

HKDSE Chinese Literature Mock Paper (2027) — Creative Writing Prompt with Model Essay, Appreciation Questions with Model Answers

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Quick answer: HKDSE Chinese Literature has two written papers. **Paper 1, Creative Writing, carries 25%** and lasts 2 hours: two questions are set and you answer one, in prose or in classical Chinese, with no word limit. **Paper 2, Literary Appreciation, carries 60%** and lasts 2 hours: four questions of equal marks, of which you answer two, set on both the prescribed works listed in the curriculum guide and on unseen works. A further **15% comes from school-based assessment** — creative writing practice in at least two of four genres (prose, poetry, fiction, drama), with the teacher submitting three pieces. Private candidates do not take the SBA and are graded entirely on the written papers.

Important update: the Education Bureau updated the Chinese Literature Curriculum and Assessment Guide in 2025, cutting the prescribed works from 28 to **25**. The new list applies to S4 from 2025/26 and takes effect for the **2028** HKDSE. Candidates sitting in 2027 are still examined on the current 28 works.



Paper 2 is sixty per cent of the subject: two questions out of four, marked not on how much you remember but on how closely you read.

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The 2027 assessment framework at a glance

Component	Content	Weighting	Format and time
Public exam (Paper 1)	Creative Writing: two questions set, answer one; prose or classical Chinese; no word limit	25%	Written paper • 2 hours
Public exam (Paper 2)	Literary Appreciation: questions combine the prescribed works listed in the curriculum guide with unseen works; four questions of equal marks, answer two	60%	Written paper • 2 hours
School-based assessment	Creative writing practice in at least two of the four genres (prose, poetry, fiction, drama); the teacher submits three pieces	15%	Completed during the course

There is **no Paper 3, no listening and no oral component**. Paper 2 carries the most marks and is where grades are decided. Private candidates do not take the SBA; their grade comes entirely from the written papers, with Papers 1 and 2 re-weighted in the ratio 25:60.

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How this mock paper was designed, and its copyright status

The questions below were written by TutorZone tutors from the assessment objectives and suggested learning focuses of the HKEAA 2027 HKDSE Chinese Literature Assessment Framework and the EDB Chinese Literature Curriculum and Assessment Guide (S4–S6). They are **not past HKEAA questions and not official examination material**. The classical works quoted (from the *Book of Songs*, the *Chu Ci*, and the poetry, prose and drama of later dynasties) are in the public domain; the model essay and model answers are original to this paper. The paper split, question types and answering requirements follow the official framework, but the mark allocations are this paper's own and are intended for practice only — in the real examination, follow the printed instructions.

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Prescribed works: the 28 for 2027 against the new 25 from 2028

The current curriculum provides 28 prescribed works for close study, and Paper 2 sets its questions on them. The 2025 update of the curriculum and assessment guide reduces the list to **25**, stating that it applies to **S4 from the 2025/26 school year and takes effect for the 2028 HKDSE** — so the 2027 and earlier examinations still use the 28, while students sitting from 2028 are examined on the new list.

#	For the 2027 exam: the current 28	From 2028: the new 25
1–11	<i>Qin feng</i> • <i>Jian jia</i> (Book of Songs); <i>Jiu zhang</i> • <i>She jiang</i> (Chu Ci); <i>The Matter of Duke Huan of Qi and Duke Wen of Jin</i> (Mencius); <i>Cook Ding Carves an Ox</i> (Zhuangzi); <i>Su Qin's Vertical Alliance</i> (Intrigues of the Warring States); <i>The Meeting at Hongmen</i> (Records of the Grand Historian); <i>Battle South of the City</i> (anon.); <i>Short Song Style</i> (Cao Cao); <i>Returning Home</i> (Tao Qian); <i>Bring in the Wine</i> (Li Bai); <i>Climbing High</i> (Du Fu)	Identical (all 11 retained)
12	<i>Explanation on Learning</i> (Han Yu)	— removed
13–18	<i>The Pavilion of the Old Drunkard</i> (Ouyang Xiu); <i>First Prose Poem on the Red Cliff</i> (Su Shi); <i>Qi tian le</i> (Zhou Bangyan); <i>Nan xiang zi</i> (Xin Qiji); <i>Shuang diao</i> • <i>Ye xing chuan</i> • <i>Autumn Thoughts</i> (Ma Zhiyuan); <i>The Execution Ground</i> (Act 3 of <i>The Injustice to Dou E</i> , Guan Hanqing)	Identical (all retained)
19–20	<i>The Seventh Month of the West Lake</i> (Zhang Dai); <i>Refusing the Dowry</i> (Scene 7 of <i>The Peach Blossom Fan</i>, Kong Shangren)	— removed
21–27	<i>Grandmother Meets Her Granddaughter</i> (Chapter 3 of <i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i> , Cao Xueqin); <i>Dead Water</i> (Wen Yiduo); <i>Mistake</i> (Zheng Chouyu); <i>Books</i> (Liang Shiqiu); <i>My Four Imaginary Enemies</i> (Yu Guangzhong); <i>Medicine</i> (Lu Xun); <i>The Bowl</i> (Xi Xi)	Identical (all retained)
28	<i>Xi Shi</i> (Yao Ke)	— removed
New	—	<i>Sunrise</i> (Act 2 excerpt, Cao Yu)

