

Cambridge International AS Level

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

8021/13

Paper 1 Essay

October/November 2025

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 30

Published

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge International will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge International is publishing the mark schemes for the October/November 2025 series for most Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International A and AS Level components, and some Cambridge O Level components.

This document consists of **16** printed pages.

Generic Marking Principles

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptions for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

Rules must be applied consistently, e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	Demonstrates an understanding of the question and is used to indicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a focused introduction. • each new valid point made in relation to the key words of the question.
	Further development of a valid point in the question or development of evaluation. [This may precede or follow a tick, according to the candidate's argumentative method.]
	Use of relevant example.
	Generalised and descriptive points.
	Assertion. Opinions stated without any credible evidence.
	Repetition of point.
	When the candidate has not answered the question, or a section of the response is not answering the question.
	Vague points and ideas.
	Evaluation is attempted.
	Examples of ambitious, sophisticated accurate expression, punctuation and grammatical structures.
	Serious errors that impede communication and for where register becomes informal or inappropriate.

Generic levels of response descriptions

These level definitions address Assessment Objectives (AOs) 1, 2 and 3, and should be used in conjunction with the indicative content for each question in the mark scheme. Information about AOs can be found in the Cambridge International AS Level English General Paper syllabus (8021) for examination in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Introduction

The level definitions which follow reflect, and should be interpreted within the context of, the following general statement:

- Examiners will give their highest marks to candidates who demonstrate a disciplined management of the discussion the question provokes and use clear and accurate communication. Examiners will be guided more by careful selection and application of information, effective analysis and evaluation, and supported judgement, than by weight of facts.
- Examiners will use these level definitions in combination with the question-specific mark schemes.
- Explanation or judgement is strengthened if informed by the use of relevant examples.
- The level in which an essay is placed depends on the range of criteria detailed in AO1, AO2 and AO3. As a result, not all essays fall obviously into one particular level. In such cases a 'best-fit' approach will be adopted with any doubt erring on the side of generosity.

In marking an essay, examiners will first place it in a level and then fine-tune the mark in terms of how strongly/weakly the demands of the level have been demonstrated. The criteria in each level are written to exemplify the middle of that level.

Levels of response descriptions				
Level	AO1 Selection and application of information	AO2 Analysis and evaluation	AO3 Communication using written English	Marks
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selects a range of fully relevant information that effectively exemplifies the main aspects of the response to the question. Applies a range of examples appropriately to support the main ideas and opinions in the response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses possible meanings of the question and defines the scope of the response. Develops, analyses and evaluates a range of arguments to reach a supported conclusion. Develops a strong argument with clear use of supportive evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates clearly with consistently appropriate use of register. Uses a wide range of vocabulary and a variety of language features. Uses language with control and accuracy. Errors, if present, are only related to the use of sophisticated words and structures. Constructs a cohesive response which links ideas, arguments and paragraphs convincingly. Text is well organised. 	25–30
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selects relevant information that exemplifies the main aspects of the response to the question. Applies examples appropriately to support the main ideas and opinions in the response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses the meaning of the question to inform the scope of the response. Develops, analyses and begins to evaluate different arguments to reach a supported conclusion. Develops a well-reasoned argument with use of supportive evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates clearly with appropriate use of register. Uses a range of vocabulary and language features. Uses language with control and some accuracy. Errors relate to the use of less common words and structures. Constructs a clear response which links ideas, arguments and paragraphs. Text is generally well organised. 	19–24

Levels of response descriptions				
Level	AO1 Selection and application of information	AO2 Analysis and evaluation	AO3 Communication using written English	Marks
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selects information that exemplifies some of the main aspects of the response to the question. Applies examples to support the main ideas and opinions in the response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates understanding of the meaning of the question in the response. Develops and brings together some arguments to form a conclusion. Constructs an argument which is logical and usually supported by evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates clearly overall but with inconsistent use of appropriate register. Uses everyday vocabulary and some varied language features. Uses language with some control. Errors are noticeable but do not impede communication. Constructs a mostly coherent response which links ideas, arguments and paragraphs. Text has some organisation but may not be sustained. 	13–18
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selects limited information that exemplifies aspects of the response to the question. Applies examples that are linked to some of the ideas and opinions in the response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates partial understanding of the meaning of the question in the response. Refers to arguments to form a conclusion. Constructs an argument partially supported by evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates clearly in places, with inconsistent use of register. Uses basic vocabulary with limited language features. Uses language with limited control. Errors are frequent and sometimes impede communication. Constructs a fragmented response which links some ideas and/or arguments. 	7–12
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selects limited information that is relevant to the question. Makes examples which may not link to the ideas and opinions in the response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes a limited response to the question. Makes some form of basic conclusion. Constructs a weak argument. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates with lack of clarity and/or register is inappropriate. Uses basic vocabulary. Uses language with control rarely. Errors are frequent and communication is often lost. Constructs a response but the response is not organised and ideas are not linked. 	1–6
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A mark of zero should be awarded for no creditable content. 			0

