

Syllabus

Cambridge IGCSE First Language Chinese
Syllabus code 0509
For examination in June 2013



UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

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1. Introduction

1.1 Why choose Cambridge?

University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) is the world's largest provider of international qualifications. Around 1.5 million students from 150 countries enter Cambridge examinations every year. What makes educators around the world choose Cambridge?

Recognition

Cambridge IGCSE is internationally recognised by schools, universities and employers as equivalent to UK GCSE. Cambridge IGCSE is excellent preparation for A/AS Level, the Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), US Advanced Placement Programme and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. Learn more at [**www.cie.org.uk/recognition**](http://www.cie.org.uk/recognition).

Support

CIE provides a world-class support service for teachers and exams officers. We offer a wide range of teacher materials to Centres, plus teacher training (online and face-to-face) and student support materials. Exams officers can trust in reliable, efficient administration of exams entry and excellent, personal support from CIE Customer Services. Learn more at [**www.cie.org.uk/teachers**](http://www.cie.org.uk/teachers).

Excellence in education

Cambridge qualifications develop successful students. They build not only understanding and knowledge required for progression, but also learning and thinking skills that help students become independent learners and equip them for life.

Not-for-profit, part of the University of Cambridge

CIE is part of Cambridge Assessment, a not-for-profit organisation and part of the University of Cambridge. The needs of teachers and learners are at the core of what we do. CIE invests constantly in improving its qualifications and services. We draw upon education research in developing our qualifications.

1. Introduction

1.2 Why choose Cambridge IGCSE First Language Chinese?

The Cambridge IGCSE First Language Chinese syllabus is designed for candidates whose mother tongue is Chinese. Cambridge IGCSE First Language qualifications are accepted by universities and employers as proof of knowledge and understanding of a language. Successful candidates gain lifelong skills including:

- the ability to communicate clearly, accurately and effectively in writing;
- the ability to use a wide range of vocabulary, and correct grammar, spelling and punctuation;
- a personal style and an awareness of the audience being addressed.

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

1.3 Cambridge International Certificate of Education (ICE)

Cambridge ICE is the group award of the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE). It requires the study of subjects drawn from the five different IGCSE subject groups. It gives schools the opportunity to benefit from offering a broad and balanced curriculum by recognising the achievements of students who pass examinations in at least seven subjects, including two languages, and one subject from each of the other subject groups.

The Cambridge portfolio of IGCSE qualifications provides a solid foundation for higher level courses such as GCE A and AS Levels and the International Baccalaureate Diploma as well as excellent preparation for employment.

A wide range of IGCSE subjects is available and these are grouped into five curriculum areas. First Language Chinese (0509) falls into Group I, Languages.

Learn more about ICE at www.cie.org.uk/qualifications/academic/middlesec/ice.

1. Introduction

1.4 How can I find out more?

If you are already a Cambridge Centre

You can make entries for this qualification through your usual channels, e.g. CIE Direct. If you have any queries, please contact us at **international@cie.org.uk**.

If you are not a Cambridge Centre

You can find out how your organisation can become a Cambridge Centre. Email us at **international@cie.org.uk**. Learn more about the benefits of becoming a Cambridge Centre at **www.cie.org.uk**.

2. Assessment at a glance

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2.1 Scheme of assessment

Cambridge IGCSE First Language Chinese comprises two papers. All candidates take Papers 1 and 2 and are eligible for the award of grades A* to G.

Paper 1: Reading	2 hours	Weighting
Candidates answer two questions: Question 1 – 25 marks Candidates answer a series of comprehension questions based on Passage 1. Question 2 – 25 marks Candidates write a summary based on Passages 1 and 2.		60%
Paper 2: Writing	1 hour 15 minutes	Weighting
Candidates write one composition of 400–600 characters.		40%

2.2 Availability

This syllabus is examined in the May/June examination session.

This syllabus is available to private candidates.

Centres in the UK that receive government funding are advised to consult the CIE website www.cie.org.uk for the latest information before beginning to teach this syllabus.

