S6 Chinese Literature Practice Paper

S6 | Chinese Literature | Time: 90 minutes | Total: 100 marks | 24 questions

Part A: Tang and Song Verse Forms and Line Counts (18 marks)

Show your working; give percentages and decimals to one place.

1. (5 marks) A five-character quatrain has four lines of five characters each. Find the total number of characters; if it is rewritten as a seven-character quatrain, find the percentage increase.

Answer: A five-character quatrain has 4 x 5 = 20 characters; a seven-character quatrain has 4 x 7 = 28 characters. The increase is 8 characters, so 8 / 20 x 100% = 40.0%.

2. (5 marks) A regulated verse (lu shi) has eight lines. If the poet writes four lines a day, how many days are needed? State also the requirement that the two middle couplets be parallel.

Answer: 8 / 4 = 2 days. In regulated verse the third and fourth lines (jaw couplet) and the fifth and sixth lines (neck couplet) must be parallel; the opening and closing couplets need not be.

3. (4 marks) A certain ci tune has two stanzas: 48 characters in the upper stanza and 47 in the lower. Find the total number of characters; if a line averages six characters, about how many lines are there (round up)?

Answer: 48 + 47 = 95 characters; 95 / 6 = 15.83, rounded up to 16 lines.

4. (4 marks) A song suite (tao shu) uses 3 tune names in one mode, with 2 songs under each tune name. Find the number of songs; if each song averages 30 characters, about how many characters is the whole suite?

Answer: 3 x 2 = 6 songs; 6 x 30 = 180 characters. A single song (xiao ling) uses one tune name and one song only.

Part B: Structure and Devices in Classical Prose (17 marks)

Show the working first, then the conclusion; percentages to one decimal place.

5. (4 marks) A discursive essay has 480 characters, of which 180 form the argument section. Find the argument section as a percentage of the whole (one decimal place).

Answer: 180 / 480 x 100% = 37.5%. The argument takes just under 40 percent while examples and introduction take over 60 percent.

6. (5 marks) The essay has 480 characters in 6 paragraphs. Find the average characters per paragraph; if the first paragraph has 60 characters, what is the average for the remaining paragraphs?

Answer: 480 / 6 = 80 characters; (480 - 60) / 5 = 84 characters.

7. (4 marks) The essay has 12 parallel couplets, each with two lines of seven characters. Find the total characters in the parallel lines and their percentage of the 480-character essay (one decimal place).

Answer: 12 x (7 x 2) = 168 characters; 168 / 480 x 100% = 35.0%. Too many parallel lines weaken the flow, so dense and loose passages should alternate.

8. (4 marks) Give one example each of parallelism, rhetorical question (setting the question) and rhetorical question (expecting no answer) in classical prose, and explain the function of each in a discursive essay.

Answer: Parallelism: three or more parallel clauses build momentum and advance step by step. Setting a question: the writer asks and answers to lead into the next point. Rhetorical question: the answer is implied, strengthening the tone and provoking thought.

Part C: Modern Fiction and Prose (17 marks)

Show your working; percentages to one decimal place.

9. (5 marks) Lu Xun published "A Madman's Diary" in 1918 and "Call to Arms" in 1923. Find the interval in years; if 12 stories appeared in that period, what is the average per year (one decimal place)?

Answer: 1923 - 1918 = 5 years; 12 / 5 = 2.4 stories per year.

10. (4 marks) Compare first-person limited, omniscient and objective (dramatic) narrative viewpoints, giving one strength and one limitation of each.

Answer: First-person limited: intimate and credible, but other minds are closed to the narrator. Omniscient: free access to every mind, but suspense easily leaks away. Objective: like watching a scene, cool and restrained, but motives stay hidden.

11. (4 marks) A 3000-character short story is divided into 5 sections, with the first taking 20 percent. Find the characters in the first section and the average for each remaining section.

Answer: 3000 x 20% = 600 characters; (3000 - 600) / 4 = 600 characters, i.e. the space is shared evenly.

12. (4 marks) Distinguish symbol from simile/metaphor in a prose essay and give one example of each with its effect.