Question	Answer	Marks
1	<p>The government should protect the health of all citizens in <u>your</u> country. To what extent do you agree with this view?</p> <p>Answers will be focused on one country with which the candidate identifies or to which they direct their answer.</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore the different ways governments can protect the health of their citizens • evaluate the extent to which governments should intervene in protecting citizens' health • make a judgement, based on the consideration of the evidence and argument put forward. <p>Answers might include discussions and examples such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pandemic-related measures being essential to prevent the spread of disease • the financial investment required having wider public impact if spent in different areas • government-imposed measures purposefully limiting the public's exposure to health-harming products • taxes being generated from health-preserving measures benefitting a country's economy • preventative interventions reducing employee absence that might impact economies • tax rises occurring from measures which unfairly fall upon healthier people • government intervention reducing the pressure on a country's health service • measures that impact citizens' freedom of choice being a questionable infringement of civil liberties. 	30

Question	Answer	Marks
2	<p>Space travel and exploration should be managed by private companies rather than governments. Discuss this view.</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore the importance of space travel and exploration • assess the capacity of private companies and national governments for managing space travel and exploration • make a judgement, based on the consideration of the evidence and argument put forward. <p>Answers might include discussions and examples such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the amount of public money currently being spent on space projects that could be spent elsewhere • the involvement of private companies helping to make space more accessible • private investment providing opportunities for competition and innovation that could reduce costs • national governments being too focused on the political benefits of space travel and exploration • potential security issues of the space industry being dominated by private companies • the importance of space travel and exploration being motivated by science, rather than profit • exploitation of space becoming a problem if there is no strategic planning by governments • only the wealthiest having access to space if private companies provide the only service. 	30

Question	Answer	Marks
3	<p>Books inspire the minds of children. To what extent do you agree with this claim?</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss a range of books which children are likely to have read • assess the extent to which books can inspire children • make a judgement, based on a consideration of the evidence and argument put forward. <p>Answers might include discussions and examples such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how books can absorb and envelop you, increasing our self-understanding • powerful recollections of early childhood reading persisting into later life • illustrations in books providing delight and illumination alongside the text • the rhythmic and metaphorical power of language being able to inspire the young • some tales and stories being able to terrify or cause upset • inspiration being gained from a variety of sources not just books • books prescribed for children to read not inspiring imagination or interest • changing levels of inspiration according to age and types of books experienced. 	30

Question	Answer	Marks
4	<p>Designers should always ensure that what they create is visually attractive. To what extent do you agree with this statement?</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore different areas and types of design • assess the extent to which designers should create visually appealing products • make a judgement, based on the consideration of the evidence and argument put forward. <p>Answers might include discussions and examples such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visually attractive items having a greater likelihood of being purchased • aesthetics being a key aspect of what people require in certain products • visual appeal being an essential consideration in certain areas of design • aesthetic appeal allowing a product to stand out from its competitors • items having a function that is more important than how they look • affordability being a more important factor for consumers than aesthetic appeal • aesthetic appeal changing over time and according to individual taste • considerations of a cultural nature that might determine a design. 	30

Question	Answer	Marks
5	<p>Spending on foreign aid should be a priority for wealthy countries. Discuss.</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate the importance of spending on foreign aid by wealthy countries • assess the extent to which spending on foreign aid should be a higher priority • make a judgement, based on the consideration of the evidence and argument put forward. <p>Answers might include discussions and examples such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • richer countries having humanitarian obligations to give more help to poorer countries • foreign aid being beneficial in building up the political influence of a country • foreign aid being a tiny proportion of spending for most governments • the higher numbers of natural disasters worldwide necessitating higher levels of spending • the need for spending more money to alleviate poverty in other countries • the possibility of foreign aid being wasted or misused by corrupt governments • foreign aid being a form of colonialism and often doing more to boost the donor country • foreign aid creating a cycle of dependency in developing countries. 	30

