



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS  
Cambridge International Level 3 Pre-U Certificate  
Short Course

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**MANDARIN CHINESE**

**1341/02**

2. Chinese Culture

May/June 2009

**1 hour 15 minutes**

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**MAXIMUM MARK: 30**

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This document consists of **10** printed pages.



The Paper will be divided into two sections. Candidates will be required to answer one question in English, to be chosen from either section. Answers should be about 600–750 words in length. Answers will be assessed for Content and Structure according to the criteria below.

- **Content (25 marks)**
- **Structure (5 marks)**

The paper is intended to test candidate's knowledge and understanding of a cultural topic and ability to use this knowledge to answer a question in a clear and focused manner. Great value is placed on evidence of a firsthand response and thoughtful, personal evaluation of what candidates have chosen to study. Candidates may have been encouraged to depend closely on prepared notes and quotation: quotation for its own sake is not useful, although it will gain credit if used appropriately to illustrate a point in the answer.

Candidates will not tend to show all the qualities or faults described in any one mark band. Examiners will attempt to weigh all these up at every borderline, in order to see whether the work can be considered for the category above.

Examiners will take a 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.

<b>Content</b>	
<b>23–25</b>	<b>Excellent</b> Excellent ability to organise material in relation to the question. Comprehensive response with an extensive number of relevant points targeting the terms of the question with precision. Displays detailed knowledge and sustained analysis.
<b>19–22</b>	<b>Very good</b> A thoughtful and well argued response to the question. Includes a large number of relevant points, well illustrated. Displays thorough knowledge, good understanding and analysis of the material.
<b>15–18</b>	<b>Good</b> A well argued response to the question. Includes a good number of relevant points, most of which are developed and illustrated. Some limitations of insight, but a coherent approach.
<b>11–14</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> A mainly relevant response to the question. Shows fair knowledge and understanding of the material. Includes a fair number of relevant points not always linked and/or developed.
<b>6–10</b>	<b>Weak</b> An uneven OR basic response to the question. Shows some knowledge and understanding of the material. Includes some relevant points, but development and illustration are limited. Contains padding AND/OR has some obvious omissions OR is largely narrative/description.
<b>1–5</b>	<b>Poor</b> Little attempt to answer the question. Only elementary knowledge and understanding of the material. Makes very few relevant points and even these are largely undeveloped and unsubstantiated. OR a response which makes hardly any attempt to address the terms of the question but which displays a basic general knowledge of the material.
<b>0</b>	No rewardable content

<b>Structure</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Very good</b> A well structured and coherent piece of writing, with ideas and arguments clearly linked throughout. All paragraphs well constructed. Includes a comprehensive introduction and conclusion.
<b>4</b>	<b>Good</b> A clear structure, with logical presentation of ideas. Most paragraphs well constructed. Includes an adequate introduction and conclusion.
<b>3</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> Some success in organising material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. A reasonable attempt to paragraph but weakness in introduction and conclusion.
<b>2</b>	<b>Weak</b> Some attempt to organise material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. Many single-sentence paragraphs or no attempt at paragraphing. Organisation of ideas not always logical.
<b>1</b>	<b>Poor</b> No attempt to organise material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. Incoherent. Ideas introduced in no apparent order.
<b>0</b>	No rewardable structure

## Indicative Content

Questions are open to interpretation and, therefore, the following notes are not intended to be prescriptive but are to give an indication of some of the points which could be made in response to each question. They are by no means exhaustive. Candidates must choose two questions in total, one from each of the sections below and answer it in English.

### SECTION 1: TOPICS IN CHINESE CULTURE

#### 1 The Founding of the People's Republic of China

**EITHER:**

**(a) How did the Chinese communist leadership transform itself from a guerrilla group into a party of government?**

Several starting points can be taken: from the survival of the Long March onwards, the regrouping at Yan'an can be seen as the beginning of the institutionalisation of the CCP (for instance, the 'Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art' establishing the ground rules for how the arts had to serve the state and the people of a Communist China). Also the Xi'an Incident established the CCP as a legitimate player in Chinese politics with Soviet backing. During the Civil War, 1946-49, the withdrawal of US aid to the Nationalists can be seen as tacit acknowledgement of the eventual victory of the CCP.

Even during the war, purges kept the Party on an ideological hard-line course (cf, aftermath of Yan'an conference; purge of soldiers during demilitarisation of 1946).

Plans for economic reforms were in place during Civil War, CCP leaders were trained by the Soviet Union and the Comintern.

