



Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board



Cambridge Assessment
International Education

**Singapore–Cambridge General Certificate of Education
Ordinary Level (2023)**

English Language (Syllabus 1128)

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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 250–350 words on a given situation which will involve viewing a visual text.</p> <p><u>Section C: Continuous Writing</u> Candidates write 350–500 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 250–350 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 350–500 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 1200 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.

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

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"> • Good understanding of purpose • Clear awareness of context and audience • Organisational structure and format entirely appropriate • All required points developed in detail, fully amplified and well organised • Given information and visual stimulus well-used to justify personal opinion and interpretation
<p><u>Band 2 (7–8 marks)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of purpose • An awareness of context and audience • Organisational structure and format appropriate • All required points addressed but not always developed in detail • Given information and visual stimulus used to support personal opinion
<p><u>Band 3 (5–6 marks)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some understanding of purpose • Some awareness of context and audience • Organisational structure and format generally appropriate • Most of the required points addressed (but not developed) • Given information and visual stimulus may not be adequately used to support opinion
<p><u>Band 4 (3–4 marks)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only partial understanding of purpose • Some confusion as to context and audience • Organisational structure and format may be inappropriate • All of the required points may not be addressed • Very limited use of given information and visual stimulus to support opinion
<p><u>Band 5 (1–2 marks)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misunderstanding of purpose • Confusion as to context and audience • Little evidence of a specific format • Not all of the required points addressed • 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 totally incomprehensible <i>or</i> • the candidate 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>Band 1 (18–20 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly accurate, apart from very occasional slips • Sentence structures varied for particular effects • Verb forms largely correct and appropriate tenses consistently used • Vocabulary wide and precise • Punctuation accurate and helpful • Spelling accurate, apart from very occasional slips • Paragraphs have unity, are linked, and show evidence of planning • Tone and register entirely appropriate
<p>Band 2 (16–17 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate; occasional errors are either slips or caused by ambition • Sentence structures show some variation to create some natural fluency • Occasional slips in verb forms or tense formation, but sequence consistent and clear throughout • Vocabulary precise enough to convey intended shades of meaning • Punctuation accurate and generally helpful • Spelling nearly always accurate • Paragraphs have unity, are usually appropriately linked and show some evidence of planning • Tone and register appropriate
<p>Band 3 (13–15 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly accurate; errors from ambition do not mar clarity of communication • Some variety of sentence structures, but tendency to repeat sentence types may produce monotonous effect • Errors may occur in irregular verb forms, but control of tense sequence sufficient to sustain clear progression of events or ideas • Simple vocabulary and idioms mainly correct; errors may occur with more ambitious words • Punctuation generally accurate and sentence separation correctly marked, but errors may occur, e.g. with direct speech • Spelling of simple vocabulary accurate; some errors in more ambitious words • Paragraphs may show some unity, although links may be absent or inappropriate • Tone usually appropriate, although there may be slips of register
<p>Band 4 (11–12 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficiently accurate to communicate meaning, with patches of clear, accurate language • Some variety of sentence length and structure, not always for particular purpose • Errors in verb forms and tense consistency may cause uncertainty in sequence of events or disturb ease of communication • Vocabulary usually adequate to convey intended meaning; idiom may be uncertain • Punctuation used but not always helpful; occasional sentence separation errors • Spelling of simple vocabulary accurate; errors in more difficult words • Paragraphs used but may lack unity or coherence • Tone may be uneven
<p>Band 5 (8–10 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall meaning never in doubt, but errors sufficiently frequent and serious to hamper precision and distract reader from content • Some simple structures accurate but may not sustain accuracy for long • Errors in verb forms and tenses will sometimes confuse sequence of events • Vocabulary limited, either too simple or imperfectly understood; some idiomatic errors likely • Simple punctuation usually accurate, but there may be frequent sentence separation errors • Spelling of simple vocabulary accurate; frequent errors in more difficult words • Paragraphs used haphazardly • Tone may be inappropriate

Band 6 (6–7 marks)

- Many serious errors of various kinds of 'single-word' type (i.e. they could be corrected without re-writing the sentence); communication established, although weight of error may cause some 'blurring'
- Sentences probably simple and repetitive in structure
- Frequent errors in verb forms and haphazard changes of tense confuse meaning
- Vocabulary conveys meaning but likely to be simple and imprecise; significant idiomatic errors
- Spelling may be inconsistent
- Punctuation and paragraphing may be haphazard or non-existent

Band 7 (3–5 marks)

- Sense usually decipherable but some errors will be 'multiple' (i.e. requiring the reader to re-read and re-organise); meaning may be partly hidden by density of linguistic errors
- Unlikely to be more than a few accurate sentences, however simple, in the whole essay

Band 8 (0–2 mark)

- Scripts almost entirely or entirely impossible to recognise as pieces of English writing; whole sections make no sense at all
- Where occasional patches of relative clarity are evident, 1 mark should be given
- The mark of 0 is reserved for scripts that make no sense at all from beginning to end

