



Cambridge IGCSE / IGCSE (9–1) First Language English 0500 / 0990 (for examination from 2020)

Writing a summary

Overview

Paper 1, Question 1(f) is a selective summary task in response to Text B

The purpose of a selective summary task is to inform the reader of the key information and ideas they need to understand from the text in relation to the specific focus of the question as set. Writing an effective selective summary involves gathering **only those ideas from the text that are relevant** to answer the question and then organising, reworking and condensing those points to offer a succinct overview. The reader needs to understand key ideas from the text quickly and efficiently, just by reading the answer.

Selective summary task – Paper 1, Question 1(f)

This task assesses skills in **both Reading and Writing** as follows:

Reading:

- **explicit meaning** – show understanding of the information as it is presented in the text and avoid adding personal comments or extending explanations
- **implicit meanings and attitudes** – consider details and hints in the text to work out the meaning they suggest
- **range** – aim to show understanding of a wide range of relevant ideas taken from the whole passage
- **relevance** – pay attention to the focus of the question and make sure that the points written are relevant to that focus
- **selection** – select only the information needed to answer the question and avoid using excess examples or repeating points
- **use** – use the information selected to help the reader understand the central ideas rather than simply repeating or copying sections from the text.

Writing:

- **organisation** – organise the answer logically and helpfully for the reader so that it efficiently communicates the ideas they need to understand
- **appropriate use of a range of own words and structures** – help the reader to understand the points selected by reworking the language of the original text to communicate ideas clearly and concisely.

Tips for writing a selective summary

Before writing a response:

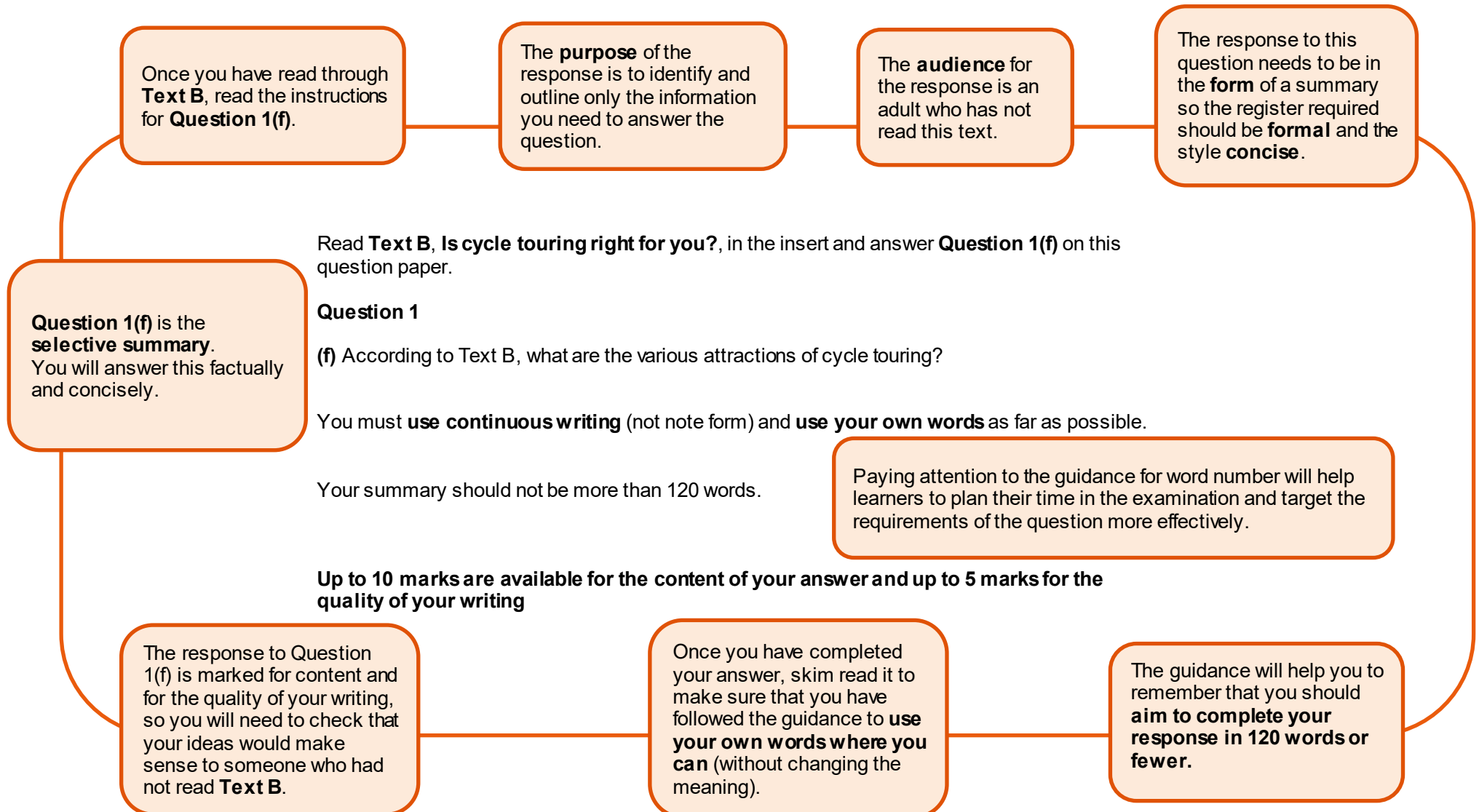
- read the question carefully to highlight the **focus** of the selective summary – for example, the question may ask for only **disadvantages** of a topic being discussed in the text
- revisit the text to underline and/or make notes of all the potentially relevant ideas
- review the ideas selected to check that they are relevant, complete and distinct. For example, aim to identify any repeated points or examples of the same thing that could be covered in one over-arching, 'umbrella' point
- organise content to decide on the best way to group and/or order relevant ideas. Numbering the points will help to highlight the most efficient route through the answer and cover all of the relevant ideas within the 120-word guidance.

