

# Syllabus

Cambridge International AS Level General Paper  
Syllabus code 8004  
For examination in June and November 2011



UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE  
International Examinations

**Note for Exams Officers:** Before making Final Entries, please check availability of the codes for the components and options in the E3 booklet (titled "Procedures for the Submission of Entries") relevant to the exam session. Please note that component and option codes are subject to change.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Why choose Cambridge?

University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) is the world's largest provider of international qualifications. Around 1.5 million students from 150 countries enter Cambridge examinations every year. What makes educators around the world choose Cambridge?

### Recognition

A Cambridge International A or AS Level is recognised around the world by schools, universities and employers. The qualifications are accepted as proof of academic ability for entry to universities worldwide. Cambridge International A Levels typically take two years to complete and offer a flexible course of study that gives students the freedom to select subjects that are right for them. Cambridge International AS Levels often represent the first half of an A Level course but may also be taken as a freestanding qualification. They are accepted in all UK universities and carry half the weighting of an A Level. University course credit and advanced standing is often available for Cambridge International A/AS Levels in countries such as the USA and Canada. Learn more at [www.cie.org.uk/recognition](http://www.cie.org.uk/recognition).

### Support

CIE provides a world-class support service for teachers and exams officers. We offer a wide range of teacher materials to Centres, plus teacher training (online and face-to-face) and student support materials. Exams officers can trust in reliable, efficient administration of exams entry and excellent, personal support from CIE Customer Services. Learn more at [www.cie.org.uk/teachers](http://www.cie.org.uk/teachers).

### Excellence in education

Cambridge qualifications develop successful students. They not only build understanding and knowledge required for progression, but also learning and thinking skills that help students become independent learners and equip them for life.

### Not-for-profit, part of the University of Cambridge

CIE is part of Cambridge Assessment, a not-for-profit organisation and part of the University of Cambridge. The needs of teachers and learners are at the core of what we do. CIE invests constantly in improving its qualifications and services. We draw upon education research in developing our qualifications.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.2 Why choose Cambridge International AS Level General Paper?

Cambridge International AS Level General Paper is accepted by universities and employers as proof of understanding and ability to communicate in English. The AS Level General Paper syllabus is multi-disciplinary, with subject matter drawn from across the curriculum. In broad terms, the syllabus encourages students to:

- make cross-curricular links
- develop maturity of thought
- achieve an understanding of (and ability in) the English language which enables them to express arguments, ideas and opinions in a reflective and academic manner.

Although an awareness of the wider implications of particular issues will improve the quality of students' learning, the AS Level General Paper is not a test of general knowledge.

## 1.3 How can I find out more?

### If you are already a Cambridge Centre

You can make entries for this qualification through your usual channels, e.g. CIE Direct. If you have any queries, please contact us at **[international@cie.org.uk](mailto:international@cie.org.uk)**.

### If you are not a Cambridge Centre

You can find out how your organisation can become a Cambridge Centre. Email us at **[international@cie.org.uk](mailto:international@cie.org.uk)**. Learn more about the benefits of becoming a Cambridge Centre at **[www.cie.org.uk](http://www.cie.org.uk)**.

## 2. Assessment at a glance

### Cambridge International AS Level General Paper Syllabus code 8004

The Cambridge International AS Level General Paper is assessed by one examination which is held in the **June** and **November** examination sessions.

Written examination	2 hours
The exam paper is divided into three sections, each section comprising five questions.	
Candidates must choose two questions, each from a different section.	
Each question is weighted at 50% of the final mark.	

The exam tests candidates' understanding and use of English, and the extent to which they have achieved a maturity of thought appropriate to sixth-form students in their second year. It is not primarily a test of general knowledge.

Copies of all Cambridge International AS Level General Paper syllabuses can be found on the CIE website. If there is any confusion, please contact CIE before making any entries.

