



CAMBRIDGE O LEVEL — MODEL EXAMINATION PAPER

ENGLISH LANGUAGE 1123

Paper 1: Reading (Set B)

YOUR PHYSICAL & ONLINE SELF-ASSESSMENT ROADMAP

PHYSICAL

1. Download any practice test →
2. Solve within assigned time →
3. Submit it to your Teacher/Examiner →
4. Get assessed and improve

ONLINE

1. Visit edusambam.com →
2. Open Assessment Arena →
3. Solve online papers →
4. Get auto-assessed and improve

Candidate Name:		Centre Number:	
Candidate Number:		Date:	
School / Institution:		Test Centre:	

Subject	English Language	Component	1123 / Paper 1
Focus	Reading	Total Marks	80
Time Allowed	2 Hours	Version	B



General Instructions

1. Read both passages carefully before answering any question.
2. Answer all questions in the spaces provided.
3. For Questions 1–3, answer in your own words as far as possible unless a question asks you to find a specific word.
4. For Question 4 (Summary), write in continuous prose, not note form, and keep to the word limit given.
5. For Question 5 (Directed Writing), address every bullet point and stay within the suggested word count.
6. Write in dark blue or black ink. Do not use correction fluid.
7. Dictionaries are not permitted.
8. This worksheet is prepared from the EDUSAMBAM practice assessment supplied for this paper.

Paper Pattern

Question	Focus	Parts	Marks
Question 1	Passage A — comprehension	5	15
Question 2	Passage A — vocabulary in context	5	5
Question 3	Passage B — comprehension	5	20
Question 4	Summary (Passage B)	1	15
Question 5	Directed writing (A & B)	1	25
Total	Reading Paper	17	80

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Passage A

Read Passage A carefully, and then answer Questions 1 and 2 on pages that follow.

The Attic Box

1 The stairs to the attic hadn't been climbed in years, and they complained about it with every step, as though roused from a long sleep they hadn't asked to end. I told myself I was only looking for the Christmas decorations. That was not, strictly, a lie.

5 Grandma's attic held itself the way she had — tidy at first glance, complicated underneath. Boxes labelled in handwriting I recognised instantly sat in careful rows, and it took me a while to notice the one that wasn't labelled at all, pushed into the corner beneath the window, as if it had been trying not to be found.

8 I lifted the lid before I had properly decided to. Inside were letters — dozens of them, tied in loose bundles with garden string, each envelope addressed in a hand I didn't know, sent to an address I didn't recognise, in a town three hundred miles from where she had lived her whole adult life.

12 I sat down on the cold floorboards and read the first one anyway, telling myself I would stop after a single page. I did not stop after a single page. The letters were not scandalous, not exactly — they were ordinary, funny, full of small complaints about weather and neighbours — but they were also, unmistakably, love letters, written to a name that was not my grandfather's.

17 It occurred to me, slowly, that I had spent twenty-six years assuming I knew the entire shape of a woman I had loved without ever asking her what she had wanted before any of us existed. The letters didn't undo anything I knew about her. They simply added a room to a house I had thought I'd fully explored.

21 I retied the bundle exactly as I had found it and sat a while longer in the dust and the cold light, feeling that I had been allowed to see something that had never been mine to see, and that I would carry it carefully, and say nothing, for as long as I was asked to keep it.



Passage B

Read Passage B carefully, and then answer Question 3 on the page that follows.

The Silent Language of Trees

1 For centuries, a solitary oak standing alone in a field was considered nature's picture of quiet independence. That image, scientists now argue, could hardly be more mistaken. Research over the past three decades has revealed that many forest trees — including Douglas fir, birch, and beech — are connected below ground by vast networks of fungal threads, nicknamed the 'wood wide web', through which they appear to share nutrients, water, and even warnings, often between trees of different ages and even different species.

