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# International GCSE **ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**

**Revision Guide**



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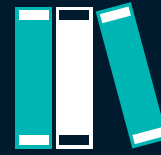
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## Audio

All of the **audio** tracks are on the website at  
[www.oxfordsecondary.com/oxfordaqa-revision](http://www.oxfordsecondary.com/oxfordaqa-revision)





## What do I need to know about the Reading paper?

The examination will not test your knowledge of specific content. However, the extracts and the questions will relate to the themes and topics set out in the specification. In the Reading paper, you will engage with all of the themes and topics. This is also referred to as ‘subject content’, and the three themes are:

**Theme one** – Identity and culture

**Theme two** – Local, national, international and global areas of interest

**Theme three** – Current and future study and employment.

You are expected to understand and identify information, ideas, and opinions about these themes relating to the experiences of other people, including people in countries and communities where English is a main language.

### You need to know:

- the structure of the Reading paper, so that you are fully prepared for the examination and there will be no surprises
- the themes and topics that are in the specification, which will help you predict what to expect in the Reading texts
- the range of question types and how you are expected to write down your answers and responses
- how you will be assessed by the examiners – in other words, where you will gain marks and how best to optimise this to raise your grade.

You will develop your understanding by working through practice questions and reading the relevant features like those listed in the ‘How to use this book’ section on pages v–vi.

### Assessment objectives: Reading

Understand and respond to written language

**R1:** Identify and select relevant detail, key points and ideas.

**R2:** Show understanding of vocabulary, ideas and purpose.

**R3:** Collate, organise and present relevant detail.

**R4:** Draw inferences, make deductions, and recognise implicit meaning.



# Recap



## What are the key skills I will need for success in the Reading paper?

Let's recap the key reading skills in the specification and explore what they mean:

*“Read, understand and respond to a range of written texts varying in type, style, purpose and degree of complexity.”*

What does this mean for you?

- The Reading paper includes different texts and extracts. These will be written for different readers or audiences, and they will be of certain types (the good news is that we will practise all of the main types). They will also start from simpler and shorter texts so you can gain confidence.

*“Develop skills in scanning and skimming texts to identify specific and general points and identify overall message.”*

What does this mean for you?

- **Skimming** means looking through a text quite quickly to find the main idea – what the text is about in general. Sometimes, we call this ‘getting the gist’ of the text. Skimming often reveals the overall message of the text.
- **Scanning** means looking through a text more carefully to find specific details. Scanning allows you to understand the style and tone of the piece at a deeper level. In your Reading paper, the areas you need to scan are indicated by the questions. In this *Revision Guide*, we will show you how to improve your scanning skill.

*“Understand the significance of tense and recognise the relationship between past, present and future.”*

What does this mean for you?

- During your International GCSE course, you will have practised using verb tenses and how to make sure verbs and their subjects agree. Using tenses correctly is particularly important in the Writing paper, but you also need to make sure your answers are in the correct tense in the Reading paper. Is the text about something in the past or the present, or is the text looking to the future?

*“Examine writers’ purpose through close consideration of content and use of language.”*

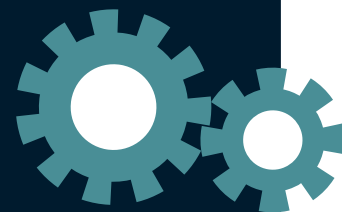
What does this mean for you?

There is a three-way relationship between purpose, content, and language. When we know one of these, we can often predict the other two. It's useful therefore to develop your skills and understanding of how the three work together.

- **Purpose:** As early as you can, try to work out the reason for the piece of writing. What is the writer, or author, trying to achieve? Find the purpose quickly and it will be easier to process the content and identify the language style.



# Apply



## What is the best way for me to apply this knowledge and these skills to practise for the Reading paper?

### Text 1

That's exactly what this *Revision Guide* is here for. Let's start with Text 1, the first extract you will see in the Reading paper.

#### Common text types

Texts that have featured in previous exams include:

- an email to a friend about holiday plans, and going to a music concert with college friends
- an email to a friend about taking part in a competitive tennis match, followed by a pizza treat afterwards
- an email to a college friend about a part-time job, and a plan to meet at the town library re-opening event after it was damaged by a storm
- an email to a friend that gives information about voluntary work for a global charity that builds pipes to provide clean water, and that tries to convince the friend to take part too
- an email to a friend about a visit from family from Canada, and some advice needed to replace a broken laptop with a new one.

#### What do we notice about Text 1?

The content can vary but the text is meant to help you start the exam confidently. Texts that are likely to be used:

- an email in two parts.

#### What are the key assessment elements of Text 1?

Marks available	Number of words	How I will gain marks
6 marks – 6 questions	200–250 words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by identifying and selecting relevant detail, key points and ideas (R1)</li> <li>• by showing understanding of vocabulary, ideas and purpose (R2)</li> </ul>

Now let's look at an example of Text 1 and the types of questions you are likely to be asked.

Read the first part of this email from Tong to Lucy.

Dear Lucy

- 1 I am back in Thailand now, but I had a wonderful time in England when I was with your family for a week. The room your parents gave me was perfect. They were very kind to put me on the second floor of the apartment, which had such a nice view.

My home is in Bangkok and the view from my bedroom is of high-rise buildings. It's

- 2 very different to the view from your guest room, of trees and the park. Our apartment is on the 26th floor, so I can also see the busy roads and the city trains above the roads.

What a contrast!

 **Rephrasing**

Sometimes, you can work out the correct answer by looking for **synonyms** – words with the same or similar meaning. Look for a synonym for 'like' from question 05. How about 'prefer'?


 **Language Support**

It's good to revise your semantic fields – words that are related to each other. For example, words used to describe the weather include: hot, humid, cold, frozen, icy, wet, rainy, stormy, windy, foggy, thunderous. Maybe you can think of some more?

**06** What is the **main** purpose of the email? Write the correct letter in the box.

A	To remember that sport can be an activity which is good for families
B	To complain about Tong's life in Bangkok
C	To suggest ways that Tong can improve his badminton skills

[1 mark]

 **Revision Tip**

You could ask your friends or family if you can read their informal emails (for example, emails to friends and family members). If the emails are about 200 words long, then that is great. Try to establish the purpose of the email, and then look at any specific details. To revise, you could also write your own email to a friend in the same format as Text 1. Then try setting your own multiple-choice questions. Share these with a partner who is also taking the International GCSE ESL examination.