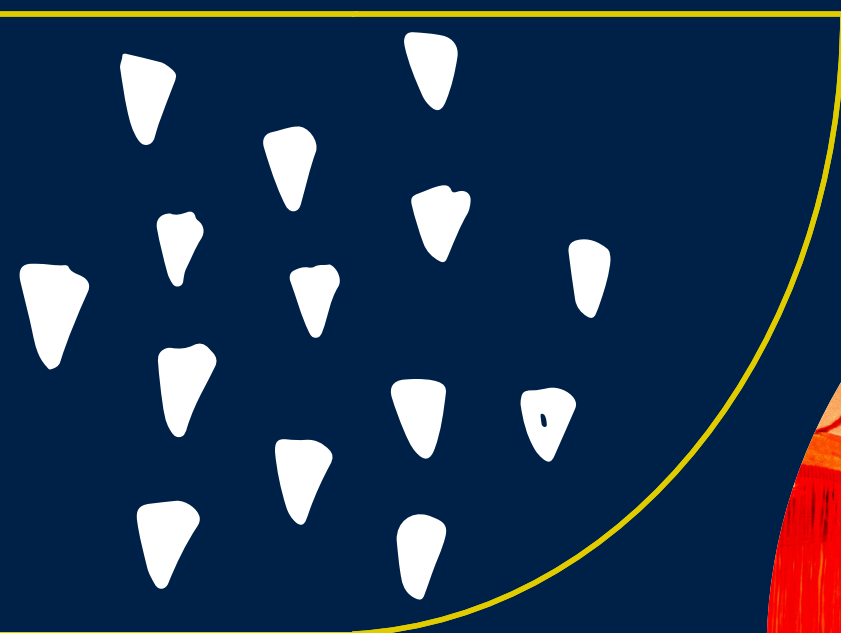


International GCSE **Chinese – First Language**

(9263) Specification



For teaching from September 2026 onwards

For exams May/June 2028 onwards

For teaching and examination outside
the United Kingdom

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Are you using the latest version of this specification?

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at **oxfordaqa.com/9263**
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to the specification.

1 Introduction

1.1 Why choose OxfordAQA International GCSE?

Our international qualifications enable schools that follow a British curriculum to benefit from the best education expertise in the United Kingdom (UK).

Our International GCSEs offer the same rigour and high quality as GCSEs in the UK and are relevant and appealing to students worldwide. They reflect a deep understanding of the needs of teachers and schools around the globe and are brought to you by Oxford University Press and AQA, the UK's leading awarding body.

Providing valid and reliable assessments, these qualifications are based on over 100 years of experience, academic research and international best practice. They reflect the latest changes to the British system, enabling students to progress to higher education with up-to-date qualifications.

You can find out about OxfordAQA at oxfordaqa.com

1.2 Why choose our International GCSE Chinese - First Language?

We have worked closely with teachers to develop a relevant, engaging and up-to-date Chinese specification to inspire, motivate and challenge students regardless of their academic ability.

We're passionate about the benefits that learning a language can bring. We strongly believe in languages as a skill for life and something students should enjoy and find rewarding.

We know you want a specification which you can enjoy teaching, and one which expands your students' cultural knowledge whilst developing their language skills.

We are confident our assessments will deliver the right results for your students. We want to help you to attract students to the study of languages and to deliver the assessments and results you and your students deserve.

Our specification offers students a firm foundation of the knowledge and skills required for further study and future employment.

You can find out about all our International Chinese qualifications at oxfordaqa.com/9263

1.3 Recognition

OxfordAQA meet the needs of international students. Please refer to the published timetables on the exams administration page of our website (oxfordaqa.com/exams-administration) for up to date exam timetabling information. They are an international alternative and comparable in standard to the Ofqual regulated qualifications offered in the UK.

To see the latest list of universities who have stated they accept these international qualifications, visit oxfordaqa.com/recognition

1.4 The Oxford International Programme learner attributes

In order to equip students with the skills they need for success both now and in the future, we have worked with Oxford University Press to create the Oxford International Programme. This combines the Oxford International Curriculum with OxfordAQA qualifications, creating an integrated offer for international schools, from Early Years to A-level.

