



Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board



CAMBRIDGE  
International Education

**Singapore–Cambridge General Certificate of Education  
Advanced Level Higher 2 (2027)**

# **English Language and Linguistics (Syllabus 9508)**

**First year of examination in 2027**

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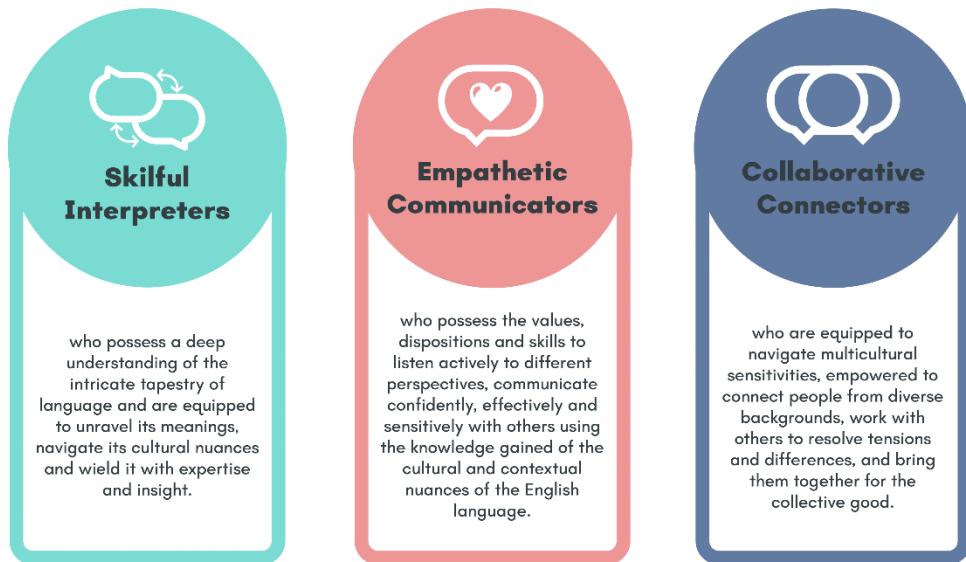
# INTRODUCTION

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## Curriculum

First implemented in 2009, the Higher 2 (H2) English Language and Linguistics (ELL) course aims to develop students' understanding, use and appreciation of the English language. It is informed by the discipline of linguistics and involves the investigation of the nature of the English language and some contemporary language issues. Students will analyse the English language, understand the contexts in which it operates and think about the issues that surround its usage. Through the study of ELL, students will develop their competence as users of the English language.

ELL's unique proposition lies in equipping students with a deep understanding of the intricate tapestry of language, developed through the rigorous study of linguistic concepts, tools and a range of contemporary language issues. These are the desired learner outcomes for all ELL students:



## *Assessment as Opportunities to demonstrate the emerging 21st Century Competencies:*

### ***Critical and Adaptive Thinking, Communication Skills and Global and Cross-Cultural Literacy***

In the H2 ELL examination, candidates have opportunities to demonstrate critical and adaptive thinking, communication skills as well as global and cross-cultural literacy. They construct and analyse meanings in different modes of communication, analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual and cultural factors in the production and reception of the English language, taking into account drivers of language change. They adapt ideas and write for specific purposes, audiences, contexts, and cultures, making linguistic choices and explaining their choices in the process. As candidates discuss language issues and show an understanding of how language is constantly interacting with and shaping society, they examine a range of social, cultural, and historical circumstances surrounding the development and use of English in various parts of the world.

## AIMS

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The ELL course aims to encourage students to deepen their interest in, appreciation for and enjoyment of the use of English, as they:

- 1 develop and apply their understanding of the concepts and methods appropriate for the analysis and study of the English language
- 2 develop an understanding of language issues and debates and respond critically to these issues
- 3 develop their skills as interpreters and producers of meaning.

## ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

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Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

**AO1:** demonstrate understanding of linguistic concepts, methods and approaches, and apply this understanding to the construction and analysis of meanings in different modes of communication (spoken, written and multimodal)

**AO2:** analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual and cultural factors in the production and reception of the English language, taking into account relevant drivers of language change

**AO3:** demonstrate expertise in the use of English, including command of appropriate terminology informed by linguistic study.

## SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

The assessment comprises two written essay components: Paper 1 and Paper 2.

H2 English Language and Linguistics	Section	Assessment Objective (AO) (%)			Overall Marks (Weighting)	Duration
		AO1	AO2	AO3		
Paper 1 Analysing Language Use	<u>Section A: Analysis</u>  There will be <b>one</b> compulsory question which carries 25 marks.	15	5	5	25 marks (25%)	3 hours
	<u>Section B: Writing an Adaptation and Commentary</u>  There will be <b>one</b> compulsory question which carries 25 marks.	10	5	10	25 marks (25%)	
Paper 2 Investigating Language Use in Society	Candidates are required to <b>answer a total of three questions</b> , of which <b>one</b> must be from Section A, <b>one</b> from Section B, and <b>one</b> from either Section A or B.  <u>Section A: Language Variation and Change</u>  There will be two questions. Candidates must answer at least one question from this section. Each question carries 25 marks.	20	25	5	75 marks (50%)	3 hours
	<u>Section B: Language, Culture and Identity</u>  There will be two questions. Candidates must answer at least one question from this section. Each question carries 25 marks.					
Overall, Paper 1 and Paper 2 will comprise AO1 (45%) + AO2 (35%) + AO3 (20%).						

## DESCRIPTION OF COMPONENTS

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### PAPER 1 (Analysing Language Use)

The paper is divided into Section A and Section B.

Questions are text/data based, with the material printed in the question paper.

The material will feature different text types. Written/spoken and multimodal material will be represented in the paper, but is not assigned to a particular section. (**Note:** Candidates are not required to analyse or evaluate non-linguistic features in multimodal texts.)

Material will be drawn from areas such as the following: transcriptions of everyday conversations, speeches and radio interviews; song lyrics; podcasts; tabloid and broadsheet journalism; advertisements; magazines; leaflets; blogs; diaries; letters; emails; text messages; biographies and other nonfiction books; writing for children; press releases and publicity materials; reviews; films; cartoons; computer games; websites.

Texts may incorporate nonstandard usage (idiolect, dialect and sociolect).

Transcriptions of speech may include young and adult speech, occupational speech, and speech from different social groups. Scripted speech (i.e. dialogue from drama or similar literary-type texts) will not be used.

#### Section A: Analysis

One compulsory task based on two linked texts, one spoken and one written, printed on the question paper.

The task will require systematic analysis of the various linguistic constituents of both texts, and consideration of relevant contextual factors.

Relevant approaches include lexical and grammatical (word, sentence and whole text levels) and syntactic (the way syntax collocates, and binds sentences together to produce stylistic elements). A systematic application of grammatical terminology will be expected. This should include the understanding of lexical and grammatical word classes: types of nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verb classes to include modals, pronoun classes, conjunctions, determiners and basic morphemes.

Candidates will need to be familiar with transcription conventions, basic phonetic notations and the understanding that spoken discourse has entirely different patterns of grammatical cohesion to written language.

#### Section B: Writing an Adaptation and Commentary

One compulsory task, based on material printed on the question paper. (The material will be different to that used in Section A.)

The task will be structured in two parts, requiring candidates to:

(a) adapt given material for another written medium using apposite and coherent written expression  
An audience, purpose, context and format for the adaptation will be specified.

The text to be produced will be: an information brochure/webpage, an article or a review for a magazine/newsletter/website, or a publicity text (in the form of an email/blog post).

Appropriateness in both register and levels of formality will be expected. A suggested word-length range will be indicated.

Issues to do with layout/graphical/typographical/graphological features will not be assessed (except when language issues relevant to these features are included).

(b) write an evaluation of their adaptation, discussing and exploring the range of linguistic constituents upon which they have drawn (e.g. grammar, lexis, morphology, phonology, syntax where appropriate).

**PAPER 2 (Investigating Language Use in Society)**

The paper is divided into Section A and Section B. Candidates are required to answer a total of three questions, of which one must be from Section A, one from Section B, and one from either Section A or B.

