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CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge O Level

ARABIC **3180/01**

Paper 1 Composition **October/November 2025**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 45

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.

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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.

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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
	Correct word or words
	To show error
	Omission
	Used to show that blank pages have been seen and any creditworthy material has been awarded
	Word limit, do not credit content beyond this point
	To show impression mark/s
	To show impression mark/s
Highlighter	Highlight
Off Page Comment	Used to make a holistic comment about the script

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General Guidance

1 Relevance

Irrelevant material should be bracketed and ignored in the word count and the marking. The word 'PAD' should be written in the left hand margin.

2 Length

In Section A, draw a line after the sentence containing the **125th** counted word.
In Section B, draw a line after the sentence containing the **210th** counted word.
Any remaining text should be crossed out.
Irrelevant material is not counted. In letters, the day, date and address are not counted.

3 Marking units

These consist of a single word or group of words which, if considered correct (free from any single minor error), should be awarded between 1 and 3 ticks '✓', where 2 or 3 ticks should be given for accurate language which is more complex or contains vocabulary and expression above the level.

No credit is given for immediate repetition.

4 Impression

Indicate with a '+' symbol in the right-hand margin cases where the candidate is not sufficiently rewarded; i.e. if the candidate attempts complex structures, vocabulary and expression above the level but with error, which cannot therefore be awarded any ticks '✓'.

Indicate with a '–' symbol in the left-hand margin cases where a candidate is excessively rewarded; i.e. by gaining a tick '✓' repeatedly for identical or near identical material.

5 Scoring

Section A

Count the ticks up to a maximum of 13. Each tick represents 1 mark.

In addition, up to 2 additional discretionary impression marks are awarded. These should be awarded with flexibility, taking into account the '+' and '–' symbols in the margins. In the absence of other evidence, the impression marks should be awarded in proportion to the mark already gained, as follows:

0–5 = 0
6–9 = 1
10–13 = 2

Total marks for Section A = 15

Section B

Count the ticks up to a maximum of 25. Each tick represents 1 mark.

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In addition, up to 5 additional discretionary impression marks are awarded. These should be awarded with flexibility, taking into account the '+' and '–' symbols in the margins. In the absence of other evidence, the impression marks should be awarded in proportion to the mark already gained, as follows:

0–8 = 0
9–12 = 1
13–16 = 2
17–19 = 3
20–22 = 4
23–25 = 5

Total marks for Section B = 30

6 Marks check

As a final check of marks awarded, after marking each essay you should refer to the grid on the following two pages. For each essay, check that the descriptors corresponding to the mark awarded best reflect the qualities of the candidate's response. If the band in which the candidate's mark falls does not seem to fit the overall performance, you should reconsider and revise the ticks, the '+' and '–' symbols, and the discretionary impression marks awarded.

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Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	Apart from very occasional slips, the language is accurate. Sentence structure is varied and demonstrates the candidate's skill to use different lengths and types of sentences for particular effects. Vocabulary is wide and precise. Spelling is accurate across the full range of vocabulary used. Paragraphs have unity, are linked, and show evidence of planning. The topic is addressed with consistent relevance; the interest of the reader is aroused and sustained.	**15**
1(b)	Apart from very occasional slips, the language is accurate. Sentence structure is varied and demonstrates the candidate's skill to use different lengths and types of sentences for particular effects. Vocabulary is wide and precise. Spelling is accurate across the full range of vocabulary used. Paragraphs have unity, are linked, and show evidence of planning. The topic is addressed with consistent relevance; the interest of the reader is aroused and sustained.	**15**
1(c)	Apart from very occasional slips, the language is accurate. Sentence structure is varied and demonstrates the candidate's skill to use different lengths and types of sentences for particular effects. Vocabulary is wide and precise. Spelling is accurate across the full range of vocabulary used. Paragraphs have unity, are linked, and show evidence of planning. The topic is addressed with consistent relevance; the interest of the reader is aroused and sustained.	**15**

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Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)	Apart from very occasional slips, the language is accurate. Sentence structure is varied and demonstrates the candidate's skill to use different lengths and types of sentences for particular effects. Vocabulary is wide and precise. Spelling is accurate across the full range of vocabulary used. Paragraphs have unity, are linked, and show evidence of planning. The topic is addressed with consistent relevance; the interest of the reader is aroused and sustained.	**30**
2(b)	Apart from very occasional slips, the language is accurate. Sentence structure is varied and demonstrates the candidate's skill to use different lengths and types of sentences for particular effects. Vocabulary is wide and precise. Spelling is accurate across the full range of vocabulary used. Paragraphs have unity, are linked, and show evidence of planning. The topic is addressed with consistent relevance; the interest of the reader is aroused and sustained.	**30**
2(c)	Apart from very occasional slips, the language is accurate. Sentence structure is varied and demonstrates the candidate's skill to use different lengths and types of sentences for particular effects. Vocabulary is wide and precise. Spelling is accurate across the full range of vocabulary used. Paragraphs have unity, are linked, and show evidence of planning. The topic is addressed with consistent relevance; the interest of the reader is aroused and sustained.	**30**
2(d)	Apart from very occasional slips, the language is accurate. Sentence structure is varied and demonstrates the candidate's skill to use different lengths and types of sentences for particular effects. Vocabulary is wide and precise. Spelling is accurate across the full range of vocabulary used. Paragraphs have unity, are linked, and show evidence of planning. The topic is addressed with consistent relevance; the interest of the reader is aroused and sustained.	**30**

