

Chinese language programme in RCHK

Questions and Answers

What is CNL, what is CFL?

In RCHK primary school, students learn Chinese in two groups: Chinese as native language (CNL), and Chinese as a foreign language (CFL).

The students who have learned Chinese formally at school before joining RCHK, and who speak Chinese (Cantonese and/or Putonghua) most of time outside school, are usually in a CNL class. The students who have little to no Chinese learning experience at school, and who speak languages other than Chinese at home, are placed in a CFL class.

Some students may speak Chinese fluently, but have not been taught in a school where Chinese is a mainstream curriculum or language in instruction (this is the case of many international schools worldwide). Generally speaking, they do not have the necessary reading and writing skills to study Chinese at the native level. There are students who have been learning Chinese for a number of years as a second language before they come to RCHK. In many cases, these students may also be placed in a CFL class.

RCHK Chinese language program supports both CNL and CFL students. They are encouraged to work together to develop their Chinese language skills and intercultural understanding.

What is Chinese A, Chinese B, or Chinese B Advanced?

When students progress to the secondary school, primary school CNL students are usually placed in MYP Chinese A class, and CFL students in MYP Chinese B class.

What is expected from a Chinese A student?

In Chinese A class, students will be expected to use Chinese not only as a tool of communication, but also the path by which they gain access to literature and thereby to the cultural treasury of civilization. Chinese A Level course includes the study of the functional language skills, such as listening, viewing, speaking, reading and writing. It also includes the study of both classic and modern Chinese literature and a variety of genres, such as poetry, prose and fiction.

What is “Chinese B Advanced” in Secondary school?

In the secondary school, Chinese B Advanced class is prepared for students who have a near-native ability in the Chinese language.

If a student speaks Chinese at home, but has not received structured education in Chinese language (including the students who have been studying mostly in English medium schools), he/she will likely be placed in a Chinese B Advanced class.

Chinese B Advanced programme also involves the study of high-level Chinese language skills, including the study of literature. The focus of the programme is to explore various global and social issues using Chinese language.

What is the curriculum focus of Chinese B?

Chinese B programme aims to enable non-Chinese background students to gain competence in the language. The long-term goal is to establish balanced bilingualism or multilingualism.

At this level students are encouraged to understand and appreciate Chinese language and culture. It provides a skill base to facilitate further Chinese learning.

Proficiency in Chinese gives B Level students access to a broader range of input, experiences and perspectives of the Chinese language and culture, and the enjoyment of being able to communicate in Chinese.

How will a student be assessed by the end of Year 11 (MYP Year 5)?

Chinese A students will be assessed following MYP Language A criteria, Chinese A Advanced students MYP Language B (Advanced) criteria, and Chinese B students MYP language B (Standard and Foundation) criteria.

How do MYP Chinese programmes connect to DP Chinese programmes?

In RCHK, we offer Chinese A1, A2, Chinese (Mandarin) B and Chinese (Mandarin) ab initio course for IB Diploma study.

When students progress to the IB Diploma course study, most MYP Chinese A students can choose Chinese A1 or Chinese A (after 2011) – Chinese language course for advanced native learners. Some Chinese A students may find Chinese A2 – a language course that accommodates students who have bilingual capacity, a better option.

Some Chinese B Advanced students may also choose Chinese A2 course. However, Chinese (Mandarin) B Higher Level course may be more suitable for many of them.

MYP Chinese B (Standard and Foundation) students will usually choose to study Chinese (Mandarin) B Standard Level course designed for foreign language learners.

How do we allocate a student to a class?

For existing students (including students from Year 6 to Year 7), class placement is

based on the record of the previous year. The record includes the class or programme of the previous year, and a student's academic performance.

When a new student is enrolled in RCHK, on induction day or during his/her first Chinese lesson, the Chinese teacher will usually give the student a Chinese Class Placement Test in order to allocate him/her into the appropriate class.

Is it good for a student to move from a CFL/Chinese B to a CNL/Chinese A class?

In general, a student's language profile provides the best information regarding to his/her language-learning pathway. For example, if a student has been studying in a school for a long time where the language of instruction is English, very likely, the first language for his/her academic study is English.

In addition, we need to recognize individual difference of young learners in terms of learning style. It's also clear that some students are more gifted in learning a language than others.

The International Baccalaureate programmes emphasize the importance of language study. At the same time, the programmes also support language study of different pathways. IB Diploma students, for example, can study a first language (in Group 1) and a secondary language (in Group 2). It is not mandatory that a student must take more than one Language A course to be awarded an IB Diploma.

In RCHK, we provide opportunity for students to accelerate Chinese learning. Teachers help students to work to their potential and achieve the best in their Chinese study. At the same time, we also give students and parents advice on the Chinese learning pathways best suited for the student.

It is not always possible for a student to be transferred from a CFL to CNL, or Chinese B to Chinese A class. We encourage parents and students seek advice from Chinese and English teachers with regard to language learning pathway.

What criteria do we use to transfer a student to a different class?

We base on the following to decide if a student should be transferred to a different class: student language profile, previous record of the student, teacher's recommendation, interview with the student or a test, and communication with parents. Very often, class size is also a factor that we need to consider.

When transferring a student to a different class, we will discuss with parents and students about the reason of the change, and strategies to help the student to do well in the new class.

There are more than one Chinese B classes in some year levels. Are they the same, or different?

We make an effort to differentiate learners to meet their needs. Taking CFL or Chinese B as an example. In there are more than one CFL or Chinese B class in a year level, the classes are doing different things in terms of difficulty level. Should we find a student be more suitable for a higher or lower level class, we will consider to transfer the student to the class.

Are students allowed to use simplified characters in the class?

Both traditional and simplified Chinese characters (繁體字 *fantizi* and 簡體字 *jiantizi*) are taught in RCHK Chinese classrooms.

In general, teachers select textbooks and teaching materials in traditional fonts for students learning Chinese as a native and near-native language. These students are usually in CNL class (in primary school) or in Chinese A/Chinese B Advanced class (in secondary school). Students who are learning Chinese as a secondary language, on the other hand, use teaching materials in the simplified form.

Teachers allow students to use the simplified form in CNL/Chinese A/Chinese B Advanced class and the traditional form in CFL/Chinese B class.

In Chinese examinations for Diploma courses, texts of both simplified and traditional forms are available, and response in both forms are accepted.

Do you teach “Chinese”?

It's written in RCHK Language Policy that we teach “Chinese (Putonghua)”. This means, in a RCHK Chinese classroom,

- students learn Modern Standard Chinese, and the standard use of vocabulary and grammatical structure;
- students learn Putonghua as the standard phonology of Modern Standard Chinese.

For more information RCHK Chinese program, please visit RCHK website to the page: <http://www.renaissance.edu.hk/content.php?contentid=31>