



CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Syllabus

Cambridge IGCSETM

Chinese as a Second Language 0523

Use this syllabus for exams in 2028 and 2029.

Exams are available in the June series.



Version I

For the purposes of screen readers, any mention in this document of Cambridge IGCSE refers to Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Why choose Cambridge?

We work with schools worldwide to build an education that shapes knowledge, understanding and skills. Together, we give learners the confidence they need to thrive and make a positive impact in a changing world.

As part of the University of Cambridge, we offer a globally trusted and flexible framework for education from age 3 to 19, informed by research, experience, and listening to educators.

With recognised qualifications, high-quality resources, comprehensive support and valuable insights, we help schools prepare every student for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Qualifications that are recognised and valued worldwide

From the world's top-ranked universities to local higher education institutions, Cambridge qualifications open doors to a world of opportunities.

Setting a global standard

With over 160 years of experience in delivering fair, valid and reliable assessments to students worldwide, we offer a global, recognised performance standard for international education.

Your path, your way

Schools can adapt our curriculum, high-quality teaching and learning resources and flexible assessments to their local context. Our aligned offer helps Cambridge schools support every learner to reach their potential and thrive.

Learning with lasting impact

Cambridge learners build subject knowledge and conceptual understanding, and develop a broad range of skills, learning habits and attributes to help make them ready for the world.

Improving learning outcomes through data-led insight and action

Our trusted baseline and diagnostic assessments, together with our insights and evaluation service, help schools turn data into knowledge and actionable insights, to inform teaching decisions and improve learner outcomes.

Bringing together a community of experts

We bring together the collective knowledge of experts and our diverse community of educators worldwide, supporting them to learn from one another and share ideas and information.

Tackling the climate crisis together

We believe that education is key to tackling the climate crisis. Together with Cambridge schools, we can empower young people with the skills and knowledge to take action on climate change, helping them be ready for the world.

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

Feedback from: Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University, USA

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Important: Changes to this syllabus

The latest syllabus is version 1, published September 2025. 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 at any age. Taught by over 5000 schools in 150 countries, it is tried, tested and trusted.

Students can choose from 70 subjects in any combination, including 30 languages.

Our programmes promote 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 in Cambridge IGCSE Chinese as a Second Language encourages learners to be:

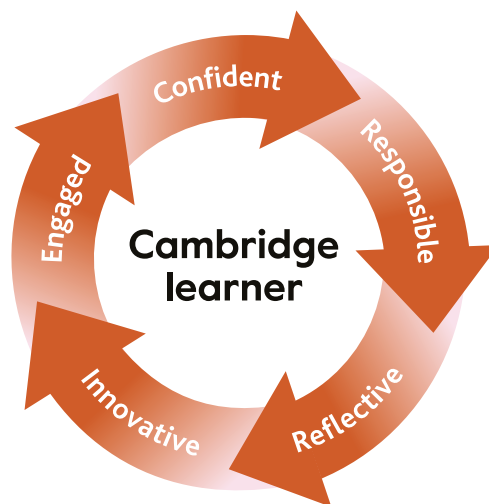
confident, understanding and communicating effectively in a range of situations

responsible, through developing language skills to express ideas

reflective, developing an awareness of how to use language effectively for communication

innovative, experimenting with language and applying their skills in different situations

engaged, taking an active interest in the ways language is used.



School feedback: ‘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.’

Feedback from: Gary Tan, Head of Schools and CEO, Raffles Group of Schools, Indonesia

Qualifications that are recognised and valued worldwide

Cambridge qualifications prepare and equip learners with the skills they need to thrive at university and beyond. The world's best higher education institutions recognise our qualifications and value the critical thinking skills, independent research abilities and deep subject knowledge that Cambridge learners bring.

We continually work with universities and colleges in every part of the world to ensure that they understand and accept our qualifications. Cambridge IGCSE provides a springboard to the Cambridge Advanced stage, as well as other post-16 routes. The combination of knowledge and skills in Cambridge IGCSE Chinese as a Second Language 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.

Many universities require a combination of Cambridge International AS & A Levels and Cambridge IGCSEs or equivalent to meet their entry requirements.

UK ENIC, 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 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

School feedback: '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.'

