



Syllabus

Cambridge IGCSE™

First Language Arabic 0508

Use this syllabus for exams in 2026.

Exams are available in the June and November series.

This syllabus is **not** available in all administrative zones.

Please check the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/0508 to see if this syllabus is available in your administrative zone.

العربية

Why choose Cambridge International?

Cambridge International prepares school students for life, helping them develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning. We are part of the University of Cambridge.

Our Cambridge Pathway gives students a clear path for educational success from age 5 to 19. Schools can shape the curriculum around how they want students to learn – with a wide range of subjects and flexible ways to offer them. It helps students discover new abilities and a wider world, and gives them the skills they need for life, so they can achieve at school, university and work.

Our programmes and qualifications set the global standard for international education. They are created by subject experts, are rooted in academic rigour and reflect the latest educational research. They provide a strong platform for learners to progress from one stage to the next, and are well supported by teaching and learning resources. Learn more about our research at www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/our-research/

We believe education works best when curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment are closely aligned. Our programmes develop deep knowledge, conceptual understanding and higher-order thinking skills, to prepare students for their future. Together with schools, we develop Cambridge learners who are confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged – equipped for success in the modern world.

Every year, nearly a million Cambridge students from 10 000 schools in 160 countries prepare for their future with the Cambridge Pathway.

School feedback: ‘We think the Cambridge curriculum is superb preparation for university.’

Feedback from: Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University, USA

Quality management



Cambridge International is committed to providing exceptional quality. In line with this commitment, our quality management system for the provision of international education programmes and qualifications for students aged 5 to 19 is independently certified as meeting the internationally recognised standard, ISO 9001:2015. Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/about-us/our-standards/

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Important: Changes to this syllabus

The latest syllabus is version 1, published September 2023. There are no significant changes which affect teaching.

Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2024 are still suitable for use with this syllabus.

1 Why choose this syllabus?

Key benefits

Cambridge IGCSE is the world's most popular international qualification for 14 to 16 year olds, although it can be taken by students of other ages. It is tried, tested and trusted.

Students can choose from 70 subjects in any combination – it is taught by over 5000 schools in 150 countries.

Our programmes promote a thorough knowledge and understanding of a subject and help to develop the skills learners need for their next steps in education or employment.

Cambridge IGCSE First Language Arabic is designed for learners whose mother tongue is Arabic. The course allows learners to:

- develop the ability to communicate clearly, accurately and effectively when writing
- learn how to use a wide range of vocabulary, and correct spelling, punctuation and grammar
- develop a personal style and an awareness of the audience being addressed.

Learners are also encouraged to read widely, both for their own enjoyment and to further their awareness of the ways in which Arabic can be used. Cambridge IGCSE First Language Arabic also develops more general analysis and communication skills such as synthesis, inference and the ability to order facts and present opinions effectively.

Our approach in Cambridge IGCSE First Language Arabic encourages learners to be:

confident, exploring and evaluating ideas and arguments in a structured, critical and analytical way. They are able to communicate and defend views and opinions as well as respect those of others

responsible, understanding how to use language in different contexts and for different purposes to influence and affect the world around them

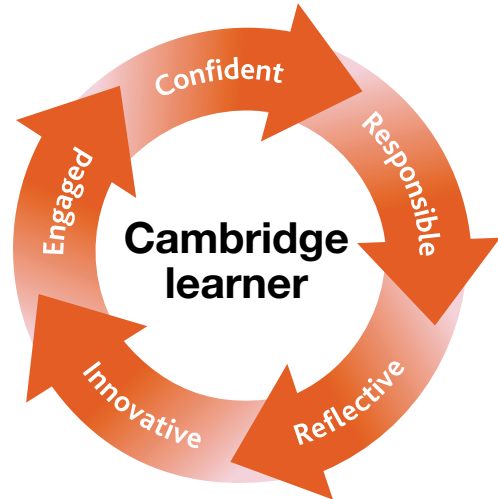
reflective, critically reviewing their own work and identifying ways to improve. They develop successful learning strategies to consolidate their skills

innovative, applying their knowledge and understanding to engage with a range of texts and styles of writing. They adapt their skills in order to respond to tasks in different contexts

engaged, taking inspiration from, and being interested in, the variety of language around them. They read critically, learn from others and understand how their learning fits within the wider context.

School feedback: 'The strength of Cambridge IGCSE qualifications is internationally recognised and has provided an international pathway for our students to continue their studies around the world.'

Feedback from: Gary Tan, Head of Schools and CEO, Raffles Group of Schools, Indonesia



International recognition and acceptance

Our expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment is the basis for the recognition of our programmes and qualifications around the world. The combination of knowledge and skills in Cambridge IGCSE First Language Arabic gives learners a solid foundation for further study. Candidates who achieve grades A* to C are well prepared to follow a wide range of courses including Cambridge International AS & A Level Arabic.

