Thorogood ENGLISH

FREE PAPER 1 MOCK

CAMBRIDGE IGCSE FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (0500/0990)

PAPER 1 — READING

Mock exam · 2027 specification

LIGHT HOUSES

— INSERT

3 READING TEXTS | LINE-NUMBERED



A **The keepers who vanished**
Non-fiction · Question 1(a)–(f)

B **Keep the lights burning**
Opinion article · Questions 2(a) and 2(b)

C **The night the light stood still**
Narrative · Questions 3(a)–(d) and 4

- This insert contains the reading texts for Questions 1 to 4.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. Do not write your answers on the insert.

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Read Text A and then answer Question 1(a)–(f) on the question paper.

A

TEXT A · NON-FICTION

The keepers who vanished

Thirty-two kilometres west of the Isle of Lewis, at the ragged edge of Scotland's Outer Hebrides, the seven Flannan Isles rise abruptly from the Atlantic. Their sheer cliffs are home to thousands of seabirds but, for most of their history, to no people at all. In December 1899, a lighthouse was first lit on the largest island, Eilean Mòr, to guide ships through these treacherous waters. Three keepers lived there at any one time, working in strict shifts so that the light never failed.

Just a year later, it did. Around midnight on 15 December 1900, the crew of a passing steamer, the *Archtor*, noticed that the lighthouse was dark. Storms then delayed the relief boat, the *Hesperus*, which finally reached the island on 26 December. Its captain sounded the ship's whistle and fired a flare, but no one came down to meet it. Joseph Moore, the relief keeper, climbed the steep path alone. The gate and the door were shut. Inside, the beds were empty, the clock had stopped and the fireplace was cold. Of James Ducat, Thomas Marshall and Donald MacArthur, there was no sign.

The search uncovered puzzling clues. The lamp had been cleaned and its oil refilled, ready for the night, which suggested that the men had disappeared in daylight. Two sets of oilskins – the waterproof clothing keepers wore only when working down at the landings – were missing, but MacArthur's waterproof coat still hung on its peg. It seemed that he had rushed outside without it, breaking a strict rule that the light must never be left unattended. The last entries on the slate, where the keepers recorded the weather, had been made on the morning of the 15th.

Newspapers pounced on the story. Some hinted at sea serpents or foreign spies; others suggested that an enormous seabird had carried the men away, or that a quarrel had ended in murder. Decades later, a dramatic set of log entries, in which the keepers wept and prayed as a storm raged, was widely published. However, no such entries appear in the official records, and most historians believe they were invented.

The official investigation, led by Superintendent Robert Muirhead, who had recruited all three men, reached a more down-to-earth conclusion. At the west landing, he found iron railings bent out of shape and a life buoy torn from its fastenings. A box of ropes, wedged into a crevice 34 metres above the sea, had been ripped away, its contents strewn across the rocks. Muirhead believed the men had gone down to secure the box during heavy weather and been swept away by an unexpectedly huge wave. Perhaps MacArthur, seeing the danger from above, had dashed out to warn them.

Many people still find this explanation strangely unsatisfying, perhaps because the sea returned no bodies and no proof. Since 1971 the lighthouse has worked automatically, its beam sweeping across the dark water each night with no human hand to tend it. Yet Eilean Mòr remains a silent witness, guarding its secret behind walls of sheer grey rock.

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Read Text B and then answer Questions 2(a) and 2(b) on the question paper.

B

TEXT B · OPINION ARTICLE

Keep the lights burning

The writer of this article is a yacht skipper who has sailed around the coasts of Britain for thirty years.

Last October, halfway across a moonless bay, every screen on my boat went blank. The chart plotter froze, the satellite position vanished, and for one long, stomach-lurching minute I had no idea where the rocks were. Then, low on the horizon, a white light flashed twice and fell dark. I counted the seconds, checked my paper chart and knew exactly where I was. That light was older than my great-grandmother, and it worked.

You may be surprised to learn that, in some quarters, lighthouses are now considered obsolete. The authorities that manage our lighthouses regularly review whether each one is still needed, and some lights have already been dimmed, reduced in range or switched off altogether. The reasoning sounds sensible enough. Nearly every commercial ship now relies on satellite navigation, electronic charts and radar; maintaining a stone tower on a remote rock is expensive; and the money, critics argue, could be better spent elsewhere.

I understand the arithmetic, but I think it is dangerously short-sighted. Satellite signals are faint by the time they reach Earth, which leaves them surprisingly vulnerable to interference. In recent years, ships in several busy seas have reported their positions suddenly jumping kilometres inland, the result of deliberate jamming. Solar storms can scramble signals too, and electronics, as I discovered, have a habit of failing at the worst possible moment. A lighthouse needs no signal and no software: it simply shines.

