



**Cambridge Assessment  
International Education**

Syllabus

**Cambridge IGCSE™**

**Chinese as a Second Language 0523**

Use this syllabus for exams in 2026 and 2027.

Exams are available in the June series.



中文

Version 1

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

**Cambridge  
Pathway** 

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## Why choose Cambridge International?

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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, are 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. Learn more about our research at [www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/our-research/](http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/our-research/)

We believe education works best when curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment are closely aligned. Our programmes develop deep knowledge, conceptual understanding and higher-order thinking skills, to prepare students for their future. 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.

**School feedback:** ‘We think the Cambridge curriculum is superb preparation for university.’

**Feedback from:** 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 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/](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/about-us/our-standards/)

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## **Important: Changes to this syllabus**



The latest syllabus is version 1, published September 2023. 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.

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## 1 Why choose this syllabus?

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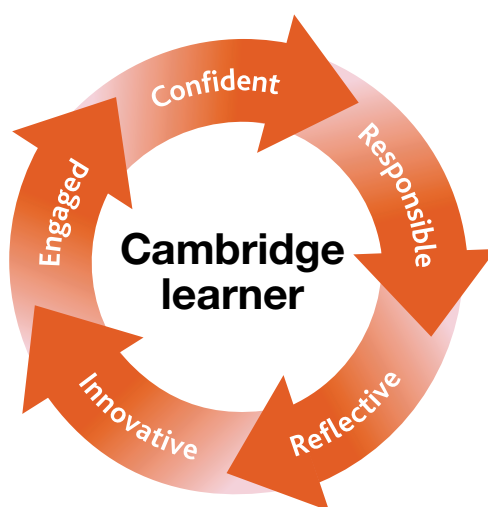
### Key benefits

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.

Students can choose from 70 subjects in any combination – it is taught by over 5000 schools in 150 countries.

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:



**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

## 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 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.

Cambridge IGCSEs are accepted and valued by leading universities and employers around the world as evidence of academic achievement. Cambridge students can be confident that their qualifications will be understood and valued throughout their education and career, in their home country and internationally. 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](http://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 is most effective when curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment are closely aligned. We provide a wide range of resources, detailed guidance, innovative training and targeted 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](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support)

Support for Cambridge IGCSE			
<b>Planning and preparation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Syllabuses</li> <li>Schemes of work</li> <li>Specimen Question Papers and Mark Schemes</li> <li>Teacher guides</li> </ul>	<b>Teaching and assessment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Endorsed resources</li> <li>Online forums</li> <li>Support for speaking components</li> </ul>	<b>Learning and revision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Example candidate responses</li> <li>Past papers and mark schemes</li> <li>Specimen paper answers</li> </ul>	<b>Results</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidate Results Service</li> <li>Principal examiner reports for teachers</li> <li>Results Analysis</li> </ul>

Sign up for email notifications about changes to syllabuses, including new and revised products and services, at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates)

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

## Professional development

Find the next step on your professional development journey.

- Introductory Professional Development – An introduction to Cambridge programmes and qualifications.
- Extension Professional Development – Develop your understanding of Cambridge programmes and qualifications to build confidence in your delivery.
- Enrichment Professional Development – Transform your approach to teaching with our Enrichment workshops.
- Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications (PDQs) – Practice-based programmes that transform professional learning for practising teachers. Available at Certificate and Diploma level.

Find out more at:

[www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools/professional-development/](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools/professional-development/)



### Supporting exams officers

We provide comprehensive support and guidance for all Cambridge exams officers.

Find out more at: [www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)

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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:

- 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
- promote learners' personal development.

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.



## 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.

All candidates take:		and:	
<b>Paper 1</b>	2 hours	<b>Paper 2</b>	Approx. 35–45 minutes
Reading and Writing	60%	Listening	20%
60 marks		30 marks	
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.		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.	
Externally assessed		All listening material is recorded in Mandarin Chinese. Externally assessed	

and:	
<b>Component 3</b>	Approx. 10–13 minutes
Speaking	20%
60 marks	
The Speaking test is conducted in Mandarin Chinese.	
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.	
Internally assessed and externally moderated	

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

Check the timetable at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables) for the test date window for Component 3.

Check the samples database at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples](http://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	Paper 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

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## 4 Details of the assessment

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### 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples)** explains how the sample will be selected.

