



## Syllabus

# Cambridge International AS & A Level English Language 9093

Use this syllabus for exams in 2024, 2025 and 2026.

Exams are available in the June and November series.

Also available for examination in March 2024, 2025 and 2026 for India only.



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## Why choose Cambridge International?

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Cambridge International prepares school students for life, helping them develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning. We are part of the University of Cambridge.

Our Cambridge Pathway gives students a clear path for educational success from age 5 to 19. Schools can shape the curriculum around how they want students to learn – with a wide range of subjects and flexible ways to offer them. It helps students discover new abilities and a wider world, and gives them the skills they need for life, so they can achieve at school, university and work.

Our programmes and qualifications set the global standard for international education. They are created by subject experts, rooted in academic rigour and reflect the latest educational research. They provide a strong platform for students to progress from one stage to the next, and are well supported by teaching and learning resources.

We review all our syllabuses regularly, so they reflect the latest research evidence and professional teaching practice – and take account of the different national contexts in which they are taught.

We consult with teachers to help us design each syllabus around the needs of their learners. Consulting with leading universities has helped us make sure our syllabuses encourage students to master the key concepts in the subject and develop the skills necessary for success in higher education.

Our mission is to provide educational benefit through provision of international programmes and qualifications for school education and to be the world leader in this field. Together with schools, we develop Cambridge learners who are confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged – equipped for success in the modern world.

Every year, nearly a million Cambridge students from 10 000 schools in 160 countries prepare for their future with the Cambridge Pathway.

**School feedback:** ‘We think the Cambridge curriculum is superb preparation for university.’

**Feedback from:** Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University, USA

### Quality management



Cambridge International is committed to providing exceptional quality. In line with this commitment, our quality management system for the provision of international qualifications and education programmes for students aged 5 to 19 is independently certified as meeting the internationally recognised standard, ISO 9001:2015. Learn more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001)

# Contents

<b>Why choose Cambridge International?</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>1 Why choose this syllabus?</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2 Syllabus overview</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Aims	8
Content overview	9
Assessment overview	10
Assessment objectives	11
<b>3 Subject content</b> .....	<b>12</b>
AS Level content (Paper 1 and Paper 2)	12
Paper 1 Reading	12
Paper 2 Writing	13
A Level content (Paper 3 and Paper 4)	15
Paper 3 Language Analysis	15
Paper 4 Language Topics	17
<b>4 Details of the assessment</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Paper 1 Reading	19
Paper 2 Writing	20
Paper 3 Language Analysis	21
Paper 4 Language Topics	22
Command words	23
<b>5 Additional information</b> .....	<b>24</b>
Reference table of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) phonemic symbols (Received Pronunciation)	24
Transcription key	25
<b>6 What else you need to know</b> .....	<b>26</b>
Before you start	26
Making entries	27
Accessibility and equality	28
After the exam	29
How students, teachers and higher education can use the grades	30
Grade descriptions	30
Changes to this syllabus for 2024, 2025 and 2026	31

## **Important: Changes to this syllabus**

**For information about changes to this syllabus for 2024, 2025 and 2026, go to page 31.**

The latest syllabus is version 2, published October 2021.

Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2021 are still suitable for use with this syllabus.



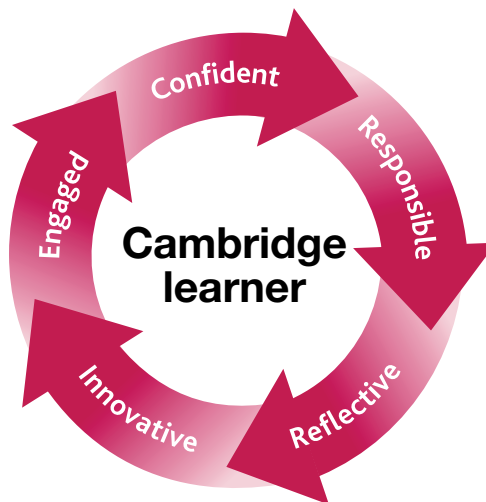
# 1 Why choose this syllabus?

## Key benefits

The best motivation for a student is a real passion for the subject they're learning. By offering students a variety of Cambridge International AS & A Levels, you can give them the greatest chance of finding the path of education they most want to follow. With over 50 subjects to choose from, students can select the ones they love and that they're best at, which helps motivate them throughout their studies.

Following a Cambridge International AS & A Level programme helps students develop abilities which universities value highly, including:

- a deep understanding of their subjects
- higher order thinking skills – analysis, critical thinking, problem solving
- presenting ordered and coherent arguments
- independent learning and research.



**Cambridge International AS & A Level English Language** develops a set of transferable skills. These include critical analysis; constructing arguments; presenting knowledge and understanding; and writing English in a balanced, articulate and fluent manner. Learners can apply these skills across a wide range of subjects and real-world situations. These skills will also equip them well for progression to higher education or directly into employment.

Our approach in Cambridge International AS & A Level English Language encourages learners to be:

**confident**, exploring texts and ideas with self-assurance, intellectual freedom and personal insight

**responsible**, committing to their learning and developing linguistic expertise to better understand themselves, others and the wider community

**reflective**, developing a keen and critical sense of themselves as users and consumers of language in a range of ever-changing contexts

**innovative**, approaching tasks and texts with a combination of creative, original and flexible thinking

**engaged**, recognising and interrogating the role language plays in matters of personal, social and global significance, and being prepared to apply this learning beyond the classroom

**School feedback:** 'Cambridge students develop a deep understanding of subjects and independent thinking skills.'

**Feedback from:** Principal, Rockledge High School, USA

## Key concepts

Key concepts are essential ideas that help students develop a deep understanding of their subject and make links between different aspects. Key concepts may open up new ways of thinking about, understanding or interpreting the important things to be learned.

