CAMBRIDGE IGCSE

Chinese as a Second Language 0523

Syllabus Overview

Examinations 2028 and 2029

Understanding the whole syllabus

Language learning combines understanding messages with expressing your own meaning. Vocabulary and grammar support communication in the situations described by the syllabus. The skills need regular contact with meaningful language; memorising isolated word lists alone does not develop comprehension or a clear response.

For Chinese as a Second Language 0523, the content map below follows the approved subject briefing and the official syllabus. Labels group related areas for orientation; the detailed syllabus remains the authority for individual learning requirements.

Content map

Syllabus area or component	What the area covers
Reading, writing, listening and speaking	The syllabus develops four integrated language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. You will learn to identify relevant details, understand both directly stated and implied meanings, organise ideas clearly and adapt your language for different purposes and audiences.
Characters, audience and Mandarin communication	You will listen to talks and conversations, respond to factual information and more abstract ideas, and develop the confidence to express and defend your viewpoints. Written papers are presented in both traditional and simplified Chinese characters, and you may answer using either form. Listening and speaking are assessed in Mandarin Chinese.

These areas should be read as a connected course. Begin with the foundational knowledge identified in the first part of the map, then build towards the applications and explanations that depend on it. Short, regular contact with the language is more useful than occasional cramming. Link new vocabulary to a meaningful sentence, and use feedback to improve recurring grammar and comprehension difficulties. Where a row describes a choice of topics or components, study the selection required by your agreed route rather than treating all alternatives as compulsory.

Qualification and component choices

All candidates follow the component structure shown in the Assessment Overview. There is no separate Core/Extended route in this syllabus.

Written answers may use traditional or simplified characters. Listening and speaking use Mandarin. Private candidates need a centre able to administer and submit the speaking assessment.

The assessed skills

Assessment objectives describe the abilities Cambridge looks for across the qualification. The following explanations paraphrase the syllabus objectives; they are not additional topics or separate orientation tasks.

Assessment objective	Meaning for the learner
AO1 Reading	Understand the main message and select or interpret relevant information from the prescribed kinds of text.
AO2 Writing	Produce clear, organised language suited to the task, with the required vocabulary and grammatical control.
AO3 Listening	Identify main points, relevant detail and attitudes in the spoken material specified for this syllabus.
AO4 Speaking	Communicate clearly, develop relevant responses and maintain interaction with suitable vocabulary and pronunciation.

These abilities work together in an answer. Accurate knowledge supports application, while a clear explanation shows how the evidence or method leads to a conclusion. The balance varies by component, so the next lesson connects these abilities with the actual assessment formats.

Key pointers: Follow the stated examination-year syllabus, cover the required areas for your route and develop skills alongside knowledge. **Next:** Open **Assessment Overview**.