After writing a response:

- read back through the answer to check that the ideas would be clear to anyone who had not read the text
- check that sections have not been copied from the text
- look back at the plan to check all relevant ideas have been included.

Example task

This is an example of a **Paper 1 Question 1(f)** task. The question below is annotated with some guidance for candidates to help them prepare their answer and encourage them to focus on what the question is asking for. This information is not given to candidates in the examination.



June 2021 Question Paper 11: insert and mark scheme available at www.cambridgeinternational/support

Example Candidate Response – high	Examiner comments
<p>Question 1(f) <i>Want to know more about the attractions of cycle touring? If so, read on.</i></p> <p>1 <i>Firstly, cycle touring is a peaceful and calm way to clear your mind. You get the chance to go to an adventure and explore the world. It offers you magical experiences such as enjoying your time in cosy campsites of forests and resting on tranquil beaches.</i></p> <p>2 <i>In addition, it's a great way to meet people and have conversations with friendly locals or cyclist that assist you during the journey.</i></p> <p>3 <i>Similarly, it's a great way to boost your self-esteem as you get to understand that you can achieve unthinkable goals. Also, it offers memorable experiences like eating meals in 4 strange places and passing through small villages, and you can enjoy the wildlife and flowers. 5</i></p> <p><i>Whatever its highs and lows, you'll find the advantages of cycle touring far outweigh the disadvantages.</i></p>	<p>1 The candidate has focused their response on the attractions of cycle touring, reorganising ideas to begin with a useful overview of key attractions drawn from different parts of the text (mark scheme points 8, 3, 4 and 5). Note how some of the points related to those opportunities to escape that cycle touring offers have been combined for concision.</p> <p>2 Focus has now moved on to the people who cyclists might meet on a tour. In this section, the candidate is helping the reader understand how the social aspects of cycle touring might appeal. (Mark scheme points 6 and 11 have been skilfully combined here and linked logically to point 7).</p> <p>3 The candidate is beginning to use connecting words to move the reader helpfully through the relevant information.</p> <p>4 The candidate groups 'memorable experiences' together here, covering mark scheme points 13 and 10 and hinting at point 12, although it is not clear to the reader the particular attraction of the food itself.</p> <p>5 The candidate does not take the opportunity to identify precisely how 'enjoying wildlife and flowers' would be a particular attraction of cycle touring according to the text.</p> <p>Reading Level 5: Demonstrates understanding of a fairly wide range of relevant ideas. Points are skilfully selected to demonstrate an overview.</p> <p>Writing Level 3: Expression is clear, fluent and mostly concise. Some efficient organisation.</p>

How the candidate could have improved their answer

Question 1(f)

The candidate has interpreted the purpose of the task as more persuasive than the task itself requires or invites and as a result includes a redundant introduction and conclusion. Whilst the word guidance has been kept in mind and excess material avoided, the addition of an introductory comment has taken up space in the response that might otherwise have been used to outline or clarify potentially relevant points. The addition of a conclusion mirroring that of the original text also leads to a slight loss of focus. The response is however clear and mostly in the candidate's own words where appropriate, with some useful organisation of ideas.

