CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/12**

Paper 1 Reading **February/March 2026**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 80

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 February/March 2026 series for most Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International A and AS Level components, and some Cambridge O Level components.

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026 **[Turn over**

PUBLISHED

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.

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

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.

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

PUBLISHED

English & Media subject specific general marking principles
(To be read in conjunction with the Generic Marking Principles (and requiring further guidance on how to place marks within levels))

Components using level descriptors:

- We use level descriptors as a guide to broad understanding of the qualities normally expected of, or typical of, work in a level.
- Level descriptors are a means of general guidance and should not be interpreted as hurdle statements.
- Where indicative content notes are supplied for a question, these are *not* a prescription of required content, and must not be treated as such. Alternative correct points and unexpected answers in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the knowledge and skills demonstrated.
- While we may have legitimate expectations as to the ground most answers may occupy, we must at all times be prepared to meet candidates on their chosen ground, provided it is relevant ground (e.g. clearly related to and derived from a relevant passage/text and meeting the mark scheme requirements for the question).

Components using point-based marking:

Point marking is often used to reward knowledge, understanding and application of skills. We give credit where the candidate's answer shows relevant knowledge, understanding and application of skills in answering the question. We do not give credit where the answer shows confusion.

From this it follows that we:

a DO credit answers which are worded differently from the mark scheme if they clearly convey the same meaning (unless the mark scheme requires a specific term).
b DO credit alternative answers/examples which are not written in the mark scheme if they are correct.
c DO credit answers where candidates give more than one correct answer in one prompt/numbered/scaffolded space where extended writing is required rather than list-type answers. For example, questions that require *n* reasons (e.g. State two reasons…).
d DO NOT credit answers simply for using a 'key term' unless that is all that is required. (Check for evidence it is understood and not used incorrectly.)
e DO NOT credit answers which are obviously self-contradicting or trying to cover all possibilities.
f DO NOT give further credit for what is effectively repetition of a correct point already credited unless the language itself is being tested. This applies equally to 'mirror statements' (i.e. polluted/not polluted).
g DO NOT require spellings to be correct, unless this is part of the test. However, spellings of syllabus terms must allow for clear and unambiguous separation from other syllabus terms with which they may be confused (e.g. Corrasion/Corrosion).

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

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

Annotations	Meaning	Questions 1(a)–1(e)	Question 1(f)	Questions 2(a)–2(c)	Question 2(d)	Question 3
^	partially effective	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	credited point, detail or choice from text	Y (point awarded)		Y (point awarded)	Y (relevant choice)	Y (supporting detail from the text)
DEV	development					Y
A1	relevant idea		Y			Y (related to first bullet)
A2	relevant idea					Y (related to second bullet)
A3	relevant idea					Y (related to third bullet)
EXP	explanation/ meaning				Y	

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Annotations	Meaning	Questions 1(a)–1(e)	Question 1(f)	Questions 2(a)–2(c)	Question 2(d)	Question 3
	effect		Y (effective own words)		Y	Y (effective use of own words)
LM	overview or organisation		Y (effective organisation / overview)		Y (overview)	
LM	lifted material		Y			Y
Highlighter	copied from text	Y (where own words were required)	Y	Y (where own words were required / excess in 2(a)) [and choice in 2(c)]	Y	Y
REP	repetition		Y		Y	Y
Text box	summative comment		Y Reading Writing [& MS numbers]		Y Reading	Y Reading Writing
SEEN	viewed – including blank and additional pages	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Note: All examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated. Nonetheless, the content must be clearly related to and derived from the texts.

Question 1

This question tests reading assessment objectives R1, R2 and R5 (25 marks):

R1 demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings
R2 demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and attitudes
R5 select and use information for specific purposes

and **Question 1(f) only** tests writing assessment objectives W2 and W3 (5 marks):

W2 organise and structure ideas and opinions for deliberate effect
W3 use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures appropriate to context.

