

Specimen Paper Answers

Cambridge IGCSE® (9–1)

First Language English **0627**

Paper 2: Directed Writing and Composition



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PAPER 2

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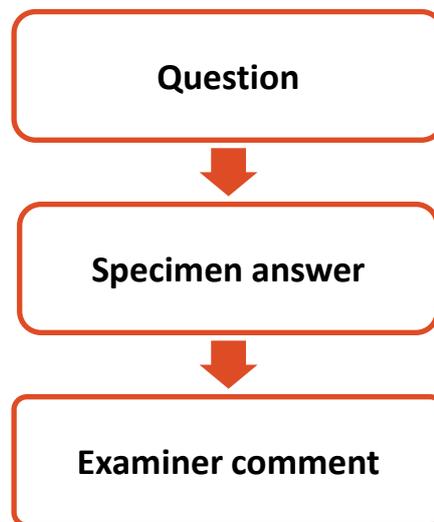
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Introduction

The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) First Language English (0627), and to show examples of high grade answers.

This booklet contains answers to the 2015 Specimen Paper 2, which has been marked by a Cambridge examiner. Candidates are eligible for grades 9 to 1, which are broken down into the Bands from the mark scheme. Each response is accompanied by a brief commentary explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the answers.

The following format for each paper has been adopted:



Each question is followed by an example of a high grade answer with an examiner comment on performance. Comments are given to indicate where and why marks were awarded, and how additional marks could have been obtained. In this way, it is possible to understand what candidates have done to gain their marks and what they still have to do to improve their grades.

The mark schemes for the Specimen Papers are available on our Teacher Support at <https://teachers.cie.org.uk>

Assessment at a glance

Candidates for Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) First Language English take three compulsory components – Paper 1, Paper 2 and Component 3. Both Paper 1 and Paper 2 are externally assessed. Component 3 is internally assessed and externally moderated. It is a non-coursework speaking and listening test. Marks for Component 3 do not contribute to the overall syllabus grade.

Component	Weighting
<p>Paper 1 Reading Passages 2 hours 10 minutes</p> <p>Candidates answer three compulsory questions.</p> <p>Question 1 Comprehension (30 marks)</p> <p>Candidates answer questions on Passage A, from the 19th century.</p> <p>Question 2 Summary (25 marks)</p> <p>Candidates answer one question on Passage B, from the 20th or 21st century.</p> <p>Question 3 Comprehension and comparison (25 marks)</p> <p>Candidates answer questions on Passage B and Passage C. The passages will be taken from both the 20th and 21st centuries.</p> <p>This component is externally assessed.</p> <p>80 marks</p>	50%
<p>Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition 2 hours</p> <p>Candidates answer two questions, one in Section 1 and one in Section 2. Section 1 Directed Writing (40 marks)</p> <p>Candidates answer one question on two passages. The passages will be taken from either the 20th or 21st century, or both.</p> <p>Section 2 Composition (40 marks)</p> <p>Candidates complete one task from a choice of four.</p> <p>This component is externally assessed.</p> <p>80 marks</p>	50%
<p>Component 3 Speaking and Listening Test Approximately 8–10 minutes</p> <p>Candidates present an individual task – a formal presentation (approximately 4–5 minutes), and answer spoken questions (approximately 4–5 minutes). Assessments for all candidates are completed and audio recorded within a set speaking test period.</p> <p>This component is internally assessed and externally moderated.</p> <p>40 marks</p>	Separately endorsed

Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition

Candidates answer two questions, one from each section. In Section 1 Directed Writing, there is one compulsory question and in Section 2 Composition there are four questions which the candidates can choose a Descriptive or Narrative title.

Section 1 Directed Writing

Candidates use and evaluate the information in the two passages to create a discursive/argumentative letter or article. Candidates write about 250–350 words.

Passage A

Passage A: Lack of care is a catastrophe, claims report

This website article explains the concerns some people have that elderly people are not being offered sufficient help and support in their homes.