In one line: four works go out and one comes in — Explanation on Learning, The Seventh Month of the West Lake, Refusing the Dowry and Xi Shi are dropped, and Cao Yu's Sunrise (Act 2 excerpt) is added. A candidate sitting in 2027 can ignore the new list; if you are in S4 now, watch for your school moving across.

Paper 1 — Creative Writing (answer one of two) and a model essay

Paper 1 imposes no form beyond the brief: prose or classical Chinese, no word limit. Marks turn on conception, structure, language and imagery. The two prompts below are worth 25 marks each in this paper.

1. Write a piece of prose entitled "The Door". There is no word limit.

2. Read the line below and write a short story (an excerpt is acceptable) entitled "The Last Train". There is no word limit.

"The station master put out the last lamp; only three shadows were left on the platform."

Model essay (prompt 1, about 600 words)

The Door

My grandmother never locked her door. The metal gate stood ajar, and behind it was a wooden one, its frame pencilled with the heights I had reached as a child, one line above another, climbing. Back then I believed a door was something that grew: every summer the line sat a little higher, and I would stand against the frame, pleased, while my mother drew another.

Then my grandmother moved into a care home. The gate was locked; the wooden door stayed. The day the keys came into my hands I understood that a door does not guard valuables — it guards a houseful of days that were never put away. Inside, the television still sat at its old height, the tablecloth still carried a tea stain like a moon that had sunk into the cloth, and the evergreen on the windowsill had two leaves left, and they were green.

I sat on the stool by the door and watched the light retreat, inch by inch. The threshold was worn smooth and bright; fifty years of soles had pressed a gentle hollow into the wood. So a home is not its walls. It is this thin, trodden boundary, and when the people leave the boundary stays, holding the time in place for you.

The doors at the care home are a different kind. They are always shut. You sign in and out, the handle is cold, and opening it carries the solemnity of a report. My grandmother sat by the window in her chair; when she saw me she raised her hand quickly, as if afraid I might not see her. She asked whether the door was locked and whether the evergreen had been watered. I said yes. She smiled, reassured, as though if the door were locked the home would still be there.

On my way out I opened the window a little for her. Wind came through the gap, carrying the smell of soil from the planters below. I thought suddenly of the height marks, the last one stopping at a metre fifty with a year written beside it. We never drew another after that — not because I stopped growing, but because the lines were no longer needed. Doors grow; people have to learn not to keep looking back.

Back at the old flat I locked the gate and turned for one more look at the wooden door. It stood quietly, like an old man who refuses to retire. And I understood at last that we spend our lives opening and closing doors: some are shut to protect, and some, once shut, never open again. All we can do is walk through while the door is still open, sit a while, and look closely at the light worn thin across the threshold.

Marking frame for Paper 1 (this paper's own scheme, 25 marks)

1. Conception and insight (8 marks): is there one genuine, focused feeling, carried from concrete detail towards a larger realisation (as the doors piece moves from the height marks and the hollowed threshold to "a home is a thin, trodden boundary")? Vague sentiment scores low.

2. Structure and selection (6 marks): paragraphs advance (old flat → care home → old flat) and echo one another (the lines, the evergreen, the threshold). No diary-style chronology; the writer dares to cut material that does not serve the idea.

