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CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE **9093/11**

Paper 1 Reading **May/June 2026**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 50

Published

This mark scheme contains the instructions and marking guidance that our examiners used to mark candidate responses for this component.

Before they start marking, examiners complete a standardisation process. They review a range of candidate responses and discuss the mark scheme in detail to agree which answers can and cannot be accepted. Examiners award marks where it is clear that candidate responses have met the requirements of the mark scheme. These requirements may vary between different components or different versions of the same component, depending on the exact requirements of the question and the candidate responses seen during the standardisation process.

Sometimes, our mark schemes may allow marks to be awarded to responses which contain elements that are factually incorrect or for content not covered by the syllabus. We do this in response to the demands of a specific question to support candidates and make sure that our assessments are fair. However, these allowances should not be used as a guide for teaching and learning.

We cannot discuss the mark scheme with schools, and we recommend that schools read the mark scheme together with the assessment material and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

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General marking principles

All examiners must apply these marking principles when marking candidate responses.

1	Examiners must award marks for each response in line with: • the specific **content** defined in the mark scheme • the specific **skills** defined in the mark scheme or in the level descriptions • the **standard of response** required as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.
2	Examiners must award **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).
3	Examiners must award marks **positively**. This means that: • marks are not deducted for errors or omissions • marks are awarded for correct/valid answers as defined in the mark scheme and also for **other valid answers** which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme referring to your team leader as appropriate • the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are judged **only** when the mark scheme indicates that these features are **specifically assessed** in the question. However, the meaning of all responses must be unambiguous.
4	Examiners must **consistently** apply the requirements of the mark scheme and any rules for what to do when candidates have not followed instructions correctly.
5	Examiners must use the **full range of marks** defined in the mark scheme, unless limited by the quality of the candidate responses seen.
6	Examiners must award marks according to the mark scheme and **must not** award marks with grade thresholds or grade descriptions in mind.

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English & Media-Specific Marking Principles
(To be read in conjunction with the General Marking Principles (and requiring further guidance on how to place marks within levels))

Components using level descriptions:

- We use level descriptions as a guide to broad understanding of the qualities normally expected of, or typical of, work in a level.
- Level descriptions are a means of general guidance and should not be interpreted as hurdle statements.
- Where indicative content notes are supplied for a question, these are *not* a prescription of required content and must not be treated as such. Alternative correct points and unexpected answers in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the knowledge and skills demonstrated.
- While we may have legitimate expectations as to the ground most answers may occupy, we must at all times be prepared to meet candidates on their chosen ground, provided it is relevant ground (e.g. clearly related to and derived from a relevant passage/text and meeting the mark scheme requirements for the question).

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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
AO1	Assessment Objective 1
AO2	Assessment Objective 2
AO3	Assessment Objective 3
	Good point
	Error (analysis)
	SPAG error
	Unclear expression / errors throughout
L	Good language
LM	Lifted material
P	Purpose

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Annotation	Meaning
Q	Addressing the question
Q 	Uncertain relevance to the question
R	Repetition
TE	Tense error

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English Language specific marking instructions:

AO1 Read and demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of texts. (Understanding)
- Marks should be awarded for the accuracy of the candidate's understanding of the text and its features, **not** for any analysis of them which is recognised under AO3.
- Where comparison is required, marks should be awarded for the candidate's recognition of similarities and differences between the texts and their features, **not** for any consequent analysis.
- When awarding a 'best-fit' mark within a Level for each AO, consider each bullet point equally.

AO2 Write effectively, creatively, accurately and appropriately, for a range of audiences and purposes. (Writing)
- Marks should be awarded equally on the basis of the level of the candidate's written expression (range of features used and accuracy) and the development of their writing (its organisation and relevance to task and audience).
- When awarding a 'best-fit' mark within a Level for each AO, consider each bullet point equally.