A “catastrophic” situation is developing in the country with many vulnerable elderly people being denied care, campaigners say.

A recent study found the proportion of over-65s getting help had fallen by a third since 2005–6.

Last year, under 900,000 over-65s got help – one in 10 people in that group – compared with 15% seven years ago.

The review – based on published data – estimated at least 800,000 older people were going without vital help.

This includes help in the home, with daily tasks such as washing, dressing and eating, as well as the allocation of care home places.

The report’s author Caroline Abrahams said: “The figures we have uncovered are catastrophic. Older people who need help and are now not getting it are being placed at significant risk and families who are now looking after their loved ones are experiencing intolerable strain.”

Care and Support Minister Norman Lamb said: “We need to work differently to respond to the needs of our ageing population – we need to focus on keeping people well and living independently for as long as possible.”

Passage B

Passage B: Homeshare scheme brings comfort to young and old

This newspaper article explains an innovative project that some people suggest could help tackle the housing crisis. Beth, 26, lives with Barbara, 97, as part of the Homeshare scheme.

For the majority of the 53 years Barbara has lived in her Victorian ground floor flat in an idyllic tree-lined street in central London, she's been alone – now the 97-year-old has a friend. Beth, 26, has been staying in Barbara's spare room for just two weeks – already she cooks, washes-up and does the shopping. It's like having the perfect granddaughter to stay, except Beth's not related. Until a month ago, she'd never even heard of Barbara. The odd pairing, bringing together two people seven decades apart in age, came through a scheme called Homeshare.

The project, organised by a charity, provides affordable housing for young people in central London and companionship and support for elderly people who live on their own. Beth, an actor currently working as a teaching assistant, pays just a fraction of the weekly rent she might normally expect to have to pay for a room two minutes' walk from the tube station. In return for her bargain-basement rent, Beth agrees to give up 10 hours weekly to help her elderly flatmate and spend at least five nights at the flat. "If you want to be in a location like this then it's going to be very expensive," says Beth. "I could afford to live in a flatshare, just about. But I wouldn't have as much money as I need to do things that I want to do. People are really interested when I tell them about my situation – someone so young living with someone so old. I think you learn a lot actually, about life. It's a completely different perspective, without any kind of family ties."

Barbara, who owns the property, pays a small amount each week to the charity, covering the cost of providing regular support and check-ups on pairings. "My arthritis means it is difficult even going to the shops now," explains Barbara, a retired receptionist who worked for the Ministry of Information during the war. "For me, this means I can stay here with my own things and not go into a care home." Barbara has had two previous homesharers, a young Irish girl who "went back to Ireland for the weekend and never came back", and a middle-aged Australian who stayed for over a year.

Two's company

Sitting in her cosy living room, surrounded by her ornaments, Barbara says she heard about the scheme through a friend. "She had to give up because she's very frail and needs full-time care. I've only got one friend left from my own generation. All my contemporaries have gone, which is boring. So it's nice to have someone around the place."

Jenny, who manages Homeshare, describes it as "like a crazy dating service". The charity interviews and selects potential homeowners and homesharers before they are introduced and, providing all goes well, are finally "matched". Currently, the youngest homesharer is 19. In most cases, the homeowner provides furniture and an internet connection. "In the early stages you work out what kind of tasks you need doing and make sure the hours are being fulfilled," says Jenny, who asks all homesharers to commit to stay for at least six months. "The relationship adapts over time – you get to know each other and find out more as time goes on. It's an ongoing issue about high rents in London and also people being isolated in their homes. It's reassuring for family and friends to know if there is someone a little bit older, there is someone there in the evening and overnight."

