



# Practice Exam - Home and Local Area

Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511 | Reading practice paper

## Exercise 1

Read the article about changing an unused shop into a community space then answer the questions.

### A new use for an old shop

When a small grocery shop closed on a residential street, the empty building quickly became a problem. Posters covered the windows, rubbish collected near the doorway and people complained that the street looked neglected. Instead of waiting for a business to rent the building, a local group asked the owner whether it could be used temporarily as a community space. At first, some residents doubted the idea because previous short-term projects had disappeared quickly. The group therefore published a simple monthly timetable and placed it in the window so people could see that the space was being used regularly.

The owner agreed to a six-month trial because the building would be looked after. Volunteers cleaned the front room, repaired shelves and painted the walls a pale colour so the room felt brighter. They did not change the outside sign at first, because they wanted residents to recognise the building and feel curious about its new purpose.

The space now hosts practical sessions rather than large events. On Monday mornings, residents can get help filling in forms. On Wednesday afternoons, a homework table is available for secondary students who need a quiet place before going home. Once a month, local workers run short repair sessions for small household items, although they do not fix electrical equipment.

The group has been careful not to compete with nearby businesses. It does not sell coffee, snacks or second-hand clothes, because those services already exist on the street. Instead, the project focuses on things that are useful but not profitable. This has helped shop owners support the project rather than see it as a threat.

The trial has changed how residents see the street. People stop to read the weekly timetable, and the doorway is no longer used as a place to leave rubbish. The project may not stay in the building forever, but it has shown that an empty shop can become more than a sign of decline. With clear rules and local support, it can give a neighbourhood somewhere to meet. The owner has not promised to keep the arrangement permanently, but says the building is in better condition now than when it was empty.

## Exercise 1 questions

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

1 What covered the shop windows after it closed? [1]

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2 How long was the first trial? [1]

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3 What colour were the walls painted? [1]

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4 Why was the outside sign not changed at first? [1]

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5 When can residents get help filling in forms? [1]

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6 List three features of the community shop project. [3]

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## Exercise 2

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

### A Pocket garden

A narrow piece of land beside a bus stop has been planted with herbs and low flowers. The garden is small, but it gives people something pleasant to look at while waiting. Volunteers chose plants that can survive dry weather, because nobody can water them every day. A sign asks people not to pick the herbs until they are fully grown. A local gardening club checks the soil twice a month and replaces plants that have been damaged by dogs or bicycles. The gardening club replaces plants damaged by bicycles or dogs.

### B Shared tool shed

Residents can borrow basic tools from a locked shed near the community hall. The scheme is useful for people who need a drill or ladder only once or twice a year. Borrowers must book items online and return them clean. The shed cannot offer expensive equipment because insurance would become too costly. The booking system also shows whether an item is heavy, so borrowers can arrange transport before collecting it. A volunteer checks the shed each Sunday evening and notes missing parts before the next bookings begin. Borrowers sign for tools so missing items can be traced.

### C Safer crossing

A new crossing has been painted near the primary school after parents complained about speeding traffic. The crossing includes brighter road markings and a raised section that forces drivers to slow down. Some drivers dislike the change, but teachers say children now have a clearer place to cross. Parents say the raised section is useful because drivers notice the crossing before they reach the school gate. Parents say the raised section makes drivers notice the crossing sooner.

### D Weekend noticeboard

A noticeboard outside the library lists free weekend activities in the area. It is updated every Thursday afternoon so families can plan before Saturday. The board is deliberately simple: posters must include a time, place and contact number. Events are removed after they happen, which keeps the space tidy. The librarian checks spelling and dates before notices are printed, because mistakes can send families to the wrong place. Old posters are removed after the event so families are not misled.

The council page compares improvements that residents can notice quickly with changes that need regular care. A new crossing is visible immediately, while gardens and noticeboards only work if someone maintains them.

## 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 local improvement...	A-D
9(a)	is updated shortly before the weekend	.....
9(b)	helps people avoid buying something they rarely need	.....
9(c)	was introduced after worries about traffic speed	.....
9(d)	needs plants that do not require daily care	.....
9(e)	has rules about cleaning borrowed items	.....
9(f)	requires event posters to include contact information	.....
9(g)	may be unpopular with some drivers	.....
9(h)	asks people not to take something too early	.....
9(i)	cannot include costly equipment because of insurance	.....

## Exercise 3

Read the article about making a residents' noticeboard useful then complete the notes.

### Notices people actually read

Many blocks of flats have noticeboards, but residents often ignore them because they are crowded with old papers. A useful noticeboard needs clear rules. One residents' group decided that every notice must show a date, a contact name and the area of the building affected. Anything without these details is removed after one week.