At its core we have introduced the Oxford International Programme learner attributes – the skills and competencies that enable our students to thrive academically, socially and personally.

The learner attributes, alongside our focus on demonstrating higher order critical thinking skills, ensure that students are equipped to get the grades that will take them places, and build the skills they need to be successful when they get there.



1.5 Support and resources to help you teach

We know that support and resources are vital for your teaching and that you have limited time to find or develop good quality materials. That's why we've worked with experienced teachers to provide resources that will help you confidently plan, teach and prepare for exams.

Teaching resources

You will have access to:

- sample schemes of work to help you plan your course with confidence
- training and support to help you deliver our qualifications
- student textbooks that have been checked and approved by us

Preparing for assessment

You will have access to the support you need to prepare for our exams, including:

- exemplar standardisation projects.
- exemplar commentaries

Analyse your students' results with Data Insights

After the first examination series, you can use this tool to see which questions were the most challenging, how the results compare to previous years and where your students need to improve. Data Insights, our free online results analysis tool, will help you see where to focus your teaching.

Information about results, including maintaining standards over time, grade boundaries and our post-results services, will be available on our website in preparation for the first examination series.

Help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at **oxfordaqa.com/9263**

You can contact the subject team directly at **info@oxfordaqa.com** or call us on +44 (0)161 696 5995 (option 1 and then 1 again).

Please note: We aim to respond to all email enquiries within two working days.

Our UK office hours are Monday to Friday, 8am – 5pm.

2 Specification at a glance

The title of the qualification is:

- OxfordAQA International GCSE Chinese – First Language.

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course.

The guided learning hours (GLH) for this qualification are 120–140. This figure is for guidance only and may vary according to local practice and the learner’s prior experience of the subject.

2.1 Subject content

Core content

Students study all of the following themes on which the assessments are based.

Theme 1: Society (page 10)

Theme 2: Education and work (page 10)

Theme 3: Culture (page 10)

Theme 4: Science and technology (page 11)

Theme 5: Global dimension (page 11)

2.2 Assessments

Paper 1: Listening and writing	+	Paper 2: Reading
What's assessed Understanding and responding to different types of spoken language. A mixture of structured and open-ended tasks.		What's assessed Communicating effectively in writing for a variety of purposes. A mixture of structured and open-ended tasks.
How it's assessed Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 60 marks 60% of GCSE The exam includes 5 minutes' reading time of the question paper before the listening stimuli are played.		How it's assessed Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes 60 marks 40% of GCSE
Questions Section A: Listening – 20 marks. Question 1 – 10 marks. MCQs on five recordings. Question 2 – 10 marks. Short answer questions on a monologue or a dialogue. Section B: Reading Comprehension – 20 marks. Short answer questions on an extract of a literary text. Section C: Critical reading - 20 marks. Short answer questions on two thematically related texts. Questions in Chinese, to be answered in Chinese or non-verbally.		Questions Passage Writing – 12 marks Student writes two passages of approximately 50 characters per passage, in response to one scenario in an informal context and one scenario in a formal context. Guided Writing – 20 marks Student responds to four compulsory detailed bullet points, producing approximately 200 characters in total. There is a choice of two questions. Composition Writing – 28 marks Student responds to one title given, producing approximately 325 characters in total. There is a choice of two questions. Questions in Chinese, to be answered in Chinese.

3 Subject content

3.1 Themes

The specification covers five distinct themes. These themes apply to all examination papers.

Students are expected to understand and provide information, ideas and opinions about these themes relating to their own experiences and those of other people, including people in countries/communities where Chinese is spoken.

3.1.1 Theme one: Society

Theme one covers the following topics. Students are expected to have studied these topics using a range of sources, including materials from online media.

- Family and friends
- Everyday life
- Free time activities
- Fitness and health
- The media
- Home, neighbourhood, town and region

3.1.2 Theme two: Education and work

Theme two covers the following topics. Students are expected to have studied these topics using a range of sources, including materials from online media.