Feedback from: Managing Director of British School of Egypt BSE

Supporting teachers

We believe education works best when teaching and learning are closely aligned to the curriculum, resources and assessment. Our high-quality teaching support helps to maximise teaching time and enables teachers to engage learners of all backgrounds and abilities.

We aim to provide the following support for each Cambridge qualification:

- Syllabus
- Specimen question papers and mark schemes
- Specimen paper answers
- Schemes of Work
- Example candidate responses
- Past papers and mark schemes
- Principal examiner reports for teachers

These resources are available on the School Support Hub at www.cambridgeinternational.org/support, our secure online site for Cambridge teachers. Your exams officer can provide you with a login.

Additional teaching & learning resources are also available for many syllabuses and vary according to the nature of the subject and the structure of the assessment of each syllabus. These can include ready-built lesson materials, digital resources and multimedia for the classroom and homework, guidance on assessment and much more. Beyond the resources available on the Schools Support Hub, a wide range of endorsed textbooks and associated teaching and learning support are available from Cambridge at www.cambridge.org/education and from other publishers. Resources vary according to the nature of the subject and the structure of the assessment of each syllabus.

You can also contact our global Cambridge community or talk to a senior examiner on our discussion forums.

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

Professional development

Find the next step on your professional development journey.

- **Introduction courses** – An introduction to Cambridge programmes and qualifications. For teachers who are new to Cambridge programmes or new to a specific syllabus.
- **Focus on Teaching courses** – These are for teachers who want to explore a specific area of teaching and learning within a syllabus or programme.
- **Focus on Assessment courses** – These are for teachers who want to understand the assessment of a syllabus in greater depth.
- **Marking workshops** – These workshops help you become more familiar with what examiners are looking for, and provide an opportunity to raise questions and share your experiences of the syllabus.
- **Enrichment Professional Development** – Transform your approach to teaching with our Enrichment workshops. Each workshop focuses on a specific area of teaching and learning practice.
- **Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications (PDQs)** – Practice-based programmes that transform professional learning for practicing teachers. Available at Certificate and Diploma level.

For more information visit www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools

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.

Students following a course based on this syllabus will:

- develop the ability to use Chinese effectively for the purpose of practical communication
- form a sound foundation for the skills required for further study or employment using Chinese as the medium
- develop an awareness of the nature of language and language-learning skills
- expand their vocabulary in Chinese
- enhance their personal development.

We are 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.



Content overview

Cambridge IGCSE Chinese as a Second Language offers learners the opportunity to develop practical communication skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Learners will be presented with a variety of stimuli that will build up their skills in reading and writing. They will learn to select relevant details, understand the difference between what is directly stated and implied, and practise writing for different purposes and audiences. Learners will listen to a range of spoken material, including talks and conversations, in order to develop listening skills. In both written and spoken Chinese, learners will be able to respond to factual information as well as abstract ideas. Learners will engage in conversations on a variety of topics, and develop their skills in expressing their viewpoints with a degree of accuracy and clarity.

Cambridge IGCSE Chinese as a Second Language will enable learners to become independent users of Chinese and to use Chinese to communicate effectively in a variety of practical contexts.

Texts and questions are printed in both traditional and simplified characters on the question papers. Candidates choose the form they prefer in the examination and may write their answers in either traditional or simplified characters.

The Speaking test is assessed in Mandarin Chinese only.

Assessment overview

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

The reading passages and questions are printed in both traditional and simplified characters on the question papers.

Candidates may write their answers in either traditional or simplified characters.

<p>All candidates take:</p> <p>Paper 1 2 hours Reading and Writing 60% 60 marks</p> <p>Written examination consisting of five exercises that test a range of reading and writing skills. Types of task include: information transfer, short-answer questions, multiple-matching, functional writing and extended writing.</p> <p>Externally assessed</p>	<p>and:</p> <p>Paper 2 Approx. 35–45 minutes Listening 20% 30 marks</p> <p>Written examination consisting of four exercises that test listening skills. Candidates listen to recordings of short and longer spoken texts. Types of task include: short-answer questions, gap-fill sentences, information correction and multiple-choice questions.</p> <p>All listening material is recorded in Mandarin Chinese.</p> <p>Externally assessed</p>
<p>and:</p> <p>Component 3 Approx. 10–13 minutes Speaking 20% 60 marks</p> <p>The Speaking test is conducted in Mandarin Chinese.</p> <p>The Speaking test consists of three parts: candidates give a two- to three-minute presentation, followed by a short discussion with the examiner about the presentation, followed by a short conversation with the examiner about general topics.</p> <p>Internally assessed and externally moderated</p>	

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

Check the timetable at www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables for the test date window for Component 3.

