

A/L GENERAL ENGLISH · PRACTICE PAPER SERIES

MODEL PAPER 04

Education, Relationships and Student Wellbeing

PAPER I · 60 MARKS · 1 HOUR

PAPER II · 140 MARKS · 3 HOURS

FINAL SCORE = (I + II) ÷ 2

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Practice paper. Format copied from the 2020/2024/2025 papers. Content is original. Biographical passages stick to well-known facts but are simplified for exam use — answer from the passage as printed.

Note: Paper I Question 5 in this paper uses the five separate sentences layout (as in 2020) rather than a continuous text, so that you have practised both.

Progress Today. **Greatness** Tomorrow.

අද දැනුමෙන් හෙට දිනුමට.



PAPER I

General English I · One hour · Total 60 marks

Instructions

- Answer all questions on this paper itself.
- Marks will be deducted for incorrect punctuation (omission of full stops, capital letters, etc.) and for mistakes in basic grammar.

PART A GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY

35 MARKS

1 QUESTION 01

05 MARKS

Fill in the blanks in the following text, using the prepositions given in the box. Use each preposition only once. There is one preposition extra.

about at for of on to

A boy who was very weak (1) mathematics was moved to a new school, and within a term his marks improved enormously. His mother, who was full (2) curiosity, asked him what had changed.

"Well," the boy said, "(3) the very first day I saw a man nailed to a plus sign on the wall. I realised at once that these people were serious (4) mathematics."

His mother did not know whether to laugh or to explain, so she said nothing and simply thanked the school (5) its excellent results.

2 QUESTION 02

10 MARKS

Fill in each blank with the correct form of the verb given within brackets.

Dr. Maria Montessori (1) (bear) in Italy in 1870, at a time when very few women (2) (allow) to study medicine. She insisted on enrolling, and in 1896 she became one of the first women in her country (3) (qualify) as a doctor.

While she (4) (work) with children who had been dismissed as unteachable, she noticed that they learned readily if they (5) (give) materials they could handle for themselves. This observation (6) (change) the direction of her career.

In 1907 she (7) (open) a school in a poor district of Rome, where children (8) (encourage) to choose their own activities. Visitors were astonished by what they saw.

Since then her method (9) (adopt) in thousands of schools around the world. She always maintained that if adults (10) (observe) children more carefully, they would teach them far less and educate them far more.

3

QUESTION 03

10 MARKS

Underline the most appropriate word from those given within brackets to fill in the blanks in the following text.

Examination pressure affects almost every Advanced Level student in (1) (a / an / the) country. (2) (Much / Many / Few) of that pressure is unavoidable, but a surprising amount of it is created by the way students organise (3) (them / their / themselves) time.

Studies show that a learner who works steadily for two hours a day remembers far more than one (4) (who / which / whose) works for twelve hours the night before the paper. (5) (Although / Because / Unless) the second student may feel more productive, the knowledge rarely lasts.

Sleep matters more than most students believe. The brain organises new information during sleep, (6) (so / nor / but) a night without rest wastes much of the effort of the previous day. Exercise helps too, (7) (although / since / whereas) it reduces the physical effects of stress.

(8) (This / These / Those) simple habits cost nothing. (9) (However / Therefore / Moreover), students who follow them consistently often outperform classmates who study for far longer hours. In the end, (10) (it / its / it's) not the number of hours that counts but what happens during them.

4

QUESTION 04

05 MARKS

Underline the most appropriate word from those given within brackets.

Regular exercise can (reduce / lower / shorten / decline) the effects of stress.

Parents should (talk / speak / discuss / say) their children's problems with them openly.

A good friend will always (hear / listen / attend / notice) to you without judging.

Students must (divide / share / manage / control) their time carefully during the A/L year.

Sleep plays a (vital / lively / living / alive) role in memory and concentration.

5

QUESTION 05

05 MARKS

Underline the correct word-ending, selecting from those given within brackets.

Regular revision is far more effect (ive / ion / ing) than studying all night.

She spoke to her class teacher confid (ent / ence / entially) about her difficulties.

The counsellor listened to him patient (ly / ce / ness) for almost an hour.

Anx (ious / iety / iously) among examination candidates has increased in recent years.

Friend (ly / ship / less) is one of the strongest supports a student can have.

PART A · 35 MARKS

**PART B READING AND WRITING****25 MARKS****6 QUESTION 06****05 MARKS**

Underline the option that best expresses the meaning of each of the sentences given below in bold print.

(1) Had Sithara spoken to her teacher earlier, she would not have fallen so far behind.

