



Cambridge Assessment  
International Education

# Syllabus

Cambridge IGCSE®

First Language Chinese 0509

For examination in June 2020, 2021 and 2022.



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## Why choose Cambridge?

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Cambridge Assessment International Education prepares school students for life, helping them develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning. We are part of the University of Cambridge.

Our international qualifications are recognised by the world's best universities and employers, giving students a wide range of options in their education and career. As a not-for-profit organisation, we devote our resources to delivering high-quality educational programmes that can unlock learners' potential.

Our programmes and qualifications set the global standard for international education. They are created by subject experts, rooted in academic rigour and reflect the latest educational research. They provide a strong platform for learners to progress from one stage to the next, and are well supported by teaching and learning resources.

Our mission is to provide educational benefit through provision of international programmes and qualifications for school education and to be the world leader in this field. Together with schools, we develop Cambridge learners who are confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged – equipped for success in the modern world.

Every year, nearly a million Cambridge students from 10 000 schools in 160 countries prepare for their future with an international education from Cambridge International.

**'We think the Cambridge curriculum is superb preparation for university.'**

**Christoph Guttentag**, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University, USA

### Quality management

Our systems for managing the provision of international qualifications and education programmes for students aged 5 to 19 are certified as meeting the internationally recognised standard for quality management, ISO 9001:2008. Learn more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001)



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## Changes to this syllabus

For information about changes to this syllabus for 2020, 2021 and 2022, go to page 14.



# 1 Why choose this syllabus?

## Key benefits

Cambridge IGCSE® syllabuses are created especially for international students. For over 25 years, we have worked with schools and teachers worldwide to develop syllabuses that are suitable for different countries, different types of schools and for learners with a wide range of abilities.

Cambridge IGCSE First Language Chinese is designed for learners whose mother tongue is Chinese. The course allows learners to:

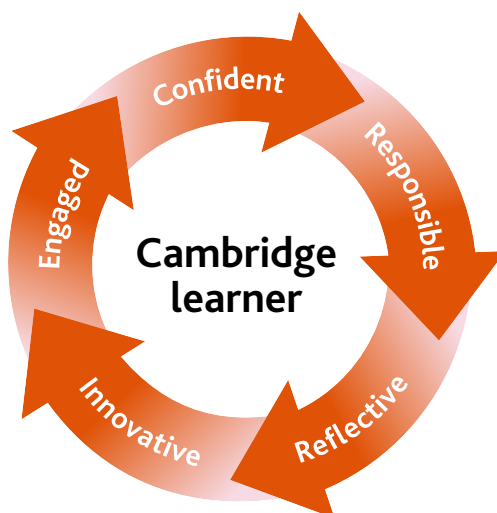
- develop the ability to communicate clearly, accurately and effectively when writing
- learn how to use a wide range of vocabulary and correct grammar, character formation and punctuation
- develop a personal style and an awareness of the audience being addressed.

Learners are also encouraged to read widely, including classical texts, both for their own enjoyment and to further their awareness of the ways in which Chinese can be used. Cambridge IGCSE First Language Chinese also develops more general analysis and communication skills such as synthesis, inference and the ability to order facts and present opinions effectively.

Cambridge IGCSE First Language qualifications are accepted by universities and employers as proof of knowledge and understanding of a language.

Our programmes balance a thorough knowledge and understanding of a subject and help to develop the skills learners need for their next steps in education or employment.

Our approach encourages learners to be:



**'The strength of Cambridge IGCSE qualifications is internationally recognised and has provided an international pathway for our students to continue their studies around the world.'**

**Gary Tan**, Head of Schools and CEO, Raffles International Group of Schools, Indonesia

## Recognition and progression

The combination of knowledge and skills in Cambridge IGCSE First Language Chinese gives learners a solid foundation for further study.

Cambridge IGCSEs are accepted and valued by leading universities and employers around the world as evidence of academic achievement. Many universities require a combination of Cambridge International AS & A Levels and Cambridge IGCSEs or equivalent to meet their entry requirements.

UK NARIC, the national agency in the UK for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills, has carried out an independent benchmarking study of Cambridge IGCSE and found it to be comparable to the standard of GCSE in the UK. This means students can be confident that their Cambridge IGCSE qualifications are accepted as equivalent to UK GCSEs by leading universities worldwide.

Learn more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition)

## Supporting teachers

We provide a wide range of practical resources, detailed guidance, and innovative training and professional development so that you can give your learners the best possible preparation for Cambridge IGCSE.



**'Cambridge IGCSE is one of the most sought-after and recognised qualifications in the world. It is very popular in Egypt because it provides the perfect preparation for success at advanced level programmes.'**

**Mrs Omnia Kassabgy**, Managing Director of British School in Egypt BSE

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## 2 Syllabus overview

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### Aims

The aims describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus.

