

# China Studies in English

## Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education Advanced Level Higher 1 (2021)

### (Syllabus 8628)

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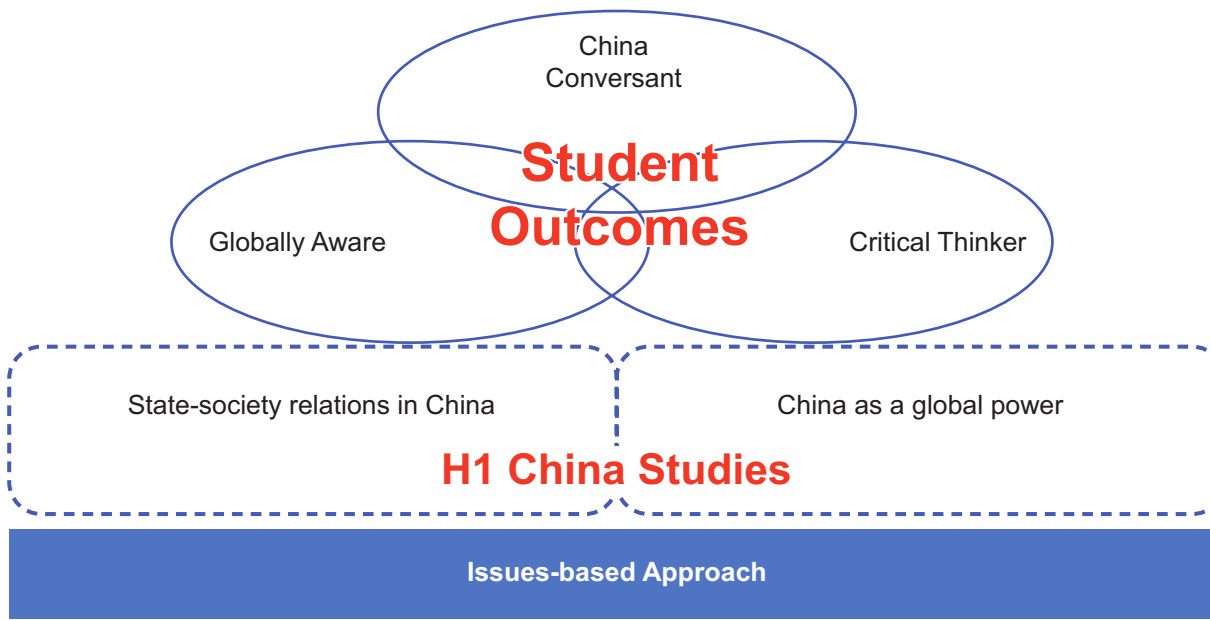
The Common Last Topics highlighted in yellow will not be examined in the 2021 A-Level national examination.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

China Studies focuses on the transformation of China since 1978 and its future. It allows students to develop the relevant knowledge and critical thinking skills to pursue a holistic understanding of contemporary China and to be cognisant of larger global trends. In the long run, it seeks to enable students to potentially contribute in their own capacity to further Singapore-China interactions. To this end, the China Studies curriculum seeks to achieve the following student outcomes:

- a person who is 'China-conversant', where the student will be knowledgeable of the developments in China and sensitive to the thoughts and behaviour of the people of China;
- a person who practises critical thinking, where the student will exercise sound reasoning through considering different perspectives and the use of evidence; and
- a person who is globally aware, where the student will possess an awareness of global issues and trends through the study of China's relations with other countries and its growth as a regional and global power.



## FEATURES OF THE CURRICULUM

### ***The Issues-based Approach***

The issues-based approach provides focus for the discussion of the developments in contemporary China. It supports and offers opportunities for constructivist teaching and learning as the study of issues will provide students with a way to thoughtfully consider how individuals and institutions in a society interact and relate to each other, and give them a meaningful way of using knowledge from relevant sources. It also requires students to utilise critical thinking skills such as reflective thinking and drawing conclusions through analysing different sources of information.

### ***Two Issues***

The two issues (state-society relations in China and China as a global power) serve to guide discourse in the key knowledge dimensions in China Studies which involves politics, society, economy and international relations. The connections across the dimensions are made through the issues so that students are aware of the inter-relationships between the dimensions in shaping China's development.