It would be complacent, too, to assume that everyone afloat has the latest technology. Thousands of fishing boats, yachts and kayaks carry nothing more sophisticated than a phone and a compass. For them, a familiar light on a headland is not a quaint decoration but a lifeline, especially when the weather closes in and a phone battery dies.

Lighthouses also do far more than guide ships. Many towers double as weather stations, recording conditions that help forecasters. Others have become museums, cafés and holiday cottages that bring visitors – and their money – to struggling coastal villages. And they are history made visible: monuments to the engineers who built them on impossible rocks and to the keepers who lived lonely lives to protect strangers.

Admittedly, a lighthouse cannot do everything. It cannot warn a captain about a sandbank that has shifted overnight, and on the foggiest nights even the strongest beam disappears within metres. Yet modern lights run on solar power and LED lamps, so the cost of keeping them lit is a fraction of what it once was.

Critics call lighthouses relics of a romantic past. I call them insurance, and switching them off a false economy. We do not rip out our smoke alarms simply because the house has never caught fire. Switch off the lights, and one night, somewhere off a dark coast, someone will pay for our thrift.

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Read Text C and then answer Questions 3(a)–(d) and 4 on the question paper.

C

TEXT C · NARRATIVE

The night the light stood still

In the 1960s, most British lighthouses were still run by keepers who lived inside them for weeks at a time. In this story, sixteen-year-old Nell has been sent to spend the summer with her father, the principal keeper of Gannet Rock lighthouse, twenty kilometres from the mainland.

From the relief boat, Gannet Rock looked less like a home than a prison: a grey stone finger jabbing at the sky, ringed by a sullen sea that snarled and gnawed at its base. Nell watched it grow closer, arms folded, resentment simmering. She had not asked to come. Her friends were spending the summer at the lido and the dance hall; she was spending it on a rock with a father she saw for one month in every three and barely knew.

‘You’ll get used to it,’ he said, hauling her suitcase up the iron ladder. It was the longest sentence he spoke all afternoon.

The routine was relentless. Each morning the lens had to be polished until not a single smear remained, the brass burnished until it glowed, and the logbook meticulously completed in her father’s small, careful handwriting. Mr Rennie, the assistant keeper, was a taciturn man who communicated mainly through nods, and who had offered Nell a tin of biscuits by way of welcome. In the evenings, the three of them listened to the shipping forecast on the crackling wireless, and Nell counted the days until the relief boat would carry her home.

The storm arrived in her third week. All afternoon the barometer fell, and by nightfall the wind was hurling itself against the tower, shrieking through every gap. Spray burst over the gallery rail, thirty metres above the waves. Mr Rennie, checking the lantern windows, slipped on the streaming iron steps and wrenched his knee; he could barely stand.

Then, just before midnight, the light stopped turning.

Nell heard her father’s footsteps pounding up the spiral staircase and followed. In the lamp room, the beam hung motionless, a single fixed blade of light pointed uselessly at the mainland. ‘The clockwork’s jammed,’ her father said. ‘Every lighthouse has its own pattern of flashes. Without ours, a ship out there won’t know which light it’s looking at.’ He fitted a heavy iron handle to the base of the lens and looked at her. For the first time, she realised, he was asking for her help.

The handle was stiff and cold, and the great lens, a tonne of glass and brass, resisted her like a sulking animal. Her father stood beside her with the stopwatch, calling out the seconds in a low, steady voice: ‘Twenty-eight. Twenty-nine. Round.’ By two o’clock her shoulders were on fire and her palms had blistered and burst. Above them, the beam swung out into the blackness, faithful and unhurried, as if nothing in the world were wrong. Somewhere beyond the reef, she knew, someone might be counting its flashes, trusting it with their life.

Text C continues on the next page ›

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They took turns until dawn. Her father talked as he never had before: about the winter he had spent stranded on another rock for nine weeks, about the keepers who had tended this light for a century, about how much he missed her and her mother. Nell found that she was listening.

At first light, as the wind dropped, a fishing boat appeared beyond the reef, far closer than it should have been. They watched it alter course and slip safely past into open water. An hour later, the radio crackled: the coastguard was passing on a message from the boat's skipper. His navigation equipment had failed in the night, and he had steered by Gannet Rock's flashes alone.

Her father said nothing for a long moment. Then he rested a hand, briefly, on her shoulder. 'You'll make a keeper yet,' he said.

