



**Cambridge Assessment  
International Education**

# Syllabus

**Cambridge International AS & A Level  
Chinese Language 8681**

**Chinese 9715**

**For centres in Mauritius**

Use this syllabus for exams in 2023.

Exams are available in the November series.

中文

### Changes to the syllabus for 2023

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

Section 4.2: The topics for Component 3: Essay have been updated.

Section 4.4: The set texts for Component 4: Texts have been updated.

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

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

Copyright © UCLES September 2020

Cambridge Assessment International Education is part of the Cambridge Assessment Group. Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), which itself is a department of the University of Cambridge.

UCLES retains the copyright on all its publications. Registered centres are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use. However, we cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within a centre.

---

# Contents

---

Why choose Cambridge International?  
Why choose Cambridge International AS & A Levels?  
Why choose Cambridge International AS & A Level Chinese?

|   |                                                                |    |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1 | Assessment at a glance .....                                   | 7  |
| 2 | Syllabus aims and assessment objectives .....                  | 8  |
|   | 2.1 Syllabus aims                                              |    |
|   | 2.2 Assessment objectives                                      |    |
| 3 | Syllabus content .....                                         | 9  |
| 4 | Description of components .....                                | 10 |
|   | 4.1 Component 2: Reading and Writing                           |    |
|   | 4.2 Component 3: Essay                                         |    |
|   | 4.3 Component 4: Texts                                         |    |
|   | 4.4 Component 5: Prose                                         |    |
|   | 4.5 Set texts for Component 4                                  |    |
| 5 | Topic areas: further guidance .....                            | 13 |
| 6 | Mark schemes .....                                             | 15 |
|   | 6.1 Component 2: Reading and Writing                           |    |
|   | 6.2 Component 3: Essay                                         |    |
|   | 6.3 Component 4: Texts                                         |    |
| 7 | Other information .....                                        | 19 |
|   | Equality and inclusion                                         |    |
|   | Language                                                       |    |
|   | Exam administration                                            |    |
|   | Retakes                                                        |    |
|   | Grading and reporting                                          |    |
|   | How students, teachers and higher education can use the grades |    |

## Why choose Cambridge International?

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

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

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

We review all our syllabuses regularly, so they reflect the latest research evidence and professional teaching practice – and take account of the different national contexts in which they are taught.

We consult with teachers to help us design each syllabus around the needs of their learners. Consulting with leading universities has helped us make sure our syllabuses encourage students to master the key concepts in the subject and develop the skills necessary for success in higher education.

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

Every year, nearly a million Cambridge students from 10 000 schools in 160 countries prepare for their future with the Cambridge Pathway.

“ We think the Cambridge curriculum is superb preparation for university. ”

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

## Why choose Cambridge International AS & A Levels?

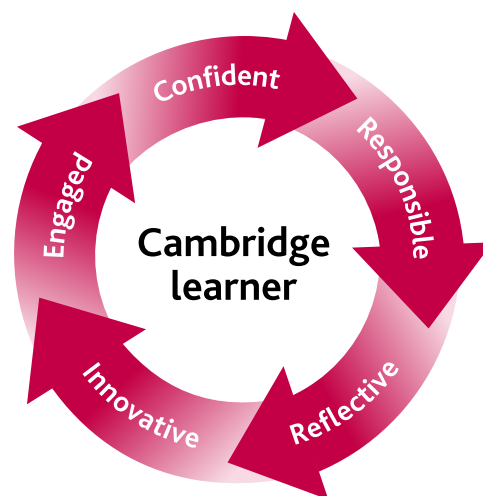
The best motivation for a student is a real passion for the subject they're learning. By offering students a variety of Cambridge International AS & A Levels, you can give them the greatest chance of finding the path of education they most want to follow. With over 50 subjects to choose from, students can select the ones they love and that they're best at, which helps motivate them throughout their studies.

Following a Cambridge International AS & A Level programme helps students develop abilities which universities value highly, including:

- a deep understanding of their subjects
- higher order thinking skills – analysis, critical thinking, problem solving
- presenting ordered and coherent arguments
- independent learning and research.

