

## Cambridge Pre-U Mandarin Chinese Paper 4 – Literature and Film

UCL IOE, London

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**12<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

### Overview

1. Introduction to Paper 4
2. Teaching *Love in a Fallen City*
3. Teaching *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*
4. Syllabus requirements
  - The mark scheme
  - Sample scripts



## 1. Introduction to Paper 4



### Aims of the Pre-U that apply to Paper 4

- Form a sound base of skills, language and attitudes required for further study, work and leisure
- Develop insights into the culture and civilisation of countries where Chinese is spoken
- Encourage positive attitudes to language learning and a sympathetic approach to other cultures and civilisations
- Further intellectual and personal development by promoting learning and social skills

## Practicalities

- Exam period and length: 2 hours, 30 minutes; taken in June
- Counts for 25% of the final grade, so each essay is worth 12.5%
- Short Course: candidates write one essay taken either from culture or literature/film
- Principle Course: candidates pick one essay from the Chinese culture options, and one essay from the literature and film options, which are currently:

## Current options

1. Fiction – *Love in a Fallen City* and other stories, by Eileen Chang
2. Fiction – *Boat to Redemption*, by Su Tong
3. Film – *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*, directed by Dai Sijie

## Preparing for teaching

- Teach largely in English.
- Should I teach both novels plus the film?
- Who is going to teach literature? Will he or she only teach Paper 4?
- Getting support and ideas from your English department
- Read the syllabus update on the website:

## Guidance from CIE

### Syllabuses

The syllabus year refers to the year in which the examination will be taken.

 [2013 - 2015 Syllabus \(PDF, 384KB\)](#)

 [2013 - 2015 Syllabus Update \(PDF, 82KB\)](#)

 [Indicative Content for Replacement Topic Areas \(PDF, 12KB\)](#)

 [2016 - 2018 Syllabus \(PDF, 222KB\)](#)

## 2. Teaching Literature

### *Love in a Fallen City*



### Suggestions for *Love in a Fallen City*

- “... be able to discuss literary techniques, structure, characterisation, language, mood and lyricism. They should also be able to compare and contrast the novellas. Sometimes the question will refer to a specific novella and at other times the question will ask the student to refer to two to illustrate their answer. Students will also need to have some background to the socio-political situation in Shanghai and Hong Kong at the time ...”

### *Suggested themes*

- Tradition and modernity
- Love
- Family
- Politics
- Conflict
- Women and escape from convention

### *What do these mean?*

- Literary techniques
- Structure
- Characterisation
- Language
- Mood
- Lyricism (think 'beautiful', 'poetic' language)
- Compare and contrast
- Socio-political situation in Shanghai and Hong Kong

## Lessons and learning

- Directed reading as homework, discussion in class
- The benefits of reading aloud in class
- Selected passages with questions
- Use of spider diagrams and tables
- Teacher and pupil presentations on a character or theme, e.g. **family**, within one story or across all novellas; teaching by theme
- Have pupils build up a bank of quotes for each theme.
- Further ideas?

## Essay writing

- The importance of responding to the question/statement
- Discuss the essay question with pupils (perhaps with spider diagram) before setting it for homework, so that they will be able to write a good essay plan.
- Remind pupils they need to know where they stand before they start writing.
- There is no “one right way” to answer a question.
- Using **relevant** quotations
- Let’s discuss the June 2014 questions:

### June 2014 question (a)

In *The Golden Cangue*, Ch'i-ch'iao is 'transformed into an animal driven by the desire for power and money.' Analyse Ch'i-ch'iao's character with close reference to the text and discuss the extent to which you agree with this statement.

**What are the key parts of the question and what aspect(s) do you think a pupil might overlook?**

### June 2014 question (b)

'Reading Eileen Chang is to read into the heart of the women of her time: repressed, oppressed, helpless, and surrendered to fate.' How far do you agree with this statement? Discuss with close reference to **two** stories.

