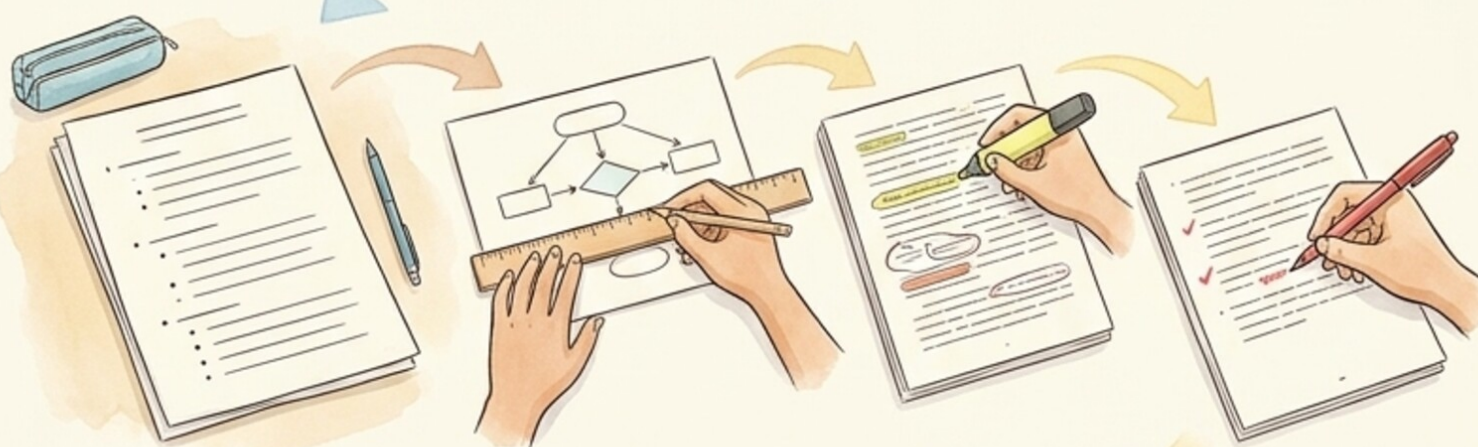




THE O/L ENGLISH GRADE LADDER



BOOK 4

Teacher & Parent Guide

How to mentor and mark Book 4 — The Distinction Crown

High B (65) → Distinction A (75+ marks)

For the adult helping a strong student stop losing marks they have already earned

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

Idasara Academy



Before You Begin

The mental shift this guide requires

For three books your job was to help a student **add** — methods, structures, vocabulary. In Book 4 it reverses. Your job is to help them **subtract**.

At 65 to 72 marks the student already knows enough English for an A. The questions they can answer correctly are worth more than 75 marks. They are losing the difference to habits.

So every session asks the same question: *where did the marks leak?* Not *what else should we learn?*

NOTE · The audit split — the most useful thing in this guide

Every drill from now on is marked twice.

- **Score** — how many marks out of the total
- **Loss type** — for each mark lost, **KNEW IT**, **SLIPPED** or **DID NOT KNOW**

Keep a running tally of both across the week.

At this level the first column is almost always larger, and that is very good news — careless losses are fixed by habit in days, knowledge gaps take months. Most students have never had anyone separate the two for them and cannot see that their problem is cheap to fix.

The one thing Book 4 actually teaches

Everything else here is auditing, but **Test 16 is genuinely new**. No earlier book covered it, because a student below a B cannot yet produce 200 words of connected English under time pressure.

It is worth **15 marks** — the largest single question on the paper — and the paper prints the plan underneath it. That is the substance of Days 3 and 4.

The time it really takes

Days 1 to 6: **fifteen to twenty minutes**. Day 7: **a full paper, about three hours**.

Book 4 is lighter than Book 3. If it feels heavy, the student is over-preparing out of nerves. Hold them to twenty minutes.

The one thing you must not let them do

Students at 70 marks conclude that what is missing is sophistication, and start collecting impressive words.

Their marks go down. Every unfamiliar word carries a grammar frame they have not learned; used wrongly it is an error, and the top Language descriptor is measured on error count.

This will be the main thing you resist all week. Day 2 addresses it directly. Back it up.





The Bullet Check and the Clock — Cut-Out Card

Guide 4's two highest-value checks on one page: the bullets that decide the Content mark, and the clock rule worth ten marks.

NOTE · How to use this card

Upper panel: number the bullets in the question, then find each number in the margin of the answer. An unticked bullet is a lost content mark. Lower panel: tape it inside the student's file and be the clock on every timed paper. The heavy rule is the one that matters — at 1 hr 25 they start Test 16, whatever is unfinished.