Check the samples database at www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples for submission information, forms and deadlines for Component 3.

Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

AO1 Reading

- R1 identify and select relevant information
- R2 understand ideas, opinions and attitudes
- R3 show understanding of the connections between ideas, opinions and attitudes
- R4 understand what is implied but not directly stated, e.g. writer's purpose, intention and feelings

AO2 Writing

- W1 communicate information/ideas/opinions clearly, accurately and effectively
- W2 organise ideas into coherent paragraphs using a range of appropriate linking devices
- W3 use a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary accurately and effectively
- W4 show control of punctuation and character formation
- W5 use appropriate register and style/format for the given purpose and audience

AO3 Listening

- L1 identify and select relevant information
- L2 understand ideas, opinions and attitudes
- L3 show understanding of the connections between ideas, opinions and attitudes
- L4 understand what is implied but not directly stated, e.g. speaker's intention or feelings, guided by the speaker's tone of voice

AO4 Speaking

- S1 present information and communicate ideas/opinions clearly, accurately and effectively
- S2 develop responses and link ideas using a range of appropriate linking devices
- S3 use a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary accurately and effectively
- S4 show control of pronunciation and intonation patterns
- S5 engage in a conversation and contribute effectively to help move the conversation forward

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	30
AO2 Writing	30
AO3 Listening	20
AO4 Speaking	20
Total	100

Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %		
	Paper 1	Paper 2	Component 3
AO1 Reading	50	0	0
AO2 Writing	50	0	0
AO3 Listening	0	100	0
AO4 Speaking	0	0	100
Total	100	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.

The skills covered in the syllabus are outlined below.

1 Reading

- understand public notices and signs (including timetables and advertisements)
- identify and select correct details from simple texts
- select and organise relevant information from a range of texts that are likely to be within the experience of young people and reflecting the interests of people from varied cultural backgrounds, such as blogs, brochures, emails, forms, imaginative writing, letters, magazines, newspapers and webpages
- identify some ideas, opinions and attitudes in a range of texts
- understand what is implied but not directly stated within a text, such as opinion, writer's purpose and intention
- identify the important points or themes within an extended piece of writing
- draw conclusions from an extended text and recognise connections between related ideas within a text

2 Writing

- communicate factual information, ideas and arguments in short and extended writing tasks in appropriate and accurate Chinese
- respond to a written stimulus and use appropriate register and style/format for the given purpose and audience, such as an informal letter/email, an article, a report or review
- use a range of grammatical structures, punctuation and vocabulary
- express opinions and use appropriate register/style
- select and organise information and ideas into coherent paragraphs and use a range of linking devices

3 Listening

- understand factual information and ideas from a range of sources, such as a recorded phone message, news or weather report, travel broadcast, interview, dialogue, memoir or telephone conversation
- identify relevant information and select correct details from a range of sources
- identify ideas, opinions and attitudes from a range of sources and understand the connections between them
- show some awareness of what is implied but not directly stated, such as a speaker's intention or feelings

4 Speaking

- communicate factual information, ideas and arguments
- use a range of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures using suitable pronunciation and intonation
- organise and link ideas with a range of appropriate linking devices
- give a short, clear presentation without a script on a topic of the candidate's choice
- demonstrate competence in a range of speech activities, such as respond to questions on topics within a defined range of topics as stated in the syllabus (for example, past and present schooling, future plans and current affairs)
- take part in a conversation and demonstrate flexibility in dealing with new ideas and other speakers' responses
- show a sense of audience

Faculty feedback: 'Understanding how and why our climate is changing and providing the knowledge and skills to explore the challenges plays a key role in every student's education.'

