

Cambridge Lower Secondary Checkpoint

ENGLISH**0861/02**

Paper 2 Fiction

May 2026**MARK SCHEME**

Maximum Mark: 50

Published

Before they start marking, examiners complete a standardisation process. They review a range of candidate responses and discuss the mark scheme in detail to agree which answers can and cannot be accepted. Examiners award marks where it is clear that candidate responses have met the requirements of the mark scheme. These requirements may vary between different components or different versions of the same component, depending on the exact requirements of the question and the candidate responses seen during the standardisation process.

Sometimes, our mark schemes may allow marks to be awarded to responses which contain elements that are factually incorrect or for content not covered by the curriculum. We do this in response to the demands of a specific question to support candidates and make sure that our assessments are fair. However, these allowances should not be used as a guide for teaching and learning.

We cannot discuss the mark scheme with schools, and we recommend that schools read the mark scheme together with the assessment material and End of Series Report for Teachers.

This document has **10** pages.

Section A: Reading

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	Award 1 mark for: five / 5	1
1(b)	Award 1 mark for each of: - that he's allowed to play with / join his sister / Millie and his sister's friends - he has to sit on the low branches / he's in the lowest ranking order / he's not respected at all	2

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)	Award 1 mark for: slowly/clearly/loudly	1
2(b)	Award 1 mark for: - She hesitates before answering. - It takes her a moment to respond.	1

Question	Answer	Marks
3(a)	Award 1 mark for: - He's worried he won't be able to back out. - That he'll have to do whatever she asks. - That he is bound to it. - He knows she's going to give him a very difficult/dangerous dare. - She makes it personal to Bailey.	1
3(b)	Award 1 mark each for two of the following answers: - A huge smile (spreads across Caroline's face as she stares down at Bailey.) (unable to keep the) hint of triumph (out of her voice) - She pauses dramatically (before declaring)	2

Question	Answer	Marks
4(a)	Award 1 mark for each of the following, up to 2 marks : • they are big / huge / high / tall • they have a point/peak / jagged outline / triangular • sloping sides • grouped together	2
4(b)	Award 1 mark for: • repetition (of the word no) / rule of three / tricolon / power of three	1
4(c)	Award 1 mark for: • Each sentence adds another reason (for him not to feel afraid). • It will be in the daylight / not in the dark • He is trying to make them seem less terrifying / frightening / scary • They are Bailey's thoughts (about why he can do the dare).	1

Question	Answer	Marks
5	Award 1 mark for: • (why) he agreed to do the dare • (why) he's moving towards the circus • he's doing it so determinedly / with determination	1

Question	Answer	Marks
6(a)	Award 1 mark for: • to give a link between the circus and the children	1
6(b)	Award 1 mark for: • fascinated	1

Question	Answer	Marks
7	Award 1 mark for: • The circus had just arrived. • Everybody was talking about it / excited about it / interested in it. • The circus would have seemed more familiar after it had been there for more than a few days. • Caroline likes to make her dares fashionable / current / topical / en vogue.	1

Question	Answer	Marks
8(a)	Award 1 mark for one of the following: • To add/build drama / tension / suspense • Each paragraph shows how Bailey has different thoughts about the circus. • It shows us how Bailey's thoughts about the circus changed/developed. • It's as if we are following Bailey's thoughts step by step	1
8(b)	Award 1 mark for one of the following: • to show a change of pace / to speed up the action / to show swift movement • to show a range of reflections • to show how big and dazzling / varied it all was • to describe Bailey's actions	1
8(c)	Award 1 mark for each of: • the never-ending size • the range of activities Tick Box 2 and Box 5 3 or more boxes ticked, 0 marks	2