GUIDE 4 · TEST 16 CHECK & THE CLOCK PROTOCOL

A4 Tear-Out Cutout Card · The Two Highest-Value Exam Checks

TEST 16 · 15 MARKS · THE BULLETS ARE THE PARAGRAPHS

Question Prompt:

Topic: Choosing Food Wisely

- 1 Types of food you eat
- 2 How you select them
- 3 Why you select them

Intro

1 Body ¶ 1

2 Body ¶ 2

3 Body ¶ 3

Conclusion

"Number the bullets. Find each number in the margin. An unticked bullet is a lost content mark."

Content 5

Language 5 (Outline Only)

Format & Org 2

Mechanics 3

PAPER II · THE CLOCK · 2 HOURS · 60 MARKS

Tests 9–13 (Grammar & Reading)

27 marks

35 min

Test 14 (Letter / Chart Description)

10 marks

25 min

Test 15 (Long Comprehension Passage)

8 marks

25 min

🕒 1 hr 25 — START TEST 16, WHATEVER IS UNFINISHED.

Test 16 (Extended Composition / Essay)

15 marks

30 min

Final Review & Proofread Gate

Pass/Fail

5 min

"Copy this timeline onto your answer sheet in the first minute of Paper II."





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.



Day 1 — Paper I as a Zero-Error Zone

40 marks · target 37

NOTE · The fact that reframes the whole book

A-grade and B-grade students are not very different on Test 16. They differ on **Paper I**.

- Typical B student: **32–34 out of 40**
- Typical A student: **37–39 out of 40**

Five marks — half the journey from B to A — and every one is on a question the student can already answer. Not a teaching problem. A checking problem.

MARKING · Marking — 'Audit Your Own Paper I'

Not scored, but the most important exercise in the book. Sit with them for it.

For every lost mark, insist on a **specific** reason. "I was careless" is not a reason. "I copied *organised* from the box and wrote *organized*" is a reason.

Then check the two lists are honestly sorted. Students file careless losses under DID NOT KNOW because it feels less foolish. Push back gently: "*Did you know that word, or not?*"

The number that matters: careless losses as a percentage of the gap to 75. It is usually most of it.

WHAT TO SAY · What to say on Day 1

Say: "You are not four marks short of knowing enough English. You are four marks short of using what you already know. Those are completely different problems, and yours is the easy one."

Do not say: "You need to be more careful." They know. Carelessness is not fixed by being told to stop; it is fixed by a specific five-minute checking routine, which is what Day 1 installs.



Day 2 — Precision Before Polish

The day that protects the grade

MARKING · Marking — 'Rewrite Downwards'

Award out of 10:

- **1 mark** per word simplified from uncertain to certain (max 5)
- **1 mark** per correctly used word from the ten, with its frame (max 3)
- **2 marks** if they can write all three frames from memory

The check that matters: if they cannot state the frame, the word comes out. Enforce this. A word without its frame is an error waiting for the examination hall.

ANSWER KEY · Version A and Version B — make sure they can explain it

Book 4 Day 2 gives two versions of a paragraph. **Version A scored 2/5; Version B scored 5/5.**

Version A's four real errors: *whom must* (wrong pronoun form), *incentivize the populace* (wrong register and collocation), *ameliorate their comportment* (meaningless in context), *necessitates immediate eradication* (does not mean what the writer intended).

Version B: every word ordinary, every word correct, sentences connected, four of the ten words used with correct frames.

The sentence to draw out of them: "*Version B is not the safe choice — it is the better answer.*" If they say it themselves, Day 2 has worked.

WHAT TO SAY · The line to repeat all week

Say: "If you have not used a word correctly three times in practice, you may not use it in the examination."

You will need to say this more than once. The instinct to reach for impressive language gets stronger as the examination approaches, and it is the most reliable way for a B student to stay a B student.



Days 3 and 4 — Test 16

15 marks · target 11 rising to 12 · the biggest question on the paper

NOTE · The bullets are the content mark — read this before marking anything

Test 16 offers **four** options: an article, an essay, a speech, and a story.

Under options **(a), (b) and (c)** the paper prints *"Include the following:"* and a list. **Option (d), the story, has no bullets.**

Those bullets are the paragraph plan, written by the examiner and printed under the question. In 2025 the traffic-congestion article went further and gave sub-lists inside each bullet — effectively the sentences.

Your marking action, requiring no English: take the question, number the bullets, and find each number in the margin of the answer. **An unticked bullet is a lost content mark.** That single check covers most of the 5 available for Content.