Feedback from: Dr Amy Munro-Faure, Head of Education and Student Engagement of Cambridge Zero

4 Details of the assessment

Paper 1 – Reading and Writing

Written paper, 2 hours, 60 marks

All questions and responses will be in Mandarin Chinese.

The reading passages and questions are printed in both traditional and simplified characters on the question paper. Candidates may write their answers in either traditional or simplified characters.

Candidates should attempt **all** questions.

For all parts of this paper, candidates write their answers in spaces provided in the question paper booklet. Dictionaries may **not** be used in the examination.

The question paper has five exercises:

Exercise 1 – Information transfer: candidates complete a form/notes template based on information provided in the question paper.

Assessment objectives: R1, R2, R3

Total marks: 8

Exercise 2 – Short-answer questions: candidates read a text printed in the question paper and answer a series of questions that test their gist-reading skills and reading for detail. Some questions in this exercise will also test implicit meaning. Questions require short answers. The text will be one of the following types: advertisement, brochure, leaflet, guide, report, manual, instructions or newspaper/magazine article. Assessment objectives: R1, R2, R3, R4

Total marks: 12

Exercise 3 – Multiple-matching: candidates read a series of short paragraphs followed by a series of sentences, then match each sentence to one of the paragraphs.

Assessment objectives: R1, R2, R3

Total marks: 10

Exercise 4 – Writing: candidates write a short piece of functional prose, such as an email. A stimulus of short prompts and/or pictures will be printed in the question paper. A purpose, format and audience for the writing will be specified.

Candidates are required to write 100–120 characters.

Assessment objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5

Total marks: 8

Exercise 5 – Extended writing: candidates write a longer piece of continuous prose. A stimulus of short prompts will be printed in the question paper. A purpose, format and audience for the writing will be specified. Candidates are required to write 250–300 characters.

Assessment objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5

Total marks: 22

Paper 2 – Listening

Written paper, approximately 35–45 minutes, 30 marks

All questions and responses will be in Mandarin Chinese.

The audio material will be provided in Mandarin Chinese only.

Candidates should attempt **all** questions.

For all parts of this paper, candidates write their answers in spaces provided in the question paper booklet. Dictionaries may **not** be used in the examination.

Each exercise tests listening comprehension of spoken material (e.g. dialogues, interviews, conversations, news items, public announcements, talks) provided as an audio material file that will be played in the examination room. Candidates hear the spoken material for each exercise twice and appropriate pauses are included on the recording to allow candidates time to read the questions and write their answers.

The audio material is controlled by the invigilator of the examination, not the candidate(s).

Centres should check the *Cambridge Handbook* for the year candidates are taking the assessment for information on when the audio materials will be available and how to access the materials
www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Teachers/invigilators should consult the relevant sections of the *Cambridge Handbook* for details about room, equipment, checking the audio material in advance and guidance on ensuring that candidates can hear the recording clearly.

The question paper has four exercises:

Exercise 1 – Short-answer questions: candidates hear a series of short spoken texts (e.g. travel announcements, recorded phone messages, brief dialogues) and write short answers in response to six questions.

Assessment objectives: L1, L2

Total marks: 6

Exercise 2 – Gap-fill sentences: candidates hear a longer spoken text (e.g. conversation, interview, monologue, formal talk) and complete gaps in notes/sentences printed in the question paper.

Assessment objectives: L1, L2

Total marks: 8

Exercise 3 – Information correction: candidates hear a longer spoken text (e.g. conversation, interview, monologue, talk) and correct information in notes printed in the question paper.

Assessment objectives: L2, L3, L4

Total marks: 8

Exercise 4 – Multiple-choice questions: candidates hear a discussion between two speakers and answer multiple-choice comprehension questions.

Assessment objectives: L1, L2, L3, L4

Total marks: 8

Component 3 Speaking

Speaking test, approximately 10–13 minutes, 60 marks

There is no question paper for the Speaking test. **The test will be conducted and assessed in Mandarin Chinese**, and must be recorded for **all** candidates. No other variety of Chinese will be accepted.

Dictionaries may **not** be taken into the test.