Good teaching and learning will incorporate and reinforce a subject's key concepts to help students gain:

- a greater depth as well as breadth of subject knowledge
- confidence, especially in applying knowledge and skills in new situations
- the vocabulary to discuss their subject conceptually and show how different aspects link together
- a level of mastery of their subject to help them enter higher education.

The key concepts identified below, carefully introduced and developed, will help to underpin the course you will teach. You may identify additional key concepts which will also enrich teaching and learning.

The key concepts for Cambridge International AS & A Level English Language are:

- **Text and context**

A **text** can be defined as a single, coherent unit of language, from the briefest spoken utterance to a book published across several volumes. However, no text exists without **context**; students of English language must always consider how a text's meaning is informed by the circumstances not only of its production, but also of its communication and reception.

- **Meaning and style**

The study of English language involves developing a range of strategies for exploring the complex ways in which different linguistic elements come together to create **meaning**. Whether producing their own texts or analysing texts produced by others, students of English language must consider how choices regarding form, structure and language also interact to create a distinctive **style**.

- **Audience**

Students of English language must learn to identify and analyse the strategies writers and speakers use to communicate with their intended **audience(s)**. Likewise, they must be able to predict, recognise and analyse the various responses these strategies might elicit.

- **Creativity**

Whether writing artfully for a specified purpose and audience, reading deeply between the lines of a challenging text, or developing strategies for acquiring the language in the first place, users of the English language must demonstrate **creativity** in a range of forms and contexts.

- **Diversity**

Constantly subject to a range of influences – whether personal, social, geographical or otherwise – the English language exists in a range of competing and overlapping forms at any given moment. This extraordinary **diversity** offers a rich opportunity for analysis, comparison and exploration.

- **Change**

The phonological, morphological, semantic, syntactic and other aspects of the English language are liable to **change** over time. Students of English language must analyse these changes and explore in detail the factors that drive them.

## International recognition and acceptance

Our expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment is the basis for the recognition of our programmes and qualifications around the world. Every year thousands of students with Cambridge International AS & A Levels gain places at leading universities worldwide. Our programmes and qualifications are valued by top universities around the world including those in the UK, US (including Ivy League universities), Europe, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

UK NARIC, the national agency in the UK for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills, has carried out an independent benchmarking study of Cambridge International AS & A Level and found it to be comparable to the standard of AS & A Level in the UK. This means students can be confident that their Cambridge International AS & A Level qualifications are accepted as equivalent, grade for grade, to UK AS & A Levels by leading universities worldwide.

Cambridge International AS Level English Language makes up the first half of the Cambridge International A Level course in English Language and provides a foundation for the study of English Language at Cambridge International A Level. Depending on local university entrance requirements, students may be able to use it to progress directly to university courses in English Language or some other subjects. It is also suitable as part of a course of general education.

Cambridge International A Level English Language provides a foundation for the study of English or related courses in higher education. Equally it is suitable as part of a course of general education.

For more information about the relationship between the Cambridge International AS Level and Cambridge International A Level see the 'Assessment overview' section of the Syllabus overview.

We recommend learners check the Cambridge recognition database and university websites to find the most up-to-date entry requirements for courses they wish to study.

Learn more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition)

**School feedback:** 'The depth of knowledge displayed by the best A Level students makes them prime targets for America's Ivy League universities.'

**Feedback from:** Yale University, USA

## Supporting teachers

We provide a wide range of resources, detailed guidance and innovative training and professional development so that you can give your students the best possible preparation for Cambridge International AS & A Level. To find out which resources are available for each syllabus go to [www.cambridgeinternational.org/support](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support)

The School Support Hub is our secure online site for Cambridge teachers where you can find the resources you need to deliver our programmes. You can also keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community through our online discussion forums.

Find out more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/support](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support)

Support for Cambridge International AS & A Level			
<b>Planning and preparation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next steps guides.</li> <li>• Schemes of work.</li> <li>• Specimen papers.</li> <li>• Syllabuses.</li> <li>• Teacher guides.</li> </ul>	<b>Teaching and assessment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorsed resources.</li> <li>• Online forums.</li> <li>• Support for coursework and speaking tests.</li> </ul>	<b>Learning and revision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Example candidate responses.</li> <li>• Past papers and mark schemes.</li> <li>• Specimen paper answers.</li> </ul>	<b>Results</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidate Results Service.</li> <li>• Principal examiner reports for teachers.</li> <li>• Results Analysis.</li> </ul>

Sign up for email notifications about changes to syllabuses, including new and revised products and services at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates)

## Professional development

We support teachers through:

- Introductory Training – face-to-face or online
- Extension Training – face-to-face or online
- Enrichment Professional Development – face-to-face or online

Find out more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/events](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/events)

- Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications

Find out more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/profdev](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/profdev)



### Supporting exams officers

We provide comprehensive support and guidance for all Cambridge exams officers.

Find out more at: [www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)

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## 2 Syllabus overview

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### Aims

The aims describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus.

The aims are to enable students to:

- enjoy the experience of studying English language
- develop a critical and informed response to texts in a range of forms, styles and contexts, produced for a variety of audiences
- communicate effectively, creatively, accurately and appropriately in their writing
- develop the interdependent skills of reading, analysis and research
- develop an appreciation of concepts and techniques in the study of English language
- build a firm foundation for further study of language and linguistics.



