



English Paper 1: answer guide

Warm-up level · 25 questions · 25 minutes · + optional 15-minute writing task



PrimaryTools

How to mark

- Give 1 mark for each correct answer. There are no half marks.
- Use the answer key below, then read the explanation and tip for every question your child got wrong – and for any they guessed.
- Fill in the topic table at the end. A pattern (for example, losing marks on several questions of one type) tells you what to practise next.

The writing task is marked separately, out of 10, using the mark scheme near the end of this guide. Don't add it to the score out of 25.

Answer key

Q	Answer	Q	Answer	Q	Answer	Q	Answer	Q	Answer
1	A	6	C 112	11	A	16	B beleives the	21	C walked
2	D	7	A	12	D	17	B "can I	22	D louder
3	C uneasy	8	D	13	C in his pockit	18	C	23	E noisily
4	E	9	E	14	B making a terible	19	E No mistake	24	A very old
5	B a simile	10	B circled	15	E No mistake	20	A The keepers	25	D whether

What the score means

Score	What it suggests
22-25	Secure at warm-up level. Move on to the standard papers (4-8).
18-21	A good start. Read the tips for the questions missed, then try the next paper.
12-17	Getting there. Use the topic table to choose one or two topics to practise before the next paper.
0-11	Some foundations need work. Practise the topics without a timer first, then come back to timed papers.

This is a warm-up paper, so scores will usually be higher than on the standard and stretch papers. Scores on practice papers are a guide only – they don't predict a pass mark, which varies by area and year.



Question by question

Each answer shows how to work it out, and a **Next time** tip aimed at the most common mistake.

Question 1 - Answer A: The wind was howling.

Comprehension - Finding information (retrieval)

Why did Maya not sleep well on her first night?

The first paragraph says she 'lay awake listening to' the wind as it howled and hurled itself against the walls.

Next time: For 'why' questions, find the exact sentence in the passage that gives the reason. Don't choose an answer that just sounds likely - it must be in the text.

Question 2 - Answer D: It was a soft, faded light blue.

Comprehension - Understanding descriptive language

"The sky was the pale, washed blue of an old pair of jeans." What does this tell us about the sky?

Old jeans that have been washed many times turn pale and faded. The writer is comparing the colour of the sky to that soft, light blue.

Next time: When a writer compares two things, ask: what do they have in common? Here it's the colour, not the pattern or the material.

Question 3 - Answer C: uneasy

Comprehension - Inferring feelings

Which word best describes how Maya felt about the wind at the start of the story?

She 'had never liked the wind', lay awake listening to it and thought it 'sounded angry'. This shows she felt uneasy (worried and uncomfortable).

Next time: Look for clues the writer gives about a character's feelings - what they do, say and notice - then pick the word that fits all of the clues.

Question 4 - Answer E: The pan was very old.

Comprehension - Inferring meaning

Grandad was frying eggs "in a pan that was older than he was". What does this suggest?

Grandad is old, so a pan that is older than him must be very old indeed. The writer is using a light-hearted exaggeration.

Next time: Read the phrase carefully and think about what it really means. 'Older than he was' is describing the pan, not Grandad or the eggs.



Question 5 - Answer B: a simile

Comprehension - Language techniques

The shed "leaned against the fence like a tired horse". What kind of language is this?

A simile compares two things using 'like' or 'as'. The shed is compared to a tired horse using the word 'like'.

Next time: Learn the key techniques: simile (uses like/as), metaphor (says something IS something else), alliteration (same starting sound), onomatopoeia (a word that sounds like the noise, e.g. clunk).

Question 6 - Answer C: 112

Comprehension - Finding information (retrieval)

How many steps did the lighthouse keeper climb each night?

Grandad says she 'climbed a hundred and twelve steps to light the lamp'. 20 is the number of years she did it.

Next time: When numbers are written in words, write them as digits in the margin. Check you've picked the right number - the passage mentions more than one.

Question 7 - Answer A: Maya's great-grandmother

Comprehension - Finding information (retrieval)

Who was the last keeper of the lighthouse?

Grandad says, 'Your great-grandmother was the last keeper.' The passage says nobody has lived there for years - not that nobody ever did.

Next time: Watch out for answers that twist the text slightly. 'For years' and 'ever' mean different things.

Question 8 - Answer D: to check that it is safe

Comprehension - Finding information (retrieval)

Why has Grandad been asked to go into the lighthouse?

Grandad explains that the council wants to make it a museum and has 'asked me to check that everything inside is safe'.

