



# Introduction

This Exam Preparation and Practice has been written by an experienced international school teacher, author and English Language examiner. It covers the Reading and Writing examined components (Paper 1 and Paper 2) of the revised syllabus from 2020. It could be used as revision for May or October exam sessions during approximately six weeks of timetabled English lessons or revision periods plus homework assignments. The Exam Preparation and Practice approach to teaching is consistent with the three well-established companion books by the same author in the Cambridge IGCSE First Language English suite: Coursebook, Language and Skills Practice Book and Teacher's Resource.

This book is divided into five clear sections in logical order:

**Section A** gives information about what is being assessed in the exam and how. It clarifies the format of the exam and its terminology. This section also offers advice on how to approach exam tasks and improve performance.

**Sections B and C** help students prepare for the Reading and Writing exam papers. Each Exam Practice segment, containing exam-type passages and questions, focuses on a particular skill and/or question type. In these sections, students are provided with examiner tips and preparation tasks. There are opportunities for reflection, self-assessment and editing throughout.

**Section D** consists of two complete exam practice papers each for Reading and Writing. These should be done after Sections B and C have been completed, or they could be used as mock exams.

**Section E** contains the answers to the questions and preparation tasks in Sections B and C, and answers and specific mark schemes for the Section D practice papers, as well as the generic mark scheme tables. There are sample plans and annotated model responses for reference for each type of extended response in Paper 1 and Paper 2.

The mixture of exam guidance and practice in this book gives candidates the opportunity, experience and confidence to apply the language skills that they have developed in the most effective way to achieve success in their IGCSE First Language English course.

Cambridge IGCSE First Language English

Section A

## How to use this book

This book is designed for use in the final year of the Cambridge IGCSE First Language English course. It provides scaffolded support for students approaching the examination.

The book contains four full examination papers organised by task type, accompanied by model and sample responses, mark schemes, examiner grades and comments, learning and exam strategy training, and examiner tips.

- This heading tells you the sub-skill that you will cover in this unit.
- You can see how many marks each question is worth in the exam. This will help you to plan your time.
- Text extracts have glossary boxes. You can use these to check unfamiliar terms or information in the text.

Cambridge IGCSE First Language English

**Unit 1 Comprehension**  
 Questions 1(a)–(e) (15 marks)


These questions test vocabulary and cover the following Assessment Objectives:

- **R1** demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings
- **R2** demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and attitudes
- **R5** select and use information for specific purposes

These questions have specific answers (sometimes with alternatives) in the mark scheme. The questions relate to Text A, which is an informative text of about 350–375 words.

**EXAM PRACTICE A1**  
**Read Text A1 and then answer Questions 1(a)–(e) below.**

**Text A1: My grandmother**  
*This passage is from a memoir written by Svetlana Alliluyeva, the daughter of the Russian dictator, Joseph Stalin.*



**Bolshevik** - a member of the Russian Communist Party, persecuted until the Party seized power in the October Revolution of 1917

Brought up by a hard-working German mother, my grandmother was herself a woman of exceptional industry. She and Grandfather both had golden hands, but hers were a woman's skills. She was a wonderful cook and dressmaker and a splendid manager of the meagre resources available to her as wife of a **Bolshevik** who was in jail part of the time and always on the move from one town to another. Later on you couldn't fail to see how much she hated seeing our household run like public property by state employees who were just pouring government money down the drain!

The functionaries who were running the house didn't understand, or rather they understood only too well and couldn't forgive her for it. Unlike my tactful Grandfather, who always held his tongue, Grandmother was quite capable of bursting into sudden screams of abuse at what she called our 'careless managers' – all the state-employed cooks and commandants who looked on her as a 'capricious old woman'. We children used to hear this kind of talk about her, too, when we were all living at Zubalovo after my mother's death. It wasn't until later, of course, that we realised that Grandmother had just too hot a temper to stand silently by while the household was outrageously mismanaged.