Question	Answer	Marks
6	<p>To what extent is it desirable for all people in <u>your</u> country to earn the same amount of money?</p> <p>Answers will be focused on one country with which the candidate identifies or to which they direct their answers.</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss the benefits and drawbacks of an equitable distribution of wealth within a country • explore the extent to which equality of wealth is desirable within a country • make a judgement, based on the consideration of the evidence and argument put forward. <p>Answers might include discussions and examples such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equality of wealth decreasing competition for higher-skilled jobs and workers • reduced opportunities for accruing wealth causing a brain drain in certain countries • government control in equal distribution of wealth potentially being subject to corruption • equality of wealth reducing incentives for people to upskill or start businesses • equitable distribution of income allowing more citizens to enjoy a higher standard of living • instances of prejudicial treatment stopping people from increasing their wealth • economic growth increasing because more citizens have financial accessibility to goods and services • equitable distribution reducing social friction thus increasing the social stability of a country. 	30

Question	Answer	Marks
7	<p>Ageing populations bring many benefits to society. To what extent do you agree?</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore the roles of elderly people in society • evaluate potential problems or benefits brought by increasing numbers of older people • make a judgement, based on the consideration of the evidence and argument put forward. <p>Answers might include discussions and examples such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased health needs due to extended lifespans placing a strain on health systems • a rising proportion of the population being beyond working age causing employment shortages • increasing demands on social care budgets to meet the complex needs of older people • rising costs of pensions and the burden placed on the rest of society • problems of isolation and social alienation experienced by older people • longer life bringing increased potential for older people to play an active role in society • the experience and wisdom of the elderly benefiting other people and society in general • older people facilitating the working population via informal care networks. 	30

Question	Answer	Marks
8	<p>To what extent should environmental impacts influence what people choose to wear?</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine relevant environmental impacts • explore how what people choose to wear is influenced by environmental impacts • make a judgement, based on the consideration of the evidence and argument put forward. <p>Answers might include discussions and examples such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there being evidence of the link between fashion and carbon emissions • discarded items of clothing being off-loaded on to poorer countries • over-production of favourite garments rendering them worthless to resellers • the unpopularity people may face when wearing environmentally damaging clothing • how the fashion industry creates wealth and other economic opportunities • those individual and corporate efforts to reduce waste in a variety of ways • the increased reliance on locally grown, small-scale and domestically produced materials • the various charities that continue to benefit when we dispose of clothes. 	30

Question	Answer	Marks
9	<p>It is unacceptable to monitor people using information obtained from their mobile devices. Discuss.</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the ways in which mobile devices can be used for surveillance • evaluate how acceptable it is to use information obtained from mobile devices • make a judgement, based on the consideration of the evidence and argument put forward. <p>Answers might include discussions and examples such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • many mobile devices containing location trackers which can monitor people's movements • the ethical implications of using cameras and microphones to monitor people's locations and behaviours • mobile phone spying software potentially being surreptitiously installed onto phones • the question of governments being able to legally monitor communications via lawful interception • mobile phones and social media creating a form of surveillance which can be easily monitored • surveillance via a mobile device is not necessarily bad and can help to keep us safe • a range of privacy settings on mobile devices allowing the user some form of control • there being a wide range of alternative tools of surveillance available. 	30

Question	Answer	Marks
10	<p>Any media with disturbing content should always begin with a clear warning for viewers. Discuss.</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine contexts where content warnings might occur • evaluate whether these warnings are intrusive or helpful • make a judgement, based on the consideration of the evidence and argument put forward. <p>Answers might include discussions and examples such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • those themes offending and likely to upset specific groups or individuals • warnings allowing people to make informed choices about what they watch • parents and educators having the responsibility to make decisions on behalf of others • companies that broadcast news or stage other material having legal obligations • material that shocks or discomforts losing its value if interfered with • ways of expression unacceptable today being integral to an understanding of the past • those famous historical figures whose ideas and thoughts were weakened • contexts where warnings only benefit special interest groups and disempower others. 	30