Speaking tests take place during a period before the main examination series (see the timetable for the relevant series). A teacher/examiner at the centre assesses candidates using the Speaking assessment criteria grid (see pages 20–23). After the tests, the centre must send the final marks, a recorded sample of the candidates' performances and completed forms for external moderation to Cambridge International before the advertised deadline.

Administration of the Speaking test

Further information about the administration of speaking tests is provided in the *Cambridge Handbook* for the relevant year of assessment at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**. The forms for completion, information, dates and methods of submission of the speaking test marks, and sample size requirements are available from **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples**. Further guidance is supplied in the *Guidance for the administration of the Speaking test* document, which is also available from our website.

Using the samples database

The samples database refers you to key information about administering speaking tests for each syllabus.

Use the database to find out:

- when and how to submit your marks for moderated coursework and non-coursework tests
- when and how to submit your candidates' work
- which forms to complete and return with your candidates' work.

The samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples** will ask you for:

- your country/territory
- the syllabus code (i.e. 0523 for this syllabus).

The database will then take you to the information you need, including dates and methods of submission of candidates' marks and work, as well as any forms you may need to complete.

Recording and submitting candidates' marks and work

Please refer to the samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples** for information, dates and methods of submission of candidates' marks and work. You should follow the instructions for speaking test component 0523/03 on the samples database.

You should record marks on the required form which you should download each year from the samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples**. Follow the instructions on the form to complete it. The marks on this form must be identical to the marks you submit to Cambridge International.

Internal moderation

If more than one teacher in your centre is marking internal assessments, you must make arrangements to moderate or standardise your teachers' marking so that all candidates are assessed to a common standard. (If only one teacher is marking internal assessments, no internal moderation is necessary). You can find further information on the process of internal moderation in the *Cambridge Handbook* and on the samples database for the relevant year of assessment.

You should record the internally moderated marks for all candidates on the Working Mark Sheet and submit these marks to Cambridge International according to the instructions on the samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples**

External moderation

Cambridge International will externally moderate all internally assessed components.

- You must submit the marks of all candidates to Cambridge International.
- You must also submit the marked work of a sample of candidates to Cambridge International.

The sample you submit to Cambridge International should include examples of the marking of each teacher. The samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples** explains how the sample will be selected.

The samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples** also provides details of how to submit the marks and work.

External moderators will produce a short report for each centre with feedback on your marking and administration of the assessment.

Structure of the Speaking test

There are three parts to the test:

Part 1

A two- to three-minute presentation by the candidate on a chosen topic.

The topic of the presentation should be chosen by the candidate and must reflect an aspect, or aspects, of life in a Chinese-speaking community or Chinese-speaking culture.

Note: A script of the presentation is **not** allowed.

Candidates may prepare a single 'cue card' in Chinese to bring into the examination room. This must be no larger than a postcard, and contain a maximum of five headings to remind candidates of the points they wish to make. Candidates may also bring in a limited quantity of illustrative material (no more than three or four items), which may include maps, diagrams, statistics and pictures, but must not provide additional written support or a script of their presentation.

Assessment objectives: S1, S2, S3, S4, S5

20 marks

Teachers/examiners use speaking assessment criteria – Part 1 Presentation.

Part 2

A four- to five-minute discussion with the teacher/examiner using spontaneous questions about the presentation. The teacher/examiner should encourage full responses by giving candidates the opportunity to explain and justify their opinions. Candidates are expected to give natural replies to questions.

Assessment objectives: S1, S2, S3, S4, S5

20 marks

Teacher/examiners use speaking assessment criteria – Part 2 Topic conversation.

Part 3

A four- to five-minute conversation with the teacher/examiner covering two or three general topics (see Topics for Part 3 of the Speaking test on page 19). The teacher/examiner should encourage full responses by giving candidates the opportunity to explain and justify their opinions. Candidates are expected to give natural replies to questions.

Assessment objectives: S1, S2, S3, S4, S5

20 marks

Teacher/examiners use speaking assessment criteria – Part 3 General conversation.

Topics for Part 3 of the Speaking test

At least two topics will be covered in the general conversation: one from Areas A–B and one from Areas C–D. The candidate will not know in advance which topics will be covered by the examiner.

Topics must be chosen that do not overlap with the content of the candidate's presentation.

