Grade Descriptions for Cambridge IGCSE English Literature 0475

Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE

What are grade descriptions?

Grade descriptions describe the level of performance typically demonstrated by candidates achieving the different grades awarded for a qualification. For Cambridge IGCSEs, they describe performance at three levels – grades 'F', 'C' and 'A'.

Grade descriptions sit alongside other key documents that illustrate examination standards, including:

- the syllabus, which presents what students should be taught over a course of study and explains how this is assessed
- the specimen assessment materials, which illustrate the structure of the assessment and the kinds of tasks that candidates complete
- grade thresholds, which show the total mark required to achieve a grade.

Grade descriptions are produced with a wide range of audiences in mind. For teachers, they support lesson planning and curriculum development, while students may gain useful insights into what is required to achieve a high grade and what candidate performance at lower grades typically looks like. For university admissions staff and employers, and those less familiar with Cambridge, they paint a picture of typical performance at different grades.

Cambridge publishes grade descriptions for a qualification once examinations have taken place for the first time, and we review them when a qualification is substantially revised. They are developed by highly experienced examiners who understand performance standards in the subject area and have studied samples of candidate work.

How do I use this resource?

Grade descriptions are presented as a grid with content areas at the start of each row and the different grades at the top of each column.

The content areas group together various aspects of the syllabus – they reflect topics, assessment objectives, key concepts, syllabus aims and components. The way they are organised is specific to each subject.

For each content area, there is a descriptor for each grade. Reading across the row from left to right, the descriptors represent increasing levels of performance, with each grade descriptor building on, and including, the last.

Each column represents overall performance at a particular grade. Reading down the column from top to bottom, the descriptors capture the range of knowledge, understanding and skills that a candidate 'comfortably inside the grade' is likely to demonstrate.

Cambridge produces grade descriptions to support teaching and learning and the interpretation of candidate scores and grades. We do not use them to set grade thresholds. As such, they cannot be used to challenge the grade awarded to any individual candidate.

Grade descriptions

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade F	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
Show knowledge of literary texts	Students show an awareness of a few surface aspects of texts. They may comment on surface meanings in poems and more obvious features of plot and characters in prose and drama texts. They may make a limited attempt to use their knowledge to address the focus of the question.	Students show knowledge of a range of relevant aspects of texts. They may show some understanding of main ideas in poems and of key characters and themes in prose and drama texts. They generally link their knowledge to the specific focus of the question.	Students show a detailed knowledge of a wide range of relevant aspects of texts. For example they may show an appreciation of the development of ideas in poetry and presentation of characters and themes in prose and drama texts. They usually link the material they select to the specific focus of the question.
Make references to texts	Students make some reference to the text. They may use a few, indirect references to the text or direct quotations from it. Direct quotations may be very brief or excessively long; they often require a more explicit link between the quotation and accompanying comment. They may include elements of a narrative response.	Students use a range of textual evidence to support their response. They may use indirect references and direct quotations that are generally relevant in supporting their response to the question. They may include some assertions that require specific support from the text.	Students use a wide range of careful textual reference to support their response. They may integrate much concise textual reference into a response that for the most part focuses on the question. They use references to support most of the points they make in their response.
Understand the meanings of literary texts	Students show evidence of a straightforward grasp of surface meanings. They may show a straightforward grasp of simple meanings in poetry and of basic aspects of the plot and obvious traits of characters in prose and drama texts.	Students show understanding of explicit meanings and of some deeper implications in responses that are generally focused on the question.	Students show a convincing appreciation of a text's deeper implications in a focused response to the question.

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade F	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
	They may make simple references to the text's themes, sometimes simply listing themes, regardless of the topic of the question.	They may show understanding of a range of key themes in their poetry, prose and drama texts, where relevant to the question.	They generally sustain an appreciation of a wide range of themes in their poetry, prose and drama texts, where relevant to the question.
Understand the contexts of literary texts	Students may give basic general information about context. They may provide extraneous information, for example about social context or the writer's biography, that is not relevant to the question. They may show a limited awareness of how an extract from a text contributes to an understanding of the whole text.	Students show awareness of context that is relevant to the question and that arises from their study of the text. For example they may show awareness of what a Romantic poem reveals about specific aspects of Romanticism in a way that addresses the specific focus of the question. They may show some understanding of how a particular extract contributes to an understanding of the whole text.	Students integrate aspects of context that are relevant to the question and that arise from their study of the text. For example they may comment on how dialogue within a novel or a play contributes to the portrayal of gender in a way that addresses the specific focus of the question. They may show a clear understanding of the significance of an extract's contribution to the wider text.
Comment on the ways in which writers create and shape meanings	Students show some awareness of obvious ways in which writers create meanings. For example they may recognise stanzas in poetry, chapters in novels and scenes in plays.	Students show some knowledge of ways in which writers create and shape meanings. For example they may make some comment on the development of ideas across stanzas within poems or the development of a character within a prose or drama text.	Students show a detailed appreciation of ways in which writers create and shape meanings. For example they may explore in some detail how writers develop ideas within a poem or how writers develop characters and themes in novels and plays.
Appreciate how writers achieve their effects	Students show awareness that writers use language and structure devices to achieve their effects. They show awareness of aspects of form.	Students show an understanding of how writers use language and structure devices to achieve their effects. They show some evidence of understanding of how writers use form.	Students show a critical appreciation of how writers use language and structure to achieve their effects. They show a clear understanding of how writers use form.

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade F	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
	They may recognise key language devices such as similes and alliteration, and rhyme schemes in poetry, without making specific comments on the effects writers create. They may make accurate use of only a limited number of literary terms.	They may explain how writers use language and structure to achieve specific effects. They may comment on writers' use of imagery, sound and rhetorical devices. They may use a range of literary terms, with some attempt to go beyond the simple logging of features.	They show a confident analysis of how writers achieve their effects. They may explore the use of narrative viewpoint in prose fiction and the use of soliloquy in Shakespeare plays. They may use a wide range of literary terms confidently to inform their analysis.
Communicate a personal response to texts and tasks	Students attempt to communicate a straightforward personal response to surface meanings. They may make a limited attempt to address the focus of the question. They may make a limited attempt to provide supporting references.	Students communicate a personal response generally informed by supporting textual detail. They make some attempt to address the focus of the question. They select relevant textual detail to support their personal response.	Students sustain a confident personal response informed by well-selected supporting references to the text. They make a well-developed personal response that for the most part addresses the focus of the question. They integrate concise textual references to support their personal response.