The aims are to enable students to:

- read a wide range of texts, fluently and with good understanding, enjoying and appreciating a variety of language
- read critically and use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing
- write accurately and effectively using appropriate standard language
- work with information and ideas in Chinese by developing skills of critical evaluation, analysis, synthesis and inference
- acquire and apply a wide vocabulary, alongside a knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology and linguistic conventions
- deepen understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture and classical texts.

### Content overview

Cambridge IGCSE First Language Chinese offers candidates the opportunity to respond knowledgeably to a range of reading passages. Candidates will use some of these passages to inform and inspire their own writing and write in a range of text types for different audiences.

The passages cover a range of genres and types, including fiction and non-fiction, and may also include other forms of writing, such as essays, reviews and articles.

Learners will have the opportunity to read Classical Chinese prose texts to help to deepen their knowledge of Chinese culture.

We encourage learners to become appreciative and critical readers and writers of Chinese.

#### Support for Cambridge IGCSE First Language Chinese



Our School Support Hub [www.cambridgeinternational.org/support](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support) provides Cambridge schools with a secure site for downloading specimen and past question papers, mark schemes, grade thresholds and other curriculum resources specific to this syllabus. The School Support Hub community offers teachers the opportunity to connect with each other and to ask questions related to the syllabus.

## Assessment overview

All candidates take two papers.

### All candidates take:

**Paper 1** 2 hours 15 minutes  
 Reading, Directed Writing and 50%  
 Classical Chinese  
 60 marks  
 Questions will be based on syllabus content  
 Externally assessed

### and:

**Paper 2** 2 hours  
 Writing 50%  
 50 marks  
 Questions will be based on syllabus content  
 Externally assessed

## Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

### AO1 Reading

Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- R1 identify and interpret explicit information and attitudes
- R2 identify and interpret implicit information and attitudes
- R3 demonstrate understanding of how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers
- R4 analyse and evaluate facts, ideas and opinions
- R5 select information for specific purposes.

### AO2 Writing

Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- W1 communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively
- W2 synthesise information, sequence facts and develop ideas and opinions
- W3 use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- W4 use tone, style and register appropriate to audience and context
- W5 write characters correctly and make accurate use of characters, punctuation and grammar.

## Weighting for assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

### Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

Assessment objective	Weighting in IGCSE %
AO1 Reading	40
AO2 Writing	60

### Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %	
	Paper 1	Paper 2
AO1 Reading	75	0
AO2 Writing	25	100



### 3 Subject content

In preparation for assessment, learners should engage with a range of genres and types of texts, including fiction and non-fiction, essays, reviews and articles, as well as Classical Chinese texts. This study should include focus on writers' use of language and style. For the contemporary texts, learners should also focus on the ways in which writers achieve effects and influence readers. Learners should study how influence may include facts, ideas, perspectives, opinions and bias.

As developing writers themselves, learners should be introduced to a range of skills. They should also learn to create a discursive/argumentative letter, article or essay and a descriptive or narrative composition.

The skills covered in the syllabus are outlined below for the different areas of language developed.

#### Assessment Objective

AO1: Reading	Candidates should be able to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify and interpret explicit information and attitudes</li> <li>identify and interpret implicit information and attitudes</li> <li>demonstrate understanding of how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers</li> <li>analyse and evaluate facts, ideas and opinions</li> <li>select information for specific purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings and viewpoints in modern and classical texts</li> <li>demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and viewpoints in modern and classical texts</li> <li>identify and comment on specific ways in which writers use language, form and structure for effect</li> <li>make relevant responses to facts, ideas and opinions in texts</li> <li>accurately identify specific ideas, information and/or features in texts and develop them for a specified purpose</li> </ul>
AO2: Writing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively</li> <li>synthesise information, sequence facts and develop ideas and opinions</li> <li>use a range of appropriate vocabulary</li> <li>use tone, style and register appropriate to audience and context</li> <li>write characters correctly and make accurate use of characters, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>produce clear and coherent texts that communicate effectively, sustaining the reader's interest</li> <li>synthesise information, structure text to make sequence and development of ideas clear to the reader</li> <li>choose vocabulary to create effects appropriate to purpose and audience</li> <li>use form and style suited to purpose and audience</li> <li>write in paragraphs using varied sentence structures, demonstrating control of syntax and grammar and using accurate character formation and punctuation.</li> </ul>

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## 4 Details of the assessment

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The question papers are set entirely in Chinese.

Texts and questions are printed in both traditional and simplified characters on the question paper.

Candidates choose the form they prefer in the examination and may write their answers in either traditional or simplified characters.

For information on the assessment objectives (AOs), see Section 2.

### Paper 1 – Reading, Directed Writing and Classical Chinese

2 hours 15 minutes, 60 marks

Candidates answer **all** the questions in three compulsory sections. Candidates write all their answers in the spaces provided on the question paper. Dictionaries may **not** be used.