2.3 Combining this with other syllabuses

Candidates can combine this syllabus in an examination session with any other CIE syllabus, except:

- syllabuses with the same title at the same level
- 0547 Mandarin Chinese

Please note that IGCSE, Cambridge International Level 1/Level 2 Certificates and O Level syllabuses are at the same level.

3. Syllabus aims and objectives

3.1 Aims

The aims of the syllabus are the same for all students. The aims are set out below and describe the educational purposes of a course in a First Language for the IGCSE examination. They are not listed in order of priority.

The aims are to:

- enable students to communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in writing;
- enable students to understand and respond appropriately to what they read;
- encourage students to enjoy and appreciate the variety of language;
- complement the students' other areas of study by developing skills of a more general application (e.g. analysis, synthesis, drawing of inferences);
- promote the students' personal development and an understanding of themselves and others.

3.2 Assessment objectives

Reading

Candidates are assessed on their ability to:

R1: Understand and collate explicit meanings

R2: Understand, explain and collate implicit meanings and attitudes

R3: Select, analyse and evaluate what is relevant to specific purposes

R4: Understand how writers achieve effects.

Writing

Candidates are assessed on their ability to:

W1: Articulate experience and express what is thought, felt and imagined

W2: Order and present facts, ideas and opinions

W3: Understand and use a range of appropriate vocabulary

W4: Use language and register appropriate to audience and context

W5: Make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

3. Syllabus aims and objectives

3.3 Specification grid

This grid shows how assessment objectives relate to the examination papers, described in more detail in Section 4.

Assessment Objective	Paper 1		Paper 2
	Question 1	Question 2	
R1	✓	✓	
R2	✓	✓	
R3	✓	✓	
R4	✓		
W1			✓
W2		✓	✓
W3		✓	✓
W4		✓	✓
W5	✓	✓	✓

4. Description of papers

The question papers are set entirely in the target language.

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

4.1 Paper 1: Reading

2 hours

Dictionaries may not be used in the examination.

Questions relate to two passages of approximately 1200–1400 characters in total, linked by a common theme. These passages are printed on the question paper.

Question 1 (25 marks)

This question, based on Passage 1, is divided into a series of sub-questions requiring answers of different lengths.

Questions test the following reading objectives (20 marks):

- R1 Understand and collate explicit meanings
- R2 Understand, explain and collate implicit meanings and attitudes
- R3 Select, analyse and evaluate what is relevant to specific purposes
- R4 Understand how writers achieve effects.

In addition, 5 marks are available for the accuracy of the language in which answers are expressed.

Question 2 (25 marks)

Candidates write a summary of approximately 225–275 characters based on Passage 1 and Passage 2. The question tests the following reading objectives (15 marks):

- R1 Understand and collate explicit meanings
- R2 Understand, explain and collate implicit meanings and attitudes
- R3 Select, analyse and evaluate what is relevant to specific purposes

In addition, 10 marks are available for Writing (5 marks for Style and Organisation and 5 marks for Accuracy of Language).

4. Description of papers

4.2 Paper 2: Writing

1 ¼ hours

Dictionaries may not be used in the examination.

Candidates are required to write **one** composition to be chosen from either of the two sections below.

Section 1 – Discussion and Argument

Section 2 – Description and Narration

Eight titles will be set in total. Candidates are required to write between 400 and 600 characters on their chosen title.

The questions test the following writing objectives (40 marks):

W1 Articulate experience and express what is thought, felt and imagined

W2 Order and present facts, ideas and opinions

W3 Understand and use a range of appropriate vocabulary

W4 Use language and register appropriate to audience and context

W5 Make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling

5. Curriculum content

All candidates follow the same curriculum.