7 The reasons behind this cooperation are still debated, but several explanations have gained support. The fungi themselves profit from the arrangement, taking a share of sugars from every tree they connect in exchange for delivering scarce nutrients from the soil. Related trees, meanwhile, may simply benefit more from helping kin survive than from purely competing with them. There is also evidence that chemical alarm signals, released when a tree is attacked by insects, travel along these same fungal threads, prompting neighbouring trees to raise their own chemical defences before the threat arrives.

14 It would be wrong, however, to picture the forest floor as a purely harmonious community. The same networks that carry nutrients can also be used far less generously: some trees are thought to draw resources from weaker neighbours without giving anything back, and a few plants tap into fungal threads solely to steal sugar from trees they are not even directly connected to. Human activity complicates the picture further — logging and soil disturbance can sever these underground connections, sometimes with consequences for forest health that are not yet fully understood.

19 Not every scientist is comfortable with the popular framing of these discoveries. Some researchers are enthusiastic, describing forests as cooperative, almost social structures in which trees actively 'help' one another. Others urge caution, arguing that much of this behaviour may be better explained by simple chemical and biological processes than by anything resembling deliberate communication, and that popular accounts risk overstating what the evidence actually shows.

25 What is harder to dispute is that the discovery has already begun to change forestry practice. Some foresters now argue for leaving certain large, well-connected trees standing when a plot is logged, on the theory that these 'hub' trees may be quietly supporting the recovery of an entire area. Whatever the eventual scientific consensus, the idea of the solitary, self-sufficient tree looks increasingly like one more comforting story that the forest itself does not really support.



Questions

Answer all questions.

Question 1 — Passage A

Re-read Passage A, and then answer the following questions.

(a) Give one word from lines 1–4 which suggests that the attic had been left undisturbed for a long time. [2]

(b) "pushed into the corner beneath the window, as if it had been trying not to be found" (lines 5–7). Explain in your own words what this suggests about the box. [3]

(c) Why, according to the narrator in lines 12–16, might it be unfair to assume the letters were simply "scandalous"? Give two reasons, using your own words as far as possible. [4]

(d) What does the narrator's realisation in lines 17–20 suggest about her feelings at that moment? [3]

(e) Explain what the narrator means by saying the letters "added a room to a house I had thought I'd fully explored" (line 20). [3]



Question 2 — Vocabulary in Context (Passage A)

Choose one word from Passage A which is closest in meaning to each of the following. Give the line number where the word appears.

(a) well looked after; neat (paragraph 2) [1]

(b) certainly; without doubt (paragraph 4) [1]

(c) plain; not special (paragraph 4) [1]

(d) fastened again, as before (paragraph 6) [1]

(e) gradually, not suddenly (paragraph 5) [1]



Question 3 — Passage B

Re-read Passage B, and then answer the following questions.

(a) According to paragraph 1, give two examples of tree species shown to exchange resources through fungal networks. [2]

(b) Using your own words as far as possible, explain three reasons given in paragraph 2 why trees might cooperate in this way. [6]

(c) What is meant by the phrase "it would be wrong... to picture the forest floor as a purely harmonious community" (line 14)? [3]

(d) Explain, in your own words, why scientists mentioned in paragraph 4 hold differing views about this phenomenon. [5]

(e) What overall impression of the future of forestry is created in the final paragraph? [4]





Question 4 — Summary

Using material from Passage B only, summarise the reasons why forest trees are thought to cooperate through fungal networks, and the concerns this raises.

Write your summary in continuous prose (not note form). Your summary should be no more than 100 words, not counting the words given to help you begin.

Begin your summary as follows: "Trees are thought to cooperate through fungal networks because..."

Up to 10 of the 15 marks available are for the content of your summary, and up to 5 marks are for the quality of your writing.

[15]



Question 5 — Directed Writing

A school magazine has invited students to submit a short article about an unexpected discovery about someone or something familiar.

