

Grade Descriptions for Cambridge International A Level Literature in English 9695

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 International A Levels, they describe performance at three levels – grades 'E', '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/or 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 achieving the grade is likely to demonstrate.

Where content areas for the first and second halves of the A Level are distinct, they are also assessed a different standards. Performance for content areas assessed at AS Level is therefore described separately in this document.

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 E	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
Knowledge and understanding of literary texts	Students select from knowledge of plot, showing some understanding of literary texts to address a question. They may use some references and quotations to support their ideas.	Students select from knowledge of plot and concern, showing competent understanding of literary texts to address a question. They use references and quotations to support their ideas.	Students select from thorough knowledge of plot and concern, showing confident understanding of literary texts to address a question. They demonstrate secure use of specific references and quotations to support their ideas.
Making connections between selections from texts and the whole text	Students make some connections, usually of plot and subject matter, between parts of the text and the whole. The significances of the links will not be fully developed.	Students make some specific connections, of plot, subject matter or style, between parts of the text and the whole in a balanced discussion. Some of the significances of the links are developed.	Students make confident and detailed connections, of plot, subject matter, language and style, between parts of the text and the whole. The significances of the links are developed in a balanced argument.
Appreciation of relevant contexts	Students demonstrate some awareness of wider contexts which are relevant to a question. They may show awareness of how an episode fits into the wider text, or show awareness of the geographical setting or the time of the text's composition.	Students demonstrate awareness of relevant contexts which they can use with some insight to inform their argument. They may appreciate how an episode contributes to the wider text, or make some comment on the significance of the geographical setting or societal expectations at the time of the text's composition.	Students demonstrate confident awareness of relevant contexts which are selected and used to inform the development of their argument. They may discuss how a particular episode contributes to the wider text, or discuss the significance of the geographical setting or societal expectations at the time of the text's composition.

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade E	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
<p>Understanding the style and methods of different literary forms</p>	<p>Students demonstrate some appreciation of the literary features and methods of poetry, prose and drama texts.</p> <p>For example, they might make references to paragraph and chapter progression in prose texts; stanzas, rhythm and rhyme schemes in poetry; or scene progression and dialogue in drama.</p>	<p>Students demonstrate appreciation of the literary features and methods of poetry, prose and drama texts.</p> <p>For example, they might make references to the effects of paragraph and chapter progression in prose texts; the effects of stanza structure, rhythm and rhyme schemes in poetry; or scene progression and language of dialogue in drama.</p>	<p>Students demonstrate confident appreciation of the literary features and methods of poetry, prose and drama texts.</p> <p>For example, they might discuss the effects of the structure of paragraphs and chapters in prose texts; the effects of stanza structure and progression, rhythm and rhyme schemes and their variations in poetry; or scene development and characterisation through the language of dialogue in drama.</p>
<p>Understanding writers' literary choices and their effects, using appropriate literary terminology</p>	<p>Students demonstrate understanding of some of the ways in which writers use language and structure to communicate meaning and create effects for the reader or audience.</p> <p>For example, they may make comments on writers' use of such features as chapters, stanzas, scenes, simile, metaphor and personification.</p> <p>They demonstrate some knowledge of literary terminology and usually use it appropriately.</p>	<p>Students understand and discuss ways in which writers use language and structure to communicate meaning and create effects for the reader or audience.</p> <p>For example, they may discuss writers' use of such features as chapters, stanzas, scenes, simile, metaphor, personification and other literary features.</p> <p>They demonstrate competent knowledge and use of literary terminology.</p>	<p>Students analyse in detail ways in which writers use language and structure to communicate meaning and create effects for the reader or audience.</p> <p>For example, they may discuss the varying effects of writers' use of such features as chapters, stanzas, scenes, and a range of specific literary features.</p> <p>They use literary terminology accurately and fluently to develop their arguments.</p>
<p>Articulating a personal response to texts</p>	<p>Students demonstrate a personal response. Their interpretations are partially supported by some references and quotations.</p>	<p>Students demonstrate a thoughtful personal response, competently supporting their interpretations with references and quotations.</p>	<p>Students demonstrate a confident personal response. Their own interpretations are informed, developed and supported with specific references and quotations.</p>

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade E	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
Developing a structured argument in response to a task	Students present their ideas and arguments, sometimes with occasional loss of clarity and reliance on paraphrase.	Students develop their ideas through clear paragraph structure and clear expression.	Students develop complex ideas through sequenced and directed paragraphs. They argue with clarity and fluency.
Evaluating different arguments and opinions about literary texts	Students consider some other views and interpretations of texts. They may attempt to evaluate these views in places with some support from the text.	Students discuss other views and interpretations of texts. They evaluate these views with support from the text.	Students examine other views and interpretations thoroughly. They evaluate them confidently, with thorough support from the text.

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