MARKING · Marking scheme — Days 3 and 4 (the official split, printed on the paper)

> Content: 5 · Language: 5 · Format & Organisation: 2 · Mechanics: 3 — Total 15

Content — 5. Every bullet addressed, developed with detail → 5. Most bullets → 3–4. One or two only, or thin → 1–2. Off-topic or the question copied → 0, and the whole answer scores 0.

Language — 5 (*the only part needing judgement*). Connected sentences, few errors, some variety → 4–5. Mostly complete, noticeable errors → 3. Some broken → 2. Only a few correct → 1.

Format & Organisation — 2. Introduction, developed body, real conclusion → 2. For a speech, the salutation and closing count here — which is why the speech is worth choosing.

Mechanics — 3. Capitals, full stops, paragraphing, spelling largely sound → 3. Frequent slips → 1–2.

Then the floor: under 50 words → cap the total at 5.

MARKING · The four-check audit — no English needed

Before attempting the Language mark, with a pencil:

1. **Count the words.** Write the number at the top. Target 190–210.
2. **Count the paragraphs.** Five expected for three bullets. Fewer than three is an organisation problem.
3. **Number the bullets in the question, then find each number in the answer's margin.** Any bullet with no number anywhere is lost content.
4. **Is the last paragraph a conclusion?** Does it summarise or call for action, rather than introducing something new?

Those four decide Content, Organisation and Mechanics — **10 of the 15 marks** — without judging a sentence.

**WHAT TO SAY · The three sentences that matter most on Test 16**

If a bullet is missing: "The question asked for three things. I can find two in your answer. Where is the third? That is content marks you have simply left on the table."

If they skipped the plan: "Copy the bullets into the margin before you write anything. It takes ten seconds and it is the difference between a plan and a hope."

If they chose the story: "The story is the only option with no bullets. The other three tell you what to write. Under time pressure, a printed plan beats a good imagination."



Day 5 — The Last Three Marks

Test 15 inference · 3 marks · target 2

ANSWER KEY · Model answers — The Last Weaver

1. Any title about the loss of a craft rather than the person — *"The End of a Craft"*, *"Recording What We Lose"*. A title that is only *"Somawathie"* misses the theme.
2. The writer does **not** blame them — *"Nobody blamed them"* — and gives their reasons: steadier work, pay on time.
3. That recording a tradition is not the same as keeping it alive; the knowledge lives in practice, not in documentation.
4. That we have become good at recording what we are losing and no better at preventing the loss.
5. **steadier**.
6. The difference between saving the picture and saving the weaving.

MARKING · Marking scheme — Day 5 writing

Award out of 6, one per answer.

The rule that decides these marks: for the inference and theme questions — 1, 3, 4 and 6 — **a copied sentence scores zero**. The answer must be in the student's own words.

This is where students at this level lose the last marks on Test 15. They find a sentence that looks relevant and copy it, which signals they located a fact rather than understood a theme.

Your check needs no English judgement: put the answer beside the passage. Is it word for word? If yes, send it back.



Day 6 — The Clock Protocol

No English at all. Up to ten marks.

NOTE · The failure that costs the most A grades

Students reach Test 16 with fifteen minutes left, write forty words, and are capped at 5 out of 15.

Ten marks. Not one for a language reason.

Book 4 Day 6 gives a worked case: the same student, same English, two mocks three weeks apart — **68 and then 77**. The only change was the clock.

Make sure they read it properly. It is the most persuasive page in the series, because it proves marks can be gained without learning anything.

MARKING · Marking — 'Build Your Own Timetable Card'

Not scored. Check three things:

- The card uses **clock times**, not durations. Under pressure nobody calculates "35 minutes from now."
- The Test 16 start time is written and circled.
- The sentence "*At ... I start Test 16 even if Test 15 is not finished*" is written out in full.

Then rehearse it. Ask: "It is 10.25 and you are halfway through Test 15. What do you do?" The answer must be immediate. If they hesitate, they will hesitate in the hall.

WHAT TO SAY · Your job on every timed paper from now on

You are the clock. Say the time aloud at the marked points and nothing else.

If they reach the Test 16 start time and have not started it, **tell them to stop and start**, even if they protest. Especially if they protest.

This one intervention is worth more marks than every correction you will make all month.



Day 7 — Marking the Distinction Gate

Full paper, 2025. 100 marks. The gate is 75.

MARKING · Marking the gate

Official 2025 marking scheme, both papers, no adjustment.

Record per question, and record the **loss type** for every mark dropped. That table is what the final month is built on.

WHAT TO SAY · After the gate — what to say at each outcome

75 or more: "About fifteen per cent of the country gets an A in English, and many of them grew up speaking it at home. If you started this series at thirty marks, you did not close a gap in English. You closed a gap in access."

Say it exactly like that. It is true, and it is what they should carry into the examination hall.