# 3. Syllabus aims and assessment

## 3.1 Aims

The aims of the AS Level General Paper are to:

- promote the skills of rational thought, persuasion, analysis, interpretation and evaluation
- encourage the exploration and appraisal of social, cultural, economic, philosophical, scientific and technological issues
- promote maturity of thought and clarity of expression
- promote understanding and appreciation of individual, societal and cultural diversity
- encourage independent, critical reading.

## 3.2 Assessment objectives

In the AS Level General Paper syllabus, assessment objectives relate to the skills of:

- knowledge
- understanding
- analysis
- application
- communication
- evaluation.

In the assessment, candidates should therefore be able to demonstrate:

- knowledge and understanding in relation to the topic areas identified in the syllabus
- knowledge of methods and techniques appropriate to a specific task
- the ability to identify, select and interpret, through reasoned consideration, material (including knowledge) appropriate to a specific task
- the ability to apply knowledge, understanding and analysis in relation to a specific task (e.g. in drawing inferences, providing explanations, constructing and developing arguments, understanding the implications of a suggested course of action or conclusion, etc.)
- the ability to exercise evaluation and discrimination in assessing evidence, ideas and opinions in order to formulate a supported conclusion
- the ability to communicate information, ideas and opinions in a clear, concise, logical and appropriate manner.

# 3. Syllabus aims and assessment

## 3.3 Exam combinations

Candidates can combine this syllabus in an exam session with any other CIE syllabus, except:

- 8001 AS General Paper
- 8005 AS General Paper
- 8009 AS General Paper

# 4. Description of components

Questions are general in nature, demanding discussion and evaluation; answers are in the form of compositions of between 500–600 words.

In awarding marks, examiners will assess how well candidates have:

- used their specialised knowledge to answer questions on the broad aspects of school subjects
- discussed general topics which are not directly related to school subjects
- used the English language.

**All questions carry up to 30 marks for Content and up to 20 marks for Use of English.**

## 4.1 Topic areas and question focus

Topic areas are cross-curricular and comprehensive, and some may appear in more than one section. Teachers do not need to cover all the topic areas when teaching the course, as candidates should be able to draw upon knowledge and understanding gained when studying other subjects. The areas for consideration listed here are **suggestions only**. They are intended to help teachers devise and plan the course.

### **Section 1: Historical, social, economic, political and philosophical topics**

*Possible area for consideration:*

- the role of history and war; terrorism
- the role of the individual in society – the family, marriage, peer pressure, class
- cultural changes – youth and drug culture
- education and welfare
- sport, leisure, international competition
- wealth; changes in work practice
- the importance and impact of tourism on a country – implications for the economy, employment
- public transport, environmental concerns
- aid provision
- the State and its institutions; development of State, democracy post-imperialism, nationalism
- minority groups, pressure groups
- freedom of speech, action, thought
- judiciary
- matters of conscience, faith, tolerance, equality.

# 4. Description of components

## **Section 2: Science, including its history, philosophy, general principles and applications; geographical and mathematical topics**

*Possible area for consideration:*

- medical dilemmas and issues of research and ethics; concept of progress in science
- drug manufacture and provision
- diet, health education
- old and new industries
- spin-offs from space industry; weaponry
- information and communications technology; the Internet
- environmental concerns; renewable energy resources; climate change
- migration; population dynamics
- feeding the global population; farming techniques for the twenty-first century
- public transport and travel
- the uses and applications of mathematics in everyday life.

## **Section 3: Literature and language, arts and crafts**

*Possible area for consideration:*

- literature, biography, diary, science fiction
- language – heritage, tradition, dialect
- the global media – tv, radio, satellite; influence and controls; effects on lifestyle, culture and habits
- cultural dilution and diversification; advertising; role models
- censorship; privacy; the right to know; freedom of the press, etc. uses and abuses
- traditional arts and crafts; creativity; national heritage/preservation; effects of tourism
- architecture; painting; fashion; photography; sculpture; music; heritage etc.



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