Answer: A simile or metaphor compares one thing with another, both terms present, making an idea concrete. A symbol is a concrete image running through the whole essay whose meaning must be inferred from context and situation, giving depth and reserve.

Part D: Identifying Literary Devices (16 marks)

Short answers: name the device and give the reason for your judgement.

13. (4 marks) Distinguish simile, metaphor and metonymic substitution (borrowed comparison), giving one example of each.

Answer: A simile links tenor and vehicle with words such as like or as; a metaphor states that one thing is another; in borrowed comparison the tenor never appears, only the vehicle. Example: simile "the moon like frost"; metaphor "time is a thief"; borrowed "gold everywhere" meaning fallen leaves.

14. (4 marks) What is irony? Give one example each of verbal irony and situational irony, and explain the effect.

Answer: Verbal irony says the opposite of what is meant, calling a poor work a masterpiece. Situational irony makes the outcome opposite to expectation, as a miser losing his hoard through over-guarding. The effect is a complicity between writer and reader and a sharper critique.

15. (4 marks) What is plain line drawing (bai miao)? Compared with detailed description, what are its strengths and limits in pace and emotional force?

Answer: Plain line drawing sketches with a few strokes and no figurative ornament. Its strength is a brisk pace and suggestive blanks that invite imagination; its limit is weaker emotional force, which must be offset by precise choice of detail.

16. (4 marks) Distinguish positive foil from contrast by opposition, giving one example of each and its function.

Answer: Positive foil sets like beside like so the subject stands out, as stars set off a bright moon. Contrast by opposition sets opposites side by side, as noise sets off loneliness. Both highlight the subject, but opposition creates greater tension.

Part E: Figures in Literary Publishing and Events (16 marks)

Show your working; amounts are in dollars.

17. (4 marks) The fee is $450 per thousand words and the writer submits 3,200 words. Find the fee.

Answer: 3200 / 1,000 x 450 = $1,440.

18. (4 marks) A poetry collection is printed in 1,500 copies and 1,140 are sold. Find the sell-through rate (one decimal place) and the number of unsold copies.

Answer: 1,140 / 1,500 x 100% = 76.0%; 360 copies remain unsold.

19. (4 marks) A literary prize is $50,000 with 10 percent tax withheld. Find the net amount; if shared equally among 4 winners, how much does each receive?

Answer: 50,000 x (100% - 10%) = $45,000; 45,000 / 4 = $11,250.

20. (4 marks) A reading group has 30 sign-ups and 24 attend. Find the attendance rate (one decimal place); if next month's target is 90 percent, what is the minimum number who must attend (round up)?

Answer: 24 / 30 x 100% = 80.0%; 30 x 90% = 27.0, rounded up to 27 people.

Part F: Guided Writing and Time Planning (16 marks)

Show your working; marks to one decimal place.

21. (4 marks) The paper lasts 90 minutes; the essay is 1,200 characters and you write 20 characters a minute. Find the writing time and the minutes left for reading the question, outlining and checking.

Answer: 1,200 / 20 = 60 minutes; 90 - 60 = 30 minutes left.

22. (4 marks) Reading the question takes 6 minutes, outlining 9 minutes and checking 15 minutes. Find the total and its percentage of the 90-minute paper (one decimal place).

Answer: 6 + 9 + 15 = 30 minutes; 30 / 90 x 100% = 33.3%.

23. (4 marks) The essay is worth 16 marks: content 40 percent, structure 30 percent and language 30 percent. Find the full marks for each part (one decimal place).

Answer: Content 16 x 40% = 6.4 marks; structure 16 x 30% = 4.8 marks; language 16 x 30% = 4.8 marks; total 16 marks.

24. (4 marks) State three time-planning principles for a guided essay and explain why you read the question before writing.

Answer: Principles: read the question and underline key words and the required genre; outline the main idea before drafting paragraphs; reserve time to check for wrong characters and relevance. Reason: the question fixes the theme and the choice of material, so misreading it makes the whole essay irrelevant, and rewriting costs far more than careful reading beforehand.