- (a) Sithara spoke to her teacher and did not fall behind.
- (b) Sithara did not speak to her teacher early, so she fell far behind.
- (c) Sithara spoke to her teacher but still fell behind.
- (d) Sithara never fell behind in her studies.

(2) Ravindu, whose sister is a doctor, has decided to study engineering.

- (a) Ravindu is a doctor.
- (b) Ravindu's sister has decided to study engineering.
- (c) Ravindu has decided to study engineering.
- (d) Both Ravindu and his sister are studying engineering.

(3) Far from improving her results, the extra classes left her exhausted.

- (a) The extra classes improved her results.
- (b) The extra classes did not improve her results and made her tired.
- (c) The extra classes improved her results but tired her.
- (d) She did not attend any extra classes.

(4) Hardly had the results been released when the telephone began to ring.

- (a) The telephone rang long before the results were released.
- (b) The telephone rang very soon after the results were released.
- (c) The telephone did not ring after the results were released.
- (d) The results were released after the telephone rang.

(5) Only a handful of the students had asked for help before the examination.

- (a) Most of the students had asked for help.
- (b) Very few of the students had asked for help.
- (c) None of the students needed help.
- (d) All of the students had asked for help.

7 QUESTION 07**10 MARKS**

Read the following four news items and answer the questions (I) and (II).

Counselling units to be set up in schools

The Ministry of Education stated on Monday, 4th May that trained counsellors would be appointed to 500 selected schools during the current year. The programme, which will cost Rs. 1.1 billion, follows a pilot project in 40 schools last year. A Ministry spokesperson said that the pilot had shown a measurable improvement in school attendance and that the appointments would begin in the Central and Uva provinces.

Students' science project selected for exhibition

A rainwater purification system built by four students of a school in Hambantota has been selected for a national science exhibition to be held in Colombo. The selection was announced on Wednesday, 6th May. The system, which cost less than Rs. 8,000 to build, uses sand, charcoal and gravel. The team's teacher said the students had tested eleven different designs before arriving at the final one.

Library opens on Sundays

The public library in Kurunegala began opening on Sundays from Sunday, 10th May, following requests from Advanced Level students preparing for the examination. The library will now be open from eight in the morning until six in the evening on Sundays. Officials said an additional reading room with fifty seats had also been opened.

Survey reports rise in examination anxiety

A survey of 3,600 Advanced Level students published on Tuesday, 12th May found that 64 per cent reported significant anxiety about the forthcoming examination. Students who said they had someone at home they could talk to reported markedly lower levels of anxiety. The researchers recommended that schools should give parents guidance on supporting candidates.

(I) Underline the most appropriate response in each of the questions from (1) to (5).

- (1) How many schools took part in last year's pilot project?
(a) Four (b) Forty (c) Fifty (d) Five hundred
- (2) Which of the following happened on Sunday?
(a) The Ministry's announcement about counsellors
(b) The announcement of the science exhibition selection
(c) The opening of the library on Sundays
(d) The publication of the anxiety survey
- (3) Who or what does the pronoun "they" refer to in the news item about the science project?
(a) The teachers (b) The four students (c) The eleven designs (d) The exhibition organisers
- (4) Which of the following was not given in the news item about the counselling units?
(a) the cost of the programme
(b) the number of schools to be covered
(c) the qualifications required of the counsellors
(d) the provinces where appointments will begin
- (5) The underlined phrase "a measurable improvement" in the first news item most nearly means
(a) an improvement that people believed had occurred.
(b) an improvement that could be shown with figures.
(c) an improvement that was very small.
(d) an improvement that lasted a long time.

(II) Do the following statements agree with the information given in the above news items? In boxes (6) to (10), write True, False or Not Given.

	Statement	
(6)	Counsellors will be appointed to every school in the country this year.	
(7)	The students tested more than ten designs before choosing the final one.	
(8)	The Kurunegala library opened on Sundays because students had requested it.	
(9)	The new reading room in the library is air-conditioned.	
(10)	According to the survey, students with someone to talk to at home reported less anxiety.	



QUESTION 08

10 MARKS

Write a paragraph beginning with the given sentence. Use about 75–100 words. Do not exceed the word limit. Do not write more than one paragraph.

Good relationships are important for a happy and successful life.

Write your answer below.

PART B • 25 MARKS



PAPER II

General English II · Three hours + 10 minutes reading time · Total 140 marks

PART A READING SKILLS

50 MARKS

1 QUESTION 01

10 MARKS

Read the following text in which some words are given in bold print. Then, underline the meaning that is most appropriate to the context for the words given in bold print from (1) to (10).

