



UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE  
International Examinations

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# SYLLABUS

**Cambridge International AS Level  
General Paper**

**8004**

For examination in June and November 2014

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Why choose Cambridge?

University of Cambridge International Examinations is the world's largest provider of international education programmes and qualifications for 5 to 19 year olds. We are part of the University of Cambridge, trusted for excellence in education. Our qualifications are recognised by the world's universities and employers.

### Recognition

A Cambridge International AS or A Level is recognised around the world by schools, universities and employers. The qualifications are accepted as proof of academic ability for entry to universities worldwide, though some courses do require specific subjects.

Cambridge International A Levels typically take two years to complete and offer a flexible course of study that gives students the freedom to select subjects that are right for them. Cambridge International AS Levels often represent the first half of an A Level course but may also be taken as a freestanding qualification. They are accepted in all UK universities and carry half the weighting of an A Level. University course credit and advanced standing is often available for Cambridge International A/AS Levels in countries such as the USA and Canada.

Learn more at [www.cie.org.uk/recognition](http://www.cie.org.uk/recognition)

### Excellence in education

We understand education. We work with over 9000 schools in over 160 countries who offer our programmes and qualifications. Understanding learners' needs around the world means listening carefully to our community of schools, and we are pleased that 98 % of Cambridge schools say they would recommend us to other schools.

Our mission is to provide excellence in education, and our vision is that Cambridge learners become confident, responsible, innovative and engaged.

Cambridge programmes and qualifications help Cambridge learners to become:

- **confident** in working with information and ideas – their own and those of others
- **responsible** for themselves, responsive to and respectful of others
- **innovative** and equipped for new and future challenges
- **engaged** intellectually and socially, ready to make a difference.

### Support in the classroom

We provide a world-class support service for Cambridge teachers and exams officers. We offer a wide range of teacher materials to Cambridge schools, plus teacher training (online and face-to-face), expert advice and learner-support materials. Exams officers can trust in reliable, efficient administration of exams entry and excellent, personal support from our customer services. Learn more at [www.cie.org.uk/teachers](http://www.cie.org.uk/teachers)

### Not-for-profit, part of the University of Cambridge

We are a part of Cambridge Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge and a not-for-profit organisation.

We invest constantly in research and development to improve our programmes and qualifications

## 1.2 Why choose Cambridge International AS and A Level?

Cambridge International AS and A Levels have a proven reputation for preparing students well for university, employment and life. They help develop the in-depth subject knowledge and understanding which are so important to universities and employers.

You can offer almost any combination of 55 subjects. Students can specialise or study a range of subjects, ensuring breadth. Giving students the power to choose helps motivate them throughout their studies.

Cambridge International AS and A Level gives you building blocks to build an individualised curriculum that develops your learners' knowledge, understanding and skills in:

- in-depth subject content
- independent thinking
- applying knowledge and understanding to new as well as familiar situations
- handling and evaluating different types of information sources
- thinking logically and presenting ordered and coherent arguments
- making judgements, recommendations and decisions
- presenting reasoned explanations, understanding implications and communicating them clearly and logically
- working and communicating in English.

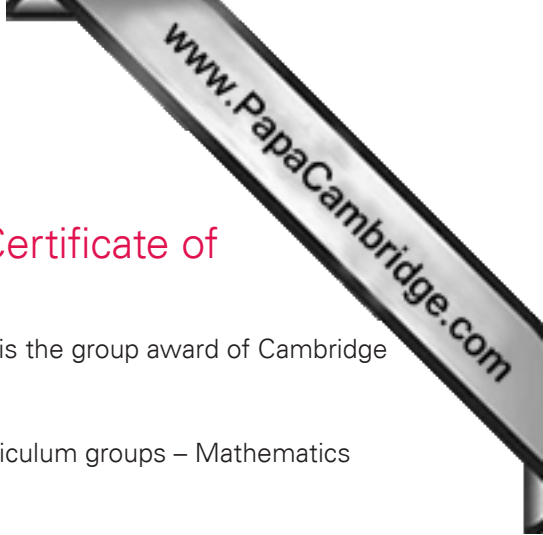
The syllabuses are international in outlook, but retain a local relevance. They have been created specifically for an international student body with content to suit a wide variety of schools and avoid cultural bias.

## 1.3 Why choose Cambridge International AS Level General Paper?

Cambridge International AS Level General Paper is accepted by universities and employers as proof of understanding and ability to communicate in English. The Cambridge International AS Level General Paper syllabus is multi-disciplinary, with subject matter drawn from across the curriculum. In broad terms, the syllabus encourages students to:

- Be more aware of the breadth and complexity of the contemporary world.
- Develop thinking and reasoning skills, and maturity of thought.
- Achieve an understanding of (and ability in) the English language which enables them to express arguments, ideas and opinions in a reflective and academic manner.

