

PSAC ASSESSMENT REPORT 2023

MODERN CHINESE

(SUBJECT CODE: 200)

INTRODUCTION

The 2023 Modern Standard Chinese PSAC Question Paper was based on the prototype paper set by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate. A 6th cohort of Grade 6 students sat for the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) Examination, as part of the ongoing Nine-Year Continuous Basic Education (NYCBE) reform.

The Modern Chinese assessment focuses on the following areas:

1. Reading Comprehension (40%)
2. Writing (30%)
3. Grammar and Vocabulary (30%)

These assessment objectives are in line with the goals and objectives of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for Primary Education. A variety of tasks were set at different levels underpinning the principle of greater fairness to allow students from the whole spectrum of the ability range to demonstrate their proficiency levels.

General Comments

For the cohort of the year 2023, there was a total of 210 candidates, out of which 121 candidates have passed the examinations and 89 candidates were unable to attain a pass mark in the subject. The total percentage pass is 57.62%, among which 12% of the candidates got grade A. Nevertheless, there were still 42.38% of the candidates who were unable to attain a pass mark in the subject. Teachers should give greater consideration to this, and should investigate into its causes in order to improve pupils' performance.

Specific Comments

Question 1A

This question assesses the candidates' knowledge of basic vocabulary. It relates to the labelling of 5 pictures and carries a total of 5 marks. Most candidates did not perform well in this exercise and could not write “大象/动物”, “鼻子” and “帽子”. Some candidates were

unable to write the whole Chinese characters but only part of them. Others wrote“脸” as an answer instead of “鼻子”which was also accepted as a correct answer. Pictures 3 & 5 were easier and most of the candidates got the correct answer.

Question 1B

The purpose of this question is to assess the candidates’ reading comprehension ability at a basic level. It is done through tasks which require candidates to match a sentence to the corresponding picture. It carries 5 marks. Most candidates attempted this question successfully.

Question 2A

A range of grammatical structures was tested through multiple-choice items in this question. This year, the use of conjunction (连词), interrogative pronouns (疑问代词), measure word reduplication (量词重叠), the verb forms (动词), comparative particle (比) and pronouns (代词) were assessed. Most of the candidates didn’t perform well on this question, revealing pupils’ poor knowledge of Chinese grammar. It consists of 10 multiple choice questions which carry 1 mark each.

The best-done items were:

Item 2 莎莎下个星期过生日，我想送给她一件礼物。

Item 5 桌子下有一个书包。

Item 6 超市里的水果个个都很新鲜。

The following items were found challenging:

Item 1 因为毛里求斯的气候很好，所以很多外国人都喜欢来这里度假。

Item 3 我明天要去路易港。

Item 4 我不知道他住在哪儿。

Item 9 姐姐穿着一条很漂亮的裙子。

Many candidates could not differentiate between 穿着 and 戴着。They chose 戴着 instead of 穿着。

Item 10 上中文课的时候，请大家不要迟到。

Question 2B

For this task, the candidates were required to deal with vocabulary in context through multiple-choice items. Only 14% of the candidates scored full marks on this question and 14% could not score any mark.

The best done items were:

Item 3 天太冷了，我想喝一杯热咖啡。

Item 4 今天学校关门了，学生们都呆在家里。

Item 5 爸爸的汽车坏了，他只好坐公共汽车去上班。

The following items were found challenging:

Item 1 我很渴了，可以喝点儿水吗？ Many candidates wrongly chose “高兴” as the answer. Most candidates had problems in choosing the right answer. It seems that the candidates did not understand the meaning of the sentence as well as the vocabulary “渴”.

Item 2 冬冬的书丢了，找不到了。

Question 3

Question 3 assesses the candidates’ ability to read with understanding a text pitched at intermediate level, and also be able to locate explicit information from the text. In general, candidates performed rather satisfactorily. 27% of the candidates scored between 8 and 10 marks whereas 42% scored between 4 and 7 marks.