Common mistakes

Question 1(f)

Candidates can sometimes lose sight of the focus for a question, for example, by offering both what would and would not appeal about cycle touring, when only the attractions have been asked for.

Inefficient planning of an answer leads to some candidates attempting to simply track through the passage chronologically, repeating most of the information offered rather than selecting, recasting and using in their response just that which is relevant to answering the question. Answers approached in this way are often overlong or stop abruptly at 120 words before a range of relevant ideas have been communicated.

Copying sections straight from the text can make a response unclear. For example, there are likely to be times when an explanation taken straight from the text is neither concise nor complete. Recasting the material using their own words and sentence structures as appropriate will help candidates to offer a clear and concise response, showing a secure understanding of both text and task.

Candidates can sometimes lose sight of the text, forgetting that the task is testing their Reading skills, for example, offering their own opinion outside of the text, adding additional detail from their own knowledge and/or drifting into discussion of ideas unconnected to the material in the passage.

Examination preparation

Question 1(f) Selective summary

Candidates should practise selecting only relevant information from a text, as well as explaining it to others who have not read that text. Opportunities to target and develop skills include working with a range of texts – spoken or visual, as well as written – and working with peers to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of example responses – both written and oral.

Candidates should be encouraged to rehearse and extend their summary skills in real life situations, for example by recapping points covered on an aspect of a topic in a previous lesson.

The role of efficient planning and editing in timed conditions should be explored and explained.

Example activities taken from 0500 / 0990 scheme of work (for examination from 2024): Writing summaries.

Assessment objectives (AO)	Learning objectives	Suggested teaching activities
<p>AO1 Reading</p> <p>R1 demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings</p> <p>R2 demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and attitudes</p> <p>R5 select and use information for specific purposes</p> <p>AO2 Writing</p> <p>W2 organise and structure ideas and opinions for deliberate effect</p> <p>AO3 Speaking and Listening</p> <p>SL2 present facts, ideas and opinions in a cohesive order which sustains the audience's interest</p>	<p>Developing logically sequenced summary responses</p>	<p>Learners identify relevant material in a text for a specific question. They extract the material as a list of points (paraphrased). Then they agree on a grouping and order for the points and write a paragraph.</p> <p>Learners change a narrative version of a journey to a summary of its dangers, re-ordering the material to group similar items.</p> <p>Learners are given a paragraph with a jumbled sentence sequence and have to reorder it logically or chronologically.</p> <p>Learners practise reordering jumbled reports so that the logical, chronological order is restored.</p> <p>Useful resources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • jumbled sentences in paragraphs • jumbled reports, e.g. for science experiments, made by cut and pasting in Word docs • narrative account of a dangerous journey from a course book, media or online source • Paper 1 texts and Paper 2 texts.

Useful resources

The **School Support Hub** at www.cambridgeinternational.com/support provides teachers with a wide range of practical resources, detailed guidance and innovative training and professional development so that you can give your learners the best possible preparation for Cambridge IGCSE.

Teaching resources (for examination from 2020)

- Scheme of Work
- Coursework Handbook
- Speaking and Listening Handbook
- Learner Guide
- Writing a Summary
- Specimen Paper Answers
- Example Candidate Responses

The up-to-date resource list for this syllabus, including endorsed resources to support Cambridge IGCSE First Language English is on the Published resources tab of the syllabus page on our public website [here](#).

Please note: The website links listed below are useful resources to help with the study of the Cambridge IGCSE First Language English selective summary task questions.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is not responsible for the accuracy or content of information contained in these sites. The inclusion of a link to an external website should not be understood to be an endorsement of that website or the site's owners (or their products/services).

The website pages referenced in this guide were selected when this document was produced. Other aspects of the sites were not checked and only the particular resources are recommended.

<http://websummarizer.blogspot.com/2013/01/summaries-in-everyday-life.html>

A website giving examples of summaries in everyday life.

www.grammarly.com/blog/how-to-write-a-summary

A website with guidance on how to write a summary, including examples and a step-by-step guide.

www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/gist-summarizing-strategy

A website with lesson plans and summarising strategies.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEwmts9MqGs

A video on summary writing skills, including a step-by-step guide.

Changes to this syllabus for 2024

The syllabus has been updated. The latest version of this syllabus is version 1, published September 2021.

You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.

Changes to assessment including changes to specimen papers)

Paper 1 Reading

The assessment of *W5: Make accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar* has been removed from Paper 1 Reading.

The W5 assessment objective has been removed from the following questions and marking criteria:

Question 1f

Question 3

W5 will continue to be assessed in extended response in the Writing Paper.

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