In both sections, candidates should be able to offer detailed appraisal of stylistic features in the English language and to show evidence of appreciation of wider geographical/historical/social perspectives (as appropriate) in their answers. Answers will need to balance the use of a wide range of linguistic terminology with a concise appraisal of the importance of context and mode of production where relevant.

**Section A: Language Variation and Change**

There will be two tasks in this section, of which candidates must attempt at least one.

Each task will be linked to material printed on the question paper. (The material may contain graphical/statistical/tabulated data, as well as conventional prose.) Each task will require a response to an essay question in the area of English language variation and change.

Candidates will be required to include examples and/or ideas from the material and to make reference to features of lexis, grammar, syntax, and discourse as appropriate.

Relevant areas of concern in this section are:

- reasons for language variation and language change
- notable examples of language change
- terms and concepts related to language variation
- variation in the English language
- attitudes to different varieties of the English language
- Standard Singapore English and Colloquial Singapore English<sup>1</sup>
- English as a global language
- impact of new communications technology on the use of the English language.

**Section B: Language, Culture and Identity**

There will be two tasks in this section, of which candidates must attempt at least one.

Each task will be linked to material printed on the question paper. (The material may contain graphical/statistical/tabulated data, as well as conventional prose.) Each task will require a response to an essay question in the area of English language, culture and identity.

Candidates will be required to include examples and/or ideas from the material and to make reference to features of lexis, grammar, syntax, and discourse as appropriate.

Relevant areas of concern in this section are:

- how culture and language influence one another
- the use of language to convey, influence and construct how we understand and respond to society and culture, i.e.:
  - how language is used to reflect or transmit particular characteristics of individuals, groups and institutions:
    - aspects of identity<sup>2</sup> – age, ethnicity, gender, social class, and where relevant, occupation and role in society
    - whether the English language possesses or has acquired any features that convey expectations, stereotypes, bias or other pre-conceived notions such as supposedly gender-neutral job titles and politically correct expressions.
  - how and why language is used to shape perspectives and behaviour via:
    - representing people, institutions, events and issues
    - creating, reinforcing and/or challenging values and attitudes
    - including and excluding others.

<sup>1</sup> Also referred to as Singlish.

<sup>2</sup> Candidates will no longer be required to analyse texts on national identity.

## BAND DESCRIPTORS

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### PAPER 1

<b>1</b> <b>21–25 marks</b>	<p>Answers that are <b>developed</b> and which should (<u>where appropriate</u>)</p> <p><b>AO1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate thoroughly informed understanding of a wide repertoire of linguistic concepts</li> <li>• analyse in depth, where relevant, the lexical, grammatical, syntactical and discoursal features of a wide range of texts in different modes and/or from different times</li> <li>• demonstrate a command of linguistic study in distinguishing the genuinely significant from the incidental, and in selecting and exploring detailed examples</li> </ul> <p><b>AO2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyse complex language variations according to time and place, including issues which reflect both prescriptive and descriptive approaches to language use</li> <li>• explore complex levels of formality and register in texts, showing how stylistic variations construct specific audiences</li> <li>• make assured judgements about contextual and cultural factors relevant to the production and reception of texts</li> </ul> <p><b>AO3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write with control and a sure sense of appropriateness in both creative and evaluative tasks</li> <li>• communicate a critically-aware understanding of concepts and approaches from linguistic study through a command of terminology appropriate to the tasks and texts</li> <li>• demonstrate some originality in structuring and organising coherent written argument and analysis</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> <b>16–20 marks</b>	<p>Answers that are <b>proficient</b> and which should (<u>where appropriate</u>)</p> <p><b>AO1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate detailed understanding of a range of linguistic concepts</li> <li>• analyse in some detail, where relevant, the lexical, grammatical, syntactical and discoursal features of a range of texts in different modes and/or from different times</li> <li>• demonstrate some proficiency of linguistic knowledge in selecting and exploring detailed examples</li> </ul> <p><b>AO2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyse language variations according to time and place, showing an awareness of prescriptive and descriptive approaches to language use</li> <li>• explore levels of formality and register in texts, showing awareness of the (sometimes complex) relationship between style and audience</li> <li>• make informed judgements about some of the contextual and cultural factors relevant to the production and reception of texts</li> </ul> <p><b>AO3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write with accuracy and some proficiency of linguistic discrimination in both creative and evaluative tasks</li> <li>• communicate an accurate understanding of concepts and approaches from linguistic study through proficient use of terminology appropriate to the tasks and texts</li> <li>• structure and organise coherently-written argument and analysis</li> </ul>