The passage set was about a notice for the Notre Dame Des Victoires RCA school Grade 6 students concerning a water saving activity to be held on the 22nd March 2023 from 9 am to noon at the neighbourhood river. This question carries 10 marks in all and the candidates were required to answer 9 questions.

The following items were found challenging for the candidates:

Item 3 学校举行什么活动？ The expected answer was: 打扫学校附近的小河 and 以水为主题的作文比赛。 Many candidates could not understand the verb 举行 and the word 活动。 They wrote down 日期/ 二 0 二三年三月二十二日。

Item 4 在哪一天举行活动？ The expected answer was: 二 0 二三年三月二十二日。 Many candidates did not understand the question word 哪一天 and wrongly wrote “参加/上午九点到中午十二点/在三月二十日/喝水/学校”.

The best done items were:

Item 7 如果你想参加这个活动，要得到谁的同意？ The correct answer was: 家长/妈妈/爸爸.

Item 8 女校长叫什么名字？ The correct answer was: 刘芳.

Item 9 学校的电话号码是什么？ The correct answer was: 4267534.

Question 4

Question 4 was split into two parts: **4A** and **4B**. This type of comprehension passage is of higher order compared to that of Question 3. Candidates’ ability in reading comprehension was assessed through their understanding of the extended passage. The narrative passage

set was about two good friends called Yun Yun and Fang Fang who sat together in class and went home together every afternoon. One day, YunYun did not smile and did not talk in the classroom. Everyone asked her the reason why she was not speaking but she did not reply. Suddenly Fang Fang succeeded in making her laugh. In fact, Yun Yun neither smiled nor talked the whole day because she had lost her 4 incisors teeth.

A few candidates demonstrated excellent understanding of the passage. 13 % scored full marks in question 4A and 6% of them scored full marks in question 4B. Weaker ones had difficulties in understanding the passage, so they could barely score some marks.

Question 4A

Question 4A assesses candidates' ability to locate explicit information from the passage through multiple-choice items. It consists of 5 multiple choice questions, carrying 1 mark each. Some candidates did not understand the questions; hence they scored between 0-2 marks.

The best-done items were:

Item 1 每天下午，云云和芳芳一起回家。。

Item 2 云云的朋友都很喜欢云云，因为云云是个好孩子。

Item 3 云云没有回答老师的时候，老师大声地叫她的名字。

The following items were found challenging:

Item 5 云云低着头，因为她不想说话。Some candidates wrongly chose“笑了/病了”as the answer as they did not read carefully or they simply did not understand the story.

Question 4B

Question 4B assesses candidates' ability in reading comprehension. This extended reading comprehension task goes beyond literal understanding of a text and a range of reading comprehension skills are assessed.

This question carries 10 marks. Many candidates lost marks in the last item question number 6 where candidates had to label the sentences based on the chronological order of the story. Many candidates could not differentiate between the names of persons and the verb 问 in question 3. They thought that the verb 问 was part of the name of a person.

The following items were found challenging by the candidates.

Item 2 当云云不说话的时候，老师是怎么想的? The expected answer was 老师想云云是不是病了/云云是不是病了/病了.

Item 4 芳芳是怎么让云云笑起来的? The expected answer was 她给 云云一只玩具老鼠/她扔给云云一只很大的玩具老鼠。Many students wrongly wrote 芳芳想出了一个办法，她要让云云笑。It seemed that many candidates did not know the meaning of the question word 怎么 and hence could not attempt items 2 and 4.

The best done items were:

Item 1 云云和谁坐在一起? The expected answer was 芳芳.

Item 5 为什么云云一整天都没有微笑? The expected answer was 因为她少了四颗门牙/没有牙齿/很害羞.

Question 5

Question 5 was split into two parts: **5A** and **5B**. This question evaluated candidates' knowledge of grammar in writing at sentence level.

Question 5A

In this question, the candidates required knowledge of syntax in writing the sentences through re-arranging jumbled words. It is to be noted that the candidates had to answer correctly to score 2 marks in each item. If for one item, candidates got the answer partially correct, no marks were allocated.

