

## May 2018 extended essay reports

**Chinese B**

## Overall grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	E	D	C	B	A
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-6	7-13	14-20	21-26	27-34

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

Most essays submitted met the topic selection principles, with many of them being very creative and thought provoking. [s](#)

With the introduction of the new assessment criteria, more emphasis has been put on the requirement of EEs having to fit into the 3 categories: **1) Language**; **2) Socio-cultural**, including: **a) language use**; **b) general culture based on specific artifacts**; and **3) Literary works**.

Although the topics selected this year covered a wide range of the above three categories, the majority of candidates selected **Category 2 b)**, probably because there was always a wide range of possible topics available and it would comparatively be easier to produce an essay with rich and vivid content.

However, the biggest challenge this year was how to determine the specific artifact as the basis of EE under **Category 2 b)**. A considerable number of EEs submitted under this category were judged to have fallen outside the range of the 3 categories (especially 2 b)) and as a result were awarded very low marks based on them being “inappropriate”. Some of the typical problematic topics included education in the East and West, Fengshui, women’s position in traditional marriage, One Belt One Road, globalization, Chinese vs. western medicine, new immigrants of Hong Kong, Korean Wave and so on. These topics were too broad and the candidates did not base their essays on any specific artifacts. The essays were merely a generalized description or evaluation.

One good example under **Category 2 b)** was an analysis of family education in China through 2 movies. The candidate found a lot of convincing examples in the stories and used them as evidence to prove his/her argument.

Artifacts, whether being written, audio or visual, should be introduced and discussed in certain details in the essay, especially at the beginning.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A: focus and method

There are a few points that need attention under this criterion.

First, on the front page, there must be both a general topic in the form of a statement and a Research Question in the form of a question. It is also required that the candidate must identify which category or categories (mixture of 2 or 3 allowed) the EE belongs to.

Second, the Introduction is not simply a showcase of background knowledge. The Research Question must be emphasized, and the main argument and research method(s) are to be explained clearly. A lot of candidates forgot to mention the method(s) and range of research.

Third, the whole essay must be well-focused around the Research Question. Most candidates performed well in this respect, but others were rather weak.

### Criterion B: knowledge and understanding

Reference materials should mostly be in the target language i.e. Chinese. In case a few websites or materials are in another language (e.g. Korean), at least the titles should be translated into Chinese because examiners are responsible for checking the quality and credibility of these sources.

Many candidates were excellent in making use of first-hand materials or survey results to support their analysis, but others were not very clear about the purpose of a questionnaire investigation because the survey was irrelevant to the Research Question and therefore could not serve as evidence to prove the main argument. Questionnaires of this kind tended to be very simple in content and were of almost no academic value to the essay.

It is suggested that the supervisors remind the students to provide sufficient information about the surveys carried out. Failure to include questionnaires or interview contents in the Appendices or to introduce the basic information such as purpose of the survey, number and composition of respondents, method(s) used and so on could impact the clarity and coherence of the analysis and the authenticity of these investigations.

For those who select Category 3: literature works, please note that they should try to refer to some kind of reviews written by others if possible. At least some secondary sources should

be included. The candidates should not analyse the literary works based on their own thinking only even though it may be a good demonstration of independent thinking skill. For the EE, academic research skill is also being measured.

The online survey questionnaire or result cannot be a link because the papers examiners can access are all scanned files. The assessment is based on what is provided in the body of the essay alone – examiners will not follow external links.

### Criterion C: critical thinking

This criterion is a comprehensive evaluation of the whole essay in terms of validity of argument, idea organization, depth and approach of analysis, and how well the Research Question is answered at the end.

#### Focus

It was positive to see that a good number of candidates distinguished themselves in all of the above aspects and achieved the highest level possible. However, we also had many candidates who showed weakness in staying focused on the Research Question. They often went off-track in the discussion and struggled to come back to answer their own Research Question. Therefore, it would be better if the students could be advised to always keep in mind the focus of the essay during the process of writing.

#### Organization of ideas

While analysing literature works, it is important to introduce the gist of the stories because it should not be assumed that the examiners have read the original works. Some candidates were very good at summarizing the stories in brief words when analysing, which were great examples of strong logical thinking and idea organizational skills.

Some candidates made smart use of sectional subtitles to organize the whole essay. The wording of these small titles was so concise in the Table of Contents that a clear structure and content were presented even before the start of the essay. In contrast, some candidates only had 3 parts in the Table of Content: Introduction, Main body and Conclusion.

### Criterion D: presentation

Almost all the candidates did very well and were awarded high marks under this criterion. However, there were still some students who did not know how to credit the citations and viewpoints of others. Footnotes were the most commonly adopted format even though it is not mandatory. In case end notes are used (very few cases), they should be separated from Bibliography.

The candidates should be made aware that if only a bibliography is provided at the end without any references mentioned in the essay, it would be hard for readers to tell which comments were from the candidate and which were by other people. This could affect the examiner's judgement about the critical thinking ability of the candidate in some degree.

All the reference materials should be listed in the Bibliography, including those that already appeared in the footnotes.

### Criterion E: engagement

In RPPF, most candidates could give a fairly clear account of the process they went through in completing the essay, from planning, investigation and research to writing. While describing their commitment, improvement and reflections, some outstanding candidates also demonstrated intellectual initiative and creativity in their research process.

Through the reflections, the candidates should concentrate on their own progress rather than what the supervisor had told them to do. It is suggested that the candidate check the final product of RPPF to ensure that the 3 parts are coherent and clear in organization.

Since RPPF is considered part of EE, it must be written in Chinese, not English. Where the reflections were written in another language, a mark of 0 was awarded.

### Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Due to the new changes in the EE Guide, it is strongly suggested that all supervisors read the new guide carefully and discuss together with the candidates before allowing them to proceed to the actual planning and writing.

It is important to make sure that not only a specific artifact is present in the essay, but also sufficient discussion has been devoted to it. The teachers can also remind the students to double check if the Research Question has been answered satisfactorily.