The samples database at **[www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples](http://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	
<b>Area A</b>	<b>Young people and education</b>	Education and career	School and education A1
			Future career plans A2
		Peer relationships	Friendship A3
			Peer pressure/conflict A4
<b>Area B</b>	<b>Society</b>	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
<b>Area C</b>	<b>The world</b>	Geographical surroundings	Urban and rural life C1
			Travel C2
			Home town and surrounding areas C3
		Environment	Pollution C4
			Recycling C5
			Global warming C6
<b>Area D</b>	<b>Cultural diversity</b>	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.

	<b>Content and Presentation</b> <b>Knowledge of facts, ability to express opinion and raise issues for discussion</b>	<b>Vocabulary</b> <b>Pronunciation and Intonation</b>	<b>Structures</b>
	<b>9–10 marks</b>	<b>5 marks</b>	<b>5 marks</b>
<b>Level 5</b>	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
	<b>7–8 marks</b>	<b>4 marks</b>	<b>4 marks</b>
<b>Level 4</b>	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

	<b>Content and Presentation</b> <b>Knowledge of facts, ability to express opinion and raise issues for discussion</b>	<b>Vocabulary</b> <b>Pronunciation and Intonation</b>	<b>Structures</b>
	<b>5–6 marks</b>	<b>3 marks</b>	<b>3 marks</b>
<b>Level 3</b>	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
	<b>3–4 marks</b>	<b>2 marks</b>	<b>2 marks</b>
<b>Level 2</b>	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
	<b>1–2 marks</b>	<b>1 mark</b>	<b>1 mark</b>
<b>Level 1</b>	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
	<b>0 marks</b>	<b>0 marks</b>	<b>0 marks</b>
	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.

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

	<b>Comprehension and Responsiveness</b>	<b>Vocabulary Pronunciation and Intonation</b>	<b>Structures</b>
	<b>5–6 marks</b>	<b>3 marks</b>	<b>3 marks</b>
<b>Level 3</b>	<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>
	<b>3–4 marks</b>	<b>2 marks</b>	<b>2 marks</b>
<b>Level 2</b>	<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>
	<b>1–2 marks</b>	<b>1 mark</b>	<b>1 mark</b>
<b>Level 1</b>	<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>
	<b>0 marks</b>	<b>0 marks</b>	<b>0 marks</b>
	No rewardable content	No rewardable content	No rewardable content

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## 5 What else you need to know

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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](http://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](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/adminzone)

You can view the timetable for your administrative zone at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables](http://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](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 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](http://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](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)

## Retakes and carrying forward marks

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to. Information on retake entries is at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/retakes](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/retakes)

Candidates cannot resubmit, in whole or in part, speaking tests from a previous series for remarking.

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](http://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 International, we work to avoid direct or indirect discrimination in our syllabuses and assessment materials. We aim to maximise inclusivity for candidates of all national, cultural or social backgrounds and candidates with protected characteristics, which include special educational needs and disability, religion and belief, and characteristics related to gender and identity. We also aim to make our materials as accessible as possible by using accessible language and applying accessible design principles. This gives all candidates the fairest possible opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding and helps to minimise the requirement to make reasonable adjustments during the assessment process.

### Access arrangements

Access arrangements (including modified papers) are the principal way in which Cambridge International complies with our duty, as guided by the UK Equality Act (2010), to make 'reasonable adjustments' for candidates with special educational needs (SEN), disability, illness or injury. Where a candidate would otherwise be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to a candidate with no SEN, disability, illness or injury, we may be able to agree pre-examination access arrangements. These arrangements help a candidate by minimising accessibility barriers and maximising their opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding in an assessment.

#### Important:

Requested access arrangements should be based on evidence of the candidate's barrier to assessment and should also reflect their normal way of working at school. This is explained in the *Cambridge Handbook* [www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)

- For Cambridge International to approve an access arrangement, we will need to agree that it constitutes a reasonable adjustment, involves reasonable cost and timeframe and does not affect the security and integrity of the assessment.
- Availability of access arrangements should be checked by centres at the start of the course. Details of our standard access arrangements and modified question papers are available in the *Cambridge Handbook* [www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)
- Please contact us at the start of the course to find out if we are able to approve an arrangement that is not included in the list of standard access arrangements.
- Candidates who cannot access parts of the assessment may be able to receive an award based on the parts they have completed.

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 human readers.

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 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:

- 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 a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful.  
The outcomes help students choose the most suitable course or career.

## Changes to this syllabus for 2026 and 2027

The syllabus has been updated. This is version 1, published September 2023.

**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.

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



**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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