

Learner Guide

Cambridge International AS Level English General Paper 8021

For examination from 2019



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Section 1: About this guide

This guide explains what you need to know about your Cambridge International AS Level English General Paper course and examinations.

It will help you to:

- understand what skills you should develop by taking this AS Level course
- understand how you will be assessed
- understand what we are looking for in the answers you write
- plan your revision programme
- revise, by providing revision tips and an interactive revision checklist (Section 7).

What is AS Level English General Paper?

The AS Level English General Paper course encourages you to think critically about modern issues as a means of developing your skills in reading and writing. It also seeks to strengthen your ability to communicate in English. Your experiences in this course can help you become a stronger critical reader, writer and thinker.

Unlike some of your other classes, where you need to learn about and retain content-based material, AS Level English General Paper is a skills-based course. The skills you learn as a student on this course can transfer to most other academic fields you are studying, therefore your learning experiences can set a valuable foundation for your educational experience across all disciplines.

In short, the skills you practise in this course are extremely valuable because they are the ones that are required at university level, valued in the professional world, and necessary for citizens living in twenty-first century society.

Key benefits

This course can help you to:

- develop your own opinions
- analyse the opinions of others
- evaluate the quality, value or significance of ideas before judging them
- make new insights and enter the academic conversation.

We are all shaped by our own experiences and hold different values, so not everyone sees the world in the same way. Learning how to address today's issues (and the opinions surrounding them) in a sensitive and mature way can improve your approach to global conversation. It is hoped that success in this course will inspire you to play an active role in global society and as you do so, you may help to make positive changes in the world around you.

Section 2: Syllabus content – what you need to know about

This section gives you an outline of the syllabus content for this course.

Specifically, the AS Level English General Paper syllabus is divided between two assessment tasks:

- Paper 1, where you are asked to demonstrate essay writing skills
- Paper 2, where you are asked to demonstrate comprehension skills

Paper 1 (essay)

One of the main focuses of this syllabus is essay writing. In Paper 1, you will be given a list of ten essay questions concerning contemporary issues, and you will be asked to choose one on which to respond.

You will have 1 hour and 15 minutes to plan, organise, write, and refine an essay of roughly 600–700 words in length as your response to the question you selected. The content and direction of your essay will come from your own knowledge base; no support materials will be provided for this paper.

The syllabus topics for this course are organised in three broad topic areas, which are:

- Economic, historical, moral, political, and social
- Science, including its history, philosophy, ethics, general principles and applications; environmental issues; technology; mathematics
- Literature, language, the arts, crafts, and the media

Because there is such a range of topics from which to write, a common misconception about this course is that it is a test of knowledge. However, this is not true! You are certainly not expected to learn about every suggested area which falls under these three broad topic areas, nor is your teacher expected to cover all of them.

Instead, you will be assessed on how you use your knowledge and information to develop an argument or convey a point.

It is likely that your teacher will structure this course around three to six suggested areas to explore from the broad topic areas; it is your responsibility to pay attention in your other classes such as science, maths, history, and any humanities classes you're enrolled in so that you develop and reinforce your knowledge and understanding of these broad topic areas.

Paper 2 (comprehension)

For Paper 2, you will be provided with reading materials, and you will have 1 hour and 45 minutes to read the material and respond to corresponding reading comprehension questions.

Specifically, you may be asked to:

- explain, summarise, and/or interpret information
- offer your opinion in response to a text
- justify your responses using text-based evidence and/or your own knowledge

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- determine the meaning of words or phrases and consider their impact
- analyse and evaluate information
- identify and analyse inference in the reading materials.

Your answers will range in length from short answers to extended responses of up to 120 words; and reading material may be as long as 900 words.

Broadly, there are two different types of reading material you will encounter:

- sources requiring logical reasoning (these may include different sets of data) (Section A)
- prose (continuous text) (Section B).

The sources requiring logical reasoning (Section A) will often include smaller portions of text with visual data, charts, statistics, maps, lists of information that you will need to consider in order to carry out tasks such as drawing logical conclusions, developing an informed judgement, or proposing plausible solutions.

Comprehension questions accompanying prose (such as a news article, speech, essay, email thread, printed media etc.) ask you to demonstrate your understanding by explaining ideas from the passage in your own words, summarising segments of the material, or considering the use of different words/phrases in context. You will also be asked to draw inferences, analyse details, and/or evaluate information, among other tasks.

Refer to the checklists provided in Section 7 'Revision' of this guide to gain greater insight into the specific skills you will acquire as a result of taking this course.

Make sure you always check the latest syllabus, which is available at www.cambridgeinternational.org

Section 3: How you will be assessed

You will be assessed using two components:

- Paper 1 – Essay
- Paper 2 – Comprehension

Find out from your teacher when you will sit for each component.

Components at a glance

The table below gives you further information about the examination papers:

Component	Time and marks	Skills assessed	Details	Percentage of the qualification
Paper 1 Essay	1 hour 15 min 30 marks	Selection and application of information (knowledge), analysis and evaluation of perspectives, communication using written English	You will be given a list of 10 questions from which to choose. You must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • select one question from the list • Produce a structured essay response to develop an argument, link and evaluate ideas and draw supported conclusions • respond in roughly 600–700 words. 	50%
Paper 2 Comprehension	1 hour 45 min 50 marks (25 per section)	Selection and application of information, analysis and evaluation of information, communication using written English	Two sections in the paper contain reading materials for which you will answer reading comprehension questions to show understanding. In Section A you will explain and interpret the information provided in the material to show understanding. You will respond by writing a persuasive text that expresses an opinion and justifies a conclusion. In Section B you will demonstrate the ability to read the material for detailed understanding at word, sentence and paragraph level. You must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respond to all questions 	50%

Component	Time and marks	Skills assessed	Details	Percentage of the qualification
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tailor the length of each response to the marks available. 	

About each paper/component

Paper 1

Paper 1 primarily assesses your ability to communicate in written English. It also assesses how you use knowledge and information to support an argument.

The paper contains questions from each of the three broad topic areas. (see Section 2: 'Syllabus content').

You choose one question from a list of ten and develop an essay of roughly 600–700 words in length. It is important that you use a range of examples to support your ideas, and develop points logically for your audience to follow.

Your written English will be assessed on your ability to communicate your ideas clearly, using accurate and appropriate grammar, usage, and punctuation.

In addition, you should use:

- an appropriate register, suitable for entering employment or further study
- controlled yet ambitious word choice.

You will also be assessed on your ability to develop an argument effectively.

You should:

- use argumentative strategies appropriate to your purpose
- select examples which are relevant to your main claim
- analyse a range of perspectives as part of your argument
- make a judgement on (evaluate) the issue once all points have been considered
- present ideas empathetically, with a global audience in mind.

See Section 5 of this guide for a list of command words which will appear in the questions for this paper, and see Section 7 for a list of helpful tips for writing essays.

Paper 2

Paper 2 primarily assesses your ability to comprehend what you read, either literally or through interpretation. It also assesses your ability to reason through information in order to draw a conclusion or make a judgement about it.

