



CENTER FOR LANGUAGE  
EDUCATION AND COOPERATION  
中外语言交流合作中心



**2022 'Chinese Bridge'  
Mandarin Speaking Competition  
for UK Schools**

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**Guide for Students**

1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2022

# Introduction

Centre for Language Education and Cooperation UK Office (CLEC UK) is running an online Mandarin Speaking Competition for students from all across the UK with the support of the British Council. You have to have at least one year of learning Mandarin to take part.

The aim of it is to develop your vocabulary and pronunciation, raise your confidence for oral exams (GCSE and/or A Level), increase your motivation to learn the language and to inspire you to discover more about the Chinese culture - traditional or modern.

There will be national online heats in April for all schools that want to enter. At the end of May there will be national online finals. The winners will be announced on a live national online Celebration Day event in June.

## Two strands of the competition

### A. Individual Presentation Sessions

You will be asked to give a short presentation, and then interact with the judging panel in Mandarin, according to your level of learning.

Judges are looking for real communication and presentation, not a rehearsed performance. The winner of each category will be someone who has really got to grips with the Mandarin language appropriate to their level of learning.

In all categories you will be assessed on the short presentation. Then beginners and advanced students have 3 translation challenges (different for each student). For the intermediate category, there is a scenario task where you will be asked to deliver an unprepared talk on a given subject. In the advanced category there is an additional impromptu speech task.

### The 3 categories

There are three main categories in the Individual Language Ability section – Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced. If you have three or more classroom hours of Mandarin per week, then you are in the 'plus' category:

Category name	Number of years of learning Mandarin	Number of hours Mandarin taught per week	Format of competition - HEATS
Beginner	1 year (started after August 2020)	1 to 2 classroom hours per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Student gives a 2 mins pre-prepared oral presentation</li></ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judges ask 2 questions relating to the presentation in Mandarin</li> <li>• 3 sentences for translation from English to Mandarin</li> </ul>
<b>Beginner Plus</b>	1 year (started after August 2020)	3+ classroom hours per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student gives a 2 mins pre-prepared oral presentation</li> <li>• Judges ask 2 questions relating to the presentation in Mandarin</li> <li>• 3 sentences for translation from English to Mandarin</li> </ul>
<b>Intermediate</b>	2 – 3 years (started between August 2018 and August 2020)	1 to 2 classroom hours per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student gives a 2 mins pre-prepared oral presentation</li> <li>• Judges ask 2 questions relating to the presentation in Mandarin</li> <li>• A scenario will be given in English which will require students to respond in Mandarin. 45 seconds to prepare and up to 1 minute to speak</li> </ul>
<b>Intermediate Plus</b>	2 – 3 years (started between August 2018 and August 2020)	3+ classroom hours per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student gives a 2 mins pre-prepared oral presentation</li> <li>• Judges ask 2 questions relating to the presentation in Mandarin</li> <li>• A scenario will be given in English which will require students to respond in Mandarin. 45 seconds to prepare and up to 1 minute to speak</li> </ul>
<b>Advanced</b>	4+ years (started before August 2018)	Variable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student gives a 2 mins pre-prepared oral presentation</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judges ask 2 questions relating to the presentation in Mandarin</li> <li>• 3 sentences for translation from English to Mandarin</li> <li>• A topic will be given which will require students to give an impromptu speech in Mandarin. 1 minute to prepare and up to 1 minute to speak</li> </ul>
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This competition is for non-native speakers of Mandarin. If your parents speak Mandarin, or you receive additional classes in Mandarin outside of normal school hours or travel frequently to a country where Mandarin or another similar language is spoken, you will need to raise this with your teacher who should then contact [MSCompetition@clecuk.org](mailto:MSCompetition@clecuk.org) to make sure you are eligible and in the right category.

Please note that if the Judges feel that you have been placed in the incorrect category level, and if your level of Mandarin is judged to be too advanced for the level, further investigation and questions may be asked to ascertain your background and how much additional tuition outside of normal class hours that you may have received. The Judges reserve the right to disqualify candidates who are incorrectly placed, and their decision will be final. This is why we ask you to raise this with the Competition Team before the heats take place.

## What happens during the 10 minutes online competition?

### 1. The presentation

You will give a two-minute presentation in Mandarin on a prepared topic. It can be from the National Curriculum, e.g. family and friends, school, home and pets, leisure time, festivals etc. The choice of topic should be appropriate to your level of learning. Presentations may last up to 2 minutes. At 1 minute 45 seconds students will be shown how much time they have left. At 2 minutes the presentation will be stopped.

