



# Practice Exam - Education and School Life

Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511 | Reading practice paper

## Exercise 1

Read the article about student-led noticeboards then answer the questions.

### Noticeboards run by students

A secondary school in Manchester has replaced several old noticeboards with student-led information boards. Each board focuses on a different area of school life, such as clubs, competitions, volunteering and revision support. The boards are updated every Friday by a small team of students who check dates with teachers before anything is displayed.

The idea began after students complained that important information was spread across too many places. Some announcements appeared in emails, others were mentioned in assemblies, and posters were sometimes left up long after an event had finished. The new boards aim to make information easier to find and more reliable.

Students apply to join the noticeboard team at the start of each term. They need to be organised, but they do not have to be top students. The teacher in charge says the role is useful for quieter pupils because it gives them responsibility without forcing them to speak in front of large groups. Team members learn to summarise information clearly and decide what should be displayed first.

The boards have also changed how clubs advertise. Instead of putting up crowded posters, clubs now send a short description, the meeting time and the name of the teacher responsible. This makes the boards easier to read. If an event is cancelled, the team adds a red update card so students do not waste time going to the wrong room. The noticeboard team also meets once a month to discuss which boards are being ignored. If a board has too much text, they remove old items and replace long announcements with shorter summaries.

There are still challenges. Popular boards become crowded near exam time, and students sometimes request colourful designs that are difficult to read. However, staff say the boards have reduced repeated questions about dates and rooms. More importantly, students feel that school information belongs partly to them, not only to teachers. Students have suggested adding a small section for achievements, but staff want to avoid turning the boards into a popularity display. For now, the focus remains on information that helps students take part in school life.

The noticeboards are checked at the end of each week, but teachers do not rewrite the students' messages unless there is a factual mistake. This makes the boards feel less official than the school website, while still keeping information accurate enough for younger pupils and parents.

## Exercise 1 questions

Answer the questions using information from the article. Write short answers.

1 How often are the boards updated? [1]

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2 Who do students check dates with before displaying information? [1]

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3 Where were some announcements previously mentioned? [1]

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4 When can students apply to join the noticeboard team? [1]

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5 Which pupils may find the role especially useful? [1]

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6 Give three ways the student noticeboard system helps manage school information. [3]

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## Exercise 2

Read the article about four school spaces (A-D). Then answer Questions 9(a)-9(i).

### A Quiet study room

The quiet study room is open before school and during lunch. Students can use it without booking, but they must work silently. It is popular before exams because phones are kept in a box near the door. Some students say the rule is strict, but others like having one place where nobody is allowed to chat. The room is checked by a duty teacher, but students are expected to manage their own revision once inside. Phones are kept in bags unless they are needed for a specific task. The room has a sign reminding users that whispering still disturbs others.

### B Project corner

The project corner contains large tables, card, glue and display materials. It is designed for group work rather than individual revision. Teachers can reserve it for lessons, but students may use it after school if a member of staff is nearby. The space becomes messy quickly, so users must clear tables before leaving. Teachers keep spare display labels nearby because groups often forget to name their work clearly. Visitors are invited to leave written comments after viewing the projects. Students must clear unfinished materials into labelled trays before leaving.

### C Peer help desk

The peer help desk is run by older students twice a week. Younger students can ask for help with homework or school routines. The helpers do not complete work for anyone; they ask questions and show examples. The desk is busiest at the start of the year when new students are still learning how the school works. Helpers write common questions in a notebook so the school can improve information for new students. They also guide visitors to subject rooms that are difficult to find. Questions are written on cards, so helpers do not have to repeat instructions.

### D Reflection room

The reflection room is a calm space for students who need a short break during the day. It is not a punishment room, and students stay for only ten minutes unless a teacher agrees otherwise. There are breathing cards and simple drawing materials. Students must speak to a staff member before returning to class. The room is deliberately plain because too much decoration can make it less calming. Students may stay for ten minutes or a whole break, depending on what they need. The space is booked for short sessions after difficult lessons or meetings.

## Exercise 2 questions

For each statement, write the correct letter A, B, C or D on the line. Each letter may be used more than once.

No.	Which school space...	A-D
9(a)	is most useful when new students are still settling in	.....
9(b)	requires students to leave phones in a particular place	.....
9(c)	contains materials for making displays	.....
9(d)	is not meant to be used for a long time	.....
9(e)	does not allow talking	.....
9(f)	requires users to tidy before they go	.....
9(g)	helps without doing the work for students	.....
9(h)	has activities designed to help students calm down	.....
9(i)	can be reserved by teachers	.....

## Exercise 3

Read the article about school equipment libraries then complete the notes.

### Borrowing equipment at school

Some schools have introduced equipment libraries so students can borrow items they need for lessons or clubs. The libraries may include calculators, art materials, sports equipment and musical instruments. The aim is to make participation easier for students who forget items occasionally or cannot buy everything at once.

The system works best when borrowing is simple. Students sign items out with their name and return them by a clear deadline. Expensive items may require a teacher's signature, while everyday items such as rulers can be borrowed quickly from a box near the classroom door. Schools avoid asking students to explain why they need equipment because this can feel embarrassing.