Passage B, continued

Rebecca, 32, a student nurse, has been homesharing with a lady in her 70s, for the past two months. “There are obviously boundaries,” she says. “It’s still a professional agreement, but she’s a bit like my gran, really. I do everything from popping to the shops to pick up bits and pieces, to having a nice chat with a cup of tea.” Rebecca missed out on student accommodation – which is becoming increasingly expensive and hard to find – when she moved to London from Suffolk, where she used to be a radio presenter. “For her family it provides peace of mind,” says Rebecca. “They’re keen on somebody being there; otherwise they’d have to think about sheltered accommodation. To give up a home which she’s lived in for longer than I’ve been on the planet seems really unfair.” For Rebecca, the best thing about the scheme is knowing there’s someone else in the house. She says she could see herself homesharing for the duration of her three-year degree.

Question 1 Directed Writing (40 marks)

Your elderly relative lives alone and is considering joining the Homeshare scheme. They think this might help not just themselves, but a young person too. They are determined to remain independent and have contacted you for advice.

Write a letter to your elderly relative, in which you should:

- Explain what you think might be the advantages and potential disadvantages for any young person sharing your relative's house in the Homeshare scheme.
- Evaluate whether you think joining the Homeshare scheme would be a good idea for your relative or not. Give reasons and examples to support what you say.

You should use evidence from the two passages you have read to help you answer this question. Remember to write the letter using your own words.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

Specimen answer

Dear Gran,

It was good to hear your news and yes thanks Uni is fine. I'm getting used to sharing a flat, and you're right, it's not easy sharing at any age. Your sharer would be luckier though – their rent would be lower than mine and they would only be minutes from town.

Homesharing could mean you get help with chores like putting the bins out or making tea. You've got to admit that would be nice. In fact, having someone there for emergencies might stop Mum worrying so much about you being alone since your home help was stopped.

Sharers must be trustworthy if they have passed the agency checks and I think they'd just be relieved to find that you are such good company. Your stories would cheer anyone up. I know you've felt lonely recently, so a new face around the place might liven things up.

Don't worry about needing internet installed. The rent would cover the cost and having internet access will make it easier for you to stay independent. I'm sure your sharer would show you the basics if you get stuck. That's the point really isn't it? The Homeshare scheme helps both of you. Your sharer needs a home and probably doesn't know anyone in the area. You'd be someone to turn to who knows about living round there. You need extra support but don't want to move away from your lovely garden. Your new sharer might even be persuaded into a bit of gardening if Mum can't get over to mow your lawn.

There could be negatives. Sharers might only stay a short time or might not stick to the rules if they miss having parties or friends round. If that kind of thing happens though

you can tell the agency. It won't just be down to you to sort it out and the biggest plus will be that you can stop worrying about the whole care home issue.

It's got to be worth trying and if the scheme is as good as it sounds, I might be asking Homeshare if they have places here in Edinburgh too!

Bye for now

Examiner comment

The response synthesises and develops a wide range of evidence, with ideas drawn from both of the texts. Information is assimilated to offer a convincing overview, addressing both the potential positives and negatives for each participant involved in a Homeshare.

From the beginning, there is evidence of evaluation which balances the point of view of both parties. The positives for the young sharer are established early, with the implication that Gran would be helping them. The decision has clearly been made that the scheme would be good for the relative and the answer builds a convincing case, sensitively weaving in a number of positives throughout. For example, the suggestion that there would be fewer worries for relatives, thanks to assistance with basic chores and having someone there, is linked with those issues around lack of readily available support (Passage A) by mention of the home help.

Concerns and potential negatives are dealt with in the context of reassurance designed to further the argument. Potential worries for the relative, such as whether the sharer could be trusted, whether they would abide by the agreement and for how long they might stay, are dealt with using details from the text. Likewise, some of the young person's potential concerns are woven in to the argument, for example lack of freedom, having to have boring chats with an old person or the need to be 'persuaded' into activities they might not want or feel able to do.

Throughout there is a strong sense of audience and purpose, consistent use of own words and a well-organised argument.

Reading Band 6
Writing Band 6

Section 2 Composition

Question 2 Descriptive Writing (40 marks)

You find a photograph which reminds you of someone or somewhere you used to know. Describe what you see, feel and remember as you look at the image.

Specimen answer

Who is this Dad?