Cambridge IGCSEs are accepted and valued by leading universities and employers around the world as evidence of academic achievement. Cambridge students can be confident that their qualifications will be understood and valued throughout their education and career, in their home country and internationally. Many universities require a combination of Cambridge International AS & A Levels and Cambridge IGCSEs or equivalent to meet their entry requirements.

UK ENIC, the national agency in the UK for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills, has carried out an independent benchmarking study of Cambridge IGCSE and found it to be comparable to the standard of the GCSE in the UK. This means students can be confident that their Cambridge IGCSE qualifications are accepted as equivalent to UK GCSEs by leading universities worldwide.

Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition

School feedback: ‘Cambridge IGCSE is one of the most sought-after and recognised qualifications in the world. It is very popular in Egypt because it provides the perfect preparation for success at advanced level programmes.’

Feedback from: Managing Director of British School of Egypt BSE

Supporting teachers

We believe education is most effective when curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment are closely aligned. We provide a wide range of resources, detailed guidance, innovative training and targeted professional development so that you can give your students the best possible preparation for Cambridge IGCSE. To find out which resources are available for each syllabus go to our School Support Hub.

The School Support Hub is our secure online site for Cambridge teachers where you can find the resources you need to deliver our programmes. You can also keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community through our online discussion forums.

Find out more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/support

Support for Cambridge IGCSE			
Planning and preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabuses Schemes of work Specimen Question Papers and Mark Schemes Teacher guides 	Teaching and assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorsed resources Online forums 	Learning and revision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example candidate responses Past papers and mark schemes Specimen paper answers 	Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidate Results Service Principal examiner reports for teachers Results Analysis

Sign up for email notifications about changes to syllabuses, including new and revised products and services, at www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates

Syllabuses and specimen materials represent the final authority on the content and structure of all of our assessments.

Professional development

Find the next step on your professional development journey.

- Introductory Professional Development – An introduction to Cambridge programmes and qualifications.
- Extension Professional Development – Develop your understanding of Cambridge programmes and qualifications to build confidence in your delivery.
- Enrichment Professional Development – Transform your approach to teaching with our Enrichment workshops.
- Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications (PDQs) – Practice-based programmes that transform professional learning for practising teachers. Available at Certificate and Diploma level.

Find out more at:

www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools/professional-development/



Supporting exams officers

We provide comprehensive support and guidance for all Cambridge exams officers.

Find out more at: www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

2 Syllabus overview

Aims

The aims describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus.

The aims are to enable students to:

- communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in writing
- understand and respond appropriately to what they read
- enjoy and appreciate the variety of language
- complement their other areas of study by developing skills of a more general application (e.g. analysis, synthesis, drawing of inferences)
- promote their personal development and an understanding of themselves and others.

Content overview

Cambridge IGCSE First Language Arabic offers candidates the opportunity to respond knowledgeably to a rich array of reading passages. Candidates will use some of these passages to inform and inspire their own writing, and write in a range of text types for different audiences.

The passages cover a range of genres and types, including fiction and non-fiction, and may also include other forms of writing, such as essays, reviews and articles.

Candidates are encouraged to become appreciative and critical readers and writers of Arabic.

Assessment overview

All candidates take two components. Candidates will be eligible for grades A* to G.

All candidates take:		and:	
Paper 1	2 hours	Paper 2	2 hours
Reading	50%	Writing	50%
50 marks		50 marks	
Structured and extended writing questions		Two composition tasks	
Questions will be based on Arabic passages		Externally assessed	
Externally assessed			

Information on availability is in the **Before you start** section.



Cambridge Assessment International Education is an education organisation and politically neutral. The contents of this syllabus, examination papers and associated materials do not endorse any political view. We endeavour to treat all aspects of the exam process neutrally.

Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

AO1 Reading

Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- R1 understand and collate explicit meanings
- R2 understand, explain and collate implicit meanings and attitudes
- R3 select, analyse and evaluate what is relevant to specific purposes
- R4 understand how writers achieve effects.

AO2 Writing

Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- W1 articulate experience and express what is thought, felt and imagined
- W2 order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- W3 understand and use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- W4 use language and register appropriate to audience and context
- W5 make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

Weighting for assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

Assessment objective	Weighting in IGCSE %
AO1 Reading	35
AO2 Writing	65
Total	100

Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %	
	Paper 1	Paper 2
AO1 Reading	70	0
AO2 Writing	30	100
Total	100	100

3 Subject content

This syllabus gives you the flexibility to design a course that will interest, challenge and engage your learners. Where appropriate you are responsible for selecting texts, topics, subject contexts, resources and examples to support your learners' study. These should be appropriate for the learners' age, cultural background and learning context as well as complying with your school policies and local legal requirements.