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 (27–30 marks)**

- Highly accurate, apart from very occasional slips
- Sentence structures varied for particular effects
- Verb forms largely correct and appropriate tenses consistently used
- Vocabulary wide and precise
- Punctuation accurate and helpful
- Spelling accurate, apart from very occasional slips
- Paragraphs have unity, are linked, and show evidence of planning
- Consistently relevant; interest aroused and sustained
- Tone and register entirely appropriate

Band 2 (23–26 marks)

- Accurate; occasional errors are either slips or caused by ambition
- Sentence structures show some variation to create some natural fluency
- Occasional slips in verb forms or tense formation but sequence consistent and clear throughout
- Vocabulary wide and precise enough to convey intended shades of meaning
- Punctuation accurate and generally helpful
- Spelling nearly always accurate
- Paragraphs have unity, are usually appropriately linked and show some evidence of planning
- Relevant; interest aroused and mostly sustained
- Tone and register appropriate

Band 3 (19–22 marks)

- Mostly accurate; errors from ambition do not mar clarity of communication
- Some variety of sentence structures, but tendency to repeat sentence types may produce monotonous effect
- Errors may occur in irregular verb forms, but control of tense sequence sufficient to sustain clear progression of events or ideas
- Simple vocabulary and idioms mainly correct; errors may occur with more ambitious words
- Punctuation generally accurate and sentence separation correctly marked, but errors may occur, e.g. with direct speech
- Spelling of simple vocabulary accurate; some errors in more ambitious words
- Paragraphs may show some unity, although links may be absent or inappropriate
- Relevant; some interest aroused, although there may be some lack of originality and/or planning
- Tone usually appropriate, although there may be slips of register

Band 4 (15–18 marks)

- Sufficiently accurate to communicate meaning, with patches of clear, accurate language
- Some variety of sentence length and structure, not always for particular purpose
- Errors in verb forms and tense consistency may cause uncertainty in sequence of events or disturb ease of communication
- Vocabulary usually adequate to convey intended meaning; idiom may be uncertain
- Punctuation used but not always helpful; occasional sentence separation errors
- Spelling of simple vocabulary accurate; errors in more difficult words
- Paragraphs used but may lack unity or coherence
- Attempt to address topic but there may be digressions or failures of logic; may lack liveliness and interest
- Tone may be uneven

Band 5 (11–14)

- Overall meaning never in doubt, but errors sufficiently frequent and serious to hamper precision and distract reader from content
- Some simple sentence structures accurate but unlikely to sustain accuracy for long
- Errors in verb forms and tenses will sometimes confuse sequence of events
- Vocabulary limited, either too simple or imperfectly understood; some idiomatic errors likely
- Simple punctuation usually accurate, but there may be frequent sentence separation errors
- Spelling of simple vocabulary accurate; frequent errors in more difficult words
- Paragraphs used haphazardly
- Some relevance; some interest
- Tone may be inconsistent

Band 6 (7–10)

- Many serious errors of various kinds of 'single-word' type (i.e. they could be corrected without re-writing the sentence); communication established, although weight of error may cause some 'blurring'
- Sentences probably simple and repetitive in structure
- Frequent errors in verb forms and haphazard changes of tense confuse meaning
- Vocabulary conveys meaning but likely to be simple and imprecise; significant idiomatic errors
- Spelling may be inconsistent
- Punctuation and paragraphing may be haphazard or non-existent
- A little relevance; a little interest
- Some recognition of appropriate tone

Band 7 (3–6)

- Sense usually decipherable but some errors will be 'multiple' (i.e. requiring the reader to re-read and re-organise); meaning may be partly hidden by density of linguistic errors
- Unlikely to be more than a few accurate sentences, however simple, in the whole essay
- Little relevance or interest
- Tone may be inappropriate

Band 8 (0–2)

- Scripts almost entirely or entirely impossible to recognise as pieces of English writing; whole sections make no sense at all
- Where occasional patches of relative clarity are evident, 2 or 1 mark(s) should be given
- The mark of 0 is reserved for scripts that make no sense at all from beginning to end

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 O-LEVEL ORAL COMMUNICATION			
Reading Aloud		Spoken Interaction	
Assessment Criteria for Reading Aloud <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pronunciation & Articulation: to read aloud a text with accurate pronunciation and clear articulation • Rhythm & Fluency: to read 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"> • Very clear pronunciation and articulation that conveys meaning effectively • Reads with appropriate pace and fluency using appropriate rhythm and stress to good effect • Reads with full awareness of the purpose, audience and context 	Band 1 (16–20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers well-considered personal responses which are coherent and well-developed • Expresses ideas clearly using a wide range of well-chosen vocabulary and structures, and supported by good pronunciation • Engages actively with the Examiners to sustain the discussion, introducing new ideas, opinions or issues where appropriate
Band 2 (6–8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally clear pronunciation and articulation with occasional errors • A mainly fluent reading with some mistakes in stress and rhythm • Reads with generally good awareness of the purpose, audience and context 	Band 2 (11–15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers some thoughtful 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"> • Pronunciation of words is rather inaccurate, but some attempt to maintain clarity of articulation • Reading is hesitant with frequent mistakes in stress and rhythm • Reads with some 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 a 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"> • Very weak pronunciation and articulation which leads to distortion of meaning • Very hesitant reading with serious errors in stress and rhythm • 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 repeated prompting