Assessment Objectives	<i>All candidates should be able to:</i>	<i>Candidates aiming for Grades A* to C should, in addition, be able to</i>
Reading	• demonstrate understanding of words within extended texts • scan for and extract specific information • identify main and subordinate topics, summarise, paraphrase, re-express • show some sense of how writers achieve their effects • recognise and respond to simple linguistic devices including figurative language	• show a more precise understanding of extended texts • recognise the relationship of ideas • evaluate effectiveness, draw inferences, compare, analyse, synthesise • show understanding of how writers achieve their effects • recognise and respond to more sophisticated linguistic devices
Writing	• express thoughts, feelings and opinions in order to interest, inform or convince the reader • show some sense of audience • demonstrate adequate control of vocabulary, syntax and grammar • exercise care over punctuation and spelling • write accurate simple sentences • attempt a variety of sentence structures • recognise the need for paragraphing • use appropriate vocabulary	• show a wider and more varied sense of different styles to interest, inform or convince the reader • show a clear sense of audience • demonstrate a sophisticated use of vocabulary and structures • demonstrate accuracy in punctuation and spelling • write accurate complex sentences • employ varied sentence structures • write in well-constructed paragraphs • use imaginative and varied vocabulary

6. Grade descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall, and may conceal weakness in one aspect of the examination that is balanced by above average performance on some other.

Grade A

- Candidates understand and communicate information at both a straightforward and a complex level.
- Candidates understand facts, ideas and opinions, and order and present in detail what is relevant for specific purposes.
- Candidates describe and reflect upon experience and detail, analysing effectively what is felt and what is imagined.
- Candidates recognise implicit meanings and attitudes of a writer.
- Candidates show a clear sense of audience and an understanding of appropriate uses of language.
- Candidates write in well constructed paragraphs, using a full range of appropriate sentence structures and showing accuracy in spelling and punctuation.

Grade C

- Candidates understand and convey information both at a straightforward level and at a more complex level.
- Candidates understand basic facts, ideas and opinions, presenting them with a degree of clarity and accuracy.
- Candidates evaluate material from texts and select what is relevant for specific purposes.
- Candidates describe and reflect upon experience and express effectively what is felt and what is imagined.
- Candidates recognise the more obvious implicit meanings and attitudes of a writer.
- Candidates show a sense of audience and an awareness of appropriate uses of language.
- Candidates write in paragraphs, using sentences of varied kinds and exercising care over spelling and punctuation.

Grade F

- Candidates understand and convey information at a straightforward level.
- Candidates understand basic facts, ideas and opinions, presenting them with a degree of coherence.
- Candidates select material from texts and comment upon it at a literal level.
- Candidates describe experience in concrete terms and express intelligibly what is felt and what is imagined.
- Candidates recognise clear meanings and explicit attitudes of a writer.
- Candidates show awareness that language is used in different ways in different circumstances.
- Candidates write at least in simple sentences – weaknesses in spelling and punctuation and the construction of complex sentences will be apparent, but will not seriously impair communication.

7. Mark schemes

7.1 Paper 1

Question 1: 20 marks are available for Reading, awarded according to a detailed mark scheme written specifically for each question paper.

5 marks are available for Writing, awarded as follows:

Writing: Accuracy of Language	
5 (Excellent)	Clear, carefully chosen language with complex syntax where appropriate. Varied, precise vocabulary. Hardly any or no technical errors.
4 (Good)	Clear, appropriate language. Appropriate vocabulary. Few technical errors.
3 (Adequate)	Language generally appropriate, but unsophisticated and generally simple syntax. Adequate vocabulary. Some technical errors.
2 (Weak)	Unsophisticated language, not always appropriate. Very simple syntax with some clumsiness. Thin vocabulary. A number of technical errors.
1 (Poor)	Thin, inappropriate use of language. Confused and obscure. Many errors.

Question 2: 15 marks are available for Reading. The examiner ticks each relevant point extracted by the candidate from the texts; a mark is awarded for each tick, up to a maximum of 15.