All candidates follow the same curriculum.

1 Reading

All candidates should be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of words within extended texts
- scan for and extract specific information
- identify main and subordinate topics, summarise, paraphrase, re-express
- show some sense of how writers achieve their effects
- recognise and respond to simple linguistic devices including figurative language.

Candidates aiming for grades A* to C should, in addition, be able to:

- show a more precise understanding of extended texts
- recognise the relationship of ideas
- evaluate effectiveness, draw inferences, compare, analyse, synthesise
- show understanding of how writers achieve their effects
- recognise and respond to more sophisticated linguistic devices.

2 Writing

All candidates should be able to:

- express thoughts, feelings and opinions in order to interest, inform or convince the reader
- show some sense of audience
- demonstrate adequate control of vocabulary, syntax and grammar
- exercise care over punctuation and spelling
- write accurate simple sentences
- attempt a variety of sentence structures
- recognise the need for paragraphing
- use appropriate vocabulary.

Candidates aiming for grades A* to C should, in addition, be able to:

- show a wider and more varied sense of different styles to interest, inform or convince the reader
- show a clear sense of audience
- demonstrate a sophisticated use of vocabulary and structures
- demonstrate accuracy in punctuation and spelling
- write accurate complex sentences
- employ varied sentence structures
- write in well-constructed paragraphs
- use imaginative and varied vocabulary.

4 Details of the assessment

The question papers are set entirely in Arabic.

Paper 1 – Reading

Written paper, 2 hours, 50 marks

Dictionaries may **not** be used.

Questions relate to two passages of approximately 600–700 words each, linked by a common theme. These passages are printed on the question paper insert.

Question 1 (25 marks)

This question is divided into a series of sub-questions requiring answers of different lengths.

The sub-questions are based on Passage 1 and test the following reading objectives (20 marks):

- R1 understand and collate explicit meanings
- R2 understand, explain and collate implicit meanings and attitudes
- R3 select, analyse and evaluate what is relevant to specific purposes
- R4 understand how writers achieve effects.

In addition, 5 marks are available for the accuracy of the language in which answers are expressed.

This tests the following writing objective:

- W5 make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

Question 2 (25 marks)

Candidates write a summary of 200–250 words based on Passage 1 and Passage 2.

The question tests the following reading objectives (15 marks):

- R1 understand and collate explicit meanings
- R2 understand, explain and collate implicit meanings and attitudes
- R3 select, analyse and evaluate what is relevant to specific purposes.

In addition, 10 marks are available for Writing (5 marks for Style and Organisation and 5 marks for Accuracy of Language).

This tests the following writing objectives:

- W2 order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- W3 understand and use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- W4 use language and register appropriate to audience and context
- W5 make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

Paper 2 – Writing

Written paper, 2 hours, 50 marks

Dictionaries may **not** be used.

This paper is divided into two sections, as detailed below. Candidates are required to write **two** compositions, one from each section.

Section 1 – Discussion and Argument (25 marks)

Four argumentative/discursive titles are set, from which candidates choose one.

Section 2 – Description and Narration (25 marks)

Four titles are set (two descriptive and two narrative), from which candidates choose one.

Candidates are required to write between 350 and 500 words for each of their answers.

The questions test the following writing objectives:

- W1 articulate experience and express what is thought, felt and imagined
- W2 order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- W3 understand and use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- W4 use language and register appropriate to audience and context
- W5 make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures, sentences, punctuation and spelling.

5 What else you need to know

This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support. Find more information about our administrative processes at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Before you start

Previous study

We recommend that learners starting this course should have studied a broad curriculum such as the Cambridge Lower Secondary programme or equivalent national educational framework.

Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge IGCSE syllabuses to require about 130 guided learning hours for each subject. This is for guidance only. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to each school and the learners' previous experience of the subject.

Availability and timetables

All Cambridge schools are allocated to one of six administrative zones. Each zone has a specific timetable. Find your administrative zone at www.cambridgeinternational.org/adminzone. This syllabus is **not** available in all administrative zones. To find out about availability check the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/0508

You can view the timetable for your administrative zone at www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables

You can enter candidates in the June and November exam series.

Check you are using the syllabus for the year the candidate is taking the exam.

Private candidates can enter for this syllabus. For more information, please refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*.

Combining with other syllabuses

Candidates can take this syllabus alongside other Cambridge International syllabuses in a single exam series. The only exceptions are:

- Cambridge IGCSE Arabic (0544)
- Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) First Language Arabic (7184)
- Cambridge O Level Arabic (3180)
- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) and Cambridge O Level syllabuses are at the same level.