**What are the key parts of the question and what aspect(s) do you think a pupil might overlook?**



## Improving essay technique

- Remind pupils to keep returning to the question but to be careful not to sound too repetitive.
- Share the mark scheme with pupils.
- Share quality work with the whole class.
- Ask the class to grade each other's essays and then reveal the grade you awarded.
- Only use the most relevant quotes.
- Be gentle on the readers; don't assume they know what you mean.
- Balance detail with general argument.

## Challenges and hope

- It's a two-year course and practice makes perfect, or at least better!
- Encourage pupils to become their own editors, wary of repetition, vagueness, slang and bad punctuation habits

**Think back to how your own writing was in Year 12 compared to now. Some of your pupils will be developing their essay skills for life precisely because of Paper 4!**

### 3. Teaching Film

*Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*



#### *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*

“Students need to have some background knowledge to the Cultural Revolution and rusticated youth in order to be able to understand the film. They should also know about the Three Gorges Dam for the coda at the end of the film to have any significance. Students should be very familiar with the plot and should be able to discuss the characters, particularly the main protagonists Lu, Ma and the Little Seamstress, but also the other characters ...”

### *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*

- Power and the impact of classical literature and art
- Brutality and the Cultural Revolution
- Political repression and freedom of thought
- Youth and love
- Cinematography
- Audience impact and critical reaction
- Change and tradition
- The individual and the collective
- The role of women
- Nostalgia and reality
- Rural Sichuan

### *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*

When discussing character, here are three interesting angles:

1. What is the character **motivated** by?
2. How does his/her **physical appearance** reflect his/her nature?
3. What is the **function** of this character? Too often pupils mistake characters for real people, rather than as agents the author/director has purposely chosen/created to serve his or her narrative needs.

### *Some questions on the film to think about*

1. Can you think of one adjective to describe each of Ma, Luo and the Little Seamstress?
2. How is the **mood** during most of the film, and how does it differ from the dominant moods in *Love in a Fallen City* or *Boat to Redemption*?
3. What could we say about the **cinematography**?
4. What is the film's main **message**? How is it revealed?

### *The Boat to Redemption*

- See syllabus update notes and consult English department for guidance.
- Be sure to teach the Cultural Revolution, which dovetails nicely into the history option.
- Examine the relationship between father and son; Dongliang's obsession with Huixian.
- Explore the three characters, Dongliang, Ku Wenxuan and Huixian.



Time	What's going on? (a brief description of the scene)	Quotes	Camera (shots, camera movement, transitions)	Sound (music, sound effects)	Actors (facial expressions, actions)
44s	people climbing a mountain trail		Opens to characters walking a mountain path	Classical Chinese music	Small figures
1:54	Director opens the film <b>medias res</b> (in the midst of things), makes audience interested in this so far unexplained story			Cuts to Communist song	
1:57				Sounds of climbing + nature+ song	
				Contrast of optimistic song and fatigue of characters	See 2 male characters, look tired
				Voice over narration > sounds personal	

**Main characters**



What does this screenshot say about the three main characters?

## Ma

- Sent from the city to be re-educated because of his **intellectual** background.
- Plays the violin and has a highly developed sense of culture.
- More **timid** than his friend Luo but has a **stronger** physical constitution.
- Loves the seamstress but does nothing to fight his friend for her.
- Loyal, caring
- Moves to **France** to join an orchestra (represents Dai Sijie).



## Luo

- Often portrayed as **physically weak** but shows a strong **rebellious** spirit.
- Finds it hard to complete physical work assigned to him.
- **Pro-active** in pursuing a relationship with the seamstress.
- **Passionate**
- **Charismatic**



## The little seamstress

- Could be mistaken for a weak, quiet country girl but has a **strong personality** (how is this shown?).
- Has a 'classic' Chinese country-beauty look (what's the significance?).
- **Uneducated** but intellectually **curious** (how? Why?).
- Often portrayed as some kind of mysterious **princess**; the other girls flock to her
- Has a **hobby**: making model planes (what does this say about her?).



