

OxfordAQA

International AS/A-level

Chinese – First Language (9680)

Switching guide

Switching from Pearson Edexcel or Cambridge International Examinations to
Oxford International AQA Examinations

Topic by topic comparison

OxfordAQA specification (9680)	Pearson Edexcel specification (9CN0)	Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) specification (AS 8238 A-level: 9868)
Overall structure		
<p>Organised into five themes with associated topics:</p> <p>Theme 1: Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social issues and trends • Health and well-being • Economic development • The media • Transport and infrastructure <p>Theme 2: Education and work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social life and routines • Preparing for exams • Higher and further education • Lifelong learning • Work, career and ambitions <p>Theme 3: Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertainment • Arts and literature • Celebrity culture • Fashion • Travel and tourism • Regional and ethnic diversity <p>Theme 4: Science and technology</p>	<p>Organised into four themes with associated topics and sub-topics:</p> <p>Theme 1: Changes of Contemporary Chinese Societies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family: Family structures and the generation gap; family planning and population ageing • Education and work: School life and student issues; job opportunities; work-life balance <p>Theme 2: Chinese culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditions: Festivals (the Spring Festival; the Dragon Boat Festival; the Mid-Autumn Festival) and customs • Cultural activities: film; television; music and reading (associated with Chinese culture) <p>Theme 3: The evolving Chinese society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and technology: the internet and social media • Economy and the environment: economic development; environmental protection <p>Theme 4: The impact of 1978 Reform and Opening Up on China</p>	<p>Organised into six topics with associated subtopics and examples</p> <p>Topic 1: Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertainment For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - types of popular entertainment: cinema, TV/streaming, gaming, internet - the role of entertainment in our lives - celebrity culture: role models, idols, responsibilities • Identity and culture For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - expressing identity through style and appearance, language, association with particular groups, fashion - preserving/respecting cultural heritage, sites/monuments, festivals, traditions • The arts For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - theatre, music, visual arts, dance, literature, film - access to the arts, funding (commercial/governmental), awards/prizes, representation/diversity <p>Topic 2: Health and well-being</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • Artificial intelligence • Technology in education and work • Scientific research and innovation <p>Theme 5: Global issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change • Environmental issues • Sustainable living • Poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform: wealth gap; megacities; urban migration • China-UK relations: trade; cultural exchange; educational exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and fitness For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the role of sport in society, fair play, individual versus team sports, national sports events - physical health, the importance of exercise/diet - mental health and happiness, sleep, mental health awareness, self-esteem - healthcare provisions • Nutrition For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - different types of diet/eating habits - environmental impact of food production, organic foods, food waste and shortage - ethics of food production, fair trade, food labelling, government intervention • Manage well-being For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work-life balance - importance of leisure activities - relaxation <p>Topic 3: Education and future plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage well-being For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - different education systems - student issues: discipline, workload, time management, organisation of the school day/year - school as preparation for future life • Further/higher education

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		<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - access and barriers to further/higher education - costs versus benefits of further/higher education - alternatives to further/higher education: vocational education, apprenticeships, gap years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career/work choices <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - different career options - the world of work, different workplaces and working practices, employment and unemployment - money versus job satisfaction, volunteering, working for charities <p>Topic 4: Community and society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality and diversity <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inclusivity, diversity, gender equality, social mobility - prejudices within society: ageism, racism, classism - immigration, refugees, integration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifestyle <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - friends, family and relationships, generation gap, changing patterns of family life - quality of life: where we live, differences between urban/rural/coastal life, changing

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		<p>patterns in where people live, overcrowding and its consequences, social isolation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lifestyle choices: relationships, diet, fashion, self-expression, values, goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - social organisation, law and order, local and national governance, communities - national and global citizenship - rights and responsibilities of individuals, governments <p>Topic 5: Our responsibility for the planet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The environment For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - global warming, climate change and pollution, possible solutions, governmental intervention, impact on the economy - preserving biodiversity/ecosystems, treatment of animals - impact of growing population • Sustainable living For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use of natural resources and recycling, waste disposal, consumerism/ overconsumption - sources and use of energy: fossil fuels, renewable energy, energy and geopolitics, impact of energy production on local environment and landscape