There are two sections to this paper, each of which contains reading material and corresponding questions. The questions in each section contain sub-questions (1a, 1b, 1c...), and you will need to answer **all** parts of each question. There is no penalty for trying, so some response is better than no response at all!

Section A

The reading material provided in this section will require you to explain and interpret the information in order to show that you understand it. Having logically reasoned through the material, you will be asked to present your perspective by using a clear line of reasoning to argue (and justify) your point.

For example, imagine the reading material presented contains information and data on three different organisations in the local area. You might be asked to provide your perspective on which organisation the city council should fund. You would need to justify the logic behind your response by using information from the reading material.

Or, you might be given the profile of a start-up company seeking to expand. They want to hire a project manager for their development team, so you are also given the qualities they are seeking in this individual. Last but not least, the reading material might include details for three different prospective employees. You might then be asked to share your opinion as to which employee would be the best fit for the job. Again, you would need to use insights gathered from your interpretation of the reading material in order to justify your decision.

Section B

The reading material for this section will be in the form of prose (for example, news article, essay, speech, printed media), and the questions will assess your ability to understand how language is used in various contexts as well as how well you comprehend the details of text.

Specifically, you will be asked to do things such as:

- determine the meanings of words based on how and for whom they are used (i.e. context and audience)
- explain and/or summarise the ideas of others using your own words
- infer meaning from text
- evaluate the strengths/weaknesses of information.

Keep in mind that the reading material in this assessment (Paper 2) can be up to 900 words in length, and it will include text you have not yet seen. You should therefore make reading a part of your daily routine; reading text carefully and often is an important part of preparing for this exam.

Section 4: What skills will be assessed

The areas of knowledge, understanding, and skills that you will be assessed on are called **assessment objectives** (AO).

There are three AOs for this syllabus:

AO1 Selection and application of information

AO2 Analysis and evaluation

AO3 Communication using written English

To better understand what is meant by each of these objectives, review the table below. It breaks down this syllabus terminology so you can understand what skills you'll need to demonstrate on the assessments.

Assessment objectives (AO)	What does the AO mean?	What do you need to be able to do?
AO1 Selection and application of information	This concerns your ability to understand information. It also concerns your ability to select appropriate information from either reading material or your own knowledge and apply it to a question in a relevant way.	<p><i>Understanding/selecting information</i></p> <p>Can you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the question being asked or the text you are reading? • understand detailed written information that is presented in different ways (e.g. text, data, images, charts, lists)? • understand the use of English words and phrases as they are used in different contexts? • acquire a wide-ranging vocabulary from what you are reading? <p><i>Applying information</i></p> <p>Can you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use your own words to communicate the ideas of others? • summarise key text using your own words? • select relevant/appropriate information (i.e. text evidence or general knowledge) to use in your written responses? • pair reasons with relevant examples to support your point(s)? • recognise different points of view?

Assessment objectives (AO)	What does the AO mean?	What do you need to be able to do?
AO2 Analysis and evaluation	This concerns your ability to go beyond mere understanding; it involves your ability to interpret information, and offer a supported judgement as a result of these observations.	<p>Analysing information</p> <p>Can you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpret the meaning of text or other data? • understand how words can be used to achieve a particular effect? • infer meaning based on what you read, learn about, or observe? • assess different points of view and decide between them? • develop ideas in a logical way? • weigh the consequences of actions? <p>Evaluating information</p> <p>Can you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer workable solutions to real-world problems? • discriminate among evidence to help you draw reasonable conclusions? • make supported judgements using a combination of evidence and your own perspective? • understand the implications of a situation or course of action?
AO3 Communication in written English	This concerns your ability to communicate clearly to your audience by using accurate grammar, spelling, and other mechanics. It also concerns your ability to use language that is appropriate for your audience and your purpose.	<p>Communicating information</p> <p>Can you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use a register that is appropriate to both your purpose and your audience? • articulate ideas clearly, accurately, and cohesively? • use a range of language that is relevant to your purpose? • organise ideas in a way that is easy for your audience to follow? • use language to connect ideas and to indicate their direction and flow? • write responses that are intentionally structured?

As well as knowing what you should be able to do in this course, you should also know how heavily these skills are weighted in each paper because this affects how the examiner will assess your work.

For example, AO3: Communication using written English is worth only 25% of the total marks in Paper 2 (comprehension), but it is the main skill assessed for Paper 1 (essay), worth 45%.

Review the table below to see how the skills you learn will be weighted in the assessment. This will help you prepare for each assessment accordingly.

Component	Time and marks	Questions	% of total mark	What is tested and % of total mark
Paper 1	1 hour 15 minutes 30 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose one question from a list of ten options Develop an essay of roughly 600–700 words in response 	50%	AO1 = 20% AO2 = 35% AO3 = 45%
Paper 2	1 hour 45 minutes 50 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reading material provided contains two text selections (Section A, Section B) Answer all questions and sub-questions for each section (1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, etc.) 	50%	AO1 = 35% AO2 = 40% AO3 = 25%

Section 5: Command words

The table below includes command words used in the assessment for this syllabus. Be aware that while these definitions are a helpful tool for understanding assessment tasks, the meaning of command words should ultimately be determined by the *context* of the question itself!

Command word	What it means
Analyse	examine something in detail to determine its meaning, identify its elements and determine the relationship between them
Assess	make an informed judgement
Compare	identify/comment on similarities and/or differences
Consider	review and respond to given information
Contrast	identify/comment on differences
Demonstrate	show how or give an example
Describe	state the points of a topic / give characteristics and main features
Develop	take forward to a more advanced stage by expanding or building upon given information
Discuss	write about issue(s) or topic(s) in depth in a structured way
Evaluate	judge or calculate the quality, importance, amount, or value of something
Examine	investigate closely, in detail
Explain	set out purposes or reasons / make the relationships between things evident / provide why and/or how and support with relevant evidence
Give	produce an answer by referring to reading material or recall from memory (depending on how the question is framed)
Identify	name/select/recognise
Justify	support a case with evidence/reasoning
State	express in clear terms
Suggest	apply knowledge and understanding to situations where there are a range of valid responses in order to make proposals
Summarise	select and present the main points, without detail

Other signal words

There are several other signal words/phrases you may see on the assessment(s) for this syllabus:

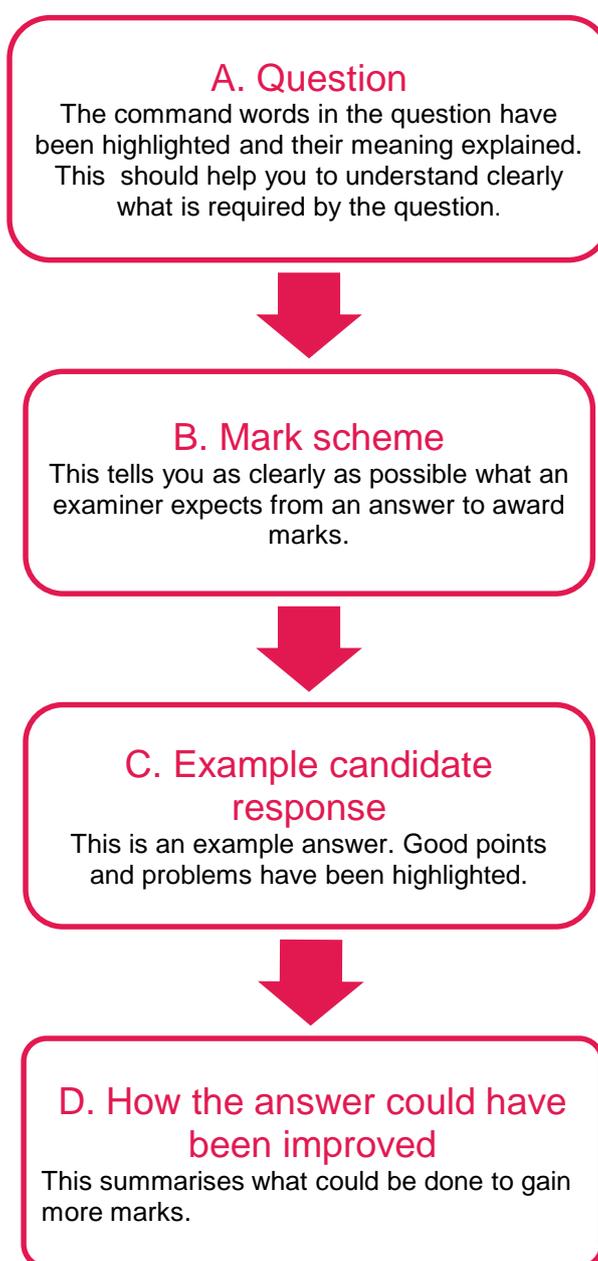
Signal word/ phrase	What it means
<p>'How far ...'</p> <p>'To what extent ...'</p> <p>'Is (X) always ...'</p>	<p>These are signals for you to consider the <i>degree</i> to which something is fair/true/valuable/worthy/appropriate/etc.</p> <p>Suggests that a 'grey' (unclear) area exists when judging the topic and invites critical evaluation</p>
'What is your view?'	Invites you to share an informed perspective using reasoning, but expects you to consider <i>multiple</i> perspectives when doing so

Section 6: Example candidate response

This section takes you through an example question and response. It will help you to see how to identify command words within questions and to understand what is required in your response. A command word or phrase is the part of the question that tells you what you need to do with your knowledge, for example, you might need to describe something, explain something, argue a point of view or list what you know.

All information and advice in this section is specific to the example question and response being demonstrated. It should give you an idea of how your responses might be viewed by an examiner but it is not a list of what to do in all questions. In your own examination, you will need to pay careful attention to what each question is asking you to do.

This section is separated as follows:



A. Question

The question used in this example is from Specimen Paper 1.

7. Can communities ever recover fully from serious natural disasters? [30]

Now let's look at the question to see what the command words for this question mean for the answer.

You are advised to write an essay of 600–700 words. Use examples to support your arguments.

7 **Can** communities ever recover fully from serious natural disasters? [30]

Though not a specific command word, 'Can', together with the instruction to 'Use examples to support your arguments', requires the candidate to show analysis and evaluation using a range of examples.

B. Mark scheme

The mark scheme provides **example** points only. If a candidate includes points not in the mark scheme but which are accurate and relevant, the examiner will award marks for these points. The mark scheme does not include all possible answers. Look at the mark scheme for question 7 below:

Can communities ever recover fully from serious natural disasters?

Answers are likely to:

- show some understanding of serious natural disasters and how these affect countries and communities
- show some understanding of the process of recovery from natural disasters
- make a judgement, based on a consideration of the evidence and argument put forward.

Answers might include discussions and examples such as:

- different types of natural disasters, such as tsunamis, earthquakes, hurricanes, drought and volcanic eruptions could be related to specific countries
- the size and density of the population which could be affected
- the ways in which people, infrastructure and industry may prepare for natural disasters
- the effect on people, infrastructure and industry in the short- and long-term
- the effectiveness of local, government and international responses.

The examiner uses a mark scheme like that above, a set of level criteria (see next page) and the assessment objectives to mark the answer. The mark scheme lists some **examples** of the knowledge (details such as dates, names, statistics etc.) that the examiner would expect to see in the response as evidence.

Level criteria

Level	AO1 Selection and application of information	AO2 Analysis and evaluation	AO3 Communication using written English
5	<p>Selects a range of fully relevant information that effectively exemplifies the main aspects of the response to the question.</p> <p>Applies a range of examples appropriately to support the main ideas and opinions in the response.</p>	<p>Analyses possible meanings of the question and defines the scope of the response.</p> <p>Develops, analyses and evaluates a range of arguments to reach a supported conclusion.</p> <p>Develops a strong argument with clear use of supportive evidence.</p>	<p>Communicates clearly with consistently appropriate use of register.</p> <p>Uses a wide range of vocabulary and a variety of language features.</p> <p>Uses language with control and accuracy. Errors, if present, are only related to the use of sophisticated words and structures.</p> <p>Constructs a cohesive response which links ideas, arguments and paragraphs convincingly. Text is well organised.</p>
4	<p>Selects relevant information that exemplifies the main aspects of the response to the question.</p> <p>Applies examples appropriately to support the main ideas and opinions in the response.</p>	<p>Analyses the meaning of the question to inform the scope of the response.</p> <p>Develops, analyses and begins to evaluate different arguments to reach a supported conclusion.</p> <p>Develops a well-reasoned argument with use of supportive evidence.</p>	<p>Communicates clearly with appropriate use of register.</p> <p>Uses a range of vocabulary and language features.</p> <p>Uses language with control and some accuracy. Errors relate to the use of less common words and structures.</p> <p>Constructs a clear response which links ideas, arguments and paragraphs. Text is generally well organised.</p>

The examiner used the descriptions in this table (just the top two levels are shown) to determine what Level to award the candidate’s response to Question 7. The example was awarded a **Level 5**.

The **Level criteria** list what the candidate needs to do in order to demonstrate the assessment objectives at that level. These criteria make reference to knowledge and examples, which are those listed in the mark scheme. The **assessment objectives** are the areas of knowledge, understanding and skills you saw in 'Section 4: What skills will be assessed'.

Now let's look at the example candidate response to Question 7 and the examiner's comments on this response.

C. Example candidate response and examiner comments

The example answer has been typed and is presented on the left-hand side. The examiner comments are included on the right.

