



THE O/L ENGLISH GRADE LADDER



BOOK 2

Teacher & Parent Guide

How to mentor and mark Book 2 — The Credit Bridge

Safe S (35) → Solid C (50 marks)

For the adult supporting a student who passes but cannot get past the pass

G.C.E. (O/L) English Language · Subject 31

Idasara Academy



Before You Begin

What changes in Book 2

In Book 1 you checked whether a fact was present and whether four lines existed. Book 2 asks you to check something slightly different: **whether a method was followed**.

That is still not a judgement about English. It is visible on the page:

- Did they write **C** or **G** beside the box words before answering Test 11?
- Did they read the **table headings first**, or work through the text from the top?
- Did they answer the True/False and vocabulary questions on Test 15 **before** the inference ones?

If the method is on the page, the marks follow. If it is not, a high score was luck and will not repeat.

NOTE · Where the fifteen marks actually are

Do not let the student spread effort evenly. The credit is won in three questions.

- **Test 5** — 5 marks. Typical S-band score: **2**
- **Test 11** — 7 marks. Typical S-band score: **1**, or blank
- **Test 15** — 8 marks. Typical S-band score: **3**

Twenty marks in play, about six usually taken. The gap between a pass and a credit is fifteen. Thirteen of them are sitting right here.

The time it really takes

Days 1 to 6: **fifteen to twenty minutes**. Day 7: **one hour**, one sitting.

Day 2 is the heaviest day in the book because Test 5 has two possible forms and both must be taught — a student who has practised only one loses all five marks when the other appears. Expect Day 2 to run to the full twenty minutes.

Do not let them skip Day 3

Day 3 teaches sorting and produces **no answers at all**. Students find this pointless and want to jump to Day 4.

If they skip it, Day 4 does not work, and they will conclude the method is useless when they only did half of it. Sit with them for Day 3 if that is what it takes. It is four minutes of actual work.



The Banked Cloze — Decision Tree Card

Test 11 is where the credit is won and lost, and this card lets you check the method rather than the answers.

NOTE · How to use this card

Use the upper panel to check the student sorted the box into content and glue before reading. Use the decision tree to check any answer they cannot explain: read the word before the blank, follow the branch. The lower box is the spare-word check — fifteen words, fourteen blanks, and an everyday leftover means an error somewhere.



TEST 11 — THE BANKED CLOZE · 7 MARKS

The Decision Tree & Method for Parents Marking at Home

STEP 1: SORT THE BOX BEFORE FILLING BLANKS

CONTENT **C · Solid**

puddles · rainwater · Penicillin · disease · meditation ·
concentration

GLUE **G · Outline**

the · that · it · had · was · before · but · on · also · ever

"About 7 of the 15 words in the box are glue."

LOOK AT THE WORD BEFORE THE BLANK

After *a / an / the* + noun follows



Describing word (Adjective)

After *a / an / the*, no noun



Content noun

After *to / can / will / must*



Plain verb

Between two complete ideas



Joining glue word (Conjunction)

After a subject, before a main verb



Auxiliary glue word (had, was, has)

15 words, 14 blanks. One is always spare.

If your spare is an everyday word like *the* or *had*, check again.

⚠️ "A blank scores zero. A guess scores zero or more."





The card is A4 and stays legible photocopied in black and white. Photocopy it rather than passing the book around — an adult marking at the kitchen table should not have to share the manual with the student.



The Three Rules, Again

- **Rule 1 — Content is scored first and gates everything.** *If 0 is awarded for content, no marks are awarded for language, organisation or mechanics.* In Book 2 this applies to Test 8.
- **Rule 2 — Word-count floors.** Test 8: **under 20 words, capped at 2 marks.** The paper asks for 50–60.
- **Rule 3 — Never leave a blank.** On Test 11 there are fifteen words for fourteen blanks, so a student who fills everything can still score by elimination. A blank scores nothing, ever.