Overview of items for Question 1

Item	Assessment objectives tested	Marks for assessment objectives
1(a)	R5	1
1(b)(i)	R1	2
1(b)(ii)	R1 and R2	2
1(c)	R1 and R2	2
1(d)(i)	R1, R2 and R5	2
1(d)(ii)	R1, R2 and R5	3
1(e)	R1 and R2	3
1(f)	R1, R2 and R5 W2 and W3	10 5
Total		**30**

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	**How many years did researchers spend studying giraffes in Tanzania according to the text?** • ten (years) / (a) decade / 10	**1**
1(b)(i)	**<u>Using your own words</u>, explain what the text means by:** **'widespread decline' (line 1).** Award 2 marks for full explanation (both strands). Award 1 mark for partial explanation. Credit alternatives explaining the whole phrase. • extensive / all over the place / over a large area / far-reaching / everywhere / overall / globally / worldwide • downturn / reduction (in numbers) / drop / fall / dwindling / waning / decrease / loss	**2**
1(b)(ii)	**<u>Using your own words</u>, explain what the text means by:** **'combined effects' (line 2).** Award 2 marks for full explanation (both strands). Award 1 mark for partial explanation. Credit alternatives explaining the whole phrase. • joint / aggregate(d) / (both) together / united / overall / sum of / mixed (together) / total (of) • consequence(s) / outcome(s) / ramification(s) / repercussion(s) / what they cause (to happen) / impact(s) / result(s)	**2**
1(c)	**Reread paragraph 2 ('"Studying … years."').** **Give <u>two</u> different reasons why the study had to go on for so long.** Award 1 mark for each idea, up to a maximum of 2. • giraffes are long-lived • could be delayed effects (on survival) / capture (both immediate and) delayed effects • to establish patterns in climate variation	**2**

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Question	Answer	Marks
1(d)(i)	**Reread paragraphs 3 and 4 ('Her team … the leaves.').** **Identify <u>two</u> findings that surprised the researchers.** Award 1 mark for each idea, up to a maximum of 2. • higher temperatures had a positive effect on giraffes / higher temperatures did not have a negative effect on giraffes • rainier seasons had a negative effect / wet seasons impacted giraffe survival rates negatively • higher vegetation greenness was associated with reduced survival of adult giraffes	**2**
1(d)(ii)	**Reread paragraphs 3 and 4 ('Her team … the leaves.').** **Explain the reasons scientists gave for what they found out about giraffe survival.** Award 1 mark for each idea, up to a maximum of 3. • rise in parasites • outbreaks of disease / heavy flooding • faster leaf growth reduces nutrients	**3**
1(e)	**Re-read paragraph 5 ('Worse still … to blame.').** **<u>Using your own words</u>, explain why people may not have noticed changes in giraffe numbers.** Award 1 mark for each idea, predominantly in own words, up to a maximum of 3. Answers which are entirely in the words of the text should not be credited. • image often seen in films / image used often in fashion / image used in media • exhibited in zoos / encountered on safari / animals in captivity are displayed (giving a false impression of survival rates) • concentrating on threats to other species / worrying about declining populations of other animals	**3**

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Question	Answer	Marks
1(f)	**According to Text B, what is appealing about Sophie the giraffe to modern parents of young children?** **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.** Use the Marking Criteria for **Question 1(f)** (Table A, Reading and Table B Writing). **INDICATIVE READING CONTENT** Candidates **may** refer to any of the points below: 1 visually attractive / friendly-looking 2 specially designed for children / designed for young children 3 fashionable / famous / on social media 4 children become attached / becomes companion 5 big events / has celebrity fans / royal fans 6 still made in the same small factory (in France) / provenance / not mass produced 7 painted with food-grade paint / non-toxic paint / safe 8 biodegradable / sustainable rubber / environmentally friendly / natural rubber 9 engages all baby's five senses / engages different senses / stimulates / educational 10 range of Sophie products / Sophie themed accessories 11 classic / vintage / iconic / nostalgia 12 has won awards / (featured) in a movie	**15**

