

## Cambridge IGCSE® English as a Second Language – introduction to the exam

The Cambridge IGCSE® English as a Second Language exam is an international exam for speakers whose first language isn't English. The exam is mainly for learners who are between 14 and 16 years old and who have been studying for the exam for two years. It is recommended that learners have completed approximately 130 guided learning hours before entering for the exam. However, the number of hours may vary depending on the proficiency of each learner at the start of the course.

There are two levels, Core and Extended. The Core level is aimed at learners who have reached at least high intermediate level (B1+). The Extended level is for learners who are at least at an upper-intermediate level (B2). Core candidates are awarded grades C–G while extended candidates can gain grades A\*–E. All the examination-style papers in this book are Extended level. They are, of course, excellent practice for Core candidates too.

There are two syllabuses 0510 and 0511. The content of these syllabuses is identical. However, candidates who are entered for the 0510 syllabus (Speaking endorsement) are given a separate grade for their performance in the speaking component. Candidates who are entered for the 0511 syllabus (Count-in speaking) are given one grade for all three components: reading and writing, listening and speaking.

### Syllabus 0510 (Speaking endorsement)

Reading and writing component:	Listening component:	Speaking component:
counts towards 70% of the final grade	counts towards 30% of the final grade	a separate grade is given

### Syllabus 0511 (Count-in speaking)

Reading and writing component:	Listening component:	Speaking component:
counts towards 60% of the final grade	counts towards 20% of the final grade	counts towards 20% of the final grade

## Exam overview

Reading and Writing paper*					
Exercises	Assessment objectives tested	Extended paper (2 hours)	Number of marks awarded (80 marks)	Core paper (1 hour and 30 minutes)	Number of marks awarded (60 marks)
Exercise 1	R1	Reading comprehension for specific detail	13 marks	Reading comprehension for specific detail	9 marks
Exercise 2	R1, R2, R3, R4	Multiple matching	10 marks	Multiple matching	8 marks
Exercise 3	R1, R2, R3	Note-making	9 marks	Note-making	7 marks
Exercise 4	R1, R2, R3, W1, W2, W3, W4	Summary writing	16 marks	Summary writing	12 marks
Exercise 5	W1, W2, W3, W4, W5	Extended writing (informal email)	16 marks	Extended writing (informal email)	12 marks
Exercise 6	W1, W2, W3, W4, W5	Discursive writing (review, report or article)	16 marks	Discursive writing (review, report, article)	12 marks

\* Candidates are not allowed to use dictionaries.

Listening paper**					
Exercises	Assessment objectives tested	Extended paper (50 minutes)	Number of marks awarded (40 marks)	Core paper (40 minutes)	Number of marks awarded (30 marks)
Exercise 1 (Question 1–4)	L1	Four short extracts, listening for specific detail (informal or semi-formal dialogues, announcements, monologues)	8 marks	Four short extracts, listening for specific detail	8 marks
Exercise 2 (Question 5)	L1, L2	Gap-filling (formal talk)	8 marks	Gap-filling (formal talk)	8 marks
Exercise 3 (Question 6)	L3, L4	Multiple matching (informal monologues)	6 marks	Multiple matching	6 marks
Exercise 4 (Question 7)	L3, L4	Multiple choice (semi-formal interview)	8 marks	Multiple choice (semi-formal interview)	8 marks
Exercise 5 (Question 8 part a)	L1, L2, L3, L4	Gap-filling (formal talk)	5 marks	N/A	N/A
Exercise 5 (Question 8 part b)	L1, L2, L3, L4	Gap-filling (informal conversation)	5 marks	N/A	N/A

\*\* Each part of the listening paper is played twice

Speaking paper***				
Parts	Assessment objectives tested	Core and Extended (10–15 minutes)	What happens	Number of marks awarded (30 marks)
Part A	N/A	Welcome	The examiner welcomes the candidate and explains the procedure.	N/A
Part B	N/A	Warm-up (2–3 minutes)	The examiner asks the candidate questions about their life outside school, and interests, to put candidates at ease. For example: <i>What do you enjoy doing in your free time?, What are your favourite hobbies, and why?, What are your plans for the weekend?</i> , etc. The questions should not focus on exam preparation or school studies.  This part is not assessed.	N/A
Part C	N/A	Preparation (2–3 minutes)	The candidate reads the topic card selected by the examiner and thinks about what to say about each of the five prompts on the card. The candidate isn't allowed to write anything down, but can ask the examiner for clarification on any unknown vocabulary. The candidate must use the whole time allocated for this part of the test.	N/A
Part D	S1, S2, S3, S4, S5	Conversation (6–9 minutes)	The examiner and the candidate have a conversation about the five ideas/ bullet points on the topic card. All five bullet points should be covered during the conversation in the order given on the topic card. The examiner asks extra questions on the topic to help the conversation to develop. This part mustn't be a monologue by the candidate, but a two-way conversation.  This is the only part that is assessed.	30 marks

\*\*\* The whole of the speaking exam is recorded including the preparation part. The speaking exam is conducted by one examiner who may be also the teacher. The candidates are examined individually, **not** in pairs. The examiner and the candidate must speak English throughout the whole exam.