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Marks	Descriptors for the Assessment of Section A and B
14–15 (Section A) **27–30 (Section B)**	Apart from very occasional slips, the language is accurate. Sentence structure is varied and demonstrates the candidate's skill to use different lengths and types of sentences for particular effects. Vocabulary is wide and precise. Spelling is accurate across the full range of vocabulary used. Paragraphs have unity, are linked, and show evidence of planning. The topic is addressed with consistent relevance; the interest of the reader is aroused and sustained.
12–13 (Section A) **23–26 (Section B)**	The language is accurate; occasional errors are either minor or arise from attempts to use ambitious structures or vocabulary. Vocabulary is wide enough to convey intended shades of meaning with some precision. Sentences show some variation in length and style, including the confident use of complex sentences. Spelling is usually accurate. Paragraphs show some evidence of planning, have unity and are usually appropriately linked. The piece of writing is relevant to the topic title and the interest of the reader is aroused and sustained through most of the composition.
10–11 (Section A) **19–22 (Section B)**	Vocabulary and structures are mainly correct when they are simple; mistakes may occur when more sophistication is attempted. Sentences may show some variety of structure and length, although there may be tendency to repeat sentence types and 'shapes', producing a rather monotonous effect. Spelling of simple vocabulary is accurate; errors may occur when ambitious vocabulary is used. Sentence separation is correct. The composition is written in paragraphs which may show some unity, although links may be absent or inappropriate. The composition is relevant to the topic title and will arouse some interest in the reader.
8–9 (Section A) **15–18 (Section B)**	The meaning is generally clear. There will be patches of accurate language, particularly when simple vocabulary and structures are used. There may be some variety of sentence length and structure, but the reader may not be convinced that this variety is for a particular purpose. Vocabulary is usually adequate to convey intended meaning, although it may be insufficiently developed to achieve precision. Idiom may be uncertain at times. Some sentence separation errors may occur occasionally. Simple words will be spelt accurately, but more complex vocabulary may show some weakness in spelling. Paragraphs will be used, but may lack unity or coherence. A genuine attempt has been made to address the topic, but there may be digressions or failures of logic. Compositions may lack liveliness and interest value.
6–7 (Section A) **11–14 (Section B)**	Errors do not impede understanding but are sufficiently frequent and serious to hamper precision, and may slow down speed of reading. Some simple structures are accurate. Vocabulary may be limited. Some idiomatic errors are likely. There may be simple sentence separation errors. Simple words will usually be spelt correctly, but there may be inconsistency, and frequent mistakes in the spelling of more difficult words. Paragraphs may lack unity or be used haphazardly. The subject matter will show some relevance. The incidence of linguistic error is likely to distract the reader from merits of content.
4–5 (Section A) **7–10 (Section B)**	There will be many serious errors of various kinds throughout the script, but they will be of the 'single-word' type, i.e. they could be corrected without rewriting the sentence. Communication is established, although the weight of error may cause 'blurring' from time to time. Sentences will probably be simple and repetitive in structure. Vocabulary will convey meaning but is likely to be simple and imprecise. Errors in idiomatic usage will be a significant feature. Paragraphing will be haphazard or non-existent. There may be evidence of interesting and relevant subject matter, but the weight of linguistic error will tend to obscure or neutralise its effect.

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Marks	Descriptors for the Assessment of Section A and B
2–3 (Section A) **3–6 (Section B)**	Sense will usually be decipherable, but some of the error will be multiple, i.e. requiring the reader to re-read and re-organise before meaning becomes clear. There are unlikely to be more than a few accurate sentences, however simple, in the whole composition. The content is likely to be comprehensible, but may be partly hidden by the density of linguistic error.
0–1 (Section A) **0–2 (Section B)**	The piece of writing is entirely, or almost entirely, impossible to recognise as a piece of writing in the target language. Whole sections will make no sense at all. Where occasional patches of relative clarity are seen, some marks will be given. The mark of 0 is reserved for scripts that make no sense at all from beginning to end.

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