level. (A wholistic 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:

- sustain a 5-8 minute discussion in the target language with two other partners

#### **Information about the discussion:**

You will participate in a discussion (5 to 8 minutes) with two partners who will be assigned to you on the day of the examination. Your topic will be given to you on a card. You will have a minute to clarify the task, then you and your partners will have approximately 8 minutes to prepare.

During the preparation time, you should think or talk about your ideas on the topic. Partners may wish to take differing points of view in order to better sustain the discussion. The examiner will mark your discussion using the attached scale.

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

- exchange ideas and thoughts about areas of personal interest;
- give reasons and information to support points of view on various issues.

#### **During the examination you will be expected to:**

- engage in a discussion;
- use your skills and knowledge to develop the discussion by asking each other questions; offering your opinions, reasons, ideas, arguments; interacting with and responding to others' ideas and cues; supporting your partner(s);

## **Tips for the discussion activity**

(Grade 12)

- Use your preparation time to think about your ideas and possible vocabulary you might use. Decide on the point of view you will argue for or speak to. It is a better discussion if differing points of view are adopted by the partners.
- You will be allowed to bring one small index card into the oral examination. You can make notes, in point form, about key ideas or points you want to bring up.
- Work together. Help each other. This examination is about communication. Try to keep the discussion going; respond to your partners comments. The more you **interact**, the better your scores are likely to be.
- Listen to others in your group for clues and ideas during the discussion.
- If you don't understand what someone says, ask a question or say: "I don't understand" or "Can you repeat that please?" (in the target language).
- Paraphrase when necessary — summarize what someone else has said in your own words to check that you understood. Then, respond.
- If you get stuck, turn someone else's statement into a question.
- Don't hesitate to help (or rescue) others in your group. That is part of effective communication.
- You will lose marks if you dominate the discussion and do not give your partners a chance to talk.

## RATING SCALES:

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

### Grade 12 Oral Rating Scale:

<b>excellent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• message is clear; ideas are clearly and effectively stated</li><li>• gives logical reasons, examples, details to support point of view</li><li>• responds to others' ideas with relevant questions or ideas</li><li>• interacts spontaneously; language flows easily</li><li>• expression, intonation help make the meaning and feelings clear</li><li>• uses a variety of strategies to sustain interaction (e.g., may include supporting/rescuing others)</li><li>• attempts complex structures and language to make meaning precise</li><li>• may include minor errors in tense or structure; these do not reduce the effectiveness of communication</li></ul>
<b>very good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• message is clear; point of view is clear</li><li>• gives some relevant reasons, examples and/or explanations as support</li><li>• attempts to respond to others' ideas</li><li>• may be hesitant; uses some strategies to sustain interaction (e.g., may support others)</li><li>• expression, intonation are appropriate</li><li>• uses appropriate structures and language to convey meaning;</li><li>• may include errors in word choice, idiom, tense and structure, but these do not reduce the effectiveness of the communication</li></ul>
<b>satisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• offers an understandable point of view</li><li>• provides some detail and support</li><li>• may not respond to others' ideas</li><li>• sustains some interaction; may be hesitant with frequent short pauses</li><li>• some appropriate expression, intonation to support meaning</li><li>• uses basic structures and language</li><li>• may include errors in word choice, idiom, tense and structure that weaken but do not prevent communication</li></ul>
<b>minimal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• point of view may be vague; basic message is understandable by teacher but may be extremely difficult for peers</li><li>• little support, detail or elaboration; may repeat one statement over and over</li><li>• often no evidence of recognizing or responding to others' views</li><li>• interaction is hesitant with frequent pauses or breaks; these often extend to the point where little or no communication is taking place</li><li>• may use expression and intonation to support meaning in places</li><li>• uses simple, basic structures and language; repetitive</li><li>• errors in word choice, idiom, tense and structure disrupt communication</li></ul>
<b>weak</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• may offer an opening statement that can be partly understood by teacher</li><li>• little or no understandable support</li><li>• 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</li><li>• repeats a few simple patterns and expressions; may use English words and phrases</li><li>• errors prevent communication</li></ul>
<b>not demonstrated</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• student does not demonstrate relevant criteria; message may be extremely brief, unintelligible, inappropriate, or include frequent use of English.</li></ul>

## **Holistic Scoring Guide for Writing** (Grade 12)

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