- School life and routines
- Preparing for exams
- The education system
- Higher and further education
- Work career and ambitions

3.1.3 Theme three: Culture

Theme three covers the following topics. Students are expected to have studied these topics using a range of sources, including materials from online media.

- Entertainment
- Arts and literature
- Customs and traditions
- Festivals and special celebrations
- Travel and tourism
- Regional and ethnic diversity

3.1.4 Theme four: Science and technology

Theme four covers the following topics. Students are expected to have studied these topics using a range of sources, including materials from online media.

- Social media
- Artificial intelligence
- Technology in everyday life and education
- Scientific research and innovation

3.1.5 Theme five: Global issues

Theme five covers the following topics. Students are expected to have studied these topics using a range of sources, including materials from online media.

- Climate change
- Environmental issues
- Music events
- Sports events

3.2 Scope of study

3.2.1 Listening and reading: understand and respond to spoken and written language

Students are expected to be able to:

- Demonstrate general and specific understanding of different types of spoken and written language, involving some more complex language
- Identify the overall message, key points, details and opinions in a variety of short and longer spoken and written passages
- Deduce meaning from a variety of short and longer spoken and written texts, involving some complex language, some unfamiliar and more abstract materials, including short narratives and authentic materials addressing a wide range of contemporary and cultural themes
- Recognise and respond to key information, important themes and ideas in more extended spoken and written texts, including authentic sources, adapted and abridged, as appropriate, by being able to extract information, draw inferences, evaluate and draw conclusions.

3.2.2 Writing: communicate in writing

Students are expected to be able to:

- Communicate effectively in writing for a variety of purposes across a range of specified contexts
- Write short texts and familiar language accurately to convey meaning and exchange information
- Produce clear and coherent text of extended length to present facts and express ideas and opinions appropriately for different purposes and in different settings
- Make accurate use of a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures to describe and narrate with reference to past,

present and future events

- Manipulate the language, using and adapting a variety of structures and vocabulary with increasing accuracy and fluency for new purposes, including using appropriate style and register, to express and justify individual thoughts and points of view, in order to stimulate the reader's interest, to inform or to convince.

3.3 Knowledge of Chinese grammar and writing

GCSE students will be expected to have acquired knowledge and understanding of Chinese grammar and writing during their course. In the exams they will be required to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and understanding, appropriate to the type of question.

Students are expected to have studied the following:

词类：实词、虚词、名词、动词、形容词、数词、量词、代词、副词、介词、连词、助词、拟声词

词组：联合、主谓、动宾、偏正、数量、补充、方位、固定、介词、‘的’字结构

单句：主谓句、非主谓句、陈述句、疑问句、祈使句、感叹句

复句：并列复句、偏正复句、紧缩句

修辞：比喻、比拟、夸张、借代、双关、反语、设问、反问、对偶、排比、层递、反复、对比、

写作手法：叙述、描写、说明、议论、抒情

4 Scheme of assessment

Find mark schemes, and specimen papers for new courses, on our website at [oxfordaqa.com/9263](https://www.oxfordaqa.com/9263)

This is a linear qualification. In order to achieve the award, students must complete all assessments at the end of the course and in the same series.

Our International GCSE exams and certification for this specification are available for the first time in May/June 2028 and then every May/June and November for the life of the specification.

This specification is available in English only. The assessments are available in simplified characters only. The listening audio is available in spoken Mandarin only.

Students should respond using either simplified or traditional characters, i.e. students should be consistent in using one or the other. However, there will be some degree of tolerance where a few traditional characters are written in a simplified piece and vice versa. Student responses in Pinyin will **not** be accepted.

Our GCSE exams in Chinese – First Language include questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- draw together their knowledge, skills and understanding from across the full course of study
- provide extended responses.

