

Cambridge International AS Level

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER**8021/23**

Paper 2 Comprehension

October/November 2025**MARK SCHEME**Maximum Mark: 50

Published

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge International will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge International is publishing the mark schemes for the October/November 2025 series for most Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International A and AS Level components, and some Cambridge O Level components.

This document consists of **10** printed pages.

Generic Marking Principles

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptions for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

Rules must be applied consistently, e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

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
	One mark
	Two marks
	Used to indicate a creditable point in levels-based marking
	The point is incorrect, perhaps factually, or the wrong word or point has been offered
	Used to indicate development
	Used where there is repetition of the same/an earlier point
	'Too vague', used when the response does not make the required point precisely enough
	'Benefit of the doubt', used to indicate marginal decisions where the point is not totally convincing but where credit is given
	The point is either unclear, illogical, or unconvincing in some way
nfp	No further penalty

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	According to the Background, identify the <u>two</u> main reasons for the increase in the volume of traffic. Designated a cultural heritage site / A sharp increase in tourism / it is attracting <u>more</u> visitors. (1) The university is expanding / <u>more</u> students. (1) 2 × 1	2
1(b)(i)	With reference to Option A, explain the <u>problem</u> for the taxi drivers. Do <u>not</u> refer to Option B. Battax Council will introduce a free shuttle bus service for tourists to the drop off zone/taxis will no longer be permitted to transport tourists to the <u>drop off zone</u>. (1) Taxi drivers will lose a lot of earnings / lose a lot of customers (1) 1 × 2	2
1(b)(ii)	With reference to Option A, explain the <u>advantages</u> for the tourists. Do <u>not</u> refer to Option B. Tourists will not have to pay for the shuttle service into town / will save on potentially high taxi fares. (1) With 60 per cent of tourists taking a taxi, the majority of tourists will benefit. (1) Double-decker buses will be able to accommodate more tourists / carry a lot of tourists in only one vehicle (1) and wait times are likely to reduce. (1) Tourists will have a more relaxing journey when travelling to the centre of Battax. (1) as there are likely to be fewer traffic jams / overpowering fumes (1) 2 × 1 or 1 × 2	2

Levels	Mark(s)	Descriptors
4	9–10	- Capacity to interpret evidence and sustained ability to present relevant arguments, analysis and exemplification maintaining a strong focus on the main issues in the question. - Comprehensive approach demonstrating ability to identify and select relevant information, data, concepts and opinions and maintain a strong focus on the key issues. - Shows the ability to communicate clearly and accurately in a fluent and organised manner.
3	6–8	- Moderate range of arguments, analysis and exemplification covering some of the main issues in the question. - Demonstrating some grasp of the nature of key issues but with a restricted range or a loss of focus leading to the inclusion of some irrelevant material. - Shows the ability to communicate clearly and accurately in a fluent and organised manner.
2	3–5	- Limited analysis shown in a response consisting of mainly undeveloped material. - A modest range of selected points, perhaps some of which are irrelevant or incorrect. - Ability to convey meaning but with limited powers of expression with some errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar which impede the flow and hinder communication.
1	1–2	- Some simple, mainly unexplained or undeveloped points or perhaps a very narrow range – with little interpretation or analysis and little development or exemplification. - Limited range, dubious choice showing restricted appreciation of key issues. - Ability to convey meaning but with limited powers of expression with some errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar which impede the flow and hinder communication.
0	0	A mark of zero should be awarded for no creditable content.

Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)	Explain the advantages and <u>one</u> disadvantage for students if Option B were chosen. Do <u>not</u> refer to Option A. Answer in continuous prose. 70 per cent / most / the majority / a great many of the students (who answered the questionnaire) live within a 5-minute walk of the train station, so the new bus stop location will be handy and easily accessible from their accommodation. The majority of students use the university bus service, so many will benefit from an increased number of buses. Doubling the number of buses will mean that students will have a more comfortable journey to university as there will be fewer passengers on any one bus For those students who appreciate the beautiful surroundings of Battax, they will get to see the town's tranquil surroundings on the way to lectures. The 75 per cent of students who are concerned about being late for lectures will be relieved to have shorter bus journeys. The alternative bus route will save students \$0.50 per journey, which will alleviate some of the financial concerns. The original bus route is 8 km long but the new route is only 4 km long. A shorter distance will mean less time travelling on the bus. The alternative bus route means that the congested area around Battax Old Town can be avoided leading to fewer traffic jams. The engineering conferences at the university will have less of an impact on bus wait times if the university is able to double the number of buses in service. Many students enjoy visiting the town's bakeries and as the best bakery in Battax is situated across from the train station, they can call in on their way to/from the bus stop. However, Battax is a very wet town and the lack of bus shelters in the first few months may leave students soaking wet before lectures have even begun. However, 30 per cent of students (who responded to the questionnaire) live between a 6–30-minute walk of the train station so may have to get up early to walk to the bus stop, catch the bus and be on time for lectures	10

Question	Answer	Marks
1(d)	Explain why Option B may create a problem for the residents of Battax. Moving the university bus stop to the train station will increase the number of students in the area (1) and may result in <u>more</u> noise and litter. (1) The new bus route will travel through a quiet area where members of the Peace4Communities live. (1) They are committed to reducing noise and traffic pollution in their area and will not be in favour of this new bus route. (1) 1 × 2, 2 × 1	2
1(e)	Explain why the engineering department's accreditation application may <u>not</u> be successful. The reputation of the engineering department may have suffered following the chaotic events at the bus stop (1) which were shared widely on social media / which the engineer <u>posted</u> about (1) The university bus issue this year meant that the visiting engineer wasn't able to introduce the keynote speakers properly (1) which could become a recurring problem/could prevent these conferences being so highly regarded in the future (1) 1 × 2 or 2 × 1	2
1(f)	Identify <u>three</u> reasons why the student questionnaire feedback may <u>not</u> provide accurate data. <u>Only</u> 30 per cent of students completed the questionnaire.(1) The questionnaire was handed out during the <u>first lecture of the day</u> (1) A large proportion of students might not have received a copy of the questionnaire because they were <u>late</u> / experienced <u>transport delays</u>. (1)	3