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Marking criteria for Question 1(f)
Table A, Reading

Use the following table to give a mark out of 10 for Reading

Level	Marks	Description
5	**9–10**	• A very effective response that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirements of the task. • Demonstrates understanding of a wide range of relevant ideas and is consistently well-focused. • Points are skilfully selected to demonstrate an overview.
4	**7–8**	• An effective response that demonstrates a competent understanding of the requirements of the task. • Demonstrates understanding of a good range of relevant ideas and is mostly focused. • Points are carefully selected and there is some evidence of an overview.
3	**5–6**	• A partially effective response that demonstrates a reasonable understanding of the requirements of the task. • Demonstrates understanding of ideas with occasional loss of focus. • Some evidence of selection of relevant ideas but may include excess material.
2	**3–4**	• A basic response that demonstrates some understanding of the requirements of the task. • Demonstrates general understanding of some relevant ideas and is sometimes focused. • There may be some indiscriminate selection of ideas.
1	**1–2**	• A response that demonstrates a limited understanding of the task. • The response may be a simple list of unconnected ideas or show limited focus. • There is limited evidence of selection.
0	**0**	• No creditable content.

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Table B, Writing

Use the following table to give a mark out of 5 for Writing.

Level	Marks	Description
3	**4–5**	• A relevant response that is expressed clearly, fluently and mostly with concision. • The response is well organised. • The response is in the candidate's own words (where appropriate), using a range of well-chosen vocabulary which clarifies meaning.
2	**3–2**	• A relevant response that is generally expressed clearly, with some evidence of concision. • There may be some lapses in organisation. • The response is mainly expressed in the candidate's own words (where appropriate) but there may be reliance on the words of the text.
1	**1**	• A relevant response that lacks clarity and concision. • There may be excessively long explanations, or the response may be very brief. • The response may include lifted sections.
0	**0**	• No creditable content.

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Note 1: All examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated. Nonetheless, the content must be clearly related to and derived from the texts.

Question 2

This question tests reading assessment objectives R1, R2 and R4 (25 marks):

R1 demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings
R2 demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and attitudes
R4 demonstrate understanding of how writers achieve effects and influence readers.

Overview of items for Question 2

Item	Reading assessment objectives tested	Marks for reading assessment objectives
2(a)(i)	R1	1
2(a)(ii)	R1	1
2(a)(iii)	R1	1
2(a)(iv)	R1	1
2(b)(i)	R2	1
2(b)(ii)	R2	1
2(b)(iii)	R2	1
2(c)	R1, R2 and R4	3
2(d)	R1, R2 and R4	15
Total		**25**

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)(i)	**Identify a word or phrase from the text which suggests the same idea as the words underlined:** **The shipping director hardly takes his eyes off the papers on his desk as Emil is guided into the office.** Accept cloze responses that repeat all / some of the question stem with the correct answer • (the shipping director / he) **barely looking (up)** [line 1].	**1**
2(a)(ii)	**Identify a word or phrase from the text which suggests the same idea as the words underlined:** **People creating spacesuits want to replicate the characteristics of giraffe skin.** Accept cloze responses that repeat all / some of the question stem with the correct answer • (they want to) **imitate** (its/the) **qualities** (of giraffe skin) [line 5]	**1**
2(a)(iii)	**Identify a word or phrase from the text which suggests the same idea as the words underlined:** **The sailor explains the general features of how they intend to get the giraffes off the ship.** Accept cloze responses that repeat all / some of the question stem with the correct answer • (the sailor / he) **outlines the plan for unloading** [line 29]	**1**
2(a)(iv)	**Identify a word or phrase from the text which suggests the same idea as the words underlined:** **Emil speaks his concerns to the zoo manager.** Accept cloze responses that repeat all / some of the question stem with the correct answer • (He/I) **voice**(s) (his/my) **misgivings** [line 48]	**1**