MARKING · The Book 2 addition — check the method, not just the answer

When you mark a drill, ask one extra question: **'show me how you decided.'**

- Test 5 — *"Did you read the whole text?"* If yes, the lesson has not landed even with 5 out of 5.
- Test 11 — *"Where are your C and G letters?"* No letters means no method.
- Test 15 — *"Which question did you answer first?"* If it was the inference one, they spent their time on the hardest marks.

A right answer by the wrong route is a mark they will lose next time.



Day 1 — The Credit Arithmetic

MARKING · Marking — 'The Honest Audit'

Not scored. Check two things:

- The three scores are **real**, from a marked paper, not remembered.
- The arithmetic is right.

The moment that matters: when they see Test 11 written down with 0 or 1 beside it. Do not soften it. That is the discovery the whole book depends on.

WHAT TO SAY · What to say on Day 1

Say: "You are not bad at English. You are unfinished on three questions. Twenty marks, and you are taking six. That is the whole gap."

Do not say: "You need to work harder across the board." That is how a student in the S band spreads effort thin and stays at 42 for another year.



Day 2 — The Two Kinds of Test 5

5 marks · target 4

ANSWER KEY · Model answer — the chipmunk table (Form A)

- **Family** — the squirrel family
- **Number of species** — about twenty-five
- **Where found** — North America / eastern and south-eastern United States
- **Length** — eight to ten centimetres
- **Food** — seeds, nuts, fruit and insects

Form B matching: (a) Appearance → 3 · (b) Habitat → 2 · (c) Diet → 4 · (d) Size → 1

MARKING · Marking scheme — Day 2 writing

Award out of 10:

- **1 mark** per correct table entry, Form A (max 5). Single words and short phrases are fully acceptable — Test 5 does not require sentences and does not penalise grammar.
- **1 mark** per correct topic match, Form B (max 4)
- **1 mark** for the closing sentence naming both directions correctly

The real check is the method, not the answers. Ask: *"Did you read the whole text?"* If they say yes, they have not learned the lesson even with full marks. Have them redo it on a different text, hunting only.

Correct only this: a fact that is wrong. **Ignore:** everything else in the table.

WHAT TO SAY · If they resist the hunting method

Many students feel that not reading the whole text is cheating, or that they will miss something.

Say: "The examiner is not testing whether you read it all. They are testing whether you can find a fact. Reading it all is how you run out of time and lose the marks you could have had."



Days 3 and 4 — The Banked Cloze

Test 11 · 7 marks · target 5 · the highest-value method in the book

MARKING · Marking scheme — Day 3 'Sort Three Real Boxes'

Award out of 15 per box, **1 mark** per word correctly marked **C** (content) or **G** (glue).

The rough answer for each year is **seven or eight glue words out of fifteen**. A student whose totals are wildly different — say two glue words — has not understood what glue means. Work through five examples aloud with them.

Words can be genuinely borderline. *Form* and *comes* are content; *what* and *ever* are glue. Accept a defensible answer with a reason.

Then check the reflex: by the third box, are they under 90 seconds? That speed is the real deliverable of Day 3, not the accuracy.

MARKING · Marking scheme — Day 4 'Fill and Explain'

Award out of 17:

- **1 mark** per blank filled with a word of the correct **kind** (max 14) — *award this even when the specific word is wrong*, because kind-accuracy is the skill being built
- **1 mark** per written explanation naming a real neighbouring word (max 3)

Then mark the fourteen blanks against the official scheme for the real score out of 7.

Record both numbers. High kind-accuracy with a low real score means they have the method and need vocabulary — good news, and it will come. Low kind-accuracy means the method is absent, and repeating the passage will not help; go back to Day 3.

WHAT TO SAY · The two sentences that unlock Test 11

On method: "You are not reading for meaning. You are looking at the two words either side of the gap and asking what *kind* of word belongs there. Meaning is the last check, not the first."

On the blank: "There are fifteen words and fourteen blanks — one is always spare. If you fill everything, the worst case is one wrong. If you leave it blank, you definitely get nothing. And if your spare word turns out to be something ordinary like *the* or *had*, check again — the examiner rarely leaves an everyday word unused."



