



Home and Local Area

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

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. What green spaces are there in your local area?
2. Why might people want to grow food together?
3. How can a community garden improve a neighbourhood?
4. Would you join a gardening project? 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 reasons people join community gardens?

Community Gardens

Community gardens are shared spaces where residents grow vegetables, herbs and flowers. They are often created on unused land near flats, libraries or community centres. Some people join because they want to grow fresh food, while others join because they want to meet people in the local area. The garden can be especially valuable in neighbourhoods where many homes do not have private outdoor space. A small piece of land that was once ignored can become a place where residents stop, talk and share advice.

A typical garden has raised beds, shared tools and a simple timetable for watering plants. New members may begin by planting easy crops such as lettuce, tomatoes or beans. More experienced gardeners teach them how to prepare soil, save seeds and protect young plants from cold weather. These skills can make people feel more confident about cooking with fresh ingredients. In some gardens, older residents share traditional growing tips with children who have never planted anything before.

Community gardens can also improve relationships between neighbours. People who would normally pass each other without speaking may work side by side at the weekend. Some gardens organise harvest meals, plant swaps or children's activity mornings. These events help families feel that the garden belongs to everyone, not only to expert gardeners.

There are practical problems. Gardens need reliable water, safe storage for tools and clear rules about shared areas. If no one takes responsibility, weeds can spread quickly and equipment may disappear. Successful gardens usually have a small committee, regular work days and contact details for members. Some gardens also keep a noticeboard so people know which beds are private and which crops can be shared. When these systems are in place, a garden can turn unused land into a friendly public space.

3. Strategy focus

Separate reasons from activities

A paragraph may list activities, but the heading may ask for reasons. Check whether your note answers why people take part or what they do.

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 community gardens are created	- - -
Why community gardens are useful	- - -
Gardening skills people learn	- - -
Practical needs	- - -

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: What would make a community garden successful in your area?
2. Strategy: Choose two notes and explain how the heading helped you avoid copying a benefit instead.
3. Writing: Write a short proposal for using empty land in your neighbourhood.
4. Vocabulary: Circle words and phrases connected to housing, neighbourhoods and community facilities.

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2. Read for overall understanding

Suggested answer: to grow fresh food and meet people in the local area.

4. Practice note-taking task

Where community gardens are created

- unused land
- near flats
- near community centres / community centres

Why community gardens are useful

- grow fresh food
- meet people in the local area
- homes do not have private outdoor space

Gardening skills people learn

- prepare soil
- save seeds
- protect young plants from cold weather

Practical needs

- reliable water
- safe storage for tools
- clear rules about shared areas

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.