GradeMax

CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge International A Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE **9093/31**

Paper 3 Language Analysis **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.

This document consists of **13** printed pages.

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

[Turn over

GradeMax

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.

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

GradeMax

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).

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

GradeMax

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
1	Assessment Objective 1
2	Assessment Objective 2
4	Assessment Objective 4
5	Assessment Objective 5
REP	Repetition
λ	Omission
?	Requires clarity
SEEN	Seen
[Highlighter]	Inaccurate
	Not relevant

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

GradeMax

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.

AO4: Demonstrate understanding of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches. (Conceptualisation)

- Marks should be awarded equally on the basis of the level of the candidate's understanding of the relevant issues, concepts, methods and approaches represented both in the text(s) and in their wider studies.
- When awarding a 'best-fit' mark within a Level for each AO, consider each bullet point equally.

AO5: Analyse and synthesise language data from a variety of sources. (Data handling)

- Marks should be awarded equally on the basis of the level of the candidate's selection, analysis and synthesis of language data.
- When awarding a 'best-fit' mark within a Level for each AO, consider each bullet point equally.

Higher marks should be awarded where candidates identify patterns and offer thoughtful and plausible explanations for the features they are discussing.

Weaker answers may spot features or describe individual cases of language change without reference to broader considerations or examples.

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

9093/31 Mark Scheme June 202

GradeMax

Section A: Language change

Question	Answer	Marks
1	**Read Texts A, B and C.** **Analyse how Text A exemplifies the various ways in which the English language has changed over time. In your answer, you should refer to specific details from Texts A, B and C, as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study of language change.** 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. Candidates may organise their response in any appropriate way. They are not required to focus on lexis, grammar and syntax, orthography and graphology in separate sections. **Responses might feature the following:** **Lexis** • The semantic shift in the use of *injured*, which in Text A is used to refer to damage to an inanimate object, whereas the contemporary denotation would involve harm to a person or people. Text B exemplifies a change from this word often being used to refer to an injustice or wrong-doing in the 1500s–1800s, to more recent texts where this is more likely associated with physical harm, although the collocate 'party' remains frequent throughout • As seen in Text C, *procure*, although not obsolete, has become less frequent than either 'buy' or 'purchase'. In contemporary discourse, the verb *procure* is more frequently used to denote competitive tendering or bidding related to goods and services rather than to people, and this sounds formal to contemporary readers • The word *lest* sounds archaic today and is used where 'in case' may be used in contemporary English • The use of *for* in *for if the clothes*, where *for* seems to be synonymous with 'because', sounds formal today • The plural lexical item *muslins* is used less frequently in contemporary English, reflecting a change in fashion • The verb phrase *will answer* used to mean 'will suffice' or 'will be adequate' sounds quite formal to contemporary readers • The compound noun *cork-screw* is written without a hyphen by contemporary writers • Unlike *cork-screw*, *peach-stone* tends tends to be written as two separate words in contemporary texts. Candidates may comment on the way that changes in hyphen usage have not been consistent.	**25**

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

9093/31 Mark Scheme June 2026

GradeMax

Question	Answer	Marks
1	**Grammar** • The phrase *a less time* is used where 'a shorter time' or 'less time' would be used in contemporary English • Since *suds* is grammatically plural, the phrase 'too many suds' would be the standard way to refer to an excess of these, whereas in Text A *too much suds* is used, which would instead accord with a non-count noun in contemporary English (similar to 'soap') • The subjunctive clause *if this be done* is used but the clause 'if this is done' is more likely to be used in contemporary texts • Semi colons are used to separate two clauses in the lines *when you wash; for if* and *not hot; then boiled and rinsed.* In contemporary English, a comma would be used instead in the former example, and a dash (or parenthesis) in the latter. This gives Text A a feeling of density • There are a number of passive constructions used (including *should be washed*) which makes the text seem formal • In contemporary English, the preposition 'for' would precede *about* in the phrase *Should be milled about thirty minutes*. **Orthography** • Text A was published later than Samuel Johnson's dictionary of 1755 and Noah Webster's American dictionary of 1828, and so spelling is mostly standardised. Candidates may comment on the American spellings of *colored* and *woolen*, which accord with Webster's dictionary entries. **Graphology** • *&c.* is used where contemporary texts would be more likely to use the abbreviation 'etc.' • There are additional spaces used before semi-colons compared to contemporary usage.	