I look up from my book and take the photograph. 'Where did you find this?' I frown.

'In the box Grandad gave me.' she states proudly. Then, with a giggle she scampers off again, her interest in the grainy image already lost.

I examine the picture more closely. A woman stands near a doorway in a room full of people. Her gaze is stern, her lips are pursed. Her dark hair is scraped back unfashionably into a tight bun, which does little to soften her harsh features. My heart catches in my throat. I know her of course. My mother's face is not easily forgotten.

She's wearing a striped skirt and matching jacket, and is clearly uncomfortable with the jolly scene behind her. As if cut and paste into the picture by someone with a wicked sense of humour, she looks out of place. The other wedding guests, are caught in action chatting and smiling in the background. She is still, posed and already grey.

I do not remember if I was there that day. I remember that suit though and how it smelled strongly of the cloves my mother used to keep the moths out of the wardrobe. I remember folding the suit into an old suitcase years later. I remember the cold smoothness of the material. My mother rarely cuddled or hugged me.

When I look again at the photograph, I recognise the place, remembering other such occasions when my cousins and I enjoyed skating round wildly in our socks on that same wooden floor. Their parents, my aunts and uncles, would dance in circles or sometimes in pairs. We would sometimes be encouraged to join in but preferred to make dens under the tables and sneak back to the buffet to raid what was left of the yellow marzipan off the cake. My mother did not dance unless my father insisted.

I try to make out my mother's eyes. Brown I remember, the same colour as my daughter's, but the camera has turned them a bright and angry red. I shudder and turn over the picture, pushing it into the back pages of my book.

The photograph is still hidden there later when my daughter asks for it back. I hug her and say not to worry, it will turn up somewhere and there are other better ones I can find for her.

Examiner comment

There are a number of well-defined, engaging images here and the response offers varieties of focus. The initial narrative does not distract from the description and is a device used to frame the memories evoked by the picture itself. Clearly some time has passed since the picture was taken and the mother is described in such a way as to suggest she is no longer alive and showed little warmth or emotion when she was.

There is evidence that sentences have been deliberately varied, crafted and patterned for effect: my mother's face is not easily forgotten, my mother rarely cuddled, my mother did not dance, for example. Vocabulary is used with some precision and there are a number of interesting contrasts between the other wedding guests, the dancing parents and the still, stern mother.

The ending is deliberately managed for effect, creating a sense of having come full circle. Throughout the response there is a consistent sense of audience.

Band 6 Content and structure

Band 6 Style and Accuracy

Question 3 Descriptive Writing (40 marks)

Write a description using the title, 'The view from the top'

Specimen answer

The relief at reaching the top was immense. I'd stopped feeling angry about half way up and now was just relieved to have made it. As I pulled myself up to the top of the rock, the sheer effort meant I could see, hear or feel nothing for what seemed like several minutes afterwards. I lay exhausted on my back on the sandy platform.

Directly above me the gulls were too high to make out though their shrill cries seemed to mock me and my puny efforts in swimming out here and climbing the rock. As my eyes tried to focus, the sky seemed unreal, too blue to be true. Only smudges of clouds still hung on to this perfect canvas of summer, the sun behind my head burned, too intense to look at.

Turning my head to the right I could see swimmers still in the water. Some lazily floated on their backs, faces upwards, enjoying the gentle rocking movement of the waves out past the beach. Further back, nearer the shore, surf boards bobbed and toppled, and groups of boisterous teenagers ducked and dived in the waves as they crashed in towards the sand. On the shoreline, smaller children in brightly coloured costumes shrieked and ran back to parents as waves, tiny now, trickled between their toes.

I sat up and looked left, across the bay towards the busy docks and city with its shops, schools and offices. From the beach it had been screened by the curve of the rocks. From out here high up on Long Rock the ugly cranes and buildings spoil the view. The dirty reds and blacks of shipping containers clashed with the impossibly blue green sea and the hazy fog of pollution hung between the land and the impossibly blue sky. I didn't want to go back, ever.

