

Cambridge International AS Level

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

8021/11

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 **19** printed pages.

PUBLISHED**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.

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Annotation	Meaning
	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:

- (a) 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.
- (b) Examiners will use these level definitions in combination with the question-specific mark schemes.
- (c) Explanation or judgement is strengthened if informed by the use of relevant examples.
- (d) 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.

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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

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Levels of response descriptions				
Level	AO1 Selection and application of information	AO2 Analysis and evaluation	AO3 Communication using written English	Marks
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

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Question	Answer	Marks
1	<p>International organisations are of essential importance in today's world. To what extent do you agree with this statement?</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore what international organisations are and what they do • evaluate the extent to which international organisations are of essential importance • 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"> • international organisations providing benefits to a wide range of countries • the economy of an individual country benefitting from the international organisations it hosts • sharing of resources and knowledge improving advancements within all participating countries • international organisations providing services that people can access regardless of their location • their effectiveness being reduced without recognition or membership from certain countries • the actions of international organisations causing issues which countries can struggle to solve • the large-scale influence of international organisations having a negative impact on ordinary people's lives • the negative moral or ethical issues arising from internal corruption. 	30

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Question	Answer	Marks
2	<p>Technological advances will make learning to speak other languages unnecessary. Evaluate to what extent this statement is true.</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore how technology can be used when learning to speak other languages • assess whether technology might end the need for learning to speak other languages • 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"> • improved technological methods for translating languages enabling much easier communication • the difficulty of learning other languages to a level that allows for meaningful communication • time currently spent on learning other languages being available for other subjects • technology allowing easier communication with speakers of other languages all around the world • the opportunity for understanding other cultures that language learning provides • memory and skills such as problem solving being improved by learning other languages • language apps being helpful for people learning other languages, but not replacing the need to study • technology not being able to fully capture the subtleties of different languages. 	30

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Question	Answer	Marks
3	<p>To what extent is health education effective in <u>your</u> country?</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"> • assess the importance of education in the understanding and maintenance of one’s health • evaluate the effectiveness and limitations of current health education provision • 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 most prevalent and serious health-related issues in the candidate’s country • awareness of the various initiatives and practices available to support people’s health • the platforms and contexts in which health education can be offered • government policies relating to the sale of products likely to damage health • social and cultural attitudes towards various behaviours linked to health • people being free to disregard advice and choose less healthy behaviours • the limitations imposed by socio-economic status on choosing healthier lifestyles • people having little control over some aspects of their health. 	30

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Question	Answer	Marks
4	<p>Evaluate the extent to which literature can change how people think.</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine a variety of examples of literature • assess the extent to which literature can change people’s attitudes • 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"> • positive experiences of literature being encountered in the classroom and elsewhere • characters in literature providing role-models and situations that inspire and encourage • reflections on material challenging us and bringing us out of our comfort zone • literature inspiring a range of profound emotional reactions and provoking intellectual debate • people being resistant to being told what to read in a range of circumstances • some literature making no difference to the way we think or feel • reading experiences causing anxiety and distress leading to personal development through reflection • some literature providing only a means of escapism and entertainment. 	30

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Question	Answer	Marks
5	<p>Traditional arts and crafts are not appreciated enough in <u>your</u> country. To what extent do you agree with this statement?</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"> • examine the traditional arts and crafts of a country • assess the extent to which these traditional arts and crafts are appreciated • 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"> • historical arts and crafts benefitting domestic economies through being popular with tourists • preserving historical artefacts and examples of traditional art in museums • students learning about the work of former artists as part of their education • local or national festivals promoting a country’s traditional arts and crafts • funding cuts impacting the extent to which traditional arts can be accessed • non-arts and crafts related subjects being promoted as more useful or important • current artistic phenomena generating greater social interest than historically artistic forms • traditional art forms being too out-of-date to be relevant to modern society. 	30

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Question	Answer	Marks
6	<p>The desire to make a lot of money is having a positive effect on today's world. Discuss.</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore the concept of the desire to make a lot of money • evaluate the extent to which making a lot of money can be seen as positive or negative • 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"> • consumers being able to have an increased choice in the products that they can purchase • constant consumption of goods providing many different people and industries with jobs • encouraging development of economies on a national and global scale • the competition created through money making fostering the innovation of goods and services • various environmental issues arising from the desire to make more money • consumer behaviour having a range of negative impacts on mental health • the desire to continually make and spend money causing detrimental impacts • prioritising making money resulting in selfishness and the excessive desire for material things. 	30

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Question	Answer	Marks
7	<p>Evaluate the view that space exploration should be publicly funded.</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine a range of benefits and drawbacks of space exploration • evaluate reasons why the exploration of space may not be the best use of public funds • 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"> • space exploration creating a large number of jobs in a range of areas • the economy being boosted in a variety of ways via space exploration • pushing horizons and design innovation providing value beyond cost measurements • space exploration expanding knowledge and technological advancement benefiting the public • products benefiting the public being developed by commercial companies at a fraction of the cost • public money being prioritised to focus on more tangible benefits • negative impacts upon the individual through an increased tax burden • advances in space exploration not having a direct benefit on the public. 	30

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Question	Answer	Marks
8	<p>To what extent has digital media negatively impacted the attendance at live performances?</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore the differences between live performances and digital forms of media • evaluate how attendance at live performances has been impacted by digital media • 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"> • artists and production companies accruing large volumes of income through touring • the atmosphere and audience experience of live performance being distinctive • live performances using effects that cannot be replicated through digital forms of media • live performances providing a different social, collaborative experience than digital forms of media • the increase in streaming of live performances through various digital platforms • watching via digital platforms providing greater affordability than attending live performances • forms of digital media having greater accessibility than performances which are limited by time and place • digital media providing greater choice and variety than live performances. 	30

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Question	Answer	Marks
9	<p>Human rights are still <u>not</u> given enough importance in today's world. Discuss.</p> <p>Answers are likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess what human rights are • evaluate how valued human rights are in a range of different contexts • 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"> • changes and updates to country's legislatures improving citizens' human rights • successful human rights campaigns helping people to overcome human rights abuses • organisations continuing to observe human rights practices by developing positive practices • governments positively responding to protests carried out to improve people's rights • discriminative legislation being enshrined in the legislation of certain countries • people-trafficking continuing to rise rather than decrease in recent years • capital punishment still existing as a sentence in several countries • people having more restricted access to basic amenities compared to other citizens. 	30

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Question	Answer	Marks
10	<p>To what extent are the problems of water pollution being successfully addressed in <u>your</u> country?</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"> • discuss the current state of water pollution in the chosen country • explore the developments which aim to improve water quality • 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 ways differing forms of water pollution affect human, animal and plant life • the varied responsibilities of industry and commercial companies in tackling water pollution • identifying ways in which individuals could be minimising their own contribution to water pollution • poorer countries being unable to solve their issues with water without outside aid • governments being unwilling to invest further in methods to purify water • the long-term effects on the country without improvements in water quality being made • neighbouring places needing to work together to reduce pollution across a wide area • blaming concepts such as climate change rather than taking local action to reduce the problem. 	30