



الإطار المرجعي لامتحان الوطني الموحد للسنة الثانية من سلك البكالوريا  
مادة اللغة الإنجليزية  
جميع المسالك

**The English Baccalaureate Exam Specifications  
All Streams**

## INTRODUCTION

The Baccalaureate English exam is a final written achievement test based on the standards set forth for the teaching of English in high school (See Guidelines 2007). The form, the content and the tasks of the exam aim at assessing the testees' knowledge and skills in reading, vocabulary, grammar, functions and writing. The test paper comprises three main sections: Reading Comprehension, Language and Writing.

The different test tasks lend themselves to different scoring methods that are clearly specified for each section. The scoring methods involve (i) the criteria for what constitutes "successful completion", and (ii) whether responses are scored as right or wrong, or with varying degrees of correctness. The Baccalaureate test paper takes the curriculum and official guidelines as a framework of reference. It also takes into account the syllabus distribution, time allocation, coefficient, test sections, rubrics, and weighting for various streams.

## 1. SYLLABUS BREAKDOWN

Streams	Syllabus and Textbooks	Syllabus coverage
<b>Arts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The syllabus specified in the Guidelines (2007)</li> <li>✓ The textbook(s) adopted by the Ministry of Education for the second year Baccalaureate.</li> </ul>	<p>All learners must cover the <b>10 units + four supplementary reading texts which are supplied in the textbook(s)</b>. These reading texts and tasks are related to the themes below :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cultural issues/values.</li> <li>2. The gifts of youth.</li> <li>3. Women and power.</li> <li>4. Sustainable development.</li> </ol>
<b>Humanities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The syllabus specified in the Guidelines (2007)</li> <li>✓ The textbook(s) adopted by the Ministry of Education for the second year Baccalaureate.</li> </ul>	<p>All learners must cover the <b>10 units + two supplementary reading texts which are supplied in the textbook(s)</b>. These reading texts and tasks are related to the themes below :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Women and power.</li> <li>b. Sustainable development.</li> </ol>
<b>All science, technical and original streams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The syllabus specified in the Guidelines(2007)</li> <li>✓ The textbook(s) adopted by the Ministry of Education for the second year Baccalaureate.</li> </ul>	<p>All learners must cover the <b>10 units</b>.</p>

## 2. TIME ALLOCATION AND COEFFICIENT

Streams	Coefficient	Time allocation
Arts	<b>4</b>	<b>3 hours</b>
Humanities	<b>3</b>	<b>3 hours</b>
All science, technical and original streams	<b>2</b>	<b>2 hours</b>

### 3. EXAM SECTIONS AND WEIGHTING.

The test consists of three sections: *Reading Comprehension (37.5%)*, *Language (37.5%)* and *Writing (25%)*. The weighting designed for each section is specified as follows:

Stream	Reading	Language	Writing
Arts	15/40	15/40	10/40
Humanities	15/40	15/40	10/40
All science, technical and original streams	15/40	15/40	10/40

### 4. SECTIONS, TEST TECHNIQUES AND RUBRICS

#### 4.1. THE READING SECTION

##### 4.1.1. READING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Students have to demonstrate their level of attainment in the following reading sub-skills:

- ✓ Identify main idea and details;
- ✓ Identify specific information;
- ✓ Make inferences;
- ✓ Infer word meaning from the context;
- ✓ Identify referents;
- ✓ Identify discourse markers and their functions in the text;
- ✓ Distinguish fact from opinion;
- ✓ Identify the author's attitude;
- ✓ Identify the author's purpose;
- ✓ Transfer information from text to chart, diagram or table;
- ✓ Identify the logical order of ideas in the text;
- ✓ Evaluate ideas expressed in a text ;
- ✓ Draw conclusions from the text.

##### 4.1.2. TEXT TYPES AND TOPICS

Texts designed for testing reading comprehension need to be of appropriate level of difficulty, and should target stimulating issues related to the topics/themes mentioned in the syllabus. They should also relate to students' interests, age, and should tap their prior knowledge and experience.