You will then be asked two questions in Mandarin relating to your presentation to ensure understanding. You are allowed to have brief, bullet-pointed notes (up to a maximum of 25 words in English) but only at the appropriate level. You must show these to the Judging Panel at the start of your session.

You must prepare your presentation yourself; your teacher is only allowed to guide and make corrections for you.

Judges will assess communication, fluency, usage of vocabulary and pronunciation, therefore please make sure that you focus on all of those elements in your preparation.

One of the Judges will ask you follow-up questions in order to check that you understand and can talk about what you have covered in your presentation. Your score for your presentation can be reduced if they feel that you had learnt it by heart without understanding.

## 2. Translation

You will be shown 3 sentences in English and you should translate them into Mandarin Chinese. You will receive points not only for correct translation of the whole sentence, but you can also gain scores for translating individual words correctly. Please try your best to say any words you know, even if the structure is not accurate. The Judges want to encourage you and want you to do the best you can on the day.

## 3. Scenario (for intermediate category students only)

A scenario will appear on the screen in English which will require you to respond in Mandarin. You will have 45 seconds to prepare and one minute to speak e.g. "You're staying with a Chinese family to have a lot of questions about your life in the UK. Tell them about your school/holidays/family/home etc."

## 4. Impromptu speech in Mandarin (for advanced category students only)

You will be given a topic or phrase in Mandarin and will be asked to give a short impromptu speech. You will have one minute to prepare and one minute to give your presentation. It might be a topic such as: the Environment, your favourite actor, or Coronavirus.

## 5. Audience

As a trial of the Online Competition 2022, students of the individual competition at all categories are allowed to watch other students' competition of the same-hour session as audience in the Zoom 'Competition Room'.

Further explanation of the Competition's rules can be found in the Competition Guide (for Teachers). Please make sure they are read carefully and ask your teacher to contact [MSCompetition@clecuk.org](mailto:MSCompetition@clecuk.org) if you or they have any queries.

### Note:

Heats are open to all schools who register and whose students meet the eligibility criteria (see below). Maximum of one entry per category per school, which makes a total maximum of 5 students per school for the individual presentations.

The competition session will be for up to 10 minutes online with a panel of three judges. Your teacher will have the chance to choose which one-hour session is best, during the week of 25<sup>th</sup> April. Your teacher will receive an email from the CLEC UK organising team with the results of the heats. If you are top-ranked, you will be invited back to take part in the second round of the national finals.

The competition will comprise of different stages – open heats the week of 24<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> April and then national finals on 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> May. The winner of each category will be announced at the live national online Celebration Day, week of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022.

## What the Judges are looking for?

For the two-minute presentation, there are 20 points in total, five for each of:

- Communication (richness of the message)
- Fluency (without memorising, improvising, based on your own interests)
- Vocabulary and Grammar (try to make your sentence structures Chinese, rather than English. Find interesting and exciting ways of describing, explaining and expressing your opinions)
- Pronunciation (clear enough to understand - vowels, consonants, tones and stress patterns)

For the translation there are 6 points per sentence translated, plus two bonus points if all three sentences are correct.

For the Intermediate scenario and the advanced impromptu speech, a maximum of **5** marks are awarded for each of communication, fluency, usage and pronunciation.

## Timeline

<b>13<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Deadline for teachers to submit applications (including consent forms)
<b>4<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Deadline for teachers to choose heats session (one-hour slot)
<b>25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Heats online sessions with judges
<b>30<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Deadline for group video submission (with script)
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Finals online sessions with judges
<b>Week of 1<sup>st</sup> June</b>	One day national online celebration event, winners' announcement

## Tips & Tricks

### Why online skills are important

2022 is the second year for the competition to take place online. Learning online skills is a really important part of your education. In a society that is increasingly mobile and digital, the ability to communicate and collaborate online will become more and more pertinent. Over the next decade, you will discover more flexible learning and working environments. Many interviews for jobs, or for places at University, are now held online. Being able to give a presentation online, and interact with people using an online tool, is an important skill. We hope taking part in this competition online will give you some experience in doing that.

But the benefits of an online competition aren't only about communication skills online. Thinking about climate change, then we have to look at reducing impact and finding ways to communicate and collaborate that is carbon-neutral. Also, Coronavirus means restricted travelling and gathering anyway. This competition is a way to practice that approach and develop those skills.