Question	Answer	Marks
9	Award 1 mark for: • his conviction fades.	1

Question	Answer	Marks																										
10	<u>If the Quotation is wrong the Explanation cannot be awarded</u> Accept any Explanation that reasonably supports the quotation If 'Yes' is ticked: <table><tr><th>Quotation</th><th>Explanation</th></tr><tr><td>not wanting Caroline to retract the dare.</td><td>He starts to go towards the circus quickly before Caroline can change her mind.</td></tr><tr><td>And for reasons Bailey cannot quite put words to,</td><td>He has a subconscious desire to go. / He doesn't even know himself why he is going.</td></tr><tr><td>he is walking toward the circus with a considerable amount of determination</td><td>He has made up his mind to go / he's determined/sure he wants to go there / he wants to explore the circus.</td></tr><tr><td>It looks just as it did the first time he saw it, when he was not quite six years old.</td><td>The circus is as appealing now as it was when he was a small child.</td></tr><tr><td>It materialized in the same spot then, and now it looks like it never left.</td><td>It's like he's still the child looking at the circus.</td></tr><tr><td>He ached to go back almost the moment he walked away.</td><td>He really wanted to return to the circus after his visit the night before.</td></tr></table> If 'No' is ticked: <table><tr><th>Quotation</th><th>Explanation</th></tr><tr><td>It is so still in the daytime, with no lights and no music and no crowds of people.</td><td>The circus isn't attractive / mysterious / magical during the day.</td></tr><tr><td>Just a bunch of striped tents, looking more yellow and grey than black and white in the afternoon sun.</td><td>The tents look scruffy/dirty / are not attractive in the daylight.</td></tr><tr><td>It looks odd, and perhaps a bit mysterious, but not extraordinary. Not in the middle of the day.</td><td>The circus doesn't look anything special during the day.</td></tr><tr><td>the larger and more intimidating the tents look, and the more his conviction fades</td><td>The circus looks more and more frightening the closer he gets to it.</td></tr><tr><td>The others are still in the tree, undoubtedly watching.</td><td>He's only doing the dare to impress Caroline and her friends.</td></tr></table>	Quotation	Explanation	not wanting Caroline to retract the dare.	He starts to go towards the circus quickly before Caroline can change her mind.	And for reasons Bailey cannot quite put words to,	He has a subconscious desire to go. / He doesn't even know himself why he is going.	he is walking toward the circus with a considerable amount of determination	He has made up his mind to go / he's determined/sure he wants to go there / he wants to explore the circus.	It looks just as it did the first time he saw it, when he was not quite six years old.	The circus is as appealing now as it was when he was a small child.	It materialized in the same spot then, and now it looks like it never left.	It's like he's still the child looking at the circus.	He ached to go back almost the moment he walked away.	He really wanted to return to the circus after his visit the night before.	Quotation	Explanation	It is so still in the daytime, with no lights and no music and no crowds of people.	The circus isn't attractive / mysterious / magical during the day.	Just a bunch of striped tents, looking more yellow and grey than black and white in the afternoon sun.	The tents look scruffy/dirty / are not attractive in the daylight.	It looks odd, and perhaps a bit mysterious, but not extraordinary. Not in the middle of the day.	The circus doesn't look anything special during the day.	the larger and more intimidating the tents look, and the more his conviction fades	The circus looks more and more frightening the closer he gets to it.	The others are still in the tree, undoubtedly watching.	He's only doing the dare to impress Caroline and her friends.	4
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Section B: Writing

Question	Answer	Marks
Notes to markers • Use the marking grids on the following pages. • Marking should always begin from the lowest mark in each row and work across: start from the left-hand side. • Award 0 marks where the performance fails to meet the lowest criteria. • A 'best fit' judgement should be made in judging first in which box to place the response and then, within that box, which mark is appropriate. • The lower mark within a box should be given if some criteria have been met but not all. Note on extent: • Award 0 marks for 20 words or fewer. • Award a maximum of 7 marks for responses of between 21 and 60 words. • You need not count the words unless you think there will be fewer than 60. In normal-sized handwriting 60 words will be approximately 8 lines.		
11	Creation of texts (Wc)	5
	Vocabulary and Language (Wv)	3
	Structure of texts (Ws)	7
	Grammar and punctuation (Wg)	7
	Word structure [Spelling] (Ww)	3
		[Total 25]

			
Creation of texts (Wc)	Creation of texts (Wc)	Creation of texts (Wc)	Creation of texts (Wc)
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4–5]
Some material included that elaborates on basic information. OR Some elements of the text type can be seen. <i>A maximum of 1 mark can be awarded if not the given text type.</i>	A relevant response with well-chosen ideas and content. Some ideas and material are developed. Purpose of writing is clear and appropriate to the given text type where some features are evident. A straightforward viewpoint which is generally consistent and appropriate for the purpose and the audience.	Relevant material has ideas and content with detail developed. Features of the text type are clear throughout. Consistent viewpoint with detail that sustains interest with writer's style / personal response which emphasises particular points.	Content is clearly aimed at a target audience with a good balance of coverage. Writing is well developed so that features of the text type are used consistently and successfully. A clear, consistent relationship between writer and reader is established and maintained throughout the text.

		
Vocabulary and Language (Wv)	Vocabulary and Language (Wv)	Vocabulary and Language (Wv)
[1]	[2]	[3]
Sometimes uses appropriate vocabulary to convey meaning matched to the context.	Appropriate vocabulary is used that is suitable for the <u>specified</u> text type. Good attempts to use persuasive elements (word/tone/phrases).	Language is wholly relevant to the text type and purpose. Specialised vocabulary is used well, for effect, throughout the text. Words and phrases chosen to convey mood and feeling so that the writing sustains the reader's interest.