Although an awareness of the wider implications of particular issues will improve the quality of students' learning, the Cambridge International AS Level General Paper is not a test of general knowledge.



## 1.4 Cambridge AICE (Advanced International Certificate of Education) Diploma

Cambridge AICE (Advanced International Certificate of Education) Diploma is the group award of Cambridge International AS and A Level.

Cambridge AICE Diploma involves the selection of subjects from three curriculum groups – Mathematics and Science; Languages; Arts and Humanities.

An A Level counts as a double-credit qualification and a Cambridge International AS Level as a single-credit qualification within the Cambridge AICE Diploma award framework.

To be considered for an AICE Diploma, a candidate must earn the equivalent of six credits by passing a combination of examinations at either double credit or single credit, with at least one course coming from each of the three curriculum areas.

The AICE Diploma is comprised of examinations administered in May/June and October/November series each year.

General Paper (8004) falls into Group 3, Arts and Humanities.

Learn more about the AICE Diploma at <http://www.cie.org.uk/qualifications/academic/uppersec/aice>

## 1.5 How can I find out more?

### If you are already a Cambridge school

You can make entries for this qualification through your usual channels. If you have any questions, please contact us at [international@cie.org.uk](mailto:international@cie.org.uk)

### If you are not yet a Cambridge school

Learn about the benefits of becoming a Cambridge school at [www.cie.org.uk/startcambridge](http://www.cie.org.uk/startcambridge). Email us at [international@cie.org.uk](mailto:international@cie.org.uk) to find out how your organisation can become a Cambridge school.

## 2. Assessment at a glance

### Written examination

**2 hours**

The exam paper is divided into three sections, each section comprising four questions. See section 4.1 for possible topic areas.

Candidates must choose **two** questions, **each** from a **different** section.

Each essay should be about 500 to 600 words in length.

Per question, up to 30 marks are awarded for content and up to 20 marks for English.

Each question is weighted at 50% of the final mark.

Candidates are tested on their understanding and use of English, and the extent to which they are able to think maturely as appropriate for this level. They are not primarily tested on their general knowledge.

The examination time takes into account the need for candidates to study the questions and think before starting to write.

### Availability

This syllabus is examined in the May/June examination series and the October/November examination series.

This syllabus is available to private candidates.

This syllabus is not available to Centres in Mauritius.

Centres in the UK that receive government funding are advised to consult the Cambridge website **www.cie.org.uk** for the latest information before beginning to teach this syllabus.

### Combining this with other syllabuses

Candidates can combine this syllabus in an examination series with any other Cambridge syllabus, except:

- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

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## 3. Syllabus aims and objectives

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### 3.1 Aims

The aims of the Cambridge International AS Level General Paper are to:

- Promote the skills of rational thought, persuasion, analysis, interpretation and evaluation.
- Promote maturity of thought and clarity of expression.
- Encourage the broad exploration and appraisal of social, cultural, economic, environmental, political, philosophical, scientific and technological issues.
- Promote understanding and appreciation of individual, societal and cultural diversity.
- Encourage independent, critical reading.

### 3.2 Assessment objectives

In the Cambridge International AS Level General Paper syllabus, assessment objectives relate to the skills of:

- evaluation
- understanding
- analysis
- application
- communication
- knowledge.

In the assessment, candidates should therefore be able to demonstrate:

- The ability to identify, select and interpret, through reasoned consideration, material (including knowledge) appropriate to a specific task.
- The ability to apply knowledge, understanding and analysis in relation to a specific task (e.g. in drawing inferences, providing explanations, constructing and developing arguments, understanding the implications of a suggested course of action or conclusion, etc.).
- The ability to exercise evaluation and discrimination in assessing evidence, ideas and opinions in order to formulate a supported conclusion.
- The ability to communicate information, ideas and opinions in a clear, concise, logical and appropriate manner.
- Knowledge and understanding in relation to the topic areas identified in the syllabus.
- Knowledge of methods and techniques appropriate to a specific task.



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## 4. Description of components

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### 4.1 Topic areas and question focus

Topic areas are cross-curricular and comprehensive, and some may appear in more than one section. Teachers do not need to cover all the topic areas when teaching the course, as candidates should be able to draw upon knowledge and understanding gained when studying other subjects. The areas for consideration listed here are **suggestions only**. They are intended to help teachers devise and plan their own broad course.