It was not for nothing that Grandmother grew up in Georgia and loved it there. Her whole approach to life was hot-blooded and southern. There were endless tears of sorrow and jubilation, there were lamentations and lengthy declarations of love and tenderness and disapproval. My mother, who was more restrained, like Grandfather, got tired of Grandmother's outpourings and her constant criticisms of the way the household was run and the children brought up and of my mother herself. She didn't like Grandmother's staying with us too frequently and interfering in the household. Could it also be that Grandmother's heartaches and fears were only too justified, and that my mother was actually afraid and trying to close her eyes to it all?

From *Twenty Letters to a Friend* by Svetlana Alliluyeva (Penguin, 1968).

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There are three examples of each type of exam question in this part of the book. The book contains five full practice papers in total.

You will find Exam Advice boxes when you first see an exam question type. These contain advice from an examiner on how to approach each part of the question and how to maximise your marks.

Reflection boxes help you to think about what you have learnt, before you try the exam question type again.

Paper 1 Reading

**Question 1<sup>a</sup>**

a Give **two** characteristics of the writer's grandmother, according to the text.<sup>b</sup>

- .....
- ..... [1]

b Using your own words, **explain<sup>c</sup>** what the text means by:

i 'had golden hands' (line 2) .....

ii 'held his tongue' (line 10) .....

c Re-read paragraph 1, ('Brought up by ... down the drain'). Give **two reasons<sup>d</sup>** why there wasn't much money available.

- .....
- ..... [2]

d Re-read paragraph 2, ('The functionaries ... mismanaged.').

i Identify **two reasons<sup>e</sup>** why the functionaries didn't like Grandmother.

- .....
- ..... [2]

ii Re-read paragraph 3 ('It was not ... it all?'). Explain why the writer's mother did not get on with Grandmother.

..... [3]<sup>f</sup>

e **Using your own words<sup>g</sup>**, explain why Grandmother was so critical of how others ran the household.

..... [3]

**SELF-ASSESSMENT**  
 Check your answers on pages 107–108.

**REFLECTION**  
 Did you find any of these questions difficult?  
 Did you read the questions carefully and follow the instructions exactly?  
 Were you able to demonstrate your understanding by selecting the right information and providing synonyms?  
 Short answers must be concise, precise, clear and focused. Were your answers all of these things?

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**Paper 1 Reading**

**Question 1**  
 f According to Text B2, what are the causes and characteristics of hurricanes?  
 Put brackets round all examples, repetitions and minor details.<sup>a</sup> Then list, in your own words<sup>b</sup>, the 15 points remaining.<sup>c</sup>  
 When you have found all the points, group them by topic and put the groups into a logical order. Then write your summary<sup>d</sup> in four complex sentences.<sup>e</sup>

**SELF-ASSESSMENT**  
 Check your answers on pages 109–110.

**REFLECTION**  
 Did you manage to arrange the points in four sentences, one for each aspect of hurricanes?  
 How long is your summary?  
 If it is more than 120 words, what can you delete without losing necessary information? If it contains fewer than 120 words, which points did you miss?

**Preparation tasks**

1 Look at the sample summary below and discuss it with a partner. What do you notice about the overall structure, the sentence structures, and the vocabulary? How does it compare in content and style to the one you wrote?

Hurricanes – also known as cyclones or typhoons depending on the region – are numbered in increasing severity from 1 to 5 and given human names in alphabetical order by the WHO. They form in autumn over equatorial waters above 80 degrees E, when light winds push moisture upwards and new air creates clouds which rotate because of the Coriolis Force, clockwise or anti-clockwise according to hemisphere. This movement produces heavy rain, strong winds – which can reach 320 kph – and storm surges of high waves that cause flooding when the hurricanes make landfall. They cover hundreds of miles, usually over water, have a calm centre surrounded by the wall of the eye – the most dangerous part of the hurricane – and weaken only several days later after meeting cooler air. (133 words)

2 The summary above is too long by 13 words. How could it be reduced? Check your answer on page 110.

3 Here is another summary of the same text. How many marks out of 10 would you give it for Reading and how many out of 5 for Writing? (See mark schemes on pages 141 and 142 and remind yourself of the list of relevant points on pages 109–110.) Annotate the summary to explain your assessment.