Example answer	Examiner comments
<p><u>Can communities ever recover fully from serious natural disasters?</u></p> <p>1 <i>Serious natural disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes, hurricanes and floods immediately devastate communities whereas drought inflicts damage over time. However, the degree of recovery depends on the type and scale of the catastrophe, the speed at which local people, government and international organisations respond, population density, the affected country's resources, the quality of infrastructure and the loss of life and livelihoods. By examining such factors it should be possible to explore whether certain type of community can recover better than others leading to a conclusion as to whether it is ever possible to fully recover from such natural disasters.</i></p> <p>2 <i>The scale of these disasters makes it very difficult to cope and recover in the aftermath as communities are left helpless with the impossible task of re-building lives and buildings. The Indian earthquake of 2004 created a massive tsunami which killed 250,000 in fourteen countries whereas the Nepalese earthquake of 2015 destroyed the capital city of Kathmandu and killed 9000. Whether such disasters are localised or wide spread recovery here was aided by a rapid international response: burying bodies in Aceh province to minimise the spread of disease or rescuing and re-building in Kathmandu. However, whereas well organised funding allowed the people of Aceh to recover after five years, people in</i></p>	<p>1 The first paragraph is a solid introduction focusing on the key words and meanings of the question. The final sentence adds a personal voice and clearly defines the scope of the argument. However, there is incomplete emphasis on the full range of factors that make a community e.g. social, cultural, economic, political and environmental.</p> <p>The candidate communicates clearly with a vocabulary range ('devastate', 'inflicts'), and a consistent and appropriate register. There is one grammar error (in red) and the list is a little cumbersome, as well as having slightly repetitive vocabulary at the end ('recover', 'whether').</p> <p>2 The second paragraph defines 'scale' as either widespread or localised and effectively exemplifies with details. The 'Indian earthquake' is slightly inaccurate, but does not impede the quality of the response. The candidate develops a comparison to support the argument that the relationship between local government and outside agencies is key to a successful recovery ('could it be that...' suggests the candidate's voice).</p>

Example answer

Kathmandu were still living in tents. The high population density of Kathmandu and inaccessible mountain terrain may be partly responsible, but the prioritising and distribution of funds was slow. In the end Aceh seems to have recovered more quickly than Nepal despite more casualties. *Could it be that, although outside organisations are often quick to respond to disasters with both money, technology and man power*, recovery is also dependent on a willingness to accept such aid and distribute it fairly. For example, the severe drought of 2010 in Somalia possibly resulted in many deaths because of local corruption and in-fighting.

3

However, most communities will feel helpless and isolated anyway. Their immediate experience could be of losing family and friends, of losing infrastructure such as housing, schools, roads, water and sanitation and faced with the constant threat of disease and looting. In poorer countries livelihoods like fishing and farming are fragile. Five years after Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar most households *had not been able to replace fishing boats and livestock taken by the storm*. Also, six months after the 2010 Haiti earthquake, there were few signs of recovery. Plenty of aid had been sent to Haiti so what happened to it? In the end slow recovery reinforces a community's sense of isolation, adding to hardship and helplessness and leading to possible migration. Hurricane Katrina's destruction of the southern states of America in 2005 lead to more than a million people being displaced with few returning. Even in a prosperous country like the United States, the government was slow to respond and was accused of mismanagement so created a refugee *crisis whereby full recovery was either going to be impossible or different in a new situation*.

4

Once destruction has occurred and an assessment made of the situation then the quality of economic recovery matters, not only to re-build quickly but to enable infrastructures to withstand future disasters. In the end

Examiner comments

There is clear communication and structure, with a varied and sophisticated vocabulary (in red – a little inelegant at times).

3 This paragraph analyses the consequences of 'slow recovery' and its effect on the community with a careful selection of examples and evaluation throughout.

There is a wide vocabulary with some sophisticated structures and crafting of the English to create a persuasive tone (often of indignation to reflect the frustration of the community). The red text highlights some occasional wordiness.

4 This paragraph emphasises the need for quality reconstruction using examples to develop, and evaluating the difficulties of ever achieving this in the context of loss and repeated natural events.

Example answer

hurricanes will occur a few times a year in the Caribbean and often densely populated towns lie in earthquake zones or at the foot of a volcano. This is where people choose to live through family and economic ties so any **recovery could be repeatedly destroyed** unless improvements are made. However, this could be very difficult for poor countries like Haiti where recovery depends entirely on international aid or where there is cultural devastation amongst the Hindu and Buddhist temples of Kathmandu, all obstacles to ever making a full recovery.

5

In conclusion, the extent of recovery from a serious natural disaster depends on the speed and degree of aid received, a committed response from local government to allow recovery and the scale of the disaster. Admittedly, the poor are hit hardest and the loss of family, home and livelihood will make any form of recovery slow. Nothing will ever be the same again but anything towards full recovery must consider proper funding to produce improved reconstruction and allow local people to learn the skills needed for the country to be self-sufficient. Over time, suffering could be eased and economic growth improve enough to establish a different 'full recovery', after which foreign aid could gradually withdraw.

Examiner comments

Again, the candidate is quite sophisticated with vocabulary with barely an error, but it can be a little inelegant (highlighted in red).

5 This is a conclusion which returns to both the question and introduction, and evaluates the argument in the context of other considerations (climate change/control of aid agencies). It does a lot more than just summarise the main points. It is possibly a little abrupt with the last sentence but does point to the distant future.

There is use of a wide-ranging vocabulary with some sophistication and appropriate register. There are no errors in the use of language or communication.

**Total mark awarded =
26 out of 30 (Level 5)**

Summative comments

This response selects a range of fully relevant information with some detailed illustration. It consistently analyses the key words of the question, and evaluates a range of arguments with a convincing conclusion. Perhaps it could have considered environmental recovery, and developed social recovery in more detail and the way recovery also needs to be sympathetic towards community culture and religion.

The meaning is clear with a sophisticated, varied vocabulary. It uses language with control and accuracy with barely an error, and constructs a cohesive argument with well-structured paragraphs. Occasionally it can be a little cumbersome or wordy, but it is still an accomplished piece of writing.

How could the candidate have improved the answer?

The response is mostly a focus on economic recovery with detailed illustration. The word count is marginally higher than the guidance given to the candidate (600–700 words), but the candidate does not need to write more to improve their response. Rather they need a wider variety of examples to address all aspects set out in their introduction. For a higher mark there would need to be wider considerations such as the environment, the extent to which social, religious or cultural aspects could fully recover etc. Also, the focus is on tsunamis, earthquakes and hurricanes with drought barely mentioned: perhaps the range of disasters could have been extended with reference to different situations, such as the Fukushima nuclear power station disaster in Japan for example.

Common mistakes candidates made in this question

To achieve a mark of 26, candidates would have understood the question and addressed the key words showing analysis and evaluation using a range of examples. The common mistakes which prevented a higher mark are being too rambling with some statements and not picking up on less obvious issues such as environment. Issues like 'climate change' and 'aid giving control to other countries' are appropriate to the conclusion but should have been recognised as areas which could have been developed in the main body of the essay. Also, more could have been said about social/cultural recovery. However, the response integrates a range of examples into a cohesive argument with consistent evaluation so must achieve just Band 5.

Section 7: Revision

The following advice will help you revise and prepare for the examinations set for this course. Specifically, this section is divided into *general* advice for all papers, followed by more *specific* advice for Paper 1 and Paper 2.

