

How to Succeed in Mandarin

Course Information

Exam Board	AQA
Exam Structure	100% Assessment
Specification weblink	AQA Chinese (Mandarin) GCSE GCSE Chinese (Mandarin)
Practice exam papers weblink	See website suggestions below

Units/Topics studied

- Listening 25% (exam paper at the end of the course)
- Speaking 25% (non-exam assessment conducted in school by the class teacher)
- Reading 25% (exam paper at the end of the course)
- Writing 25% (exam paper at the end of the course)

The Year 10 topics studied include:

1. 常用单词 (General Vocabulary).
2. 兴趣 (Interests)
3. 运动 (Sports)
4. 我的小镇 (My Small Town)
5. 交通 (Transportation)
6. 我的家庭 (My Family)
7. 工作 (Jobs)
8. 衣服和颜色 (Clothes and Colour)
9. 买东西 (Shopping)
10. 外表 (Appearance)
11. 食品和饮料 (Food and Drink)
12. 在饭馆 (In a Restaurant)
13. 作息 (Daily Routine)
14. 班级 (Class)
15. 天气 (Weather)
16. 度假 (Holidays)
17. 景点 (Scenic Sport)
18. 健康 (Health)
19. 运动比赛 (Sports Competition)
20. 教育 (Education)

The Year 11 Themes studied include:

- Theme 1: identity and culture
- Theme 2: Local, National, International and Global Areas of Interest
- Theme 3: Current and Future Study and Employment

Revision strategies and materials

Writing

Foundation:

- Question 1 – message (student produces four sentences in response to a photo) – 8 marks
- Question 2 – short passage (student writes a piece of continuous text in response to four brief bullet points, approximately 30 characters in total) – 16 marks
- Question 3 – translation from English into Chinese (Mandarin) (minimum 25 words) – 10 marks
- Question 4 – structured writing task (student responds to four compulsory detailed bullet points, producing approximately 75 characters in total) – there is a choice from two questions – 16 marks

Higher:

- Question 1 – structured writing task (student responds to four compulsory detailed bullet points, producing approximately 75 characters in total) – there is a choice from two questions – 16 marks
- Question 2 – open-ended writing task (student responds to two compulsory detailed bullet points, producing approximately 125 characters in total) – there is a choice from two questions – 32 marks
- Question 3 – translation from English into Chinese (Mandarin) (minimum 40 words) – 12 Marks

Before Writing

- I think about what the task requires and brainstorm ideas for what I want to say.
- I gather more information by reading, talking to others, remembering relevant words or phrases that I have previously learned.
- I list some key ideas.
- I decide how to organise and communicate my ideas; if the task requires describing, sequencing, explaining or justifying.
- I write a rough plan to show the order in which I will put my ideas.

While Writing

- I add ideas as I write.
- If I do not know a word or phrases that I need. I look it up or think of an easier way of saying it.
- I try to include as much detail as possible, for example using lots of adjectives when I am describing something or someone.
- I pay attention to accuracy.
- I use squared paper to help achieve correct proportions and balance when writing character.

After Writing

- I write a first draft, correct it using strategies for 'checking written work' and then write a second draft.
- I ask a friend/teacher to read it.
- I write a final draft.

Checking Written Work

- I read the text all the way through to see if it makes sense.
- I read each word separately to see if the character 'looks right'.
- I say each sentence to myself to see if it 'sounds right'.
- I make sure that the style is appropriate and I use good 'linking' words (connectives).
- I try to spot what I am still not sure of.
- I look it up.
- I leave my work for a day and then come back to read it 'with fresh eyes'.

Listening

Foundation Tier and Higher Tier

- Questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally

Before Listening

- I check that I understand the task I have to do.
- I look carefully at the title and any pictures to see if I can guess what it will be about.
- I try to remember as many words as I can to do with this topic.
- I think about what is likely to be said in this situation and predict the words I am likely to hear.
- I practise listening to recordings of sets of four sounds, and identifying which one has different tone.
- I practise listening to recordings of pairs of words differentiated by tone level and identifying meaning.

While Listening

- I work out if it is a conversation, an advert, a news bulletin etc.
- I pay attention to the tone of voice and any background noises for clues.
- I listen for intonation patterns.
- I use tones as clue to meaning.
- I use other clues like key words to identify the rough gist.
- I use my common sense to make sensible guesses.
- I listen out for the names of people or places.
- I listen out for grammar clues like tenses, pronouns, etc.

Reading

Foundation Tier and Higher Tier

- Section A – questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally
- Section B – translation from Chinese (Mandarin) into English (a minimum of 35 characters for Foundation Tier and 50 characters for Higher Tier)

Before Reading

- I work out what I am reading; e.g. if it is instructions, a letter, an advert or a brochure.
- I try to get clues from any pictures and the title to help me guess what it will be about.
- I try to predict all the words and information that I might find in the text.
- I use visualisation (seeing the character in the mind's eye).

While Reading

- I try to spot words that I do understand from when we learned them in class.
- I just try to get the main ideas first and then read it again for the details.
- I look out for the names of people or places and for punctuation clues.
- I break the word or sentence up into bits that I may recognise.
- If I do not understand one bit, I go back to it and read it over several times slowly.
- Association with picture that mirrors form of character (applies to simple characters only).
- I break character down into component parts.
- I identify one particular character from a set (as when word processing based on pinyin).
- I identify radicals (remembering that radical may be in different positions in character and that some characters are themselves radicals).

Speaking

The format is the same at Foundation Tier and Higher Tier, but with different stimulus questions for the Photo card and different stimulus materials for the Role-play. The timings are different too:

- Role-play – 15 marks (2 minutes at Foundation Tier; 2 minutes at Higher Tier)
- Photo card – 15 marks (2 minutes at Foundation Tier; 3 minutes at Higher Tier)
- General conversation – 30 marks (3–5 minutes at Foundation Tier; 5–7 minutes at Higher Tier)

Practising Speaking

- I look at the teacher or at native speakers and imitate the shape of their mouths.
- I listen to the radio/recordings and repeat out loud useful expressions I hear.
- I think about what I would like to say and look up any words I don't know in the dictionary.
- I learn and practise the pinyin phonetic system (especially those letters and letter combinations which are sounded differently to English: j, q, x, zh, ch, sh, z, c, s)
- I repeat after the tape.
- I sign the tone with hand movement as the word is said.
- I identify the tone level on lines of music score.
- I self-test by adding tone markers to Pinyin form.
- I recite chants which contrast different tones.