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Question	Answer	Marks
2(b)(i)	**Using your own words, explain what the writer means by each of the words underlined:** **That afternoon, I sit in the ship's library, sifting through documents estimating shipping costs, profits and loss, until I find the veterinary report. I make notes on the blood-pressure measurements recorded for one unfortunate giraffe before its voyage ended.** • **sifting:** sorting / going through carefully / looking for something / discarding what is not required / searching / scanning	**1**
2(b)(ii)	**Using your own words, explain what the writer means by each of the words underlined:** • **estimating:** approximating / calculating / working out / suggesting the rough amount / giving an idea of / offering a guess at / predicting	**1**
2(b)(iii)	**Using your own words, explain what the writer means by each of the words underlined:** • **recorded:** written (down) / entered / detailed / listed / catalogued / logged / taken down	**1**

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Question	Answer	Marks
2(c)	**Use <u>one</u> example from the text below to explain how the writer suggests what Emil might be thinking and feeling during the ride in the lorry.** **Days later, I'm journeying onwards to the zoo in a lorry carrying four of the giraffes, including Snowstorm. Bemused schoolchildren on buses catch sight of the giraffes and wave. The woods we pass are increasingly dense, not the vast, open woodlands giraffes dream of. We rattle along bumpy back roads, avoiding bridges, turning north towards the mountains along the border. 'Slower,' I tell the driver. The narrow window in the back of the cab seems to frame the giraffes' captivity. Their eyes are shut tight.** **<u>Use your own words in your explanation.</u>** Award 3 marks for an appropriate example with a comprehensive explanation which shows understanding of how the writer suggests what Emil might be thinking and feeling during the ride in the lorry. Award 2 marks for an appropriate example and attempt at an explanation which shows some understanding of how the writer suggests what Emil might be thinking and feeling during the ride in the lorry. Award 1 mark for an example with an attempt at an explanation which shows awareness of what Emil might be thinking and feeling during the ride in the lorry.The explanation may be partial. The explanation **must** be predominantly in the candidate's **own** words. **Responses *might* use the following:** • **Bemused schoolchildren on buses catch sight of the giraffes and wave:** children are puzzled and do not understand why the giraffes are there; they find it amusing to see the giraffes; insensitive to giraffes' suffering; even the children realise these creatures are out of context; sees parallels with innocence of giraffes who do not understand either • **(The woods we pass are) increasingly dense, not the vast, open woodlands giraffes dream of:** close vegetation; unsuitable for giraffes; contrast between the environment they are in now and where they need/want to be; sadness that the giraffes will be constrained • **We rattle along bumpy back roads:** being shaken in the lorry; noisy, uncomfortable, not showing care • **(The narrow window in the back of the cab) seems to frame the giraffes' captivity:** restricted space; like prisoners, vivid memory; can recall as if a picture; mocking • **'Slower,' I tell the driver:** feels they are going too fast; worried about the giraffes' safety • **Their eyes are shut tight:** blocking out the scene; cannot bear to look; vulnerable – as if asleep; almost as if dead already; painful to see them like this	**3**

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Question	Answer	Marks
2(d)	**Reread paragraphs 12 and 16.** • **Paragraph 12 begins 'One hour later …' and is about the first encounter with the giraffes.** • **Paragraph 16 begins 'Next morning …' and is about the morning's activity at the port.** **Explain how the writer uses language to convey meaning and to create effect in these paragraphs.** **Choose <u>three</u> examples of words or phrases from <u>each</u> paragraph to support your answer. Your choices should include the use of imagery.** **Write about 200 to 300 words.** **<u>Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer.</u>** Use the Marking Criteria for Question 2(d) (Table A, Reading) **Notes on the task** This question is marked for the ability to select powerful or unusual words and for an understanding of ways in which the language is effective. Expect responses to provide words / phrases that carry connotations additional to general meaning. Mark holistically for the overall quality of the response, not for the number of words chosen, bearing in mind that for the higher bands there should be a range of choices to demonstrate an understanding of how language works, and that this should include the ability to explain images. It is the quality of the analysis that attracts marks. Do not deduct marks for inaccurate statements; simply ignore them. The following notes are a guide to what good responses might say about the selections. Candidates can make any *sensible* comment, but only credit those that are relevant to the correct meanings of the words in the context and that have some validity. Alternative acceptable explanations should be credited. Credit comments on effects created by non-vocabulary choices such as grammar / syntax and punctuation devices. These must be additional to comments on vocabulary.	**15**