Using ideas from both Passage A and Passage B, write the article. In your article you should:

- describe a personal-style discovery about someone or something familiar, in a similar spirit to Passage A
- explain, using ideas from Passage B, how something assumed to be simple or independent can turn out to be more connected or complex than expected
- suggest what such discoveries can teach us about not making quick assumptions about people or things we think we know well

Base your article on what you have read in Passage A and Passage B, but be careful to use your own words. Address each of the three bullet points above.

Write about 200 to 300 words.

Up to 15 of the 25 marks available are for the content of your article, and up to 10 marks are for the quality of your writing.

[25]





Mark Allocation Summary

Question	Focus	Marks
1	Passage A — comprehension (explicit & implicit meaning)	15
2	Passage A — vocabulary in context	5
3	Passage B — comprehension (explicit & implicit meaning)	20
4	Summary (Passage B)	15
5	Directed writing (Passages A & B)	25
	Reading total	80

Candidate Signature

Invigilator Signature

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Marks Obtained: ____ / 80		Checked By:	
Result / Grade:		Date Checked:	



Marking Guidance & Model Answers

Teacher reference: this paper contains largely open-ended, own-words responses. Equivalent, grammatically sound wording that captures the same meaning should be accepted. Guidance below indicates the key content expected, not a single fixed wording.

Question 1 — Passage A

- (a) Any one of: sleep / nap / roused — indicating the attic had been left undisturbed for a long time. [2]
- (b) Accept answers indicating that the box seemed deliberately hidden or kept private — tucked away as though someone did not want it noticed. [3]
- (c) Two of: the letters' content was mostly ordinary and mundane rather than shocking; they show a genuine relationship that deserves understanding rather than judgement. [4]
- (d) Accept: the narrator responds with curiosity and reflection rather than shock, suggesting she values understanding her grandmother's full life over judging it. [3]
- (e) Accept: the letters added a new dimension to what the narrator knew about her grandmother without erasing or replacing what she already knew. [3]

Question 2 — Vocabulary in Context

- (a) tidy (b) unmistakably (c) ordinary (d) retied (e) slowly — one mark each for the correct word. [5]

Question 3 — Passage B

- (a) Any two of: Douglas fir, birch, beech. [2]
- (b) Three of: fungi profit by taking a share of sugars in exchange for delivering nutrients; related trees benefit more from helping kin survive than from competing; chemical warning signals travel through the network so neighbouring trees can prepare their defences. [6]
- (c) Accept: the network is not purely cooperative — it can also be used for competition or exploitation, such as trees or plants drawing resources without giving anything back. [3]
- (d) Accept: some scientists are enthusiastic, viewing the behaviour as genuine cooperation or communication; others are more cautious, attributing it to ordinary chemical and biological processes and warning against overstating the evidence. [5]



(e) Accept: a sense that the discovery is already influencing real forestry decisions, such as preserving well-connected 'hub' trees, and that the traditional idea of the self-sufficient, solitary tree is being replaced by a more connected view. [4]

Question 4 — Summary (Model Answer)

Trees are thought to cooperate through fungal networks because the fungi profit by taking a share of sugars in exchange for delivering scarce nutrients, related trees benefit more from helping kin survive than from competing, and chemical warning signals travel through the same threads to prepare neighbouring trees for insect attacks. However, this is not purely cooperative: some trees and plants draw resources from others without giving anything back, and logging or soil disturbance can damage these connections in ways not yet fully understood. Scientists also disagree about how much of this represents genuine communication.

Mark on coverage of the key content points (up to 10) and quality/concision of expression (up to 5). [15]

Question 5 — Directed Writing (Marking Guidance)

Award content marks (up to 15) for: a personal-style discovery in the spirit of Passage A; an explanation, drawing on Passage B, of how something familiar can turn out to be more connected or complex than expected; and a thoughtful suggestion about not making quick assumptions. All three bullet points should be addressed, in the candidate's own words.

Award language marks (up to 10) for register and tone appropriate to a community magazine article, clear paragraphing, and accuracy of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. [25]