I looked straight out to sea and studied the tiny yellow white sails of yachts or brave windsurfers – so far out from here I couldn't tell. At the furthest edge of the horizon a larger ship, perhaps a ferry or tanker, hardly seemed to move as it crept towards the port.

I shifted a little towards the edge of the smooth rock platform, and looked directly downwards to the water below. Jumping off didn't seem like such a good idea now. The sea moved around the rock in swirls, and shadows beneath might have been rocks or worse. I was going to have to climb down back the way I had come.

Examiner comment

The overall structure here is secure. Constituent parts are well-managed with the narrator's view in different directions described to offer a cohesive and convincing overall picture. The place is named, suggesting the writer has somewhere specific in mind, a sense that continues throughout the description as the position of the narrator in relation to everyone else is carefully maintained. There is a narrative implied but whilst we are clear as readers that the narrator has swum out in anger from the beach to climb the rock, intending to jump off into the sea, the story does not take over. The 'climb down' at the end may well be an intentional image as well as a literal description and creates an effective ending to the piece.

There are a number of precise and effective choices of vocabulary and some deliberate repetition for effect. Images are sometimes extended and show evidence of careful crafting. For example, the gentle waves become crashing waves, then finally small trickles, as the description moves back towards the beach. Sentence structure is varied and punctuation largely accurate.

Band 6 Content and structure

Band 6 Style and accuracy

Question 4 Narrative Writing (40 marks)

Write a story, or part of a story, beginning with the words: ‘Something had changed this time.’

Specimen answer

... *Something had changed this time.*

Probably, this was because it was the last time, but how could even I have known that then?

I’ve always had a talent for knowing things I wasn’t supposed to know, or couldn’t possibly know. ‘The child has a gift,’ my grandmother would tell my mother gravely. The younger me would just laugh and continue with my drawing.

What if she had listened as she set out that morning? What if Mum had looked me in the eye and asked me what exactly I’d pictured this time? Could she have seen what was to come for us as well?

And you, that day. Would you have listened if I had said that something had changed? If I had explained that there was a haze, a fuzziness around the edges of you as you headed towards our front door, would you have laughed and told me you’d be late if you didn’t go now. If I’d said I thought I might be feeling poorly again, that the pictures in my head were clearer, more vivid, more real, would you have stopped with me until Mum got back?

Would you have sat back down and finished your coffee? Would you have tucked me up on the sofa with a book and more toast? Would you have given in if I’d said I felt really bad, and worked from home that day? Would we have switched on the news later that morning, together?

I worry that you would, that we would, that you would have come back that day as you always had done. I worry that I should have told you more.

I watch it again in my mind, picturing you rushing around, hearing the sound track as you struggle into your coat: toast first in your one hand, then between your teeth; swearing as your arm gets stuck on the way into your sleeve. Crumbs, a smear of peanut butter and strawberry jam, smudge into a dark, sticky mess on your tie as you try to wipe it with a piece of kitchen roll and just make matters worse.

‘Why doesn’t Sarah have to clear up? I whine. It’s always my turn.

‘Oh, don’t start,’ you say. Then smile at my sulking. ‘I’ll see you later. Make sure you start that revision before lunchtime. No watching daytime telly.’

I had meant to start. I'd even cleared the mugs and cereals from the table and put them in the dishwasher so that Mum wouldn't moan when she got in. But the television had gone on and the news had broken. The pictures in my mind had played out.

By the time Mum arrived back, one look told me she'd seen it too.

Examiner comment

The content here is complex, engaging and realistic. We imagine as readers what has happened. The news event is made all the more frightening since details are not revealed. Meanwhile, the idea that the narrator has some kind of ability to predict or envisage future events is built up gradually along with his/her sense of guilt for not having done more to change events that day.

