

# CSEC English Language Exam Breakdown

Matthew Williams • English Language • April 25, 2026

## CSEC English Language Exam Breakdown

### Format

The CSEC English A examination assesses two core profiles:

- Understanding
- Expression

These determine how your marks are distributed across the exam.

Profile	Description
Understanding	Reading, interpreting, analysing meaning and information
Expression	Writing clearly, creatively, and persuasively

Total marks: **165**

The exam consists of **three papers**.

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### Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

**Duration:** 1 Hour 30 Minutes

**Questions:** 60

Paper 01 is a **reading and language analysis test**.

### Structure

- 25 Grammar and Mechanics Questions
- 35 Comprehension Questions based on:
  - Poem
  - Literary Extract

- Expository Passage
- Argumentative Passage
- Visual (Chart, Diagram, Advertisement)

## Skills Tested

- Grammar and sentence structure
- Vocabulary and meaning
- Reading comprehension
- Inference and interpretation
- Tone, bias, and purpose
- Visual literacy

### Paper 01 Tips

- Move quickly. Do not overthink single questions.
- Eliminate wrong answers first.
- Watch for subtle wording differences.
- Practice reading extracts efficiently.

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## Paper 02 – Structured and Extended Writing

**Duration:** 2 Hours 40 Minutes

This is the **main paper** and carries the most weight.

### Structure

- Section A – Summary (Compulsory)
  - Section B – Expository Writing (Compulsory)
  - Section C – Short Story (Choose 1 of 2)
  - Section D – Argumentative Writing (Compulsory)
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## Section A – Summary

### 25 Marks

Tests your ability to:

- Identify main ideas
  - Extract relevant information
  - Paraphrase accurately
  - Write concisely
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## Section B – Expository Writing

### 30 Marks

You respond to a stimulus as:

- Letter
- Report
- Email
- Article
- Notice

Tests your ability to:

- Communicate information clearly
  - Use correct format
  - Adjust tone and register
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## Section C – Short Story

### 25 Marks (Choose 1)

Tests your ability to:

- Create engaging narratives
- Structure a story effectively
- Use descriptive language
- Develop characters and setting

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## Section D – Argumentative Writing

### 25 Marks

You may write:

- Essay
- Speech
- Letter to Editor

Tests your ability to:

- Present logical arguments
- Support ideas with reasons
- Persuade effectively
- Maintain clear structure

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#### Paper 02 Tips

- Answer exactly what the question asks.
- Use correct format in Section B.
- Structure all writing clearly.
- Avoid vague points. Be specific.
- For argumentative writing, always justify your stance.

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## Paper 03 – School-Based Assessment (SBA)

This paper contributes **21%** of the total marks.

### Components

- Individual Research
- Group Work
- Oral Presentation
- Reflection

## Skills Assessed

- Communication
  - Organisation
  - Critical thinking
  - Collaboration
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## How You Are Actually Tested

The exam is built around two core abilities:

### Understanding

- Extracting explicit information
- Making inferences
- Identifying tone and bias
- Analysing language use
- Interpreting visuals

### Expression

- Writing clearly and accurately
  - Adapting tone and register
  - Structuring ideas logically
  - Persuading effectively
  - Writing creatively
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## Key Skill Areas

### Grammar and Mechanics

- Sentence structure
- Agreement and tense
- Punctuation
- Paragraphing

## **Informative Writing**

- Summaries
  - Reports
  - Instructions
  - Expository responses
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## **Argumentative Writing**

- Logical reasoning
  - Persuasion techniques
  - Bias detection
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## **Creative Writing**

- Narrative structure
  - Tone and mood
  - Descriptive language
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## **Comprehension**

- Main ideas
  - Inference
  - Cause and effect
  - Denotation vs connotation
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## **Common Mistakes**

- Writing too much in summaries
- Ignoring required format
- Weak grammar and sentence control
- Vague or unsupported arguments

- Poor story structure
  - Not answering the question directly
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## Study Strategy

### Understand, Do Not Memorise

English is skill-based. You must practise applying skills, not memorising content.

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### Practice Past Papers

Focus on:

- Question patterns
  - Timing
  - Mark scheme expectations
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### Master Writing Formats

You must be fluent in:

- Reports
  - Letters
  - Articles
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### Fix Grammar

Weak grammar affects **every section** of the exam.

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## Train Comprehension Daily

Use:

- Past papers
- Articles
- Opinion pieces

Focus on:

- Inference
  - Tone
  - Bias
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## Final Insight

English Language is not difficult because of content.

It is difficult because students:

- Misread questions
- Write vaguely
- Ignore structure

If you fix those, your grade jumps immediately.