Topic areas		Examination topics	
Area A	Young people and education		
	Education and career	School and education	A1
		Future career plans	A2
	Peer relationships	Friendship	A3
		Peer pressure/conflict	A4
Area B	Society		
	Family relationships	Generation gap	B1
		Young people	B2
	Health and fitness	Healthy eating	B3
		Sports and exercise	B4
	Leisure activities	Films and the media	B5
		Hobbies	B6
	Communication and technology	New means of communication	B7
		Social networking	B8
		Learning technology	B9
Area C	The world		
	Geographical surroundings	Urban and rural life	C1
		Travel	C2
		Home town and surrounding areas	C3
	Environment	Pollution	C4
		Recycling	C5
		Global warming	C6
Area D	Cultural diversity		
	Life at home and in other countries	Festivals and celebrations	D1
		Customs and traditions	D2
		Culinary diversity	D3

Speaking assessment criteria grid

Guidance on using levels-based mark schemes

Marking of work should be positive, rewarding achievement where possible, but clearly differentiating across the whole range of marks, where appropriate.

The marker should look at the work and then make a judgement about which level statement is the best fit. In practice, work does not always match one level statement precisely so a judgement may need to be made between two or more level statements.

Once a best-fit level statement has been identified, use the following guidance to decide on a specific mark:

- If the candidate's work **convincingly** meets the level statement, award the highest mark.
- If the candidate's work **just** meets the level statement, award the lowest mark.

Part 1: Presentation [Total: 20 marks]

Enter the separate marks for Content and Presentation [max. 10 marks], Vocabulary, Pronunciation and Intonation [max. 5 marks], and Structures [max. 5 marks] on to the Working Mark Sheet.

	Content and Presentation Knowledge of facts, ability to express opinion and raise issues for discussion	Vocabulary Pronunciation and Intonation	Structures
	9–10 marks	5 marks	5 marks
Level 5	Full and well-organised coverage of the topic Ideas and opinions included as well as factual points Lively presentation that sustains examiner's interest fully	Uses a wide range of precise vocabulary generally accurately Pronunciation and intonation are clear	Uses a variety of complex structures Generally accurate
	7–8 marks	4 marks	4 marks
Level 4	Good coverage and sound organisation of the topic Makes relevant factual points with some ideas and opinions Clear presentation that sustains examiner's interest	Uses a sufficient range of vocabulary, which sometimes lacks precision Vocabulary errors do not impede communication Pronunciation and intonation are generally clear	Uses some complex structures and a range of simple structures Errors do not impede communication
	5–6 marks	3 marks	3 marks
Level 3	Adequate coverage of the topic, generally organised Includes some factual points with few ideas or opinions Presentation is slow and somewhat stilted though examiner's interest is generally sustained	Uses a limited range of vocabulary, but hesitates when going beyond simple structures Vocabulary lacks precision but errors do not usually impede communication Pronunciation and intonation sometimes lack clarity but communication is not impeded	Generally uses simple structures accurately Errors occur when complex structures are attempted Any errors in simple structures do not impede communication

	Content and Presentation Knowledge of facts, ability to express opinion and raise issues for discussion	Vocabulary Pronunciation and Intonation	Structures
	3–4 marks	2 marks	2 marks
Level 2	Thin coverage of the topic, lacking organisation Few ideas or opinions Mostly coherent but weak presentation that sometimes does not follow a logical sequence	Uses a very limited range of vocabulary which is sometimes inadequate to convey even simple ideas Pauses frequently Vocabulary errors often impede communication Pronunciation and intonation cause some communication difficulties	Generally uses very simple structures, such as single-word responses Errors often occur and some impede communication
	1–2 marks	1 mark	1 mark
Level 1	Very thin and often irrelevant coverage Very little factual information, only vague ideas and opinions Incoherent presentation	Uses enough words to convey only very short pieces of information Pronunciation and intonation cause frequent communication difficulties	Uses only very simple structures Errors often impede communication
	0 marks	0 marks	0 marks
	No rewardable content	No rewardable content	No rewardable content

Part 2: Topic conversation [Total: 20 marks] and Part 3: General conversation [Total 20 marks]

Enter the separate marks for Comprehension and Responsiveness [max. 10 marks], Vocabulary, Pronunciation and Intonation [max. 5 marks], and Structures [max. 5 marks] on to the Working Mark Sheet.