Hurricanes have names of people and the strongest ones are level 5. They get weaker when they get cooler. Hurricanes are created when warm wet air goes over oceans near the equator. Winds turn the moisture into clouds which then spin round and produce rain. They cover a large area and the worst part is in the middle. Hurricanes also cause huge waves to flood the land. (67 words)

4 Check on page 110 to see if the examiner agrees with you. See if you can improve the coverage and expression of your own summary after studying these two versions, one too long and one too short.

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Self-assessment boxes enable you to partner with other students and mark your own work. You can use the mark scheme tables in Section E to help with this.

The second example of the summary task shows a sample answer by a student. You can compare this with your own work and see how you can improve it.

You can grade the sample answers. This means that you will become familiar with mark schemes. It also helps you to understand the standard that you should aim for.

**Paper 1 Reading**

**Write the news report.**  
 Base your report on what you have read in Text C1, but be careful to use your own words.<sup>a</sup> Address each of the three bullet points.<sup>b</sup>  
 Begin your report with the words 'Yesterday a tragic death occurred in the town centre ...'  
 Write about 250 to 350 words.

**Preparation tasks**

1 Make your own plan for this question<sup>c</sup>, making sure there are enough points for each<sup>d</sup> of the three sections.<sup>e</sup>

2 Read the Student X model response and examiner comments on page 115. Now look at your plan again. Have you missed out any relevant points? Add them if so, and then sequence<sup>f</sup> the points to give a structure to each section of the response.

3 Look at Student Y response below and compare the content and sequence of the response with your own plan.

**Student Y – Sample response**

October 6, 2017 – Yesterday a tragic death occurred in the town centre. The man was hit by a streetcar that was coming from the opposite direction. The man who was hit was in a rush to join his family, who were to start in an hour or two for their summer home on the Atlantic coast.<sup>1</sup>

From the information gathered at the scene, the victim was one of the wealthiest person in the town. He also was a very useful man and some people say he was the most useful.<sup>2</sup> He was also the most influential men of the town. He use to be able to influence people and people use to listen to him alot.<sup>3</sup> He was a man noted for his prudence and foresight. I still do not know<sup>4</sup> how a terrible fate have overtaken him.

The way how the accident happened was very scary because the victim was in a total rush and he did not see both sides of the streets. A streetcar coming from the opposite direction hit him and the man had died. People reacted to this, this way the boys run, men and women tearing up on their wheels<sup>5</sup> to see the sickening sight and doctors dashing up in buggies as if directed by Providence. A woman who saw the thing fainted and a strong men<sup>6</sup> who also saw it grow sick and dizzy.

The people who were at the scene felt emotional, scared and worried. Some people gave their views. It was not something that was nice to see. I was there and i witnessed it. I saw the same thing it was something that should have not taken place.

May he rest in peace and sorry to all his loved ones.<sup>7</sup> May god always protect the family.<sup>8</sup>

4 With a partner, look at the two mark scheme tables (Paper 1, Question 3 Response to Reading and Writing: Structure and style on pages 144 and 145). After discussion, assign bands for Reading and Writing to the Student Y response. Check on page 116 to see if the examiner agrees with you, and consider any differences.

5 Add to your plan the details to support and extend<sup>9</sup> your news report, e.g. names of those involved, and quotations from officials and witnesses. Read the model plan on pages 116–117 to check that you haven't omitted anything important.

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You are given help on how to plan your written work.

Sample answers from students are provided.

Examiner Comment boxes provided feedback from an examiner.