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reducing environmental impact, individual choices in housing, food, travel • Protecting our world For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - travel and tourism: sustainable tourism, benefits of travel - global cooperation versus national agendas - the role of individuals versus the role of industry/governments, environmental movements Topic 6: Science and technology • Scientific and technological innovation For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - medical advances, ethics of research - smart technology, privacy and security - artificial intelligence • Social media For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - digital media, benefits and dangers - communication technology - online communities • Technology For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - access to technology - technology in education - technology in the workplace
Paper-by-paper breakdown		

OxfordAQA specification (9680)	Pearson Edexcel specification (9CN0)	Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) specification (AS 8238 A-level: 9868)
<p>AS</p> <p>Paper 1: Listening and writing</p> <p>Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes. 50 marks. 50% of AS and 20% of A-level</p> <p>Externally assessed.</p> <p>Two compulsory sections:</p> <p>Section A: Listening (20 marks) Question 1 (10 marks): Non-verbal responses based on five speaking stimuli Question 2 (10 marks): short response questions to be answered in Chinese characters based on a monologue or dialogue of approximately 3 minutes</p> <p>Section B: Writing (30 marks) One discursive or argumentative essay in response to an issue raised in the monologue/dialogue in Question 2 of Section A.</p> <p>Dictionaries are not allowed.</p>	<p>AS: N/A</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>Paper 1: Listening</p> <p>Written exam: Approximately 1 hour. 40 marks. 25% of the AS Level.</p> <p>Externally assessed.</p> <p>Candidates listen to a series of short and long recordings and answer 40 Multiple-choice and matching questions; have 6 minutes to transfer answers to the answer sheet.</p> <p>Dictionaries are not allowed.</p>
<p>AS</p> <p>Paper 2: Reading</p>	<p>AS: N/A</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>Paper 2: Reading</p>

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<p>Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes. 50 marks. 50% of AS and 20% of A-level.</p> <p>Externally assessed. 2 compulsory sections:</p> <p>Section A: Chinese language (30 marks) Question 1 (6 marks): select the correct idiom that fits the explanation provided.</p> <p>Question 2 (10 marks): give definition for the five idioms provided.</p> <p>Question 3 (8 marks): complete a cloze test, using knowledge of Chinese vocabulary and syntax.</p> <p>Question 4 (6 marks): choose the correct statements based on the information provided in the text.</p> <p>Section B: Critical reading (20 marks) Read a literary text and answer comprehension questions, analyse writing techniques used and evaluate their effectiveness; respond to a question in relation to the whole text.</p> <p>Dictionaries are not allowed.</p>		<p>Written exam: Approximately 1 hour. 40 marks. 25% of the AS Level.</p> <p>Externally assessed.</p> <p>A series of short and long passages are given; candidates read and answer 40 Multiple-choice and matching questions.</p> <p>Dictionaries are not allowed.</p>
<p>AS</p> <p>Paper 3: N/A</p>	<p>AS: N/A</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>Paper 3: Writing</p>

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		<p>Written exam: Approximately 1 hour 30 minutes. 40 marks. 25% of the AS Level.</p> <p>Externally assessed.</p> <p>Dictionaries are not allowed.</p> <p>Two compulsory sections.</p> <p>Section A: functional writing task Candidates must answer the single question given; write 100-150 characters.</p> <p>Section B: argumentative/discursive writing task Two questions are given. Candidates must choose one to answer; write 200-250 characters.</p>
<p>AS</p> <p>Paper4: N/A</p>	<p>AS: N/A</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>Paper 4: Speaking</p>

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		<p>Oral exam: Approximately 16 minutes. 65 marks. 25% of the AS Level.</p> <p>Internally assessed and externally moderated.</p> <p>Dictionaries are not allowed.</p> <p>Three compulsory tasks and must respond in Mandarin Chinese.</p> <p>Task 1: a two-minute presentation</p> <p>Task 2: a follow-up discussion for 4-5 minutes</p> <p>Task 3: a conversation based on a task card; duration is 9 minutes which includes 5 minutes preparation time.</p>
A-level	A-level Paper 1: Listening, reading and translation	A-level Paper 1: Reading

