Thorogood ENGLISH

FREE PAPER 2 MOCK

CAMBRIDGE IGCSE FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (0500/0990)

PAPER 2

DIRECTED WRITING & COMPOSITION

Mock exam · 2027 specification

FOUR DAYS

— INSERT

2 READING TEXTS

LINE-NUMBERED



A **The long weekend**
Feature article · Question 1(b)

B **Who pays for the day off?**
Opinion article · Questions 1(a) and 1(b)

- This insert contains the reading texts for Question 1.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. Do not write your answers on the insert.

An original practice paper written by Thorogood English in the style of the 2027 Cambridge specification. Not produced or endorsed by Cambridge University Press & Assessment. Cambridge IGCSE is a trademark of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

Read both texts and then answer Question 1(a) and 1(b) on the question paper.

A

TEXT A · FEATURE ARTICLE

The long weekend

Every Friday at Harbourside Academy, the corridors are silent. Since last September, the school's 900 students – among the first in the country to trial the idea – have attended lessons from Monday to Thursday only, with slightly longer days to compensate for some of the lost time. On Fridays, a few students join optional clubs or catch-up sessions; most stay at home.

'We were losing staff faster than we could replace them,' explains the head teacher, Dr Amara Osei. 'Attrition was relentless: teachers were exhausted, and recruitment had become almost impossible. A four-day week was the one thing we could offer that wealthier schools couldn't.' Within a term, she says, applications for teaching posts had tripled and staff absence had fallen sharply.

Students, too, report benefits. 'I actually arrive on Monday ready to learn,' says Year 11 student Leo Fernandes. 'I use Fridays to revise, see my grandad and catch up on sleep. My stress levels are so much lower.' Several parents have noticed that their children seem calmer and more organised, and attendance on the remaining four days has improved.

Not everyone at the school was immediately persuaded. One governor, who asked not to be named, admits that she voted against the scheme. 'I feared we were solving a staffing crisis at the expense of learning,' she says. 'A year on, I'm cautiously optimistic, but the real test will be this summer's examination results.'

Supporters point out that shorter school weeks are nothing new. In parts of the United States, hundreds of mostly rural school districts have adopted them, often to cut the logistical costs of transport and heating or to attract teachers to remote areas. The research there has produced mixed findings: some studies have found little change in students' results, while others have recorded small falls.

For Dr Osei, the greatest change has been cultural. 'We have stopped treating exhaustion as a badge of honour,' she says. 'Our students are learning that rest is part of working well, not the opposite of it.' Not everyone is convinced, but at Harbourside, nobody she has spoken to wants to go back.

PLANNING SPACE

Use this space to plan your answers. Nothing written here will be marked.

© Thorogood English 2026 · Free sample paper · You may copy it for use in your own classroom or home study

B

TEXT B · OPINION ARTICLE

Who pays for the day off?

The four-day school week sounds like a gift. Who wouldn't want a three-day weekend? But behind the cheerful headlines lies an uncomfortable question: who is looking after the children on Fridays?

For families with flexible jobs or a grandparent nearby, the answer is simple. For many others, it is not. Childcare is expensive, and a fifth day of it every week can swallow a sizeable share of a modest wage. Some younger children are simply left at home alone, while teenagers with nothing to do may drift into trouble. Charities also warn that pupils who rely on free school meals could lose one nutritious meal a week.

Then there is learning itself. Longer days do not automatically mean more learning; by the final lesson, tired students – and tired teachers – absorb far less. Critics argue that pupils who are already behind have the most to lose, while those with books at home and parents who can help will barely notice the difference. 'Concentration is not infinite,' warns one education researcher. 'Adding forty minutes to the end of an exhausting day is not the same as giving students a fifth morning.'

Supporters claim that the extra day lets teenagers rest and revise, but that assumes every home is a calm, well-stocked place to study. For a student sharing a bedroom with two siblings, or caring for an unwell relative, a free Friday may be anything but restful. Sceptics contend that the policy disproportionately benefits families who were already thriving, and risks eroding the very fairness that free, full-time education was designed to protect.

Marcus Bell, a hospital porter and single father of two, has watched the change at his children's school with growing alarm.

'Nobody asked us,' he says. 'One letter arrived in July, and that was that. I work Fridays – I can't just stop. So now I'm paying a neighbour out of money we haven't got, or my eldest misses his own lessons to mind his little sister. I've had to beg for different shifts as if it's a crime to have kids. Everyone talks about teachers' wellbeing, and I'm glad for them, honestly I am. But what about ours? It feels like a decision made by people who've never had to choose between the electricity bill and a babysitter.'

PLANNING SPACE

Use this space to plan your answers. Nothing written here will be marked.