Helen Keller was an American writer and campaigner whose life altered what the world believed possible for people with disabilities. Born in Alabama in 1880, she was a healthy infant until an illness at nineteen months left her both deaf and blind. For the next five years she lived in almost total (1) **isolation**, unable to communicate beyond a few crude signs, and her behaviour became increasingly (2) **unruly**.

Everything changed in 1887 with the arrival of a young teacher, Anne Sullivan. Sullivan was (3) **persistent** where others had given up, spelling words into Helen's palm hour after hour. The famous breakthrough came at a water pump, when Helen suddenly (4) **grasped** that the letters being traced on one hand named the water flowing over the other.

From that moment her progress was (5) **astonishing**. She learned to read Braille in several languages and eventually to speak. In 1904 she graduated from Radcliffe College, the first deafblind person to (6) **attain** a bachelor's degree.

She refused to be treated as a (7) **curiosity**. Instead she wrote a dozen books and spent decades campaigning — for the blind, for workers, and for women's right to vote. Her lectures drew large crowds, and she was frequently (8) **outspoken** on subjects her admirers would have preferred her to avoid.

She died in 1968. Her life is still cited whenever someone argues that a disability (9) **determines** what a person can become — an argument her own biography quietly (10) **refutes**.

No.	Options
(1) isolation	comfort · loneliness · silence · darkness
(2) unruly	obedient · uncontrollable · cheerful · nervous
(3) persistent	impatient · determined · gentle · experienced
(4) grasped	held · understood · rejected · remembered
(5) astonishing	steady · amazing · disappointing · predictable
(6) attain	apply for · achieve · demand · refuse
(7) curiosity	strange object of interest · clever student · well-known writer · kind person
(8) outspoken	silent · frank · polite · uncertain
(9) determines	decides · questions · improves · describes
(10) refutes	supports · disproves · repeats · ignores

2

QUESTION 02

10 MARKS

Read the following text and answer questions (I) and (II).

① Sirimavo Bandaranaike holds a place in world history that is often forgotten in the country of her birth: in July 1960 she became the first woman in the world to serve as the elected head of a government. She was born in 1916 into a prominent family from the Ratnapura district and was educated at St. Bridget's Convent in Colombo.

② For the first two decades of her adult life she took no part in electoral politics. She married S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike in 1940 and devoted herself to social work, particularly among rural women, becoming well known for her involvement in family welfare and health programmes long before she held any office.

③ Her entry into politics was sudden and unwanted. Her husband, then Prime Minister, was assassinated in 1959. The party he had founded was left leaderless, and its members persuaded her to lead them. She campaigned across the country the following year, often reduced to tears while speaking of her husband, and won the general election of July 1960.

④ She served as Prime Minister three times: from 1960 to 1965, from 1970 to 1977, and again from 1994 to 2000. Her periods in office included the adoption of a new constitution in 1972, under which the country changed its name to Sri Lanka and became a republic, and a prominent role for the country in the Non-Aligned Movement.

⑤ Her record remains contested, as the record of any long-serving leader must be. What is not contested is the position she occupies internationally. She died in October 2000, a few hours after casting her vote in a general election — a detail that many observers thought entirely appropriate.

(I) Do the following statements agree with the information given in the above text? Write True or False in the boxes (1) to (8).

	Statement	
(1)	Sirimavo Bandaranaike was the first woman in the world to be elected head of a government.	
(2)	She was educated in the Ratnapura district.	
(3)	She was active in electoral politics from the time of her marriage.	
(4)	She entered politics after the assassination of her husband.	
(5)	She served as Prime Minister on two occasions.	
(6)	The country became a republic under a constitution adopted in 1972.	
(7)	The writer states that her record as a leader is universally admired.	
(8)	She died shortly after voting in a general election.	

(II) Underline the most appropriate answer.

(9) Who or what does the pronoun "them" in bold print in paragraph ③ refer to?

- (a) Her family members
- (b) The members of the party her husband had founded
- (c) The voters of the country
- (d) The rural women she had worked with



- (10) The phrase "Her record remains contested" in paragraph ③ most nearly means
- (a) her achievements have been officially cancelled.
 - (b) people continue to disagree about how to judge her time in office.
 - (c) her documents have been lost.
 - (d) she competed in many elections.

3**QUESTION 03****05 MARKS**

Read the following poem and do the activities that follow.

The Lamp My Mother Left

She did not say, "Be brave, my child,"
Nor lecture me on how to grow;
She simply left a lamp alight
In every room I had to go.

