

Revision Checklist for IGCSE English as a Second Language

A guide for students

How to use this guide

The guide describes what you need to know about your IGCSE English as a Second Language (E2L) examination.

It will help you to plan your revision programme for the examinations and will explain what the examiners are looking for in your answers. It can also be used to help you to revise by using the tick boxes in Section 3, 'What you need to do', to check what you have covered.

The guide contains the following sections:

Section 1: How will you be tested?

This section will give you information about the different examination Papers that you will take.

Section 2: What will be tested?

This section describes the skills that the Examiners will test you on.

Section 3: What you need to do:

This section shows the syllabus in a simple way so that you can check that:

- You have practised each skill.
- You can understand and respond, in English, in a variety of contexts and situations.
- You are well prepared for the level of examination (Core **or** Extended) you will be taking. (You will need to check which level with your teacher.)
- You have covered enough topics and themes to enable you to show your skills in writing and speaking English.

Section 4: Appendix

This section shows you the importance of the command words and phrases that Examiners use in examination questions. It also gives you additional hints and details, which will help you feel more confident when you take the examination.

Section 1: How will you be tested?

You will probably take **three** elements:

- Reading and Writing question Paper
- Listening question paper
- Speaking test

Let's look at the first two papers you will take. If your teacher thinks you should enter for the Core examination, you will take Papers 1 and 3. If your teacher thinks you should enter for the Extended examination, you will take Papers 2 and 4.

Your teacher will assess your skills towards the end of your IGCSE course and will discuss with you which Papers and which level of examination (Core or Extended) you should take. You may also wish to discuss the decision with your parents.

Paper number and level of examination	How long and how many marks?	What's in the Paper? Which skills are being tested?	What's the % of the total examination ?
Paper 1 (Core)	1 hour 30 minutes (56 marks)	Part 1 – Reading Part 2 – Reading and writing as a combined skill Part 3 – Writing	70%
Paper 2 (Extended)	2 hours (84 marks)	Part 1 – Reading Part 2 – Reading and writing as a combined skill Part 3 – Writing	70%
Paper 3 (Core)	30 minutes (30 marks)	Part 1 – Listening and responding to short statements Parts 2 and 3 – Listening to longer conversations/interviews	30%
Paper 4 (Extended)	45 minutes (36 marks)	Part 1 – Listening and responding to short statements Parts 2 and 3 – Listening to longer conversations/interviews	30%

You will also, normally, take an Oral test, **either** Paper 5 **or** Paper 6, which tests your speaking skills.

Paper Number	How long and how many marks?	What's in the Paper?	What's the % of the total mark?
Paper 5	Up to 15 minutes 30 marks	A speaking test based on a discussion with the examiner. A topic, with suggestions for developing the discussion, will be given to you on one of a set of cards in the examination.	None. A separate result is given
Paper 6	Completed during your course	Coursework – 3 different speaking activities, e.g. role	None. A separate

	30 marks	play, telephone conversation, interview. The tests will be conducted and marked by your teacher during your course.	result is given
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These Oral Papers do not contribute to your overall result, since they are marked as a separate examination, for which you will be given a separate result.

You should check with your teacher whether you have to take Paper 5 or 6.

Section 2: What will be tested?

The syllabus sets out the skills which will be tested in the examination Papers. In E2L, there are four main skills – two which test how well you understand and receive information, and two which test how well you are able to convey, or pass on, information. This information might be information you have just received, or it might be new and original information.

The skills are as follows:

Skill	What the skill means	What you need to be able to do
Reading	Being able to read a variety of pieces of writing (texts), from short to quite long, and being able to understand the overall meaning (gist) of the text, as well as more specific/detailed parts.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand written information. 2. Understand facts, ideas and opinions. 3. Evaluate and select information from texts.
Writing	Being able to write short responses (answers to questions), as well as longer pieces of writing (paragraphs, summaries, letters, essays, articles etc.). Also, being able to write notes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convey information 2. Order and present facts, ideas and opinions. 3. Express your feelings. 4. Communicate clearly and accurately.
Listening	Being able to listen to a variety of contexts and scenarios (situations in which two or more people are talking together). Recognising different ways that speakers talk (e.g. tone, emphasis, etc.).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand spoken information. 2. Recognise facts, ideas and opinions, and speakers' attitudes. 3. Evaluate and select detail from what is heard.
Speaking	Being able to talk in a variety of situations. For the Oral (Speaking) Test, being able to hold and develop a conversation about a topic/theme. For the Coursework, you may have to give oral presentations and/or speeches, and to take part in a group discussion.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convey information. 2. Respond quickly with ordered facts, ideas and opinions. 3. Express your feelings. 4. Communicate clearly.