3. Language and imagery (7 marks): precise diction and varied sentence rhythm, with two or three fresh images that are not contrived ("a tea stain like a moon that had sunk into the cloth"; "Doors grow; people have to learn not to keep looking back").

4. Answering the title (4 marks): the piece stays with the title rather than attaching it at the end.

Paper 2 — Literary Appreciation (answer two of four)

Three questions come from the prescribed works and one from an unseen work. Each is worth 30 marks in this paper and all carry equal marks; you answer two. Questions require content, central ideas, genre features, style and technique.

1. Analyse how the opening stanza of *Jian jia* ("Thick grow the reeds, white dew turns to frost") writes feeling through scene, and explain the role of the poem's repeated stanzas in creating its atmosphere. (30 marks)

2. Su Shi's *First Prose Poem on the Red Cliff* is threaded through with a dialogue between host and guest. Analyse how that structure carries the writer from sorrow to joy and from mutability to constancy, and comment on the language of the piece as a *fu*. (30 marks)

3. In Act 3 of *The Injustice to Dou E* (The Execution Ground), Dou E swears before heaven and earth that frost will fall in June and drought will follow for three years. Analyse how this episode shapes her character and how the playwright uses dramatic conflict to indict society. (30 marks)

4. (Unseen work) Read the poem below:

After the new rain on the empty hills, / evening brings the autumn air.

The bright moon shines between the pines, / clear spring water flows over the stones.

Bamboo rustles as washing girls return, / lotus stirs as the fishing boat goes downriver.

Let the spring fragrance fade as it will — / a prince may stay here as long as he likes. (Wang Wei, *Autumn Evening in the Mountains*)

Analyse how the poem achieves "a painting within a poem", and explain the state of mind the closing couplet expresses. (30 marks)

Model answer for question 1 (30 marks)

1. Content (8 marks)

The poem follows a seeker who, on an autumn morning among thick reeds and white frost, searches for the beloved "across the water". All three stanzas are near-identical, changing only a few words — *cang cang / qi qi / cai cai*, frost "turning to frost / not yet dried / not yet ended", and the beloved's location "one shore away / at the river's edge / at the river's bank" — so that longing is expressed through repetition rather than statement.

2. Technique (10 marks)

- (i) **Scene as feeling (exposition doubling as evocation):** the opening reeds and frost are the scene before the eyes, yet their cold, desolate tone sets the poem's atmosphere of bewildered longing — description is already emotion.
- (ii) **Distance as image:** placing the beloved "across the water" puts mist and water between seeker and sought; the barrier of water and the chill of frost compound into an image of the visible-but-unreachable.
- (iii) **Repeated stanzas:** the identical structure with varied words mimics the rhythm of a seeker who circles and returns; meanwhile the frost moves from "turning" to "not yet dried" to "not yet ended", marking the passage from dawn towards full day and allowing the melancholy to deepen with each turn. "The way is blocked and long / steep / winding" translates the road's detours into the mind's detours.
- (iv) **Progression:** from "as if at the centre of the water" to "on the islet" and "on the sandbar", what is seen remains a shimmering illusion, quietly registering the cycle of hope and disappointment.

3. Insight and judgement (7 marks)

Not once does the poem state the depth of longing directly; instead labour, distance and illusion make a longing that is restrained and lasting. Because the beloved is never identified — lover, ideal, worthy talent or simply the good — the meaning stays open, which is precisely what has made *Jian jia* so enduring.

4. Expression and organisation (5 marks): points made in order, quotations accurate, analysis tied to the quotation; no plot summary or line-by-line translation.

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A four-step frame for appreciation answers

Step	What to do
1. Read the terms	Underline the command words ("how does it write feeling through scene", "the role of the structure", "comment on the language") and decide whether the question wants technique alone or technique plus evaluation. Paper 2 usually wants both — answering only one loses half the marks.
2. Fix the spine	One or two sentences on context and the work's movement (who, where, and what shift of feeling takes place) so quotations have somewhere to stand.
3. Name the device, then quote	Name the technique (repeated stanzas, closing with a scene, host-and-guest dialogue, alternating arias and spoken lines), quote one line, then explain its effect: device — quotation — effect.
4. Return to feeling	Close on the writer's feeling or the work's value, and, where asked, judge: does the technique succeed, and what are its limits?

