



CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge
Pathway 

Cambridge IGCSE English

The value of Cambridge IGCSE English for higher education



Contents

What is Cambridge IGCSE English?.....	1
Cambridge IGCSE English: a valuable indicator of English language proficiency	2
Design.....	3
Summative assessment referenced to the CEFR	3
Syllabus: engaging and relevant for work and study.....	4
Assessment	4
Use: an English proficiency qualification used with other subjects in English	7
Track record: a long record of success over the years.....	8
Recognition and acceptance by universities – various models.....	9

We work with schools worldwide to build an education that shapes knowledge, understanding and skills.

Together, we give learners the confidence they need to thrive and make a positive impact in a changing world.

As part of the University of Cambridge, we offer a globally trusted and flexible framework for education from age 3 to 19, informed by research, experience, and listening to educators like you.

With recognised qualifications, high-quality resources, comprehensive support and valuable insights, we help schools prepare every student for the opportunities and challenges ahead. Together, we help Cambridge learners be ready for the world.

What is Cambridge IGCSE™ English?

The Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), awarded by Cambridge International Education, is a two-year single-subject secondary qualification for learners typically aged 14–16, with the aim of preparing them for work and further study.

Cambridge IGCSE is recognised as the international version of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) taken in the United Kingdom. We commit in our Code of Practice to align the standard of IGCSE with the equivalent qualifications in England; we do this by using statistical evidence and comparability studies.

UK NARIC (now [Ecctis](https://ecctis.com)), the national UK agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications, carried out [independent benchmarking studies](#), which found Cambridge IGCSE to be comparable to the standard of the GCSE. Read the studies at: www.cambridgeinternational.org/research-and-insights

Cambridge IGCSE is available in over 70 subjects, including 30 languages. Full-time Cambridge International students commonly take 5–8 subjects.

Read more about Cambridge IGCSE and download our qualification guides for universities at www.cambridgeinternational.org/guidance-for-universities

Structure	Length	Designed for	Grading	Level
Subject syllabus + course + assessment Students select their subjects.	Recommended 130 teaching hours over two years.	Learners aged 14 to 16, but also available for any ages above.	A*–G, or 9–1 (same syllabus content).	Grades A*–C: level 2 Grades D–G: level 1, as per UK Qualification Framework

Cambridge International offers a number of IGCSE syllabuses in subject English. This document refers to IGCSE English First Language (syllabuses 0500/0990) and IGCSE English as a Second Language (syllabuses 0510/0511/0993/0991).

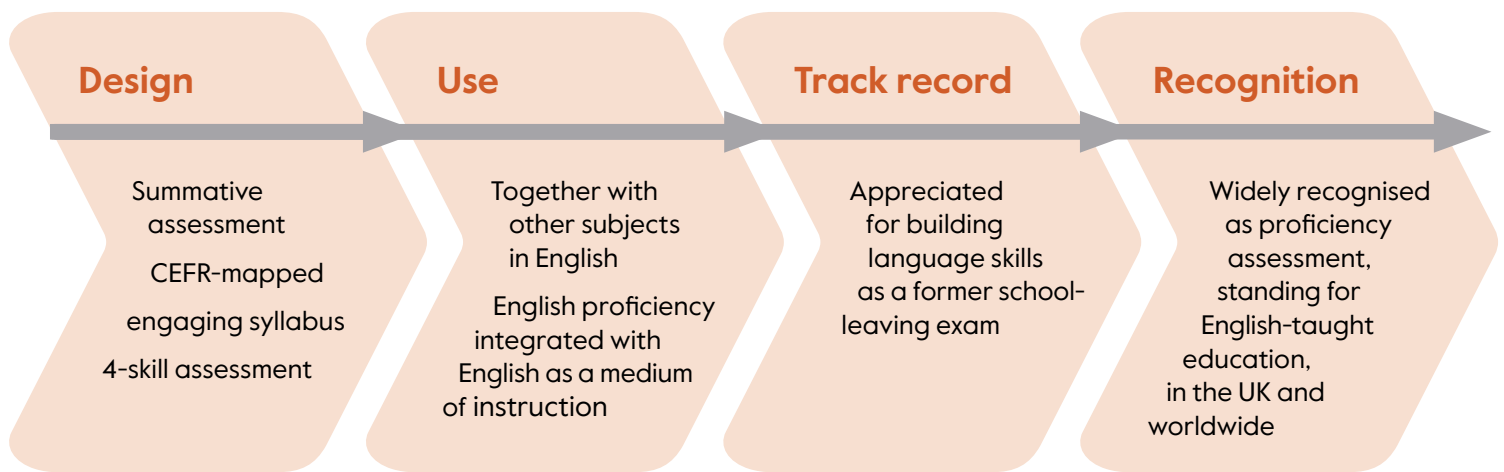
Domain	Syllabus	Language skills	Grading and CEFR
CEFR level B2 communicative competences,	English First Language * English as a Second Language **	Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking (optional for English First Language)	Grades are mapped to the CEFR, see relevant section in this document