4.1 Aims and learning outcomes

Courses based on this specification should enable students to:

- develop their ability to communicate confidently and coherently in writing, conveying what they want to say with increased accuracy
- express their knowledge about how language works and enrich their vocabulary to increase their independent use and understanding of extended language in a range of contexts
- acquire knowledge, skills and ways of thinking through the ability to understand and respond to authentic, adapted or abridged spoken and written materials, including literary texts
- develop control of the language system to convey meaning, and writing skills, including the use of an extended range of vocabulary, as increasingly confident, accurate and independent users of the language
- enhance their linguistic skills and promote and develop their capacity for critical thinking on the basis of their knowledge and understanding of the language, culture and society of the countries where Chinese is spoken.

4.2 Assessment Objectives

The exams will measure how well students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

AO1: understand and summarise ideas, details, opinions and attitudes from spoken sources

AO2: understand and analyse ideas, details, opinions, meaning and effects from written texts

AO3: produce coherent writing that organises ideas, opinions and information clearly, effectively and imaginatively, using style appropriate to the task and in ways that engage the reader

AO4: demonstrate technical accuracy in grammar, character writing and use of vocabulary, structures and idioms

AO5: collate and synthesise detail from one or more sources, making cross-references and comparisons as appropriate

4.2.1 Assessment Objective weightings

Assessment Objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx %)		Overall weighting of components (approx %)
	Paper 1	Paper 2	
AO1	20	0	20
AO2	36	0	36
AO3	0	24	24
AO4	0	16	16
AO5	4	0	4
Overall weighting of components	60	40	100

4.3 Assessment weightings

Component	Maximum raw mark	Scaling factor	Maximum scaled mark
Paper 1: Listening and reading	60	x3/2	90
Paper 2: Writing	60	x1	60
Total scaled mark			150

4.4 Paper 1: Listening and reading

60 marks; 1 hour 45 minutes (including 5 minutes' reading time for the Listening section of the exam).

There are three sections to this paper. Students are required to answer all questions in all sections. Students are tested on their ability to understand and respond to different types of spoken and written language.

Access to dictionaries is not permitted at any time during the test.

Section A: Listening (20 marks)

Question 1 (10 marks) – selective responses based on five speaking stimuli.

Question 2 (10 marks) – one monologue or one dialogue. Students respond to short answer questions in Chinese characters based on the monologue/dialogue recording of approximately two minutes.

- The test will be studio recorded using native speakers speaking Mandarin in clearly articulated, standard speech at normal speed.
- The recording will be provided to schools in an appropriate audio format at the same time as the dispatch of the question papers.
- Different types of spoken language will be used, using familiar language across a range of contemporary and cultural themes.
- The content of the passages will be based on the themes and topics listed in this specification.
- Questions will target main points, gist and detail and will require either selected responses or responses in characters. Questions will include the need to infer meaning and will include abstract material such as opinions, views, emotional reactions and personal experiences.
- Students will be given five minutes' reading time at the beginning of the test to give them time to read the questions.
- An example will be provided in the question paper only where it is necessary to indicate to students how a particular question should be answered.
- Each item will be heard twice and pauses for students to answer will be built into the test.
- Students will be allowed to make notes at any time during the test.

Section B: Reading comprehension and analysis (20 marks)

Students will be given an extract of a literary text for close study. The text will be approximately 750 characters. At least one question will relate to the whole text. In addition to comprehension questions, students are required to analyse writing techniques employed by the writer.

The text extract will be taken from a work of fiction of the twentieth or twenty-first century.

Section C: Critical reading (20 marks)

Students will be given two texts which are thematically related and each text will be approximately 500 characters. Questions will be asked about the individual texts, and at least one question will require candidates to consider both texts. In addition to comprehension questions, students will be required to analyse and evaluate the writing techniques employed by the writer, how writers create meanings and effects, and to collate and synthesise detail from one or more sources, making cross-references and comparisons as appropriate.

Texts may be fiction or non-fiction.

4.5 Paper 2: Writing

60 marks; 1 hour 30 minutes

Students are expected to demonstrate technical accuracy in grammar, punctuation and character writing.

Access to dictionaries is not permitted at any time during the test.