AO3: Analyse the ways in which writers' and speakers' choices of form, structure and language produce meaning and style. (Analysis)
- Marks should be awarded equally on the basis of the level of the candidate's analysis of the text's elements (form, structure and language) and of the writer's stylistic choices (including how style relates to audience and shapes meaning).
- When awarding a 'best-fit' mark within a Level for each AO, consider each bullet point equally.

In response to **Question 1(a)**, candidates are required to write between 150 and 200 words. While there is no direct penalty for failing to adhere to this requirement, examiners should consider this an aspect of the response's 'relevance to purpose'. As such, adherence to the word limit is assessed as part of the second bullet point of AO2.

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Section A: Directed response

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	**Read the following text, which is the opening of an article from a travel website.** **You have recently been on a trip to Japan, organised by a travel company. Write a review of the trip, which you will publish on an international travel website. Use 150–200 words.** Mark according to the levels of response marking criteria in Table A. **Additional guidance:** The comments below are illustrative and are not intended to be exhaustive. Candidates may make other valid comments that should be credited. **Responses might feature the following:** • form, audience, purpose, style, conventions, language and structure will be appropriately adapted to suit the task • content may include thoughts/feelings, personal experience, descriptive details, as well as other relevant ideas • tone will be used to have an impact on the reader and to create an effect.	**10**

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Question	Answer	Marks
1(b)	**Compare your review with the article, analysing form, structure and language.** Mark according to the levels of response marking criteria in Table B. **Additional guidance:** The comments below are illustrative and are not intended to be exhaustive. Candidates may make other valid comments that should be credited. Candidates may organise their response in any appropriate way. They are not required to focus on form, structure and language in separate sections. **Responses might compare and analyse the following:** **Form** • the typical text conventions used in the original article and the candidate's own review • the ways in which the different purposes affect the content and style of the two texts • the ways in which the article and review appeal to their respective intended audiences, e.g. through the register used in each text • any other relevant aspect of the form of the two texts **Structure** • the ways in which paragraphs or sections are used in each text • the ways in which any change in sentence types or functions might be used by the writers to achieve effects • the significance of opening or concluding sentences or sections • the use of subheadings at specific points in the travel writing • any other relevant structural features in the texts, including chronological order, etc.	**15**

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Question	Answer	Marks
1(b)	**Language** • the potential use of first-person pronouns and first-person narrative voice in the review to engage and involve the reader from the outset • the use of third person in the article to provide a more objective stance • the potential use of direct address in the review to involve and persuade the audience more directly • the reference to facts and named places – *sakura cherry blossoms, the Scramble Crossing in Shibuya* – to add credibility to the article • the frequent use of Japanese terms to lend authenticity to the piece and credibility to the writer – *bon-odori, hanabi-taikai* – and their translated meanings to render the article inclusive, and the parenthesis to signify that the Japanese terms take precedence • the use of positive lexis to persuade the reader to travel to Japan – *world-renowned ski resorts, pristinely trimmed trees, an abundance of extraordinary monuments*, *thriving restaurant scene, tranquil Meiji-Jingu Shrine, Stunning spring blossoms* • any other relevant language features used in the texts.	

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Marking criteria for Section A Question 1 (a)

Table A

Level	AO1: Read and demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of texts. **5 marks**	AO2: Write effectively, creatively, accurately and appropriately, for a range of audiences and purposes. **5 marks**
5	• Sophisticated understanding of text (meaning/context/audience) • Insightful reference to characteristic features 5 marks	• Sophisticated expression, with a high level of accuracy • Content is fully relevant to audience and purpose; ideas are developed throughout in a sophisticated manner 5 marks
4	• Detailed understanding of text (meaning/context/audience) • Effective reference to characteristic features 4 marks	• Effective expression, with a few minor errors which do not impede communication • Content is relevant to audience and purpose; ideas are developed in an effective manner 4 marks
3	• Clear understanding of text (meaning/context/audience) • Clear reference to characteristic features 3 marks	• Clear expression, with occasional errors which do not impede communication • Content is relevant to audience and purpose; ideas are developed clearly 3 marks
2	• Limited understanding of text (meaning/context/audience) • Limited reference to characteristic features 2 marks	• Expression is clear but may not flow easily, with frequent errors which generally do not impede communication • Content is mostly relevant to audience and purpose; ideas are developed in a limited manner 2 marks
1	• Basic understanding of text (meaning/context/audience) • Minimal reference to characteristic features 1 mark	• Basic expression, with frequent errors which impede communication • Content may lack relevance to audience and purpose; minimal development of ideas 1 mark