© Thorogood English 2026 · Free sample paper · You may copy it for use in your own classroom or home study

Thorogood ENGLISH

FREE PAPER 2 MOCK

CAMBRIDGE IGCSE FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (0500/0990)

PAPER 2 DIRECTED WRITING & COMPOSITION
Mock exam · 2027 specification

FOUR DAYS

QUESTION PAPER

SECTIONS A & B | 2 HOURS | 80 MARKS

NAME | CLASS | DATE

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **two** questions in total. **Section A:** answer Question 1. **Section B:** answer **one** question.
- Use a black or dark blue pen.
- Write your answer to each question in the space provided.
- If you need more space, use the lined pages at the end of this booklet. Show the question number clearly.
- Dictionaries are not allowed.

INFORMATION

- You will need: **Insert** (the two reading texts).
- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [ ].
- Line numbers in the questions refer to the insert.

SUGGESTED TIMING · 2 HOURS

Read + 1(a) · 20 min | 1(b) · 40 min | Section B · 60 min

YOUR MARKS

Question 1(a)	Question 1(b)	Section B	Total
Attitude · Text B	Speech · Texts A and B	Composition	Paper 2
/ 5	/ 35	/ 40	/ 80

An original practice paper written by Thorogood English in the style of the 2027 Cambridge specification. Not produced or endorsed by Cambridge University Press & Assessment. Cambridge IGCSE is a trademark of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

A Section A: Directed Writing

Texts A and B · 40 marks

QUESTION 1 · ≈ 60 MIN

Read **Text A** and **Text B** in the insert and then answer Section A, Question 1(a) and 1(b).

1(a) Reread this extract from Text B (lines 22–27): **[5]**

> 'Nobody asked us,' he says. 'One letter arrived in July, and that was that. I work Fridays – I can't just stop. So now I'm paying a neighbour out of money we haven't got, or my eldest misses his own lessons to mind his little sister. I've had to beg for different shifts as if it's a crime to have kids. Everyone talks about teachers' wellbeing, and I'm glad for them, honestly I am. But what about ours? It feels like a decision made by people who've never had to choose between the electricity bill and a babysitter.'

Use your own words to evaluate Marcus's attitude to the four-day school week. Give details from the text to justify your answer.

Your mark / 5

© Thorogood English 2026 · Free sample paper · You may copy it for use in your own classroom or home study

Question 1(b)

Your school is considering whether to move to a four-day week. Write a speech for a school debate in which you give your views.

Use your own words to write your speech based on what you have read in both Text A and Text B.

In your speech you should:

- explain the possible benefits and drawbacks of a four-day week for students, teachers and families
- give your views on whether your school should adopt a four-day week, and why.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

[35]

Up to 10 marks are available for reading and up to 25 marks for writing.

Question 1(b) continues on the next page ›

© Thorogood English 2026 · Free sample paper · You may copy it for use in your own classroom or home study

Question 1(b) continues on the next page ›

© Thorogood English 2026 · Free sample paper · You may copy it for use in your own classroom or home study

Your mark / 35

[Total: 40]

Section A check

- Own words in 1(a), with details to justify?
- Ideas from **both** texts in 1(b)?
- Both bullets covered?
- Speech voice: audience, opening, ending?
- Your views clearly argued?
- About 250 to 350 words?

© Thorogood English 2026 · Free sample paper · You may copy it for use in your own classroom or home study

B Section B: Composition

Answer one question · 40 marks

QUESTIONS 2–5 · ≈ 60 MIN

Answer **one** question from Section B. Write about **350 to 450 words**. Up to 16 marks are available for the content and structure of your answer and up to 24 marks for the style and accuracy of your writing.

DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

EITHER

2 Describe a person at work, completely absorbed in what they are doing. **[40]**

OR

3 Describe an outdoor market as the traders pack up at the end of the day. **[40]**

NARRATIVE WRITING

OR

4 Write a story that begins with the words, 'Nobody had opened the door at the end of the corridor for years.' **[40]**

OR

5 Write a story with the title, 'The swap'. **[40]**

Write the number of the question you have chosen (2, 3, 4 or 5) here: ☐

© Thorogood English 2026 · Free sample paper · You may copy it for use in your own classroom or home study

Section B continues on the next page ›

© Thorogood English 2026 · Free sample paper · You may copy it for use in your own classroom or home study

Section B continues on the next page ›

© Thorogood English 2026 · Free sample paper · You may copy it for use in your own classroom or home study

Your mark / 40

[Total: 40]

Finished? Check your work.

- Question number written in the box?
- About 350 to 450 words?
- Paragraphs planned for effect?
- Varied sentences and precise vocabulary?
- Spelling and punctuation checked?
- A strong ending?

© Thorogood English 2026 · Free sample paper · You may copy it for use in your own classroom or home study

Additional answer space

If you use these lined pages, write the question number or numbers clearly.

