

# Specimen Paper Answers

## Paper 1

# Cambridge International AS Level English General Paper 8021

For examination from 2019



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## Introduction

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The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS Level English General Paper 8021, and to show examples of very good answers. There are 10 questions in Paper 1 and candidates must answer one of the questions. These questions require the candidate to write an essay of 600–700 words, using examples to support their arguments.

In this booklet, we have provided an answer for one of the questions along with examiner comments. Comments are given to indicate where and why marks were awarded, and how additional marks could have been obtained. In this way, it is possible to understand what candidates have done to gain their marks and how they could improve.

The mark schemes for the specimen papers are available to download from the School Support Hub at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/support](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support)

### 2019 Specimen Mark Scheme for Specimen Paper 1

Past exam resources and other teacher support materials are also available on the School Support Hub.

## Assessment overview

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### Paper 1 – Essay

Written paper

1 hour 15 minutes

30 marks

Candidates answer one essay question from a choice of 10.

Externally assessed

50% of the AS Level

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

#### AO1 Selection and application of information

- Demonstrate understanding of information from a variety of material.
- Identify, select and interpret relevant data, information and examples.
- Apply information that exemplifies ideas and opinions.

#### AO2 Analysis and evaluation

- Demonstrate the ability to analyse the meaning of language as used in its context.
- Develop explanations with examples, analysis and evaluation.
- Develop, analyse and evaluate arguments and make supported judgements.

#### AO3 Communication using written English

- Write structured responses, using a range of appropriate language for a variety of purposes.
- Communicate information, ideas and opinions clearly and accurately.
- Construct cohesive and organised responses, linking ideas and arguments.

## Question 7

## Specimen answer

Can communities ever recover fully from serious natural disasters?

1

Serious natural disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes, hurricanes and floods immediately devastate communities whereas drought inflicts damage over time. However, the degree of recovery depends on the type and scale of the catastrophe, the speed at which local people, government and international organisations respond, population density, the affected country's resources, the quality of infrastructure and the loss of life and livelihoods. By examining such factors it should be possible to explore whether certain *type* of community can recover better than others leading to a conclusion as to whether it is ever possible to fully recover from such natural disasters.

2

The scale of these disasters makes it very difficult *to cope and recover* in the aftermath as communities are left helpless with the impossible task of re-building lives and *buildings*. The Indian earthquake of 2004 created a massive tsunami which killed 250,000 in fourteen countries whereas the Nepalese earthquake of 2015 destroyed the capital city of Kathmandu and killed 9000. Whether such disasters are localised or wide spread recovery here was aided by a rapid international response: burying bodies in Aceh province to minimise the spread of disease or rescuing and re-building in Kathmandu. However, whereas well organised funding allowed the people of Aceh to recover after five years, people in Kathmandu were still living in tents. The high population density of Kathmandu and inaccessible mountain terrain may be partly responsible, but the prioritising and distribution of funds was slow. In the end Aceh seems to have recovered more quickly than Nepal despite more casualties. *Could it be that, although outside organisations are often quick to respond to disasters with both money,*

## Examiner comments

1 The first paragraph is a solid introduction focusing on the key words and meanings of the question. The final sentence adds a personal voice and clearly defines the scope of the argument. However, there is incomplete emphasis on the **full** range of factors that make a community e.g. social, cultural, economic, political and environmental.

The candidate communicates clearly with a vocabulary range ('devastate', 'inflicts'), and a consistent and appropriate register. There is one grammar error (in red) and the list is a little cumbersome, as well as having slightly repetitive vocabulary at the end ('recover', 'whether').

2 The second paragraph defines 'scale' as either widespread or localised and effectively exemplifies with details. The 'Indian earthquake' is slightly inaccurate, but does not impede the quality of the response. The candidate develops a comparison to support the argument that the relationship between local government and outside agencies is key to a successful recovery ('could it be that...' suggests candidate's voice).

There is clear communication and structure, with a varied and sophisticated vocabulary (in red – a little inelegant at times).

## Specimen answer

## Examiner comments

*technology and man power*, recovery is also dependent on a willingness to accept such aid and distribute it fairly. For example, the severe drought of 2010 in Somalia possibly resulted in many deaths because of local corruption and in-fighting.