You have a chance to learn more about how digital technology can support communication, consider creativity and innovation by making videos, and to be aware of the opportunities, limitations, effects and risks of the online space. These are all really strong competences that can help you in your education and in later life.

## Think about your online skills

Have you given many presentations before? Do you know how to prepare one, put one together, communicate to people you don't know? Have a think about how to improve it. Here's some ideas that can help you:

### Communicate Well

- Remember to speak clearly and pronounce well.
- More than 70% of communication is non-verbal. Think about using your facial expression, hand gestures and body stance to communicate the message too. Make sure the video or laptop screen is adjusted to see your head, shoulders and arms.
- Wearing presentable clothing will make you feel more alert and professional. Make sure your school uniform (if you wear one) is clean and smart.
- It's ok to have prompts in English about the topic of your presentation for the question section (after you've done your 2 min presentation). Make sure they are positioned somewhere you can easily see them without having to turn away from the camera.
- It's ok to have some silences while you gather your thoughts. Don't be afraid of the quiet.
- Make sure you have a water bottle nearby so you can avoid a dry throat, taking sips as and when you need to. Don't spill the water on the laptop (!).
- If you are nervous about talking to a group of people you don't know, try focusing on just one person's face, and think about talking directly to them.

### How online is different than face-to-face?

- Take turns to speak. Let the other person finish speaking before you start talking.
- Listen to the question that the judge asks you. Clarify if you didn't hear or didn't understand, and then respond as best you can. It's not about getting everything perfect, it's about communicating in Mandarin as best you can.

- It might feel strange not to have an audience, or just to talk to a screen. Some people prefer it this way, other people find it hard. You might not be on stage, but the judges and other contestants of the same-hour session are still your audience.

## Technical tips

Your Accompanying teacher will receive the direct link for the online 'Competition Room' of the competition by email. The teacher is the one responsible for the technical connection to the CLEC UK Zoom competition. If any issues (technical or otherwise) arise in the lead up to your competition session, please ask either a parent or a teacher to get in touch with us (CLEC UK organising team) as soon as possible so we can assist. The email address for the adult to contact our team is [MSCompetition@clecuk.org](mailto:MSCompetition@clecuk.org).

These tips below are mostly for the teacher to sort out, but maybe you want to be aware of them too:

- Ensure you have a strong WIFI connection (being close to your router will help) or you have an Ethernet Cable internet connection. Think about a Plan B just in case that doesn't work – is there a mobile phone you can tether, just in case?
- Check your equipment in advance. Have you got a microphone of some sort? Can you use headphones with a microphone, to make the communication more direct and prevent reverb or an echo?
- Have a technical dress rehearsal before the event – test your microphone and headphones to make sure you can hear and be heard, work out where you need to stand, plan what is going to be in the frame on the screen etc. Get someone to be the pretend audience at the other end of the connection, get them to give you feedback (could they hear you? Can they see all of your head / arms / upper body?)
- If you've not used Zoom before, it is very similar to Microsoft Teams. You will see the judges and your own video feed, as well as having further functionality from the taskbar. Please note some functions may be restricted.
- Familiarise yourself with Zoom before the event: <https://explore.zoom.us/en/resources/>. The CLEC UK will also be organising some drop-in sessions at the end of March and in mid-April for teachers to learn Zoom.
- We ask the School link (the teacher at your school that is the contact point for the competition) to use the chat function to communicate with the CLEC UK team if there are any questions, problems or technical difficulties. The chat is for teachers only, not for students.

## If you are self-isolating (not at school) on the day of the competition

If you cannot be at school on the day of the online competition, here are the steps to follow for how to compete remotely:

<http://bridge.chinese.cn/>



- Follow your own school rules for online safety and use the same IT guidance to join the competition online from home.
- If you normally have to blank your video for school lessons, you can do it also for the competition. Although it is recommended that cameras are on so the judges can see the students converse.
- Your teacher will receive an individual link for your online competition slot. They should forward this to you at home (using the normal channels that you communicate for schoolwork).
- All under-18s have to have an accompanying adult with them in the room during the whole competition session while you are presenting to the judges. This can be either a parent/guardian (in person) or your accompanying teacher (joining online at the same time as you to the competition link and staying for the whole time).
- When you have finished your 10-minute competition slot, you can stay in the ‘Competition Room’ to watch the competition of other students of the same-hour session as audience. When the one-hour competition session finishes, all students and the link teachers should press the red ‘Leave’ button to totally quit the session.
- Your teacher will keep you updated about the results after the competition.