The passages will be printed in the question paper Insert.

#### Section 1

##### Comprehension and Use of Language (23 marks)

This comprises a series of questions and sub-questions requiring candidates to respond to Passage 1, a fiction text. There will be comprehension questions worth a total of 14 marks and 9 additional marks relating to the author's use of language and structure and the effect these have.

Passage 1 will be approximately 1000 characters long and will be from either the twentieth or the twenty-first century.

This section assesses the following reading assessment objectives:

- R1 identify and interpret explicit information and attitudes
- R2 identify and interpret implicit information and attitudes
- R3 demonstrate understanding of how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers.

#### Section 2

##### Directed Writing (25 marks)

Candidates answer **one** compulsory question on two thematically linked non-fiction passages – Passage 2 and Passage 3.

Candidates use and evaluate the information in the two passages to create an argumentative/discursive email, letter, essay or article.

Using their own words, candidates write a response of about 250–350 characters.

Responses will be awarded up to 15 marks for content and up to 10 marks for quality of writing.

Passage 2 and Passage 3 will have a combined total of up to 600 characters and will be from either the twentieth or the twenty-first century, or both, and will be thematically linked.

This section assesses the following writing assessment objectives:

- W1 communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively
- W2 synthesise information, sequence facts and develop ideas and opinions
- W3 use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- W4 use tone, style and register appropriate to audience and context
- W5 write characters correctly and make accurate use of characters, punctuation and grammar

This question also assesses the following reading assessment objectives:

- R4 analyse and evaluate facts, ideas and opinions
- R5 select information for specific purposes.

### Section 3

#### Classical Chinese (12 marks)

Candidates answer a series of questions about Passage 4, a previously unseen passage of Classical Chinese text. The passage will be taken from a short story or essay from the Ming dynasty and will be approximately 200 characters in length.

The questions will be a mix of short-answer and multiple choice and will assess reading skills only. There will not be a requirement to write in Classical Chinese.

Candidates will be asked to focus on the language of the passage and their understanding of it. This means that prior knowledge of the text or contextual information such as historical or social knowledge will not be needed.

In preparation for the examination, candidates should have studied a range of Classical Chinese texts from this time period in order to be familiar with the language used.

This section assesses the following reading assessment objectives:

- R1 identify and interpret explicit information and attitudes
- R2 identify and interpret implicit information and attitudes

## Paper 2 – Writing

2 hours, 50 marks

Candidates answer **two** questions, one from each section.

Candidates write all their answers in the spaces provided on the question paper. Dictionaries may **not** be used.

### Section 1

#### **Argumentative/Discursive Writing (25 marks)**

##### **Argumentative:**

An argumentative essay attempts to clearly present a strong position on a particular topic. Its purpose is to both educate and persuade the reader on a particular point of view. It may target an audience that is more resistant to its viewpoint or message.

##### **Discursive:**

The goal of a discursive essay is to present a balanced and objective examination of a subject. It does not, however, have to be expressly neutral. The essay should present both sides of the discussion.

Candidates answer **one** question from a choice of four titles: two argumentative and two discursive.

Candidates use the title to develop and write a composition.

Candidates are advised to write about 400–600 characters.

### Section 2

#### **Descriptive/Narrative Writing (25 marks)**

Candidates answer **one** question from a choice of four titles: two descriptive and two narrative.

Candidates use the title to develop and write a composition.

Candidates are advised to write about 400–600 characters.

This paper tests the following writing assessment objectives:

- W1 communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively
- W2 synthesise information, sequence facts and develop ideas and opinions
- W3 use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- W4 use tone, style and register appropriate to audience and context
- W5 write characters correctly and make accurate use of characters, punctuation and grammar.

## 5 What else you need to know

This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support. Find more information about our administrative processes at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsofficers](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsofficers)

### Before you start

#### Previous study

We recommend that learners starting this course should have studied a language curriculum such as the Cambridge Lower Secondary programme or equivalent national educational framework such as the Key Stage 3 programme of study within the National Curriculum for England.

#### Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge IGCSE syllabuses based on learners having about 130 guided learning hours for each subject during the course but this is for guidance only. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to local practice and their previous experience of the subject.

#### Availability and timetables

You can enter candidates in the June exam series. You can view the timetable for your administrative zone at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables)

All Cambridge schools are allocated to one of six administrative zones. Each zone has a specific timetable. This syllabus is **not** available in all administrative zones. To find out about the availability visit the syllabus page at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/igcse](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/igcse)

Private candidates can enter for this syllabus.

#### Combining with other syllabuses

Candidates can take this syllabus alongside other Cambridge International syllabuses in a single exam series. The only exceptions are:

- Cambridge IGCSE Chinese as a Second Language (0523)
- Cambridge IGCSE Mandarin Chinese (0547)
- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) and Cambridge O Level syllabuses are at the same level.

