

Syllabus Outline

Cambridge Pre-U
MANDARIN CHINESE

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Cam
Pre-U

For examination in 2010, 2011, 2012



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

Cambridge Pre-U Overview

Cambridge Pre-U is an exciting qualification for 16-19 year olds who want to go to university. It equips students with the skills they need to make a success of their undergraduate studies:

- a solid and coherent grounding in specialist subjects at an appropriate level;
- the ability to undertake independent and self directed learning;
- the ability to think laterally, critically and creatively and communicate effectively.

Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subject in Mandarin Chinese is a stand-alone qualification, with all components assessed at the full Cambridge Pre-U standard at the end of a two-year programme of study. There are no unit retakes. Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects are certificated separately. They are fully compatible with A Levels and may be taken in combination with them.

Reporting of Achievement

Achievement is reported on a scale of nine grades: Distinction 1, 2 and 3, Merit 1, 2 and 3 and Pass 1, 2 and 3. The Distinction 3 standard is aligned to that of Grade A and the Pass 3 is aligned to that of Grade E at A Level. Distinction 1 reports achievement above the new A* grade. The intention is to differentiate more finely and extend reporting at the top end, while keeping the grading scale accessible to the full range of ability currently achieving passes at A Level.

UCAS Tariff Points

The table shows the UCAS tariff awarded to each Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subject Grade and how this compares with the tariff for A Level.

The tariff reflects the additional content within each syllabus and the linear assessment (terminal examinations at full Pre-U standard).

Universities which normally ask for three A grades at A Level might therefore consider Cambridge Pre-U offers involving a combination of Distinction 3 and Merit 1. Other offers may include asking for a Merit 2 in place of a B, Merit 3 or Pass 1 for a C, Pass 2 for a D and Pass 3 for an E.

Cambridge Pre-U Band	Cambridge Pre-U Grade	Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subject Tariff	Equivalent A Level Tariff
Distinction	1	tbc	n/a
	2	145	(A*) 140
	3	130	(A) 120
Merit	1	115	
	2	101	(B) 100
	3	87	
Pass	1	73	
	2	59	
	3	46	(E) 40

For more details, please go to www.cie.org.uk/qualifications/recognition.

Cambridge Pre-U Mandarin Chinese

Assessment Objectives

Candidates should:

AO1	Understand and respond to texts written in the target language and to spoken material.
AO2	Manipulate the target language accurately in spoken and written forms to demonstrate a capacity to choose appropriate examples of lexis and structures.
AO3	Select information and present it in Mandarin Chinese and in English, organising arguments and ideas logically.
AO4	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of aspects of Chinese society.

Scheme of Assessment (Principal)

Candidates for the Mandarin Chinese Cambridge Pre-U Certificate take Papers 1, 2, 3 and 4, which are assessed at the end of the two year course. A single grade is awarded.

Component	Name	Duration	Weighting(%)	Type of Assessment
Paper 1	Speaking	c. 15m	20	Externally assessed Oral
Paper 2	Listening, Reading and Translation	2h 30m	30	Externally set and marked written paper
Paper 3	Writing and Usage	2h	25	Externally set and marked written paper
Paper 4	Chinese Culture	2h 30m	25	Externally set and marked written paper

This syllabus aims to equip students learning Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language with the skills to survive in a Chinese environment.

As the majority of Chinese communities speak and understand Mandarin, the official language of the People's Republic of China, the syllabus only requires knowledge of this language. Similarly, for romanisation the standard pinyin system is used and in writing the simplified characters, again as prescribed in the People's Republic of China, are used. The Listening, Reading and Writing papers concentrate on contemporary vernacular style.

Even for the advanced non-background speaker, the free association possible within, for example, Indo-European languages does not work and for this reason a Core Vocabulary and six Topic Areas underpin the syllabus.

Scheme of Assessment (continued).

This syllabus aims to equip students learning Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language with the skills to survive in a Chinese environment. The syllabus also provides a stepping stone for university courses in Chinese and Chinese studies. As well as allowing students to develop their language skills, the syllabus will foster an awareness of Chinese culture and history.

Paper 1 Speaking

Prepared topic and topic conversation.

Candidates research a topic related to the history, current affairs or culture of the Chinese world. In the examination, they will speak in Mandarin Chinese on this topic for about two minutes and answer follow-up questions from the Examiner.

General conversation. Straightforward questions about the candidate's background and interests will lead quickly to a more mature conversation covering the Topic Areas listed in the syllabus.

Paper 2 Listening, Reading and Translation

Listening. Candidates listen to pre-recorded passages in Mandarin Chinese and:

- write down individual words using the correct pinyin romanisation and tones;
- answer a series of comprehension questions, some objective and some requiring answers in English;
- provide an English gist summary of one passage using bullet points for guidance.

Reading. The comprehension of two passages in Chinese is tested by questions in English. There is a mixture of objective questions and questions requiring written answers in English. Both passages will be in contemporary vernacular style, using grammatical structures as used in all popular textbooks.

Chinese sayings (chengyu). Candidates provide a literal translation and an explanation in English for three chengyu taken from a list of 25 prescribed in the syllabus.

Translation. Candidates translate a short

passage of vernacular Chinese (not more than 200 characters) into English. The assessment focuses on the transfer of meaning rather than literal correctness.

Paper 3 Writing and Usage

Writing. Candidates complete exercises testing radical and stroke order skills as well as the use of grammar markers, aspect markers and measure words.

Letter writing. Candidates write a letter of 80–100 characters. The task will be in English but may require candidates to respond to a stimulus in Chinese. Assessment focuses on communication of the required elements, the accuracy of characters, accuracy of grammar and structures and appropriateness of language.

Opinion essay. A choice of six titles, one on each of the six Topic Areas, is provided. Candidates have to write one essay in Chinese of 175–225 characters. Essays will be assessed for accuracy and linguistic range as well as development and organisation of ideas. A colloquial style will be sufficient for top marks.

Paper 4 Chinese Culture

Candidates prepare two options, one from Topics in Chinese Culture and one from Chinese Literature and Film (texts in this Section to be studied in English). In the examination, candidates answer two questions, in English, one on each of their chosen options. The recommended length for each answer is 600–750 words. Candidates are assessed on their knowledge and understanding of their chosen cultural options and their ability to answer a question in a clear and focused manner.

Support and Resources

CIE offers a programme of Cambridge Pre-U INSET training for teachers accompanied by support materials on a dedicated Cambridge Pre-U website.

Full syllabus details are at www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu

Specimen assessment materials are available from: international@cie.org.uk



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