## **B. Group Video Competition**

### **What is an entry?**

Your entry can be traditional or modern, but it should be something which is uniquely Chinese, related to the Chinese culture or China. You also need to write the script yourselves without help from your teacher. Your script will be uploaded together with the video when you submit it online.

There should be a minimum of 4 and maximum of 5 students in the group. The judges will need to see each person in the group on the Video and see them speaking (so they can judge your Mandarin). The teacher must not be present as an actor in the performance/video. Inclusion and participation is important in these videos. Judges will take into account whether all students are equally involved in the performance.

Pay attention to tones and correct stress patterns - the competition rewards ability to communicate in Mandarin. Communicating effectively means getting your tones and stress patterns broadly right - that goes for vowel and consonant sounds too.

Stick with a language level with which you feel comfortable - It's easy to be tempted to show off by including advanced vocabulary. You are encouraged to be a bit adventurous but the more ambitious you are, the more difficulty you'll have using the words when questioned. Make sure you are saying things that you understand.

When making the video: Don't panic when you make a mistake. The odd tone mistake won't be penalised so remain calm and carry on if this happens to you.

In summary, the video should be:

- Maximum 4 mins long. If it is longer, only the first 240 seconds will be considered by the judges.
- Made by 4 or 5 students together in a group.
- Showing all the students in the group, so the judges can see them speaking Mandarin.
- The script of the video must be written by the students (and uploaded as part of the submission).
- In Mandarin (although you can put a short English introduction at the beginning if you want).
- Students can make a video using the camera on a phone (etc.) or use pictures and an audio recording and make these into a video file (avi, mov, wmv, mp4, mpg, flv, wav, wma).
- Submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022 by the teacher (by uploading it first on an online platform, and then filling in the submission form with the online link and the script).

## Scoring

Each video will be assessed by at least two independent judges, fluent in Mandarin, each scoring against the following criteria out of 10, with a maximum of 50 points in total:

<b>Student composition (Max 10 points)</b>	Videos will be rewarded for scripts composed by students only. Where the script of a video content is clearly influenced by a teacher, marks will be deducted
<b>Communication (Max 10 points)</b>	Performances will be judged on the richness of the content and the extent to which students demonstrate understanding of the messages they are conveying. Students should be a bit adventurous, but not to the point where they do not understand what they are saying.
<b>Pronunciation (Max 10 points)</b>	It is important that pronunciation is comprehensible and is clear enough for a sympathetic native speaker of Mandarin Chinese to understand. This includes vowels, consonants, tones and stress patterns. A few wrong tones and wrong segments can be forgiven, but students should avoid pronouncing pinyin as if it were English because this makes communication ineffective.
<b>Usage (Max 10 points)</b>	Vocabulary and grammatical structures should be appropriate to the content/theme devised by students. Within the range of their own ability, they should find interesting, exciting ways of making their characters express themselves. Dictionary-type lists should

	be avoided: vocabulary should be integrated into a meaningful dialogue. Perfect grammar is not necessary, as long as structures are mainly Chinese, rather than English.
<b>Cultural content (Max 10 points)</b>	Performances and content of videos should demonstrate the students' understanding of Chinese culture, modern and/or traditional. Ways to do this could include but are not limited to: including a short song, dance or martial arts display within the content (the inclusion should make sense in the context of the drama); basing the content on a traditional or modern Chinese story; taking as a theme an important element of life in China in the past or today

For groups who entered to the final, they will nominate two members of the group to answer two questions in Mandarin from the judging panel live at the group final competition, scoring against the following criteria out of 10.

<b>Question(s) following the group video display (Max 10 points)</b>	Two representative students will be asked two questions in Mandarin by one member of the judging panel following their group video display. The aim of the questions will be to check that students understand and can talk about what they have shown in their videos and have not merely learnt it by heart. Judges will ask the questions sympathetically and will not be trying to catch students out. Students must answer in Mandarin and answers should be more than a few words. Judges will mainly test the students' question answering techniques, sentence structures, expressions and manners.
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There will be winning videos for the beginner and intermediate categories, which will be shown at the live national Celebration Day in June. The most creative videos will also be recognised and celebrated.