Our approach in Cambridge International AS & A Level encourages learners to be:

- **confident** in working with information and ideas – their own and those of others
- **responsible** for themselves, responsive to and respectful of others
- **reflective** as learners, developing their ability to learn
- **innovative** and equipped for new and future challenges
- **engaged** intellectually and socially, ready to make a difference.



## 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. Every year thousands of students with Cambridge International AS & A Levels gain places at leading universities worldwide. They are valued by top universities around the world including those in the UK, US (including Ivy League universities), Europe, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

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

### Learn more

For more details go to [www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition)

## Quality management

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



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.

“ The depth of knowledge displayed by the best A Level students makes them prime targets for America’s Ivy League universities ”

Yale University, USA

## Why choose Cambridge International AS & A Level Chinese?

### About the syllabus

Cambridge International AS and A Level syllabuses in Chinese are accepted by universities and employers as proof of linguistic ability and understanding. Successful language students gain lifelong skills, including:

- the ability to communicate confidently and clearly in Chinese
- a sound understanding of the nature of language and language study, and of the skills and abilities required for further study, work and leisure
- insight into the culture and contemporary society of countries where Chinese is spoken
- better integration into communities where Chinese is spoken
- a positive attitude towards language learning, towards the speakers of other languages, and towards other cultures and societies
- skills which can be used in other areas of learning, such as analysis and memory skills.

### Guided learning hours

Guided learning hours give an indication of the amount of contact time teachers need to have with learners to deliver a particular course. Our syllabuses are designed around 180 guided learning hours for Cambridge International AS Level, and around 360 guided learning hours for Cambridge International A Level.

These figures are for guidance only. The number of hours needed to gain the qualification may vary depending on local practice and the learners' previous experience of the subject.

### Prior learning

We recommend that candidates who are beginning this course should have previously completed a Cambridge O Level or Cambridge IGCSE™ assessment/course or equivalent in Chinese.

### Progression

A Cambridge International A Level in Chinese provides a suitable foundation for the study of languages or related courses in higher education. Equally it is suitable for candidates intending to pursue careers or further study in languages, or as part of a course of general education.

Depending on local university entrance requirements, the qualification may permit or assist progression directly to university courses in Chinese or some other subjects.

We recommend learners check the Cambridge recognitions database and the university websites to find the most up-to-date entry requirements for courses they wish to study.

“ Cambridge International AS & A Levels prepare students well for university because they've learnt to go into a subject in considerable depth. There's that ability to really understand the depth and richness and the detail of a subject. It's a wonderful preparation for what they are going to face at university. ”

US Higher Education Advisory Council

## Supporting teachers

### Support materials

We provide a wide range of resources, detailed guidance and innovative training and professional development so that you can give your students the best possible preparation for Cambridge International AS & A Level.

Please see the syllabus and support materials DVD for access to resources.

# 1 Assessment at a glance

Centres and candidates may choose to take an assessment at either

- Advanced (A) Level or
- Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level.

Candidates wishing to take a Cambridge International A Level must take **all components** of the assessment in the **same** examination series. **It is not possible for candidates to follow a staged assessment of the qualification.** Centres can offer an AS qualification either as a stand-alone assessment, or as a means of testing candidates' skills and competence before they enter for the Cambridge International A Level exam. See Section 6 for an outline of the components.

**Note:** The use of dictionaries is **not** permitted in any assessment.

## Availability

These syllabuses are examined in the November examination series.

These syllabuses are available to private candidates.

## Scheme of assessment summary

|                    | Component 2<br>Reading and<br>Writing |           | Component 3<br>Essay |           | Component 4<br>Texts |           | Component 4<br>Texts |           |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
|                    | duration                              | weighting | duration             | weighting | duration             | weighting | duration             | weighting |
| <b>A Level</b>     | 1 hour<br>45 mins                     | 35%       | 1 hour<br>30 mins    | 20%       | 2 hours<br>30 mins   | 35%       | 45 mins              | 10%       |
| <b>AS Language</b> | 1 hour<br>45 mins                     | 70%       | 1 hour<br>30 mins    | 30%       |                      |           |                      |           |

Where a component is common to two qualifications, grading of each qualification is carried out separately.