Cambridge Assessment International Education is an education organisation and politically neutral. The contents of this syllabus, examination papers and associated materials do not endorse any political view. We endeavour to treat all aspects of the exam process neutrally.



## Content overview

Cambridge International AS Level English Language provides learners with opportunities to make critical and informed responses to a wide range of texts. Learners will also demonstrate their ability to produce writing to specific briefs and for given audiences.

Cambridge International A Level English Language learners will also develop a strong foundation in the study of linguistics, focusing on language change, child language acquisition, English in the world, and language and the self.

Learners who follow the Cambridge International AS & A Level English Language syllabus will develop the following skills and understanding:

- sustaining accurate, fluent and consistent writing
- producing informed responses appropriate to the specified form, style, context, and audiences
- conveying knowledge and understanding from both specific examples and wider studies.

These are highly transferable skills and may help learners in other subject areas, as well as equipping them for higher education or employment.

### Support for Cambridge International AS & A Level English Language



Our School Support Hub [www.cambridgeinternational.org/support](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support) provides Cambridge schools with a secure site for downloading specimen and past question papers, mark schemes, grade thresholds and other curriculum resources specific to this syllabus. The School Support Hub community offers teachers the opportunity to connect with each other and to ask questions related to the syllabus.

**School feedback:** ‘Cambridge International AS & A Levels prepare students well for university because they’ve learnt to go into a subject in considerable depth. There’s that ability to really understand the depth and richness and the detail of a subject. It’s a wonderful preparation for what they are going to face at university.’

**Feedback from:** US Higher Education Advisory Council

## Assessment overview

### Paper 1

Reading 2 hours 15 minutes

50 marks

Candidates answer **two** compulsory questions: Question 1 in Section A, and Question 2 in Section B.

Externally assessed

50% of the AS Level

25% of the A Level

### Paper 3

Language Analysis 2 hours 15 minutes

50 marks

Candidates answer **two** compulsory questions: Question 1 in Section A, and Question 2 in Section B.

Externally assessed

25% of the A Level

### Paper 2

Writing 2 hours

50 marks

Candidates answer **two** questions: one compulsory question from Section A, and one question from a choice of three in Section B.

Externally assessed

50% of the AS Level

25% of the A Level

### Paper 4

Language Topics 2 hours 15 minutes

50 marks

Candidates answer **two** compulsory questions each on a separate topic area: Question 1 in Section A, and Question 2 in Section B.

Externally assessed

25% of the A Level

Information on availability is in the **Before you start** section.

There are three routes for Cambridge International AS & A Level English Language:

Route	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4
<b>1 AS Level only</b> (Candidates take all AS components in the same exam series)	yes	yes	no	no
<b>2 A Level</b> (staged over two years) Year 1 AS Level*	yes	yes	no	no
Year 2 Complete the A Level	no	no	yes	yes
<b>3 A Level</b> (Candidates take all components in the same exam series)	yes	yes	yes	yes

\* Candidates carry forward their AS Level result subject to the rules and time limits described in the *Cambridge Handbook*.

Candidates following an AS Level route will be eligible for grades a–e. Candidates following an A Level route are eligible for grades A\*–E.

## Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

### AO1

Read and demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of texts.

### AO2

Write effectively, creatively, accurately and appropriately, for a range of audiences and purposes.

### AO3

Analyse the ways in which writers' and speakers' choices of form, structure and language produce meaning and style.

### AO4

Demonstrate understanding of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches.

### AO5

Analyse and synthesise language data from a variety of sources.

## Weighting for assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

### Assessment objectives as a percentage of each qualification

Assessment objective	Weighting in AS Level %	Weighting in A Level %
AO1	15	20
AO2	45	30
AO3	40	20
AO4	0	20
AO5	0	10
Total	100	100

### Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %			
	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4
AO1	30	0	10	40
AO2	10	80	10	20
AO3	60	20	0	0
AO4	0	0	40	40
AO5	0	0	40	0
Total	100	100	100	100

## 3 Subject content

### AS Level content (Paper 1 and Paper 2)

In Paper 1, candidates are primarily assessed on skills and techniques related to reading.

In Paper 2, candidates are primarily assessed on skills and techniques related to writing.

The examples listed in the content below are suggested rather than prescribed ways in which candidates can demonstrate knowledge and understanding. These examples are not exhaustive.

### Paper 1 Reading

Learners are encouraged to read widely throughout their programme of study, continually deepening their appreciation of an increasingly rich array of reading material. They should develop an intimate knowledge and understanding of the conventions and discourses associated with a diverse range of genres, styles and contexts. Furthermore, learners should continue to cultivate their personal relationship with reading, enabling them to respond reflectively, analytically, discursively and creatively, as is appropriate to the task or context.

