

Grade Descriptions for Cambridge International A Level Law 9084

What are grade descriptions?

Grade descriptions describe the level of performance typically demonstrated by candidates achieving the different grades awarded for a qualification. For Cambridge International A Levels, they describe performance at three levels – grades ‘E’, ‘C’ and ‘A’.

Grade descriptions sit alongside other key documents that illustrate examination standards, including:

- the syllabus, which presents what students should be taught over a course of study and explains how this is assessed
- the specimen assessment materials, which exemplify the structure of the assessment and the kinds of tasks that candidates complete
- grade thresholds, which show the total mark required to achieve a grade.

Grade descriptions are produced with a wide range of audiences in mind. For teachers, they support lesson planning and curriculum development, while students may gain useful insights into what is required to achieve a high grade and what candidate performance at lower grades typically looks like. For university admissions staff and employers, and those less familiar with Cambridge, they paint a picture of typical performance at different grades.

Cambridge publishes grade descriptions for a qualification once examinations have taken place for the first time, and we review them when a qualification is substantially revised. They are developed by highly experienced examiners who understand performance standards in the subject area and have studied samples of candidate work.

How do I use this resource?

Grade descriptions are presented as a grid, with content areas at the start of each row and the different grades at the top of each column.

The content areas group together various aspects of the syllabus – they reflect topics, assessment objectives, key concepts, syllabus aims and components. The way they are organised is specific to each subject.

For each content area, there is a descriptor for each grade. Reading across the row from left to right, the descriptors represent increasing levels of performance with each grade descriptor building on, and including, the last.

Each column represents overall performance at a particular grade. Reading down the column from top to bottom, the descriptors capture the range of knowledge, understanding and skills that a candidate comfortably achieving the grade is likely to demonstrate.

Where content areas for the first and second halves of the A Level are distinct, they are also assessed at different standards. Performance for content areas assessed at AS Level is therefore described separately in this document.

Cambridge produces grade descriptions to support teaching and learning and the interpretation of candidate scores and grades. We do not use them to set grade thresholds. As such, they cannot be used to challenge the grade awarded to any individual candidate.

Grade descriptions for papers 3 and 4

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade E	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
Knowledge	<p>Students state some basic factual information which relates to the specific area or areas of law in the question.</p> <p>They may support this information with some reference to relevant legal principles and rules, and statutory and case authority.</p> <p>They may struggle to explain or link the authorities they have referred to in terms of the specific area or areas of law in the question.</p>	<p>Students state and explain some factual information which relates to the specific area or areas of law in the question.</p> <p>They may support this information with some detailed and accurate reference to relevant legal principles and rules, and statutory and case authority.</p> <p>They may struggle to provide detail and accuracy across a range of issues relating to the specific area or areas of law in the question.</p>	<p>Students state and give a detailed explanation of a wide range of factual information which relates to the specific area or areas of law in the question.</p> <p>They may support this information with detailed and accurate reference to relevant legal principles and rules, and statutory and case authority covering a range of issues relating to the specific area or areas of law in the question.</p> <p>They may struggle to provide detail and accuracy across the full range of issues relating to the specific area or areas of law in the question.</p>
Analysis – Section A	<p>Students identify a small range of the legal issues raised by the specific area or areas of law in the question.</p> <p>They may apply some of the factual information they have stated to the specific area or areas of law in the question, but they may struggle to show reasoning.</p>	<p>Students identify a range of the issues raised by the specific area or areas of law in the question.</p> <p>They may apply a range of the factual information they have stated in more detail to the specific area or areas of law in the question, but they may struggle to show detailed reasoning.</p>	<p>Students identify a wide range of the issues raised by the specific area or areas of law in the question.</p> <p>They make detailed and often focused points, using the wide range of the factual information they have stated, providing detail relevant to the specific area or areas of law in the question. They may struggle to show detailed reasoning in their application of all the legal issues in the scenario.</p>