Nell looked down at her ruined hands. Two weeks earlier, she would have been horrified by them. Now, absurdly, she felt proud. Below them, the sea had calmed to a gentle silver, and Gannet Rock no longer looked like a prison at all.

PLANNING SPACE

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

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Thorogood ENGLISH

FREE PAPER 1 MOCK

CAMBRIDGE IGCSE FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (0500/0990)

PAPER 1 READING
Mock exam · 2027 specification

LIGHT HOUSES

QUESTION PAPER

QUESTIONS 1–4 | 2 HOURS | 80 MARKS

NAME | CLASS | DATE

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **all** questions.
- 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 page at the end of this booklet. Show the question number clearly.
- Dictionaries are not allowed.

INFORMATION

- You will need: **Insert** (the three 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

Q1 · 30 min	Q2 · 30 min	Q3 · 30 min	Q4 · 30 min

YOUR MARKS

QUESTION 1	QUESTION 2	QUESTION 3	QUESTION 4	TOTAL
Text A	Text B	Text C	Text C	Paper 1 Reading
/ 20	/ 20	/ 20	/ 20	/ 80

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1 Question 1

Text A: The keepers who vanished

20 MARKS · ≈ 30 MIN

Read **Text A, The keepers who vanished,** in the insert and then answer Question 1(a)–(f).

(a) According to paragraph 1, why was a lighthouse built on Eilean Mòr? **[1]**

Your mark / 1

(b) Use your own words to explain what the text means by:

(i) 'rise abruptly' (line 2) **[2]**

Your mark / 2

(ii) 'puzzling clues' (line 14). **[2]**

Your mark / 2

(c) Reread paragraph 2 ('Just a year later … no sign.'). **[2]**

Give **two** signs that something was wrong when the *Hesperus* reached the island.

-
-

Your mark / 2

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(d) Reread paragraph 3 (‘The search uncovered … the 15th.’). **[2]**

Identify **two** things the clues suggested about how or when the keepers disappeared.

- _____
- _____

Your mark / 2

(e) Reread paragraphs 4 and 5 (‘Newspapers pounced … warn them.’).

(i) Explain why Superintendent Muirhead’s explanation is more believable than the theories reported in the newspapers. **[3]**

Your mark / 3

(ii) Using your own words, explain how the damage at the west landing supported Muirhead’s explanation. **[3]**

Your mark / 3

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(f) Reread paragraphs 4 and 6.

(i) Why does the writer use the word 'pounced' (line 20) rather than the word 'reported' to describe how newspapers responded to the story? **[2]**

Your mark / 2

(ii) Explain what the writer suggests about the island in the phrase: **[3]**

'a silent witness, guarding its secret behind walls of sheer grey rock' (line 35).

Your mark / 3

[Total: 20]

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2 Question 2

Text B: Keep the lights burning

20 MARKS · ≈ 30 MIN

Read **Text B, Keep the lights burning,** in the insert and then answer Question 2(a) and 2(b).

(a) According to Text B, what are the arguments for keeping lighthouses? **[15]**

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 reading and up to 5 marks for writing.

Question 2(a) continues on the next page ›

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Your mark / 15

(b) Assess the writer's attitude towards switching off lighthouses. **[5]**

Use **three** details from Text B to support your answer.

Your mark / 5

[Total: 20]

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3 Question 3

Text C: The night the light stood still

20 MARKS · ≈ 30 MIN

Read **Text C, The night the light stood still,** in the insert and then answer Question 3(a)–(d).

(a) Identify a word or phrase from the text which suggests the same idea as the words in bold:

(i) Nell **felt bitter about** being sent to Gannet Rock. **[1]**

Your mark / 1

(ii) Mr Rennie **rarely said very much.** **[1]**

Your mark / 1

(b) Use your own words to explain what the writer means by each of the words in bold:

> 'The routine was **relentless**. Each morning the lens had to be polished until not a single smear remained, the brass **burnished** until it glowed, and the logbook **meticulously** completed in her father's small, careful handwriting.'

(i) relentless **[1]**

(ii) burnished **[1]**

(iii) meticulously **[1]**

Your mark / 3

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(c) Use **one** example from the text below to explain how the writer uses language to suggest Nell's feelings about Gannet Rock when she first sees it. **[5]**

Use your own words in your explanation.

> 'From the relief boat, Gannet Rock looked less like a home than a prison: a grey stone finger jabbing at the sky, ringed by a sullen sea that snarled and gnawed at its base.'