### **Videoring tips for live-action filming**

- Find the right set and location. Find a quiet place where other people won't interrupt you and where noise/echo isn't a problem. The judges will want to hear your Mandarin clearly.
- Speak in complete sentences and properly phrase your sentences to the end. Make sure the message is clearly communicated.
- Consider using a microphone (or headphones with a microphone) so the tones and stress patterns of your Mandarin are clear.
- Think about clothing, outfits and backgrounds. Remember that all items in the shot will give a message – including your non-verbal communication and props that you use. Don't

choose a background that is too distracting and consider wearing dark clothing (grey, blue and brown shades) or colours that contrast well with the background you have chosen.

- Make sure you have a light source in front of you (never behind you); it can be a natural source, such as a window, or an artificial one, such as a lamp. Make sure none of the actors look straight into the light, to prevent squinting.
- If you are using a mobile phone to shoot the presentation, check the adjustments of your phone to set up the video to the highest quality before shooting. Preferably shoot with the back camera rather than with the frontal one to get a higher quality. When shooting, place your phone on a stable surface rather than handholding it.
- Shoot in horizontal mode, so the image is landscape and the ratio is 16:9.
- After recording, please double-check that sound and video are clearly audible and visible.

If you are making your video while self-isolating, you will have to get creative on how to blend and link separate videos together, to show a story or explain your theme.

## **Tips and ideas for creating a video story\***

(\*Inspired by Gil Nunes, Storyteller and Youth Worker, Lisbon, Portugal)

- **Title**

Make sure your video has a title that explains or teases a bit about the contents. It should connect a bit to the contents or the topic, but not give everything away. Think about using a question, or a phrase or a saying.

- **Storyboarding**

Work out exactly what the message is you are trying to give, and how you want the viewer to feel? Think what the whole video is about, and then think about the introduction, the middle and the end of your story. Think about the camera shots and characters in each scene and plan it out.

If you don't know much about storyboarding, here's a good introduction:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6aTnEanIXBk>

- **Characters**

- Use yourself as a reference to build characters. It is much easier if you build main characters closer to the real you. You can build secondary characters using characteristics that are opposite to yours. It's less risky, more effective!
- Build "top secret" files of the people around you. Then build characters using that files. For instance, shy people have similar attitudes, gestures, ways of speaking. Find patterns. You can build characters that are, in fact, a melting pot of several people you know, that really exist.
- Hero and Villain – Try to build heroes that are not the masterpiece of perfection. Give them imperfections. On the other hand, create some small humanity and

positivity around the villain concept. Your storytelling will be much more human and that's the point!

- **Speed of the story**

Sometimes the speed of the storytelling helps get the message across just as much as choosing the write narration.

Some tips about this topic:

- The Football Report Example: “Pass. Receive. Shoot. Score”. These are imperative verbs with short sentences and a lot of punctuation. This happens because the action is extremely fast. To explain the goal, the action will lose speed and turn into slow. “Player X made a wonderful movement in the middle, passed the ball to player Y, the winger made a cross with his left foot to player Z, who scored after a tremendous left-foot kick”. Now you use long sentences, punctuation is less used, and verbs are in a different tense. Think: how would this work in Mandarin? How should it be different if you are acting or narrating, compared to the words written in a script?
- The Seaside Exercise: Imagine you are seated by the seaside, watching the sea. The vision of the sea demands a slow action because the sea is calm and smooth. If you look to the street, you will see cars and bicycles and it demands a fast action. Now try the opposite. Push up the details of the first vision and try to describe the sea as a fast scene. You'll need to emphasise all the details you can to create a text with short sentences and punctuation. “Sea, no sand, global warming! Oh my God! We're running out of beach”. And try to do the same watching to street, turning it into a slow scene. Try to focus on one or two scenes and describe them with details. “That was a very curious car. It seems to me that the lady is trying to talk to the steering wheel because, in fact, all that the man wanted was to look to the walking ice creams on the sidewalk”
- Fast scene to slow scene: “Schindler’s List” – Balcony Scene Link: <https://youtu.be/gasW6LPzml8> The main message would be the two gunshots. But, instead, the message you want to pass is the plainness of killing during World War II. So, you need to slow down the text (the storytelling)
- Slow scene to fast scene: Mr Bean “The Exam” - <https://youtu.be/9LhLjpsstPY> The classroom is incredibly quiet and peaceful, it's the perfect atmosphere to take an exam. But you want it to be funny, so you need to speed up the text and, therefore, to explore and oversize all possible details.

***Good luck and enjoy making your videos!***

***Deadline for submission: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022***