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

GradeMax

Marking criteria for Section A Question 1

Table A

Level	AO2: Write effectively, creatively, accurately and appropriately, for a range of audiences and purposes. 5 marks	AO4: Demonstrate understanding of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches. 5 marks	AO5: Analyse and synthesise language data from a variety of sources. 15 marks
5	• Sophisticated expression, with a high level of accuracy • Content is fully relevant; ideas are developed throughout in a sophisticated manner 5 marks	• Sophisticated understanding of, and insightful reference to, linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches 5 marks	• Insightful and fully appropriate selection of language data from all three sources • Sophisticated and insightful analysis of language data • Sophisticated synthesis of evidence from all three sources of language data 13–15 marks
4	• Effective expression, with a few minor errors which do not impede communication • Content is relevant; ideas are developed in an effective manner 4 marks	• Detailed understanding of, and effective reference to, linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches 4 marks	• Effective and appropriate selection of language data from all three sources • Detailed and effective analysis of language data • Effective synthesis of evidence from all three sources of language data 10–12 marks
3	• Clear expression, with occasional errors which do not impede communication • Content is relevant; ideas are developed clearly 3 marks	• Clear understanding of, and appropriate reference to, linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches 3 marks	• Clear and appropriate selection of language data from at least two sources • Clear analysis of language data • Clear synthesis of evidence from at least two sources of language data 7–9 marks

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Level	AO2: Write effectively, creatively, accurately and appropriately, for a range of audiences and purposes. 5 marks	AO4: Demonstrate understanding of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches. 5 marks	AO5: Analyse and synthesise language data from a variety of sources. 15 marks
2	• Expression is clear but may not flow easily, with frequent errors which generally do not impede communication • Content is mostly relevant; ideas are developed in a limited manner 2 marks	• Limited understanding of, but generally appropriate reference to, linguistic issues, concepts, methods and/or approaches 2 marks	• Limited and generally appropriate selection of language data; may be uneven coverage • Limited analysis of language data • Some attempt to synthesise evidence from sources of language data 4–6 marks
1	• Basic expression, with frequent errors which impede communication • Content may lack relevance in parts; minimal development of ideas 1 mark	• Basic understanding of, and minimal reference to, linguistic issues, concepts, methods and/or approaches 1 mark	• Basic and minimal selection of language data • Basic analysis of language data • Minimal attempt to synthesise evidence from sources of language data 1–3 marks
0	• No creditable response 0 marks	• No creditable response 0 marks	• No creditable response 0 marks

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

GradeMax

Section B: Child language acquisition

Question	Answer	Marks
2	**Read the following text, which is a transcription of a conversation between Bisma and her friend Shama (both age 6). Bisma's brother, Azad (age 4), and their mother are with them whilst they are making a puppet show.** **Analyse ways in which Bisma, Shama, Azad and the mother are using language in this conversation. In your answer, you should refer to specific details from the transcription, as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study of child language acquisition.** 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 child-directed speech and children's language features in separate sections. **Responses might feature the following:** **Child-directed speech** • The mother acts as intermediary, attempting to involve all three children in making a puppet show, e.g. *maybe azad can join in↗* • Later on, however, she provides a solution to the disruption, e.g. *anyway let him go and play and you carry on* to bring the situation back into equilibrium • The mother separates ideas with pause as if to list instructions, e.g. *(2) so think of a story for the show first and then youll know which characters you need (3)*, possibly to make the language more accessible for the children • She uses modifiers to try to simplify her message to assist the children's understanding, e.g. *in fact thats kind of what clay is (.) a special kind of mud* • Lexical choices are simple until she needs to be more firm with the children, e.g. *you cannot possibly <u>need</u> beads* using *cannot* instead of the contracted form.	**25**