You can use the mark scheme tables in Section E to give the sample answer a grade. You can then look at the mark given by the examiner.

You will find model plans in Section E for various text types.

## Syllabus overview

The aims of the Cambridge IGCSE First Language English syllabus are to enable students to:

- read a variety of types of text with ease and comprehension, showing an appreciation of different styles of writing
- read analytically in order to be able to apply skills they have learnt to their own writing
- write without errors and to the purpose in Standard English
- develop textual material by analysing and evaluating it or adding implied meaning
- extend and use a range of vocabulary, in addition to demonstrating an understanding of linguistic terms and devices.

## Assessment Objectives

Skill	Assessment Objectives
AO1: Reading	<p>Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:</p> <p>R1 demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings</p> <p>R2 demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and attitudes</p> <p>R3 analyse, evaluate and develop facts, ideas and opinions, using appropriate support from the text</p> <p>R4 demonstrate understanding of how writers achieve effects and influence readers</p> <p>R5 select and use information for specific purposes.</p>
AO2: Writing	<p>Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:</p> <p>W1 articulate experience and express what is thought, felt and imagined</p> <p>W2 organise and structure ideas and opinions for deliberate effect</p> <p>W3 use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures appropriate to content</p> <p>W4 use register appropriate to context</p> <p>W5 make accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p>

## Skills

### Reading

The skills covered in the syllabus are:

- show comprehension of texts and the language used
- summarise and adapt material
- extend, examine and evaluate textual material
- show comprehension of the ways in which writers create impressions
- choose relevant ideas according to genre
- identify and comment on stylistic usage and literary language.

During the course of study, candidates should become familiar with texts in a range of fiction and non-fiction genres from 1900. Close reading skills should be developed to enable candidates to recognise and explain how writers use choice of content and style to position readers to respond in certain ways.

### Writing

The skills covered in the syllabus are:

- describe thoughts and feelings
- arrange and communicate material effectively
- use a variety of suitable words
- use suitable sentence types
- show awareness of genre, purpose and audience
- write without spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.

To develop their writing skills, candidates should study the features of texts with different purposes and audiences, and practise creating their own texts in a full range of imaginative, informative and persuasive genres.

## Exam at a glance

### Paper 1 Reading

2 hours – 50% – 80 marks

Questions are based on three reading texts related by theme totalling 1200–1400 words.

Questions	Type of task	Students respond to	Description	Word limits	Marks	
					Reading	Writing
1(a)–(e)	Comprehension questions	Text A	Short questions containing several parts	n/a	15	
1(f)	Summary task	Text B	Two-part specific summary	No more than 120	10	5
2(a)–(c)	Short answer questions	Text C	Part-answer questions on language of text	n/a	10	
2(d)	Selection task	Text C	Six own choices of text language to be explored	200–300	15	
3	Extended response	Text C	Structured response to reading in one of seven genres: letter, news report, formal report, journal entry, article, speech, interview	250–350	15	10

### Paper 2 Writing

2 hours – 50% – 80 marks

Section A is directed writing, an extended writing question based on one or two texts totalling 650–750 words.

Section B is a descriptive or narrative composition task.

Section	Questions	Type of task	Description	Word limits	Marks	
					Style	Content
A	1	Directed writing	Response to one/two texts in a persuasive non-fiction genre: article, speech, letter	250–350	24	16
B	2 or 3	Descriptive composition	One of two titles	350–450	24	16
	4 or 5	Narrative composition	One of two titles			

## Rubric terms

The command words in the list below may feature on the exam paper or be used in teaching materials. It is useful to get to know their exact meaning in the context of an English exam.