#### Knowledge and understanding

Candidates should be prepared to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- the conventions of a wide range of written textual forms
- the linguistic elements and literary features of texts
- the significance of audience in both the design and reception of texts
- the ways in which genre, purpose and context contribute to the meaning of texts

Examples:

- advertisements, brochures, leaflets, editorials, news stories, articles, reviews, blogs, investigative journalism, letters, podcasts, (auto)biographies, travel writing, diaries, essays, scripted speech, narrative writing, and descriptive writing
- parts of speech / word classes, vocabulary, figurative language, phonology, morphology, rhetorical devices, voice, aspect, tense, modality, narrative perspective, word ordering and sentence structure, paragraph- and text-level structure, formality/informality of tone, pragmatics

## Skills and techniques

Candidates should be prepared to demonstrate the following skills and techniques:

- reading a range of unseen texts
- analysing the ways in which linguistic elements come together in a text to create meaning
- recognising different nonfiction textual forms and their conventions
- writing analytically about the effects produced by a range of linguistic elements and literary features
- integrating individual analytical points into broader overall responses to texts
- selecting and interpreting words and phrases from a text with care and precision
- recognising and commenting on the overall style of a text, and exemplifying this through specific instances of language analysis
- using quotations and evidence, with judgement, to produce precise, meaningful commentaries
- using appropriate language to link quotations and evidence with explanatory comments
- integrating quotations and evidence into a cohesive argument
- writing short, directed pieces in response to a text
- writing in the same style as another text
- writing in a different style from a text at the same time as re-using the content/material
- comparing the style and linguistic elements of their own writing with those of a given text.

## Paper 2 Writing

Using their reading as inspiration, learners should explore and experiment with a similarly extensive variety of genres, styles and contexts in their writing. In addition to refining their ability to express themselves with precision and clarity of purpose, learners should become increasingly reflective writers, capable of adapting the style of their writing to fit a diverse range of forms, audiences, purposes and contexts.

The knowledge and understanding that candidates are required to demonstrate in Paper 2 is the same as is covered in Paper 1.

## Knowledge and understanding

Candidates should be prepared to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- the conventions of a wide range of written textual forms
- the linguistic elements and literary features of texts

Examples:

- advertisements, brochures, leaflets, editorials, news stories, articles, reviews, blogs, investigative journalism, letters, podcasts, (auto)biographies, travel writing, diaries, essays, scripted speech, narrative writing, and descriptive writing
- parts of speech / word classes, vocabulary, figurative language, phonology, morphology, rhetorical devices, voice, aspect, tense, modality, narrative perspective, word ordering and sentence structure, paragraph- and text-level structure, formality/informality of tone, pragmatics

### Knowledge and understanding continued

Candidates should be prepared to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- the significance of audience in both the design and reception of texts
- the ways in which genre, purpose and context contribute to the meaning of texts

### Skills and techniques

Candidates should be prepared to demonstrate the following skills and techniques:

- writing for a specified audience and purpose, to fulfil the brief provided
- producing an appropriate structure for longer pieces of writing
- organising writing to achieve specific effects
- structuring paragraphs
- using a range of appropriate linguistic elements and literary features
- expressing ideas accurately and clearly at both sentence and word level
- reflecting upon and evaluating the qualities of their own writing, including aspects relating to its purpose, form and audience

Examples:

- Freytag's Pyramid in imaginative writing; dialectical structure in discursive writing; introductory, summary and evaluative sections in review writing
- withholding key information in imaginative writing; juxtaposing counterarguments in discursive writing; evidentiary logic in critical writing
- topic sentences, connectives, internal coherence, discourse markers
- imagery in descriptive writing; rhetorical devices in argumentative writing; evaluative lexis in critical writing

## A Level content (Paper 3 and Paper 4)

At A Level, candidates are required to build upon the knowledge and understanding established at AS Level, and to concentrate their study on four specialised subject areas:

- language change
- child language acquisition
- English in the world
- language and the self.

Similarly, the skills and techniques required at A Level expand upon those required at AS Level: Paper 3 primarily focuses on skills and techniques related to analytical reading, while the emphasis in Paper 4 is on discursive writing.

The examples listed in the content below are suggested rather than prescribed ways in which candidates can demonstrate knowledge and understanding. These examples are not exhaustive.

## Paper 3 Language Analysis

Learners should familiarise themselves with a comprehensive set of tools, strategies and conventions for studying language. This should include the following: developing frameworks for analysing and comparing unseen texts; assimilating a range of appropriate technical terminology; assessing, evaluating and synthesising sources of evidence; carrying out independent research into language concepts; contextualising their views in relation to theories; and understanding language data presented in the form of transcripts, tables and graphs.

### Section A: Language change

In Section A, learners will explore how English has continually adapted to reflect changes in the social, cultural, political and technological contexts in which it has been used. Learners will explore the causes and consequences of language change in English, developing their knowledge of the topic through research, analysis, and an understanding of conventional methods of presenting historical language data.

#### Knowledge and understanding

Candidates should be prepared to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- the chronology and essential features of the development of the English language from Early Modern English to Contemporary English
- concepts and terminology related to language change
- theories and theorists of language change
- *n*-gram graphs representing changes in language use over time
- word tables derived from corpus data

Examples:

- graphology, orthography, phonology, morphology, syntax, lexis, semantics, pragmatics, grammar
- etymology, derivation, inflection, telescoping, coalescence, acronym, conversion, compounding, backformation, blending, borrowing, amelioration, pejoration, broadening, narrowing
- random fluctuation theory, cultural transmission theory, theory of lexical gaps, substratum theory, functional theory, tree and wave models
- comparisons of related words, parts of speech, inflections, collocations
- collocate lists, synonym lists

### Skills and techniques

Candidates should be prepared to demonstrate the following skills and techniques:

- researching in the field of language change
- analysing unseen texts as exemplars of certain aspects of language change
- interpreting and analysing *n*-gram graphs and corpus data relating to language change
- contextualising findings alongside relevant theories and concepts relating to language change
- synthesising their responses to a range of language data into a coherent analytical essay.