Your mark / 5

Question 3(d) is on the next page ›

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(d) Choose **three** powerful words or phrases from the extract below to analyse how the writer uses language to describe the night Nell spends turning the lens. **[10]**

> 'The handle was stiff and cold, and the great lens, a tonne of glass and brass, resisted her like a sulking animal. Her father stood beside her with the stopwatch, calling out the seconds in a low, steady voice: "Twenty-eight. Twenty-nine. Round." By two o'clock her shoulders were on fire and her palms had blistered and burst. Above them, the beam swung out into the blackness, faithful and unhurried, as if nothing in the world were wrong. Somewhere beyond the reef, she knew, someone might be counting its flashes, trusting it with their life.'

Write about 200 to 250 words.

Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer.

Question 3(d) continues on the next page ›

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Your mark / 10

[Total: 20]

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4 Question 4

Text C: The night the light stood still

20 MARKS · ≈ 30 MIN

Reread **Text C, The night the light stood still,** in the insert and then answer Question 4.

YOUR TASK

You are Nell. On your last night on Gannet Rock, at the end of the summer, you write a journal entry.

In your journal entry you should:

- describe the daily routine at the lighthouse and how you felt about it when you first arrived
- explain what happened on the night of the storm and how you felt during it
- explain how your feelings about the lighthouse and your father have changed, and why.

Use your own words to write your journal entry.

Write about 250 to 300 words.

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

[20]

Question 4 continues on the next page ›

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Question 4 continues on the next page ›

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Your mark / 20

[Total: 20]

Finished? Check your work.

- Every part answered?
- Own words in 1(b), 1(e)(ii), 2(a), 3(b), 3(c) and 4?
- Summary 120 words or fewer?
- Three choices analysed in 3(d)?
- All three bullets covered in Q4?
- Spelling and punctuation checked?

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Additional answer space

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

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FREE PAPER 1 MOCK

CAMBRIDGE IGCSE FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (0500/0990)

PAPER 1 READING
Mock exam · 2027 specification

LIGHT HOUSES

MARK SCHEME

FOR TEACHERS & STUDENTS | 80 MARKS | MODEL ANSWERS



WHAT'S INSIDE

Q1	Point-by-point answers with Accept and Do not accept rows
Q2	All 12 summary points, plus model answers for 2(a) and 2(b)
Q3	Vocabulary answers, a language bank and a Level 5 model for 3(d)
Q4	A1 / A2 / A3 content grid and a colour-coded model journal entry
+	'Where did your marks go?' – find your next step

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MARK SCHEME PREVIEW

1 Question 1 · Text A: The keepers who vanished

20 marks · point-marked

Tests reading objectives **R1–R5**: explicit and implicit meaning, analysis and evaluation, writer's effects, and selecting information.

QUESTION	ANSWER	MARKS
1(a)	**According to paragraph 1, why was a lighthouse built on Eilean Mòr?** 1 mark for: to guide ships (safely) through dangerous / treacherous waters. ACCEPT to warn ships of danger / to help ships navigate safely past the islands / to keep ships away from the rocks DO NOT ACCEPT 'to light up the island'; 'because no people lived there'; 'for the keepers to live in'	1
1(b)(i)	**Use your own words to explain what the text means by 'rise abruptly' (line 2).** 1 mark for each strand explained. Credit alternatives that explain the whole phrase. ACCEPT • **abruptly:** suddenly / steeply / sharply / sheer / dramatically / without warning • **rise:** emerge / stick up / tower / climb / stand up (out of the sea) DO NOT ACCEPT repeating 'rise' or 'abrupt'; 'grow' or 'get bigger' (wrong sense)	2
1(b)(ii)	**Use your own words to explain what the text means by 'puzzling clues' (line 14).** 1 mark for each strand explained. ACCEPT • **puzzling:** confusing / baffling / mysterious / strange / hard to explain • **clues:** evidence / signs / hints / indications / pieces of information DO NOT ACCEPT repeating 'puzzle' or 'clues'; 'riddles' or 'games'	2