### Point for consideration:

What else do we know about the little seamstress? What is the significance of her character?





Character	Clothing	Assigned colour	Physical traits	Character traits	Artistic talent
Ma					
Luo					
Seamstress					

A look at a few of the themes

**Impact of literature:  
Key quote:**

有时候一本书  
可以改变人的一辈子

*Sometimes a book can change a person's life forever.*

## The role of women

- The Party liberated women after centuries of oppression.
- Women had rights to education, divorce, property, work and political activity.
- On paper, women were equal to men; what was the reality?



## Rural Sichuan

- Renowned in classical poetry for its tough terrain.
- Difficult to penetrate > trade, economy, culture isolated.
- Lack of education
- Life takes on a unique feel which may be different to other versions of the Chinese experience elsewhere



## Brutality and the cultural revolution

- The CR was a very brutal time in China's history, but the film does not necessarily reflect this reality. This could be for political reasons or simply because Dai had a relatively good experience.
- Could the film provide evidence of a 'nicer' reality that some people experienced at this time in history, or is it unjustified in its portrayal of reality?

## 4. Syllabus requirements



## Mark scheme

**Content 25 marks**

**Structure 5 marks**

### Notes

- Candidates will not have marks deducted for spelling, grammar and punctuation mistakes, except where these affect the clarity of argument. Good writing, however, naturally makes an argument sound more convincing.
- An essay scoring low on content does not automatically mean a low score for structure.
- An essay will not always have all the qualities or faults listed in any one mark band.

Content	
<b>23–25 Excellent</b>	Excellent ability to organise material in relation to the question. Comprehensive response with an extensive number of relevant points targeting the terms of the question with precision. Displays detailed knowledge and sustained analysis.
<b>19–22 Very good</b>	A thoughtful and well-argued response to the question. Includes a large number of relevant points well illustrated. Displays thorough knowledge, good understanding and analysis of the material.
<b>15–18 Good</b>	A well-argued response to the question. Includes a good number of relevant points, most of which are developed and illustrated. Some limitations of insight, but a coherent approach.
<b>11–14 Satisfactory</b>	A mainly relevant response to the question. Shows fair knowledge and understanding of the material. Includes a fair number of relevant points, not always linked and/or developed.
<b>6–10 Weak</b>	An uneven OR basic response to the question. Shows some knowledge and understanding of the material. Includes some relevant points, but development and illustration are limited. Contains padding AND/OR has some obvious omissions OR is largely narrative/description.
<b>1–5 Poor</b>	Little attempt to answer the question. Only elementary knowledge and understanding of the material. Makes very few relevant points and even these are largely undeveloped and unsubstantiated OR a response which makes hardly any attempt to address the terms of the question but which displays a basic general knowledge of the material.
<b>0</b>	No rewardable content.

<b>Structure</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Very good</b> A well-structured and coherent piece of writing, with ideas and arguments clearly linked throughout. All paragraphs well constructed. Includes a comprehensive introduction and conclusion.
<b>4</b>	<b>Good</b> A clear structure, with logical presentation of ideas. Most paragraphs well constructed. Includes an adequate introduction and conclusion.
<b>3</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> Some success in organising material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. A reasonable attempt to paragraph but weakness in introduction and conclusion.
<b>2</b>	<b>Weak</b> Some attempt to organise material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. Many single-sentence paragraphs or no attempt at paragraphing. Organisation of ideas not always logical.
<b>1</b>	<b>Poor</b> No attempt to organise material and ideas into a structured piece of writing. Incoherent. Ideas introduced in no apparent order.
<b>0</b>	No rewardable structure.

## Sample scripts



## Reminders - How to keep in touch

Ask your Examinations Officer to register you for a username and password for the Teacher Support site

### Welcome to Teacher Support

Teacher Support is a secure support site for Cambridge teachers where you can find a wealth of resources including schemes of work, past papers, mark schemes and examiner reports. You can also talk to our subject experts and Cambridge teachers via the discussion forums.