* aimed at students who speak English at home

** aimed at students who speak another language at home but may be studying in an English-language setting

Cambridge IGCSE English: a valuable indicator of English language proficiency

Your university can trust IGCSE English as a reliable proficiency assessment, based on evidence every step of the way, from qualification design to external recognition.



Design

Summative assessment mapped to the CEFR

Cambridge IGCSE English is a summative B2-level qualification. This is reflected in the syllabus design, from the learning and assessment objectives to the alignment of grades to the CEFR. One of its primary purposes is to support learners in confidently passing exams in different subjects in English.

The topics, as well as the language and study skills in the syllabus reflect the B2-level CEFR descriptors. While teachers are advised to select materials suitable for their students, the syllabus does not limit the scope of the qualification to teenagers.

If you need to find out which CEFR level students are at, please use this information as a guide:

IGCSE English First Language (syllabus 0500/0990):

- CEFR level B2 for grade E/3 or above, with a grade 2/Merit or above in Speaking
- CEFR level C1 for grade B/6 or above, with a grade 1/Distinction in Speaking

IGCSE English as a Second Language (syllabuses 0511/0991 and 0510/0993):

- CEFR level B2 for grade C/4 or above, with 2/Merit in Speaking
- CEFR level B1 for grade E/3 or above, with 3/Pass in Speaking

Working with
schools around
the world for

160
years



Syllabus: engaging and relevant for work and study

Analyse, evaluate and develop ideas and opinions using appropriate support from the text

Demonstrate understanding of how writers achieve effects and influence readers

Demonstrate understanding of explicit and implicit meanings & attitudes

Organise and structure ideas for deliberate effect

Communicate clearly and purposefully using fluent language

Articulate experience of what is thought, felt and imagined

Cambridge IGCSE syllabuses are created especially for international students. For over 30 years, we have worked with schools and teachers worldwide to develop syllabuses that are suitable for different countries, different types of schools and for learners with a wide range of abilities. You can download any IGCSE English Language and Literature syllabus at www.cambridgeinternational.org/igcse

The learning and assessment objectives below are only a few examples that may highlight the qualification's relevance for study.



Assessment

Cambridge IGCSE English as a Second Language covers all four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Listening & Speaking (tested together) are optional in Cambridge IGCSE English First Language.

IGCSE English First Language

Reading and Writing
optional: Listening and Speaking with a separate grade ("separately endorsed")

IGCSE English as a Second Language

Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking all in one grade ("count-in speaking")

OR:

Reading, Writing, Listening, plus Speaking with a separate grade ("separately endorsed")

You can download the IGCSE English syllabuses on our www.cambridgeinternational.org/igcse.

Examples of assessment tasks

Here are examples of assessment tasks that illustrate assessment objectives and their level of demand in Cambridge IGCSE English First and Second Language.

Read Text A, and then answer Questions 1(a)–1(e) on the question paper.

Text A: Project Mammoth

This text is an article about a new scientific project.

Of all the incredible possibilities presented by controversial new scientific techniques, perhaps the most intriguing are efforts to bring animals back from extinction. Candidates for 'de-extinction', as the process is known, include species like the passenger pigeon (the last one died in captivity in 1914) and the dodo (last seen in 1652).

These projects are not just distant dreams.

Scientists working on such projects estimate that a variation of the first new woolly mammoth (which disappeared some 4 000 years ago) may soon be born. They hope these animals will play a role in slowing or reversing the effects of climate change.

5

Read Text A, *Project Mammoth*, in the insert and then answer Questions 1(a)–(e) on this question paper.

Question 1

(a) Give two examples of extinct species (other than the mammoth) according to the text.

•

• [1]

(b) Using your own words, explain what the text means by:

(i) 'candidates for "de-extinction"' (line 2):

(ii) 'not just distant dreams.' (line 5): [2]

..... [2]

Read Text B, and then answer Question 1(f) on the question paper.