There is a sense of cohesion with the overall structure clearly planned and controlled. Constituent parts are well-balanced as the narrator looks back on what happened and the ending in particular is carefully managed for deliberate effect. Elements of fiction such as subtle use of descriptive detail demonstrate some sophistication. Characterisation for example relies on what is not said, as well as what is. Cogent detail helps to create a picture of a 'typical' family with two children – one nearing exams, the parent(s) work. There is still much left unsaid about the person who is addressed throughout. The response might perhaps have included more clues about them, though we are clearly meant to fill in the gaps ourselves and deduce from clues given that the character is the father. The mention of a tie suggests the person is male and employed in some sort of business/office work as they can choose to work from home. Careful use of dialogue – realistic and economically used – creates both a sense of character and relationship.

A range of vocabulary is included. The choices are not complicated but deliberate and evocative for example, smear, smudge and whine. Punctuation is almost always accurate and the style here is highly effective.

Band 6 Content and structure

Band 6 Style and accuracy

Question 5

Write a story, or part of a story, that involves an argument or misunderstanding between friends.

Specimen answer

'You're kidding?' said Gemma, already knowing I wasn't and beginning to panic that we were going to be in trouble.

'No, there's no sign of her,' I said shutting the door again. 'She's not come back here after all.'

The realisation of what that meant hit us. Gemma's nine year-old sister lost somewhere between here and the park could be anywhere by now, with anyone. Anything could have happened to her and everybody would say it was our fault.

The argument had been stupid anyway, as usual. Gemma and I were too similar and often argued. Our arguments were intense and ferocious but always fizzled out eventually. One of us would sulk under her fringe, whichever one was most wrong that time, until the other one starting giggling and then we'd both fall about crying with laughter as we played back through the childish drama of the things we'd said.

This time the argument had blazed longer than usual. The scars would take longer to heal. Gemma's eyes had glinted with hatred as I'd screamed into them the worst insults I could imagine. Friends know secrets and friends are the worst enemies you can have. Friends know how to use those secrets to hurt you, flashing memories of embarrassment, twisting the blade of shame in a frenzy of jealous rage until reality sinks in and you both just stop.

The quiet had been unreal. The silence once we'd stopped yelling at each other was solid, scary and forced itself to be noticed. Rose was nowhere to be seen. The swing was empty, the climbing frame loomed like a metal skeleton against the grey sky. We'd meant to be watching her, keeping an eye on her as she played. Instead we'd got sucked into our own world and ignored what was happening in hers.

Panicking we'd circled the outskirts of the play area through the plastic bags and burger wrappers being blown about by the wind. It was raining slightly now and much colder. The mothers with toddlers who'd stared at us shouting had left hours before. No one was there to say if they'd seen Rose or knew where she'd gone.

'She's hiding,' said Gemma, 'or just gone home in a huff.'

We'd agreed and made our way back, trying to convince ourselves as we raced along the uneven pavements and dodged traffic as we crossed the main road that we were only running because of the cold.

As we went through the side gate into the garden Gemma hung back. I'd seen the key still behind the plant pot too. I unlocked the back door and checked but we'd both known Rose wouldn't be there.

I wasn't kidding. The house was still empty. Gemma's mother would be back from work soon.

Examiner comment

The narrative shows some complexity and the decision not to give details of the argument is consistent with the idea that the dispute itself pales into insignificance compared to the disappearance of the younger sister. The story involves an argument between friends but is not limited by the argument or distracted with how it started and why. There are realistic details of the park and its other occupants with the reaction of the mothers to the friends' loud behaviour typical of how parents might well react to rowdy teenagers. The sense of shock when the friends realise that the sister is nowhere to be seen is convincing. The skeleton image suggests their fears that something awful might have happened.

Constituent parts of the narrative are controlled and balanced with a crafted ending suggesting there is more to come and this is just part of the story. Vocabulary is carefully chosen and though there is occasional reliance on cliché, the audience has clearly been considered throughout. Dialogue is used to move the narrative forward, engage the reader and suggest something of the characters themselves with a strong sense of the narrator's voice and their mounting panic strong. Grammar and punctuation are almost always accurate.

Band 6 Content and structure

Band 6 Style and accuracy

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