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Question	Answer	Marks
2(d)	Responses **might** use the following: **Paragraph 12 begins 'One hour later …' and is about the first encounter with the giraffes.** Only credit comments on stylistic effect where these are explicitly linked to choices. Overview: overwhelming experience of encountering the giraffes in this context. • (I) **stare, dumbfounded:** fixed look, cannot take his eyes off them; unable to speak; incredulous; was not what he expected • (an) **old zoo animal, weary, hunched:** aged, tired and bent over, (almost) lifeless; cowed and lacking vitality; contrast of the diminished, tamed creature with these beasts • **wild and so impossibly stretched that they seem to scrape the sky:** untamed, extremely tall, as if extended artificially, seemed to reach so high they would be touching against the heavens/atmosphere • **(Tarpaulins cover their crates, so only their necks and shoulders are visible** like**) enormous hand-puppets:** huge marionettes, extremely large toys; material concealing their bodies; heads are the only part that show; unreal, controlled, no agency; boxed up like commodities; manipulated to entertain • (When they move) **they flow as if underwater:** smooth actions; rounded, rippling and slow motion, graceful; otherworldly • (like) **slender trees swaying in a breeze:** thin, elegant forms, unable to resist even a light wind; blown by even gentle gusts; young and potentially fragile; vulnerable; natural, delicate and beautiful • (The) **smell of the giraffes is pungent:** strong distinctive scent; powerful and bordering on unpleasant; inescapable; overpowering experience	

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Question	Answer	Marks
2(d)	Responses **might** use the following: **Paragraph 16 begins 'Next morning …' and is about the morning's activity at the port.** Only credit comments on stylistic effect where these are explicitly linked to choices. Overview: giraffes are transferred without sentiment or care. • (Next morning) **unloading begins:** moving the giraffes off the ship; matter of fact, business-like; treated as if conventional cargo/objects • (each animal is) **harnessed and hoisted:** shackled and lifted aloft; suggests lack of agency, • (Some giraffes) **panic at the sensation of flying, kicking out:** worried by the unnatural experience; feels wrong to them; frantic movement to escape / fight back; futile as not in control; demeaning • **Swinging precariously** (they're lowered towards the barge)**:** shifting from side to side / back and forth; out of control; dangerous manoeuvre (coming back down toward the river boat). • **stare desperately back out to sea:** poignant looks towards their homeland; want to escape; want to go back home; deep longing; yearning to return • **shimmering hot with fear:** heat is radiating from the scared giraffes; sweat is coming off the terrified animals; terror is so strong it is visible; painful and pitiful image; life-threatening • **Squawking gulls hover overhead, mocking the new arrivals:** noisy local birds (who can really fly) find amusement in 'flying' giraffes; taunting them; lack of empathy in creatures who live there (suggests same of humans) • **they descend, legs flailing:** not in control of their limbs as they are being lowered down; thrashing around, making wild leg movements as they desperately try to run, in vain • **'Let them walk on air: they'll never walk their continent again,' he says sadly:** the last vestiges of freedom/hope of escape are now lost; depressing finality of tone; pities the creatures	

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Marking Criteria for Question 2(d)

Table A, Reading: Analysing how writers achieve effects

Use the following table to give a mark out of 15 for Reading.