Text B: Waking the Baby Mammoth

This text is a review of a television programme called 'Waking the Baby Mammoth'.

Only a handful have been found before. But none like her. Her name is Lyuba. A one-month-old baby mammoth, she walked the tundra about 40 000 years ago, then died mysteriously. Discovered on a riverbank in Siberia, she's the most perfectly preserved woolly mammoth ever discovered. Lyuba has mesmerised the scientific world with her arrival – creating headlines across the globe.

'Waking the Baby Mammoth', a new television programme, tells the tale of this single accidental discovery of a frozen baby mammoth in the Siberian tundra and how the discovery has enriched our understanding of these extinct magnificent beasts.

The programme begins with the incredibly fortunate discovery of Lyuba by a reindeer herder who

5

Read Text B, *Waking the Baby Mammoth*, in the insert and then answer Question 1(f) on this question paper.

Question 1

(f) According to Text B, what made Lyuba such a remarkable and precious scientific specimen and what did scientists hope to discover by studying her?

You must use continuous writing (not note form) and use your own words as far as possible.

Your summary should not be more than 120 words.

Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer and up to 5 marks for the quality of your writing.

.....

Cambridge IGCSE English First Language, Reading & Writing.

You want to help reduce pollution in your local area and you are thinking about doing the following:

- not using plastic
- walking or cycling to school.

Discuss how easy or difficult these options would be for you. Say which option you would prefer, and why.

Cambridge IGCSE
English as a Second
Language, Speaking.

Exercise 3

Read the article about areas of the world where living to 90 years of age is common, and then complete the notes on the following page.

THE SECRET OF LIVING LONGER

There is something really interesting about Ikaria, a Greek island in the Aegean sea, 50 kilometres off the coast of Turkey. It has the highest percentage of inhabitants over the age of 90 in the world. Among these inhabitants are a 95-year-old man who still plays the violin, a 98-year-old woman who runs a hotel, and a 102-year-old man who can beat almost anyone in an arm-wrestling competition.

Since 2008, Donald Brueckner, a writer and explorer, has been studying the island to discover its secrets. He has also tried to identify other areas of the world where there is a higher proportion of people who live considerably longer than is normal. He analysed the lifestyles of each place in order to find out if there were similarities which might explain such long lives, and named these places 'blue zones'.

In addition to Ikaria, there are other areas in the 'blue zone' category. They include Okinawa in Japan, where the population lives on average seven years longer than people in America. Another is the mountainous Barbagia region on the island of Sardinia, where a large number of people have reached 100 years of age. Finally, the Nicoya peninsula in Costa Rica in Central America has the lowest rate of middle-age death in the world.

So what is the secret?

Brueckner believes that long life is not all related to genetic factors. Scientific studies have

You are going to give a talk about 'blue zones' to your class at school. Prepare some notes to use as the basis for your talk.

Make short notes under each heading.

11 Examples of 'blue zone' areas and the people who live in them

Example: Barbagia – many people of 100 years of age.

•

•

• [3]

12 Similar lifestyle characteristics of 'blue zone' areas

•

•

• [3]

13 Ideas introduced in Minnesota

IGCSE English as a Second Language, Reading and Writing.

Assessment components and grading: Cambridge IGCSE English First Language

Compulsory		Optional
Paper 1: Reading (50%) 2 hours 3 input texts, 5 tasks Externally assessed (by Cambridge)	Paper 2: Directed Writing and Composition (50%) 2 hours 2 writing tasks, one compulsory and one from a choice Externally assessed (by Cambridge) OR Coursework Portfolio (50%) 3 extended writing assessments Internally assessed (by school), externally moderated (by Cambridge)	Speaking and Listening 10–12 minutes Individual talk and conversation marks do not contribute to the overall grade, but are entered separately on the certificate Internally assessed (by school), externally moderated (by Cambridge)
Grades: A* (high) – G (low).		If separately endorsed: grades 1 (high) to 5 (low)

Assessment components and grading: Cambridge IGCSE English as a Second Language

All students take three papers: Reading & Writing, Listening, and Speaking.