45% of the candidates could not attempt this question as they did not understand the meaning of the Chinese characters and hence had difficulties in writing a correct grammatical sentence. Only 4 % of the candidates scored full marks in this question.

The best done item was:

Item 1 去、我们、书店、很多书、买了 The expected answer was 我们去书店买了很多书.

The most challenging item was:

Item 2: 全家福、我们、就是、这、的 The expected answer was 这就是我们的全家福.

Question 5B

For this question, the candidates had to complete the given sentences. This question also assessed candidates' writing at the sentence level. Knowledge of syntax was assessed through the sentence completion task. This question carries 6 marks.

Item 1 is to assess whether the candidates could understand the meaning of“假期的时候”which was given in the first part of the sentence. Some examples of correct answers were:

假期的时候，我们要去海边。

假期的时候，妈妈去奶奶家。

假期的时候，我们去海边。

假期的时候，学生很高兴。

假期的时候，我去了奶奶家玩。

Item 2 assessed whether candidates could understand the meaning of “星期天大家”to complete the sentence. Examples of correct answers written by candidates are given below.

星期天大家去海边玩。

星期天大家要休息。

星期天大家去饭店吃饭。

星期天大家一起去海边。

星期天大家会去海边。

Item 3 assessed candidates using the conjunction word“不但”. The first part of the sentence was 李立不但喜欢学英文. Many students had difficulties in completing this sentence as they did not know how to use the conjunction 不但.....而且也/还 to make a sentence.

Question 6

The cloze-test is a higher order reading task assessing the use of language which requires the ability to rely on the context to guess the suitable word for filling the blanks. It aimed at assessing the candidates’ ability to read with understanding. Candidates had to fill in the blanks with appropriate words from the list of words given. This question carries 10 marks.

This year, the passage set was based on the following story:

One day, a birdie told its father: I do not want to fly because I am scared.” The father told it not to be scared. It should try to fly because it was gradually growing up and the nest would soon become small. After hearing its father’s words, the birdie looked down from the tree. It thought:” the tree is too tall, I cannot fly.” The wind was very strong and the birdie felt that it could fall down. At that moment, mother told it not to look down. Mother said it should be more courageous. Father and mother told it to fly by itself. Finally, the birdie flew out of the nest. It had learnt how to fly.

Many candidates lost marks because they could not fill in the words: “害怕”、“勇敢”、“掉在”、“长大”in the appropriate blanks. .Some candidates could not distinguish between the words 下 and 不.

The best done items were:

Item 4 小鸟就从树上往下。

Item 7 这时，妈妈告诉它不要往下看。

The most challenging items were:

Item 6 小鸟觉得自己会掉在地上了。The wrong answer was 飞.

Item 8 妈妈说它应该勇敢。The wrong answers were 不、长大、些.

Item 9 爸爸妈妈都告诉它要自己飞起来。The wrong answers were 长大、大、看、掉在、不。

Item 10 最后，小鸟飞出了鸟窝，它终于学会了飞。The wrong answers were 掉在、不、看、害怕。

Question 7A

This question assessed candidates' ability to deal with spelling in context. Five short sentences containing spelling and grammatical mistakes were set and candidates were required to correct these mistakes. Some candidates had problems in writing the right Chinese characters, hence they lost marks. This question carries 5 marks. There were 54 candidates who got (3-5) marks.

The best done items were:

Item 1 刘冰见到一个钱苞（包）。

Item 4 哥哥要去法国读书了，我们去机场送她（他）。

Item 5 昨天，弟弟不（没）去学校上课。

The following items were found challenging:

Item 2 香蕉比苹果便且（宜）。Some candidates did not understand the meaning of the sentence at all, all these students lost marks.

Item 3 快升（开）学了，很多人去书店买书和本子。The same as item 2, many candidates did not understand the meaning of “开学”, hence they lost marks.

Question 7B

This question assessed candidates to write the appropriate Chinese character according to the provided Chinese pinyin in the given context. Some candidates demonstrated excellent understanding of the sentences and scored maximum marks. This question carries 5 marks. There were 32 candidates who got (3-5) marks.