## Combining this with other syllabuses

Candidates can combine this syllabus in an examination series with any other Cambridge International syllabus, except:

- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

In addition, where a component contributes to different awards, candidates may not take more than one of those awards in the same examination series:

- Cambridge International A Level candidates may **not** take the Cambridge International AS Level qualification in the same language in the same series
- Cambridge International AS Level candidates may **not** take the Cambridge International A Level qualification in the same language in the same series.

---

## 2 Syllabus aims and assessment objectives

---

### 2.1 Syllabus aims

The Cambridge International AS and A Level syllabus in Chinese aims to:

- develop the ability to understand Chinese from a variety of registers
- enable students to communicate confidently and clearly in Chinese
- form a sound base of skills, language and attitudes required for further study, work and leisure
- develop insights into the culture and civilisation of the countries where Chinese is spoken, including the study of literary texts where appropriate (this does not apply to AS Language qualifications)
- encourage positive attitudes to language learning and a sympathetic approach to other cultures and civilisations
- support intellectual and personal development by promoting learning and social skills.

### 2.2 Assessment objectives

The examinations are designed to assess candidates' linguistic competence and their knowledge of contemporary society. In the exams, candidates will be expected to:

- understand and respond to texts written in Chinese, drawn from a variety of sources such as magazines, newspapers, reports, books and other forms of extended writing
- manipulate Chinese accurately to demonstrate a capacity to choose appropriate examples of lexis and structures
- select information and present it in Chinese
- organise arguments and ideas logically.

---

## 3 Syllabus 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.

All textual material used in the examinations will be drawn from the topic areas below, with reference to the country or countries where Chinese is spoken. More guidance on the topic areas is given in section 5.

- Human relationships
- Family
- Generation gap
- Young people
- Patterns of daily life
- Urban and rural life
- The media
- Food and drink
- Law and order
- Philosophy and belief
- Health and fitness
- Work and leisure
- Equality of opportunity
- Employment and unemployment
- Sport
- Free time activities
- Travel and tourism
- Education
- Cultural life/heritage
- War and peace
- Social and economic development
- Scientific and medical advances
- Technological innovation
- Environment
- Conservation
- Pollution
- Contemporary aspects of the country or countries where Chinese is spoken

---

## 4 Description of components

---

### 4.1 Component 2: Reading and Writing

**1 hour 45 minutes, 70 marks**

Two passages in Mandarin Chinese are set which deal with related themes.

Candidates answer specific and general comprehension questions on the two passages, and respond to a task requiring a summary or comparison of issues raised. Mandarin Chinese will be used for all questions and answers.

The passages will have been written during the last twenty years, and will reflect the international scene. In addition:

- the two passages, taken together, will not exceed 750 characters
- on the first passage, two tests (5 marks each) will cover vocabulary recognition and grammatical manipulation. These will be followed by a series of comprehension questions (15 marks for Content and 5 marks for Quality of Language)
- on the second passage, there will be a series of comprehension questions (15 marks for Content and 5 marks for Quality of Language)
- the last question will require candidates to write about 200 characters, drawing information from both passages and adding their own opinions, (10 marks for information drawn from the passages, 5 marks for personal response to the material, and 5 marks for Quality of Language).

### 4.2 Component 3: Essay

**1 hour 30 minutes, 40 marks**

A list of five topics, selected from the topic areas in Section 3, is published below. The list changes every year. A question will be set on each of the five topics; candidates choose **one** question and write an essay in Mandarin Chinese of 250–400 characters. Of the 40 marks available, 24 are for the quality of the language and 16 for the content (see Section 6, Mark Schemes).

#### Set topics for examination in 2023:

- 1 Family
- 2 Law and order
- 3 Travel and tourism
- 4 Technological innovation
- 5 Pollution

## 4.3 Component 4: Texts

**2 hours 30 minutes, 75 marks**

Candidates answer **three** questions in Mandarin Chinese. Each question must be on a different text, taken from the list in Section 4.5. The list is divided into two sections: candidates must choose at least one text from each section.

Each question is marked out of 25. Each answer should be around 600–800 characters. Candidates who write more than 800 characters cannot be placed higher than the 16–17 category for that answer (see Section 6, Mark Schemes).

Set texts may **not** be taken into the examination room.

### Section 1

Candidates are given a choice of two questions for each text.