70 to 74: "This is not English any more. Count your careless losses." Then one change for the next mock: finish Paper I in 55 minutes and use the full five-minute check.

Under 70: ask one question — "*Did you finish Test 16, or run out of time?*" If it stopped mid-thought, it is the clock: redo Day 6. If it was finished but scored under 10, check the bullets: a missing bullet is a missing content mark, and that is structure, not English. Both are one-week fixes. Do not let them conclude they need to relearn English.



The Final Month

After the gate, the work is repetition: **one full timed paper each weekend until December**, marked against the official scheme, with careless and knowledge losses tallied separately every time.

NOTE · Three rules for the last month

- 1. No new vocabulary after the beginning of November.** Nothing learned in the final weeks will be secure enough to use correctly, and an insecure word is an error. Deepen what is owned instead. Students find this counter-intuitive and parents find it alarming — hold the line anyway.
- 2. The timetable card gets written in the first minute of every paper.** Sixty seconds, up to ten marks. Practise until automatic.
- 3. Full papers, not question practice.** At this level pacing and stamina are the variables. Doing twenty Test 16s teaches nothing about arriving at Test 16 with thirty minutes in hand.

WHAT TO SAY · If the student wants to cram in December

Say: "You are not short of English. You are three habits away from the mark you want, and cramming will not touch any of them. Sleep, one paper a week, and the timetable card."

A tired student loses more marks to carelessness than a rested one gains from an extra hour of revision. At this level that trade is clearly negative, and you may need to say so more than once.



Progress Tracker

Day	Activity	Score	Target	Done
1	Paper I audit — careless vs knowledge	—	—	
1	Drill: full Paper I (out of 40)		37	
2	Rewrite downwards (out of 10)		8	
2	Three words × three sentences	—	9	
3	Article to the bullets (out of 15)		11	
3	Drill: Test 16 (a) (out of 15)		11	
4	Speech conversion (out of 15)		12	
4	Drill: Test 16 (c) (out of 15)		12	
5	Six inference answers (out of 6)		4	
5	Drill: Test 15 × 2 (out of 16)		14	
6	Timetable card written and rehearsed	—	yes	
7	THE GATE — full paper (out of 100)		75	



Warning Signs

- **Rising error count alongside more ambitious vocabulary.** The defining Book 4 failure. Return to Day 2 and enforce the three-correct-uses rule.
- **Choosing the story option on Test 16.** It is the only one without bullets. Unless they are genuinely a strong storyteller, this is choosing to invent a plan the paper would have given them.
- **Test 16 answers that stop mid-sentence.** Pacing. Time them on Test 16 alone until 30 minutes is comfortable.
- **Refusing full papers, preferring question practice.** Avoidance of the pacing measurement — the thing most likely costing the grade.
- **Perfect scores at home, lower scores in school tests.** Usually the clock, or marking themselves too generously. Have someone else time and mark one.
- **Anxiety rising as the score rises.** Common near the top. They now have something to lose. Reduce the volume of work rather than increasing it, and keep the weekend paper as the only fixed commitment.
- **Cramming vocabulary lists in November.** Stop it. See the final-month rules.

NOTE · When to seek a teacher — and when not to

By Book 4, most remaining issues are **habits**, not knowledge, and a teacher is not the right fix for a habit. Get a teacher only if Language sits at 3 out of 5 across several Test 16 answers **despite** every bullet ticked, a conclusion present, and a clean error audit. That is a genuine sentence-level ceiling and it needs a trained eye.

Otherwise, resist. Adding a tutor in the final month usually adds new material, and new material at this stage adds errors. The student's problem is subtraction.



The End of the Series

Four books, four gates, one paper in December.

If your student came into Book 1 scoring thirty and reaches a distinction, understand what actually happened — and tell them, because they will not see it themselves.

They did not become better at English than the students who grew up speaking it. They found out that the examination is a structure with rules, that the rules can be learned, and that nobody had ever told them. In a country where English has functioned for generations as a gate rather than a subject, that is not a small thing to have taken back.

Whatever the December result, that stays true.

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Teacher & Parent Guide

The last guide is the easiest to use and the hardest to obey.

Easy, because at this level the work is auditing rather than teaching, and auditing is almost entirely countable — careless losses, word counts, clock times, bullets ticked.

Hard, because your instinct will be to push, and pushing is exactly wrong here. A student at 70 marks does not need more input. They need fewer errors, better pacing, and somebody who will not let them start using words they cannot control.

Inside: the official 15-mark split for the biggest question on the paper, the bullet check that decides its content mark, how to separate careless losses from real gaps, and what to say in the last month when the temptation to cram is strongest.

The final guide. Four books, four gates, one paper in December.



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