## Assessment objectives

### Reading

- R1 identify and select relevant information
- R2 understand ideas, opinions and attitudes
- R3 show understanding of the connections between ideas, opinions and attitudes
- R4 understand what is implied but not directly stated, e.g. gist, writer's purpose, intention and feelings

### Writing

- W1 communicate information/ideas/opinions clearly, accurately and effectively
- W2 organise ideas into coherent paragraphs using a range of appropriate linking devices
- W3 use a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary accurately and effectively
- W4 show control of punctuation and spelling
- W5 use appropriate register and style/format for the given purpose and audience

### Listening

- L1 identify and select relevant information
- L2 understand ideas, opinions and attitudes
- L3 show understanding of the connections between ideas, opinions and attitudes
- L4 understand what is implied but not directly stated, e.g. gist, speaker's purpose, intention and feelings

### Speaking

- S1 communicate ideas/opinions clearly, accurately and effectively
- S2 develop responses and link ideas using a range of appropriate linking devices
- S3 use a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary accurately and effectively
- S4 show control of pronunciation and intonation patterns
- S5 engage in a conversation and contribute effectively to help move the conversation forward

## Assessment criteria for writing and speaking

The following criteria are designed to help you and your students when grading oral and written work. We have simplified the grading criteria used by Cambridge Assessment International Education in the Cambridge IGCSE English as a Second Language exam, so that they are accessible for students to understand success criteria.

If you wish to see the official grade criteria for Cambridge IGCSE English as a Second Language, please visit the Cambridge Assessment International Education website.

## Writing

Give a separate Content mark and Language mark by deciding which band is the best fit for each. (The Content and Language marks can be very different if necessary.) If all of the criteria of the band are met, give the upper mark; if it meets some of the criteria, give the lower mark. If the writing is very short in Exercise 5 or 6 (below 105 words), deduct 1 or 2 marks.

The top mark for extended candidates is 8 for both content and language. The top mark for core candidates is 6 for both content and language.

### Exercise 4

Mark	Content (maximum 8 marks)	Mark	Language (maximum 8 marks)
7–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes 7–8 content points</li> <li>All content in the summary is relevant to the task</li> </ul>	7–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content points in the summary are organised very well</li> <li>Appropriate linking words/phrases are used clearly to connect ideas</li> <li>The summary is written using own words as much as possible</li> <li>Almost no errors in vocabulary and grammar</li> </ul>
5–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes 5–6 content points</li> <li>Most content in the summary is relevant to the task</li> </ul>	5–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content points in the summary are well organised</li> <li>Appropriate linking words/phrases are used to connect ideas</li> <li>The summary is written using mostly own words</li> <li>Very few errors in vocabulary and grammar</li> </ul>
3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes 3–4 content points</li> <li>Only some content in the summary is relevant to the task</li> </ul>	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content points in the summary are partially organised</li> <li>Appropriate linking words/phrases are sometimes used to connect ideas</li> <li>The summary is written using some own words and some words taken from the original text</li> <li>Some errors in vocabulary and grammar, but the content of the summary can be understood</li> </ul>
1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes 1–2 content points</li> <li>Very little content in the summary is relevant to the task</li> </ul>	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content points in the summary are poorly organised</li> <li>Linking words/phrases are rarely used or used incorrectly</li> <li>The summary is written mostly using words taken from the original text</li> <li>Frequent errors in vocabulary and grammar</li> </ul>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No content in the summary is relevant to the task</li> <li>OR</li> <li>No attempt at the summary task</li> </ul>	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very inaccurate language is used</li> <li>OR</li> <li>No attempt at the summary task</li> </ul>