The skills carry different weights in each of the syllabus versions:

Syllabus number	Reading & Writing	Listening	Speaking
0510 (speaking separately endorsed)	70% (35% Reading, 35% Writing)	30%	Separate grade
0511 ((count-in speaking))	60% (30% Reading, 30% Writing)	20%	20%

The assessment is made up of:

Reading & Writing	Listening	Speaking
2 hours 6 tasks: matching, short responses, note-making etc.; two writing tasks, externally assessed	50 minutes 5 tasks: short answers, gap-fill, matching etc, externally assessed	10–15 minutes conversation on a particular topic internally assessed, externally moderated
Grades: A* (high) – G (low).		If separately endorsed: grades 1 (high) to 5 (low)

Use: an English proficiency qualification used with other subjects in English

Cambridge International developed Cambridge IGCSE to be taught internationally, and it is designed to be accessible and fair to students whose first language is not English. In schools where English is the medium of instruction, students typically study at least 5 Cambridge IGCSE subjects.

Recently, an increasing number of state schools, in countries such as Italy, Spain, and France, are using Cambridge IGCSE as part of a bilingual curriculum. Students may study two to four syllabuses alongside the national curriculum.

This is mainly because IGCSE English:

- is the world's most popular international curriculum for 14-to-16-year olds;
- is taught in English; this has advantages for learners, but also for schools, who can develop their CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) capacities;
- has a single-subject structure, which means that each subject is certified separately, giving schools flexibility to choose how many subjects they offer.

As a single-subject qualification, **Cambridge IGCSE English is taught alongside other Cambridge IGCSE subjects in English**. In bilingual settings, English is the most commonly selected Cambridge IGCSE subject, as it helps boost English overall proficiency, and thus enables students to pass their compulsory national curriculum English exams more successfully. Other Cambridge IGCSE subjects commonly chosen by schools in the bilingual framework are Sciences, Business, History, Geography, Global Perspectives, and IT.

Cambridge International has run a research study on the English language requirements posed by non-language IGCSE courses, specifically History, Geography, and Biology. The study found that the syllabuses, teaching materials and assessment formats and rubrics require language proficiency on CEFR level B2 or higher, in order to complete the courses successfully.



Cambridge IGCSE English can therefore be trusted not only as a proficiency assessment in itself, but also because it reflects competences related to English both as a language subject and as a medium of instruction, at level B2 and above.



Track record: a long record of success over the years

Cambridge IGCSE helps students develop deep subject knowledge and skills for the future.

The summative assessment approach of Cambridge IGCSE can be traced back to the fact that its UK counterpart, the GCSE, was designed as a school-leaving exam at 16. Although the school-leaving age in the UK is no longer 16, the GCSE has retained its summative character and is a recognised level 2 qualification by employers and universities in the UK.

Cambridge IGCSE English as a Second Language used to be offered for many years in the UK to non-British pupils in school year 10 to prepare them for the domestic GCSE in year 11. Empirical observation found that IGCSE English as a Second Language equipped the students not just with the necessary language skills, but also built their overall confidence using English and passing their GCSE.

Cambridge IGCSE English as a Second Language also used to be authorised as a Secure English Language Test for visa purposes, on a par, for example, with IELTS.

We work with
more than 
10 000
schools in
160 countries
around the world

Recognition and acceptance by universities – various models



Cambridge IGCSE English, whether First or Second Language, is recognised as proof of English proficiency by most UK universities, and widely accepted in Europe and worldwide. Below you can find various ways in which universities choose to accept this qualification:

- IGCSE English is accepted by most universities in the UK and many others worldwide as proof of English language proficiency.
- Sometimes, universities accept IGCSE English as a Second Language by evaluating it together with other factors, such as:
 - How many/what other IGCSE subjects were completed.
 - Number of classes per week taught in English.
 - Evidence of other English-taught courses after the IGCSE stage.
- Requirement exemption: universities may exempt students from the requirement of producing an English language certificate if:
 - they have completed an all-English curriculum in the final 2 school years;
 - if they are an English first-language speaker.

Contact the Recognitions team:
recognitions@cambridgeinternational.org
 to advise the best policy for accepting Cambridge IGCSE English as proof of English proficiency in the admission process to your university's degree programmes.

Learn more! about our Cambridge IGCSE English suite at: www.cambridgeinternational.org/english

Learn more

Getting in touch with us is easy.

Email info@cambridgeinternational.org

Call +44 1223 553554

Visit www.cambridgeinternational.org

6000
schools in 150
countries offer
Cambridge
IGCSE



We are committed to making our documents accessible in accordance with the WCAG 2.2 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 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.

Cambridge Assessment International Education
The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge, CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
t: +44 1223 553554
www.cambridgeinternational.org