The well done items were:

Item 1 一年有十二个月（yuè）。

Item 2 我们常常去公园（yuán）滑冰。

Item 5 看到妈妈回来了，妹妹非常高兴（Xìng）。

The following items were found challenging:

Item 3 姐姐穿着一件红色的上衣（yī）。Some candidates could not differentiate between “衣” and “一” and wrongly gave “一” as answer, hence they lost marks.

Item 4 祝你周末（mò）快乐。Some candidates did not understand the meaning of the sentence, all these students lost marks.

Question 8

This question assesses the candidates' ability to write grammatically correct and meaningful sentences based on pictures and five given pairs of words. The different sentences should be linked together with the given words to make up a coherent short story. This question carries 10 marks. There were 68 candidates who got (6-10) marks.

A number of issues were noted:

- In some cases, candidates wrote sentences by adding only a Personal Pronouns or a Verb.
- Some candidates did not understand the given pair of words in item 3 “突然----雨” and item 4 “赶快----东西”, therefore they were unable to write a correct sentence.
- Some candidates could not use “家” properly.

Item 1 一天----- 海边

This was the best done item in Question 8. Candidates produced simple sentences such as
一天，我们一家人去海边。

一天，我和爸爸妈妈一起去海边。

Nevertheless, some issues related to grammar and syntax were noted. In several cases, candidates produced flawed sentences such as:

我们一天去海边。

我们去海边一天。

Item 2 到了----- 吃饭

This item was also well done in Question 8. Candidates produced simple sentences such as:
到了海边，我们先吃饭。

到了海边，我们坐下来吃饭。

But here also some issues pertaining to grammar were noted, for example:

到了吃饭大家。

到了我们吃了饭。

There were also some candidates who wrote the sentences by adding the personal pronoun.

For example:

到了，我们吃饭。

到了，大家吃饭。

Item 3 突然 ----- 雨

This item posed difficulty to some candidates as they did not understand the meaning of “突然” hence they could not write good sentences and lost marks. Some candidates produced good sentences such as:

突然天上下起了大雨。

突然下大雨了。

There were also many sentences containing syntax errors:

突然天去雨。

突然有雨了。

Item 4 赶快 ----- 东西

This item was also well done in Question 8. Candidates produced a variety of correct sentences such as:

我们赶快把东西收起来。

我和爸爸妈妈赶快收拾东西。

There were also many sentences containing syntax errors:

我们赶快的拿东西。

爸爸和妈妈赶快东西。

Item 5 最后 ----- 家

This item posed some difficulty to candidates. They had to struggle to find the right vocabulary for writing the grammatically correct sentences. Some candidates produced good sentences such as:

最后，我和爸爸妈妈走路到了家。

最后，我们很高兴地回到了家。

In some cases, candidates did not use “家” properly, they produced some sentences such as:

最后我们很快的去家。

最后大家来家。

Question 9

This question tests the ability of candidates to write a coherent piece of continuous prose of about 100 words based on a given canvas. It assesses higher order writing skills, especially, candidates' ability to develop a given storyline creatively and coherently, use accurate grammar to express themselves, their ability to use varied sentence structures and the richness and appropriateness of the vocabulary used. This question carries 10 marks.

The following prompts had been given to guide the candidates:

- 你和家人在菜市
- 买青菜
- 突然听到有人叫你们帮忙
- 你和家人是怎么做的？
- 最后怎么样？

Performance on this question was, on the whole, below expectations. Some candidates indeed produced good pieces of writing in a satisfactory way. There were only 31 candidates who got (5-10) marks. A good number of below average candidates did not attempt this question and did not score any mark, the majority of their compositions were full of grammatical errors. Inappropriate use of case-endings, wrong words, inappropriate verb-tense usage and sentence writing were noted. This showed that candidates had not mastered the skills for writing an essay.

The following sample of compositions is an illustration of the strengths and weaknesses encountered in this year's paper.