Reading texts could be in the form of newspaper articles, letters, biographies, film/book reviews, reports and advertisements. They can be narrative, informative, descriptive, or argumentative texts.

#### 4.1.3. TEXT LENGTH

Streams	Number of words
Arts	400 - 550
Humanities	350 - 450
All science, technical and Original streams	300 - 400

#### 4.1.4. TEST TECHNIQUES

The following techniques are designed to test various reading sub-skills. They should be varied so that no particular technique would become predictable.

- ✓ Wh-questions
- ✓ True/False + appropriate justification
- ✓ Sentence completion
- ✓ Multiple choice
- ✓ Summary cloze
- ✓ Gap filling
- ✓ Information transfer
- ✓ Matching
- ✓ Ordering
- ✓ Extracting information

Test techniques should lead to clear and reliable scoring for the sake of equity. **Three to six** of the above techniques must appear in the reading comprehension section to guarantee appropriate coverage of the reading sub-skills.

#### 4.1.5. DISTRIBUTION OF BITS

The reading section should contain **10 to 20 bits**. The bits should sample the reading sub-skills listed above. Over-testing one or two reading sub-skills at the expense of others should be avoided.

#### 4.1.6 RUBRICS

Rubrics are those characteristics of the test that guide the testees and inform them about the procedures for performing test tasks. They also inform testees about how the test will be scored. Rubrics need to be made as explicit and clear as possible. **Three to six** of the rubrics below must appear in the reading comprehension section:

- ✓ **CHOOSE THE BEST TITLE FOR THE PASSAGE.**
- ✓ **TICK (✓) THE QUESTIONS THAT THE PASSAGE ANSWERS.**

- ✓ ARE THESE SENTENCES TRUE OR FALSE? JUSTIFY.
- ✓ ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS.
- ✓ COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES.
- ✓ FILL IN EACH BLANK WITH A WORD OR AN EXPRESSION FROM THE TEXT.
- ✓ FIND IN THE TEXT WORDS OR EXPRESSIONS THAT MEAN THE SAME AS:
- ✓ WHAT DO THE UNDERLINED WORDS IN THE TEXT REFER TO?
- ✓ PICK OUT FROM THE TEXT SENTENCES OR PHRASES WHICH SHOW THAT:
- ✓ MATCH THE MAIN IDEA WITH THE CORRESPONDING PARAGRAPH.
- ✓ PUT THE FOLLOWING IDEAS/ ARGUMENTS/ SENTENCES/ EVENTS ...IN THE CORRECT ORDER ACCORDING TO THE TEXT.
- ✓ WHAT IS THE WRITER'S OPINION/ ATTITUDE/ PURPOSE...?
- ✓ CHOOSE THE RIGHT ANSWER FROM THE LIST GIVEN.
- ✓ FILL IN THE CHART WITH THE RIGHT INFORMATION FROM THE TEXT.
- ✓ MATCH THE WORD(S) OR EXPRESSION(S) WITH THE RIGHT EXPLANATION(S) ACCORDING TO THE TEXT.
- ✓ WHAT LESSON DOES THE WRITER WANT TO TEACH US?

#### 4.1.7 SCORING

Responses may receive **0.5, 1, or 2 points**.

It is important to ensure that suitable test techniques and rubrics are used for testing students' performance and for eliciting reliable scoring. When scoring reading comprehension, students should not be penalized on grammar or spelling mistakes.

## 4.2 THE LANGUAGE SECTION

It comprises three content areas: vocabulary, grammar and functions. It aims at assessing students' ability to use language accurately and appropriately.

### 4.2.1 DISTRIBUTION AND WEIGHTING

VOCABULARY	GRAMMAR	FUNCTIONS
4 points	7 points	4 points

### 4.2.2 VOCABULARY

Vocabulary test items should be related to the topics and themes dealt with in the syllabus. They should particularly focus on the following areas:

- ✓ collocations
- ✓ word associations
- ✓ definitions of key terms
- ✓ synonyms/ antonyms
- ✓ poly-words

- ✓ word formation
- ✓ suffixes, prefixes and their meanings
- ✓ phrasal verbs
- ✓ idiomatic expressions.