Use the tick boxes to keep a record of what you have covered and understand, versus what you have yet to study/master.

For more advice on revision, see the [Cambridge Learner Revision Guide](#) on our website.

General advice

Before the examination

- Find out when the examinations are and plan your revision so you have time to revise. Create a revision timetable and divide it into sections to cover each topic.
- Find out how long each paper is, how many questions you have to answer, how many marks there are for each question, and work out how long you have for each question.
- Find out the choices you have on each paper, make sure you know how many sections there are and which sections you should answer from.
- When there is a choice of questions in a section, make sure you revise enough to have a choice.
- Know the meaning of the command words used in questions and how to apply them to the information given. Look at past examination papers and highlight the command words and check what they mean.
- Make revision notes. Try different styles of notes.
- Work for short periods then have a break. Revise small sections of your work at a time.
- Practise writing on a consistent basis. Try reading a short selection of material then writing a brief summary of it before offering your own opinion about the information. This simple task can help you practise syllabus-related skills such as understanding and analysing.
- Practise writing in a timed writing environment. The more comfortable you are writing within a timeframe, the less anxious you will feel about the examination.
- Review the list of topics for this syllabus and think about what you are learning in other courses that relates to them. When possible, use the knowledge you've gained across subject areas to assist you in responding to questions in this syllabus.
- Review lists of commonly misspelled and commonly confused words to avoid making these simple errors in your writing.
- Have a look at past questions so that you are clear of what to expect in an examination.

- Look at mark schemes to help you to understand how the marks are awarded for each question.

In the examination

- Read the instructions carefully and answer the right number of questions from the right sections.
- Do not answer more questions than are needed and do not exceed word counts, as this will not gain you more marks in the examination.
- Plan your time according to the marks for each question. For example, a question worth 3 marks requires less time and a shorter answer than one worth 10 marks. If a question has several parts, then the parts with more marks will need more time and more developed answers.
- Do not leave out questions or parts of questions. Remember, no answer means no mark.
- Read each question very carefully.
 - Identify the command words – you could underline or highlight them.
 - Identify the other key words and perhaps underline them too.
 - Try to put the question into your own words to understand what it is really asking.
- Read all parts of a question before starting your answer. Think carefully about what is needed for each part. You will not need to repeat material.
- Look very carefully at the resource material you are given.
 - Read the title, key, axes of graphs, etc. to find out exactly what it is showing you.
 - Look for dates, scale, and location.
 - Try using coloured pencils or pens to pick out anything that the question asks you about.
- **Answer the question.** This is very important!
 - Use your knowledge and understanding.
 - Do not just write all you know; only write what is needed to answer the question.
 - Answer *all* parts of the question.
- Plan your answers. Clear, concise, well-ordered, well-argued, well-supported answers get more marks than long, rambling, muddled, repetitious answers. Quality is better than quantity.
- Use academic language as much as possible. Avoid colloquialisms, slang, or clichés when articulating ideas.
- When it is provided, use the resource material given to support your answer.
- Make sure your writing is clear and easy to read. Otherwise, your audience will never receive the (potentially brilliant) message you are sending!

Paper 1 advice: essay

Selecting and interpreting the question

- Only pick an essay question when you understand all the terms used.
- Be careful if you choose to write on topics you have very strong views about. This can lead to an unsubstantiated argument or, worse still, a lack of appreciation for other points of view.
- Do not be afraid to challenge the assumptions that may seem implicit in the question. In other words, avoid taking questions about topics at face value.
- Make sure you read and respond to the entire question, rather than just addressing part of it.
- Make sure you choose a topic that you know enough about to provide the basis for a good essay.

Planning

- Take time to plan out your argument, even if you are approaching it more discursively. This will help you to write a clearer, more organised discussion.
- A rough plan is all that is needed to ensure that your argument will have shape and structure. Just make sure the ideas you outline are relevant, reasonable, and intentional.
- When generating ideas, think of the issue from multiple disciplines and from a variety of viewpoints. This will help you deepen your understanding of the topic beyond the surface level and will lead to a more specific address of the topic.
- Keep an open mind when responding to questions of global significance. This will help you to address the issue maturely and empathetically.

Staying focused and organised

- While writing, refer back to the question often to ensure that your ideas are directly related to what is being asked and that you are answering all parts of it.
- Read the question carefully. Make sure you do not misread or overlook a word or phrase, as this can change the focus of your entire essay (e.g. overlooking the phrase 'in your country').
- Use the wording of the question in your essay. As a general rule, the language used in the question should appear in nearly every paragraph of your essay. Use synonyms, however, to avoid sounding repetitive or mechanical.
- Avoid merely writing down everything you know about an essay topic. Instead, answer the question as directly as possible. Otherwise, this could negatively impact the focus of your essay.
- Organise your ideas so that they logically link from one to the next. Use transitional strategies to show the relationship of ideas within and among paragraphs.

Support

- Essay questions are designed to provoke critical thinking and encourage the sustained development of ideas; you can accomplish this by providing clear and appropriate examples, and offering your perspective on the ideas you use.
- Use specific examples to minimise the likelihood of exaggerating or overgeneralising ideas. Exemplification is an important part of your reasoning!
- The key objective for your argument should be to evaluate, not just describe.
- Aim for range and variety; do not allow a single point or source to dominate your argument.
- When addressing opposing views, be fair in representing their ideas and mature in your consideration of them.
- Use language appropriately to address opposing views without losing the force of your own argument. Your tone should connect to your purpose.

Analysing and evaluating

- Analyse an issue from several relevant perspectives before passing judgement.
- Don't be afraid to share your own perspective in response to other views or the evidence supporting them. Think critically!
- Consider the context surrounding a topic as part of your analysis (i.e. how does circumstance of an issue shape/influence different perspectives including your own?)
- Use evidence, not just opinion, to draw conclusions about an issue.
- Drawing conclusions intermittently throughout your argument can help you reason carefully through the information before arriving at a final judgement.

Approach and style

- Since you are writing for an academic purpose, maintain a formal register while also letting your voice be heard.
- When asked what 'you' think, offer relevant, local examples when possible, as opposed to personal anecdote. (Note: this is what sets an academic essay apart from a personal essay.)
- A wide-ranging knowledge of topics at the general level is expected, but you should also explore your own logical opinions in response to this knowledge. Pair knowledge with your own commentary about its relevance or value!
- Write a fair, well-reasoned response as opposed to a one-sided assertion. Your task is to provide an argument, not a rant!
- Avoid a formulaic approach to your language and/or essay structure. Instead, explore issues in a way that naturally fits the question being asked.

