



Syllabus

Cambridge O Level

Sinhala 3205

Tamil 3226

Use this syllabus for exams in 2026.

Exams are available in the June series.

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Version 1

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

For the purposes of screen readers, any mention in this document of Cambridge IGCSE refers to Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Changes to the syllabus for 2026

The latest syllabus is version 1, published September 2023.

There are no significant changes which affect teaching.

You are strongly advised to read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.

Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2017 are still suitable for use with this syllabus.

Contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1 Why choose Cambridge International?	
1.2 Why choose Cambridge O Level?	
1.3 Why choose Cambridge O Level Sinhala and Tamil?	
1.4 How can I find out more?	
2. Teacher support.....	7
2.1 Support materials	
2.2 Endorsed resources	
2.3 Training	
3. Sinhala and Tamil.....	8
3.1 Assessment	
3.2 Aims	
3.3 Assessment objectives	
3.4 Description of papers	
4. Other information	11
4.1 Accessibility and equality	
4.2 Additional information	

1. Introduction

1.1 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 Cambridge University Press & Assessment, which is a department 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, rooted in academic rigour and reflect the latest educational research. They provide a strong platform for students to progress from one stage to the next, and are well supported by teaching and learning resources.

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

Cambridge learners

Our mission is to provide educational benefit through provision of international programmes and qualifications for school education and to be the world leader in this field. Together with schools, we develop Cambridge learners who are:

- **confident** in working with information and ideas – their own and those of others
- **responsible** for themselves, responsive to and respectful of others
- **reflective** as learners, developing their ability to learn
- **innovative** and equipped for new and future challenges
- **engaged** intellectually and socially, ready to make a difference.

Recognition

Our expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment is the basis for the recognition of our programmes and qualifications around the world.

Cambridge O Level is internationally recognised by schools, universities and employers as equivalent in demand to Cambridge IGCSE™ (International General Certificate of Secondary Education). There are over 600 000 entries a year in over 50 countries. Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition



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.

Support for teachers

A wide range of materials and resources is available to support teachers and learners in Cambridge schools. Resources suit a variety of teaching methods in different international contexts. Through subject discussion forums and training, teachers can access the expert advice they need for teaching our qualifications. More details can be found in Section 2 of this syllabus and at www.cambridgeinternational.org/teachers

Support for exams officers

Exams officers can trust in reliable, efficient administration of exams entries and excellent personal support from our customer services. Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Quality management

Cambridge International is committed to providing exceptional quality. In line with this commitment, our quality management system for the provision of international qualifications and education programmes for students aged 5 to 19 is independently certified as meeting the internationally recognised standard, ISO 9001:2015. Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001

1.2 Why choose Cambridge O Level?

Cambridge O Level is typically for 14 to 16 year olds and is an internationally recognised qualification. It has been designed especially for an international market and is sensitive to the needs of different countries. Cambridge O Level is designed for learners whose first language may not be English, and this is acknowledged throughout the examination process.

Our aim is to balance knowledge, understanding and skills in our programmes and qualifications to enable students to become effective learners and to provide a solid foundation for their continuing educational journey.

Through our professional development courses and our support materials for Cambridge O Levels, we provide the tools to enable teachers to prepare students to the best of their ability and work with us in the pursuit of excellence in education.

Cambridge O Levels are considered to be an excellent preparation for Cambridge International AS & A Levels, the Cambridge AICE (Advanced International Certificate of Education) Diploma, and other education programmes, such as the US Advanced Placement program and the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme. Learn more about Cambridge O Levels at www.cambridgeinternational.org/olevel

Guided learning hours

Cambridge O Level syllabuses are designed on the assumption that learners have about 130 guided learning hours per subject over the duration of the course, but this is for guidance only. The number of hours required to gain the qualification may vary according to local curricular practice and the students' prior experience of the subject.

1.3 Why choose Cambridge O Level Sinhala and Tamil?

Cambridge O Levels are established qualifications that keep pace with educational developments and trends. The Cambridge O Level curriculum places emphasis on broad and balanced study across a wide range of subject areas. The curriculum is structured so that candidates attain both practical skills and theoretical knowledge.

Cambridge O Level Language qualifications are accepted by universities and employers as proof of knowledge and understanding of a language. Successful candidates gain lifelong skills including:

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

Candidates are also encouraged to read widely, both for their own enjoyment and to further their awareness of the ways in which the language can be used. Cambridge O Level Language qualifications also develop more general analysis and communication skills such as synthesis, inference, and the ability to order facts and present opinions effectively.

Prior learning

We recommend that candidates who are beginning one of these courses should have previously achieved a level corresponding to the requirements of the Key Stage 3 programme of study for Modern Foreign Languages within the National Curriculum for England.

Progression

Cambridge O Level Certificates are general qualifications that enable candidates to progress either directly to employment, or to proceed to further qualifications.

Candidates who are awarded grades C to A* in a Cambridge O Level language syllabus are well prepared to follow courses leading to Cambridge International AS and A Level, or the equivalent, in the same language.

1.4 How can I find out more?

If you are already a Cambridge school

You can make entries for this qualification through your usual channels. If you have any questions, please contact us at info@cambridgeinternational.org

If you are not yet a Cambridge school

Learn about the benefits of becoming a Cambridge school at www.cambridgeinternational.org/join

Email us at info@cambridgeinternational.org to find out how your organisation can register to become a Cambridge school.

2. Teacher support

2.1 Support materials

You can go to our public website at www.cambridgeinternational.org/olevel to download current and future syllabuses together with specimen papers or past question papers, examiner reports and grade threshold tables from one series.