10 marks are available for Writing, awarded as follows:

Writing: Style and Organisation	
5 (Excellent)	Excellent expression and focus with assured use of own words. Good summary style with orderly grouping of ideas; excellent linkage. Answer has sense of purpose.
4 (Good)	Good expression in recognisable summary style. Attempts to focus and to group ideas; good linkage.
3 (Adequate)	Satisfactory expression in own words. Reasonably concise with some sense of order. Occasional lapses of focus.
2 (Weak)	Limited expression but mostly in own words. Some sense of order but little sense of summary. Tendency to lose focus (e.g. by including some anecdote); thread not always easy to follow.
1 (Poor)	Expression just adequate; maybe list-like. Considerable lifting; repetitive. Much irrelevance.

Writing: Accuracy of Language	
5 (Excellent)	Clear, carefully chosen language with complex syntax where appropriate. Varied, precise vocabulary. Hardly any or no technical errors.
4 (Good)	Clear, appropriate language. Appropriate vocabulary. Few technical errors.
3 (Adequate)	Language generally appropriate, but unsophisticated and generally simple syntax. Adequate vocabulary. Some technical errors. Some lifting.
2 (Weak)	Unsophisticated language, not always appropriate. Very simple syntax with some clumsiness. Thin vocabulary. A number of technical errors OR language is almost entirely lifted.
1 (Poor)	Thin, inappropriate use of language. Confused and obscure. Many errors.

7. Mark schemes

7.2 Paper 2

Marks are awarded in two categories, as follows:

- The first mark, out of 20, is for Style and Accuracy. See Table A.
- The second mark, out of 20 is for Content and Structure. See either Table B1, B2 or B3 depending on whether the composition is argumentative, descriptive or narrative.

Table A: Style and Accuracy

Band 1	18–20	• Fluent; variety of well made sentences, including sophisticated complex sentences where appropriate, used to achieve particular effects. • Wide, consistently effective range of vocabulary with appropriately used ambitious words. • Assured use of grammar and punctuation, spelling accurate.
Band 2	15–17	• Mostly fluent; sentences correctly constructed, including a variety of complex sentences. • Vocabulary often effective, sometimes complex, mostly varied. • Grammatically correct; punctuation mostly correct between and within sentences; very occasional spelling mistakes.
Band 3	12–14	• Occasional fluency; sentences of some variety and complexity, correctly constructed. • Appropriate and accurate vocabulary with occasional examples of choice made to communicate precise meaning or to give interest. • Simple grammatical constructions correct; sentence separation mostly correct but other forms of punctuation sometimes inconsistently used; occasional spelling mistakes – but no error of any sort impedes communication.
Band 4	9–11	• Sentences tend to be simple and patterns repetitive. Where more complicated structures are attempted there is lack of clarity and inaccuracy. • Vocabulary communicates general meaning accurately. • Some errors of punctuation including sentence separation; several spelling and grammatical errors, rarely serious.
Band 5	6–8	• There may be the occasional grammatically complex sentence but mostly these are simple and repetitively joined by ‘and’, ‘but’ and ‘so’, with other conjunctions being used ineffectively, if at all. • Vocabulary communicates simple details/facts accurately. • Many errors of punctuation, grammar and spelling, but the overall meaning is never in doubt.
Band 6	3–5	• Sentences are simple and sometimes faulty and/or rambling sentences obscure meaning. • Vocabulary is limited and may be inaccurate. • Errors of punctuation, grammar and spelling may be serious enough to impede communication.
	0, 1, 2	• Meaning of the writing is often lost because of poor control of language; errors of punctuation, grammar and spelling too intrusive to award a mark in Band 6.