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<p>Paper 3: Short-form literature and writing</p> <p>Written exam: 2 hours. 60 marks, 30% of A-level.</p> <p>Dictionaries are not allowed.</p> <p>Two compulsory sections:</p> <p>Section A: Poem or short story (30 marks) Choose either a question about one poem or a question about one short story; comment on aspects of the poem or short story; write approximately 500 characters.</p> <p>Section B: Open letter (30 marks) Write an open letter in response to one of two scenarios provided; write approximately 350 characters.</p>	<p>Written examination: 2 hours. 80 marks. 40% of the total A level</p> <p>Dictionaries are not allowed.</p> <p>The paper is split into three sections:</p> <p>Section A: Listening (30 marks) This section has three compulsory questions. All questions are set in English. Question 1 is non-verbal; Questions 2 and 3 must be answered in English.</p> <p>Question 1 (6 marks): multiple choice questions Question 2 (8 marks): short response questions. Question 3 (16 marks): 3(a) are short response questions; 3(b) requires candidates to summarise the content of a recording.</p> <p>Section B: Reading (30 marks) This section has four compulsory questions. Questions are set in English and must be answered in English.</p> <p>Question 4 (4 marks): choose the correct statements based on the information provided in the text. Question 5 (6 marks): short response questions to be answered in English.</p>	<p>Written exam: Approximately 1 hour 30 minutes. 40 marks. C.33% of the A Level.</p> <p>Externally assessed.</p> <p>A series of short and long passages are given; candidates read and answer 40 Multiple-choice and matching questions.</p> <p>Dictionaries are not allowed.</p>

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	<p>Question 6 (10 marks): short response questions to be answered in English. Question 7 (10 marks): short response questions to be answered in English.</p> <p>Section C: Translation into English (20 marks) This section is compulsory. It requires candidates to translate a short text into English.</p> <p>Text is written in Chinese characters and must be answered in English.</p>	
<p>A-level</p> <p>Paper 4: The novel and writing</p>	<p>A-level</p> <p>Paper 2: Written response to works and translation</p>	<p>A-level</p> <p>Paper 2: Writing</p> <p>Written exam: Approximately 2 hours. 40 marks. C.33% of the A Level.</p>

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<p>Written exam: 2 hours. 60 marks, 30% of A-level.</p> <p>Two compulsory sections:</p> <p>Section A: Novel (30 marks) Three novels are given. Students choose one to study. Students are allowed to take a non-annotated copy of works into the exam room.</p> <p>One question is given for each novel, and candidates are required to respond to one question; they are expected to display detailed knowledge of the text and to show how the author conveys the message of the work.</p> <p>Section B: Creative writing (30 marks) Write an imaginative composition in response to one of two starter sentences given; write approximately 500 characters.</p>	<p>Written exam: 2 hours 40 minutes. 120 marks, 30% of A-level.</p> <p>Dictionaries are not allowed.</p> <p>Section A: Translation (20 marks) This section is compulsory. Candidates are required to translate an unseen text from English to Chinese.</p> <p>Questions are set in English and must be answered in characters.</p> <p>Sections B and C: Written response to works (100 marks) Four novels and four films are given. Students choose either two literary texts or one literary text and one film to study. Students are not allowed to take any works or films into the exam room.</p> <p>Candidates are required to respond to questions from Section B (literary texts) or one question from Section B and one question from Section C (films); Write between 250-350 Chinese characters for each essay, giving detailed analysis of the works and justifying points of view, arguments and conclusions with evidence from the work.</p> <p>Questions are set in both English and Chinese and must be answered in characters.</p>	<p>Externally assessed.</p> <p>Dictionaries are not allowed.</p> <p>Two compulsory sections.</p> <p>Section A: argumentative/discursive writing task Candidates must answer the single question given; write 350-500 characters.</p> <p>Section B: narrative or descriptive writing task Two questions are given. Candidates must choose one to answer; write 350-500 characters.</p>

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<p>A-level</p> <p>Paper 3: N/A</p>	<p>A-level</p> <p>Paper 3: Speaking</p> <p>Oral exam: 21-23 minutes (total), including 5 minutes for preparations. 72 marks, 30% of A-level. Dictionaries are not allowed.</p> <p>This paper has two compulsory tasks.</p> <p>Task 1 (30 marks): Candidates have 5 minutes to prepare for this task. The teacher-examiner first asks two questions and then some follow-up questions based on the broader theme. This task is recommended to last 6-7 minutes.</p> <p>Task 2 (42 marks): This task has two parts. Part 1 requires candidates to give a presentation which lasts up to two minutes; Part 2 is a broader discussion of the content of the candidate’s presentation. The content for this task is the independent research project chosen by the candidate and which can be based on any of the four themes.</p>	<p>A-level</p> <p>Paper 3: Literature</p> <p>Written exam: Approximately 2 hours. 40 marks. C.33% of the A Level.</p> <p>Externally assessed.</p> <p>Dictionaries are not allowed.</p> <p>Two compulsory sections.</p> <p>Section A: passage-based questions (20 marks) Three passages are given, with one question on each passage. Candidates must choose one to answer; write 500-600 characters.</p> <p>Section B: essay questions (20 marks) Three literary works are given, with two questions on each work. Candidates must choose one question to answer; write 500-600 characters.</p>
<p>General overview</p>		
<p>Although all three qualifications are similar, there are some significant differences.</p> <p>Both OxfordAQA and Cambridge International offer AS and A-level qualifications, but Pearson Edexcel does not.</p>		