I did not notice it as gold —
A small thing, easily passed by;
But every door I opened since
Was easier because of my

Remembering that someone thought
The dark was worth a little flame,
And that a room prepared for me
Was hers, though it did not bear her name.

Now I go quietly through the house
Of other people's fear and doubt,
And leave a small light burning there,
And say nothing, and go out.

(A) Underline the most appropriate response.

- (1) According to the first stanza, the mother taught her child by
- (a) giving long advice. (b) her actions rather than her words.
 - (c) strict discipline. (d) telling stories.
- (2) What does the "lamp" in the poem most nearly represent?
- (a) An expensive gift
 - (b) Quiet preparation and care for another person
 - (c) A warning against danger
 - (d) A family tradition of lighting lamps
- (3) In the final stanza, the speaker
- (a) rejects what the mother did.
 - (b) repeats for others what the mother did for her.
 - (c) explains the lesson to other people.
 - (d) returns to the mother's house.
- (4) The tone of the poem is best described as
- (a) grateful. (b) bitter. (c) boastful. (d) impatient.

(B) Write down a word, selecting from the poem, which means the same as "a small fire or light."

.....



4

QUESTION 04

05 MARKS

Complete the blanks of the summary meaningfully and appropriately, using one word only from the passage titled "Time Management."

Time Management

Time management is the practice of planning how to divide the hours available between competing tasks. It is often described as a way of finding more time, which is misleading: the number of hours cannot be increased. What time management actually changes is how deliberately those hours are spent.

The first principle is prioritisation. Not every task is equally urgent or equally important, and treating them as though they were is the commonest reason plans collapse. A student who revises the subject she enjoys because it is pleasant, while avoiding the subject she is weak in, is not managing time at all.

The second principle is realism. Plans that assume twelve hours of concentrated study a day fail within a week, and the failure itself is discouraging. A modest plan that is actually followed produces far better results than an ambitious one that is abandoned.

The third principle is rest. Concentration declines sharply after long unbroken periods of work, and short planned breaks restore it. Rest is therefore part of the schedule, not a reward for completing it.

Summary

Time management does not create more hours; it changes how (1) those hours are used. Its first principle is (2) , because treating every task as equally urgent is the commonest reason plans fail. Its second principle is (3) : a modest plan that is followed is better than an ambitious one that is (4) Its third principle is rest, which restores concentration and should therefore be part of the (5) itself.

5

QUESTION 05

20 MARKS

Read the following text and answer the questions from (1) to (5).

① Ask any Advanced Level student in Sri Lanka what the hardest part of the two years has been, and the answer is rarely the syllabus. It is the pressure. A national examination that determines university entry, taken once, by candidates who have often been told since childhood that the rest of their lives depends on it, produces a level of anxiety that would be considered serious in an adult workplace.

② Some of that pressure is unavoidable and even useful. A degree of stress sharpens attention and motivates preparation, and students who feel no pressure at all rarely perform well. The difficulty arises when pressure stops being an aid to performance and starts to damage it — when a student cannot sleep, loses appetite, withdraws from friends, or becomes unable to concentrate on the very work she is anxious about.

③ Parents who ask about marks every evening but never about how their child is feeling are not being unkind; they usually believe that pressure is what produces effort. Teachers under pressure to produce results pass that pressure downwards. Tuition schedules that leave a student with no unscheduled hour in a seven-day week are accepted as normal. The system rarely intends harm, and yet the cumulative effect is considerable.

④ The signs that pressure has become harmful are reasonably well known and are usually visible to those around the student: persistent irritability, disturbed sleep, physical complaints such as headaches with no medical cause, loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed, and withdrawal from friends. What is less well known is that these signs are frequently mistaken for laziness, which produces exactly the wrong response.

⑤ What helps is unglamorous. Regular sleep, some physical activity, a realistic study plan rather than an

heroic one, and — above all — at least one adult the student can talk to honestly without being immediately advised. Research in this area consistently finds that the single strongest protective factor is not the amount of study support a student receives but whether there is someone at home who listens.

⑥ Schools are beginning to respond, and counselling services are slowly expanding. But the most important changes are the ones that cost nothing: an examination result reported without a speech, a question about the day rather than the marks, and the occasional reminder — obvious to adults, invisible to a seventeen-year-old — that a single examination, however important, is not the whole of a life.

(1) Do the following statements agree with the information given in the above text? Write True, False or Not Given in the boxes from (a) to (f). (06 marks)

	Statement	
(a)	According to the text, students identify the syllabus as the hardest part of the two years.	
(b)	The writer accepts that a certain amount of stress can be useful.	
(c)	Parents who ask only about marks are described as deliberately unkind.	
(d)	Physical symptoms such as headaches can be a sign of harmful pressure.	
(e)	Every government school in Sri Lanka now has a trained counsellor.	
(f)	Research suggests that having someone at home who listens is a strong protective factor.	