Group awards: Cambridge ICE

Cambridge ICE (International Certificate of Education) is a group award for Cambridge IGCSE. It encourages schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum by recognising the achievements of learners who pass exams in a range of different subjects.

Learn more about Cambridge ICE at www.cambridgeinternational.org/cambridgeice

Making entries

Exams officers are responsible for submitting entries to Cambridge International. We encourage them to work closely with you to make sure they enter the right number of candidates for the right combination of syllabus components. Entry option codes and instructions for submitting entries are in the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*. Your exams officer has access to this guide.

Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as administrative zones. We allocate all Cambridge schools to an administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable.

Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

Support for exams officers

We know how important exams officers are to the successful running of exams. We provide them with the support they need to make entries on time. Your exams officer will find this support, and guidance for all other phases of the Cambridge Exams Cycle, at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Retakes

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to. Information on retake entries is at www.cambridgeinternational.org/retakes

Language

This syllabus is available in English and Arabic. The assessment materials are in Arabic only.

Accessibility and equality

Syllabus and assessment design

At Cambridge International, we work to avoid direct or indirect discrimination in our syllabuses and assessment materials. We aim to maximise inclusivity for candidates of all national, cultural or social backgrounds and candidates with protected characteristics, which include special educational needs and disability, religion and belief, and characteristics related to gender and identity. We also aim to make our materials as accessible as possible by using accessible language and applying accessible design principles. This gives all candidates the fairest possible opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding and helps to minimise the requirement to make reasonable adjustments during the assessment process.

Access arrangements

Access arrangements (including modified papers) are the principal way in which Cambridge International complies with our duty, as guided by the UK Equality Act (2010), to make 'reasonable adjustments' for candidates with special educational needs (SEN), disability, illness or injury. Where a candidate would otherwise be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to a candidate with no SEN, disability, illness or injury, we may be able to agree pre-examination access arrangements. These arrangements help a candidate by minimising accessibility barriers and maximising their opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding in an assessment.

Important:

Requested access arrangements should be based on evidence of the candidate's barrier to assessment and should also reflect their normal way of working at school. This is explained in the *Cambridge Handbook* www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

- For Cambridge International to approve an access arrangement, we will need to agree that it constitutes a reasonable adjustment, involves reasonable cost and timeframe and does not affect the security and integrity of the assessment.
- Availability of access arrangements should be checked by centres at the start of the course. Details of our standard access arrangements and modified question papers are available in the *Cambridge Handbook* www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide
- Please contact us at the start of the course to find out if we are able to approve an arrangement that is not included in the list of standard access arrangements.
- Candidates who cannot access parts of the assessment may be able to receive an award based on the parts they have completed.

Some access arrangements are not allowed in this syllabus because they affect the assessment objectives:

- candidates must **not** use voice-activated software to dictate their written work
- candidates must **not** use word processing technology which uses word prediction and/or phrase prompting including spell check and grammar check
- candidates must **not** use human readers.

Please note that we cannot provide Braille papers for this syllabus. We can only provide Braille papers for languages which use the Roman alphabet.

After the exam

Grading and reporting

Grades A*, A, B, C, D, E, F or G indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge IGCSE.

A* is the highest and G is the lowest. 'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for grade G. 'Ungraded' is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

In specific circumstances your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (PENDING)
- X (NO RESULT).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

On the statement of results and certificates, Cambridge IGCSE is shown as INTERNATIONAL GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION (IGCSE).

How students and teachers can use the grades

Assessment at Cambridge IGCSE has two purposes:

- 1 to measure learning and achievement
The assessment confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus.
- 2 to show likely future success
The outcomes help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful.
The outcomes help students choose the most suitable course or career.

Changes to this syllabus for 2026

The syllabus has been updated. This is version 1, published September 2023.

You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme. We review our syllabuses regularly to make sure they continue to meet the needs of our schools. In updating this syllabus, we have made it easier for teachers and students to understand, keeping the familiar features that teachers and schools value.

There are no significant changes which affect teaching.

Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2024 are still suitable for use with this syllabus.



School feedback: ‘While studying Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge International A Levels, students broaden their horizons through a global perspective and develop a lasting passion for learning.’

Feedback from: Zhai Xiaoning, Deputy Principal, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China

We are committed to making our documents accessible in accordance with the WCAG 2.1 Standard. We are always looking to improve the accessibility of our documents. If you find any problems or you think we are not meeting accessibility requirements, contact us at **info@cambridgeinternational.org** with the subject heading: Digital accessibility. If you need this document in a different format, contact us and supply your name, email address and requirements and we will respond within 15 working days.

Cambridge Assessment International Education, The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
t: +44 (0)1223 553554 email: info@cambridgeinternational.org www.cambridgeinternational.org