## Exercises 5 and 6

Mark	Content (maximum 8 marks)	Mark	Language (maximum 8 marks)
7–8	<p><b>Relevance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question is answered fully</li> <li>• Style and register are appropriate for the text type</li> <li>• Excellent understanding of purpose and audience</li> </ul> <p><b>Development of ideas (detail)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content is very well developed</li> <li>• Ideas are communicated clearly and effectively</li> </ul>	7–8	<p><b>Range and complexity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide range of vocabulary</li> <li>• Wide range of simple and complex structures</li> </ul> <p><b>Accuracy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to understand</li> <li>• Errors are in less common vocabulary and complex structures</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideas are organised effectively in a logical order</li> <li>• Wide range of linking words</li> </ul>
5–6	<p><b>Relevance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question is answered fully</li> <li>• Style and register are mostly appropriate for the text type</li> <li>• Good understanding of purpose and audience</li> </ul> <p><b>Development of ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content is developed</li> </ul>	5–6	<p><b>Range and complexity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Range of common vocabulary. Some less common vocabulary</li> <li>• Range of simple structures. Some complex structures</li> </ul> <p><b>Accuracy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly easy to understand</li> <li>• Errors are mostly in less common vocabulary and complex structures</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideas are well organised</li> <li>• Range of linking words</li> </ul>
3–4	<p><b>Relevance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of the question is answered</li> <li>• Style and register are quite appropriate for the text type most of the time</li> <li>• Some understanding of purpose and audience</li> </ul> <p><b>Development of ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some development of content, but with some gaps or repetition</li> <li>• Sometimes unclear</li> </ul>	3–4	<p><b>Range and complexity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly common vocabulary</li> <li>• Mainly simple structures</li> </ul> <p><b>Accuracy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes difficult to understand</li> <li>• Some errors in common vocabulary and simple structures</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasonably well organised</li> <li>• Some linking words. Not always used well</li> </ul>
1–2	<p><b>Relevance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only some of the question is answered</li> <li>• Style and register are inappropriate for the text type</li> <li>• Limited understanding of purpose and audience</li> </ul> <p><b>Development of ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing content, irrelevance and/or repetition</li> <li>• Often unclear</li> </ul>	1–2	<p><b>Range and complexity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited vocabulary</li> <li>• Limited structures</li> </ul> <p><b>Accuracy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult to understand</li> <li>• Errors in common vocabulary and simple structures</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor organisation. Few linking words</li> </ul>
0	No marks can be given	0	No marks can be given

## Speaking

Give a mark out of 10 for each category (structure, vocabulary, development and fluency), and then add these marks to give an overall total out of 30.

Mark	Structure	Vocabulary	Development and fluency
9–10	Uses a range of structures with accuracy and confidence	Uses a range of vocabulary to communicate sophisticated ideas with precision	Can hold a long conversation Can expand and develop the topic with original ideas Pronunciation is clear
7–8	Uses a range of structures with accuracy and confidence, but there are errors when using complex sentences	Uses enough vocabulary to communicate well	Can hold a conversation Responds relevantly with original ideas Pronunciation is generally clear
5–6	Uses simple structures with very few errors	Communicates simple ideas, not always successfully	Responds to questions and prompts, but sometimes needs help to continue with the conversation Pronunciation is understandable
3–4	Uses very simple, limited structures with errors. Communication is difficult	Limited vocabulary makes it difficult to communicate simple ideas, there is repetition and/or searching for words	Responses are brief with pauses Conversation is difficult Pronunciation is not always understandable
1–2	Rarely achieves communication	Cannot communicate simple ideas	Very brief responses Pronunciation difficult to understand
0	No response	No response	No response

**Disclaimer:** Please note that these mark schemes have not been produced by Cambridge Assessment International Education. The grade descriptors are based on Cambridge's descriptors but have been written by the authors of this resource. If you wish to see the official grade criteria for Cambridge IGCSE English as a Second Language, please visit the Cambridge Assessment International Education website.

## Marking learners' work

Reading and Writing paper		
Exercises	Answers which gain marks:	Answers which lose marks:
Exercise 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>short answers lifted from the original text</li> <li>alternative answers which have the same meaning as the answer in the text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>poorly spelt answers where the meaning is not clear</li> </ul>
Exercise 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clearly written letters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>more than one answer per question</li> <li>a letter written over the initial answer which makes it difficult to decipher</li> </ul>
Exercise 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ideas lifted from the text that are clearly different from one another</li> <li>ideas written under the correct heading on a separate line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ideas that are too similar (only 1 mark can be awarded for two similar ideas)</li> <li>correct answers written under the wrong heading</li> <li>paraphrased answers which change the meaning of the original idea in the text</li> <li>answers that are misspelt which means the meaning is not clear</li> </ul>
Exercise 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>relevant ideas which focus on the aspect required (e.g. challenges, difficulties, advantages)</li> <li>ideas (content points) which are clearly different from one another</li> <li>ideas which are paraphrased from the original text as much as possible</li> <li>ideas which are clearly organised and written as complex sentences with appropriate linking words</li> <li>answers with a range of vocabulary (e.g. struggle, a daunting challenge, overcome)</li> <li>answers with minimal errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ideas which don't match the aspect required (e.g. disadvantages instead of advantages)</li> <li>irrelevant details which don't contain any correct ideas (content points)</li> <li>ideas which use the same words/phrases as per original text</li> <li>ideas which are written as short sentences with no linking words</li> <li>answers which only contain a very limited range of very easy words (e.g. good, bad, do, don't like)</li> <li>answers which are difficult to understand because of a lot of errors (e.g. grammar, spelling)</li> </ul>
Exercise 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the email is informal</li> <li>the email contains all the points from the question</li> <li>all the information in the email is clearly organised into paragraphs and it is easy for the reader to understand</li> <li>the ideas are well developed and easy to follow</li> <li>ideas are linked using appropriate linking words</li> <li>there is a range of vocabulary (e.g. phrasal verbs – get on with, set off and fixed phrases – I was in two minds) and grammatical structures (e.g. I've never done anything like it, I shouldn't have gone there) appropriate for an email</li> <li>minimal errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the email uses the wrong register and a tone which would have a negative effect on the reader</li> <li>some of the points from the question are omitted or the email goes off the topic</li> <li>the information is not well organised, the writer jumps from one idea to another which makes it very difficult for the reader to understand, there are no paragraphs</li> <li>the answers are very brief with no development</li> <li>the sentences are very short with no linking words</li> <li>the range of vocabulary and grammatical structures is very limited</li> <li>answers which are difficult to understand because they contain a lot of errors (e.g. grammar, spelling)</li> <li>answers which are too short</li> </ul>



