

English Language Syllabus A

Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education Normal (Academic) Level (2021) (Syllabus 1190)

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Update

AIMS OF TEACHING SYLLABUS

By the end of Secondary education, pupils will be able to communicate effectively in English as a result of their development in the following areas:

1. **Listen, read and view** critically and with accuracy, understanding and appreciation a wide range of literary and informational/functional texts from print and non-print sources.
2. **Speak, write and represent** in internationally acceptable English (Standard English) that is grammatical, fluent, mutually intelligible and appropriate for different purposes, audiences, contexts and cultures.
3. **Understand and use internationally acceptable English (Standard English) grammar and vocabulary** accurately and appropriately as well as understand how speakers/writers put words together and use language to communicate meaning and achieve impact.

These aims, taken from *English Language Syllabus 2010: Primary & Secondary (Express/Normal [Academic])*, p.10, form the broad basis of a course of study; they may not all be translated into Assessment Objectives for formal examination.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

In this English Language examination, candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- speak and write in internationally acceptable English
- respond, in speech or writing, to a variety of written, spoken and visual texts
- speak, read aloud and write to suit purpose, audience and context
- speak and write using appropriate register and tone
- speak and write clearly, effectively, relevantly and coherently
- plan, organise and show development of ideas
- use varied sentence structures and a wide and appropriate vocabulary with clarity and precision
- use correct grammar, punctuation and spelling
- show understanding of a variety of written, spoken and visual texts at the literal, inferential and evaluative levels
- show understanding of how use of language achieves purpose and impact
- identify main ideas and details in written, spoken and visual texts
- synthesise, summarise and organise information
- read aloud a given text with accurate pronunciation and clear articulation
- read aloud a given text fluently with appropriate variations in voice qualities, i.e. pace, volume, tone and stress.

SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

Paper	Description	Marks	Weighting (%)	Duration
1	<p>Writing</p> <p><u>Section A: Editing</u> Candidates identify and edit grammatical errors in a short written text.</p> <p><u>Section B: Situational Writing</u> Candidates write 180–250 words on a given situation which will involve viewing a visual text.</p> <p><u>Section C: Continuous Writing</u> Candidates write 250–400 words on one of four topics set.</p>	<p>70</p> <p>(10)</p> <p>(30)</p> <p>(30)</p>	35.0	1 hour 50 minutes
2	<p>Comprehension</p> <p><u>Section A</u> Candidates respond to questions based on Text 1, a visual text.</p> <p><u>Section B</u> Candidates respond to a variety of questions based on Text 2 which is a narrative or a recount.</p> <p><u>Section C</u> Candidates respond to a variety of questions based on Text 3, a non-narrative text, and write an 80-word response to a summary writing task.</p>	<p>50</p> <p>(5)</p> <p>(20)</p> <p>(25)</p>	35.0	1 hour 50 minutes
3	<p>Listening</p> <p><u>Section A</u> Candidates respond to a variety of listening tasks based on a number of audio recordings which the candidates will hear twice.</p> <p><u>Section B</u> Candidates listen to an audio recording and do a simple note-taking exercise. Candidates will hear the recording only once.</p>	<p>30</p> <p>(24)</p> <p>(6)</p>	10.0	About 45 minutes
4	<p>Oral Communication</p> <p>The two parts in this paper are thematically linked.</p> <p><u>Part 1: Reading Aloud</u> Candidates read aloud a short text, presented on a computer screen.</p> <p><u>Part 2: Spoken Interaction</u> Candidates engage in a discussion with the examiners on a topic based on a visual stimulus, in the form of a video clip.</p>	<p>30</p> <p>(10)</p> <p>(20)</p>	20.0	About 20 minutes (including 10 minutes of preparation time)
	Total	180	100.0	

PAPER DESCRIPTION

Candidates are required to sit all four papers.

Paper 1 Writing [70 marks]

Duration of Paper 1: 1 hour 50 minutes

This paper is divided into three sections.