### Login

Please enter your login details

Username:

Password:

Remember my name

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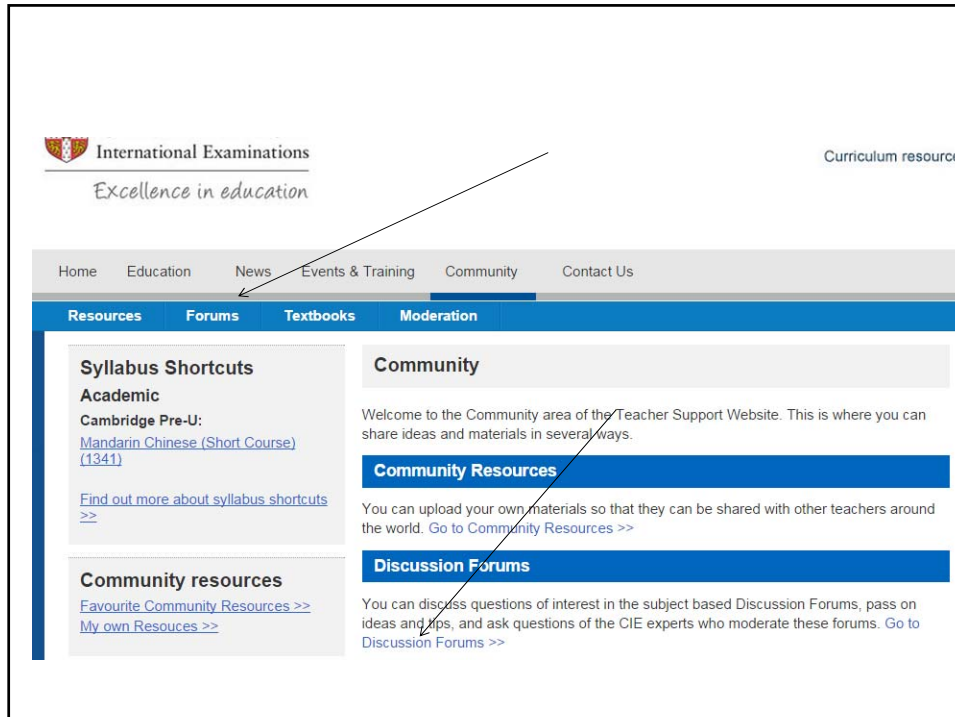
### Login

Please enter your login details

Username:

Password:

Remember my name



The screenshot shows the International Examinations website. At the top left is the logo and text: "International Examinations" and "Excellence in education". At the top right is the text "Curriculum resources". Below this is a navigation bar with links: "Home", "Education", "News", "Events & Training", "Community", and "Contact Us". Below the navigation bar is a blue header with tabs: "Resources", "Forums", "Textbooks", and "Moderation". The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column has a "Syllabus Shortcuts" section with "Academic" and "Cambridge Pre-U:" sub-sections, and a "Community resources" section. The right column has a "Community" section with a welcome message, a "Community Resources" section, and a "Discussion Forums" section. A red arrow points from the "Community" tab in the header to the "Community" section in the main content area.

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Curriculum resources

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Resources Forums Textbooks Moderation

**Syllabus Shortcuts**  
**Academic**  
**Cambridge Pre-U:**  
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**Community resources**  
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**Community**  
Welcome to the Community area of the Teacher Support Website. This is where you can share ideas and materials in several ways.

**Community Resources**  
You can upload your own materials so that they can be shared with other teachers around the world. [Go to Community Resources >>](#)

**Discussion Forums**  
You can discuss questions of interest in the subject based Discussion Forums, pass on ideas and tips, and ask questions of the CIE experts who moderate these forums. [Go to Discussion Forums >>](#)

## Reminders - How to keep in touch

- [info@cie.org.uk](mailto:info@cie.org.uk)
- For more information about future courses please go to the training events calendar at [www.cie.org.uk/events](http://www.cie.org.uk/events)