For teachers at registered Cambridge schools a range of additional support materials for specific syllabuses is available online from the School Support Hub. Go to www.cambridgeinternational.org/support (username and password required). If you do not have access, speak to the School Support coordinator at your school.

2.2 Endorsed resources

We work with a range of publishers to provide a choice of high-quality resources to help teachers plan and deliver Cambridge programmes and qualifications. All Cambridge endorsed resources have been through a detailed quality assurance process to make sure they closely reflect the syllabus and provide a high level of support for teachers and learners.

You can find resources to support this syllabus by clicking the Published resources link on the syllabus page www.cambridgeinternational.org/3205 or www.cambridgeinternational.org/3226

2.3 Training

We offer a range of support activities for teachers to ensure they have the relevant knowledge and skills to deliver our qualifications. See www.cambridgeinternational.org/events for further information.

3. Sinhala and Tamil

3.1 Assessment

Candidates take Papers 1 and 2. Candidates will be eligible for grades A* to E.

Component		Weighting
Paper 1: Composition Section A – 15 marks One composition of about 120 words from a choice of three topics. Section B – 30 marks One essay of about 200 words from a choice of four topics. Externally assessed.	1 hour 30 minutes	45%
Paper 2: Translation and Reading Comprehension Section A – 30 marks Two translations, one from the target language into English and one from English into the target language. Section B – 25 marks Open-ended comprehension questions on one set passage. Externally assessed.	1 hour 30 minutes	55%

Availability

These syllabuses are examined in the June examination series.

These syllabuses are available to private candidates.

These syllabuses are **not** available in all administrative zones. To find out about availability check the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/olevel

Detailed timetables are available from www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables

Combining this with other syllabuses

Candidates can combine this syllabus in an examination series with any other Cambridge International syllabus, except:

- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

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

3.2 Aims

The aims of the syllabus are the same for all candidates. The aims are set out below and describe the educational purposes of a course in a language other than English for the Cambridge O Level examination. They are not listed in order of priority.

The aims are to:

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

3.3 Assessment objectives

There are three assessment objectives:

A Continuous Writing

Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- 1 articulate experience and express what is felt and what is imagined
- 2 order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- 3 communicate effectively and appropriately
- 4 demonstrate an awareness of the conventions of paragraphing, sentence structure, punctuation and spelling
- 5 express thoughts, feelings and opinions in order to interest, inform or convince
- 6 demonstrate adequate control of vocabulary, syntax and grammar, punctuation and spelling.

B Writing for a Specific Purpose

Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- 1 understand and adequately convey information
- 2 understand, order and present facts, ideas and opinions
- 3 evaluate information and select what is relevant to specific purposes
- 4 articulate experience and express what is felt and what is imagined
- 5 communicate effectively and appropriately
- 6 show a sense of audience and an awareness of register and style in both formal and informal situations.

C Language Usage/Reading Comprehension

Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- 1 exercise control of appropriate structures
- 2 understand and employ a range of apt vocabulary
- 3 recognise implicit meaning and attitude
- 4 evaluate information and express it in their own words.

3.4 Description of papers

Dictionaries may **not** be used in the examination.

Paper 1: Composition

1½ hours, 45 marks

Section A: Letter, report or speech, dialogue (15 marks)

From a choice of three topics, candidates must write one composition of about 120 words in the target language. The choice of topics will allow candidates to demonstrate ability in using the written language to:

- communicate by letter
- compose a report or speech
- compose a dialogue.

Section B: Essay (30 marks)

From a choice of four topics (narrative, descriptive or argumentative), candidates must write one essay of about 200 words in the target language.

Paper 2: Translation and Reading Comprehension

1½ hours, 55 marks

Section A: Translation (30 marks)

Candidates must:

- translate a passage from the target language into English (10 marks)
- translate a passage from English into the target language (20 marks).

Section B: Reading Comprehension (25 marks)

Candidates must answer a variety of questions testing their understanding of a set passage.

4. Other information

4.1 Accessibility and equality

Syllabus and assessment design

Cambridge International works to avoid direct or indirect discrimination. We develop and design syllabuses and assessment materials to maximise inclusivity for candidates of all national, cultural or social backgrounds and candidates with protected characteristics; these protected characteristics include special educational needs and disability, religion and belief, and characteristics related to gender and identity. In addition, the language and layout used are designed to make our materials as accessible as possible. 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 in line with 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 are not allowed to use voice-activated software to dictate their written work
 - candidates are not allowed to use word processing technology which uses word prediction and/or phrase prompting
 - candidates are not allowed to use human readers.

Please note that we are unable to provide Braille papers for this syllabus; we can only provide Braille papers for languages which use the Roman alphabet.

4.2 Additional information

Language

This syllabus and the associated assessment materials are available in English only.

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 a copy of 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 one 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.

Retakes

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to. This is a linear qualification so candidates cannot re-sit individual components. Information on retake entries is at www.cambridgeinternational.org/retakes

Grading and reporting

Cambridge O Level results are shown by one of the grades A*, A, B, C, D or E, indicating the standard achieved, A* being the highest and E the lowest. 'Ungraded' indicates that the candidate's performance fell short of the standard required for grade E. 'Ungraded' will be reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate. The letters Q (pending) and X (no result) may also appear on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

How students and teachers can use the grades

Assessment at Cambridge O Level 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, to the levels described in the grade descriptions.
- 2 to show likely future success
The outcomes 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.

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.

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