Passage writing (12 marks) – Two prompts will be given, and both prompts will require students to write in short sentences in Chinese characters. One prompt requires students to use informal language in a familiar context and the other prompt requires students to use formal language in a formal context.

Students are expected to write approximately 50 characters in response to each prompt but, provided the tasks are completed, the number of characters is not important.

Guided writing (20 marks) – This is a structured writing task which demonstrates students' ability to produce clear and coherent text of extended length, to present facts and express ideas and opinions. Students choose one of two tasks and are expected to address four bullet points that require a letter/email response.

Students are expected to write approximately 200 characters but, provided the task is completed, the number of characters is not important.

Composition writing (28 marks) – This is an open-ended writing task which demonstrates students' ability to make independent, creative and more complex use of the language. Students choose one of two tasks, to write either a descriptive or a narrative composition from the prompt given.

Students are expected to write approximately 325 characters but, provided the task is completed, the number of characters is not important.

5 General administration

We are committed to delivering assessments of the highest quality and have developed practices and procedures that support this aim. To ensure that all students have a fair experience, we have worked with other awarding bodies in England to develop best practice for maintaining the integrity of exams. This is published through the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). We will maintain the same high standard through their use for OxfordAQA.

More information on all aspects of administration is available at oxfordaqa.com/exams-administration

For any immediate enquiries please contact info@oxfordaqa.com

Please note: We aim to respond to all email enquiries within two working days.

Our UK office hours are Monday to Friday, 8am – 5pm local time.

5.1 Entries and codes

You only need to make one entry for each qualification – this will cover all the question papers and certification.

Qualification title	OxfordAQA entry code
OxfordAQA International GCSE Chinese - First Language	9263

Please check the current version of the Entry Codes book and the latest information about making entries on oxfordaqa.com/exams-administration

Exams will be available May/June and in November.

5.2 Overlaps with other qualifications

There are no overlaps with any other OxfordAQA qualifications at this level.

5.3 Awarding grades and reporting results

In line with UK GCSEs, this qualification will be graded on a nine-point scale: 1 to 9 – where 9 is the best grade. Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade 1 will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

To find out more about the new grading system, visit our website at oxfordaqa.com

5.4 Resits

Students can retake the whole qualification as many times as they wish. This is a traditional linear specification, individual components cannot be resat.

You only need to make one entry for each qualification – this will cover all the question papers and certification.

5.5 Previous learning and prerequisites

There are no previous learning requirements. Any requirements for entry to a course based on this specification are at the discretion of schools.

However, as a first language qualification we recommend that students should have prior experience of Chinese either at school, at home or within their community.

5.6 Access to assessment: equality and inclusion

Our general qualifications are designed to prepare students for a wide range of occupations and further study whilst assessing a wide range of competences.

The subject criteria have been assessed to ensure they test specific competences. The skills or knowledge required do not disadvantage particular groups of students.

Exam access arrangements are available for students with disabilities and special educational needs.

We comply with the UK Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage that affects a disabled student. Information about access arrangements will be issued to schools when they become OxfordAQA centres.

5.7 Working with OxfordAQA for the first time

You will need to apply to become an OxfordAQA centre to offer our specifications to your students. Find out how at oxfordaqa.com/centreapprovals

5.8 Private candidates

Centres may accept private candidates for examined units/components only with the prior agreement of OxfordAQA. If you are an approved OxfordAQA centre and wish to accept private candidates, please contact OxfordAQA at: info@oxfordaqa.com

Private candidates may also enter for examined only units/components via the British Council; please contact your local British Council office for details.



Developing skills. *Building success.* Accessing universities worldwide.

Thank you for choosing OxfordAQA. Our globally recognised International GCSE and A-level qualifications blend subject knowledge with higher-order critical thinking skills – to encourage curiosity, independent thinking and a deeper understanding of the world.

These are the skills that will help students succeed in exams, thrive at university and be ready for life.

We look forward to supporting you and your students on this journey.

Get in touch

You can contact us at
oxfordaqa.com/contact-us

or email info@oxfordaqa.com