



Cambridge Assessment
International Education

Syllabus

Cambridge IGCSE™

First Language Chinese 0509

Use this syllabus for exams in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Exams are available in the June series.



Why choose Cambridge International?

Cambridge International 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 Cambridge Pathway gives students a clear path for educational success from age 5 to 19. Schools can shape the curriculum around how they want students to learn – with a wide range of subjects and flexible ways to offer them. It helps students discover new abilities and a wider world, and gives them the skills they need for life, so they can achieve at school, university and work.

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 the Cambridge Pathway.

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

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



Quality management

Cambridge International is committed to providing exceptional quality. In line with this commitment, our quality management system for the provision of international qualifications and education programmes for students aged 5 to 19 is independently certified as meeting the internationally recognised standard, ISO 9001:2015. Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001

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Important: Changes to this syllabus



For information about changes to this syllabus for 2023, 2024 and 2025, go to page 15.

The latest syllabus is version 1, published September 2020. There are no significant changes which affect teaching.

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

1 Why choose this syllabus?

Key benefits

Cambridge IGCSE is the world's most popular international qualification for 14 to 16 year olds, although it can be taken by students of other ages. It is tried, tested and trusted.

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

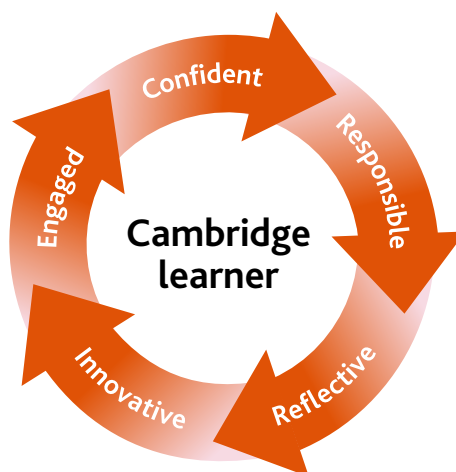
- develop the ability to communicate clearly, accurately and effectively when writing
- learn how to use a wide range of vocabulary and correct grammar, character formation and punctuation
- develop a personal style and an awareness of the audience being addressed.

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

International recognition and acceptance

Our expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment is the basis for the recognition of our programmes and qualifications around the world. The combination of knowledge and skills in Cambridge IGCSE First Language Chinese gives learners a solid foundation for further study. Candidates who achieve grades A* to C are well prepared to follow a wide range of courses including Cambridge International AS & A Level Chinese.

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 the reformed 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

'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.'

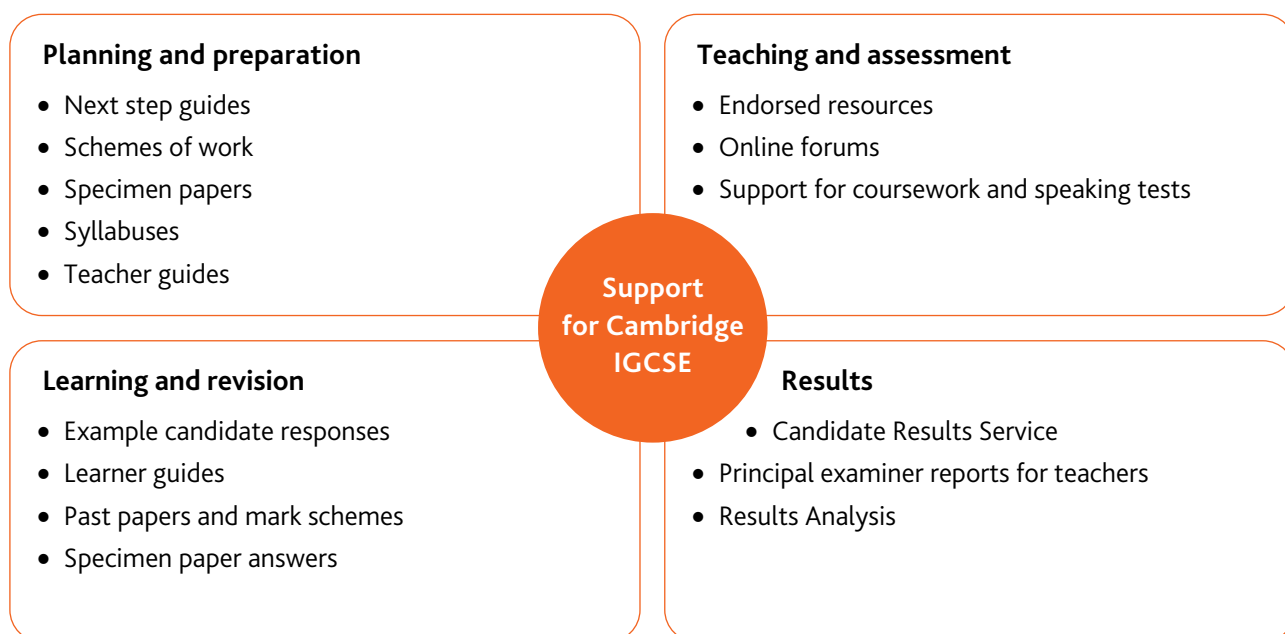
Managing Director of British School in Egypt BSE