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade E	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
Analysis – Section B	<p>Students make some basic analytical points relating to legal issues raised by the specific area or areas of law in the question.</p> <p>They may support these points by linking to factual information in a general way, but they may struggle to develop any of their analytical points.</p>	<p>Students make some analytical points which are focused at times on legal issues raised by the specific area or areas of law in the question.</p> <p>They may support these points by linking to some relevant and detailed factual information. They may struggle to develop their analytical points across a range of legal issues relevant to the question.</p>	<p>Students make a wide range of analytical points which are mostly focused on legal issues raised by the specific areas of law in the question.</p> <p>They may support these points by linking to relevant and detailed factual information which they develop in several areas. They may struggle to develop their analytical points in relation to some of the more complex legal issues relevant to the question.</p>
Evaluation	<p>Students make a small number of evaluative points which may be linked to the general area of law in the scenario or question.</p> <p>They attempt to support these points with factual material, though this may not be fully relevant.</p> <p>In scenario-based tasks, they may struggle to evaluate the legal issues they have raised when applying them to the facts in the scenario and so may not reach a conclusion.</p> <p>In essay-based tasks, they may struggle to build an argument based on the material they have provided and may or may not reach a conclusion.</p>	<p>Students make some reasoned evaluative points which, at times, are linked to the legal issues identified in the scenario or presented in the question.</p> <p>They may support these points with some relevant factual information and material, some of which may be detailed.</p> <p>In scenario-based tasks, they may struggle to evaluate the legal issues they have raised when applying them across a range of the facts of the scenario, but they may still reach a conclusion.</p> <p>In essay-based tasks, the supporting material helps them to build a coherent argument in places and so may allow them to reach a conclusion. They may struggle to link their argument to all the issues raised by the question.</p>	<p>Students make focused evaluative points linked to a wide range of the legal issues identified in the scenario or presented in the question.</p> <p>They support these points with detailed use of effective and relevant factual information and material relating to the range of legal issues.</p> <p>In scenario-based tasks, they may struggle to evaluate some of the more complex legal issues they have raised when applying them to the facts of the scenario, but they may reach a mostly reasoned conclusion.</p> <p>In essay-based tasks, they draw on supporting material to develop a coherent argument and reach a conclusion. They may struggle to link their argument to all the issues raised by the question, and so conclusions may not be fully reasoned and justified.</p>

Grade descriptions for papers 1 and 2

Content assessed at AS Level standard

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade E	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
English legal system			
Knowledge Section A Section B	<p>Students identify some relevant information and communicate what they know in a general way.</p> <p>They may struggle to use technical words accurately and to develop their knowledge beyond identification in longer questions.</p> <p>Students state some accurate factual information relating to the general area of the question and communicate what they know in a general way.</p> <p>They may struggle to support their knowledge with, and show understanding of, accurate and relevant legal principles and rules, citation and statutory authority.</p>	<p>Students identify a range of relevant information and use some technical words accurately in shorter questions.</p> <p>They may struggle to identify all the relevant information in the longer questions and may not be confident using technical words.</p> <p>Students state some accurate factual information focused on the question.</p> <p>They support their knowledge with some reference to relevant legal principles and rules, citation and statutory authority, demonstrating some understanding.</p> <p>They may struggle to provide detail across the different areas of the question.</p>	<p>Students identify a wide range of relevant information. They use technical words accurately and provide some development beyond identification where required.</p> <p>They may struggle to address the full range of development needed in the longer question.</p> <p>Students state accurate factual information across a good range of what is required by the question.</p> <p>They support this knowledge with good, and at times thorough, reference to relevant and accurate use of legal principles and rules, citation and statutory authority, demonstrating their understanding.</p> <p>They may struggle to provide detail in relation to more complex aspects of the question.</p>
Analysis Section A	<p>Students make a small number of analytical points, communicate them in a general way and support them with some relevant examples.</p>	<p>Students make some analytical points and link them to the question using some technical legal language.</p> <p>They may be able to analyse one aspect of the question in some detail and support this with relevant examples.</p>	<p>Students make a range of analytical points dealing with most or all of the issues raised by the question and using technical language accurately.</p> <p>They make their points clearly and support them with examples which are often effective and relevant.</p>

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade E	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
Analysis Section B	<p>They may struggle to make analytical points across the full range indicated in the question, for example if two different areas need to be covered, and their examples may be limited to some aspects of one of the areas.</p> <p>Students make a few general analytical points which may be related to the topic in the question but are made with little or no reference to relevant legal authority.</p> <p>They may struggle to apply the law relevant to a scenario question or analyse issues relevant to a topic in an essay question.</p>	<p>They may struggle to make points across the full range indicated in the question and their examples may be accurate but not wide ranging.</p> <p>Students make some reasoned analytical points which may be related to the topic in question and are supported by some use of relevant legal authority.</p> <p>They may struggle to apply the law to each aspect of a scenario question or analyse a range of issues in an essay question.</p>	<p>They may struggle to make analytical points across the full range indicated in the question and to provide clear support for each of their points in their use of examples.</p> <p>Students make reasoned and developed analytical points which are focused on a range of issues raised by the question and supported by effective and detailed use of relevant legal authority.</p> <p>They may struggle to apply the relevant law in detail to each aspect of a scenario question or analyse a range of issues in depth in an essay question.</p>
Evaluation Section A	<p>Students make a small number of points of general evaluation which may be linked to the question in a general way.</p> <p>They may struggle to provide relevant evidence to support their evaluation.</p>	<p>Students make a number of evaluative points with some focus on the question. They may link their points to the question in a more specific way and support them with some relevant evidence.</p> <p>They may struggle to develop their evidence in depth or across the range of the question.</p>	<p>Students make a range of evaluative points which are clearly focused on the issues raised by the question. They support their points with detailed and relevant evidence.</p> <p>They may struggle to develop all of their evidence across the full range of evaluative points.</p>
Section B	<p>Students make a small number of basic evaluative points which may have a general link to factual information they have provided and legal issues they have raised.</p>	<p>Students make a number of evaluative points, some of which are focused on the question. They may include detail which is linked to some aspects of the question, the factual information they have provided and some of the legal issues they have raised.</p>	<p>Students make a number of evaluative points on a range of issues raised by the focus of the question.</p> <p>They may include detail which is effectively linked to the range of issues in the question, the factual information they have provided and the legal issues they have raised.</p>

