

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Cambridge International AS & A Level Chinese (8681 and 9715)

Are there any changes to the syllabus?

It should be noted that set texts are likely to change from year to year. The full list of set texts to be examined is provided in the syllabus booklet for each year.

For full details of any changes, please consult the syllabus booklet for the relevant year.

What resources are available to support this syllabus?

The following resources are available:

- Student Guide to Cambridge International AS and A Level Languages other than English (aimed at students and teachers, this gives a general overview of the syllabus, explains what examiners are looking for and guides students on how to approach the examination).
- Past Papers.
- Schemes of Work (see the Teacher Support website).

Why do Cambridge International AS and A Level Languages other than English not follow the same staged assessment pattern as the other new Cambridge International AS and A Level syllabuses?

Language learning is both linear and skills based. Experience has shown that it takes some time for students to acquire the confidence to handle Cambridge International AS and A Level topic areas and feedback from “modular” type examinations shows that languages do not readily fit this pattern. This means that it would be inappropriate to test candidates in the early stages of their development of a particular skill area e.g. reading and then count that towards a Cambridge International A Level grade without further assessment of their progress. If this was done, students would compulsorily have to take two tests in each of the skill areas which would significantly add to the burden.

What can you offer students in Languages other than English as an interim assessment of their progress?

A Cambridge International AS Level is available which could be used for different purposes: for interim assessment in Reading/Writing and Essay, and in Literature; for final assessment of students who wish to progress beyond Cambridge O Level/Cambridge IGCSE, but whose Cambridge International A Levels are in other subject areas. To accommodate the fact that Cambridge International AS Level candidates are taking Cambridge International A Level components, the grade boundaries will be set lower than for Cambridge International A Level candidates. What this Cambridge International AS Level does not do, however, is contribute to the Cambridge International A Level assessment.

Which combinations of qualifications are permitted within each language (other than English) at Cambridge International AS and A Level?

Where common components contribute to different awards, candidates may not take more than one of the awards in the same examination session.

For example, candidates for a Cambridge International Advanced Level award in a subject may not take a Cambridge International Advanced Subsidiary Level award in the same language in the same session.

Are students allowed to take dictionaries into the examination room?

No. Dictionaries are not permitted.

If my candidate is ungraded at Cambridge International A Level, is there a possibility of a compensatory Cambridge International AS Level?

Yes, all candidates in this position will then be regraded as Cambridge International AS Level Chinese candidates using the components which are common to both levels and will be awarded a Cambridge International AS Level grade.

Can I teach Cambridge International AS and A Level candidates in the same classroom?

Yes, the overlap between the components for Cambridge International AS and A Level is such that most activities will be suitable for both groups.

I've got a great idea for a set text I'd like to see on the syllabus, and I think it would be very popular with other teachers too. What should I do?

Please write to the Product Manager for Cambridge International A Level Chinese. We welcome suggestions from our Centres for set texts in future sessions.

Is it a requirement to use particular editions of the set texts? Is it a problem if my candidates are studying from different editions?

If a particular edition is not specified in the syllabus booklet, students can use any edition (so long as it is the full text).

Are candidates who prepare more than the minimum required set texts at an advantage in the exam room?

Only in the sense that they potentially will have more choice of questions. In reality, demands on classroom time mean that it is unlikely that many candidates will have prepared more than 3 texts.