(2) Answer the following. (03 marks)

(i) Underline the most appropriate option to complete the missing sentence in paragraph ③.

- (a) The pressure is created by the students themselves.
- (b) Almost nobody in the system sets out to create this pressure, yet almost everybody adds to it.
- (c) Parents and teachers are entirely responsible for examination anxiety.
- (d) Tuition classes should be banned immediately.

(ii) Why does the writer say that mistaking the warning signs for laziness "produces exactly the wrong response"?

- (a) Because lazy students also show these signs.
- (b) Because a student who is struggling is then pressed harder instead of being helped.
- (c) Because laziness is more serious than anxiety.
- (d) Because teachers cannot tell the difference.

(iii) Which of the following best summarises paragraph ⑥?

- (a) Counselling services should replace parental support.
- (b) The most valuable changes are simple and cost nothing.
- (c) Examination results should not be reported to students.
- (d) Schools have already solved the problem.

(3) If you wish to extend each paragraph further, in which paragraphs do you include the following information? Match the information with the paragraphs of the text and write the number of the paragraph in the relevant box. (03 marks)



	Information	Paragraph
(a)	A study finds that candidates performing best reported moderate rather than minimal or extreme stress.	
(b)	A father describes how he stopped asking about marks and began asking about his son's day.	
(c)	A survey shows the average A/L student attends tuition classes on six days a week.	

(4) Who or what do the following pronouns in bold print refer to? (03 marks)

(a) it (paragraph ①, "depends on it") :

(b) they (paragraph ③, "they usually believe") :

(c) these signs (paragraph ④) :

(5) Write one word in each blank, selecting from the passage, which means the same as the following. (05 marks)

(a) Increasing gradually by addition :

(b) Continuing over a long period :

(c) Not attractive or impressive, though useful :

(d) Giving protection against something harmful : (e) Removing oneself from company or activity :

PART A · 50 MARKS

PART B DIALOGUES

25 MARKS

6

QUESTION 06

05 MARKS

How do you respond in each of the following situations? Write only one appropriate sentence or question for each, beginning with the word/s given.

(1) Your friend has been looking worried for several days. Offer to listen.

"If"

(2) You need to leave the class early to attend a medical appointment. Inform the teacher.

"Sir, may?"

(3) Your friend did not do as well as she hoped in the term test. Encourage her.

"Don't"

(4) Your parents want you to attend three extra tuition classes a week. Express your concern politely.

"I'm afraid"

(5) A friend thanks you for helping him with mathematics. Respond modestly.

"Not"

05 MARKS

Counsellor : Good. Come back next Wednesday and we'll see how it has gone.

15 MARKS

Write your answer below.



PART B · 25 MARKS

PART C WRITING SKILLS**65 MARKS****9****QUESTION 09****05 MARKS**

Select any five words from the list given below. Write five meaningful sentences using the selected words. You may use the verbs in any tense and nouns in singular or plural form. Do not change the form of the other words.

encourage balance anxious gradually responsibility supportive
concentrate routine rarely progress

10**QUESTION 10****10 MARKS**

The table below shows how a group of 400 Advanced Level students in a school reported spending their time on an average school day in 2025. Describe the information given in the table by reporting the main features and making comparisons where relevant. Use about 100 words.

Activity	Boys (hours)	Girls (hours)
School and tuition classes	9.0	9.5
Private study at home	2.5	3.5
Sleep	6.0	6.0
Screen use (phone, TV, games)	3.5	2.5
Sports and physical activity	1.5	0.5
Household work	0.5	1.5

Write your answer below.

11

QUESTION 11

15 MARKS

You have been feeling under a great deal of pressure this term, and a friend who studies in another school has written to ask how you are. Write a reply. In your letter, include the following details:

- how you have been feeling and why
- what has been the most difficult part of the term
- what has helped you to cope
- ask about your friend's own preparation

Use about 100–125 words.

Write your answer below.



12**QUESTION 12****15 MARKS**

Imagine that you are the Secretary of the Students' Council of your school. Advanced Level students have complained that the school library closes too early for those who stay back for extra classes. Write a letter to the Principal about this matter. Include the following in your letter:

- the difficulty students are facing
- how many students are affected
- what change you are requesting
- how the students' council is willing to assist

Use about 100–125 words.

Write your answer below.

20 MARKS

Write your answer below.