3

However, most communities will feel helpless and isolated anyway. Their immediate experience could be of losing family and friends, of losing infrastructure such as housing, schools, roads, water and sanitation and faced with the constant threat of disease and looting. In poorer countries livelihoods like fishing and farming are fragile. Five years after Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar most households *had not been able to replace fishing boats and livestock taken by the storm*. Also, six months after the 2010 Haiti earthquake, there were few signs of recovery. Plenty of aid had been sent to Haiti so what happened to it? In the end slow recovery reinforces a community's sense of isolation, adding to hardship and helplessness and leading to possible migration. Hurricane Katrina's destruction of the southern states of America in 2005 lead to more than a million people being displaced with few returning. Even in a prosperous country like the United States, the government was slow to respond and was accused of mismanagement so created a refugee *crisis whereby full recovery was either going to be impossible or different in a new situation*.

4

Once destruction has occurred and an assessment made of the situation then the quality of economic recovery matters, not only to re-build quickly but to enable infrastructures to withstand future disasters. In the end hurricanes will occur a few times a year in the Caribbean and often densely populated towns lie in earthquake zones or at the foot of a volcano. This is where people choose to live through family and economic ties so any *recovery could be repeatedly destroyed* unless improvements are made. However, this could be very difficult for poor countries like Haiti where recovery depends entirely on

3 This paragraph analyses the consequences of 'slow recovery' and its effect on the community with a careful selection of examples and evaluation throughout.

There is a wide vocabulary with some sophisticated structures and crafting of the English to create a persuasive tone (often of indignation to reflect the frustration of the community). The red text highlights some occasional wordiness.

4 This paragraph emphasises the need for quality reconstruction using examples to develop, and evaluating the difficulties of ever achieving this in the context of loss and repeated natural events.

Again, the candidate is quite sophisticated with vocabulary with barely an error, but it can be a little inelegant (highlighted in red).

Specimen answer	Examiner comments
<p><i>international aid or where there is cultural devastation amongst the Hindu and Buddhist temples of Kathmandu, all obstacles to ever making a full recovery.</i></p> <p><b>5</b>  <i>In conclusion, the extent of recovery from a serious natural disaster depends on the speed and degree of aid received, a committed response from local government to allow recovery and the scale of the disaster. Admittedly, the poor are hit hardest and the loss of family, home and livelihood will make any form of recovery slow. Nothing will ever be the same again but anything towards full recovery must consider proper funding to produce improved reconstruction and allow local people to learn the skills needed for the country to be self-sufficient. Over time, suffering could be eased and economic growth improve enough to establish a different 'full recovery', after which foreign aid could gradually withdraw.</i></p>	<p><b>5</b> This is a conclusion which returns to both the question and introduction, and evaluates the argument in the context of other considerations (climate change/control of aid agencies). It does a lot more than just summarise the main points. It is possibly a little abrupt with the last sentence but does point to the distant future.</p> <p>There is use of a wide-ranging vocabulary with some sophistication and appropriate register. There are no errors in the use of language or communication.</p> <p><b>Total mark awarded = 26 out of 30 (Level 5)</b></p>

### Examiner comment

This response selects a range of fully relevant information with some detailed illustration. It consistently analyses the key words of the question, and evaluates a range of arguments with a convincing conclusion. Perhaps it could have considered environmental recovery, and developed social recovery in more detail and the way recovery also needs to be sympathetic towards community culture and religion. The meaning is clear with a sophisticated, varied vocabulary. It uses language with control and accuracy with barely an error, and constructs a cohesive argument with well-structured paragraphs. Occasionally it can be a little cumbersome or wordy, but it is still an accomplished piece of writing.

### How the candidate could have improved the answer?

The response is mostly a focus on economic recovery with detailed illustration. The word count is marginally higher than the guidance given to the candidate (600–700 words), but the candidate does not need to write more to improve their response. Rather they need a wider variety of examples to address all aspects set out in their introduction. For a higher mark there would need to be wider considerations such as the environment, the extent to which social, religious or cultural aspects could fully recover etc. Also, the focus is on tsunamis, earthquakes and hurricanes with drought barely mentioned: perhaps the range of disasters could have been extended with reference to different situations, such as the Fukushima nuclear power station disaster in Japan for example.

### Common mistakes candidates make in this question

To achieve a mark of 26, candidates would have understood the question and addressed the key words showing analysis and evaluation using a range of examples. The common mistakes which prevent a higher mark are being too long-winded with some statements and not picking up on less obvious issues such as environment. Issues like 'climate change' and 'aid giving control to other countries' are appropriate to the conclusion but should have been recognised as areas which could have been developed in the main body of the essay. Also, more could have been said about social/cultural recovery. However, the response integrates a range of examples into a cohesive argument with consistent evaluation so must achieve just Band 5.



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