



# Environment and Conservation

Note-taking: repair cafes | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511

## 1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. What broken items do people usually throw away in your area?
2. Why might repairing things be better than buying new ones?
3. What skills could young people learn at a repair event?
4. Would you take something to a repair cafe? Why, or why not?

### Exercise 3 at a glance

In this activity, you will read one factual text and complete notes using information from the text. In the exam, this task is usually worth 7 marks. This practice version includes extra notes to help you build confidence. Use short words or phrases from the text, not your own ideas.

## 2. Read for overall understanding

Read the text. What are two main aims of repair cafes?

### Repair Cafes

Repair cafes are community events where people bring broken household items instead of throwing them away. They are often held in libraries, school halls or community centres once a month. Volunteers help visitors repair clothes, lamps, toys and small pieces of furniture. The main aim is to reduce waste, but organisers also want to teach people practical repair skills. The atmosphere is usually informal, with people waiting at tables and talking about how long they have owned each item.

At a typical repair cafe, visitors describe the problem first. A volunteer then checks whether the item is safe to repair. Electrical items are tested carefully, and anything dangerous is refused. For simple repairs, visitors are encouraged to take part rather than watch silently. They might sew on a button, replace a loose screw or learn how to clean a blocked part. This matters because the event is not just a free repair service; it is also a chance to understand how everyday objects work.

Repair cafes can change how people think about consumer life. Many visitors realise that a product is not useless just because one part has broken. Some also become more aware of advertising that pushes people to replace things quickly. In one town, students created posters showing how repairing old items can save money and protect natural resources. The posters were displayed near the school canteen, where students could discuss whether second-hand goods should be seen as normal.

There are limits. Volunteers cannot fix everything, and some spare parts are difficult to find. Organisers also need insurance, safe tools and enough time between visitors. Even when an item cannot be repaired, the event can still be useful because people learn what caused the problem. Supporters say repair cafes help communities cut down on waste and value everyday objects more carefully. They also give younger people a practical way to discuss sustainability, instead of only hearing warnings about climate change. Some schools now invite repair cafe volunteers to technology lessons so students can see how design choices affect the life of a product. This makes the environmental message feel practical rather than abstract.

### 3. Strategy focus

#### Watch for reasons and results

A paragraph may explain why something happens and what result it has. Use the heading to decide whether your note should be a reason, an action or a result.

### 4. Practice note-taking task

Complete the notes using information from the text. Use short words or phrases from the text. Do not add your own ideas.

Notes	Write short answers
Where repair cafes are held	- ..... - ..... - .....
Items volunteers help repair	- ..... - ..... - .....
Safety and learning	- ..... - ..... - .....
Limits and benefits	- ..... - ..... - .....

### 5. Vocabulary notebook

Underline five useful words or phrases from the text. Check their meaning, then record them in your vocabulary notebook.

### 6. Follow-up tasks

1. Discussion: Which item would be most useful to repair instead of replace?
2. Strategy: Choose three answers and underline the shortest exact phrase in the text that supports each one.
3. Writing: Write a short advert for a school repair cafe.
4. Vocabulary: Circle words and phrases connected to waste, repair and consumer life.

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Note-taking: repair cafes

## 2. Read for overall understanding

Suggested answer: to reduce waste and teach people practical repair skills.

## 4. Practice note-taking task

### Where repair cafes are held

- libraries
- school halls
- community centres

### Items volunteers help repair

- clothes
- lamps / toys
- small pieces of furniture

### Safety and learning

- checks whether the item is safe
- electrical items are tested carefully
- visitors are encouraged to take part

### Limits and benefits

- volunteers cannot fix everything / spare parts are difficult to find
- cut down on waste
- value everyday objects more carefully

## Notes for checking

This is an extended practice version of the IGCSE ESL note-taking task. The live exam normally has fewer marks, but this version includes extra notes to build confidence and selection skills.

Accept short phrases that keep the same meaning.

Learners should avoid copying a whole sentence if a shorter note answers the heading.

Some answers need more than one or two words, especially when the key detail is a phrase.