For each text in this section there will be an extended passage taken from the text followed by either a single question or a number of short questions. This will not be a context passage (the location of the passage is given) but a stimulus to allow candidates to bring a focus to their answer. Candidates are asked to comment on particular aspects of the passage and/or to indicate how the passage reflects the book as a whole.

The alternative question will be an essay question, similar to those in Section 2.

### Section 2

For each text there is a choice of two questions focusing on issues central to the text. Candidates are expected to display detailed knowledge of the text and to show some awareness of how the author conveys the message of the work.

## 4.4 Component 5: Prose

**45 minutes, 40 marks**

Candidates translate a short passage from English into Mandarin Chinese.

## 4.5 Set texts for Component 4

Note that the list of set texts is different for each year. Please ensure that you refer to the table below for candidates who will sit the examination in 2023.

| Set texts for examination in 2023                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Students may use any edition of the set texts provided it is not an abridged or simplified version.                                                                                            |                                                                                                       |
| <b>Section 1</b>                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Section 2</b>                                                                                      |
| 1 Selected poems by Gu Cheng<br>顾城诗选<br>The following poems are to be studied:<br>《远和近》/《一代人》/《感觉》/《弧线》/<br>《案件》/《生命幻想曲》/《摄》/<br>《我是一座小城》/《自信》/<br>《我们去寻找一盏灯》/《简历》/《不是再见》/<br>《回家》/《我是一个任性的孩子》 | 4 “Hong Gaoliang Jiazu” by Mo Yan<br>《红高粱家族》莫言<br>Chapter one to be studied 第一章《红高粱》                  |
| 2 “Shanghai wuyan xia” by Xia Yan<br>《上海屋檐下》夏衍                                                                                                                                                 | 5 “Bian Cheng” by Shen Congwen<br>《边城》沈从文                                                             |
| 3 “Liuqing” / “Fengsuo” by Zhang Ailing<br>《留情》张爱玲<br>《封锁》张爱玲                                                                                                                                  | 6 “Taibei ren” by Pai Hsien-yung<br>《台北人》白先勇<br>The following stories to be studied:<br>《永远的尹雪艳》/《冬夜》 |

## 5 Topic areas: further guidance

Teachers can explore the topic areas **in any way they choose**. The following examples (which are not prescriptive) are a useful guide to planning courses. All these suggestions, and other themes chosen by the teacher from within the topic areas, should be studied with reference to countries/communities where Chinese is spoken.

### **Human relationships – family – generation gap – young people**

- family activities; new patterns of family relationships; the status of the elderly and responsibility for their care
- generation gap; conflicts in the family circle; young people and the older generation; attitudes of young people to the family environment
- young people; young people and their peer group; young people as a target group for advertisers and politicians

### **Patterns of daily life – urban and rural life – the media – food and drink – law and order – philosophy and belief – health and fitness**

- daily routine; school; the individual's way of life; living conditions
- advantages and disadvantages of urban and rural life; transport and communications; shopping; housing
- the role and influence of the media; the power of advertising
- healthy eating; fast-food; national traditions of eating and drinking
- violence and crime; drug-related crime; the role of the police; law-enforcement
- the role of philosophy and belief in a local, national and an international context; attitudes towards different beliefs and philosophical issues; philosophical and religious practices/groups; values and morality
- healthy living; exercise; dieting; drugs; health care provision; stress; AIDS

### **Work and leisure – equality of opportunity – employment and unemployment – sport – free time activities – travel and tourism – education – cultural life/heritage**

- women in society and in the workforce; equality of opportunity for minority groups
- preparation for work and job opportunities; career plans; qualifications and job routines; plight of the unemployed, areas of high unemployment; demise of traditional industries; possible solutions, immigrant workers
- individual and team sports; amateur and professional sport
- value of leisure; balance between leisure and work; planning leisure time
- tourism as a modern phenomenon; friction between tourists and local inhabitants; holidays and foreign travel
- education systems and types of school; patterns of curriculum; relationship between education and training; further and higher education provision; examinations
- the world of the arts; significant figures and trends in the arts; the place of culture and the arts in the life of the nation