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MARK SCHEME PREVIEW

QUESTION	ANSWER	MARKS

Indicative reading content – in the order the ideas appear

1. Lighthouses still work when electronic equipment fails – which tends to happen at the worst possible moment
   'every screen on my boat went blank … knew exactly where I was' and 'a habit of failing at the worst possible moment'
2. Satellite signals are weak / faint when they reach Earth
   'faint by the time they reach Earth'
3. Satellite signals can be deliberately blocked or jammed
   'vulnerable to interference … deliberate jamming'
4. Solar storms can disrupt satellite signals
   'Solar storms can scramble signals'
5. A lighthouse needs no signal or software – it is simple and independent
   'needs no signal and no software: it simply shines'
6. Many small boats have only basic equipment (a phone and a compass)
   'nothing more sophisticated than a phone and a compass'
7. Lights are a lifeline in bad weather or when phones run out of battery
   'when the weather closes in and a phone battery dies'
8. Many lighthouses work as weather stations / help forecasters
   'double as weather stations'
9. Converted lighthouses attract tourists and money to coastal villages
   'museums, cafés and holiday cottages … struggling coastal villages'
10. They are part of our history / honour engineers and keepers
    'history made visible: monuments to the engineers … and to the keepers'
11. Modern solar and LED lights make them cheap to run
    'a fraction of what it once was'
12. They are insurance against a rare disaster / switching off is a false economy / lives could be lost
    'I call them insurance … a false economy … someone will pay'

DO NOT CREDIT the critics' arguments (ships now use satellite navigation; lighthouses are expensive; the money could be spent elsewhere) or the writer's concessions (a lighthouse cannot warn of shifting sandbanks; fog hides the beam). Selecting these is a sign of weak focus. The opening story earns credit only as idea 1.

TEACHER TIP A top-level answer does not need every point – look for a wide range, well selected.

The Level 5 model summary, the level tables and every other answer are in the free full mark scheme ›

MARK SCHEME PREVIEW

MODEL ANSWER LEVEL 5 · 10 / 10 207 WORDS

The writer presents the night as a gruelling battle. Firstly, the lens '**resisted her like a sulking animal**'. This simile makes the machine seem alive and stubborn, as though it is deliberately refusing to cooperate. 'Sulking' suggests a heavy, grudging resistance, like a creature that will only move when it is forced to, so every turn becomes a contest of will between a teenage girl and a massive machine.

Secondly, the metaphor '**her shoulders were on fire**' conveys the pain of the work. Fire suggests a burning, spreading agony that is almost unbearable, and the exaggeration shows how completely the effort consumes her. Coming after hours of rhythmic turning, it also shows how the repeated movement slowly wears her down, and the fact that she keeps going regardless reveals her determination.

Finally, the beam is described as '**faithful and unhurried**'. This personification presents the light as a loyal companion calmly doing its duty, which is deeply ironic: it moves smoothly only because of Nell's desperate labour, and the ships outside can have no idea of the struggle behind it. 'Faithful' also hints at the trust that strangers place in the light, which transforms Nell's exhaustion into something meaningful, even heroic, and gives her suffering a clear purpose.

Why this reaches Level 5

- **Exactly three choices**, each a short, precise quotation analysed in depth – quality, not quantity. Other details are paraphrased, not quoted.
- Explores **connotations** ('sulking', 'fire', 'faithful') and the effect on the reader, not just the meaning, and shows how the pain builds over the hours.
- Explores the **irony** of the calm beam, and links every choice back to the question: the ordeal of the night.

4 Question 4 · Text C: Nell's journal entry

20 marks · Reading 10 + Writing 10

Tests reading objectives **R1, R2, R3, R5** and writing objectives **W1–W4**.

QUESTION	ANSWER	MARKS
4	**You are Nell. On your last night on Gannet Rock, at the end of the summer, you write a journal entry. In your journal entry you should:** • describe the daily routine at the lighthouse and how you felt about it when you first arrived • explain what happened on the night of the storm and how you felt during it • explain how your feelings about the lighthouse and your father have changed, and why. Use your own words to write your journal entry. Write about 250 to 300 words. Up to 10 marks are available for reading and up to 10 marks for writing. Use the marking criteria for Question 4: Table F (Reading) and Table G (Writing). **NOTES ON THE TASK** Reward students who pick relevant material from Text C, build on it with sensible inferences and back it up with textual detail. Look for a personal, reflective journal register in Nell's voice, a balanced response covering all three bullets, and the student's own words. Annotate A1 for the routine and first feelings, A2 for the storm night, and A3 for how Nell has changed. **det.** = detail from the text; **dev.** = development that shows inference.	**20**

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FREE PAPER 1 MOCK

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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)–(d)	Finding and explaining information in your own words	/ 9	Short Answers
1(e)–(f)	Inference, evaluation and word choice	/ 11	Short Answers
2(a)	Summary: selecting and paraphrasing	/ 15	Summary
2(b)	The writer's attitude	/ 5	Summary
3(a)–(c)	Vocabulary in context and one-example language analysis	/ 10	Short Answers
3(d)	Writer's effect: three choices	/ 10	Writer's Effect
4	Extended reading: writing from Text C	/ 20	Extended Reading
Total	**Paper 1 Reading**	/ 80	**Aim for +10 next time**

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