In addition to the main skills outlined above, you will also be tested on how accurate and consistent your usage of English is. The Examiners will assess your usage of English according to:

- How well you can control your grammar and structures. This applies to writing as well as speaking.
- The range of vocabulary you use. You will be tested on your understanding and whether you are able to use words accurately and/or appropriately, in both writing and speaking.
- How accurately you spell.
- Your use of sentences, paragraphs and punctuation in longer pieces of writing.
- Your awareness of 'register' in formal and informal situations, for example, whether you are aware that you should not write a letter to a friend in the same tone and style as a letter to your Head Teacher, also that spoken English is generally less formal than written English.

Section 3: What you need to do

The E2L course doesn't cover content in the same way as most other IGCSE courses do. In Science, for example, you might need to learn how a particular process works. This means understanding and being able to recall all the steps involved in the process in a logical way. Once you have reached a certain level of knowledge, you can move on and extend that knowledge base.

The same principle can be seen in Mathematics, where understanding formulae is the basis for making accurate calculations.

Learning both of these subjects is, therefore, structured in a logical, step-by-step manner. **E2L is quite different.**

The best way to approach the 'content' of your E2L course is to make sure that you have practised English in a wide variety of contexts, that you understand the different ways that English can be used and can respond appropriately.

E2L teachers in different parts of the world probably use different textbooks and teaching materials. This is because there is no single 'correct' textbook that should be used. It is generally agreed that the best approach to learning E2L is to use a variety of books, articles, newspapers, magazines, as well as the Internet; also to use as many recordings (to test listening) and oral activities (to test speaking) as possible. Success in learning ESL is certainly linked to using a variety of different resources that will enable students to practise all the skills and combinations of skills that they will be tested on.

The table – containing the checklist – is, therefore, simply a guide to the types of activities, which are useful. However, you should not think of the table as a list of activities that you must do, or as a list of contexts that you must cover. If you do not tick some areas, it does **not** mean that you have not completed the whole course!

Skill:	All students should be able to:	Those taking the Extended examination should also be able to:	Ways in which the skills might be practised (appropriate contexts)	Checklist – Also tick if you have worked on something similar
Reading. Locating specific information as quickly as possible = Skimming	Read short texts, such as notices and advertisements.	Cope with more detailed notices and advertisements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at timetables. • Comparing signs. • Newspaper advertisements. • Collecting and analysing brochures. 	
Reading. Locating more detailed information; looking more carefully = Scanning.	Read longer texts, such as articles from newspapers and magazines.	Cope with slightly longer and more challenging articles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading similar articles (in style and in length) to those seen frequently in past examination papers. • Reading factual articles. • Extracting relevant information from articles. 	
Reading & Writing. Integrated reading and writing.	1. Read a text which contains additional information in statistical or graphical form (e.g. tables, graphs, charts, etc.)	Convey a more thorough understanding by writing a paragraph length response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at different visual ways of presenting information e.g. analysing graphs or data in tables. 	
	2. Fill out forms.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using forms found in newspapers and magazines. • Using websites, which require you to fill in forms to register details. 	
	3. Make notes.	This skill applies mainly to those taking the Extended examination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using more complex and detailed texts (perhaps of a 	

			<p>general scientific nature) to extract thematic notes from.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing an article based on a set of notes you are given 	
	4. Write summaries.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysing summaries to recognise the similarities of good ones. • Writing a summary based on a set of notes of about 6 or 7 points • Becoming familiar with the language that helps to make summaries easier to read and follow. 	
Writing	1. Describe, report, and give personal information.	Carry out longer writing tasks on a wider range of topics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing letters to people in different situations (some formal, some informal). • Writing down your feelings and opinions, e.g. diary entries, and recording your experiences in other ways, e.g. postcards. • Writing descriptions of events, places, people, etc. 	
	2. Use language for a specific purpose, e.g. to persuade, to consider others' views, to write a commentary		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking part in debates and writing up the conclusions in a report • Writing letters or articles of a very specific nature, e.g. to persuade your local council to not build a new road; to argue that smoking should 	

			<p>be banned in all public areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming familiar with current world/international issues. • Reading letters and articles aimed at stating a point of view. 	
Listening.	1. Listen for specific information in short, separate statements.	Listen to more difficult, sometimes longer statements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to announcements (e.g. on the radio, at train stations, at airports). • Listening for factual detail (e.g. news reports, weather reports, travel reports). • Asking for directions, etc. 	
	2. Listen for specific information in longer conversations (usually as interviews).	Find more information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to recordings of interviews, on news or chat shows. • Watching television shows in which one person is interviewing another about his/her lifestyle, hobbies, job, future career, etc. • Role-playing typical interview-type situations. 	
	3. Listen for gist – understand the main idea of a conversation; follow the overall theme.	In addition, work out the attitudes, opinions and feelings of speakers from what they say and how they say it.	<p>For the Extended examination you should practise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to interviews and responding by writing short sentences to show both your specific and overall 	