**21st Century Competencies**

The H1 China Studies in English curriculum is aligned to the 21st Century Competencies framework. Through issues-based learning, students will acquire knowledge of contemporary China while developing 21st century competencies in a constructivist setting. For instance, in examining key issues facing China's transformation, students will continuously engage in critical questions of why China has formulated certain policies or undertaken certain actions. They will also examine how these in turn impact China's economic development and her role in the international arena as a potential great power. In this regard, students' understanding of contemporary China will be undergirded by their ability to study the dynamic inter-relationships across China's economy, politics, society and international relations (civic literacy, global awareness and cross-cultural skills). The discussion of the different issues in the classroom (communication, collaboration, and information skills) will serve as a platform to develop analytical and evaluative skills (critical and inventive thinking).

**2 AIMS**

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H1 China Studies aims to enable students to understand China's transformation and its future by:

- (a) examining the key issues of state-society relations and international relations in contemporary China;
- (b) developing skills in evaluating multiple perspectives to arrive at an informed judgement of issues; and
- (c) developing an awareness of and interest in developments in China and its interactions with the world.

**3 ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES**

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Candidates are expected to:

**AO1: Knowledge**

- demonstrate knowledge of issues in contemporary China

**AO2: Analysis and Evaluation of Issues**

- critically examine issues and developments
- analyse and evaluate different perspectives
- construct coherent and substantiated arguments
- make judgements and reach conclusions based on reasoned consideration of issues

**AO3: Interpretation and Evaluation of Information**

- interpret, analyse and evaluate information from a range of sources
- postulate outcomes and developments based on information
- justify opinions and recommendations
- make judgements and reach conclusions based on reasoned consideration of information

## 4 SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

### 4.1 ASSESSMENT MODE

The assessment comprises one written examination paper. The paper will consist of two sections: Section A (Case Study) and Section B (Essay Questions).

### 4.2 SPECIFICATION GRID

Section	Description	Assessment Objective	Marks	Overall weighting	Duration
A (Case Study)	Candidates answer the compulsory case study comprising three sub-questions.	AO1 + AO2 + AO3	30 marks	37.5%	3 hours
B (Essay Questions)	Candidates answer two essay questions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer 1 out of 2 questions on <u>Key Issue 1</u></li> <li>• Answer 1 out of 2 questions on <u>Key Issue 2</u></li> </ul>	AO1 + AO2	50 marks	62.5%	

Note: AO1 forms part of testing of AO2 and AO3

### 4.3 DESCRIPTION OF COMPONENTS

#### 4.3.1 SECTION A (CASE STUDY)

The Case Study will consist of a collection of material, containing three to four sources and no more than 3 A4 pages in length, on any one of the two key issues in the syllabus content. The given material will provide different perspectives and opinions. It will include both text and non-text sources (e.g. maps, pictures, photos and statistics) but the interpretation of these sources will not require specialised knowledge of a particular discipline. The Case Study will require candidates to interpret, analyse and evaluate the given material, and make postulations on outcomes and developments based on the given information.

The Case Study questions will be assessed using the Levels of Response Mark Scheme (LORMS). LORMS involves qualitative judgements and awards marks according to the level of skill or understanding in the answer. The mark scheme will be specific to the target objective of the question set. There will be different levels of skill or understanding, in relation to the target objective, demonstrated by the candidates in their answers. The mark scheme will thus be question-specific.

#### 4.3.2 SECTION B (ESSAY QUESTIONS)

Candidates are required to show depth of understanding of issues and evidence of reading in their answers. The answers should demonstrate critical thinking skills such as the ability to interpret and evaluate different points of view and to present thoughtful and analytical arguments. Candidates are required to answer the essay questions in continuous prose.

The essay questions will be assessed using holistic level descriptors. The assessment involves qualitative rather than quantitative evaluation. Judgements on the appropriate band of each essay assessed will be based on the principle of 'best fit' determined by the descriptions within each band which has several assessment criteria.

For details on the assessment criteria, please refer to Section B (Essay Questions) Level Descriptors in Appendix A.

## 5 SYLLABUS CONTENT

The syllabus focuses on China's transformation since 1978 and its future and is grounded upon an examination of two key issues facing contemporary China. This syllabus frames two key issues as follows:

- State-society relations in China
- China as a global power

### Key Issue 1 – State-society relations in China

With a huge population and an enormous one-party government that has been the prime mover of China's development, the influence of both society and state remains a key force in determining China's future progress as a country. Significantly, the domestic peace and stability required for China's sustained development hinges on the relationship and interaction between state and society. With Chinese society becoming more open and diversified, the state is adapting to new modes of governance in addressing the various social issues arising in the country. The relationship and interaction between state and society will be important indicators of China's domestic peace and stability.