7. Mark schemes

Table B1: Argumentative/Discursive tasks		
Band 1	18–20	- There is a consistent quality of well developed, logical stages in an overall, at times complex, argument. - Each stage is linked to and follows the preceding one. Sentences within paragraphs are soundly sequenced.
Band 2	15–17	- Each stage of the argument is defined and developed, although the quality of the explanation may not be consistent. - The stages follow in a generally cohesive progression. Paragraphs are mostly well sequenced, although some may finish less strongly than they begin.
Band 3	12–14	- There is a series of relevant points and a clear attempt is made to develop some of them. These points are relevant, straightforward and logical/coherent. - Repetition is avoided, but the order of the stages in the overall argument can be changed without adverse effect. The sequence of the sentences within paragraphs is satisfactory, although opportunities to link ideas may not be taken.
Band 4	9–11	- Mainly relevant points are made and they are developed partially with some effectiveness. - The overall argument shows signs of structure but may be sounder at the beginning than at the end. There may be some repetition. It is normally possible to follow sequences of ideas, but there may be intrusive ideas or misleading sentences.
Band 5	6–8	- A few relevant points are made and although they are expanded into paragraphs, development is very simple and not always logical. - Overall structure lacks a sense of sequencing. Paragraphs used only for obvious divisions. It is sometimes possible to follow sequencing of sentences within paragraphs.
Band 6	3–5	- A few points are discernible but any attempt to develop them is very limited. - Overall argument only progresses here and there and the sequence of sentences is poor.
	0, 1, 2	Rarely relevant, little material, and presented in a disorderly structure. Not sufficient to be placed in Band 6.

7. Mark schemes

Table B2: Descriptive tasks

Band 1	18–20	- There are many well defined, well developed ideas and images, describing complex atmospheres with a range of details. - Overall structure is provided through devices such as the movements of the writer, the creation of a short time span, or the creation of atmosphere or tension. Focus is description (not storytelling). Repetition is avoided and the sequence of sentences makes the picture clear to the reader.
Band 2	15–17	- There is a good selection of interesting ideas and images, with a range of details. - These are formed into an overall picture of some clarity, largely consistent. There may be occasional repetition and opportunities for development or the provision of detail may be missed. Sentences are often well sequenced and the description is often effective.
Band 3	12–14	- There is a selection of effective ideas and images that are relevant to the topic and which satisfactorily address the task. An attempt is made to create atmosphere and to provide some details. - The description provides a series of points rather than a sense of their being combined to make an overall picture, but some of the ideas are developed successfully, albeit straightforwardly. Some sentences are well sequenced.
Band 4	9–11	- Some relevant and effective ideas are provided and occasionally developed a little, perhaps as a narrative. There is some feeling of atmosphere, but most of the writing is about events or description of objects or people. - There is some overall structure, but the writing may lack direction and intent. There may be interruptions in the sequence of sentences and/or some lack of clarity.
Band 5	6–8	- Content is relevant but lacking in scope or variety. Opportunities to provide development and detail are frequently missed. - Overall structure, though readily discernible, lacks form and dimension. The reliance on identifying events, objects and/or people sometimes leads to a sequence of sentences without progression.
Band 6	3–5	- Some relevant facts are identified, but the overall picture is unclear and lacks development. - There are examples of sequenced sentences, but there is also repetition and muddled ordering.
	0, 1, 2	Rarely relevant, little material and presented in a disorderly structure. Not sufficient to be placed in Band 6.

7. Mark schemes

Table B3: Narrative tasks

Band 1	18–20	- The narrative is complex and sophisticated and may contain devices such as subtexts, flashbacks and time lapses. Cogent details are provided where necessary or appropriate. - The different sections of the story are carefully balanced and the climax carefully managed. Sentence sequences are sometimes arranged to produce effects such as the building up of tension or providing a sudden turn of events.
Band 2	15–17	- The writing develops some features that are of interest to a reader, although not consistently so. Expect the use of detail and some build-up of character or setting. - The writing is orderly and the beginning and ending (where required) are satisfactorily managed. The reader is aware of the climax even if it is not managed completely effectively. The sequencing of sentences provides clarity and engages the reader in events or atmosphere.
Band 3	12–14	- A straightforward story (or part of story) with satisfactory identification of features such as character and setting. - While opportunities for appropriate development of ideas are sometimes missed, the overall structure is competent, and features of a developed narrative are evident. Sentences are usually sequenced to narrate events.
Band 4	9–11	- A relevant response to the topic, but largely a series of events with occasional details of character and setting. - The overall structure is sound although there are examples where a particular section is too long or too short. A climax is identified but is not effectively described or led up to. Sentence sequences narrate events and occasionally contain intrusive facts or misleading ideas.
Band 5	6–8	- A simple narrative with a beginning, middle and end (where appropriate). It may consist of simple, everyday happenings or unlikely, un-engaging events. - Unequal or inappropriate importance is given to the sections of the story. Dialogue that has no function may be used or over-used. There is no real climax. Sentence sequences are used only to link simple series of events.
Band 6	3–5	- Stories are very simple and narrate events indiscriminately. Endings are simple and lack effect. - The shape of the narrative is unclear; some of the content has no relevance to the plot. Sequences of sentences are sometimes poor, leading to a lack of clarity.
	0, 1, 2	Rarely relevant, little material, and presented in a disorderly structure. Not sufficient to be placed in Band 6.