Where Paper 2 marks are lost

- **Narrating instead of analysing:** treating the question as comprehension, translating the text or retelling the plot without naming a technique or its effect.
- **Vague device names:** "it uses rhetorical devices", "it is very moving" — say instead "closing with a scene", "contrast", "reduplication", "arias carry the feeling while spoken lines drive the conflict".
- **Quotation detached from argument:** a paragraph of abstract comment with a quotation tacked on. Argument first, then the quotation, then the effect.
- **Ignoring genre:** poetry needs metre, stanza and imagery; drama needs conflict, character and stage directions; fiction needs point of view and characterisation. Questions often ask for "features of the genre" outright.
- **Choosing badly:** two out of four means choosing the two you can answer best, not the two that look shortest. Spend three minutes reading all four before deciding.

Paper 1: how to score, and how marks are lost

Four habits: (1) settle the conception before writing and put it in one sentence; (2) replace adjectives with detail ("a threshold worn into a gentle hollow" beats "very old"); (3) echo the opening at the close, and step the ending forward rather than repeating the start; (4) cut — delete every sentence in a paragraph that does not serve the idea.

Three fatal errors: (1) a diary of events with no centre; (2) large slabs of life philosophy with no incident to support them; (3) stock phrases ("life is like a play", "time flies") offered as insight.

The 15% SBA: how the creative writing practice works

Element	Requirement
Genres	At least two of the four genres — prose, poetry, fiction, drama — must be attempted; four prose pieces do not show enough range.
Submission	The teacher selects three pieces and submits their marks, worth 15% of the subject.
Retention	All SBA work must be kept until the HKDSE results are released, for verification.
Private candidates	Exempt; graded entirely on the written papers.

Suggested timeline: in S5 complete two pieces in a first genre (prose or poetry) and try one piece of fiction; in S6 Term 1 finish a drama or fiction piece and leave time to revise on your teacher's comments. Spread the three submitted pieces across different genres and different months so the file shows development.

Common errors: (1) submitting exam-style school compositions, which rarely show personal observation; (2) writing in only one genre; (3) keeping no drafts, so there is no evidence of response to feedback or of progress.

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Timing: two hours for each paper

Paper	Time	Suggested split
Paper 1 (25%)	2 hours	15 minutes planning (conception, scenes, ending); 75 minutes writing; 20 minutes reading through (add detail, cut stock phrases, adjust paragraph rhythm); 10 minutes checking spelling and punctuation
Paper 2 (60%)	2 hours	8 minutes reading all four questions and choosing; about 50 minutes per answer (5 of them for an outline); the last 2–5 minutes checking quotations and characters

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FAQ

Does Chinese Literature have an SBA?

Yes — 15%, as creative writing practice in at least two of four genres, with the teacher submitting three pieces. Private candidates are exempt.

Is Paper 2 really two questions out of four?

Yes. Under the HKEAA 2027 framework, Paper 2 sets four questions of equal marks and you answer two, on both prescribed and unseen works.

Will the 2027 exam use the new 25 works?

No. The 2025 curriculum guide states that the new list applies to S4 from 2025/26 and takes effect for the 2028 HKDSE, so the 2027 exam still uses the current 28.

Can I write Paper 1 in classical Chinese?

Yes — the framework allows prose or classical Chinese with no word limit. Classical Chinese earns no automatic bonus; marks still turn on conception, structure, language and imagery.

How does Chinese Literature differ from Chinese Language?

Chinese Language assesses language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking). Chinese Literature centres on appreciating and creating literary works, with 60% in Paper 2 requiring critical analysis and close study of the prescribed works.

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Official sources to check against

Source	What to use it for
HKEAA — 2027 HKDSE Chinese Literature Assessment Framework	Confirming Paper 1 25% / Paper 2 60% / SBA 15%, times, number of questions and answering rules
EDB — Chinese Literature Curriculum and Assessment Guide, 2025 update	Appendix 2, the prescribed works (25, effective for the 2028 HKDSE), and the suggested learning focuses
EDB — senior secondary Chinese Literature page	Curriculum documents, learning and teaching resources, seminar materials

See more papers in this series: [Exam practice questions](#). For help with Paper 2 analysis or with revising creative writing, start with the [Chinese Literature subject guide](#) and then get matched with a tutor.