The CCP and the People's Liberation Army also positioned themselves as legitimate winners of the Sino-Japanese War; the Nationalists were widely seen as responsible for Japanese occupation.

Even during the war, the military structure saw a military commander working hand-in-hand with a political commander, allowing for transition of power in peace time.

In 1949, the CCP showed their preparation: proclamation of the People's Republic of China on 1 October, Beijing chosen as new capital, new constitution and new flag were introduced. International recognition (including UK) followed swiftly.

**OR:**

**(b) Why did the Chinese Communist Party develop a five-year plan and how was it implemented in 1953?**

The transformation from Civil War to functioning state necessitated the introduction of several steps which were to lead to a Chinese-style Socialist society. The immediate pre-War years were a period of 'New Democracy' with the peaceful co-existence of the Four Classes, which in practice led to a redistribution of land and the destruction of the gentry. This process was completed by 1953, and the next phase was the introduction of the First Five-Year Plan. The CCP had already implemented policies that allowed the economy to recover from the downturn of the Second World War and the Civil War.

Some key elements of the process leading towards implementation of the First Five-Year Plan were the collectivisation of the agricultural sector and the state-sponsored construction of large

industrial projects. Simultaneously, the direction of education changed towards a heavy emphasis on science. Although the plan was not fully implemented until two years into the five year period, the economic growth was such that the targets were met by 1957, which led to the planned Second Five-Year Plan (1958-1962) that was eventually abandoned because of the Great Leap Forward.

Important economically, the Five-Year Plan also had a political role. The CCP showed the desire to advance quickly towards a Soviet-style Socialist system, and it ended the period of transformation from Republic of China to People's Republic.

## 2 Chinese Economic Trends since 1978

**EITHER:**

- (a) What specific measures did the Chinese Communist Party implement to encourage economic opening (kaifang) in the decade following 1978?**

The Opening Period was a reaction to the Cultural Revolution and the preceding Soviet-style economic policies. Starting in 1978 under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, its aims were to modernise China as well as improve the living standards of the population.

The most immediate influential policy was the introduction of Town and Village Enterprises, which allowed previously collectivised enterprises to work independently from state control as well as being profit-making. Simultaneously, the agricultural sector was allowed to achieve surplus production that became profit for the peasants themselves. The state withdrew gradually from the agricultural and from the heavy industry sectors, while increasingly needing to subsidise the latter sector due to its uncompetitiveness.

For the rural population in China, the household responsibility system required peasants to achieve certain quotas of production which had to be sold at state-fixed prices, while any overproduction was allowed to be traded at free market prices.

The 'Opening' most noticed outside China was the freeing-up of trade barriers between China and other countries. 'Special Economical Zones' were established in 1980, the first one being Shenzhen (four others followed until 1984, when a further 14 coastal cities were opened to outside investment). In these regions, favourable legislation was introduced to attract foreign investors, who were invited to 'Joint Ventures'.

**OR:**

- (b) Why did China want to join the World Trade Organisation and what were the benefits to China following accession in December 2001?**

During the 1990s, China intensified her attempts to join the world community in a variety of forums and organisations (the first bid to host the Olympic Games was part of this movement). Coupled with the increasing economical importance of China, the campaign to join the WTO had therefore political as well as economical reasons.

Politically, China had to change her role from supporting block-free countries during the Cold War. The new role of China was to reflect its economic and cultural importance, and a more active and cooperative role was assumed, for instance in the United Nations during the First Iraq War. At the same time, with increasing democratisation in Taiwan during the early 1990s, a substantial minority movement there towards independence from the Mainland drove the Chinese government to reassert its position as the sole representative for China in various bodies of World organisations.

Economically, much of China's boom was due to a large export surplus. Coupled with criticism of neglect of intellectual copyright, China needed to become an accountable business partner through the regulations of the WTO, at the same time increasing trust and accountability. This also meant the discontinuation of the Most Favoured Nation rule.

## 3 The City of Beijing

**EITHER:**

- (a) **'The economic opening of the People's Republic of China has transformed Beijing over the last 30 years'. Discuss what you consider to be the most important aspects of this urban transformation.**

The economic boom had many consequences for China, and most notably in her fast-rising cities. Beijing was affected as much as any city, as it attracted large migration over the last decades.

The modernisation of Beijing is evident in the plethora of new and modern buildings. The infrastructure is always trying to catch up with the development of the city. One example is the expanding subway. Transport is one of the main challenges for Beijing, and the new overground branches of the subway are a visible sign of this. Also, Beijing's ringroads are expanding, with the Sixth Ring Road recently completed.