Next time: Skim for key words from the question (here, 'asked') to find the right part of the passage quickly.



Question 9 - Answer E: She was so excited about the lighthouse that she stopped worrying.

Comprehension - Inferring feelings

"For the first time since she had arrived, she forgot all about the wind." What does this sentence show?

It comes straight after Grandad gives her the key and asks her to help. Her new excitement pushes the wind out of her mind.

Next time: Look at what happens just before the sentence. The cause of a change in feelings is usually close by.

Question 10 - Answer B: circled

Comprehension - Word meaning in context

"Gulls wheeled and shrieked above them." Which word is closest in meaning to "wheeled" here?

Birds that 'wheel' fly round and round in circles. The gulls are flying above them, so 'landed' and 'rested' don't fit.

Next time: Swap each option into the sentence and read it back. Only one will make sense for birds in the sky.

Question 11 - Answer A: It would not turn.

Comprehension - Finding information (retrieval)

What happened the first time Maya tried the key in the lock?

The passage says 'It would not turn.' It only worked when she tried again.

Next time: Questions about the order of events need you to find the exact moment in the text. 'The first time' is a clue to read carefully around that point.

Question 12 - Answer D: nervous but determined

Comprehension - Inferring feelings

Which phrase best describes how Maya feels at the very end of the passage?

Taking 'a deep breath' suggests she is a little nervous, but she still 'began to climb', which shows she is determined.

Next time: Feelings can be mixed. Check both halves of a two-part answer against the text - both must be true.

Question 13 - Answer C: 'in his pockit'

Spelling

(A) Grandad carried | (B) the heavy key | (C) in his pockit | (D) all morning.

'pockit' should be spelt 'pocket'.

Next time: Words ending in an 'it' sound are often spelt -et: pocket, ticket, jacket, bucket. Say the word slowly in your head as it is spelt: pock-et.



Question 14 - Answer B: 'making a terrible'

Spelling

(A) *The seagulls were* | (B) *making a terrible* | (C) *noise above* | (D) *the harbour*.

'terible' should be spelt 'terrible', with a double r.

Next time: Some words have a double letter you can't hear: terrible, carrot, tomorrow, necessary. Keep a list of the ones you get wrong.

Question 15 - Answer E: No mistake

Spelling

(A) *Maya climbed the* | (B) *narrow staircase* | (C) *very carefully* | (D) *to the top*.

Every word is spelt correctly, so the answer is E.

Next time: Don't assume there must be a mistake. Check each section once, carefully, then trust your answer - 'no mistake' is right sometimes.

Question 16 - Answer B: 'beleives the'

Spelling

(A) *The council* | (B) *beleives the* | (C) *museum will* | (D) *open in May*.

'beleives' should be spelt 'believes'.

Next time: Remember 'i' before e except after c' when the sound is 'ee': believe, field, chief - but receive, ceiling.

Question 17 - Answer B: "can I"

Punctuation - Punctuating speech

(A) *Maya asked,* | (B) *"can I* | (C) *come with* | (D) *you?"*

The first word spoken inside speech marks needs a capital letter: "Can I come with you?"

Next time: Speech always starts with a capital letter, even if it's in the middle of a sentence.

Question 18 - Answer C: 'sandwiches apples'

Punctuation - Commas in lists

(A) *For the picnic* | (B) *we packed* | (C) *sandwiches apples* | (D) *and juice*.

Items in a list need commas between them: sandwiches, apples and juice.

Next time: Say the list aloud. Wherever you would pause between two items, there should be a comma (no comma is needed before 'and').



Question 19 - Answer E: No mistake

Punctuation

(A) *The lighthouse* | (B) *stood on the rocks* | (C) *at the end* | (D) *of the bay*.

The sentence starts with a capital letter, ends with a full stop and needs no other punctuation. The answer is E.

Next time: Check three things: a capital at the start, the right mark at the end, and any commas or apostrophes in the middle.

Question 20 - Answer A: 'The keepers'

Punctuation - Apostrophes for possession

(A) *The keepers* | (B) *lamp could be* | (C) *seen from* | (D) *miles away*.

The lamp belongs to the keeper, so it needs an apostrophe: the keeper's lamp.

Next time: Ask 'does something belong to it?' If yes, add an apostrophe before the s: the keeper's lamp, Maya's key.

Question 21 - Answer C: walked

Grammar & vocabulary - Verb tenses

Choose the word that completes the sentence correctly: *Maya and her grandad _____ to the lighthouse yesterday.*

'Yesterday' tells us it happened in the past, so we need the past tense: walked.