Day 5 — The Long Reading

Test 15 · 8 marks · target 5

NOTE · The most important thing to know about Test 15

Test 15 is not one hard question. It is **four kinds of question**, and three are easy:

| Type | Marks | | :--: | :--: | :--: | | True or False | 2 | easy — stated in the text | | Pronoun reference | 1 | easy with the trick | | Vocabulary in context | 2 | easy with the method | | Inference | 3 | **hard — Book 4's work** |

Five of the eight are the easy three. A student who starts at question 1 and works down often spends their time on the inference marks and never reaches the easy ones. Order of attack is worth more than ability here.

ANSWER KEY · Model answer — The Mother Tree

True/False: 1. **True** · 2. **False** (the bark is rough and deeply cracked) · 3. **False** (nothing suggests danger; it is treated with respect) · 4. **True**

5. Pronoun: *they* = the tree's **limbs** (the branches spreading out) — from the sentence immediately before.

6. 'limbs' → (ii) branches. It is a thing, and the passage is about a tree. **7. 'crown' → (iii) top of the tree.** Same test: which meaning fits a tree?

MARKING · Marking scheme — Day 5 writing

Award out of 9:

- **1 mark** per True/False correct (max 4)
- **1 mark** for the pronoun answer (max 1)
- **1 mark** per vocabulary answer (max 2)
- **1 mark** per explanation that names the word class and an option crossed out (max 2)

The explanations carry the method. A student who answers *branches* correctly but cannot say "it is a thing, so I crossed out *arms* and *legs* as parts of a body" has guessed from context and will fail on an unfamiliar word.

Correct only this: a True/False answer based on what is *probably* true rather than what the text says. That is the commonest error and it is a reasoning habit, not an English one.



Day 6 — The Fifty-Word Paragraph

Test 8 · 5 marks · target 4

ANSWER KEY · Model answer — a place

"My favourite place in our town is the public library near the bus stand. It is an old building with high windows and long wooden tables. I go there every Saturday morning to borrow a book and to read the newspapers. It is quiet, and nobody hurries you. I have done most of my studying in that room."

58 words, five complete sentences, ordinary vocabulary, at least eight things named.

MARKING · Marking scheme — Day 6 (the official criteria)

Mark each paragraph out of 5, as the examiner does.

Content — 2 marks. Is it on the given topic, and does it say enough?

- On topic with several details → **2** · Thin or partly off-topic → **1**
- Off-topic, or the question copied out → **0** — *and Rule 1 zeroes the whole answer*

Language — 3 marks.

- Four or five complete sentences, mostly correct → **3**
- Some complete, some broken → **2** · Only a few correct → **1**

Then the floor: count the words. Under 20 → cap at **2**.

Your extra check, needing no English: count the **things named**. Fewer than five usually means the student chose a topic they cannot name, and the sentences will be vague. Have them choose a different topic rather than trying to improve the sentences.

WHAT TO SAY · If the paragraph is short or vague

If under 40 words: "You have thirty-one. The paper asks for fifty to sixty, and under twenty the rule caps you at two marks. Add one sentence saying why you like it."

If vague: "Read it back and count how many things you actually named. Three? Choose the place you can name ten things in, not the one that sounds most interesting. Naming is what makes sentences complete."



Day 7 — Marking the Credit Gate

One hour · Paper I complete (40) + Tests 11 and 15 (20) · 60 marks available

MARKING · Marking the gate

Use the **official 2024 marking scheme**.

- Paper I Tests 1–5, 7 — objective, 5 marks each
- Test 6 — Content 2 + Language 3, then the 20-word floor
- Test 8 — Content 2 + Language 3, then the 20-word floor
- Test 11 — 7 marks (half a mark per blank, per the official scheme)
- Test 15 — 8 marks across the four question types

Total out of 60. **The gate is 38.**

NOTE · Reporting the number

Say: **'You scored 38 out of 60 on everything you have trained.'**

Not "you got a credit." The untrained remainder — Tests 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 16 — is 40 marks, on which a candidate reliably picks up around 12. That is what projects 38 to roughly 50.

A student told in September that they "have a credit" stops working in October.

WHAT TO SAY · Diagnosing a near miss

Do not treat 34/60 as a general failure. Look at two numbers.