Question	Answer	Marks
1(g)	In your opinion, explain <u>one</u> way a busy town could reduce the amount of traffic. Do <u>not</u> repeat any material from Section A. A cycle to work scheme (1) could offer incentives for people to use their bike rather than a car. (1) Car sharing (1) would mean fewer cars on the road. (1) Stagger work start times (1) to reduce congestion at rush hour. (1) Allow people to work from home (1), so they do not need to use their car at all / every day. (1) Build a metro system (1) so trams can travel over or underground (1) Build a bridge / tunnel / bypass (1) to take traffic over / under / around busy roads (1) Modify / limit the times cars can travel into towns or cities (1) to reduce traffic during peak times (1) Toll charges for cars (1) to encourage use of public transport (1) Limit tourism / discourage over tourism (1) by imposing a tourist tax (1) 1 × 2	2

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)(i)	Identify the <u>exact</u> word in the material that means the following: shared (lines 3–7) collective (1)	1
2(a)(ii)	Identify the <u>exact</u> word in the material that means the following: acknowledged (line 9–14) recognised (1)	1
2(a)(iii)	Identify the <u>exact</u> word in the material that means the following: (to) control (lines 15–20). (to) regulate (1)	1
2(b)	Identify <u>one</u> of the benefits for the volunteers who ate a large breakfast. They saw <u>greater</u> weight loss / waist circumference reduction. (1)	1
2(c)	According to Brady Holmer, state <u>one</u> of the problems caused by missing breakfast. Increased hunger levels (later in the day) / which results in overeating. (1)	1

Question	Answer	Marks
2(d)	Explain why going for a walk ‘might be good advice’ (lines 26–29) Answer <u>using your own words</u> as far as possible. Research suggested (1) taking a stroll (1) could <u>lessen</u> (1) the <u>chance</u> of <u>early</u> death (1) caused by <u>heart disease</u> and <u>cancer</u>, (1) with clear <u>benefits/improvements</u> being achieved up to <u>10 000 steps</u> (1) Further research highlighted comparable findings regarding dementia (1) as <u>just</u> 3800 steps every 24 hours can <u>make a difference</u>. (1) especially if you walk at a <u>higher speed</u> (1)	5
2(e)(i)	Explain the benefit for a person who achieved seven to eight hours of sleep. They performed <u>better cognitively</u> (than those who slept more or less). (1)	1
2(e)(ii)	Identify the <u>three</u> disadvantages for people who lacked sleep (lines 38–41). Answer <u>in about 30 words</u> using continuous prose. They performed as if they were <u>9 years older</u>. (1) It can affect <u>testosterone</u> production. (1) It can <u>raise the risk of mortality</u>. (1) Examiners should draw a vertical red line after 30 words but consider the remainder of any incomplete point within 35 words.	3
2(e)(iii)	According to Steve Magness, identify <u>three</u> different ways we can improve the way we sleep. (We could) <u>establish a routine</u>. (1) (We would benefit from) <u>getting outside early/in the day</u> to see some <u>sunlight</u>. (1) (We could try to) <u>cut down on device use at night</u>. (1)	3
2(f)	Explain why Brady Holmer says, ‘The five servings recommendation is sound advice, but also somewhat arbitrary’ (lines 50–53). Answer <u>in about 20 words</u> using continuous prose. Studies conclude that five servings are likely to boost health. (1) Evidence also suggests that up to 10 servings have benefits. (1) Examiners should draw a vertical red line after 20 words but consider the remainder of any incomplete point within 23 words.	2

Question	Answer	Marks
2(g)	Identify the <u>two</u> different reasons why ‘the recommendation to drink two litres of water a day is not based on hard science’ (lines 58–64). Answer <u>in about 20 words</u> using continuous prose. Most of the 2 litres’ intake comes from eating <u>food</u>. (1) It doesn’t need to be water because other liquids count (1) / it can be in the form of <u>coffee / tea / hot drinks / milk</u> or <u>soft drinks</u> (1) MAX 1 Examiners should draw a vertical red line after 20 words but consider the remainder of any incomplete point within 23 words.	2
2(h)(i)	<u>Using your own words as far as possible</u>, state the exact meaning of the following <u>four</u> phrases as they are used in the material: (to) sift fact from fiction (lines 1–2) (to) separate what is true and false / truth from make believe (1)	1
2(h)(ii)	<u>Using your own words as far as possible</u>, state the exact meaning of the following <u>four</u> phrases as they are used in the material: (the) bottom line (line 21) (the) most important fact / (the) whole point / (the) conclusion. (1)	1
2(h)(iii)	<u>Using your own words as far as possible</u>, state the exact meaning of the following <u>four</u> phrases as they are used in the material: stepping up the pace (line 29) getting quicker / increasing the speed. (1)	1
2(h)(iv)	<u>Using your own words as far as possible</u>, state the exact meaning of the following <u>four</u> phrases as they are used in the material: cognitive decline (line 54) a reduction in brain function / performance. (1)	1