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CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge International A Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE **9093/32**

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.

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

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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.

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.

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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 lexical items *parties* and *antagonists* are used. Today the nouns 'teams' and 'opponents' would be more likely to be used, with *parties* and *antagonists* tending to have more formal connotations in contemporary English • The nouns *competitors* and *performers* are also used, where contemporary writers would be more likely to use 'players'. In contemporary texts, *performers* would be more likely to denote entertainers working in artistic fields, such as singers and dancers, rather than football players • Text C exemplifies the decline in the frequency of *in vogue*, whilst there has been an increase in frequency of 'trending', with a crossover around the 1930s–40s. The increase in 'trending' around 2010 may be due to the use in social media • Contemporary writers would be more likely to use 'whoever achieves it' than *he who achieves it* • The noun *instrument* has undergone a pragmatic shift • The phrases *a goal at foot-ball* and *a game at foot-ball* sound unusual to contemporary readers; the phrase 'a game of football' would be more common today • The phrase *it answers to* is used in a way which is synonymous with 'it corresponds to'	**25**

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Question	Answer	Marks
1	• The formal phrase *obtains the victory* is used where 'wins the game' or similar may be used in contemporary English. In contemporary English, *obtains* is relatively formal and tends to be used in legal or professional contexts where a planned effort is required. This is exemplified in Text B, which suggests that this verb is often now collocated with concrete nouns, whereas in the past it was used with more abstract concepts, some with religious associations. **Grammar** • Sentences are often complex. Relative clauses are frequently used, including *which is commonly made of a blown bladder* and *which they played with a ball* • Semi colons are frequently used to separate clauses, which gives the text a feeling of density • Several passive constructions are used (including *the ball… is delivered…*) which makes the text seem formal • The phrases *is but little practised* and *is much practised* would be unusual today and sound formal. In contemporary discourse *but* is used as a conjunction, whereas here it seems more synonymous with 'only' or 'just' • The phrase *There are generally two players, who have each of them his bat and ball* would use a different syntactical construction in contemporary texts. Candidates may discuss contemporary alternatives. **Orthography** • Text A was published later than Samuel Johnson's dictionary in 1755 and so spelling is mostly standardised • The nouns *pastime* and *pas'ime* are both used, suggesting some uncertainty about the spelling of this word • The hyphenated compound noun *foot-ball* would be written without a hyphen by contemporary writers to denote both the sport itself and the ball with which it is played. This reflects a tendency over time for compound words to begin by being written with a space, then to be hyphenated, then written solidly without a hyphen. However, *goff-ball*, which is likewise hyphenated in Text A, would be written as 'golf ball' in contemporary texts and has not followed this pattern. **Graphology** • The title includes Roman numerals and is set in block capitals with closed punctuation, which were commonplace conventions in chapter headings at the time • Additional spaces are used around semi-colons and colons.	

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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

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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

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Section B: Child language acquisition

Question	Answer	Marks
2	**Read the following text, which is a transcription of a conversation between Bartek (age 5) and his grandfather. They are at home, discussing a play that Bartek has recently taken part in at school.** **Analyse ways in which Bartek and his grandfather 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 grandfather uses a range of question types, e.g. his closed *did you like being in the play at school↗* and his open *why do you hate singing↗* to ensure that adjacency pairs are fulfilled as far as possible and to further the conversation • He uses varied intonation including raised and lowered pitch in his questioning, as well as stressed words and syllables, and raised volume for emphasis, e.g. *EXCITING* • The grandfather is quick to interrupt Bartek to check his behaviour, e.g. *oh no i dont need a demonstration* • He qualifies this, however, with an explanation: *i can use my imagination on that one thank you* and remains polite and enquiring throughout, despite Bartek's swift topic shifts • Topic shifts are also managed by the grandfather, including *who came to watch the play at school↗* in order to bring the conversation back to the original subject, Bartek's school play.	**25**

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Question	Answer	Marks
2	**Children's language features** • Bartek demonstrates full phonological competence including consonant cluster, e.g. *building things* with no substitution or deletion • He is also competent in pluralisation (e.g. *games*), negation and contraction (e.g. *i dont know*) • Pronouns *i, we, her, my* and *their* are used fluently • Bartek finds tenses problematic at times, e.g. *i sung it* but in general he is able to use simple present, past and continuous forms with intensifiers/adverbs, e.g. *shes too little*, *she said my name* and *it was just crying.* There is some successful use of language, however, to discuss future events in *can you come to see the play next time↗* • Some of Bartek's constructions are non-standard, e.g. *i was right all the times* although he is able to produce lengthy utterances involving conjunction, e.g. *did you know that im the best runner and i got picked by my teacher↗* which contain multiple ideas • Bartek mimics the baby crying using raised volume. The pattern of repetition in *CRY CRY CRY* is also seen in his attempt to demonstrate running: *fast fast fast* • Although his numeracy skills are not developed, e.g. *three zero one million times*, Bartek has some understanding of the way large numbers might be constructed and demonstrates language play in this utterance in order to impress his grandfather • Overall, although there are instances of holophrase, Bartek has reached the post-telegraphic stage of acquisition, despite some grammatical or syntactical slips, e.g. *to do a different big race.* **References to relevant theories and research should be integrated into the response and may include:** • Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device may be referenced in scrutiny of Bartek's virtuous tense error, *understanded*, in which he applies the standard English morphological rules of past tense • The grandfather makes two attempts to draw Bartek into a Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky) with his introduction of lexemes *rehearsal* and, later, *dialogue* – neither of these attempts are fruitful, however as Bartek merely ignores these examples of more sophisticated vocabulary • At age 5, Bartek sits within Piaget's preoperational stage, mainly evidenced by his egotistical responses, e.g. *i was right all the times* • The grandfather acts as Bartek's Language Acquisition Support System (Bruner) as he scaffolds using questioning technique to propel the conversation further • A number of Hallidayan functions are indicated, e.g. personal – *i hate singing*, representational – *we keep on running round and round (.) fast fast fast like this*, interactional – *did you like being in the play at school↗*, and regulatory, which is demonstrated by the grandfather in *its ok i dont need a demonstration of that either* • Rather than use negative reinforcement (Skinner) of Bartek's *to do a race*, for example, the grandfather chooses to ignore the non-standard construction and any virtuous errors seen elsewhere in the transcription.	

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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

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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

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