Expression

- Write as simply and accurately as you can, while still giving attention to style and audience. Clarity is key.
- Avoid overly-elaborate or 'flowery' language. Your aim should be to demonstrate an understanding of words and how to use them appropriately in context.
- It is important to be original, so avoid clichéd phrases. Phrases such as 'nowadays' and 'in a nutshell' should be avoided. Instead, find your own, unique way to express ideas.
- Exercise word economy when possible (e.g. it is not necessary to write 'due to the fact that' when you can simply say 'because').
- Avoid using contrived (unnatural) language, or forcing the use of words you've learned beforehand. Formulaic/prescribed terms such as 'to recapitulate' should also be avoided. Instead, use language that is authentic to the flow of your essay's ideas.
- Avoid the use of colloquial language. Since your audience is an international one, phrases that are only familiar to your local region will not translate well. Also, omit the use of slang-based phrases which appear in conversation (such as 'would ya', 'for sure', 'kids', etc.)
- When beginning an essay, avoid grand phrases such as 'since the dawn of man', as this takes your essay unnecessarily out of context. Instead, think of how the topic came into importance in more recent times.

Use of English

- Follow proper usage and mechanics. If your response is full of errors, the message will not be communicated clearly. Allowing time for editing and revision can help minimise errors of this type.
- Make sure that any errors in your use of English do not affect the meaning of what you are saying. Review a list of commonly confused words to minimise errors of this type.
- As this is a formal, academic essay, avoid the use of abbreviations as much as possible, particularly the use of 'etc.' and 'e.g.'. You may use acronyms but you should introduce them in a formal way first, to explain them to your audience (some of the very common, globally-recognised acronyms such as AIDS, SONAR, and SCUBA can be exceptions to the rule, but use your best judgement).

Audience

- Be aware of your audience. Make sure you use language that is appropriate to an academic audience of both assessors and peers, as well as a global audience in general.
- Remember that based on your audience's own, unique circumstances, they may not necessarily agree with your ideas, so aim for a sensitive approach to the issues. When arguing a point, do so with your audience in mind.

Technicals

- You do not need to write the essay question at the top of your essay; you need only indicate the question number. (Bear in mind, however, that some learners prefer to write the question as a strategy for getting focused on the task, which is fine, though potentially time-consuming.)
- Depending on your writing utensil, you may write on both sides of the page, but make sure the writing is legible when written on both sides (e.g. pressing too hard, or ink that bleeds through the page can make writing illegible).
- Essays should adhere generally to the suggested word count given in the exam instructions.
- Essays that are significantly shorter than the suggested word count are unlikely to gain many marks. There may not be enough information to satisfy the requirements of the task.
- Whether you are typing or writing your essay, allow time for review of your work. Revise content and edit mechanical errors as necessary.

Paper 2 advice: comprehension

Reading carefully

- Before you begin reading the material provided, spend some time previewing the questions that accompany it. This will help you set a purpose for reading.
- Pay attention to key words in comprehension questions, which will command you to carry out the task in a particular way. Also pay attention to how many marks a question is worth in order to determine how much time you will spend answering it.
- Read each question actively; circle and/or underline key words in the instructions to help you focus on the task.
- Break prose into smaller, more manageable sections as you read by making notes in the margin to summarise the key point(s) of a section or paragraph.
- Pay attention to any information accompanying the text itself. This may include information as to its source, graphics or other images, captions, side bars, or footnotes, among other text features. These can reinforce your understanding of the material and it may also help you form judgements about the information.

Considering the context of words

- Thinking about the context of an unknown word or phrase can help you determine its meaning. Pay attention to clues, which can appear near to the word or phrase.
- Before you begin reading, scan the list of comprehension questions for any which require you to determine the meaning of words or phrases. It is much easier to understand what is meant by the word as you are reading, rather than doubling back and trying to figure it out after. As you encounter the term, note a few possible synonyms for it in the margin.

- When a comprehension question asks you to provide a synonym for a word, make sure that the word you provide matches the grammatical form of the original as far as possible (i.e. replace nouns with nouns, verbs with verbs, adjectives with adjectives, etc.).
- When asked to write a sentence using a vocabulary word from the reading material, briefly review the original context in which it is used to make sure that you use the word in the same context. (For example, if the word is ‘*pool* your resources’, you would not want to write a sentence about a swimming ‘pool’!)
- When asked to write sentences using words from the reading material, make sure you apply the term to a fresh circumstance to show you understand how it is meant to be used. (For example, if the text describes volcanoes as ‘ominous’, you should apply the term to something different, such as *clouds*.)
- When you are writing sentences using vocabulary words, make sure you demonstrate the meaning of the words by constructing appropriate context clues.

Responding to questions

- When a question explicitly asks you to use your own words, do *not* include quotes from the reading material in your response. **Lifting information directly from the text does not demonstrate you understand it.**
- Questions may include more than one task. Make sure you address all parts of the question.
- Questions that ask you to explain or summarise something usually target a specific section, rather than the entire passage. (e.g. ‘Summarise X’s point in Paragraph 5.’ or ‘Using your own words, explain the point expressed in Paragraphs 3–4.’)
- Be aware that questions can sometimes sound similar, though they are asking different things from you. One question, for example, might ask you to consider both the advantages *and* disadvantages of something; another might ask for advantages *only*. Some questions might ask for the ‘*most* suitable’ option whereas others might ask for the ‘*least* suitable’ one, so be sure to read carefully.
- Check whether a question wants you to use explicit details from the material to support your response, or whether it allows you to use some of your own, outside knowledge and/or reasoning.
- If you are asked to explain the advantages *and* disadvantages of something, these do not necessarily need to be equally balanced (e.g. two advantages and two disadvantages). Instead, you may have more for one than the other (e.g. three advantages, one disadvantage), and this is acceptable so long as you address *both* sides in a sustained way.

Generating ideas and preparing to respond

- It is just as important to set aside time to organise responses for the reading comprehension tasks as it is for the essay. Be sure to carefully plan all answers before writing them.
- When giving your opinion, you will need to support it with either text-based justification or examples from your own knowledge (depending on the question). Use mind-mapping strategies to help you outline reasons and supporting examples.

- When asked to evaluate something (such as its effectiveness, value, or worth), briefly outline ideas using a two-column approach.

Developing and sustaining ideas

- For questions worth greater marks, you will probably need to sustain your ideas (by expanding them) rather than just listing points. Take time to extend points via elaboration and detail.
- When asked to provide reasons or to explain a point further, use the subordinating conjunction 'because' to help you extend your thoughts.
- Connecting evidence to claims to show how and why the information is relevant can be an effective way to sustain your point.
- When a comprehension question asks you to 'justify your answer', use specific examples from the text to develop your point, not vague or generalised explanations. When a comprehension question asks you to identify the 'least relevant information' in a text, for example, you would need to explain why you find it irrelevant after identifying it.
- Use a 'what-why' approach to develop and sustain points. This will help you substantiate any claims you make.

Organisation and style

- Similar to an essay, use topic sentences to make your main point clear when responding, then develop evidence such as examples to further develop and support your point.
- The use of transitions in your response can help you organise ideas and show connections between your thoughts and ideas.
- Carefully wording your responses can help you to avoid making broad statements or overgeneralising an issue. In order to demonstrate nuance in your response, use:
 - modals (to indicate possibility)
 - comparatives (to analyse)
 - superlatives (to express judgement).