			
Structure of texts (Ws)	Structure of texts (Ws)	Structure of texts (Ws)	Structure of texts (Ws)
[1]	[2-3]	[4-5]	[6-7]
Structure is clear using paragraphs/sections with some attempts to organise the content.	Paragraphs/sections are evident with related points grouped together (and/or linked by time sequence). Some attempts to sequence relevant ideas logically. Cohesion between paragraphs/sections is achieved using devices such as simple connectives to establish links. <i>If either the context or text type is incorrect, the maximum is 3.</i>	Content is organised so that ideas are developed cohesively and logically throughout a piece of sustained writing. Paragraphs/sections are organised to achieve an <u>appropriate effect for the specified text type</u> , where included sentences add clarity to overall text. (There may be some use of organisational devices such as bullets, numbered lists, Q&A style.)	Development of ideas is managed throughout an extended piece of writing. Well-organised ideas in paragraphs and/or sections support overall cohesion and shaping of a text. Logical links between paragraphs help the development of ideas. Cohesion within and between paragraphs is achieved using devices such as connectives.

			
Grammar and Punctuation (Wg)	Grammar and Punctuation (Wg)	Grammar and Punctuation (Wg)	Grammar and Punctuation (Wg)
[1]	[2-3]	[4-5]	[6-7]
Some simple sentence structures are used successfully. Some correct use of punctuation, such as full stops and capital letters. Note: <i>do not discriminate if learners write with good English but there are punctuation errors. If ambitious structures are used, begin marking at 2–3 marks, provided there is variation in sentence openings.</i>	Uses an increasing range of sentence types accurately and may include attempts at complex structures. Use of expanded phrases to develop ideas. For example: - noun, adverbial, adjectival, and verb phrases - with a range of connectives. Verb forms are generally used accurately, i.e. subject matches verb, consistency of tense, use of singular and plural. Punctuation is used consistently and accurately, e.g. - To demarcate sentences. - Commas are always used in lists and sometimes to clarify meaning in sentences. - Apostrophes correct for possession (sing./plural) (Direct speech punctuation includes other punctuation alongside speech marks.) Note: <i>if punctuation is totally lacking <u>and</u> other descriptors met then give the lower mark here</i>	Grammar is almost always accurate throughout the text. For example: - simple, compound and complex sentences; multi-clause sentences combine simple sentences and/or re-order clauses - modal verbs - pronouns and possessive pronouns used accurately - adjectives and adverbs used correctly (comparative/superlative) - use of prepositions Punctuation is used accurately to: e.g. - demarcate sentences (and for direct speech) - Commas are always used in lists and often to mark clauses in complex sentences. - Use of apostrophes is accurate.	Overall grammar and use of English is fully <u>appropriate for the text type</u>. For example: - A variety of simple, compound and complex sentences are chosen for effect. - Relative pronouns may provide detail. Punctuation is used accurately, e.g.: - to clarify meaning in complex sentences. (All speech punctuation, reported and direct, is correct).

		
Word structure (Ww) (Spelling)	Word structure (Ww) (Spelling)	Word structure (Ww) (Spelling)
[1]	[2]	[3]
Examples: Spelling of all high frequency words and common polysyllabic words, including compound words, is correct. Spelling of words with common letter strings, but different pronunciations is correct, e.g. <i>through, tough</i>. Spelling of a range of common prefixes and suffixes is correct. Spelling of common homophones is correct. Some correct spelling of long and short vowel phonemes. Spelling of plurals is usually correct, e.g. <i>-s, -es, -y/ies, -f/ves</i>	Examples: Correct spelling of words with less common letter strings that are pronounced differently, e.g. <i>pour, hour, piece, pie</i>. Some successful attempts to spell exceptions to known spelling rules. Correctly spell words with silent vowels and syllables in a range of polysyllabic words, e.g. <i>library, interest</i>. Spell common homonyms correctly, e.g. <i>wave (gesture), wave (sea)</i>. Spell words with a wide range of prefixes and suffixes, including opposites (un-, im-) correctly. Spell words with double consonants correctly.	Examples: Spell words with different suffixes that sound the same, <i>-tion, -cian</i>. Spell familiar homophones and commonly confused words correctly, e.g. <i>aloud, allowed, desert, dessert</i>. Spell a wide range of words, both regular and exception words correctly, including words where similar consonant sounds vary, e.g. <i>-ck, -k, -ch, -que, -k</i>.