This grid is used for both Parts 2 and 3 and should be applied separately for each part.

	Comprehension and Responsiveness	Vocabulary Pronunciation and Intonation	Structures
	9–10 marks	5 marks	5 marks
Level 5	No problems of comprehension Responses are natural and spontaneous even to unexpected questions and to changes in direction of the conversation Able to present and defend a point of view Shows sustained ability to initiate and maintain conversation and to contribute at some length	Uses a wide range of precise vocabulary generally accurately Pronunciation and intonation are clear	Uses a variety of complex structures Generally accurate
	7–8 marks	4 marks	4 marks
Level 4	Few problems of comprehension Responds thoughtfully, and copes reasonably well with unexpected questions and with changes in direction of the conversation Reasonably forthcoming but tends to follow examiner's lead Responds relevantly and at length to questions which makes frequent prompting unnecessary	Uses a sufficient range of vocabulary, which sometimes lacks precision Vocabulary errors do not impede communication Pronunciation and intonation are generally clear	Uses some complex structures and a range of simple structures Errors do not impede communication

	Comprehension and Responsiveness	Vocabulary Pronunciation and Intonation	Structures
	5–6 marks	3 marks	3 marks
Level 3	<p>Understands discussion around basic situations and concepts, but has difficulty with more complex ideas</p> <p>Some delay in response</p> <p>Needs prompting and encouragement to develop topics but attempts to keep the conversation going</p> <p>May rely heavily on seemingly prepared responses</p>	<p>Uses a limited range of vocabulary but hesitates when going beyond simple structures</p> <p>Vocabulary lacks precision but errors do not usually impede communication</p> <p>Pronunciation and intonation sometimes lack clarity but communication is not impeded</p>	<p>Generally uses simple structures accurately</p> <p>Errors occur when complex structures are attempted</p> <p>Any errors in simple structures do not impede communication</p>
	3–4 marks	2 marks	2 marks
Level 2	<p>Generally has difficulty understanding</p> <p>Responses to questions raised on the majority of topics are limited and brief</p> <p>Needs prompting and encouragement to go beyond single-word responses</p>	<p>Uses a very limited range of vocabulary which is sometimes inadequate to convey even simple ideas</p> <p>Pauses frequently</p> <p>Vocabulary errors often impede communication</p> <p>Pronunciation and intonation cause some communication difficulties</p>	<p>Generally uses very simple structures, such as single-word responses</p> <p>Errors often occur and some impede communication</p>
	1–2 marks	1 mark	1 mark
Level 1	<p>Severe problems of comprehension</p> <p>Very marked hesitation</p> <p>Limited responsiveness</p> <p>Responses are so brief and imprecise that little is communicated</p>	<p>Uses enough words to convey only very short pieces of information</p> <p>Conversation is limited and confused</p> <p>Pronunciation and intonation cause frequent communication difficulties</p>	<p>Uses only very simple structures</p> <p>Errors often impede communication</p>
	0 marks	0 marks	0 marks
	No rewardable content	No rewardable content	No rewardable content

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 starting this course should have studied a broad curriculum such as the Cambridge Lower Secondary programme or equivalent national educational framework.

Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge IGCSE syllabuses to require about 130 guided learning hours for each subject. This is for guidance only. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to each school and the learners' 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. Find your administrative zone at www.cambridgeinternational.org/adminzone

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. The accommodating centre must be able to make appropriate arrangements to conduct and assess the Speaking test, and submit the required sample and paperwork to Cambridge International for External moderation. For more information, please refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*.

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 First Language Chinese (0509)
- 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 encourages 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. 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 access to this guide.

Audio materials

You should check the *Cambridge Handbook* for the year candidates are taking the assessment for information on when the audio materials will be available and how to access the materials

www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

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 an 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 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 and carrying forward marks

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to.