Through the study of this issue, students will be able to discuss:

- The key societal changes in China due to its development
- The role of the Chinese state in society
- Social and political challenges created by China's development
- The effectiveness of the Chinese government in managing a changing society

### Content Dimensions

- Societal changes
  - Changing demographics
    - migration
    - ageing population
  - Urbanisation
    - growth of cities
  - Growing affluence
    - the urban middle class
  - Pluralised society
    - income and regional disparity
- The Chinese state
  - One-party rule
  - Legitimising strategies
    - importance of ideology
    - performance-based legitimacy
- State-society interactions
  - Growing civil society
    - non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)
    - the internet
    - mass incidents
  - Social development and management
    - social welfare provisions
    - online supervision
    - public security

### Key Issue 2 – China as a global power

An ascendant China on the global stage has sparked debates about the opportunities and threats posed by China. While diplomacy has been used by the Chinese leadership to allay concerns over its more aggressive territorial claims and increased global presence, China has concomitantly safeguarded its national interests through policies that have been deemed contrary to China's "Peaceful Rise" claims. The study of the twin influences of domestic pressures and international norms that shape Chinese foreign policy would allow a better understanding of this dichotomy in the way China manages its external relations.

Through the study of this issue, students will be able to discuss:

- The factors contributing to China's foreign policy goals
- China's evolving role in global affairs
- The challenges and opportunities facing China in its relations with the United States and Japan
- China's effectiveness in pursuing its foreign policy goals

#### Content Dimensions

- Factors influencing China's foreign policy goals
  - Guiding principles of China's international relations
  - National interests
  - Popular nationalism
- China as a global power
  - Involvement in international economic and political institutions
    - global economic stability
    - environment and climate change
    - international security
  - Aspects of China's growing power
    - military modernisation programme
    - soft power
- Challenges and opportunities facing China's bilateral relations
  - Sino-US relations: Co-operation and competition in Asia-Pacific
    - trade and investments
    - national security
  - Sino-Japan relations
    - bilateral trade
    - historical controversies

**APPENDIX A**  
**SECTION B (ESSAY QUESTIONS)**  
**LEVEL DESCRIPTORS**

Level	Marks	Quality of the answer
5	21–25	<p>Responses show very good understanding of issues and developments which relate to the question and contain a relevant, focused and balanced argument based on a consistently analytical approach. This is fully supported by the use of appropriate factual material.</p> <p>Towards the top of the level, responses are expected to be analytical, focused, and balanced throughout. The argument will be coherent and will reach a supported judgement in response to the question. Candidates will demonstrate a critical approach and evaluate different views as appropriate. Towards the lower end of the level, responses might typically be analytical, consistent and balanced, but the argument might not be fully convincing.</p>
4	16–20	<p>Responses show a good understanding of issues and developments which relate to the question and contain a relevant argument based on a largely analytical approach. This is supported by some use of appropriate factual material.</p> <p>Towards the top of the level, responses are likely to be analytical, balanced and effectively supported. There may be some attempt to reach a judgement but this may be partial or unsupported. Candidates may show some critical awareness and are likely to appreciate that there are different views. Towards the lower end of the level, responses are likely to contain detailed factual material with some focused analysis, but the argument will be less coherent in places.</p>
3	11–15	<p>Responses show understanding of issues and developments which relate to the question and contain an argument based on some analytical points. This may not be highly developed and factual material may lack depth.</p> <p>Towards the top of the level, responses contain detailed factual material. However attempts to argue relevantly are implicit or confined to introductions and conclusions. Candidates may be aware that there are different views on issues but the approach will be descriptive rather than evaluative. Alternatively, responses may offer an analytical framework which contains some supporting material. Towards the lower end of the level, responses might offer some narrative or description relating to the topic, but are less likely to address the question directly.</p>
2	6–10	<p>Responses show some understanding of issues and developments which relate to the question. They may be analytical with limited relevant factual support.</p> <p>Towards the top of the level, responses might contain relevant commentaries which lack adequate factual support. The responses may contain some unsupported assertions. Towards the lower end of the level, responses are likely to contain some information which is relevant to the topic but will not demonstrate full understanding of the implications of the question.</p>
1	0–5	<p>Responses show limited understanding of issues and developments which relate to the question. They may only address part of the question.</p> <p>Towards the top of the level, responses show some awareness of relevant material but this may be presented as a list. Towards the lower end of the level, answers may provide a little relevant material but are likely to be characterised by irrelevance.</p>