<p><b>3</b> <b>12–15</b> <b>marks</b></p>	<p>Answers that are <b>competent</b> and which should (<u>where appropriate</u>)</p> <p><b>AO1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show a clear understanding of some relevant linguistic concepts</li> <li>• identify and begin to analyse relevant lexical, grammatical, syntactical, phonological and discoursal features of texts in different modes and/or from different times</li> <li>• demonstrate some control of linguistic study in consistent selection of relevant examples</li> </ul> <p><b>AO2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and begin to analyse language variations according to time and place</li> <li>• explore some aspects of formality, register and audience in texts</li> <li>• demonstrate competent awareness of contextual and cultural factors relevant to the production and reception of texts</li> </ul> <p><b>AO3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write with a competence of linguistic discrimination in both creative and evaluative tasks</li> <li>• communicate with some clarity an understanding of concepts and/or approaches from linguistic study through competent use of terminology appropriate to the tasks and texts</li> <li>• structure and organise written responses with a competence of coherent argument</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b> <b>8–11</b> <b>marks</b></p>	<p>Answers that are <b>basic</b> and which should (<u>where appropriate</u>)</p> <p><b>AO1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show some understanding of linguistic concepts</li> <li>• identify obvious features of lexis, grammar, syntax, phonology and discourse, and give a limited explanation of how they function</li> <li>• support views with a limited range of examples</li> </ul> <p><b>AO2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify obvious differences in language usage (e.g. spoken / written)</li> <li>• show some basic awareness of how the formality and register of texts can be linked to intended audiences</li> <li>• demonstrate some basic awareness of contextual and/or cultural factors relevant to the production and/or reception of texts</li> </ul> <p><b>AO3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write with a basic appreciation of style in both creative and evaluative tasks</li> <li>• show a simple understanding of the various approaches from linguistic study through basic use of terminology appropriate to tasks and texts</li> <li>• attempt to structure argument coherently, though some comments may be left simply as assertion</li> </ul>
<p><b>5</b> <b>4–7</b> <b>marks</b></p>	<p>Answers that are <b>limited</b> but which</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show some occasional evidence of achievement against the criteria for Band 4</li> </ul>
<p><b>6</b> <b>0–3</b> <b>marks</b></p>	<p>Answers that <b>do not reach the standard defined for Band 5</b> because they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• do not offer an adequate attempt to answer the question or complete the task (i.e. do not sufficiently address the relevant AOs) AND/OR</li> <li>• do not demonstrate sufficient evidence of the knowledge, skills and understanding required; AND/OR</li> <li>• are not written with sufficient clarity or accuracy to make meaning and argument coherent.</li> </ul>