© Thorogood English 2026 · Free sample paper · You may copy it for use in your own classroom or home study

Thorogood ENGLISH

FREE PAPER 2 MOCK

CAMBRIDGE IGCSE FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (0500/0990)

PAPER 2

DIRECTED WRITING & COMPOSITION

Mock exam · 2027 specification

FOUR DAYS

— MARK SCHEME

FOR TEACHERS & STUDENTS | 80 MARKS | MODEL ANSWERS

1(a)	Attitude ideas with details and a full-mark model answer
1(b)	B1 / B2 content grid and a colour-coded model speech
2–5	Ideas and teacher tips for all four composition titles
Models	Level 6 descriptive and narrative model answers
+	‘Where did your marks go?’ – find your next step



An original practice paper written by Thorogood English in the style of the 2027 Cambridge specification. Not produced or endorsed by Cambridge University Press & Assessment. Cambridge IGCSE is a trademark of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

MARK SCHEME PREVIEW

A · Section A · Directed Writing

Question 1 · 40 marks · Texts A and B

1(a) tests reading objectives **R3 and R4**. 1(b) tests reading objectives **R1, R2, R3 and R5** and writing objectives **W1–W5**.

QUESTION	ANSWER	MARKS
1(a)	**Reread this extract from Text B (lines 22–27):**	5

> 'Nobody asked us,' he says. 'One letter arrived in July, and that was that. I work Fridays – I can't just stop. So now I'm paying a neighbour out of money we haven't got, or my eldest misses his own lessons to mind his little sister. I've had to beg for different shifts as if it's a crime to have kids. Everyone talks about teachers' wellbeing, and I'm glad for them, honestly I am. But what about ours? It feels like a decision made by people who've never had to choose between the electricity bill and a babysitter.'

Use your own words to evaluate Marcus's attitude to the four-day school week. Give details from the text to justify your answer.

Use the marking criteria for Question 1(a): Table A (Reading).

Relevant ideas might include

ATTITUDE	DET. – DETAIL FROM THE TEXT
resentful / feels excluded from the decision	'Nobody asked us'; 'One letter arrived in July, and that was that'
trapped / powerless – has no choice	'I can't just stop'; 'I've had to beg for different shifts'
anxious / under financial strain	'paying a neighbour out of money we haven't got'; 'the electricity bill'
humiliated / treated unfairly as a parent	'as if it's a crime to have kids'
protective / guilty about his children	'my eldest misses his own lessons to mind his little sister'
fair-minded – not simply selfish	'I'm glad for them, honestly I am'
bitter / sceptical of decision-makers	'a decision made by people who've never had to choose …'

TEACHER TIP The word 'evaluate' rewards answers that see more than one side of Marcus – angry and anxious, but also fair and protective – rather than a single label.

MARK SCHEME PREVIEW

MODEL SPEECH READING 10 · WRITING 25 331 WORDS

B1 benefits and drawbacks B2 the speaker's views

Good afternoon, everyone. Imagine waking up every Friday with no alarm, no bus and no first-period test. Tempting, isn't it? But before we vote, I want us to ask a harder question: who would a four-day week really help – and who would it leave behind?

B1 Let's be fair to the idea. Schools that have tried it say that their teachers are less exhausted and far easier to recruit, which matters when so many of our lessons are covered by supply staff. Students report feeling calmer and arriving on Monday genuinely ready to learn, and attendance has even improved. A spare day to revise, rest or spend time with family is not laziness; it could make the other four days count for more.

B1 However, a three-day weekend is only a gift if someone is at home to share it. For parents who work on Fridays, it means finding and paying for childcare they may not be able to afford. Younger children could be left alone, and older brothers and sisters might be kept off school to look after them. Students who rely on free school meals would lose a proper lunch every week. And let's be honest about longer days: by the last lesson, how much are any of us really learning? The students who are already struggling, without help at home, would pay the highest price.

B2 So where do I stand? I don't think we should reject the idea, but I don't think we are ready for it either. If our school wants a four-day week, it must first ask the families it affects, not send a single letter in July. It should keep Fridays open for supervised clubs, catch-up sessions and meals, so that nobody is left out. Then, and only then, could we trial it for a term and judge the results honestly.

B2 Rest matters. But fairness matters more. Let's make sure a shorter week works for every student in this room – not just the lucky ones. Thank you.

Why this reaches the top levels

- **Both texts used:** staffing, wellbeing and attendance from Text A; childcare, meals, tiredness and the learning gap from Text B.
- **Developed, not listed:** ideas are evaluated ('a three-day weekend is only a gift if someone is at home to share it') and lead to a reasoned, conditional view.
- **A real speech:** direct address, a hook, rhetorical questions, short sentences for emphasis and a memorable ending.
- **Own words:** Marcus's story is used without copying it, and the structure moves clearly from benefits to drawbacks to a verdict.