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<p>OxfordAQA AS qualification has two units, whereas Cambridge International AS has three units.</p> <p>OxfordAQA AS qualification is combined with the A-level qualification to form a full A-level, whereas Cambridge International AS is a standalone qualification and cannot be carried forward. OxfordAQA AS assessments contribute 40% and A2 60% of the total marks for the full International A-level.</p> <p>OxfordAQA A-level qualification has two units, whereas both Pearson Edexcel and Cambridge International A-level both three units.</p> <p>OxfordAQA does not assess speaking, while both Pearson Edexcel and Cambridge International include a speaking component.</p> <p>All three examination boards assess listening, reading, writing and the analysis of literary works. However, OxfordAQA allows candidate to take a non-annotated copy of literary work into the exam room, while Pearson Edexcel and Cambridge International do not.</p> <p>All three examination boards do not allow candidates to use dictionaries in any exams.</p> <p>The OxfordAQA A-level qualification consists of four papers in total: two at AS level and two at A2 level. Each AS paper is worth 50 marks and contributes 20% to the overall A-level grade, while each A2 paper is worth 60 marks and contributes 30% to the final qualification.</p> <p>The Pearson Edexcel full A-level qualification consists of three papers in total. Paper 1 is worth 80 marks and contributes 40% to the overall A-level grade; Paper 2 is worth 120 marks and contributes 30% to the overall A-level grade; Paper 3 is worth 72 marks and contributes 30% towards the overall A-level grade.</p> <p>The Cambridge International AS and A-level qualifications are two standalone qualifications. The AS level qualification consists of four papers. Papers 1, 2 and 3 are worth 40 marks each and Paper 4 is worth 65 marks. Each of these four papers contributes 25% to the overall AS grade. The A Level consists of three papers. Each paper is worth 40 marks and contributes c.33% of the overall A Level grade.</p>		
Assessment objectives		
	<p>AO1 Understand and respond:</p>	<p>AS Objectives:</p> <p>AO1 Listening</p>

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<p>AO1: understand and summarise ideas, details, opinions, emotions and meaning from spoken sources</p> <p>AO2: understand and analyse ideas, details, opinions, emotions and meaning from written texts.</p> <p>AO3: produce coherent writing that organises ideas, presents viewpoints and develops arguments using a range of linking devices, lexical structures and appropriate vocabulary</p> <p>AO4: demonstrate technical accuracy in grammar, punctuation and character writing</p> <p>AO5: communicate the key concepts and issues encountered in the written works by analysing and evaluating in writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in speech to spoken language including face-to-face interaction • in writing to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources <p>AO2 Understand and respond:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in speech to written language drawn from a variety of sources • in writing to written language drawn from a variety of sources <p>AO3 Manipulate the language accurately, in spoken and written forms, using a range of lexis and structure</p> <p>AO4 Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically and analytically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken</p>	<p>Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:</p> <p>L1: understand main points and key information from a range of spoken sources L2: identify emotions, opinions and attitudes which are stated or strongly implied in speech L3: understand ideas, arguments and conclusions in structured and longer speech L4: demonstrate an understanding of a wide range of vocabulary and language structures in speech on general topics.</p> <p>AO2 Reading Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:</p> <p>R1: understand main points and key information from a range of texts R2: identify emotions, opinions and attitudes when stated or strongly implied in texts R3: understand ideas, arguments and conclusions in structured and discursive texts R4: demonstrate an understanding of a wide range of vocabulary and language structures used in texts on general topics.</p> <p>AO3 Writing Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:</p>