### **War and peace – social and economic development**

- conflicts in the world: ethnic, religious, ideological
- positive and negative aspects of social and economic development; recent and predicted trends

### **Medical advances – scientific and technological innovation**

- advances in the treatment of disease; ethical issues of medical and other technologies
- cloning; genetic modifications; modern communications systems

### **Environment – pollution – conservation**

- the individual in his/her surroundings; effect of environment on individuals; protest action to protect one's locality; ways of contributing to environmental awareness
- global warming; acid rain; air pollution; water pollution; noise pollution; destruction of rain forests; damage to animal world; solutions and cost implications
- saving endangered species and landscapes

### **Contemporary aspects of the country/ies where Chinese is spoken**

- e.g. political, regional, social issues

## 6 Mark schemes

### 6.1 Component 2: Reading and Writing

#### Quality of Language – Accuracy (Questions 3, 4 and 5)

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>5 Very good</b>     | Consistently accurate. Only very few errors of minor significance. Accurate use of more complex structures (verb forms, tenses, prepositions, word order).                                       |
| <b>4 Good</b>          | Higher incidence of error than above, but clearly has a sound grasp of the grammatical elements in spite of lapses. Some capacity to use accurately more complex structures.                     |
| <b>3 Sound</b>         | Fair level of accuracy. Common tenses and regular verbs mostly correctly formed. Some problems in forming correct agreement of adjectives. Difficulty with irregular verbs, use of prepositions. |
| <b>2 Below average</b> | Persistent errors in tense and verb forms. Prepositions frequently incorrect. Recurrent errors in agreement of adjectives.                                                                       |
| <b>0–1 Poor</b>        | Little or no evidence of grammatical awareness. Most constructions incomplete or incorrect. Consistent and repeated error.                                                                       |

#### Additional marking guidance for Quality of Language – Questions 3 and 4

The five marks available for Quality of Language are awarded **globally** for the whole performance on each set of answers.

A concise answer, containing all mark-bearing components for Content is scored on the full range of marks for language, i.e. length does not determine the Quality of Language mark.

**Answers scoring 0 for Content** cannot contribute to the overall Quality of Language mark.

Identify the answer(s) scoring 0 for Content in the whole set of answers. Then add together the number of Content marks available for each of these questions and reduce the Quality of Language mark according to the following table:

| Total Content marks available on questions where a candidate scores 0 | Reduce Quality of Language mark by: |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2–3                                                                   | 1                                   |
| 4–5                                                                   | 2                                   |
| 6–7                                                                   | 3                                   |
| 8–14                                                                  | 4                                   |
| 15                                                                    | 5                                   |

**Note:** A minimum of one mark for Quality of Language should be awarded if there are any Content marks at all (i.e. 0 Quality of Language marks only if 0 Content marks).

## Response to the passage (Question 5)

This should be marked as a mini-essay according to the variety and interest of the opinions and views expressed, the candidate's response to the original text stimulus, and their ability to express a personal point of view. Additional guidance on marking specific questions will be given to examiners.

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>5 Very good</b>     | Varied and interesting ideas, showing an element of flair and imagination, a capacity to express a personal point of view.                                             |
| <b>4 Good</b>          | Not the flair and imagination of the best candidates, but work still shows an ability to express a range of ideas, maintain interest and respond to the issues raised. |
| <b>3 Sound</b>         | A fair level of interest and ideas. May concentrate on a single issue, but there is still a response to ideas in the text.                                             |
| <b>2 Below average</b> | Limited range of ideas; rather humdrum. May disregard the element of response to the text, and write a largely unrelated free-composition.                             |
| <b>0–1 Poor</b>        | Few ideas to offer on the theme. Banal and pedestrian. No element of personal response to the text. Repeated error.                                                    |