Revision checklists

In the next part of this guide we have provided some revision checklists. These include skills from the syllabus that you should practise. They don't contain all the detailed skills you need to develop, just an overview. For more detail see the syllabus and talk to your teacher.

The table headings are explained below:

Topic:	indicates a writing skill you are expected to develop over time as part of this course
I can:	indicates a description of the writing skill you are expected to be able to do as part of this course
Unsure:	indicates that you are unsure or lack confidence in this particular skill
Comfortable:	indicates you are comfortable with or feel somewhat confident in demonstrating this skill
Confident:	indicate you are confident in or have mastered this particular skill
Comments:	offers space for you to make notes regarding your progress with the skill <i>(e.g. your teacher might give you an idea as to when you will cover each of the topics/skills below for you to keep track of; you might include feedback that a peer or the teacher has given you regarding each skill; or, you might make notes based on your own observations of your growth over time; if you are studying independently, you might also use this space to set goals in order to tackle the skills listed.)</i>

Track your learning and progress by ticking the boxes to reflect what you know in these areas and what you have yet to learn. Leave yourself notes to help guide progress.

PAPER 1 SKILLS: Progress tracking

Topic	I can...	Unsure	Comfortable	Confident	Comments:
<p><i>Understanding key terms and interpreting their meaning</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read each word in the question carefully to make sure I understand the task <p>Identify/recognise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • broad terms contained in the question (e.g. 'technology') • terms that set limits to the scope of my essay's focus (e.g. 'technology in the workplace,' 'in your country,') • coordinating conjunctions that have an impact on what I will discuss in the essay (e.g. 'and', 'or', 'and/or') • phrases that indicate options for discussion; these are meant to inspire options but are not required (e.g. 'such as,' 'like') • terms that are content-specific, which will require specialised knowledge that I may or may not have 				

Topic	I can...	Unsure	Comfortable	Confident	Comments:
<i>Selecting a question</i>	Choose a question that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know enough about • I can write about fairly • makes it possible for me to demonstrate empathy for different points of view which may be counter to my own 				
<i>Generating ideas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select information for my essay that is relevant to the question • Use strategies to help me narrow the focus of key terms (e.g. considering the issue from different academic 'lenses', thinking about the issue from the perspective of different 'stakeholders', etc.) 				
<i>Organising ideas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan out information before writing it, using strategies such as mapping, outlining, charting • Present ideas in a structured and intentional way 				
<i>Main idea</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the main idea of my essay in a sentence or two • Make my purpose for writing clear to the audience 				

Topic	I can...	Unsure	Comfortable	Confident	Comments:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that the main idea usually appears in both the beginning and end of the essay (though it may be more broad in the introduction than it is in the conclusion) 				
<i>The introduction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly introduce the topic of the essay Briefly consider possible meanings of the question before establishing my own definition(s) Determine the scope of my essay Use the key words of the question to put my essay into focus Interest my audience in the topic by establishing for them why this issue matters now / how it impacts them (context) 				
<i>Support paragraphs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use topic sentences to introduce the main point of a paragraph or section Use a variety of transitional strategies to connect ideas within and among paragraphs Use reasons to support my argument Use evidence to support my reasons Link evidence back to claims by offering commentary as to its 				

Topic	I can...	Unsure	Comfortable	Confident	Comments:
	<p>relevance, impact, and/or consequence on the matter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use key terms from the question throughout in order to maintain focus • Draw interim (mid-way) conclusions when necessary to bring segments of support full-circle 				
<i>The conclusion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signal the close of an essay using advanced transitional strategies • Offer fresh ideas and insights in light of the evidence offered; <i>add</i> something new to the conversation • Redress and narrow my argument now that all evidence has been considered • Draw a final conclusion based on a combination of evidence and personal perspective, as well as any interim conclusions drawn • Consider limits to my own argument when appropriate • Consider implications and consequences of accepting or denying my position • Offer solutions or make value-based judgements when appropriate 				

Topic	I can...	Unsure	Comfortable	Confident	Comments:
<i>Edit for grammar</i>	<p>Review my work for any of the following common, grammatical errors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subject-verb agreement • pronoun-antecedent agreement • misplaced modifiers • misuse of adjectives versus adverbs • presence of unintentional fragments (sentences which do not contain both subject and verb) • shifts in pronoun use (e.g. from 'we' to 'you') 				
<i>Edit for spelling</i>	<p>Review my work for any of the following common, spelling errors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commonly confused word pairs (e.g. its/it's, there/their/they're, loose/lose) • commonly misspelt words (e.g. guarantee, environment, receive, tomorrow, privilege) 				
<i>Edit for punctuation and capitalisation</i>	<p>Review my work for any of the following common, punctuation errors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • misuse of commas (comma splice) • lack of punctuation (run-on sentences) 				

Topic	I can...	Unsure	Comfortable	Confident	Comments:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> confusion of plurals versus possessives (misuse of apostrophe) <p>Review my work to make sure the following are capitalised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the first word in a sentence names, places, and words related to these (e.g. Shakespeare /Shakespearean, Europe/European) titles of books, films, organisations and other proper nouns the personal pronoun 'I' abbreviations (e.g. BBC, WHO) 				
<i>Language and style</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a register that is appropriate for my audience and one that matches my intentions for arguing Select an approach for writing that most appropriately fits my ideas concerning the topic (e.g. choosing <i>argumentative</i> vs. <i>discursive</i> or vice versa) Use a combination of writing strategies that organically emerge in response to the topic rather than using a pre-determined (formulaic) approach 				

Topic	I can...	Unsure	Comfortable	Confident	Comments:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vary the length/structure of my sentences to add style and voice to my writing • Demonstrate range in vocabulary and control over language • Use parallel structure (using the same pattern of words to show that two or more words or ideas are of equal importance) to improve and enhance the way my ideas are communicated • Avoid overly-lengthy introductions and 'background' • Avoid 'gloom and doom' endings in my conclusions 				
<i>Argumentation strategies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a clear and logical line of reasoning to communicate my argument • Use a variety of argumentation strategies to strengthen my point (e.g. argumentative appeals, point-counterpoint, inductive/deductive patterns) • Consider a range of perspectives surrounding the issue • Fairly represent views which are counter to my own 				

Topic	I can...	Unsure	Comfortable	Confident	Comments:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show empathy for perspectives that may be contrary to my own • Identify fallacious reasoning in my own argument as I am developing it, or in the arguments of others • Address, as part of my argument, how context affects a perspective • Consider the role that source credibility plays in an argument • Address limits to my own or other arguments when necessary • Make admissions and concede to opposing views when necessary 				
<i>Time management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set clear timelines for planning, writing, and revision phases and stick to them • Record my start and stop times to remain aware and in control of time limitations • Practise in timed writing environments before assessment in order to better understand how I respond to writing to a deadline, and to minimise the potential of test anxiety 				

The next table for Paper 1 features various topics/subjects that may appear as **topics** on the Paper 1 assessment. While it is impossible to develop a strong knowledge base in *all* of them in just one year, it can be helpful to keep track of what you already know and what you are learning so you can use this awareness to your advantage in the exam.