#### Section 1: Historical, social, economic, political and philosophical topics

Possible areas for consideration might include:

- The role of history and war; terrorism.
- The role of the individual in society – the family, marriage, peer pressure, class.
- Cultural changes – youth and drug culture.
- Education and welfare.
- Sport, leisure, international competition.
- Wealth; changes in work practice.
- The importance and impact of tourism on a country – implications for the economy, employment, public transport, environmental concerns.
- The provision and politics of aid.
- The State and its institutions; development of State, democracy, post-imperialism, nationalism.
- Minority groups, pressure groups.
- Freedom of speech, action, thought.
- Judiciary.
- Matters of conscience, faith, tolerance, equality, opportunity.
- Corruption.

#### Section 2: Science, including its history, philosophy, general principles and applications; environmental issues; mathematical topics

Possible areas for consideration might include:

- Medical dilemmas and issues of research and ethics; concept of progress in science.
- Drug manufacture and provision.
- Diet, health education.
- Old and new industries.
- Spin-offs from space industry; weaponry.
- Information and communications technology; the Internet.
- Environmental concerns; renewable energy resources; climate change.
- Migration; population dynamics.
- Feeding the global population; farming techniques for the twenty-first century.
- Public transport and travel.
- The uses and applications of mathematics in everyday life.

### Section 3: Literature and language, arts and crafts

Possible areas for consideration might include:

- Literature, biography, diary, science fiction.
- Language – heritage, tradition, dialect.
- The global media – tv, radio, satellite; influence and controls; effects on lifestyle, culture and habits; cultural dilution and diversification; advertising; role models.
- Censorship; privacy; the right to know; freedom of the press, etc. uses and abuses.
- Traditional arts and crafts; creativity; national heritage/preservation; effects of tourism.
- Architecture; painting; fashion; photography; sculpture; music; heritage.

Questions are general in nature, demanding discussion and evaluation. In awarding marks, examiners will assess how well candidates have:

- Used their specialised knowledge to answer questions on the broad aspects of school subjects.
- Discussed general topics which are not directly related to school subjects.
- Used the English language.

**NB** Questions are not set on every topic in any single examination.

## 4.2 Level descriptors for essay marking

### Use of English

- Level 1** Highly fluent.  
Very effective use of expressions/idioms.  
Excellent use of vocabulary.  
Near faultless grammar.  
Excellent sentence structure and organisation of paragraphs.  
Very few slips/errors.  
Excellent spelling/punctuation.
- Level 2** Fluent.  
Effective use of expressions/idioms.  
Good use of vocabulary.  
Sound grammar.  
Good sentence structure/well-organised paragraphs.  
Few slips/errors.  
Good spelling/punctuation.
- Level 3** Reasonably fluent/not difficult to follow.  
Generally appropriate use of expressions/idioms.  
Fair range and apt use of basic vocabulary.  
Acceptable grammar.  
Simple but adequate sentence structure/paragraphing.  
Some slips/errors, but acceptable standard overall.  
Reasonable spelling/punctuation.
- Level 4** Hesitant fluency/not easy to follow at times.  
Some inappropriate expressions/idioms.  
Limited range of vocabulary.  
Faulty grammar.  
Some flawed sentence structure/paragraphing.  
Regular and frequent slips/errors.  
Regular spelling/punctuation errors.
- Level 5** Little/(no) fluency/difficult (almost impossible) to follow.  
(Very) poor use of expressions/idioms.  
(Very) poor range of vocabulary.  
(Very) poor grammar.  
(Very) poor sentence structure/paragraphing.  
Almost every line contains (many) slips/errors.  
(Very) poor spelling/punctuation.



## Content

- Level 1** Excellent focus: totally relevant and comprehensive coverage, perceptive, strongly analytical.  
Coherent and engaging discussion displaying sensitivity, sophistication, awareness and maturity.  
Thoughtful, enlightening illustration using local, national and international examples to support key points.  
Very well structured.
- Level 2** Totally (near totally) relevant and good coverage, but less analytical and perceptive than Level 1.  
Arguments well developed and discussion logical, but always sustained.  
(Very) good range of examples/illustration to support key points.  
Effectively structured.
- Level 3  
UPPER** Largely focused on the question and relevant; reasonable coverage; fairly analytical.  
Major points adequately developed.  
Reasonable range of examples/illustration to support key points.  
Reasonably structured.
- Level 3  
LOWER** Less focus; less analysis and its quality more patchy.  
Points mentioned rather than adequately developed.  
Some digression, but generally sticks to the question.  
Does not always support major points with apt illustration.  
Tendency to assert/generalise rather than argue/discuss in detail.  
May lack focus.
- Level 4** Limited focus and relevance (may be implicit/ tangential); little analysis.  
Limited argument that may be unsubstantiated; restricted material/scope; ideas vague and undeveloped.  
Limited examples/illustration to support anything.  
An attempt at a structure.
- Level 5** Little if any relevance; no analysis.  
(Very) vague; (totally) inadequate content with little/no substance.  
Very little/(no) appropriate examples/illustration.  
Very little/(no) structure.