<b>analyse</b>	examine and interpret content or style of a text
<b>annotate</b>	underline relevant textual matter (and add notes in margin)
<b>argue</b>	give supported reasons for a belief or action
<b>check</b>	re-read response to correct errors and omissions
<b>choose</b>	select ideas or words
<b>collate</b>	collect and combine information
<b>compare</b>	find and comment on similarities
<b>contrast</b>	find and comment on differences
<b>describe</b>	give a detailed account
<b>develop</b>	extend an idea
<b>discuss</b>	write about a topic from various points of view
<b>draft</b>	write a preliminary version of a response
<b>edit</b>	modify and improve
<b>evaluate</b>	judge the effectiveness
<b>evoke</b>	elicit a feeling
<b>examine</b>	look closely at the details of
<b>expand</b>	give a fuller version
<b>explain</b>	make clear and explicit the reasons or connections
<b>explore</b>	enquire further into an idea or topic
<b>focus</b>	make the centre of interest
<b>give</b>	produce an answer from a text
<b>give an account</b>	relate stages of a process chronologically
<b>identify</b>	recognise relevant material
<b>illustrate</b>	provide examples in support of a claim
<b>infer</b>	draw conclusions based on evidence
<b>inform</b>	give the facts
<b>interpret</b>	explain the meaning
<b>justify</b>	give reasons for your conclusions or decisions
<b>list</b>	use note form in a column to collect points or ideas
<b>narrate</b>	tell a story
<b>persuade</b>	convince audience to do something which benefits the writer/speaker
<b>plan</b>	make preparatory notes on the content and structure of a response
<b>present</b>	deliver structured and illustrated information or arguments
<b>select</b>	pick out what is relevant

<b>sequence</b>	arrange material in logical order
<b>structure</b>	organise content into overall shape
<b>study</b>	observe thoroughly
<b>summarise</b>	reduce to main points
<b>support</b>	give evidence
<b>synthesise</b>	combine ideas from different sources to form a new whole
<b>trace</b>	follow the development of a process

## List of relevant terms

<b>accuracy (of writing)</b>	correct use of vocabulary, grammar and punctuation
<b>analogy</b>	similar concept for the purpose of clarification and example
<b>antithesis</b>	juxtaposition of opposites
<b>argumentative</b>	designed to convince reader to accept a particular view
<b>audience</b>	receivers of a written or spoken text
<b>chronological</b>	arrangement of events in order in which they occurred
<b>cliché</b>	well-known and overused phrase, e.g. <i>Once upon a time</i>
<b>colloquial</b>	everyday spoken language
<b>concise</b>	expressed in fewest possible words
<b>connective</b>	joining word used to form compound or complex sentence, e.g. <i>but, although, as</i>
<b>connotation</b>	association evoked by a word
<b>content (of writing)</b>	subject matter
<b>context</b>	surrounding parts or setting of a text
<b>denotation</b>	literal dictionary meaning of a word
<b>descriptive</b>	enabling the reader to visualise or experience something
<b>descriptor</b>	identification of skill assessed in an exam mark scheme
<b>direct speech</b>	speech reproduced exactly as it was spoken, in inverted commas
<b>discursive</b>	discusses something informatively from different viewpoints
<b>emotive</b>	language evoking an emotional reaction
<b>evocative</b>	able to elicit a response
<b>explicit</b>	meaning stated clearly
<b>factual</b>	non-fiction; concerning provable information
<b>fiction</b>	creative or imaginative text, usually narrative
<b>figurative</b>	non-literal use of language; using imagery
<b>genre</b>	category of speech or writing, e.g. narrative
<b>imagery</b>	pictures created in words: see simile and metaphor
<b>implicit</b>	implied, though not overtly expressed