Learn more about retake entries, including definitions and information on entry deadlines, at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/retakes**

Candidates cannot resubmit, in whole or in part, speaking tests from a previous series for remarking. For information, refer to the *Cambridge Handbook* for the relevant year of assessment at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

Marks achieved in Cambridge IGCSE Chinese as a Second Language 0523, Component 3 Speaking **cannot** be carried forward to future series. See the regulations for carry forward set out in the *Cambridge Handbook* for the relevant year of assessment and the *Carry-forward regulations supplement* at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

To confirm what entry options are available for this syllabus, refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries* for the relevant series. Regulations for carrying forward component marks can be found in the *Cambridge Handbook* for the relevant year of assessment at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

Language

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

Accessibility and equality

Syllabus and assessment design

At Cambridge we recognise that our candidates have highly diverse socio-economic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and may also have a variety of protected characteristics. Protected characteristics include special educational needs and disability (SEND), religion and belief, and characteristics related to gender and identity.

We follow accessible design principles to make our syllabuses and assessment materials as accessible and inclusive as possible. We review language accessibility, visual resources, question layout and the contexts used in questions. Using this approach means that we give all candidates the fairest possible opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Access arrangements

Our design principles aim to make sure our assessment materials are accessible for all candidates. To further minimise barriers faced by candidates with SEND, illness or injury, we offer a range of access arrangements and modified papers. This is the principal way in which we comply with our duty to make 'reasonable adjustments', as guided by the UK Equality Act 2010.

Important:

Requested access arrangements should be based on evidence of the candidate's barrier to taking an assessment and should also reflect their normal way of working. For Cambridge to approve an access arrangement, we need to agree that it constitutes a reasonable adjustment and does not affect the security or integrity of the assessment. This is explained in section 1.3 of the *Cambridge Handbook* www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Applying for access arrangements

- Details of our standard access arrangements and modified question papers are available in section 1.3 of the *Cambridge Handbook* www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide
- Centres are expected to check the availability of access arrangements and modified question papers at the start of the course. Check the *Cambridge Handbook*, the assessment objectives listed in the syllabus document and, where applicable, any access arrangement restrictions listed in the syllabus document.
- Contact us at the start of the course to find out if we can approve an access arrangement that is not listed in the *Cambridge Handbook*.
- All applications should be made by the deadlines published in the *Cambridge Handbook*.

Some access arrangements are not allowed in this syllabus because they affect the assessment objectives:

- candidates must **not** use voice-activated software to dictate their written work
- candidates must **not** use word processing technology which uses word prediction and/or phrase prompting including spell check and grammar check
- candidates must **not** use a human reader.

Please note that we cannot provide braille papers for this syllabus. We can only provide braille papers for languages which use the Roman alphabet.

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, Cambridge IGCSE is shown as INTERNATIONAL GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION (IGCSE).

On certificates, Cambridge IGCSE is shown as International General Certificate of Secondary Education.

How students and teachers can use the grades

Assessment at Cambridge IGCSE has two purposes:

- 1 to measure learning and achievement
The assessment confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus.
- 2 to show likely future success
The outcomes help predict which students are well prepared for or likely to be successful in a particular course or career.
The outcomes help students choose the most suitable course or career.

Changes to this syllabus for 2028 and 2029

The syllabus has been updated. This is version 1, published September 2025.

You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme. We review our syllabuses regularly to make sure they continue to meet the needs of our schools. In updating this syllabus, we have made it easier for teachers and students to understand, keeping the familiar features that teachers and schools value.

There are no significant changes which affect teaching.

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.



Syllabuses and specimen materials represent the final authority on the content and structure of all of our assessments.

With a Customer Services team available 24 hours a day, 6 days a week, and dedicated regional teams supporting schools in 160 countries, we understand your local context and are here to guide you so you can provide your learners with everything they need to prepare for Cambridge IGCSE.

Quality management

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



School feedback: ‘While studying Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge International A Levels, students broaden their horizons through a global perspective and develop a lasting passion for learning.’

Feedback from: Zhai Xiaoning, Deputy Principal, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China

We are committed to making our documents accessible in accordance with the WCAG 2.1 Standard. We are always looking to improve the accessibility of our documents. If you find any problems or you think we are not meeting accessibility requirements, contact us at **info@cambridgeinternational.org** with the subject heading: Digital accessibility. If you need this document in a different format, contact us and supply your name, email address and requirements and we will respond within 15 working days.

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