Year 12 First Language Learners

Writing — Average

Content

Students write a range of texts using formal and informal registers. They create a range of text types including diary entries, articles, opinion pieces, reviews, and speeches, in which they, for example, persuade, reason, evaluate, advise, recommend, clarify, evaluate, justify, and entertain. They write in detached, impersonal ways or from personal and emotional perspectives in both real and imagined situations. Their writing extends beyond the factual and informational to the discussion of abstract ideas and social issues, including drawing on ideas presented in Chinese literature. They create texts both for interaction in their personal worlds and for pedagogic tasks such as those in which they discuss social and environmental issues of concern to them (e.g. the impact of Economic Reform on daily life in China, or environmental problems). They write about issues that affect them personally, including cross-generational issues, moral dilemmas, and their own intercultural experiences and sense of identity. They discuss changes in the world, and reflect on significant events and influences in their lives, including their hopes for the future, both as individuals and as members of the wider society.

Topics include issues such as the pressures of school life, changes in family structure in modern China, the influence of technology on their lives, environmental issues such as the use of plastic bags, the impact of the Three Gorges Dam, and the relationship between environmental protection and economic development. They summarise information and express their own ideas and opinions about issues.

The nature of students’ writing is influenced by their general knowledge, by the conceptual demands of the task, and by the depth of their linguistic knowledge. Their responses tend to be simplistic, repetitive, and descriptive, with limited exploration and elaboration of discussion. For example, students may treat a complex issue in a superficial way or may not adequately address the demands of the task (e.g. stating a personal opinion rather than exploring an issue objectively from both sides). The arguments are often not persuasive because of insufficient evidence and supporting detail and a lack of logical connection between paragraphs.

Vocabulary

Students’ range of language enables them to generate ideas on many topics. However, their expression and language choices are often at a superficial level. The nature and the range of vocabulary they use are highly dependent on the demands of the task, content area, and their general knowledge.

In unsupported tasks, students’ range of nouns, particularly higher order, abstract nouns, is limited (e.g. 特征; 情化) and verbs tend to be familiar terms associated with everyday processes (e.g. 拆打; 新). The range of adjectives includes common terms as well as a small number of less familiar adjectives (e.g. 广泛; 深). They are able to express their personal ideas with awareness of word combinations (e.g. 深的影响; 流逝; 增; 荒; 学). Occasionally students choose inappropriate or incorrect words when writing outside their general experience.

Characters

Characters are neat and well formed. A few errors occur because of confusion between homophones (e.g. 溶/融入; 观/关/注; 对相/相; 擦/察). Students occasionally write traditional Chinese characters rather than simplified Chinese characters.
Forms and Structures

Students’ written work includes both subject and object focus construction. There is some inconsistency in accuracy of the use of object focus as students rely on acquired patterns of use rather than having explicit knowledge of grammatical rules governing its use. Object focus construction in particular is used in familiar contexts and is less effective in unfamiliar contexts. Students use various sentence structures (e.g. ‘把’ sentences 这名女生把这件事情告诉了家长; it was told) and ‘被’ (passive) sentences 就被班里的男生进行了殴打, 我被它的庞大吸引了; 整个沙滩被染上了一层橘色, rhetorical questions 这难道还不值得国人骄傲与自豪么？). They employ a range of sentence patterns with modal verbs, conjunctions, prepositions, or particles (e.g. 网络会对青少年造成身心上的伤害; 华人活跃于政坛; 为当地经济增长; 取决于使用它的人; 降至最低). They use complex sentence structures to convey some detailed ideas, for example, 既能节省金钱, 又可以废物利用; 从而刺激顾客消费, 有助经济发展: 不少人..., 也有不少人... They use a range of cohesive devices at the sentence and text levels (e.g. 晚上; 下午; 当太阳快下山时; 晚上的时候; 这次露营真的是太棒了; 刚去的头一两天; 通过露营的一些训练, 虽然学校这次的露营很辛苦; 如果有机会的话). Grammar mistakes occur occasionally, for example, sentence constituent omission 为华人在澳的地位不断提升 (做出贡献), transposed word components (e.g. 到用 for 用到), and overuse of the attributive particle 的 (e.g. 这无疑是的方便了购物).

Discourse

Students write texts using features of the text type and use devices to create cohesion across the text as a whole. For example, they use letter features such as salutations and formal terms of address for a formal letter.

In writing a narrative, students use time phrases to locate events in the past, present, or future. There is some inconsistency in students’ use of register appropriate to the text type because of a mixing of informal and formal language. In developing an argument, students structure their responses by stating differing views, supported by examples, and discussing positions for and against before giving a personal view. They build an argument by referring to previously stated ideas. They contrast ideas in order to make a particular case, using conjunctions. They expand an idea and give examples to support a statement. Writing is presented in an appropriate format with recognition of the audience in the greeting and closure 有空给我来信！友，明华.