Reading and Writing paper		
Exercises	Answers which gain marks:	Answers which lose marks:
Exercise 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the answer is in the correct style (i.e. article, report, review) and register (semi-formal to formal)</li> <li>the answer deals with the topic from the question (e.g. a report about the school canteen and recommend what needs to be improved) and the reader would be fully informed</li> <li>the answer contains well developed ideas (either from the prompts in the question or a learner's extra ideas) and gives examples of, and reasons for, these opinions</li> <li>ideas are clearly organised into paragraphs (i.e. introduction of the topic/task, further information/ideas, conclusion/summary/recommendation)</li> <li>ideas are introduced/logically linked with appropriate linking words (e.g. on the other hand, last but not least, as far as I'm concerned)</li> <li>the answer contains a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures appropriate for the style and register</li> <li>minimal errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the answer is in the wrong style, and register and uses a tone which would have a negative effect on the reader</li> <li>the answer goes off the topic and the reader wouldn't be informed</li> <li>the answer copies ideas from the prompts, these ideas are not developed and the whole answer contains no, or very little, extra information on the topic</li> <li>ideas are poorly organised and there are no paragraphs</li> <li>ideas are written as very short sentences with no linking words</li> <li>the range of vocabulary and grammatical structures is very limited and inappropriate for the style and register</li> <li>answers which are difficult to understand because they contain a lot of errors (e.g. grammar, spelling)</li> <li>answers which are too short</li> </ul>

Listening paper		
Exercises	Answers which gain marks:	Answers which lose marks:
Exercise 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>short answers within the word limit, lifted from the recording</li> <li>alternative answers which have the same meaning as the words in the recording (e.g. teamwork/working together)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>answers which are over the word limit</li> <li>misspelt answers which make the meaning unclear</li> <li>alternative answers which change the meaning of the answer in the text</li> <li>correct answers written together with the distracting detail from the recording</li> </ul>
Exercise 2 and 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one or two-word answers lifted from the recording</li> <li>answers which fit the gap grammatically (e.g. singular/plural nouns, correct word forms – nouns/adjectives/verbs)</li> <li>alternative answers which have the same meaning as the words in the recording (e.g. coach/trainer)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>answers that are over the word limit</li> <li>answers which don't fit the gap grammatically</li> <li>misspelt answers which make the meaning unclear</li> <li>alternative answers which change the meaning of the answer in the text</li> <li>correct answers written together with the distracting detail from the recording</li> <li>answers which contain words/phrases/ideas already printed before/after the gap</li> </ul>
Exercise 3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the same letter used twice even if one of these answers is correct</li> </ul>
Exercise 4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>answers where more than one box is ticked even if one of these answers is correct</li> </ul>

Speaking paper		
Parts	Answers which gain marks:	Answers which lose marks:
Part D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>answers are well-developed and include examples of, reasons for, or comparisons of something, with the idea/opinion in the bullet point</li> <li>the examiner asks extra questions to develop the topic further and the candidate can respond appropriately to this change in the conversation</li> <li>delivery with clear pronunciation, rising and falling intonation, where appropriate, and at a natural speed so that the listener can understand</li> <li>answers with a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures</li> <li>minimal errors which result in a fluent and interesting conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>answers are very brief</li> <li>answers are widely spaced and the examiner has to ask a lot of questions in order to maintain the conversation</li> <li>delivery with poor pronunciation, flat/uninterested intonation and at an extremely slow or very fast speed so that the listener finds it very difficult to understand</li> <li>very limited range of vocabulary and grammatical structures</li> <li>frequent errors which mean the listener often doesn't understand and the conversation may break down</li> </ul>