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## 5. Additional information

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### 5.1 Guided learning hours

Cambridge International AS Level syllabuses are designed on the assumption that candidates have about 180 guided learning hours per subject over the duration of the course. ('Guided learning hours' include direct teaching and any other supervised or directed study time. They do not include private study by the candidate.)

However, these figures are for guidance only, and the number of hours required may vary according to local curricular practice and the candidates' prior experience of the subject.

### 5.2 Recommended prior learning

We recommend that candidates who are beginning this course should have previously completed a Cambridge O Level or Cambridge IGCSE course in a broad range of subjects, or the equivalent.

### 5.3 Progression

Cambridge International AS Level General Paper will help to provide a suitable foundation for study in higher education. Depending on local university entrance requirements, it may permit or assist progression directly to university courses in many subjects, especially in the arts/humanities and the social sciences. It is also suitable for candidates intending to pursue careers or planning further study or as part of a course of general education.

### 5.4 Component codes

Because of local variations, in some cases component codes will be different in instructions about making entries for examinations and timetables from those printed in this syllabus, but the component names will be unchanged to make identification straightforward.

### 5.5 Grading and reporting

Cambridge International AS Level results are shown by one of the grades a, b, c, d or e indicating the standard achieved, Grade a being the highest and Grade e the lowest. 'Ungraded' indicates that the candidate has failed to reach the standard required for a pass at Cambridge International AS Level. 'Ungraded' will be reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

For languages other than English, Cambridge will also report separate speaking endorsement grades (Distinction, Merit and Pass) for candidates who satisfy the conditions stated in the syllabus.

The content and difficulty of a Cambridge International AS Level examination is equivalent to the first half of a corresponding Cambridge International A Level.

Percentage uniform marks are also provided on each candidate's statement of results to supplement the grade for a syllabus. They are determined in this way:

- A candidate who obtains...
  - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade a obtains a percentage uniform mark of 80%.
  - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade b obtains a percentage uniform mark of 70%.
  - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade c obtains a percentage uniform mark of 60%.
  - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade d obtains a percentage uniform mark of 50%.
  - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade e obtains a percentage uniform mark of 40%.
  - ... no marks receives a percentage uniform mark of 0%.

Candidates whose mark is none of the above receive a percentage mark in between those stated according to the position of their mark in relation to the grade 'thresholds' (i.e. the minimum mark for obtaining a grade). For example, a candidate whose mark is halfway between the minimum for a Grade c and the minimum for a Grade d (and whose grade is therefore d) receives a percentage uniform mark of 55%.

The percentage uniform mark is stated at syllabus level only. It is not the same as the 'raw' mark obtained by the candidate, since it depends on the position of the grade thresholds (which may vary from one series to another and from one subject to another) and it has been turned into a percentage.

## 5.6 Access

Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled candidates in order to enable them to access the assessments and to demonstrate what they know and what they can do. For this reason, very few candidates will have a complete barrier to the assessment. Information on reasonable adjustments is found in the *Cambridge Handbook* which can be downloaded from the website **www.cie.org.uk**

Candidates who are unable to access part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may still be able to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have taken.

## 5.7 Resources

Copies of syllabuses, the most recent question papers and Principal Examiners' reports for teachers are on the Syllabus and Support Materials CD-ROM, which we send to all Cambridge International Schools. They are also on our public website – go to **www.cie.org.uk/alevel**. Click the Subjects tab and choose your subject. For resources, click 'Resource List'.

You can use the 'Filter by' list to show all resources or only resources categorised as 'Endorsed by Cambridge'. Endorsed resources are written to align closely with the syllabus they support. They have been through a detailed quality-assurance process. As new resources are published, we review them against the syllabus and publish their details on the relevant resource list section of the website.

Additional syllabus-specific support is available from our secure Teacher Support website **http://teachers.cie.org.uk** which is available to teachers at registered Cambridge schools. It provides past question papers and examiner reports on previous examinations, as well as any extra resources such as schemes of work or examples of candidate responses. You can also find a range of subject communities on the Teacher Support website, where Cambridge teachers can share their own materials and join discussion groups.