## 6.2 Component 3: Essay

| Language (24 marks)                                                                                                                        | Content (16 marks)                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>21–24 Very good</b><br>Confident use of complex sentence patterns, generally accurate, extensive vocabulary, good sense of idiom.       | <b>14–16 Very good</b><br>Detailed, clearly relevant and well illustrated; coherently argued and structured.                                                 |
| <b>16–20 Good</b><br>Generally sound grasp of grammar in spite of quite a few lapses; reads reasonably; some attempt at varied vocabulary. | <b>11–13 Good</b><br>Sound knowledge and generally relevant; some ability to develop argument and draw conclusions.                                          |
| <b>10–15 Adequate</b><br>A tendency to be simple, clumsy or laboured; some degree of accuracy; inappropriate use of idiom.                 | <b>7–10 Adequate</b><br>Some knowledge, but not always relevant; a more limited capacity to argue.                                                           |
| <b>5–9 Poor</b><br>Consistently simple or pedestrian sentence patterns with persistent errors; limited vocabulary.                         | <b>3–6 Poor</b><br>Some attempt at argument, tends to be sketchy or unspecific; little attempt to structure an argument; major misunderstanding of question. |
| <b>0–4 Very poor</b><br>Only the simplest sentence patterns, little evidence of grammatical awareness, very limited vocabulary.            | <b>0–2 Very poor</b><br>Vague and general, ideas presented at random.                                                                                        |

## 6.3 Component 4: Texts

Candidates must write their answers in Mandarin Chinese. Examiners will look for a candidate's ability to communicate effectively and will ignore linguistic errors which do not impede communication.

### Passage-based questions

Examiners should consider the extent to which candidates have been able to identify the significant issues raised in the passage and, where appropriate, have applied these to the text as a whole. The passage is a stimulus passage, to be used as a springboard to give candidates a starting point for their answer. Examiners should allow candidates to use the passage as they choose, and ask themselves how successfully the candidates have manipulated their material and to what extent they have shown depth of awareness and knowledge of the workings of the text under discussion. This is not an exercise in literary criticism: examiners should reward candidates whose answers show good understanding of how a text works and how an author has conveyed the key issues.

### Essay questions

A prime consideration is that candidates show detailed knowledge and understanding of the text.

### Extracts from Examiners' Notes

This paper is intended to test candidates' knowledge of a text and their ability to use this knowledge to answer questions in a clear and focused manner. A sophisticated literary approach is not expected (though at the highest levels it is sometimes seen), but great value is placed on evidence of a firsthand response and thoughtful, personal evaluation of what candidates have read. Candidates may have been encouraged to depend closely on prepared notes and quotations: quotation for its own sake is not useful, though it will not be undervalued if used appropriately to illustrate a point in the answer.

Candidates do not tend to show **all** the qualities or faults described in any one mark-band. Examiners attempt to weigh all these up at every borderline, in order to see whether the work can be considered for the category above. At the lower levels, the answer may mention a few 'facts' but these may be so poorly understood, badly organised and irrelevant that it falls into category 10–11; or there may be just enough sense of understanding and focus for the examiner to consider the 12–13 band. Again, at a higher level, an answer may be clear, solid and conscientious (perhaps 18–19), without showing quite the control and attention to perceptively chosen detail which would justify 20 or more.

Examiners take a positive and flexible approach and, even when there are obvious flaws in an answer, reward evidence of knowledge and especially any signs of understanding and careful organisation.

Candidates are expected to write 600–800 characters for each of their answers. Candidates who write more than 800 characters cannot be placed higher than the 16–17 category in the mark scheme.