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		<p>W1: communicate information, ideas, opinions and arguments clearly and effectively, with support/justification W2: organise ideas by paragraphing and by using a range of appropriate linking devices W3: use text conventions and register appropriate to the given purpose and audience W4: use a wide range of vocabulary and grammar W5: use vocabulary and grammar accurately.</p> <p>AO4 Speaking Candidates will be assessed on their ability to: S1: communicate information, ideas, opinions and arguments clearly and effectively, with support/justification S2: engage in a conversation and contribute effectively to help move the conversation forward S3: use a wide range of vocabulary and grammar S4: use vocabulary and grammar accurately S5: show control of pronunciation and intonation.</p> <p>A-level objectives: AO1 Reading</p>

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		<p>Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:</p> <p>R1: Understand detailed information from a range of texts when expressed in standard or idiomatic language.</p> <p>R2: Identify emotions, opinions and attitudes which are stated or implied in texts.</p> <p>R3: Understand ideas, arguments and conclusions in discursive texts.</p> <p>R4: Demonstrate a good understanding of a wide range of vocabulary and language structures used in texts on general topics.</p> <p>AO2 Writing</p> <p>Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:</p> <p>W1: Communicate information, opinions, arguments and creative ideas clearly and effectively, with support/justification.</p> <p>W2: Organise ideas into coherent text by using a range of cohesive devices and paragraphing where appropriate.</p> <p>W3: Use text conventions and register appropriate to the given purpose and audience.</p> <p>W4: Use a wide range of vocabulary and grammar effectively.</p> <p>W5: Use vocabulary and grammar accurately.</p> <p>AO3 Literature</p>

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		<p>Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:</p> <p>L1: Present a relevant, structured and supported response.</p> <p>L2: Demonstrate understanding of literary texts in a variety of genres, with an appreciation of relevant contexts and cultures.</p> <p>L3: Analyse ways in which writers create meaning and effects to engage the reader.</p> <p>L4: Produce personal opinions and interpretations of literary texts.</p>
Topic by topic		

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<p>General note: Although the topic areas are broadly similar across specifications, their organisation differs. As a result, certain topics or sub-topics may appear under different themes.</p>		
<i>Spec reference and title</i>	<i>Description of differences</i>	<i>Description of differences</i>
<p>3.1.1 Theme one: Society</p> <p>Theme one covers the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social issues and trends • Health and well-being • Economic development • The media • Transport and infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social issues: covered in Theme 1 • Health and well-being: not covered. • Economic development: covered in Theme 3. • The media: covered in Theme 3. • Transport and infrastructure is potentially covered in Themes 3 and 4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social issues: covered in Topic 6 • Health and well-being: covered in Topic 2 • Economic development: not covered • The media: covered in Topic 6. • Transport and infrastructure: not covered
<p>3.1.2 Theme two: Education and work</p> <p>Theme two covers the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School life and routines • Preparing for exams • Higher and further education • Lifelong learning • Work, career and ambitions 	<p>The theme of ‘Education and work’ is addressed in Theme 1</p>	<p>The theme of ‘Education and work’ is addressed in Topic 3.</p>
<p>3.1.3 Theme three: Culture</p> <p>Theme three covers the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertainment • Arts and literature • Celebrity culture • Fashion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertainment: covered in Theme 2 • Arts and literature: covered in Theme 2 • Celebrity culture: not covered • Fashion: not covered • Travel and tourism: potentially covered in Theme 3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertainment: covered in Topic 1 • Arts and literature: covered in Topic 1 • Celebrity culture: covered in Topic 1 • Fashion: covered in Topic 1 • Travel and tourism: covered in Topic 5

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel and tourism • Regional and ethnic diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional and ethnic diversity: not covered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional and ethnic diversity: potentially covered in Topic 4.
<p>3.1.4 Theme four: Science and technology</p> <p>Theme four covers the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • Artificial intelligence • Technology in education and work • Scientific research and innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media: covered in Theme 3 • Artificial intelligence: not covered • Technology in education and work: Potentially covered in Themes 3 and 1 • Scientific research and innovation: not covered 	<p>The theme of ‘Science and technology’ is addressed in Topic 6.</p>
<p>3.1.5 Theme five: Global issues</p> <p>Theme five covers the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change • Environmental issues • Sustainable living • Poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change: potentially covered in Theme 3 • Environmental issues: covered in Theme 3 • Sustainable living: not covered • Poverty: potentially covered in Theme 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change: potentially covered in Topic 6 • Environmental issues: covered in Topic 6 • Sustainable living: covered in Topic 6 • Poverty: potentially covered in Topic 6