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Level	AO1: Read and demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of texts. 5 marks	AO2: Write effectively, creatively, accurately and appropriately, for a range of audiences and purposes. 5 marks
0	• No creditable response 0 marks	• No creditable response 0 marks

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Marking criteria for Section A Question 1 (b)

Table B

Level	AO1: Read and demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of texts. 5 marks	AO3: Analyse the ways in which writers' and speakers' choices of form, structure and language produce meaning and style. 10 marks
5	• Sophisticated comparative understanding of texts (meaning/context/audience) • Insightful reference to characteristic features 5 marks	• Sophisticated comparative analysis of elements of form, structure and language • Sophisticated analysis of how the writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning 9–10 marks
4	• Detailed comparative understanding of texts (meaning/context/audience) • Effective reference to characteristic features 4 marks	• Detailed comparative analysis of elements of form, structure and language • Detailed analysis of how the writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning 7–8 marks
3	• Clear comparative understanding of texts (meaning/context/audience) • Clear reference to characteristic features 3 marks	• Clear comparative analysis of elements of form, structure and/or language • Clear analysis of how the writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning 5–6 marks
2	• Limited understanding of texts (meaning/context/audience), with limited comparison • Limited reference to characteristic features 2 marks	• Limited analysis of form, structure and/or language, with limited comparison • Limited analysis of how the writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning 3–4 marks

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Level	AO1: Read and demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of texts. 5 marks	AO3: Analyse the ways in which writers' and speakers' choices of form, structure and language produce meaning and style. 10 marks
1	• Basic understanding of texts (meaning/context/audience), with minimal comparison • Minimal reference to characteristic features 1 mark	• Minimal analysis of form, structure and/or language, with minimal comparison • Minimal analysis of how the writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning 1–2 marks
0	• No creditable response 0 marks	• No creditable response 0 marks

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Section B: Text analysis

Question	Answer	Marks
2	**Read the following text, which is an extract from a novel.** **The story is narrated by a fig tree which has been removed by its owner from Cyprus and is about to be planted in its new home.** **Analyse the text, focusing on form, structure and language.** Mark according to the levels of response marking criteria in Table C. **Additional guidance:** The analysis should address the style, form, genre, structure and language of the text (including specific and relevant references), explaining how they create meaning in relation to audience and purpose. The comments below are illustrative and are not intended to be exhaustive. Candidates may make other valid comments that should be credited. Candidates may organise their response in any appropriate way. They are not required to focus on form, structure and language in separate sections. **Responses might analyse the following:** **Form** • the typical text conventions used • the ways in which the purpose affects the content and style of the text • the ways in which the text appeals to its intended audience, e.g. through the tone and register used in the text • any other relevant aspects of the text's form	**25**