## Section B: Child language acquisition

In Section B, learners will explore the stages of early development (0–8 years) in child language acquisition, considering the various features and functions of spoken language use during this period, and familiarising themselves with a range of relevant theories, theorists and conventions within the field.

### Knowledge and understanding

Candidates should be prepared to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- the main stages of early development in child language acquisition
- the different functions of children's language
- theories and theorists of child language acquisition
- the conventions and features of unscripted conversation and spoken language transcripts

Examples:

- babbling, holophrastic, telegraphic and post-telegraphic stages
- instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, representational, heuristic, imaginative
- imitation and reinforcement theory, language acquisition device, language acquisition support system, cognitive development theory, child-directed or caretaker speech
- notation for pauses, overlaps, stress, intonation and phonemic features

### Skills and techniques

Candidates should be prepared to demonstrate the following skills and techniques:

- researching in the field of child language acquisition
- analysing spoken language transcripts as exemplars of certain aspects of child language acquisition
- interpreting and analysing instances of conversation involving children aged 0 to 8 years
- contextualising findings alongside relevant theories and concepts relating to child language acquisition
- synthesising these theoretical considerations into a coherent analytical essay.



## Paper 4 Language Topics

Throughout the syllabus, learners are encouraged to move beyond the practical application of English language, and to engage in a deeper consideration of a number of theoretical issues related to its use. Learners should develop their ability to engage in discussion on how the diverse forms of English that exist across the world interact both with one another and with other languages, and, how language use contributes to the construction and development of the self.

For Paper 4, learners will study two key topics in the field of English language studies: ‘English in the world’ in Section A and ‘Language and the self’ in Section B.

### Section A: English in the world

In Section A, learners will explore the history of English as a ‘global’ language; the development of standard and nonstandard forms of English, including the varieties used by first-language users outside the UK; and ethical considerations related to the continuing expansion of English usage around the world.

#### Knowledge and understanding

Candidates should be prepared to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theories, theorists and studies relating to:

- the historical development of English as a ‘global’ language
- varieties of English
- relevant ethical considerations

Examples:

- colonialism, cultural influence and effects, concentric circles model, multilingualism, the future of English
- standard and nonstandard ‘Englishes’, creolisation, sociolect continuum, official and unofficial attitudes and policies
- language shift and death, cultural imperialism, equality of opportunity, global cooperation

#### Skills and techniques

Candidates should be prepared to demonstrate the following skills and techniques:

- reading and demonstrating critical understanding of unseen texts relating to ‘English in the world’
- selecting and analysing pertinent ideas and examples from the texts
- relating these ideas and examples to theories, theorists and studies from their wider research in the relevant topic area
- synthesising these considerations into a coherent analytical essay.

## Section B: Language and the self

In Section B, learners will explore how language allows us to communicate our sense of self to others, as well as playing a highly significant role in the ongoing construction, determination and development of that self. Learners will study the degree to which language is innate, learned, or both; the ways in which language and thought are both interwoven with, and separable from, each other; and how we use language, both consciously and unconsciously, to construct and maintain social identities.

### Knowledge and understanding

Candidates should be prepared to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theories, theorists and studies relating to:

- innateness and learning
- the relationship between language and thought
- the relationship between language and social identity

Examples:

- behaviourism, innatism, nativism, empiricism
- linguistic relativity and determinism, universalism, language of thought hypothesis
- speech communities, prestige, idiolect, dialect, sociolect, genderlect, variation, standard and nonstandard features, inclusion and exclusion, speech sounds and accents

### Skills and techniques

Candidates should be prepared to demonstrate the following skills and techniques:

- reading and demonstrating critical understanding of unseen texts relating to 'Language and the self'
- selecting and analysing pertinent ideas and examples from the texts
- relating these ideas and examples to theories, theorists and studies from their wider research in the relevant topic area
- synthesising these considerations into a coherent analytical essay.

### Support for Cambridge International AS & A Level English Language

New support for teachers includes a Teacher guide, Learner guide and a Glossary of terms. Other support is available from our School Support Hub at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/support](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support)



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## 4 Details of the assessment

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### Paper 1 Reading

Written paper, 2 hours 15 minutes, 50 marks

This paper has two sections, Section A: Directed response, and Section B: Text analysis. Each section is worth 25 marks.

Candidates must answer **two** compulsory questions: Question 1 in Section A, and Question 2 in Section B.

Each question requires candidates to respond to one unseen text.

Examples of the text types candidates may be required to read (or produce for Question 1(a)) include advertisements, brochures, leaflets, editorials, news stories, articles, reviews, blogs, investigative journalism, letters, podcasts, (auto)biographies, travel writing, diaries, essays, scripted speech, narrative writing, and descriptive writing.

Dictionaries may **not** be used.

#### Section A: Directed response

Question 1 is in two parts:

- (a) directed writing task in response to a text (10 marks)
- (b) comparison of the form, structure and language of the candidate's response in part (a) with that of the original text (15 marks)

In Question 1(a), candidates are required to read a text of approximately 550–750 words, and write a directed response of 150–200 words, choosing their vocabulary, style and structure to fit a specific form, purpose and audience.

This question assesses AO1 and AO2.

In Question 1(b), candidates are required to:

- identify, analyse and compare characteristic features of the texts
- relate these features to the purpose, audience and context of the texts.

This question assesses AO1 and AO3.

## Section B: Text analysis

In Question 2, candidates are required to read a text of approximately 550–750 words, and comment on the form, structure and language of the text.