Next time: Look for time words (yesterday, tomorrow, now, last week) - they tell you which tense to use.

Question 22 - Answer D: louder

Grammar & vocabulary - Comparatives

Choose the word that completes the sentence correctly: *The storm was _____ than the one the night before.*

When comparing two things, add -er to a short adjective: louder. 'More louder' is wrong because it uses two comparing words.

Next time: Two things: -er (louder). Three or more: -est (loudest). Never use 'more' as well as -er.

Question 23 - Answer E: noisily

Grammar & vocabulary - Word classes

Which word is the adverb in this sentence? *The gulls shrieked noisily above the boats.*

An adverb tells us more about a verb. 'Noisily' tells us how the gulls shrieked.

Next time: Many adverbs end in -ly and answer 'how?'. Find the verb first (shrieked), then ask 'shrieked how?'



Question 24 - Answer A: very old

Grammar & vocabulary - Vocabulary

Which word is closest in meaning to ANCIENT?

Ancient means very old. 'Modern' is its opposite.

Next time: Opposites are often included as a trap. Make sure you choose the word with the SAME meaning, not the opposite.

Question 25 - Answer D: whether

Grammar & vocabulary - Homophones

Choose the correct word: Maya couldn't decide _____ to climb the stairs or wait outside.

'Whether' is used when there is a choice between options. 'Weather' means rain, sun and wind.

Next time: Homophones sound the same but mean different things. Whether = if (a choice); weather = rain or shine.



Marking the optional writing task

Prompt: *Continue the story. Maya has started to climb the lighthouse stairs. Write what happens next, including what she finds at the top.*

Award marks for each strand below, then add them up for a mark out of 10. Use the model answer as a guide to what a strong response looks like at this level – it doesn't need to be as polished to score well.

Strand	Marks	What to look for
Ideas and content	3	Continues the story sensibly from the ending; includes interesting detail about what Maya finds; keeps Maya's character consistent.
Structure	2	Clear beginning, middle and end; paragraphs used for new events or speech.
Vocabulary	2	Well-chosen verbs and adjectives; at least one simile or other technique used well.
Spelling, punctuation and grammar	3	Mostly accurate spelling; capital letters, full stops and commas; speech punctuated correctly if used.
Total	10	

Quick guide to marks

8–10: a lively, well-organised continuation with careful language and few errors. 5–7: a clear continuation with some good choices but uneven paragraphing or several errors. 2–4: a short or muddled response that loses track of the story. 0–1: very little written, or off the task.

Model answer

The stairs creaked under Maya's trainers as she climbed, round and round, until her legs began to ache. At last she reached a small wooden door with a brass handle shaped like a fish. She pushed it open.

Sunlight flooded in. The room at the top was made almost entirely of glass, and in the middle stood the great lamp, its huge lens glittering like a giant jewel. Dusty charts covered a desk by the window. On top of them lay a notebook with a faded blue cover.

Maya opened it carefully. On the first page, in neat, curly handwriting, someone had written: 'Lamp lit at sunset. Wind from the west. All ships safe.'

"That's your great-grandmother's writing," said Grandad softly, appearing behind her, out of breath.

Maya looked out at the calm, silver sea and smiled. Somehow, she didn't mind the wind any more.

Why it works

- Picks up exactly where the passage ends and links back to the beginning (the wind).
- Similes ('like a fish', 'like a giant jewel') and strong verbs ('flooded', 'glittering').
- Short paragraphs, with a new paragraph for speech.
- A satisfying ending that shows how Maya has changed.



Next time: Planning for two minutes makes the writing better, not slower. End by linking back to the start of the story – it makes the piece feel complete. Read your work back in your head: if you run out of breath, you probably need a full stop.



Topic table

Tick the questions your child got right and write the total for each topic. Topics where marks were lost are the ones to practise first.

Topic	Questions	Score	Skills tested
Comprehension	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	/ 12	Finding information (retrieval); Understanding descriptive language; Inferring feelings; Inferring meaning; Language techniques; Word meaning in context
Spelling	13, 14, 15, 16	/ 4	Spelling
Punctuation	17, 18, 19, 20	/ 4	Punctuating speech; Commas in lists; Punctuation; Apostrophes for possession
Grammar & vocabulary	21, 22, 23, 24, 25	/ 5	Verb tenses; Comparatives; Word classes; Vocabulary; Homophones
Total		/ 25	

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