## PAPER 2

<b>1</b> <b>21–25 marks</b>	<p>Answers that are <b>developed</b> and which should (<u>where appropriate</u>)</p> <p><b>AO1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate thoroughly informed understanding of a wide repertoire of linguistic concepts</li> <li>• analyse in depth, where relevant, the lexical, grammatical, syntactical and discoursal features of a wide range of texts in different modes and/or from different times</li> <li>• make detailed, accurate reference to linguistic debates, both historical and current, showing a command of advanced linguistic study</li> <li>• demonstrate some originality of thought in illustrating discussion with an assured selection of detailed examples</li> </ul> <p><b>AO2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyse complex language variations according to time and place, including issues which reflect both prescriptive and descriptive approaches to language use</li> <li>• explore more complex and subtle representations of cultural identity (gender, social status, age, occupation, etc.) and their various constructions in language</li> <li>• explore complex levels of formality and register in texts, showing how stylistic variations construct specific audiences</li> <li>• make detailed, accurate reference to issues in linguistic study pertaining to the production and reception of texts</li> </ul> <p><b>AO3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communicate a critically-aware understanding of concepts and approaches from linguistic study through a command of terminology most appropriate to the tasks and texts</li> <li>• consistently refer to authorities and sources in order to support textual analysis and comment</li> <li>• demonstrate some originality in structuring and organising coherent written argument and analysis</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> <b>16–20 marks</b>	<p>Answers that are <b>proficient</b> and which should (<u>where appropriate</u>)</p> <p><b>AO1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate detailed understanding of a range of linguistic concepts</li> <li>• analyse in some detail, where relevant, the lexical, grammatical, syntactical and discoursal features of a range of texts in different modes and/or from different times</li> <li>• make appropriate and mostly accurate reference to linguistic debates, both historical and current, showing some proficiency of linguistic study</li> <li>• show some independence of thought in supporting detailed discussion, through the consistent selection of detailed examples</li> </ul> <p><b>AO2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyse language variations according to time and place, showing an awareness of prescriptive and descriptive approaches to language use</li> <li>• explore representations of cultural identity (gender, social status, age, occupation, etc.) and some of the ways in which they are constructed by language</li> <li>• explore levels of formality and register in texts, showing awareness of the (sometimes complex) relationship between style and audience</li> <li>• make informed reference to issues in linguistic study pertaining to the production and reception of texts</li> </ul> <p><b>AO3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communicate an accurate understanding of concepts and approaches from linguistic study through proficient use of terminology appropriate to the tasks and texts</li> <li>• make generally accurate reference to authorities and sources in order to support textual analysis and comment</li> <li>• structure and organise coherently-written argument and analysis</li> </ul>

<p><b>3</b> <b>12–15 marks</b></p>	<p>Answers that are <b>competent</b> and which should (<u>where appropriate</u>)</p> <p><b>AO1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show a clear understanding of some relevant linguistic concepts</li> <li>• identify and begin to analyse relevant lexical, grammatical, syntactical, phonological and discoursal features of texts in different modes and/or from different times</li> <li>• make some reference to linguistic debates, current and historical</li> <li>• show some evidence of independent linguistic study by supporting discussion with relevant examples</li> </ul> <p><b>AO2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and begin to analyse language variations according to time and place</li> <li>• explore more obvious constructions of cultural identity (e.g. gender, social status, occupation) in language use</li> <li>• explore some aspects of formality, register and audience in texts</li> <li>• show some awareness of issues in linguistic study linked to the production and/or reception of texts</li> </ul> <p><b>AO3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communicate with some clarity an understanding of concepts and/or approaches from linguistic study through competent use of terminology appropriate to the tasks and texts</li> <li>• make some reference to authorities and sources in order to support textual analysis and comment</li> <li>• structure and organise written responses with a competence of coherent argument</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b> <b>8–11 marks</b></p>	<p>Answers that are <b>basic</b> and which should (<u>where appropriate</u>)</p> <p><b>AO1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show some understanding of linguistic concepts</li> <li>• identify obvious features of lexis, grammar, syntax, phonology and discourse, and give a limited explanation of how they function</li> <li>• show some basic awareness of current and/or historical issues and/or debates in linguistics</li> <li>• support views with some examples from a limited range of texts</li> </ul> <p><b>AO2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify obvious differences in language usage (e.g. spoken/written)</li> <li>• comment on how such features as gender, social status and occupation affect the form and structure of the English language</li> <li>• show some basic awareness of how the formality and register of texts can be linked to intended audiences</li> <li>• show some basic awareness of cultural and/or historical debates about the English language</li> </ul> <p><b>AO3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show a simple understanding of the various approaches from linguistic study through basic use of terminology</li> <li>• make limited references to sources and authorities in order to support comment, though some comments may be left simply as assertion</li> </ul>
<p><b>5</b> <b>4–7 marks</b></p>	<p>Answers that are <b>limited</b> but which</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show some occasional evidence of achievement against the criteria for Band 4</li> </ul>
<p><b>6</b> <b>0–3 marks</b></p>	<p>Answers that <b>do not reach the standard defined for Band 5</b> because they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• do not offer an adequate attempt to answer the question or complete the task (i.e. do not sufficiently address the relevant AOs) AND/OR</li> <li>• do not demonstrate sufficient evidence of the knowledge, skills and understanding required; AND/OR</li> <li>• are not written with sufficient clarity or accuracy to make meaning and argument coherent.</li> </ul>