Composition 1 (9—10 分)

星期六早上，我和家人在菜市买菜。妈妈买了青菜和水果，一条红色的鱼和五斤肉。突然我们听到了有人叫我们帮忙。这个人是一位老爷爷。他的篮子很满。老爷爷对我们说：“我的篮子很重。你们可能帮我回家。”我们听了他的话就帮助他。然后老爷爷和我们坐在我们的车。到达老爷爷的家，他感谢我们。
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This composition is a good piece of work. The candidate made a noticeable attempt to develop the storyline. The grammar and overall Chinese expression are good. The vocabulary

is wide and precise. The sentence structures are varied, this demonstrates the candidate's skill to use different lengths and types of sentences for particular effects.

Composition 2 (7—8 分)

今天，我和家人去菜市买很多青菜，因为这个晚上妈妈会做饭。突然我们听到有人叫我们帮忙。我们去看她，一个坏人拍她的书包。我们去帮助她。我们打电话给一位警察。一个小时，警察来了，他们抓坏人在汽车里。她给我们一件大礼物因为我们帮她。现在我们坐汽车回家。我们都很高兴。

This composition is relevant to the theme set in the examination paper. The writer has described that what happened while he heard a voice “help!” from somewhere. He was able to express himself when he saw a boy was in danger. Sentences show some variation in length and style, including the confident use of good vocabulary “好像”、“果然”、“二话不说” and “抱上来”. However, a few errors were noticeable.

Composition 3 (5—6 分)

上个星期三，爸爸带我们去菜市。爸爸买青菜。我们说爸爸买芒果。我们带爸爸去买青苹果。爸爸不喜欢去买青苹果。我们突然听到有人叫我们帮忙。我们跟爸爸去家。我们先去家，然后去看到妈妈。最后我们送妈妈芒果和青苹果。妈妈很高兴。

From this composition, we could see that the candidate made a noticeable attempt to develop the storyline. The story is organised and contains enough relevant details. A variety of simple and complex sentences were used. However, a few grammatical and spelling mistakes were identified.

Composition 4 (3—4 分)

星期六，我和家人去菜市。菜市里很多人。我和姐姐看到的青菜。我们听到妈妈买的菜。她给我们二十卢比。我们都去卖青菜。突然我们听到有人叫大家帮忙。我们一起去看到的人。他听我们一个快人。他给快人五十卢比因为他听了。最后快人去了。我和家人一起去看警察。我们对他说，突然看到的快人。警察抓到了小偷。我们都很高兴。

This composition is incomplete. In fact, the story is a basic one with little development. It contains many grammatical mistakes. The sentence structures are very simple and lacks fluency.

Composition 5 (1—2 分)

今天我在海边。孩子们在水里玩。孩子们是高兴。一个还在喊救命。他吃饭前去水里。最后李立去在水里和孩子们是不喊救命。他去到医生。我们去家和我们很高兴。

This composition can be categorised as very basic story with very little development. The vocabulary used are simple and inaccurate. Many grammatical mistakes have been noticed throughout the story. A few sentences are meaningless.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations can improve the teaching of Modern Chinese as a foreign language to Mauritian students in primary schools:

1. Teachers should create a better learning environment in classrooms by making use of blended-learning methodology and interactive strategies.
2. The use of other languages like English, French and Creole should be avoided as far as possible while teaching Chinese.
3. More emphasis should be laid on vocabulary, grammar and the application in sentence writing.
4. Students should be motivated to develop their listening and speaking skills by communicating in Chinese language.

Conclusion

Most of the candidates did not have a good basic knowledge of Chinese Language. With regard to this, Teachers are required to instruct and train the students how to read, understand and answer the questions as required in the question paper through the use of different innovative strategies and approaches which will be helpful and encourage learning to take place in a pleasurable environment. Teachers are requested to get acquainted with the use of multimedia tools, conducting online classes and using various online platforms to make the teaching and learning process more conducive and effective so that there is continuity of learning.