Candidates are required to:

- identify characteristic features of the text, relate them to the meaning, context and audience of the writing, and organise information in their answers
- comment on aspects of form, structure and language
- write in an appropriate style.

This question assesses AO1 and AO3.

## Paper 2 Writing

Written paper, 2 hours, 50 marks

This paper has two sections, Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary, and Section B: Extended writing. Each section is worth 25 marks.

Candidates must answer **two** questions: Question 1 in Section A (compulsory), and **one** question in Section B.

Dictionaries may **not** be used.

### Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary

Question 1 is in two parts:

- (a) writing a short text in response to a prompt (15 marks)
- (b) writing a reflective commentary based on how the text produced in part (a) fulfils the brief (10 marks)

In Question 1(a), candidates are required to write a response of no more than 400 words to a prompt, choosing their vocabulary, style and structure to fit a specific form, purpose and audience.

Examples of the text types candidates may be required to produce include advertisements, brochures, leaflets, editorials, news stories, articles, reviews, blogs, investigative journalism, letters, podcasts, (auto)biographies, travel writing, diaries, essays, scripted speech, narrative writing, and descriptive writing.

This question assesses AO2.

In Question 1(b), candidates are required to write a reflective commentary explaining how their linguistics choices have contributed to fulfilling the brief in part (a).

Candidates are required to focus on their choices of form, structure and language, and to analyse how these stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning.

This question assesses AO3.

## Section B: Extended writing

Candidates choose to answer **one** out of three questions.

Each question corresponds to one of the three following categories:

- imaginative/descriptive
- discursive/argumentative
- review/critical.

Depending on the category, examples of the text types candidates may be required to produce include advertisements, brochures, leaflets, editorials, news stories, articles, reviews, blogs, investigative journalism, letters, podcasts, (auto)biographies, travel writing, diaries, essays, scripted speech, narrative writing, and descriptive writing.

In each question, candidates are required to:

- produce a continuous piece of writing of 600–900 words
- express their ideas clearly, coherently and accurately, using an appropriate range of language
- develop their writing in a manner appropriate to the form, purpose and audience.

This question assesses AO2.

## Paper 3 Language Analysis

Written paper, 2 hours 15 minutes, 50 marks

This paper has two sections, Section A: Language change, and Section B: Child language acquisition. Each section is worth 25 marks.

Candidates must answer **both** questions.

Dictionaries may **not** be used.

### Section A: Language change

In Question 1, candidates are required to respond to three texts:

- a prose text of approximately 300–400 words, written at any time from the Early Modern English period (beginning c.1500) to the present day
- two sources of quantitative language data: an *n*-gram graph and a word table of corpus data.

Examples of the prose text types candidates may be required to analyse include advertisements, brochures, leaflets, editorials, news stories, articles, reviews, blogs, investigative journalism, letters, podcasts, (auto) biographies, travel writing, diaries, essays, scripted speech, narrative writing, and descriptive writing.

Candidates are required to analyse how the prose text exemplifies ways in which the English language has changed over time. They are required to support their response with reference to the two sources of quantitative language data provided, and also to their wider study of language change.

This question assesses AO2, AO4 and AO5.

## Section B: Child language acquisition

In Question 2, candidates are required to respond to a transcript featuring language spoken by a child or children between the ages of 0 and 8, possibly alongside other speakers.

Candidates are required to analyse ways in which the speakers in the transcript use language, referring to specific details from the transcription, and relating their observations to ideas and examples from their wider study of child language acquisition.

This question assesses AO1, AO4 and AO5.

## Paper 4 Language Topics

Written paper, 2 hours 15 minutes, 50 marks

This paper has two sections, Section A: English in the world, and Section B: Language and the self. Each section is worth 25 marks.

Candidates must answer **both** questions.

Dictionaries may **not** be used.

### Section A: English in the world

In Question 1, candidates are required to respond to approximately 400–500 words of text on the topic of ‘English in the world’.

In their essay, candidates are required to discuss the most important issues the text raises in relation to a specified aspect of the role and status of the English language in the world. They are required to refer to specific details from the text, relating points in their discussion to ideas and examples from their wider study of the topic of English in the world.

This question assesses AO1, AO2 and AO4.

### Section B: Language and the self

In Question 2, candidates are required to respond to approximately 400–500 words of text on the topic of ‘Language and the self’.

In their essay, candidates are required to discuss the most important issues the text raises in relation to a specified aspect of the relationship between language and the self. They are required to refer to specific details from the text, relating points in their discussion to ideas and examples from their wider study of the topic of language and the self.

This question assesses AO1, AO2 and AO4.

## Command words

Command words and their meanings help candidates know what is expected from them in the exam. The table below includes command words used in the assessment for this syllabus. The use of the command word will relate to the subject context.