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

9093/31 Mark Scheme June 2026

GradeMax

Question	Answer	Marks
2	**Children's language features** • Shama and Bisma have reached the continuing development stage of language acquisition. There is full phonological competence in both girls, e.g. *cinderella,* which indicates facility with polysyllabic lexis containing consonant cluster • Although Azad has reached the post-telegraphic stage, there are virtuous errors, including syllable deletion and tense in */jesdeɪ/ i make (1) i maked* • Nonetheless, in the same utterance he has consonant cluster competence in *worms* as well as pluralisation. He also uses contraction confidently, e.g. *i dont care* • Adjacency pairs are fulfilled although turntaking is interrupted either in playfulness or competitiveness • The patterns of repetition are of note: each of the children uses a three-word repeated phrase at different times as if to mimic each other's speech pattern, e.g. *outside outside outside* (Bisma) followed by Azad's *mud mud mud* which is interrupted by Shama's *yuck yuck yuck* • This pattern is further repeated later in Azad's song: *need beads need beads need beads*. This time, however, there is an increase in his linguistic competence being demonstrated with the rhyme and pitch variation when the words are sung • Bisma and Azad both use volume to reinforce ideas but of particular note is the way in which Bisma separates each word by pause in GIVE (.) ME (.) MY (.) BEADS (.) BACK (.) AZAD to increase the importance of her utterance. This is further strengthened with the stressed syllable in AZAD. **References to relevant theories and research should be integrated into the response and may include:** • In her role as Vygotsky's More Knowledgable Other, the mother successfully attempts to bring Bisma into a zone of proximal development as she describes the relationship between *mud* and *clay* • According to Piaget, all three children would be placed in the preoperational stage, although Bisma's reasoning in *well now hes gone i think we should* and Shama's in *no i dont want to make a show because* probably indicate emergence into the concrete operational stage. However, Azad's egocentric utterances, e.g. *i dont care*, position him firmly in the properational stage • A number of Hallidayan functions are evident, e.g. transactional (*lets make a show*), heuristic (*what things↗*), representational (*thats so horrible*) and regulatory (*dont let him spoil my beads mum*) • At times, Shama assumes the role of Language Acquisition Support System (Bruner) as she encourages Azad with a variety of question types, including her open *what like↗* and her closed *which are your best toys azad↗* • Chomsky may be cited, for example in Azad's virtuous error *i maked* • The mother uses negative reinforcement (Skinner), e.g. *azad you cannot possibly need beads* when she stresses *need*.	

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

GradeMax

Marking criteria for Section B Question 2

Table B

Level	AO1: Read and demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of texts. 5 marks	AO4: Demonstrate understanding of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches. 15 marks	AO5: Analyse and synthesise language data from a variety of sources. 5 marks
5	• Sophisticated understanding of text (meaning/context/audience) • Insightful reference to characteristic features 5 marks	• Sophisticated understanding of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches • Insightful reference to wider study of linguistic issues and concepts • Insightful reference to linguistic methods and approaches taken by fully appropriate theorists 13–15 marks	• Sophisticated selection, analysis and synthesis of language data 5 marks
4	• Detailed understanding of text (meaning/context/ audience) • Effective reference to characteristic features 4 marks	• Detailed understanding of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches • Effective reference to wider study of linguistic issues and concepts • Effective reference to linguistic methods and approaches taken by appropriate theorists 10–12 marks	• Detailed selection, analysis and synthesis of language data 4 marks
3	• Clear understanding of text (meaning/context/audience) • Clear reference to characteristic features 3 marks	• Clear understanding of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches • Clear reference to wider study of linguistic issues and concepts • Clear reference to linguistic methods and approaches taken by appropriate theorists 7–9 marks	• Clear selection, analysis and synthesis of language data 3 marks

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

GradeMax

Level	AO1: Read and demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of texts. 5 marks	AO4: Demonstrate understanding of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches. 15 marks	AO5: Analyse and synthesise language data from a variety of sources. 5 marks
2	• Limited understanding of text (meaning/context/ audience) • Limited reference to characteristic features 2 marks	• Limited understanding of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and/or approaches • Some limited reference to wider study of linguistic issues and/or concepts • Some limited reference to linguistic methods and/or approaches taken by generally appropriate theorists 4–6 marks	• Limited selection, analysis and/or synthesis of language data 2 marks
1	• Basic understanding of text (meaning/context/audience) • Minimal reference to characteristic features 1 mark	• Basic understanding of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and/or approaches • Minimal reference to wider study of linguistic issues and/or concepts • Minimal reference to linguistic methods and/or approaches taken by theorists 1–3 marks	• Basic selection, analysis and/or synthesis of language data 1 mark
0	• No creditable response 0 marks	• No creditable response 0 marks	• No creditable response 0 marks

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026