Section A: Editing [10 marks]

In a given text of continuous prose of not more than 250 words, candidates identify and then edit grammatical errors by writing the corrections in the spaces provided. Errors in punctuation and spelling will not be tested in this section.

Section B: Situational Writing [30 marks]

Candidates write a text of 180–250 words based on a given situation which will involve viewing a visual text. Candidates are required to write the text (e.g. an email, a letter, a report or a speech) to suit the purpose, audience and context.

Section C: Continuous Writing [30 marks]

Candidates choose one out of four topics to write a text of 250–400 words in continuous prose. The topics set may cover different types of texts, e.g. narrative or exposition.

Paper 2 Comprehension [50 marks]

Duration of Paper 2: 1 hour 50 minutes

This paper is divided into three sections.

Section A [5 marks]

This section contains Text 1 which will include visuals. Based on the visual text, candidates are required to answer a variety of questions testing comprehension, and on the use of visuals as well as the use of language for impact.

Section B [20 marks]

This section contains Text 2, which is narrative in nature, based on which candidates are to answer questions testing comprehension, vocabulary in context and the use of language for impact.

Section C [25 marks]

This section contains Text 3, which is non-narrative in nature, based on which candidates are required to answer questions testing comprehension, vocabulary in context and the use of language for impact. Candidates are also required to write a summary of about 80 words (excluding the introductory words that will be provided).

Texts 2 and 3 together will be about 1000 words long.

Paper 3 Listening [30 marks]

Approximate duration of Paper 3: 45 minutes

This paper comprises two sections.

Section A [24 marks]

Candidates respond to a variety of listening tasks that will assess a range of listening skills. The audio texts, which will consist of a variety of types of texts, e.g. narrative, recount, exposition, and information report, may come with visuals where appropriate. A variety of question types, e.g. multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blanks, true/false/not stated, and filling in a graphic organiser, may be set.

Section B [6 marks]

Candidates listen to an informational text and complete a simple note-taking task.

Paper 4 Oral Communication [30 marks]

Approximate duration of Paper 4: 20 minutes per candidate (including 10 minutes of preparation time)

This paper comprises two parts which are thematically linked.

Part 1: Reading Aloud [10 marks]

Candidates read aloud a short text presented on a computer screen bearing in mind the purpose, audience and context. A short instruction will guide candidates on the context in which the given text is to be read aloud. The text may be a short narrative, news report, speech, or an announcement, or a mixture of types and forms. Candidates are assessed on their ability to accurately pronounce and clearly articulate the words in the text, and read fluently and expressively, showing an awareness of purpose, audience and context.

Part 2: Spoken Interaction [20 marks]

Candidates view a visual stimulus in the form of a video clip, which is thematically linked to the text in Part 1, in order to engage in a discussion with the examiners. Candidates will not be asked any questions about what people say in the video clip.

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The Oral Communication examination will be delivered via computer. During preparation, candidates may study the text and watch the clip any number of times within the given ten minutes. During the examination, candidates will watch the video clip one more time before the discussion with the examiners.

GENERIC BAND DESCRIPTORS

Paper 1: Situational Writing

Assessment Criteria for Task Fulfilment

- Awareness of purpose, audience and context
- Relevance
- Development and organisation of information/ideas
- Appropriate use of given information and visual stimulus

Note: addressing the required points is only one factor in the award of the Task Fulfilment mark – candidates should be awarded the mark which **best fits the performance as a whole**, as follows:

BAND DESCRIPTORS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF TASK FULFILMENT IN SECTION B

<p><u>Band 1 (9–10 marks)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear awareness of the purpose of the task and of the intended audience and context. • Organisational structure and format entirely appropriate. • All required points well amplified although not necessarily equally so. • Given information and visual stimulus used accurately and relevantly to justify personal opinion and interpretation.
<p><u>Band 2 (7–8 marks)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An awareness of the purpose of the task and of the intended audience and context. • Organisational structure and format appropriate. • All or most of the required points addressed with some amplification. • Given information and visual stimulus used relevantly to support personal opinion.
<p><u>Band 3 (5–6 marks)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some awareness of the purpose of the task and of the intended audience and context. • Organisational structure and format generally appropriate. • All or most of the required points addressed but amplification may be sketchy. There may be occasional evidence of misunderstanding or a lack of clarity. • Given information and visual stimulus may not always be logically used to support personal opinion.
<p><u>Band 4 (3–4 marks)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only partial awareness of the purpose of the task and there may be some confusion as to the intended audience and context. • Organisational structure and format likely to be inappropriate or confused. • Some of the required points addressed but there is likely to be evidence of some misunderstanding and a distinct lack of clarity. • Given information and visual stimulus may be used irrelevantly.
<p><u>Band 5 (1–2 marks)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misunderstanding of the purpose of the task and there will be confusion as to the intended audience and context. • Organisational structure and format inappropriate or very confused. • There may be an attempt to use some of the required points but there will be serious misunderstanding and confusion. • Given information and visual stimulus misunderstood or used irrelevantly.
<p><u>A mark of 0</u> should be given only when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the response is so weak that there is no evidence of understanding the nature of the task <i>or</i> • the candidates has merely copied out the question or parts of it at random <i>or</i> • the question is not attempted at all.

BAND DESCRIPTORS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE IN SECTION B

<p><u>Band 1 (17–20 marks)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple structures will be accurate. There will be a variety of structures with generally successful complex sentences. • There will be instances of apt and wide vocabulary. • There will be a good sense of paragraphing demonstrating its use as a device for linking ideas and providing unity to the piece of writing. • Spelling and punctuation will be largely accurate. The candidate will be confident in the use of full stops to separate sentences. • There may be a sprinkling of grammatical errors, including some very occasional tense or verb formation slips, but this will not hinder conveying the intended meaning to the reader. • Tone and register will be entirely appropriate.
<p><u>Band 2 (13–16 marks)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures will be generally accurate and will show some variety with some successful complex sentences. • Vocabulary will convey intended meaning with some precision. • Paragraphs will be used appropriately and will show some sense of linking and unity. • Spelling and punctuation will be generally accurate. Full stops will nearly always be used to separate sentences. • There may be some grammatical errors, including a few tense or verb formation errors, but this will not confuse the reader. • Tone and register will be appropriate.
<p><u>Band 3 (9–12) marks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures will be generally accurate though they may be repetitive with occasional errors. There will be some attempt to write more complex sentences but these may not always be successful. • Vocabulary will be simple but will convey intended meaning. • Paragraphs will probably be used but may lack linking and unity. • Spelling of simple vocabulary and elementary punctuation will be largely accurate. Full stops will be used to separate sentences but their use may not be fully secure. • There will be noticeable incidence of grammatical errors, including some serious tense and verb formation errors, but this will not obscure meaning. • Tone will usually be appropriate, although there may be slips of register.
<p><u>Band 4 (5–8 marks)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures will be simple with frequent errors and perhaps break down if more complex structures are attempted. • Vocabulary will be simple and will usually convey intended meaning. There may be examples of misunderstanding or misuse. • Paragraphs may be absent or may be inappropriate. • Spelling of simple vocabulary will usually be accurate, but serious error is likely in more complex words. • Punctuation, particularly of sentence separation, is likely to be weak and uncertain. • There will be frequent grammatical errors including persistent errors in tense and verb forms which may sometimes blur but will not obscure meaning. • There may be some awareness of the appropriate register and tone but this is unlikely to be sustained for long.
<p><u>Band 5 (3–4 marks)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures will be simple and frequently confused. There will be frequent errors and some obscurity of meaning. • Vocabulary will be limited and show frequent evidence of misunderstanding. • Paragraphs are likely to be absent and may be haphazard. • Spelling and punctuation, particularly of sentence separation, may be sufficiently inaccurate to blur or obscure meaning. • There will be frequent grammatical errors of all kinds sometimes extending across whole phrases or sentences such that meaning is frequently obscured. • Tone may be inappropriate.