Test 11 under 4 → the sorting reflex is not automatic. Redo Days 3 and 4 with a different paper. This is 7 marks that will otherwise be lost again in December.

Test 15 under 5 → ask which question they answered first. If they began with the inference questions, the problem is order of attack, not comprehension, and it is fixed in one session.

Both fine, Paper I dropped → Book 1 skills have gone stale. Half an hour rereading restores it.



The Correction Policy — Unchanged

Three errors, and only these three:

1. **Subject-verb agreement** — *the chart show* → *the chart shows*
2. **Tense consistency** — do not let them drift between past and present inside one paragraph
3. **Singular and plural** — *two book* → *two books*

Still ignore: spelling that does not obscure meaning, articles, punctuation beyond full stops and capitals, style.

MARKING · Two additions for Book 2

- **A sentence with no verb.** Common in Test 8 paragraphs — "*Very beautiful and I like it so much.*" Worth correcting because the Language descriptor names complete sentences explicitly.
- **A fact that contradicts the text.** On Test 5 and Test 15 this is a *content* error, not a language error, and it always costs a mark. Correct it every time.

Beyond these, keep ignoring. A student corrected on everything in a 58-word paragraph will write 30 words next time, and the floor will punish them for it.



Progress Tracker

Day	Activity	Score	Target	Done
1	Honest audit completed	—	—	
2	Both forms of Test 5 (out of 10)		8	
2	Drill: Test 5 ×2 (out of 10)		8	
3	Sort three boxes (out of 45)		36	
3	Third box sorted under 90 seconds	—	yes	
4	Fill and explain (out of 17)		13	
4	Drill: Test 11 (out of 7)		5	
5	Mother Tree questions (out of 9)		7	
5	Drill: Test 15 (out of 8)		5	
6	Three paragraphs (out of 15)		12	
6	Drill: Test 8 (out of 5)		4	
7	THE GATE (out of 60)		38	



Warning Signs

- **Test 11 left blank in the gate despite four days of method.** This is fear, not inability. Sit beside them and do the first three blanks together, out loud, naming the kind each time.
- **Sorting done after reading the passage.** The order is the method. Sorting afterwards is just guessing with extra steps.
- **Test 15 answered strictly in order.** They will spend their time on the hard three marks. Teach the order of attack explicitly.
- **Paragraphs getting shorter each attempt.** Almost always over-correction. Stop marking language for a week; mark only word count and things named.
- **A big jump in score with no change in the work.** Check whether the drill was marked with the scheme open. Sit with the next one.

NOTE · When to seek a teacher

Book 2 stretches what an untrained adult can mark. Get a teacher involved if:

- The student sorts correctly and still scores under 3 on Test 11 across several attempts — that is a vocabulary ceiling, not a method problem
- Paragraphs are complete sentences but consistently unclear in meaning
- The student cannot read the Test 15 passage aloud with reasonable fluency, which points at a decoding problem underneath everything else

Recognising the limit of this guide is not a failure of it.



What Comes Next

When the student clears 38 out of 60, they move to **Book 3 — Breaking the Cliff**

Be honest with them and with yourself: Book 3 is the hardest of the four. Only about one candidate in ten scores a B, and the reason is precisely what Book 3 teaches — producing 100 words about a chart and 200 words of connected argument under time pressure. That cannot be reduced to a checklist the way the table and the cloze could.

Guide 3 tells you where the judgement genuinely lies — and, just as importantly, where it still does not.

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Teacher & Parent Guide

Book 1 could be marked almost entirely by counting. Book 2 can still be marked by counting — but you have to count different things.

The three questions that stand between a pass and a credit are all about method, not fluency. Did the student sort the box before reading? Did they hunt for the fact or read the whole text? Did they take the easy five marks on the long reading before attempting the hard three?

Every one of those is visible on the page. You do not need to judge English to see whether a method was followed, and at this level the method is what is missing.

Inside: the official marking splits, model answers, the glue-word decision tree, and the sentences to say when a student is about to leave seven marks blank.

Companion to Book 2 — The Credit Bridge. One guide accompanies each book in the series.



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