8. Additional information

8.1 Guided learning hours

IGCSE syllabuses are designed on the assumption that candidates have about 130 guided learning hours per subject over the duration of the course. ('Guided learning hours' include direct teaching and any other supervised or directed study time. They do not include private study by the candidate.)

However, this figure is for guidance only, and the number of hours required may vary according to local curricular practice and the candidates' prior experience of the subject.

8.2 Recommended prior learning

We recommend that candidates who are beginning this course should have a level in Chinese equivalent to first language competence.

8.3 Progression

IGCSE Certificates are general qualifications that enable candidates to progress either directly to employment, or to proceed to further qualifications.

Candidates who are awarded grades C to A* in IGCSE First Language Chinese are well prepared to follow courses leading to AS and A Level Chinese, or the equivalent.

8.4 Component codes

Because of local variations, in some cases component codes will be different in instructions about making entries for examinations and timetables from those printed in this syllabus, but the component names will be unchanged to make identification straightforward.

8.5 Grading and reporting

IGCSE results are shown by one of the grades A*, A, B, C, D, E, F or G indicating the standard achieved, Grade A* being the highest and Grade G the lowest. 'Ungraded' indicates that the candidate's performance fell short of the standard required for Grade G. 'Ungraded' will be reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate. For some language syllabuses CIE also reports separate oral endorsement grades on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the highest).

8. Additional information

Percentage uniform marks are also provided on each candidate's statement of results to supplement their grade for a syllabus. They are determined in this way:

- A candidate who obtains...
 - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade A* obtains a percentage uniform mark of 90%.
 - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade A obtains a percentage uniform mark of 80%.
 - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade B obtains a percentage uniform mark of 70%.
 - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade C obtains a percentage uniform mark of 60%.
 - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade D obtains a percentage uniform mark of 50%.
 - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade E obtains a percentage uniform mark of 40%.
 - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade F obtains a percentage uniform mark of 30%.
 - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade G obtains a percentage uniform mark of 20%.
 - ... no marks receives a percentage uniform mark of 0%.

Candidates whose mark is none of the above receive a percentage mark in between those stated according to the position of their mark in relation to the grade 'thresholds' (i.e. the minimum mark for obtaining a grade). For example, a candidate whose mark is halfway between the minimum for a Grade C and the minimum for a Grade D (and whose grade is therefore D) receives a percentage uniform mark of 55%.

The uniform percentage mark is stated at syllabus level only. It is not the same as the 'raw' mark obtained by the candidate, since it depends on the position of the grade thresholds (which may vary from one session to another and from one subject to another) and it has been turned into a percentage.

8.6 Resources

Copies of syllabuses, the most recent question papers and Principal Examiners' reports for teachers are available on the Syllabus and Support Materials CD-ROM, which is sent to all CIE Centres.

Resources are also listed on CIE's public website at **www.cie.org.uk**. Please visit this site on a regular basis as the Resource lists are updated through the year.

Access to teachers' email discussion groups, suggested schemes of work and regularly updated resource lists may be found on the CIE Teacher Support website at **<http://teachers.cie.org.uk>**. This website is available to teachers at registered CIE Centres.

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