<b>informative</b>	transactional text containing data
<b>insert</b>	reading passages in a language or literature exam
<b>mark scheme</b>	assessment criteria applied to candidate script
<b>metaphor</b>	comparison without <i>as</i> or <i>like</i> using words figuratively
<b>mind map</b>	diagram for visualising links between ideas and information
<b>monosyllabic</b>	consisting of words of one syllable
<b>mood</b>	feelings evoked in a reader by a narrative or descriptive text
<b>narrative</b>	tells a story; consists of plot and character
<b>non-fiction</b>	believed to be true
<b>nuance</b>	subtle meaning
<b>omniscient</b>	all-knowing, used to describe narrators
<b>paraphrase</b>	express the same meaning in different words
<b>part of speech</b>	word categorised according to its syntactical function, e.g. noun, verb, adverb
<b>phrase</b>	group of words that does not contain a finite verb, e.g. <i>after eating his supper</i>
<b>plot</b>	sequence of events in a narrative
<b>polysyllabic</b>	consisting of a number of syllables
<b>positioning</b>	shaping the reader's response
<b>prefix</b>	letter(s) added to the beginning of a word to alter its meaning, e.g. <i>unhappy</i>
<b>purpose</b>	aim or reason for text being produced
<b>quality (of writing)</b>	standard of content and expression
<b>question paper</b>	exam paper containing the tasks (often with spaces for answers)
<b>register</b>	level of formality or style, shaped by context or purpose
<b>reported speech</b>	speech that is reproduced indirectly, without inverted commas
<b>rubric</b>	a set of instructions; used as header for exam questions
<b>sequence</b>	ordering and linking of material in a text
<b>simile</b>	comparison using <i>as</i> or <i>like</i> , e.g. <i>She was like a fish out of water.</i>
<b>structure</b>	overall organisation of content of a text or speech
<b>style</b>	selection and organisation of language elements
<b>suffix</b>	letter(s) added to the end of a word to alter its form or meaning, e.g. <i>management</i>
<b>viewpoint</b>	the perspective from which the reader is required to see things, i.e. from the point of view of a character, narrator or writer
<b>voice</b>	the attitude or personality of a persona as conveyed through style and tone
<b>writer's effect</b>	response evoked in the reader by vocabulary style choices made in a text

## Exam techniques

### Reading

- It is a good idea to do the questions on the exam paper in order.
- Organise your time well so that you read the passages, answer the questions and check your work at the end of the exam. There is no benefit in rushing, cutting corners or finishing early.
- Read passages twice. First, before you even read the question, read the texts quickly to get the gist of the passage. Then, re-read them more carefully when you are looking for specific information to answer the question.
- Underline the key words in the questions and rubrics. These will be the focus of your responses. Underlining will remind you how many parts there are to the question and help ensure that you cover them all.
- Annotate the reading passages by underlining or highlighting key points and ideas relevant to the question.
- Underline or highlight only the key words and phrases, not whole sentences.
- For multi-part questions (Paper 1, Question 1(f) and Question 3) it is useful to highlight the material for each part in different colours.
- Write short margin comments next to the underlining to indicate how it will be used or what it is an example of, e.g. *rhetoric*.
- Take note of titles and introductions to texts. They can contain information or ideas which can help you with comprehension or provide details to include in your response.
- The syllabus requires students to know grammatical terminology. If necessary, refer to parts of speech and verb forms so that you can more precisely explain how language works and how writers create effects.

### Writing

- Plan all your extended answers by making a list in note form of relevant ideas to be included in the response.
- Collecting and organising the content first will help you improve the length and quality of your answers.
- Do not copy longer fragments from the texts. As you plan, change the phrases from the passage you have highlighted into your own words.
- Where there are bullet points or openings given in the rubric, use them to structure your response and ensure full coverage of what is expected.
- Except for the compositions, there is no creative writing required in this exam. It is text-based, which means the facts, details and ideas must come from the passages.
- Be aware that each exam question requires a different kind of response and different skills. For example, the summary (Paper 1, Question 1(f)) must be factual and objective and contain only explicit information, without detail or development. On the other hand, Question 3 in Paper 1 needs detail and development throughout, a specific viewpoint, and inferred ideas.
- The seven response genres should not be confused. They have different voices, styles and structures because they have different purposes and audiences. See Response genres section below.