Command word	What it means
<b>Analyse</b>	examine in detail to show meaning, identify elements and the relationship between them
<b>Compare</b>	identify/comment on similarities and/or differences
<b>Discuss</b>	write about issue(s) or topic(s) in depth in a structured way

## 5 Additional information

### Reference table of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) phonemic symbols (Received Pronunciation)

1 Consonants of English	2 Pure vowels of English
/ f / <u>f</u> at, rou <u>gh</u>	/ i: /     be <u>a</u> t, kee <u>p</u>
/ v / <u>v</u> ery, <u>v</u> illage, lo <u>v</u> e	/ ɪ /     b <u>i</u> t, t <u>i</u> p, bu <u>s</u> y
/ ə / <u>t</u> heatre, <u>th</u> ank, ath <u>l</u> ete	/ e /     be <u>t</u> , ma <u>n</u> y
/ ð / <u>t</u> his, <u>th</u> em, <u>w</u> ith, e <u>i</u> ther	/ æ /     b <u>a</u> t
/ s / <u>s</u> ing, thi <u>n</u> ks, lo <u>s</u> ses	/ ʌ /     cu <u>p</u> , s <u>o</u> n, b <u>l</u> ood
/ z / <u>z</u> oo, be <u>d</u> s, ea <u>s</u> y	/ a: /     c <u>a</u> r, h <u>e</u> art, c <u>a</u> lm, a <u>u</u> nt
/ ʃ / <u>s</u> ugar, bu <u>sh</u>	/ ɒ /     p <u>o</u> t, w <u>a</u> nt
/ ʒ /     ple <u>a</u> sure, be <u>i</u> ge	/ ɔ: /     p <u>o</u> rt, s <u>a</u> w, t <u>a</u> lk
/ h / <u>h</u> igh, <u>h</u> it, be <u>h</u> ind	/ ə /     a <u>b</u> out, su <u>d</u> den
/ p / <u>p</u> it, t <u>o</u> p	/ ɜ: /     w <u>o</u> rd, b <u>i</u> rd
/ t / <u>t</u> ip, p <u>o</u> t, s <u>t</u> ee <u>p</u>	/ ʊ /     b <u>o</u> ok, w <u>o</u> od, p <u>u</u> t
/ k /     k <u>e</u> ep, t <u>i</u> ck, s <u>c</u> are	/ u: /     f <u>o</u> od, s <u>o</u> up, r <u>u</u> de
/ b /     b <u>a</u> d, ru <u>b</u>	
/ d /     b <u>a</u> d, d <u>i</u> m	<b>3 Diphthongs of English</b>
/ g /     g <u>u</u> n, b <u>i</u> g	/ eɪ /     l <u>a</u> te, d <u>a</u> y, g <u>r</u> eat
/ tʃ / <u>ch</u> urch, l <u>u</u> nc <u>h</u>	/ aɪ /     t <u>i</u> me, h <u>i</u> gh, d <u>i</u> e
/ dʒ /     j <u>u</u> dge, g <u>i</u> n, j <u>u</u> ry	/ ɔɪ /     b <u>o</u> y, n <u>o</u> ise
/ m /     m <u>a</u> d, j <u>a</u> m, s <u>m</u> all	/ aʊ /     c <u>o</u> w, h <u>o</u> use, t <u>o</u> wn
/ n /     m <u>a</u> n, n <u>o</u> , s <u>n</u> ow	/ əʊ /     b <u>o</u> at, h <u>o</u> me, k <u>n</u> ow
/ ŋ /     s <u>i</u> nger, l <u>o</u> ng	/ ɪə /     e <u>a</u> r, h <u>e</u> re
/ l /     l <u>o</u> ud, k <u>i</u> ll, p <u>l</u> ay	/ eə /     a <u>i</u> r, c <u>a</u> re, c <u>h</u> air
/ j / <u>y</u> ou, b <u>e</u> y <u>o</u> nd	/ ʊə /     c <u>u</u> re, j <u>u</u> ry
/ w / <u>o</u> ne, w <u>h</u> en, s <u>w</u> ee <u>t</u>	
/ r /     r <u>i</u> m, b <u>r</u> ead	
/ ʔ /     uh_oh	



## Transcription key

(1)	=	pause in seconds
(.)	=	micropause
underlined	=	stressed sound/syllable(s)
//	=	speech overlap
[ <i>italics</i> ]	=	paralinguistic features
< <i>italics</i> >	=	contextual information
UPPER CASE	=	words spoken with increased volume
°word°	=	words spoken with decreased volume
↗	=	upward intonation
↘	=	downward intonation
/wiv/	=	phonemic representation of speech sounds

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## 6 What else you need to know

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This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support. Find more information about our administrative processes at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)

### Before you start

#### Previous study

We recommend that learners starting this course should have completed a course in English equivalent to Cambridge IGCSE™ or Cambridge O Level.

#### Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge International AS & A Level syllabuses based on learners having about 180 guided learning hours for each Cambridge International AS Level and about 360 guided learning hours for a Cambridge International A Level. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to local practice and their previous experience of the subject.

#### Availability and timetables

You can enter candidates in the June and November exam series. If your school is in India, you can enter your candidates in the March exam series. You can view the timetable for your administrative zone at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables)

Private candidates can enter for this syllabus.

#### Combining with other syllabuses

Candidates can take this syllabus alongside other Cambridge International syllabuses in a single exam series. The only exceptions are:

- Cambridge International AS Level Language and Literature in English (8695)
- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

#### Group awards: Cambridge AICE

Cambridge AICE (Advanced International Certificate of Education) is a group award for Cambridge International AS & A Level. It allows schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum by recognising the achievements of learners who pass exams in a range of different subjects.

Learn more about Cambridge AICE at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/aice](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/aice)

## Making entries

Exams officers are responsible for submitting entries to Cambridge International. We encourage them to work closely with you to make sure they enter the right number of candidates for the right combination of syllabus components. Entry option codes and instructions for submitting entries are in the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*. Your exams officer has a copy of this guide.

## Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as administrative zones. We allocate all Cambridge schools to one administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable. Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

## Support for exams officers

We know how important exams officers are to the successful running of exams. We provide them with the support they need to make your entries on time. Your exams officer will find this support, and guidance for all other phases of the Cambridge Exams Cycle, at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)

## Retakes and carry forward

Candidates can retake Cambridge International AS Level and Cambridge International A Level as many times as they want to. Cambridge International AS & A Levels are linear qualifications so candidates cannot re-sit individual components. Information on retake entries is in the *Cambridge Handbook* at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsOfficers](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsOfficers)

Candidates can carry forward the result of their Cambridge International AS Level assessment from one series to complete the Cambridge International A Level in a following series, subject to the rules and time limits described in the *Cambridge Handbook*.

## Language

This syllabus and the related assessment materials are available in English only.

## Accessibility and equality

### Syllabus and assessment design

Cambridge International works to avoid direct or indirect discrimination in our syllabuses and assessment materials. We aim to maximise inclusivity for candidates of all national, cultural or social backgrounds and with other protected characteristics. In addition, the language and layout used are designed to make our materials as accessible as possible. This gives all learners the opportunity, as fairly as possible, to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding and helps to minimise the requirement to make reasonable adjustments during the assessment process.

### Access arrangements

Access arrangements (including modified papers) are the principal way in which Cambridge International complies with our duty, as guided by the UK Equality Act (2010), to make 'reasonable adjustments' for candidates with special educational needs (SEN), disability, illness or injury. Where a candidate would otherwise be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to a candidate with no SEN, disability, illness or injury, we may be able to agree pre-examination access arrangements. These arrangements help a candidate by minimising accessibility barriers and maximising their opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding in an assessment.

#### Important:

- Requested access arrangements should be based on evidence of the candidate's barrier to assessment and should also reflect their normal way of working at school; this is in line with *The Cambridge Handbook* [www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)
- For Cambridge International to approve an access arrangement, we will need to agree that it constitutes a reasonable adjustment, involves reasonable cost and timeframe and does not affect the security and integrity of the assessment.
- Availability of access arrangements should be checked by centres at the start of the course. Details of our standard access arrangements and modified question papers are available in *The Cambridge Handbook* [www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)
- Please contact us at the start of the course to find out if we are able to approve an arrangement that is not included in the list of standard access arrangements.
- Candidates who cannot access parts of the assessment may be able to receive an award based on the parts they have completed.

## After the exam

### Grading and reporting

Grades A\*, A, B, C, D or E indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge International A Level. A\* is the highest and E is the lowest grade.

Grades a, b, c, d or e indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge International AS Level. 'a' is the highest and 'e' is the lowest grade.

'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for the lowest grade (E or e). 'Ungraded' is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate. In specific circumstances your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (PENDING)
- X (NO RESULT).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

If a candidate takes a Cambridge International A Level and fails to achieve grade E or higher, a Cambridge International AS Level grade will be awarded if both of the following apply:

- the components taken for the Cambridge International A Level by the candidate in that series included all the components making up a Cambridge International AS Level
- the candidate's performance on the AS Level components was sufficient to merit the award of a Cambridge International AS Level grade.

On the statement of results and certificates, Cambridge International AS & A Levels are shown as General Certificates of Education, GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level (GCE AS Level) and GCE Advanced Level (GCE A Level).

**School feedback:** 'Cambridge International A Levels are the 'gold standard' qualification. They are based on rigorous, academic syllabuses that are accessible to students from a wide range of abilities yet have the capacity to stretch our most able.'

**Feedback from:** Director of Studies, Auckland Grammar School, New Zealand

## How students, teachers and higher education can use the grades

### Cambridge International A Level

Assessment at Cambridge International A Level has two purposes:

- to measure learning and achievement  
The assessment:
  - confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus, to the levels described in the grade descriptions.
- to show likely future success  
The outcomes:
  - help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful
  - help students choose the most suitable course or career.

### Cambridge International AS Level

Assessment at Cambridge International AS Level has two purposes:

- to measure learning and achievement  
The assessment:
  - confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus.
- to show likely future success  
The outcomes:
  - help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful
  - help students choose the most suitable course or career
  - help decide whether students part way through a Cambridge International A Level course are making enough progress to continue
  - guide teaching and learning in the next stages of the Cambridge International A Level course.

## Grade descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give an indication of the standards of achievement candidates awarded particular grades are likely to show. Weakness in one aspect of the examination may be balanced by a better performance in some other aspect.

Grade descriptions for Cambridge International A Level English Language will be published after the first assessment of the A Level in 2021. Find more information at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/alevel](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/alevel)

## Changes to this syllabus for 2024, 2025 and 2026

The syllabus has been updated. This syllabus is version 2, published October 2021.

**You are strongly advised to read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.**

### Changes to version 2, published October 2021

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#### Changes to syllabus

- Amendments have been made to the underlining in certain examples given in the Reference table of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) phonemic symbols (Received Pronunciation) on page 21 of the syllabus document.
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Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2021 are still suitable for use with this syllabus.



**School feedback:** ‘While studying Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge International A Levels, students broaden their horizons through a global perspective and develop a lasting passion for learning.’

**Feedback from:** Zhai Xiaoning, Deputy Principal, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China

We are committed to making our documents accessible in accordance with the WCAG 2.1 Standard. We're always looking to improve the accessibility of our documents. If you find any problems or you think we're not meeting accessibility requirements, contact us at [info@cambridgeinternational.org](mailto:info@cambridgeinternational.org) with the subject heading: Digital accessibility. If you need this document in a different format, contact us and supply your name, email address and requirements and we will respond within 15 working days.

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