#### 4.2.3 GRAMMAR

Grammar test items assess students' ability to recognize and use language accurately and appropriately. The test items should be meaningful and contextualised. They must be related to the following list:

- ✓ tenses;
- ✓ wishes(present and past), if only (past), and conditionals (including type 3);
- ✓ reporting commands, statements, and questions in the present and past;
- ✓ modals: present and past;
- ✓ infinitive vs. gerund;
- ✓ phrasal verbs with particular focus on the meaning of particles ;
- ✓ passive with different tenses;
- ✓ passive with modals;
- ✓ restrictive and non-restrictive clauses;
- ✓ linking words.

Items testing vocabulary and grammar can take the form of mini-dialogues or short prose to provide enough meaningful context.

#### 4.2.4 FUNCTIONS

The functions to be tested at this level are the following:

Rhetorical Functions	Communication Functions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining</li> <li>• Cause and effect</li> <li>• Purpose</li> <li>• Addition</li> <li>• Concession</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making and responding to requests</li> <li>• Responding to good and bad news</li> <li>• Expressing regret</li> <li>• Complaining</li> <li>• Apologising</li> <li>• Asking for and giving advice</li> <li>• Expressing opinion</li> <li>• Agreeing and disagreeing</li> <li>• Expressing certainty and uncertainty</li> <li>• Expressing lack of understanding and asking for clarification</li> </ul>

--	--

#### 4.2.5 LANGUAGE TEST TECHNIQUES

A variety of test techniques should be included in the test paper. The overuse of some of these techniques at the expense of others must be avoided.

- ✓ tense form transformation
- ✓ sentence rewriting
- ✓ sentence completion
- ✓ gap filling
- ✓ matching
- ✓ multiple choice
- ✓ cloze procedure with list or with first letter given
- ✓ defining key terms
- ✓ classifying/categorising
- ✓ error correction
- ✓ responding to situations
- ✓ dialogue completion

#### 4.2.6 RUBRICS

The rubrics below are to be used when testing grammar, vocabulary and functions.

- ✓ **PUT THE VERBS BETWEEN BRACKETS IN THE CORRECT TENSE.**
- ✓ **PUT THE VERBS BETWEEN BRACKETS IN THE CORRECT FORM.**
- ✓ **FILL IN EACH GAP WITH AN APPROPRIATE WORD OR EXPRESSION FROM THE LIST.**
- ✓ **FILL IN EACH GAP WITH AN APPROPRIATE WORD OR EXPRESSION.**
- ✓ **FILL IN EACH GAP WITH AN APPROPRIATE PHRASAL VERB.**
- ✓ **FILL IN EACH GAP WITH AN APPROPRIATE COLLOCATION.**
- ✓ **MATCH THE WORDS THAT GO TOGETHER TO MAKE APPROPRIATE COLLOCATIONS.**
- ✓ **REWRITE THE SENTENCES BEGINNING WITH THE WORDS GIVEN.**
- ✓ **REWRITE THE SENTENCES AS INDICATED.**
- ✓ **MATCH THE WORDS WITH THE CORRESPONDING DEFINITIONS/ SYNONYMS/ ANTONYMS.**
- ✓ **REPLACE EACH UNDERLINED WORD WITH AN APPROPRIATE SYNONYM.**
- ✓ **PROVIDE THE APPROPRIATE WORD(S) FOR THE FOLLOWING DEFINITION(S).**

- ✓ GIVE THE CORRECT FORM OF THE WORDS BETWEEN BRACKETS.
- ✓ JOIN THE PAIRS OF SENTENCES WITH THE LINKING WORDS GIVEN.
- ✓ MATCH EACH EXPRESSION WITH ITS APPROPRIATE FUNCTION.
- ✓ WHAT DOES EACH SENTENCE EXPRESS?
- ✓ CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER.
- ✓ COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE(S) APPROPRIATELY.
- ✓ CORRECT THE UNDERLINED MISTAKE(S)
- ✓ WRITE AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING SITUATION(S).
- ✓ MATCH THE EXCHANGE(S) WITH THE APPROPRIATE FUNCTION(S).
- ✓ PUT THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGES IN THE CORRECT ORDER.