Band 6 (1–2 marks)

- There may be patches of clarity but these will be ‘buried’ by other passages which convey no meaning.
- Grammatical errors will be multiple, i.e., extending across whole sentences.
- At this level, responses will indicate an inability to write English of sufficient accuracy to convey even simple information or ideas.

A mark of 0

should be given only when:

- the response makes no sense from beginning to end *or*
- the candidate has merely copied out the question or parts of it at random *or*
- the question is not attempted at all.

Paper 1: Continuous Writing**Assessment Criteria for Writing**

- Accuracy of language in terms of sentence structure, grammar, spelling and punctuation
- Appropriate use of varied vocabulary
- Clarity of expression and organisation
- Relevance of content
- Appropriateness of register and tone

BAND DESCRIPTORS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF WRITING IN SECTION C**Band 1 (26–30 marks)**

- Simple structures will be accurate. There will be a variety of structures with generally successful complex sentences.
- There will be instances of apt and wide vocabulary.
- There will be a good sense of paragraphing demonstrating its use as a device for linking ideas and providing unity to the piece of writing.
- Spelling and punctuation will be largely accurate. The candidate will be confident in the use of full stops to separate sentences.
- There may be a sprinkling of grammatical errors, including some very occasional tense or verb formation slips, but this will not hinder conveying the intended meaning to the reader.
- Response will be fully relevant, the register and tone consistently appropriate and the reader's interest will be aroused and sustained.

Band 2 (20–25 marks)

- Structures will be generally accurate and will show some variety with some successful complex sentences.
- Vocabulary will convey intended meaning with some precision.
- Paragraphs will be used appropriately and will show some sense of linking and unity.
- Spelling and punctuation will be generally accurate. Full stops will nearly always be used to separate sentences.
- There may be some grammatical errors, including and few tense or verb formation errors, but this will not confuse the reader.
- Response will be relevant, the register and tone appropriate and there will be some attempt to arouse and sustain the interest of the reader.

Band 3 (15–19 marks)

- Structures will be generally accurate though they may be repetitive with occasional errors. There will be some attempt to write more complex sentences but these may not always be successful.
- Vocabulary will be simple but will convey intended meaning.
- Paragraphs will probably be used but may lack linking and unity.
- Spelling of simple vocabulary and elementary punctuation will be largely accurate. Full stops will be used to separate sentences but their use may not be fully secure.
- There will be a noticeable incidence of grammatical errors, including some serious tense and verb formation errors, but this will not obscure meaning.
- Response will be relevant, the register and tone generally appropriate and there will be an attempt to arouse interest in the reader although this may not be sustained.

Band 4 (10–14 marks)

- Structures will be simple with frequent errors and perhaps break down if more complex structures are attempted.
- Vocabulary will be simple and will usually convey intended meaning. There may be examples of misunderstanding or misuse.
- Paragraphs may be absent or may be inappropriate.
- Spelling of simple vocabulary will usually be accurate, but serious error is likely in more complex words.
- Punctuation, particularly of sentence separation, is likely to be weak and uncertain.
- There will be frequent grammatical errors including persistent errors in tense and verb forms which may sometimes blur but will not obscure meaning.
- Response will attempt to fulfil the requirements of the question but there may be some digression and loss of focus. There may be some awareness of the appropriate register and tone and there may be some attempt to interest the reader but this is unlikely to be sustained for long.

Band 5 (5–9 marks)

- Structures will be simple and frequently confused. There will be frequent errors and some obscurity of meaning.
- Vocabulary will be limited and show frequent evidence of misunderstanding.
- Paragraphs are likely to be absent and may be haphazard.
- Spelling and punctuation, particularly of sentence separation, may be sufficiently inaccurate to blur or obscure meaning.
- There will be very frequent grammatical errors of all kinds sometimes extending across whole phrases or sentences such that meaning is frequently obscured.
- Response may show significant deviation from relevancy and is unlikely to arouse the reader's interest.

Band 6 (1–4 marks)

- There may be patches of clarity but these will be 'buried' by other passages which convey no meaning.
- Grammatical errors will be multiple, i.e., extending across whole sentences.
- At this level, responses will indicate an inability to write English of sufficient accuracy to convey even simple information or ideas.