With the new came the demolishing of the old: one traditional feature of Beijing, the Hutong housing style, has largely disappeared. Another unwelcome feature of Beijing's recent development is an increase in pollution.

Preservation: as a reaction to the disappearance of many traditional features, the latest transformation is the preservation of old architecture. Steps have also been taken to combat the environmental pollution: traffic regulations, relocation of heavy industry, planting of trees.

**OR:**

- (b) **Why did the Ming Emperor, Yongle, relocate the capital of China to Beijing in the early C15?**

China's uneasy relationship with its northern neighbours, mostly of Mongolian origin, led most famously to the building of the Great Wall of China. By 1271, China was under the control of the Mongols who founded the Yuan dynasty. For the following Ming dynasty, this meant military confrontation with the north and the Mongol army, which initially meant that the powerbase of the Ming was located in the south of China, with Nanjing its capital. To relocate the capital to the North was therefore a risk as well as a statement of intent by the Yongle emperor.

Firstly, it showed China's military confidence and was a symbol of the pacification of the Northern borders. Secondly, it became a project of such grandeur that it created social cohesion within the population, not least reuniting the South and the North of the country (also through the restoration of the Grand Canal). Thirdly, Yongle, who was dogged by rumours that his ascendancy to the throne was illegitimate, established himself as the supreme ruler as well as legitimising his rule with such a great project. The new capital's layout and observance of geomantic rules also meant that the Mandate of Heaven was secured through these symbols of piety.

## **SECTION 2: CHINESE LITERATURE AND FILM**

### **4 *The Picador Book of Contemporary Chinese Fiction***

**EITHER:**

- (a) **'Many of the stories in this collection reflect the struggle of ordinary people to find meaning in the mundane experiences of everyday life' Discuss this statement illustrating your answer with close reference to two or three of the stories.**

**OR:**

- (b) In *The Window* by Mo Shen, how do Young Han's experiences influence her personal development and to what extent does this development reflect changes in society in 1980s.

5 *Red Dust*, Ma Jian

EITHER:

- (a) 'The narrator's romantic view of women contrasts with the reality of his one-dimensional treatment of them'. Discuss with close reference to the text.

OR:

- (b) With close reference to the text explore the extent to which specialist knowledge of China is helpful for an appreciation of *Red Dust*.

6 *Yellow Earth*, Chen Kaige

EITHER:

- (a) In your opinion is *Yellow Earth* an uplifting film or a tragedy? Support your answer with close reference to the film.

A case for either can be made:

Uplifting: strong moral message, a realistic portrayal of the hardships of countryside life, a realistic portrayal of the disadvantaged situation of women in the countryside. Although the underlying theme is the plight of the rural population and the film is ambiguous about the impact the Communist army/Chinese Communist Party as represented by the male protagonist may have on this situation, there is the possibility of change. It can also be argued that it raises awareness of these issues. Furthermore, it tells of other regions in China where the weight of tradition has already been overcome.

Tragedy: the film does not offer solutions to the problems it describes. It shows the gap between the ideal (of the ideology) and the practice, where ideology is unable to compete with ossified tradition entrenched in poverty. The promise of the soldier to the girl is hence metaphorical to the promise of modernity given to the backward community by the Army.

References to the film can be made, for instance, by highlighting the relationship of girl/soldier, or the many instances of portrayal of poverty (wedding food, etc).

OR:

- (b) *Yellow Earth* is seen as a ground-breaking film in Chinese cinematic history. Through an analysis of its content and cinematography explain why it enjoys this reputation.

One of the earliest films post-Cultural Revolution that is not bound by the strict rules of propaganda that applied to theatrical works during that period. Points that can be made can be, among others, from the areas of themes, ideology, techniques and audience impact.

Although ostensibly showing the positive impact the idealistic socialist soldier has, it negates that effect by not giving an unambiguously positive outcome: this is a major departure from the Socialist Realist demand that there is a hero, an anti-hero and a solution; here, there is no solution.



The theme of rural life is the least avant-garde element, yet by his treatment of this common theme Chen Kaige highlights his difference to a previous generation of film-makers.

Cinematographically, the film also shows new techniques. Mood is conveyed mostly by traditional folk songs. The camera work is slow, long uncut scenes add to the lack of pace. Colour plays an important role (cf later films by Chen Kaige's cinematographer, Zhang Yimou).

Its lack of overt propaganda also made this film accessible to a non-Chinese audience. Chen Kaige was the first director to participate in foreign film festivals, winning several honours which made him less subject to censorship at home, thus preparing the ground for a new generation of film-makers who gained popularity in China and outside.