



Global Issues

Note-taking: community food banks | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. Why might families need support with food?
2. What should charities do to protect people's dignity?
3. How can schools help local charities?
4. What problems might a food bank face?

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 do food banks try to provide besides food?

Community Food Banks

Community food banks collect and distribute food to people who are finding it difficult to afford regular meals. The parcels may include rice, pasta, tins, cereal and long-life milk. However, many organisers say food banks try to provide dignity, practical support and links to other services, not only emergency food.

Dignity affects how the service is organised. Some food banks allow visitors to choose items from shelves instead of receiving a prepared parcel. Others use appointment times so people do not have to wait in a public queue. Volunteers are trained to speak respectfully, protect personal information and avoid asking unnecessary questions.

Schools sometimes support food banks through collection days. Students bring long-life food, toiletries or cleaning products. Teachers may use the project to discuss poverty, inequality and the cost of living. Some schools also invite charity workers to explain which donations are useful and why fresh food can be difficult to store safely.

Food banks face several challenges. They need reliable donations, enough storage space and volunteers who can lift heavy boxes. Demand can rise during school holidays, when some families lose access to school meals. Supporters say food banks should not be seen as a complete solution, but they can help communities respond when people are under pressure.

Many food banks also keep records of what is requested most often. This helps them ask for useful donations instead of receiving too many of the same item. For example, a food bank may have enough pasta but need cooking oil, toothpaste or food for babies. Clear communication with donors saves storage space and makes parcels more balanced. It also helps schools understand that charity work requires planning, not only kindness.

Food banks sometimes work with advice services too. A visitor who needs food may also need help with bills, housing or employment. Volunteers cannot solve every problem, but they can direct people towards organisations that offer longer-term support.

Schools that collect donations may also learn about storage dates and balanced parcels. Students often discover that useful donations are not always the most obvious ones. This can make the project more thoughtful and reduce waste at the charity.

Some students are surprised to learn that food banks also need quiet, reliable volunteers. Sorting, checking dates and packing parcels carefully are just as important as collecting donations.

3. Strategy focus

Look beyond the obvious noun

A text may be about food, but the notes may ask for wider support, problems or rules. Do not copy a food item unless it fits the heading.

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
Items in food parcels	- - -
Ways food banks protect dignity	- - -
School support	- - -
Challenges for food banks	- - -

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: How can charities support people without embarrassing them?
2. Strategy: Choose three answers and explain which nearby details might distract a reader.
3. Writing: Write a short announcement for a school food-bank collection.
4. Vocabulary: Circle words and phrases connected to charities, inequality and practical support.

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2. Read for overall understanding

Suggested answer: they try to provide dignity, practical support and links to other services.

4. Practice note-taking task

Items in food parcels

- rice
- pasta
- long-life milk

Ways food banks protect dignity

- choose items from shelves
- appointment times
- protect personal information

School support

- collection days
- students bring long-life food / long-life food
- students bring toiletries / cleaning products / toiletries

Challenges for food banks

- reliable donations
- enough storage space / volunteers who can lift heavy boxes
- demand can rise during school holidays / demand can rise

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.