A mark of 0

should be given only when:

- the response makes no sense from beginning to end *or*
- the candidate has merely copied out the question or parts of it at random *or*
- the question is not attempted at all.

Paper 2: Summary

SUMMARY STYLE DESCRIPTORS	
Mark	
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a sustained and successful attempt to re-phrase the text language. • The summary is free from lifting except for phrases from the text which are difficult to substitute. • Apart from very occasional slips, the language is accurate.
5–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a noticeable attempt to re-phrase the text. • The summary is free from stretches of concentrated lifting. • The language is almost always accurate. Serious errors will be so isolated as to be almost unnoticeable.
3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are recognisable but limited attempts to re-phrase the text detail. • Groups of text expression are interlaced with own words. • The expression may not always be secure, but the attempt to substitute the text will gain credit. • The language is largely accurate.
1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholesale copying of large areas of the text, but not a complete transcript. • Attempts to substitute own language will be limited to single word expression. • Irrelevant sections of the text will be more frequent at this level and below. • Meaning is not in doubt but serious errors are becoming more frequent.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretty well a complete transcript of the text expression. • Originality is barely noticeable. • There may also be random transcription of irrelevant sections of the text. • Heavy frequency of serious errors, impeding the reading in many places.

Paper 4: Oral Communication

GCE N(A)-LEVEL ORAL COMMUNICATION			
Reading Aloud		Spoken Interaction	
Assessment Criteria for Reading Aloud <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pronunciation and Articulation: to read aloud a text with accurate pronunciation and clear articulation • Rhythm and Fluency: to read aloud with appropriate rhythm and stress to achieve a well-paced, fluent rendering of a text • Awareness of Purpose, Audience and Context: to read aloud a text with appropriate variations in voice qualities given the purpose, audience and context 		Assessment Criteria for Spoken Interaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Response: to give considered and developed personal responses • Clarity of Expression: to express oneself clearly with apt use of vocabulary, structures and with good pronunciation • Interaction: to engage actively with the examiners in a sustained discussion 	
Band 1 (9–10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear pronunciation and articulation with only occasional slips • Smooth delivery with only occasional hesitation or self-correction • Reads with good awareness of purpose, audience and context 	Band 1 (16–20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers considered personal responses which are well-developed • Expresses ideas clearly and coherently using appropriate vocabulary and structures, and supported by good pronunciation • Engages with the examiners to sustain the discussion, sometimes introducing new ideas, opinions or issues
Band 2 (6–8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally intelligible pronunciation and clear articulation with some errors • Somewhat uneven delivery with some hesitation or self-correction • Reads with fairly good awareness of the purpose, audience and context 	Band 2 (11–15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers some personal responses which are developed to some extent • Expresses most ideas clearly using a range of largely appropriate vocabulary and structures, and supported by mostly correct pronunciation • Engages with the examiners in a sustained discussion by responding well to the prompts but may not show initiative
Band 3 (3–5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads with numerous errors in pronunciation and articulation which may cause a strain for the listener • Generally slow and hesitant delivery, with numerous inappropriate pauses and self-corrections • Reads with partial awareness of the purpose, audience and context 	Band 3 (6–10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers some simple personal responses with little development • Expresses some ideas clearly using limited range of vocabulary and structures with pronunciation that may sometimes impede communication • Engages with the examiners in a discussion but may require considerable support or encouragement
Band 4 (1–2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pronunciation and articulation are very difficult to understand with intrusive and serious errors • Very hesitant delivery with inappropriate pauses • Reads with little awareness of the purpose, audience and context 	Band 4 (1–5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers hardly any personal response with very little or no development • Any ideas expressed are in disconnected single sentences, phrases or single words with pronunciation that often impedes communication • Finds it difficult to maintain any sustained interaction, even with constant support and encouragement

Note: For **Reading Aloud**, a mark of 0 should be given only when the candidate is not able to read even a single word from the text; and for **Spoken Interaction**, a mark of 0 should be given only when the candidate does not give any relevant response.