#### Group awards: Cambridge ICE

Cambridge ICE (International Certificate of Education) is a group award for Cambridge IGCSE. It allows schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum by recognising the achievements of learners who pass examinations in a range of different subjects.

Learn more about Cambridge ICE at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/cambridgeice](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/cambridgeice)

## Making entries

Exams officers are responsible for submitting entries to Cambridge International. We encourage them to work closely with you to make sure they enter the right number of candidates for the right combination of syllabus components. Entry option codes and instructions for submitting entries are in the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*. Your exams officer has a copy of this guide.

### Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as 'administrative zones'. We allocate all Cambridge schools to one administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable. Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

### Support for exams officers

We know how important exams officers are to the successful running of exams. We provide them with the support they need to make your entries on time. Your exams officer will find this support, and guidance for all other phases of the Cambridge Exams Cycle, at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsofficers](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsofficers)

### Retakes

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to. This is a linear qualification so candidates cannot re-sit individual components.

### Equality and inclusion

We have taken great care to avoid bias of any kind in the preparation of this syllabus and related assessment materials. In compliance with the UK Equality Act (2010) we have designed this qualification to avoid any direct and indirect discrimination.

The standard assessment arrangements may present unnecessary barriers for candidates with disabilities or learning difficulties. We can put arrangements in place for these candidates to enable them to access the assessments and receive recognition of their attainment. We do not agree access arrangements if they give candidates an unfair advantage over others or if they compromise the standards being assessed.

Candidates who cannot access the assessment of any component may be able to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have completed.

Information on access arrangements is in the *Cambridge Handbook* at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsofficers](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsofficers)

### Language

This syllabus is available in English only. The related assessment materials are available in Chinese.

## After the exam

### Grading and reporting

Grades A\*, A, B, C, D, E, F or G indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge IGCSE.

A\* is the highest and G is the lowest. 'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for grade G. 'Ungraded' is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate. In specific circumstances your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (result pending)
- X (no result)
- Y (to be issued)

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

## How students and teachers can use the grades

Assessment at Cambridge IGCSE has two purposes.

- To measure learning and achievement.

The assessment:

- confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus, to the levels described in the grade descriptions.

- To show likely future success.

The outcomes:

- help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful
- help students choose the most suitable course or career.

## Grade descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give an indication of the standards of achievement candidates awarded particular grades are likely to show. Weakness in one aspect of the examination may be balanced by a better performance in some other aspect.

Grade descriptions for Cambridge IGCSE First Language Chinese will be published after the first assessment of the IGCSE in 2020. Find more information at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/igcse](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/igcse)

## Changes to this syllabus for 2020, 2021 and 2022

<b>Changes to syllabus content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The syllabus sections have been updated.</li> <li>The syllabus aims have been revised.</li> <li>The syllabus content has been updated.</li> <li>The syllabus now includes the assessment of Classical Chinese in the Reading paper.</li> </ul>
<b>Changes to assessment (including changes to specimen papers)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The assessment objectives have been revised. Please refer to the details of the assessment objectives as listed in the syllabus.</li> <li>The assessment objectives remain grouped under <b>two</b> main headings: AO1: Reading and AO2: Writing.</li> <li>A revised grid showing the relationship between the scheme of assessment and the assessment objectives has been included.</li> <li>The question papers have been revised and now have a new format. Please see the description of components in the syllabus for further detail.</li> <li>In summary, the new question papers are:               <p><b>Paper 1: Reading, Directed Writing and Classical Chinese</b></p> <p>This question paper now contains three sections.</p> <p>Section 1: Comprehension and Use of Language</p> <p>Section 2: Directed Writing</p> <p>Section 3: Classical Chinese</p> <p>Revised marking criteria has been produced.</p> <p><b>Paper 2: Writing</b></p> <p>This question paper now contains two sections.</p> <p>Candidates write <b>two</b> essays, one from each section.</p> <p>Section 1: Argumentative/Discursive Writing</p> <p>Section 2: Descriptive/Narrative Writing</p> <p>Revised levels of response mark schemes have been produced.</p> </li> </ul>

In addition to reading the syllabus, teachers should refer to the updated specimen assessment materials.

The syllabus and specimen papers use our new name, Cambridge Assessment International Education.

**You are strongly advised to read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.**

Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2020 are suitable for use with this syllabus.





'While studying Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge International A Levels, students broaden their horizons through a global perspective and develop a lasting passion for learning.'

**Zhai Xiaoning**, Deputy Principal, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China

Cambridge Assessment International Education  
1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU, United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0)1223 553554 Fax: +44 (0)1223 553558  
Email: [info@cambridgeinternational.org](mailto:info@cambridgeinternational.org) [www.cambridgeinternational.org](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org)

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