Supporting teachers

We provide a wide range of resources, detailed guidance and innovative training and professional development so that you can give your students the best possible preparation for Cambridge IGCSE. To find out which resources are available for each syllabus go to our School Support Hub.

The School Support Hub is our secure online site for Cambridge teachers where you can find the resources you need to deliver our programmes. You can also keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community through our online discussion forums.

Find out more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/support



Sign up for email notifications about changes to syllabuses, including new and revised products and services at www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates

Professional development

We support teachers through:

- Introductory Training – face-to-face or online
- Extension Training – face-to-face or online
- Enrichment Professional Development – face-to-face or online

Find out more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/events

- Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications

Find out more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/profdev

Supporting exams officers

We provide comprehensive support and guidance for all Cambridge exams officers. Find out more at: www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide



2 Syllabus overview

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.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is an education organisation and politically neutral. The contents of this syllabus, examination papers and associated materials do not endorse any political view. We endeavour to treat all aspects of the exam process neutrally.



Assessment overview

All candidates take two components. Candidates will be eligible for grades A* to G.

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

Information on availability is in the **Before you start** section.

We will not allow some access arrangements for this qualification because they affect the assessment objectives. Please contact info@cambridgeinternational.org if your candidate(s) requires access arrangements

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
Total	100

Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

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

3 Subject content

This syllabus gives you the flexibility to design a course that will interest, challenge and engage your learners. Where appropriate you are responsible for selecting resources and examples to support your learners' study. These should be appropriate for the learners' age, cultural background and learning context as well as complying with your school policies and local legal requirements.

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

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

Candidates should be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings and viewpoints in modern and classical texts
- demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and viewpoints in modern and classical texts
- identify and comment on specific ways in which writers use language, form and structure for effect
- make relevant responses to facts, ideas and opinions in texts
- accurately identify specific ideas, information and/or features in texts and develop them for a specified purpose

AO2: Writing

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively • synthesise information, sequence facts and develop ideas and opinions • use a range of appropriate vocabulary • use tone, style and register appropriate to audience and context • write characters correctly and make accurate use of characters, punctuation and grammar. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce clear and coherent texts that communicate effectively, sustaining the reader's interest • synthesise information, structure text to make sequence and development of ideas clear to the reader • choose vocabulary to create effects appropriate to purpose and audience • use form and style suited to purpose and audience • write in paragraphs using varied sentence structures, demonstrating control of syntax and grammar and using accurate character formation and punctuation. |
|--|--|

4 Details of the assessment

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/eoguide

Before you start

Previous study

We recommend that learners who are beginning this course should have a level in Chinese equivalent to First Language competence.

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

All Cambridge schools are allocated to one of six administrative zones. Each zone has a specific timetable.

You can view the timetable for your administrative zone at www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables

You can enter candidates in the June exam series.

Check you are using the syllabus for the year the candidate is taking the exam.

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 exams in a range of different subjects.

Learn more about Cambridge ICE at 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/eoguide

Retakes

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to. Information on retake entries is at www.cambridgeinternational.org/entries

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 our effort to comply with the UK Equality Act (2010) we have taken all reasonable steps to avoid any direct and indirect discrimination.

The standard assessment arrangements may present barriers for candidates with impairments. Where a candidate is eligible, we may be able to make arrangements to enable that candidate to access 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.

We will not allow some access arrangements for this qualification because they affect the assessment objectives. Please contact info@cambridgeinternational.org if your candidate(s) requires access arrangements

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/eoguide

Language

This syllabus is available in English and Chinese. The 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 (PENDING)
- X (NO RESULT).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

On the statement of results and certificates, Cambridge IGCSE is shown as INTERNATIONAL GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION (IGCSE).

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 syllabus in 2020. Find more information at www.cambridgeinternational.org/0509

Changes to this syllabus for 2023, 2024 and 2025

The syllabus has been updated. This is version 1, published September 2020.

There are no significant changes which affect teaching.

You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.

Significant changes to the syllabus are indicated by black vertical lines either side of the text.

Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2020 are still 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