| Marks        | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>22–25</b> | Exceptional work. Excellent ability to organise material, thorough knowledge, considerable sensitivity to language and to author's intentions, understanding of some literary techniques. Really articulate and intelligent answers should be considered in this band even if there are still flaws and omissions.                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>20–21</b> | Very good. Close attention to detail of passages, controlled structure, perceptive use of illustration, good insight when discussing characters. Ability to look beyond the immediate material and to show some understanding of author's intentions and of underlying themes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>18–19</b> | Thoroughly solid and relevant work. Candidate does not simply reproduce information: can discuss and evaluate material and come to clear conclusion. Good focus on passages. Some limitations of insight but coherent, detailed approach and aptly chosen illustrations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>16–17</b> | Painstaking. Sound knowledge of texts; mainly relevant. Some attempt to analyse and compare, some sense of understanding. Possibly not in full control of material; solid but indiscriminate. Many very conscientious candidates fall into this category: they tend to write far too much as they are reluctant to leave out anything they have learnt. Focused, coherent essays which lack really solid detail but convey a good understanding of the text should also be considered for this band. |
| <b>14–15</b> | Fair relevance and knowledge. Better organised than work in the 12–13 band: the candidate probably understands the demands of the question without being able to develop a very thorough response. Still a fairly simple, black and white approach. Some narrative and 'learnt' material but better control and focus than work in the 12–13 band. Many candidates probably fall into this category.                                                                                                 |
| <b>12–13</b> | Sound, if simple and superficial, knowledge of plot and characters. Makes assertions without being able to illustrate or develop points. Probably still too dependent on narrative and memorised oddments but there may be a visible attempt to relate these to the question. Can extract one or two relevant points from a set passage.                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>10–11</b> | Some very basic material but not much sense of understanding or ability to answer the question. The candidate rarely reads the set passage but uses it as a springboard for storytelling and memorised bits and pieces about characters. Very general, unspecific approach. Random, bitty structure. Signs of organisation and relevance should be looked for in case the answer can be considered for a mark in the 12–13 band.                                                                     |
| <b>6–9</b>   | Marginally more knowledge here than in the 0–5 band. The candidate may have read the text but is probably unable to see beyond the barest bones of the plot or half-remembered notes. Insubstantial; very little relevance. The candidate may have problems with the language and will be unable to express ideas comprehensibly.                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>0–5</b>   | No discernible material. Often very inadequate language. Marks in this section are awarded almost on the basis of quantity: up to 3 for a sentence or two showing a glimpse of knowledge, 4 or 5 where there is also a hint of relevance to the question. It is possible for a candidate to write a whole page demonstrating no knowledge at all (have they read the book?), or only misunderstood background facts or very vague general remarks unrelated to either text or question.              |

---

## 7 Other information

---

### Equality and inclusion

We have taken great care in the preparation of this syllabus and assessment materials to avoid bias of any kind. In our effort to comply with the UK Equality Act (2010), we have taken all reasonable steps to avoid direct and indirect discrimination.

The standard assessment arrangements may present barriers for candidates with impairments. Where a candidate is eligible, we may be able to make arrangements to enable that candidate to access assessments and receive recognition of their attainment. We do not agree access arrangements if they give candidates an unfair advantage over others or if they compromise the standards being assessed. Candidates who are unable to access the assessment of any component may be eligible to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have taken.

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

### Language

This syllabus is available in English only and the associated assessment materials are available in Chinese.

### Exam administration

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

### Retakes

Candidates can retake Cambridge International AS Level and Cambridge International A Level as many times as they want to. Cambridge International AS & A Levels are linear qualifications. Candidates must enter for an option that leads to certification. To confirm what entry options are available for this syllabus, refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries* for the relevant series.

## Grading and reporting

Cambridge International A Level results are shown by one of the grades A\*, A, B, C, D or E, indicating the standard achieved, A\* being the highest and E the lowest. 'Ungraded' indicates that the candidate's performance fell short of the standard required for grade E. 'Ungraded' will be reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate. The letters Q (pending) and X (no result) may also appear on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

Cambridge International AS Level results are shown by one of the grades a, b, c, d or e, indicating the standard achieved, 'a' being the highest and 'e' the lowest. 'Ungraded' indicates that the candidate's performance fell short of the standard required for grade 'e'. 'Ungraded' will be reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate. The letters Q (pending) and X (no result) may also appear on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

If a candidate takes a Cambridge International A Level and fails to achieve grade E or higher, a Cambridge International AS Level grade will be awarded if both of the following apply:

- the components taken for the Cambridge International A Level by the candidate in that series included all the components making up a Cambridge International AS Level
- the candidate's performance on the AS Level components was sufficient to merit the award of a Cambridge International AS Level grade.

## How students, teachers and higher education can use the grades

### Cambridge International A Level

Assessment at Cambridge International A Level has two purposes:

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

### Cambridge International AS Level

Assessment at Cambridge International AS Level has two purposes:

- to measure learning and achievement  
The assessment:
  - confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus.
- to show likely future success  
The outcomes:
  - help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful
  - help students choose the most suitable course or career
  - help decide whether students part way through a Cambridge International A Level course are making enough progress to continue
  - guide teaching and learning in the next stages of the Cambridge International A Level course.

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

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