Level	Marks	Description
5	**13–15**	• Wide-ranging discussion of judiciously selected language with some high-quality comments that add meaning and associations to words/phrases in both parts of the text and demonstrate the writer's reasons for using them. • Tackles imagery with some precision and imagination. • There is clear evidence that the candidate understands how language works.
4	**10–12**	• Explanations are given of carefully selected words and phrases. • Explanations of meanings within the context of the text are secure and effects are identified in both parts of the text. • Images are recognised as such and the response goes some way to explaining them. • There is some evidence that the candidate understands how language works.
3	**7–9**	• A satisfactory attempt is made to select appropriate words and phrases. • The response mostly gives meanings of words and any attempt to suggest and explain effects is basic or very general. • One half of the text may be better addressed than the other.
2	**4–6**	• The response provides a mixture of appropriate choices and words that communicate less well. • The response may correctly identify linguistic devices but not explain why they are used. • Explanations may be few, general, slight or only partially effective. • They may repeat the language of the original or do not refer to specific words.
1	**1–3**	• The choice of words is sparse or rarely relevant. • Any comments are inappropriate and the response is very thin.
0	**0**	• The response does not relate to the question. • Inappropriate words and phrases are chosen, or none are selected.

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Note: All examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated. Nonetheless, the content must be clearly related to and derived from the texts.

Question 3

This question tests reading assessment objectives R1, R2 and R3 (15 marks):

R1 demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings
R2 demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and attitudes
R3 analyse evaluate and develop facts, ideas and opinions, using appropriate support from the text

and writing assessment objectives W1, W2, W3 and W4 (10 marks):

W1 articulate experience and express what is thought, felt and imagined
W2 organise and structure ideas and opinions for deliberate effect
W3 use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures appropriate to context
W4 use register appropriate to context.

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Question	Answer	Marks
3	**Reread *Text C, Emil and the giraffes*, in the insert and then answer Question 3 on this question paper.** **You are Emil. After you leave the zoo, you decide to share your concerns about the giraffes with an animal welfare charity. The charity asks you to write a report.** **In your report you should explain:** • **how you were involved with these giraffes and your impressions of the people you met at that time** • **what worried you about the different stages of the giraffes' journey** • **why you feel this zoo is not a suitable place for the giraffes to live** **Write the words of the report.** **Base your report on what you have read in Text C, but be careful to use your own words. Address each of the three bullet points.** **Write about 250–350 words.** **Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer and up to 10 marks for the quality of your writing.** Use the Marking Criteria for **Question 3** (Table A, Reading and Table B Writing) **Notes on the task** Candidates should select **ideas** from the text (see below) and **develop** them relevantly, supporting what they write with **details** from the text. Look for an appropriate register for the genre, and a clear and balanced response which covers the three areas of the question, is well sequenced, and is in the candidate's own words. **Annotate A1** for references to how you were involved with these giraffes and your impressions of the people you met at that time **Annotate A2** for references to what worried you about the different stages of the giraffes' journey **Annotate A3** for references to why you feel this zoo is not a suitable place for the giraffes to live	**25**