Organisation is important. Items need labels, storage space and regular checks for damage. Some schools train student monitors to count equipment at the end of the week. This gives students responsibility and reduces the amount of extra work for teachers. If items are lost, staff try to understand the pattern before blaming individual students. The library is usually open at break and lunch, but some schools also allow borrowing before important club meetings. This helps students who realise at the last minute that they do not have what they need. A simple online list shows staff which items are borrowed most often.

Equipment libraries can also reduce waste. Instead of every family buying items that may be used only a few times, schools can share resources. However, the system needs funding at the start and clear rules about care. A library is useful only if students trust that the equipment will be available when they need it. Teachers say the system works best when returns are treated calmly. If students fear punishment for every mistake, they may avoid borrowing even when the library exists to help them. The aim is responsibility, but also equal access to the equipment needed for school life.

The library keeps the most commonly forgotten items near the desk, such as calculators, rulers and sports bibs. More expensive equipment is stored separately and signed out by a member of staff, which prevents arguments about who last used it.

### Exercise 3 questions

Complete the notes using information from the article. Write short words or phrases.

Notes	Write short answers
10 Items students may borrow	- ..... - ..... - .....
11 How schools organise equipment libraries	- ..... - ..... - ..... - .....

## Exercise 4

Read the article about becoming a school guide then answer the questions.

### Showing visitors around school

When I volunteered to be a school guide on open evening, I thought the job would be simple. I knew the building well, and I assumed visitors would mainly ask where the science rooms and sports hall were. Ten minutes into my first tour, a parent asked what it felt like to start Year 10. I realised directions were only a small part of the role.

Our teacher had told us not to memorise a speech. She said visitors could read facts in the prospectus; they wanted to hear what school life actually felt like. At first, this made me nervous because personal answers seemed easier to get wrong. Then I understood that honest details were more useful than perfect sentences.

I showed one family the library, the drama studio and the outdoor seating area. Their daughter was quiet until I mentioned that I had been nervous on my first day and had got lost twice. She smiled and asked which staircase was most confusing. That question mattered more than any description of exam results.

The hardest part was balancing honesty with positivity. I did not pretend that homework was always easy or that every lunchtime was exciting. However, I explained where students could ask for help and which clubs made it easier to meet people. The visitors seemed to appreciate answers that sounded real. I also learned to notice parents' questions. Some wanted academic information, but others watched how students behaved in corridors or whether teachers greeted us by name.

By the end of the evening, I was tired but proud. Guiding visitors made me notice my school differently. I had walked through the same corridors for years without thinking about what they looked like to someone new. A good guide does not simply show rooms. A good guide helps people imagine belonging there. That made the evening feel more important. I was not selling the school; I was helping visitors decide whether it felt like a place where they could be comfortable. A short tour could not answer everything, but it could make the school feel less unknown.

The second group I guided asked fewer questions, but I noticed more. I pointed out the library entrance before anyone looked lost, and I stopped beside the noticeboard because parents were trying to read it while walking.

## Exercise 4 questions

For each question, choose the correct answer, A, B or C.

### 12 What did the writer first expect the guide role to involve? [1]

- A answering questions about exams only
- B giving directions around the building
- C making a speech to all visitors

### 13 Why did personal answers make the writer nervous? [1]

- A They had to be read from the prospectus.
- B They were not allowed by the teacher.
- C They seemed easier to get wrong.

### 14 What helped the quiet visitor begin asking questions? [1]

- A The writer admitted he had once felt nervous.
- B The library was larger than expected.
- C The teacher joined the tour.

### 15 What balance did the writer try to achieve? [1]

- A being honest but positive
- B being funny but brief
- C being formal but silent

### 16 How did guiding affect the writer? [1]

- A It made him want to leave the school.
- B It made him memorise more facts.
- C It made him see the school from a new perspective.

### 17 What is the writer's main point about a good guide? [1]

- A They know every exam result.
- B They help visitors imagine fitting in.
- C They avoid personal details.

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## Exercise 1

1. every Friday
2. teachers
3. assemblies
4. at the start of each term
5. quieter pupils
6. team members learn to summarise information clearly; red update cards show cancelled events; boards have reduced repeated questions about dates and rooms

## Exercise 2

9(a) C; 9(b) A; 9(c) B; 9(d) D; 9(e) A; 9(f) B; 9(g) C; 9(h) D; 9(i) B

## Exercise 3

### 10 Items students may borrow

- calculators
- art materials
- musical instruments

### 11 How schools organise equipment libraries

- sign items out with their name
- return them by a clear deadline
- regular checks for damage
- student monitors to count equipment

## Exercise 4

12 B; 13 C; 14 A; 15 A; 16 C; 17 B

- 12 B - He expected questions about rooms and directions.
- 13 C - He says personal answers seemed easier to get wrong.
- 14 A - She smiles after he mentions being nervous and getting lost.
- 15 A - He did not pretend everything was easy but explained support.
- 16 C - He noticed what school looked like to someone new.
- 17 B - He says a guide helps people imagine belonging there.