The group also changed the position of the board. It had been placed near the back stairs, where only a few people passed it. The new board is beside the lifts, close to the mailboxes. Residents naturally pause there, so they are more likely to read short announcements about cleaning days, water repairs or lost keys.

Design matters too. Emergency notices use red paper, building work uses yellow paper and social events use green paper. This colour system helps residents find the type of information they need quickly. Long messages are not allowed. If a topic needs more explanation, the notice gives a website link or invites residents to a meeting. The group discovered that residents were more likely to read notices that affected their own floor or entrance. For this reason, urgent building notices are copied onto smaller boards near the relevant staircases.

The board is checked every Friday by two volunteers. They remove expired notices, wipe the plastic cover and photograph important notices before taking them down. This creates a simple record if anyone later asks when information was shared. The volunteers say the board works because it is treated as a shared service, not a wall for forgotten paper. Volunteers avoid removing personal notices too quickly if they concern lost keys or pets. However, they add a removal date in pencil so the board does not slowly fill with problems that have already been solved. The system works because residents can trust that recent notices really are recent.

Residents are asked which notices they actually used during the month. Short comments help the organisers see whether people need more local events, clearer dates or better information about transport and costs.

The team also tests the board from a distance. If the main date or place cannot be read quickly, the notice is redesigned before more copies are printed.

### Exercise 3 questions

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

Notes	Write short answers
10 Rules for notices	- ..... - ..... - .....
11 How the noticeboard is kept useful	- ..... - ..... - ..... - .....

## Exercise 4

Read the article about moving to a quieter street then answer the questions.

### The quiet street

When my family moved from a main road to a quiet street, I expected everything to improve immediately. Our old flat shook when heavy buses passed, and I often had to close the window to hear my online lessons. The new street had trees, small front gardens and almost no traffic. On the first evening, I thought the silence was perfect.

After a week, I began to miss the main road. That surprised me. I did not miss the noise, but I missed being close to everything. Near the old flat, I could buy bread in three minutes or meet friends at the bus stop without planning. In the new area, every errand required more time, and buses came less often after six o'clock.

My younger brother adjusted faster because he liked having space to cycle. My parents also seemed calmer because parking was easier and neighbours said hello. I felt guilty for complaining, especially because the new flat was larger. Still, I realised that a good home is not just the rooms inside it; it is also the routes and routines around it.

Things improved when I started walking a different way to school. The route passed a small park and a local bakery I had not noticed before. I also joined a weekend football session at the community centre. These discoveries did not make the area as convenient as the old one, but they helped it become familiar. The move also changed how the writer used free time after school, because meeting friends now required checking bus times instead of simply walking outside.

Now I think moving changes your habits before it changes your feelings. A quiet street can be peaceful, but peace is not the same as belonging. I needed time to build ordinary routines: where to wait, where to shop and who I might meet. The new street became home slowly, not because it was perfect, but because I learned how to live there. He eventually understood why his parents had chosen the new flat, but that did not make the adjustment automatic.

After a few weeks, I missed the old street less, but not for the reason I expected. It was not only the silence; it was being able to notice neighbours, gardens and small routines.

## Exercise 4 questions

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

### 12 Why did the writer expect the new street to be better? [1]

- A The old flat was affected by traffic noise.
- B The new flat was next to a bus stop.
- C His friends already lived nearby.

### 13 What did the writer miss about the main road? [1]

- A parking spaces
- B large gardens
- C convenience

### 14 Why did the writer feel guilty? [1]

- A He had asked to move house.
- B Other family members seemed happier.
- C His brother could not cycle there.

### 15 What helped the new area become familiar? [1]

- A moving back near the main road
- B staying indoors more often
- C finding local places and activities

### 16 What does the writer suggest about belonging? [1]

- A It depends only on having a quiet street.
- B It develops through routines over time.
- C It happens as soon as a home is larger.

### 17 What is the writer's final view of the move? [1]

- A It became positive gradually.
- B It was a mistake from the beginning.
- C It solved every problem immediately.

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## Exercise 1

1. posters
2. six months
3. a pale colour
4. so residents would recognise the building / feel curious
5. Monday mornings
6. electrical equipment is not repaired; the project does not sell services already on the street; people stop to read the weekly timetable

## Exercise 2

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

## Exercise 3

### 10 Rules for notices

- show a date
- a contact name
- the area of the building affected

### 11 How the noticeboard is kept useful

- placed beside the lifts / close to the mailboxes
- colour system / uses red, yellow and green paper
- checked every Friday
- photograph important notices

## Exercise 4

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

12 A - Heavy buses shook the old flat and made lessons hard to hear.

13 C - He missed being close to shops and friends.

14 B - His brother and parents adjusted more easily.

15 C - He found a park, bakery and football session.

16 B - He needed time to build ordinary routines.

17 A - The street became home slowly.