Using the table below, track the topics you are learning about in both AS Level English General Paper and other courses (maths, history, art, science, etc.) by ticking the appropriate boxes for each category.

The table headings are explained below:

- Broad topics:** indicates a topic outlined in the syllabus for the course and that as a result may appear as the topic of an essay question
- Areas to explore:** indicates narrowed branches of study that may fall under the broader syllabus topic (*NOTE: this is not by any means an exhaustive list*)
- Little/no knowledge:** indicates that you do not know much at all about the content knowledge associated with this sub-category
- Some knowledge:** indicates you are somewhat comfortable with the content knowledge associated with this sub-category
- Expert knowledge:** indicate you know well or have an abundance of knowledge in this sub-category
- Comments:** offers space for you to make notes regarding your progress with the topic

Each individual has their own set of interests and experiences which govern how much knowledge you have about the different topics listed for this syllabus. Be as honest with yourself as possible in what you know and what you have yet to learn, keeping in mind that the purpose of the academic year is to encourage growth and the development of knowledge and skills *over time*.

Note: *the table below cannot contain absolutely everything you need to know, but it attempts to include topics frequently featured in this exam.*

PAPER 1 KNOWLEDGE: Progress tracking

Broad topics	Areas to explore	Little/no knowledge	Some knowledge	Expert knowledge	Comments
<i>Economic, historical, moral, political, social issues</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the role and value of history in modern society • war, conflict • terrorism • political systems and leadership / forms of government and roles • state institutions • economic systems • the role of international organisations • international aid • prison and rehabilitation • the justice system • family roles • marriage and partnerships • social pressure, social norms and attitudes • globalisation • wealth and poverty 				

Broad topics	Areas to explore	Little/no knowledge	Some knowledge	Expert knowledge	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equality • education • welfare • sport and leisure • work, employment, labour • industry and commerce • freedom of speech, thought, action • human rights • animal welfare • matters of conscience, faith, and tolerance (from a global standpoint) 				
<p><i>Science, including its history, philosophy, ethics, general principles and applications; environmental issues; technology; mathematics</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medical and scientific advances and the ethics associated with them • scientific research • drug testing, manufacturing, and provision • diet, health education • provision of healthcare • space exploration 				

Broad topics	Areas to explore	Little/no knowledge	Some knowledge	Expert knowledge	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information and communications technology • surveillance and privacy • environmental concerns • natural disasters / mitigation and management • rural and urban concerns • food and water scarcity • transportation • travel and tourism • real world uses and applications of mathematics 				
<i>Literature, language, the arts, crafts, and the media</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literature • non-fiction writing • language • performing arts • visual arts • applied arts 				

Broad topics	Areas to explore	Little/no knowledge	Some knowledge	Expert knowledge	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> arts institutions and venues traditional arts and crafts culture, heritage print and digital media advertising censorship and freedom of the media and arts 				

The next table gives you an idea of the skills you will need to become a critical reader in this course. The skills build from the basics of ‘understanding’ the information you read, to ‘applying’ it, ‘analysing’ it, and eventually, ‘evaluating’ its effectiveness against other information. You will be presented with reading passages that require you to *logically reason* through information, and you will also be asked to understand and analyse *prose*.

PAPER 2 SKILLS: Progress tracking

Topic	I can...	Unsure	Comfortable	Confident	Comments
<i>Understand what I read</i>	Identify the following aspects of reading material: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the main idea key details that support a point or the main idea the author’s purpose or intention the author’s tone regarding the topic 				

Topic	I can...	Unsure	Comfortable	Confident	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the audience to whom the author is writing • the method of development or organisational pattern the author uses to communicate their ideas <p>I can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use active reading strategies to track the details of a text and make notes to help me break information down into smaller pieces • connect the reading material to my own experiences when possible to help me understand it • recognise different viewpoints • map out the line of reasoning in an argument 				
<i>Apply what I read</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find my own unique way to explain the ideas of others (paraphrase) • Summarise key text using my own words • Select appropriate information to use in my written responses (i.e. text evidence) • Use text evidence to justify my ideas in a response 				

Topic	I can...	Unsure	Comfortable	Confident	Comments
<i>Analyse what I read</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make inferences about the reading based on the information and clues it provides • Compare information from multiple sources • Consider the accuracy and objectivity of what I read and challenge this information accordingly • Understand the impact that word choice has on the meaning of a text • Consider the context of the author’s experiences as a means of empathising with their perspective • Weigh the credibility of a source in order to determine its validity and reliability • Deconstruct a line of reasoning in order to see connections among ideas 				
<i>Evaluate what I read</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use evidence to make a judgement on a topic or issue • Synthesise information to formulate conclusions • Use my own knowledge and experiences to help me make a judgement on what I’ve read 				

Section 8: Useful websites

Though this list is far from exhaustive, the websites listed below include a few, useful resources to help you study for your Cambridge International AS Level English General Paper course.

Global news sources

BBC (UK):	www.bbc.co.uk
The New York Times (US):	www.nytimes.com
The Washington Post (US):	www.washingtonpost.com
Reuters (headquartered in UK):	www.reuters.com
The Economist (UK):	www.economist.com
NPR (US):	www.npr.org
The Guardian (UK):	www.theguardian.com/
Aljazeera (Qatar):	www.aljazeera.com
Bangkok Post (Thailand):	www.bangkokpost.com
China Daily:	http://chinadaily.com.cn
The Asia Times (Hong Kong):	www.atimes.com
Mail and Guardian (South Africa):	https://mg.co.za
Jakarta Post (Indonesia):	www.thejakartapost.com
New Zealand Herald:	www.nzherald.co.nz
Dawn (Pakistan):	www.dawn.com
The Strait Times (Singapore):	www.straitstimes.com/global
Times of India:	https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com

Student-friendly sources of information

CNN Student News:	www.cnn.com/cnn10
The New York Times' Upfront Magazine:	https://upfront.scholastic.com (subscription required)
TED.com:	www.ted.com
The Conversation:	http://theconversation.com/us
The Skimm:	https://theskimm.com
FlipBoard:	https://flipboard.com

Global data, issues, and information

CIA World Factbook:	www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/
The World Bank Topics:	www.worldbank.org/en/topic
Library of Congress List of International Organisations:	www.loc.gov/rr/news/io.html
Global Issues Network (GIN):	http://globalissuesnetwork.org
TED Global Issues:	www.ted.com/topics/global+issues
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):	www.oecd.org

Debate

ProCon.org:	www.procon.org
International Debate Education Association (IDEA):	https://idebate.org
The New York Times' Room for Debate:	www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate

Writing

Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) for grades 7–12:	https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/677/01/
Quill.org:	www.quill.org

Use of English

Grammarly.com:	www.grammarly.com
Towson University Online Writing Support:	https://webapps.towson.edu/ows/index.asp
Purdue Online Writing Lab/Grammar:	https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/5/
Oxford Dictionary/Grammar:	https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/grammar/

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