S2 Putonghua Practice Paper

S2 | Putonghua | Time: 45 minutes | Total: 100 marks | 24 questions

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Part A: Pinyin and Tones (16 marks)

Write the full pinyin with tones and state the tone-change rule.

1. Write the pinyin of the greeting ni3 hao3 ("hello") and state how the tones are actually pronounced when read together.

Answer: The pinyin is ni3 hao3. Both syllables carry the third tone, and a third tone before another third tone changes to the second tone, so it is actually read ni2 hao3.

2. The pinyin of "to learn" is xue2. On which letter does the tone mark go? Give the rule.

Answer: The tone mark goes on e. The rule is: mark a if there is one; otherwise mark o or e; when i and u stand together, mark the second one.

3. Write the pinyin of bu4 shi4 ("is not") and explain the tone change of bu4.

Answer: bu4 is basically the fourth tone; before another fourth tone it changes to the second tone, so it is read bu2 shi4.

4. The pinyin of "chair" is yi3 zi. Which tone does the second syllable take?

Answer: It is read in the neutral tone and written yi3 zi, with no tone mark.

Part B: Initials, Finals and Spelling Rules (16 marks)

State the initial or final and explain the spelling rule.

5. How many initials are there in Putonghua?

Answer: There are 21: b, p, m, f, d, t, n, l, g, k, h, j, q, x, zh, ch, sh, r, z, c and s.

6. The pinyin of "middle" is zhong1. Give its initial and its final.

Answer: The initial is zh and the final is ong.

7. How is the final i written when it forms a syllable on its own? Give one example.

Answer: When i stands alone as a syllable it is written yi, for example yi1 ("one").

8. When the final of nü3 follows n, are the two dots kept? What happens after j, q and x?

Answer: After n and l the dots are kept and it is written nü; after j, q and x the dots are dropped and it is written u.

Part C: Measure Words and Collocation (16 marks)

Fill in a suitable measure word and explain the collocation.

9. Which measure word completes "one ___ horse"?

Answer: Use pi, giving yi1 pi3 ma3; pi is used for horses and mules.

10. Which measure word completes "three ___ sheets of paper"?

Answer: Use zhang, giving san1 zhang1 zhi3; zhang is used for flat things such as paper, tickets and tables.

11. Which measure word completes "five ___ flowers"?

Answer: Use duo, giving wu3 duo3 hua1; duo is used for flowers and clouds.

12. Name three kinds of noun that can follow tiao2, with one example each.

Answer: It can follow fish (yi1 tiao2 yu2), river (yi1 tiao2 he2) and road (yi1 tiao2 lu4); it is also used for news items.

Part D: Listening and Working with Numbers (18 marks)

Note the key facts, show the working and give the unit.

13. The recording says: leave home at 9:15 a.m. and the journey takes 40 minutes. What time do you arrive?

Answer: 9:15 plus 40 minutes gives 9:55 a.m.

14. An adult ticket costs 48 dollars and a student ticket 24 dollars. Find the total cost of three adult tickets and two student tickets.

Answer: Adult tickets: 48 times 3 is 144 dollars. Student tickets: 24 times 2 is 48 dollars. Total: 192 dollars.

15. At about 120 characters per minute, how many characters are spoken in 2 minutes 30 seconds?

Answer: 2 minutes 30 seconds is 2.5 minutes, and 120 times 2.5 gives 300 characters.

16. An activity runs from 2:40 p.m. to 4:10 p.m. How many minutes is that?

Answer: From 2:40 to 3:40 is 60 minutes, plus another 30 minutes, giving 90 minutes in total.

Part E: Reading Pauses and Intonation (16 marks)

Decide the pause, intonation or pronunciation and give a reason.

17. Where should the two pauses fall in the sentence "Today I went to the library and borrowed three books"?

Answer: Pause after "today" and after "library": Today / I went to the library / and borrowed three books.

18. How should the intonation be handled at the end of a question?

Answer: The intonation rises at the end, the pace slows a little and the stress falls on the question word or key word.

19. Which tone are de, le and ma usually read in when reading aloud?

Answer: All three are usually read in the neutral tone, not in their original tones.

20. What reading speed, in characters per minute, is suitable for reading aloud?

Answer: About 120 characters per minute, pausing at the punctuation and leaving a short pause between sentences.

Part F: Topic Talk (18 marks)

Write out the structure, the number of characters and the time allocation.

21. A talk lasts 2 minutes at about 120 characters per minute. About how many characters are needed?

Answer: 2 times 120 gives 240 characters.

22. What are the three parts of the structure of a topic talk?

Answer: An opening that states the topic, a middle that gives examples, and a conclusion that sums up and answers the topic.

23. Should a topic talk use colloquial speech or bookish written style?

Answer: Use standard spoken Chinese and avoid dialect words and over-long bookish sentences.

24. How should the two minutes be allocated?

Answer: About 15 seconds for the opening, 90 seconds for the main body and 15 seconds for the conclusion, 120 seconds in total.