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Question	Answer	Marks
3	**A1: how you were involved with these giraffes and your impressions of the people you met at that time** • **student** (det. holiday job, studying science) [dev. younger than most of the people working there] • **interviewed** (det. called to the office, 'giraffe man') [dev. reputation for knowing about them] • **transporting giraffes safely to the zoo** (det. 'client's property') [dev. needed an expert / no one knew how to look after them properly] • **shipping director** (det. barely looks up from his papers, calls him 'boy') [dev. ignorant / patronising / officious] • **sailor** (det. aged) [dev. wise / kind / helpful to Emil / connection with the animals] • **zoo manager** (det. strides up, safari hat, sneers) [dev. unpleasant / motivated by profit] **A2: what worried you about the different stages of the giraffes' journey** • **voyage by ship** (det. from Africa to a different continent, pungent smell) [dev. inadequate ventilation / stuffy / unhygienic] • **vet report** (det. blood pressure measurements recorded) [dev. one had died on the ship / inadequate care / health issues ignored / worried about own inexperience regarding young wild giraffes] • **travelled in crates** (det. tarpaulins covering them) [dev. unnatural / limited movement] • **grain** (det. stale) [dev. lack fresh food / not getting the right nutrients while on board ship] • **unloading** (det. cranes, transferred to a barge, giraffes panicking, harnessed and hoisted) [dev. handled as if inanimate cargo / potential for injury] • **lorry journey** (det. rattle along back road, narrow window) [dev. noisy for the giraffes / limited light / going too fast / reckless driving / uncomfortable] **A3: why you feel this zoo is not a suitable place for these giraffes to live** • **climate** (det. wintry, icy) [dev. used to warmer conditions / too cold for them to spend day outside / more may die] • **region** (det. dense woodlands, not open) [dev. too different from homeland] • **wild giraffes** (det. they were free, walls, did not choose to come here) [dev. no longer able to roam as they should be] • **'safari park'** (det. epic migration, attract tourists) [dev. all about the image / (story is) designed to bring in more visitors / fake / (not educational for children who will) see them only as entertainment] • **psychological effect on the giraffes** (det. strain to glimpse outside; dream of home) [dev. will never see their home again / unfair they can never see home again / Snowstorm seemed sad]	

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Marking Criteria for Question 3

Table A, Reading
Use the following table to give a mark out of 15 for Reading.

Level	Marks	Description
5	**13–15**	• The response reveals a **thorough** evaluation and analysis of the text. • Developed ideas are sustained and well related to the text. • A wide range of ideas is applied. • There is supporting detail throughout, which is well integrated into the response, contributing to a strong sense of purpose and approach. • All three bullets are well covered. • A consistent and convincing voice is used.
4	**10–12**	• The response demonstrates a **competent** reading of the text with some evidence of basic evaluation or analysis. • A good range of ideas is evident. • Some ideas are developed but the ability to sustain them may not be consistent. • There is frequent, helpful supporting detail, contributing to a clear sense of purpose. • All three bullets are covered. • An appropriate voice is used.
3	**7–9**	• The text has been read **reasonably** well. • A range of straightforward ideas is offered. • Opportunities for development are rarely taken. • Supporting detail is present but there may be some mechanical use of the text. • There is uneven focus on the bullets. • The voice is plain.
2	**4–6**	• There is some evidence of **general understanding** of the main ideas, although the response may be thin or in places lack focus on the text or the question. • Some brief, straightforward reference to the text is made. • There may be some reliance on lifting from the text. • One of the bullets may not be addressed. • The voice might be inappropriate.

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Level	Marks	Description
1	**1–3**	• The response is either **very general**, with little reference to the text, or a reproduction of sections of the original. • Content is either insubstantial or unselective. • There is little realisation of the need to modify material from the text.
0	**0**	• There is very little or no relevance to the question or to the text.

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026

Table B, Writing: Structure and order, style of language

Use the following table to give a mark out of 10 for Writing.

Level	Marks	Description
5	**9–10**	• Effective register for audience and purpose. • The language of the response sounds convincing and consistently appropriate. • Ideas are firmly expressed in a wide range of effective and/or interesting language. • Structure and sequence are sound throughout.
4	**7–8**	• Some awareness of an appropriate register for audience and purpose. • Language is mostly fluent and there is clarity of expression. • There is a sufficient range of vocabulary to express ideas with subtlety and precision. • The response is mainly well structured and well sequenced.
3	**5–6**	• Language is clear but comparatively plain and/or factual, expressing little opinion. • Ideas are rarely extended, but explanations are adequate. • Some sections are quite well sequenced but there may be flaws in structure.
2	**3–4**	• There may be some awkwardness of expression and some inconsistency of style. • Language is too limited to express shades of meaning. • There is structural weakness and there may be some copying from the text.
1	**1–2**	• Expression and structure lack clarity. • Language is weak and undeveloped. • There is very little attempt to explain ideas. • There may be frequent copying from the original.
0	**0**	• The response cannot be understood.

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026