			<p>understanding. [For the Core examination, you will need to show understanding by ticking true/false boxes, about statements from the interview which are either true or false].</p>	
Speaking	<p>1. If you are taking the Speaking Test:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be confident while having a conversation with an adult. • Talk about a topic at some length. • Keep a conversation going and perhaps add to it. 	<p>There is no difference between the Core and Extended examinations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about common and current topics. Reading newspapers, listening to TV news and documentaries to improve your general knowledge. • Practising role-playing conversations based on a single topic or theme. 	
	<p>2. If you are doing Coursework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be confident in ALL speaking situations – conversations, solo work (e.g. presentations, speeches) and working in groups. 	<p>There is no difference between Core and Extended examinations.</p>	<p>If you are doing Coursework, your teacher will guide you throughout your course. Each of the three activities you do for your coursework will be different, so it makes good sense to practise speaking on your own, speaking with one other person, and discussing in a small group.</p>	

Section 4: Appendix

Here are some of the common terms used by Examiners to test skills and understanding in the three examinations:

4.1 Reading and Listening

4.1.1 To test your understanding of specific parts of a written or spoken text (e.g. advert, brochure, article, interview, monologue, statement), Examiners will use question words/phrases such as:

- How much ...?
- How long...?
- How can...?
- Why wouldn't ...?
- What other ...?
- What can ...?
- What prevents ...?
- What is ...?
- What benefits ...?
- When does ...?

The Examiners hope to find your answers to these types of questions to be short, precise, and as accurate as possible. You can repeat the information in the text, if it helps you to answer the question.

4.1.2 Another technique Examiners may use to test your understanding of specific parts of a text is to ask you to do the following:

- Give one example ...
- Give two examples ...
- Find three reasons ...
- Give one advantage ...
- Give two problems ... etc.

Examiners will expect you to write short lists (if more than one detail is required) to answer these types of questions. You should make sure you give the number of examples, reasons, problems, etc that you are asked for.

NB: In both the Reading and the Listening examinations you will be asked to make **notes** based on articles or conversations which might be quite long. By notes, Examiners mean writing down the main points, in single words or short phrases. Notes are **not** usually made using complete sentences – certainly not long sentences. In some cases, you will be asked to fill in gaps using notes.

4.2 Writing

4.2.1 After reading a short text about a specific topic, or based on a theme, you will be asked to:

- Write a summary ...

Examiners are looking for a short piece of writing which:

- (i) includes the main points of the original text (you will be told what to look for in the question), and
- (ii) uses appropriate language (linking words, conjunctions, sentences which flow together well).

4.2.2 You will also be asked to write two or three longer pieces, usually in the form of a letter or an article. You will be given some prompts (usually three), which tell you what to cover in your writing. Be sure you cover each of the prompts, as you may lose marks if you don't.

- Write a letter to a friend telling him/her ...
- Write an entry for a competition ...
- Write a letter to your Head Teacher
- Write an article for your school magazine about ...

If you are taking the Extended examination Paper, you may be asked to:

- Write an article persuading young people ...
- Write a letter stating your views on ...
- Write down how you feel about ...

In all Papers, Examiners are looking for pieces of writing which:

- (i) are the right length – remember to look at what the question Paper tells you about the number of words required
- (ii) read fluently and are logical – this is probably more important than using complex words and difficult grammar,
- (iii) are accurate – so watch your spelling, grammar and punctuation
- (iv) use paragraphs – these don't have to be long, but each one should be a different set of ideas
- (v) are clear to read – so keep your handwriting tidy!

4.3 Speaking

4.3.1 The most common phrase that you will hear is:

- Discuss with the Examiner ...

This is how the main part of the Speaking Test will usually start. The Examiner will give you a topic (with 5 or 6 prompts) on a card. The test will be based on a conversation about the topic. Either of you may start the conversation. [The Examiner will usually be your teacher, but it may sometimes be a person you are meeting for the first time].

4.3.2 You will also see the following phrase on the card:

- You may wish to consider such things as ...

This is only intended as a guide to help the conversation flow. You should **not** regard the list of 5 or 6 prompts as something you **must** cover, or **must** talk about.

Examiners are looking at the conversation as a whole, so you can talk about anything within the main theme/topic that you find interesting and/or useful.

Your Speaking Test will be recorded. Later the recording will be checked by Examiners at CIE, who will be looking for:

- (i) a genuine discussion, not a speech
- (ii) you to be relaxed and use spoken language confidently
- (iii) you to enjoy the experience
- (iv) for you to hold an interesting and challenging conversation.

4.3.3 You will also see on the Examination Card:

- You may wish to consider such things as ...

This is only a guideline intended to help the conversation flow. You should not regard the list that follows it (of 5 or 6 prompts) as something you have to cover or talk about. Examiners are looking for an overall conversation – you can talk about anything within the main theme/topic that you find interesting and/or useful.

You are *not* expected to be an expert on the topic! Remember that this is a test of your speaking skills, and the topic card is designed simply to get you speaking. It isn't a test of 'content' knowledge.

You should also remember that this exam is taken by thousands of candidates from all over the world with a wide range of accents. The Examiner is *not* testing whether you can speak with a "British English" accent