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Question	Answer	Marks
2	**Structure** • the way in which the extract opens in the middle of the action, with lively dialogue adding immediacy • the chronological structure, as the storyline unfolds to the reader, with references to the past and a different country • the way in which discourse markers and anaphoric references are used in the text for cohesion and to develop the text • the way in which the concluding paragraph brings the planting of the tree to an end and indicates the feelings of the tree at this event **Language** • the way in which the first-person narrative enables the reader to understand that the tree is looking back and reflecting on its removal to a different country 16 years earlier – *I have never been back to Cyprus since* – and how it reacts to being buried underground upon arrival elsewhere • the effect of the use of the lexical field relating to Cyprus – *the familiar sun*, *the rocks*, *cicadas, the rising heat, bees buzzing over lavender fields, butterflies* • the use of a lexical field relating to trees – *arborescent, lateral branches, roots* • the contrast between Cyprus and the tree's new home shown by the use of vocabulary – *coastline, rocks, sun, heat* contrasted with *hole in the ground, trench, slowly setting sun,* the restricting actions *of fastening* and *tightened* suggesting constriction and the tree's displeasure at being buried underground • the way in which the change in vocabulary at the end of the extract indicates the tree's optimism for the future – *Slowly, all my fears and doubts abandoned me, floating away like wisps of mist* • the use of dialogue to reassure the tree and develop characterisation of both the tree and its owner, Kostas – *'... welcome to your new home', 'this should be good enough', 'don't worry', 'You'll be fine. Trust me, dear Ficus,' he said, dotingly* • Kostas is associated with kindness, gentleness and reassurance – *his moves deft, practised, a tenderness to his face and a soft glimmer in his eyes, Carefully, The gentleness in his tone enfolded me and held me tight in place* • The use of vivid description and imagery (by the tree narrator) to bring to life places and feelings – *prickly broom bushes that burst with blossoms, each as perfect and bright as the golden coins in a children's fable, The gentleness in his tone enfolded me and held me tight in place* • the effect of the use of harsh vocabulary to indicate the tree's panic and resistance – *Grabbing, he encircled me, fastening my thicker branches together, he tightened the bundle, shoved me down towards the hole* • any other relevant language features used in the text.	

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Marking criteria for Section B Question 2

Table C

Level	AO1: Read and demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of texts. 5 marks	AO3: Analyse the ways in which writers' and speakers' choices of form, structure and language produce meaning and style. 20 marks
5	• Sophisticated understanding of text (meaning/context/audience) • Insightful reference to characteristic features 5 marks	• Analysis is sophisticated, coherent and very effectively structured • Insightful selection of elements of form, structure and language for analysis • Sophisticated awareness of writer's stylistic choices, including how style relates to audience and shapes meaning • Uses precise and fully appropriate language to link evidence with explanatory comments 17–20 marks
4	• Detailed understanding of text (meaning/context/audience) • Effective reference to characteristic features 4 marks	• Analysis is detailed, coherent and effectively structured • Effective selection of elements of form, structure and language for analysis • Detailed awareness of writer's stylistic choices, including how style relates to audience and shapes meaning • Uses effective and appropriate language to link evidence with explanatory comments 13–16 marks
3	• Clear understanding of text (meaning/context/audience) • Clear reference to characteristic features 3 marks	• Analysis is clear, coherent and well structured • Appropriate selection of elements of form, structure and language for analysis • Clear awareness of writer's stylistic choices, including how style relates to audience and shapes meaning • Uses clear and appropriate language to link evidence with explanatory comments 9–12 marks
2	• Limited understanding of text (meaning/context/audience) • Limited reference to characteristic features 2 marks	• Limited analysis, with some structure and limited coherence • Some appropriate selection of elements of form, structure and/or language for analysis • Limited awareness of writer's stylistic choices • Attempts to use appropriate language to link evidence with explanatory comments 5–8 marks

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Level	AO1: Read and demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of texts. 5 marks	AO3: Analyse the ways in which writers' and speakers' choices of form, structure and language produce meaning and style. 20 marks
1	• Basic understanding of text (meaning/context/audience) • Minimal reference to characteristic features 1 mark	• Basic analysis, with minimal structure or coherence • Minimal selection of elements of form, structure and language for analysis • Minimal awareness of writer's stylistic choices • Minimal use of appropriate language to link evidence with explanatory comments 1–4 marks
0	• No creditable response 0 marks	• No creditable response 0 marks

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