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade E	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
	They may struggle to build an argument in answer to the question and may not reach a conclusion.	They may struggle to build a reasoned argument in some aspects of the question, although they may reach a conclusion.	They may struggle to build a detailed argument in all aspects of the question, but their argument is coherent and their conclusion is reasoned.
Criminal law			
Knowledge Section A	Students may identify at least one of the statutory or case references and may cite at least one relevant piece of law. They may struggle to provide more than basic citation of the law they cite from the source material.	Students identify at least one of the statutory or case references and may cite one or both relevant pieces of law. They may struggle to provide full citation of the law they cite from the source material.	Students identify both of the statutory or case references and may provide full and accurate citation of one or both relevant pieces of law. They may struggle to provide full and accurate citation of both pieces of law from the source material.
Section B – Part (a)	Students identify at least one item of relevant information. They use language which communicates what they know in a general way, often by reproducing the source material. They may struggle to explain their points or use technical words accurately.	Students identify a range of relevant information. They communicate their points in a way which is more focused on the question and using their own words. They may struggle to identify all the relevant information and may not use technical words accurately or in sufficient detail.	Students identify a wide range of relevant information. They communicate their points in a clear and focused way using their own words linked to the relevant key words and phrases in the source material. They may struggle to use technical words accurately or in sufficient detail in all aspects of their response.
Section B – Part (b)	Students state some accurate factual information relating to the general area of the question and communicate what they know in a general way. They may struggle to support their knowledge with, and show understanding of, accurate and relevant legal principles and rules, citation and statutory authority.	Students state some accurate factual information focused on the question. They support their knowledge with some reference to relevant legal principles and rules, citation and statutory authority, demonstrating some understanding.	Students state accurate factual information across a good range of what is required by the question. They support this knowledge with good, and at times thorough, reference to relevant and accurate use of legal principles and rules, citation and statutory authority, demonstrating their understanding.

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade E	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
		They may struggle to provide detail across the different areas of the question.	They may struggle to provide detail in relation to more complex aspects of the question.
Application and analysis	Students identify a small number of legal issues and apply the source material to them. They may make general points of application and may reach a basic conclusion. They may struggle to make clear links between the points they make and the source material provided.	Students identify a number of legal issues and apply the source material to them. They may make some developed points of application and link these to the source material. They may reach a conclusion based on the points they have made. They may struggle to reason through some of the more complex issues raised by the source material and apply this to their conclusion.	Students identify a wide range or all of the legal issues raised by the question and apply the source material to them. They may identify the key legal issues and apply the law in the source material to them clearly and accurately, enabling them to reach a reasoned and justified conclusion. They may struggle to reason through the full range of the more complex issues raised by the source material and so may not apply this in a fully developed and logical conclusion.
Section A			
Section B	Students make some basic analysis of at least one of the legal issues relating to the question. They may make points based on the factual information they have provided in a general way. They may struggle to link their points to relevant legal principles and rules, and statutory and case authority or may make no links at all.	Students make some reasoned analytical points linked to legal issues related to the question. They may make some developed analytical points linked to the relevant legal principles and rules, and statutory and case authority, using some accurate technical language. They may struggle to make developed analytical points linked to more than one aspect of the question.	Students make a range of reasoned points of analysis linked to several legal issues related to the question. They make analytical points which are consistently and effectively developed by their use of relevant legal principles and rules, and statutory and case authority as well as their use of accurate technical language. They may struggle to make developed analytical points linked to each aspect of the question.
Evaluation	Students make a small number of basic evaluative points.	Students make a number of evaluative points, some of which are focused on the question.	Students make a number of evaluative points, most or all of which are focused on the question.

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade E	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
	<p>They may make general links to the factual information they have provided and any legal issues they have raised.</p> <p>They may struggle to use the points they have made to build an argument to help them answer the question they have been set. They may or may not reach a basic conclusion.</p>	<p>They may include detail which is linked to some aspects of the question, the factual information they have provided and some of the legal issues they have raised.</p> <p>They may struggle to use the points they have made to build a coherent argument in different aspects of the question although they may reach an overall conclusion.</p>	<p>They may include detail which is clearly linked to a range of aspects of the question, the factual information they have provided and the legal issues they have raised.</p> <p>They may struggle to use the points they have made to build a coherent argument in every aspect of the question, leading to a conclusion which is reasoned but not fully justified.</p>

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