#### 4.2.7 DISTRIBUTION OF BITS

The language section must contain **10 to 20 bits**. The bits must sample the **language components** (grammar, vocabulary and functions) included in the syllabus.

A **minimum of five rubrics** must appear in the language section.

#### 4.2.8 SCORING

Responses may receive **0.5** or **1** point.

### 4.3 THE WRITING SECTION

#### 4.3.1. WRITING SUB-SKILLS

The writing section assesses students' writing skills and provides an indication of how well they communicate in the written language. Testers can determine learners' achievement in writing through appropriate tasks, bearing in mind the sub-skills as stated in the syllabus and guidelines:

- ✓ using adequate and relevant content;
- ✓ using an appropriate text structure according to the targeted format ;
- ✓ selecting an appropriate style according to audience;
- ✓ using cohesive devices and transitions to organize their writing;
- ✓ using mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization) appropriately;
- ✓ applying the appropriate structures and vocabulary to get the message across;
- ✓ using a variety of sentence structures: simple and complex sentences.



The following table shows different format/genres and types of writing to be tested:

Format/Genre of Writing	Types of Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ formal/ informal letters</li> <li>✓ film review</li> <li>✓ articles</li> <li>✓ e-mail</li> <li>✓ report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ narrative</li> <li>✓ descriptive</li> <li>✓ cause and effect</li> <li>✓ describing a process</li> <li>✓ comparison and contrast</li> <li>✓ argumentative</li> </ul>

Topics designed for testing writing should be bias-free and should target stimulating issues related to the themes dealt with in the syllabus. Formulating the topic should include a SITUATION to provide a context and TASKS that clearly specify the format, the audience, the purpose and type of writing. Additional prompts can be provided to help students.

#### 4.3.2 THE WRITING PRODUCTION LENGTH

The writing task must specify the number of words as indicated in the table below:

Arts	Humanities	All science, technical and original streams
Approximately 300 words	Approximately 250 words	Approximately 200 words

#### 4.3.3 SCORING AND CRITERIA

Criteria for scoring must be specified in the marking scale.

The mark is based on the overall use and appropriateness of the language, the range of vocabulary, writing structure, correctness of grammar, mechanics, and appropriateness of content to the tasks. The scoring method is analytical and includes the following elements - **only when the writing is relevant to the topic:**

Scoring criteria	Scores
Relevance of content to the tasks	<b>(3 pts)</b>
Paragraph and composition organisation	<b>(2 pts)</b>
Appropriateness and variety of vocabulary	<b>(2 pts)</b>
Accuracy of grammar	<b>(2 pts)</b>
Mechanics (Spelling, punctuation, capitalization)	<b>(1 pts)</b>

Scorers should reduce the overall mark if the writing is too short to respond to the number of words recommended above (4.3.2).

## 5. GENERAL NOTES

### Reading section:

- Questions must appear in **textual order** within the rubrics.
- The reading **tasks** must aim at testing comprehension and not recognition per se.
- For **lexical inference**, there must be an indication of the relevant paragraph.
- The **key answer** must be provided.

### Language section:

- **Items testing grammar** must include affirmative, negative and interrogative forms.
- The **key answer and marking scale** must be provided.

### Range of difficulty:

The test paper must include easy as well as challenging items to ensure discrimination. Starting an English paper with easier questions will boost up students' motivation and help them perform better.

- **Items** in each section must be receptive and productive.
- **Gap-filling** items tested receptively must have the following number of alternatives:
  - 1 gap: 3 alternatives
  - 2 gaps: 5 alternatives
  - 3 gaps: 6 alternatives

**N.B.** For more details about assessment, see the pedagogical guidelines (2007).