The B1 / B2 content grid, all the level tables and the descriptive model are in the free full mark scheme ›

MARK SCHEME PREVIEW

MODEL NARRATIVE WRITING · QUESTION 5 **LEVEL 6 · 40 / 40** **419 WORDS**

The rucksacks were identical: navy blue, battered, with a broken zip held shut by a paperclip. That was the first sign that the universe has a sense of humour.

I grabbed mine from the luggage rack at Harrow Junction and leapt off the train seconds before the doors hissed shut. It was only at the bus stop, fumbling for my revision notes, that my fingers closed around something that was not mine: a small velvet box.

Inside, a ring caught the streetlight. Beneath it lay a bundle of letters tied with string, sealed, stamped and never posted, each envelope addressed in faded, careful capitals to someone called Eleanor.

My stomach dropped. Somewhere on that train, an old man in a tweed cap – I remembered him now, smiling as I squeezed past – was holding my chemistry notes and a half-eaten cheese sandwich, while his whole life sat in my lap.

There was a luggage tag with an address, twenty minutes away. My exam was in the morning. I could hand the bag in at the station and go home. I almost did.

Instead, I ran.

The house was small, with a front garden full of roses that had been allowed to grow wild. When the door opened, it was not the old man but a woman with silver hair and anxious eyes.

'Is he all right?' she asked, before I had said a word.

'I think so,' I stammered. 'We swapped bags. By accident. I think this is … for you.'

She did not open the box. She simply held the letters against her chest and closed her eyes. 'Fifty years,' she whispered. 'He told me once that he'd written to me every week when he was working abroad. I never believed him. I was too proud to ask. He said he would come today, to ask me one last time.'

At that moment a taxi pulled up, and out stepped the man in the tweed cap, clutching my rucksack like a lifebelt. He saw me first, then the bag, then Eleanor – and for a long moment, nobody breathed.

I left them standing in the doorway among the roses. I was home by ten, my notes rescued, smelling faintly of cheese.

The next day, I did not get every question right in my exam. But as I sat in that silent hall, I thought about the paperclip on the zip, and how a broken thing had mended something far more important. Some swaps, it turns out, are not mistakes at all.

Why this reaches Level 6

- **The title drives the plot:** the swap is the turning point, and the final line gives it a second, deeper meaning.
- **Tight structure:** a hook, a dilemma (the exam), a one-line decision ('Instead, I ran.'), a climax at the doorway and a reflective ending.
- **Characters through detail:** the tweed cap, the wild roses and the careful capitals reveal people quickly and economically.
- **Controlled style:** varied sentence lengths, dialogue used sparingly, and touches of humour ('smelling faintly of cheese') that balance the emotion.

© Thorogood English 2026 · Free sample mark scheme · For teachers and students

Thorogood ENGLISH

FREE PAPER 2 MOCK

YOU'VE SEEN A SAMPLE OF THE MARK SCHEME

Get every answer – free.

- The full 15-page mark scheme, set out like the official Cambridge one
- Plain-English level guides, 'common slips' advice and teacher tips for every composition title
- Content grids for Question 1 and four full-mark model answers: 1(a), the 1(b) speech, a descriptive and a narrative
- Plus the insert and question paper as separate, print-ready PDFs

Add to basket – £0 › thorogoodenglish.com

1
Add the free paper to your basket.

2
Check out – no payment needed.

3
All three PDFs arrive in your inbox.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Where did your marks go?

Copy your marks into the boxes. The questions where you dropped the most marks show you exactly what to work on next – and which unit teaches it, step by step.

QUESTION	WHAT IT TESTS	YOUR MARK	FIX IT WITH
1(a)	Evaluating a writer's or speaker's attitude	/ 5	Directed Writing
1(b) reading	Selecting and developing ideas from two texts	/ 10	Directed Writing
1(b) writing	Writing a speech, article or letter with a clear voice	/ 25	Directed Writing
Section B	Your one composition: descriptive (2 or 3) or narrative (4 or 5)	/ 40	Painting with Words (2 or 3) · The Vanishing Broadcast (4 or 5)
Total	**Paper 2**	/ 80	**Aim for +10 next time**

ALL THREE UNITS
£40
PAPER 2 BUNDLE

The Paper 2 Complete Bundle

Directed Writing · Painting with Words · The Vanishing Broadcast

Lesson decks, student booklets and mark schemes for every Paper 2 task – directed writing, descriptive and narrative – written for the 2027 specification, with core, support and challenge tasks in every lesson.

thorogoodenglish.com › Premium Resources

Live online classes for Year 10, Year 11 and Key Stage 3 start in March 2027. Register your interest at thorogoodenglish.com.