

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL AS & A LEVEL

Thinking Skills 9694

Assessment Overview

Examinations 2028, 2029 and 2030

How the qualification is assessed

The table shows the papers and components described for this syllabus. AS candidates take the designated AS components; the full A Level includes the additional components shown. A component's raw mark is the total available on that assessment; its weighting is the share of the qualification result, which may differ from its share of raw marks.

Paper or component	Duration	Raw marks	Weighting	Question or task structure
1: Problem Solving	1 h 30 min	50	AS 50%; A 25%	Compulsory scenario questions
2: Critical Thinking	1 h 45 min	50	AS 50%; A 25%	Five compulsory source-based questions
3: Problem Analysis and Solution	2 h	50	A 25%	Five compulsory scenario questions
4: Applied Reasoning	1 h 45 min	50	A 25%	Four compulsory questions based on multiple documents, including substantial argument

Read the weighting against your qualification route. A longer paper or a larger raw-mark total does not automatically mean a greater final weighting. Prepare for every component that applies to you, including practical, oral or coursework requirements where specified.

What each component requires

AS Level assessment consists of two written papers.

Paper One, Problem Solving, lasts one hour and thirty minutes and carries fifty marks. It contains compulsory questions based on a range of scenarios. The problems generally become more demanding as the paper progresses. It contributes fifty per cent of AS Level or twenty-five per cent of A Level.

Paper Two, Critical Thinking, lasts one hour and forty-five minutes and also carries fifty marks. You complete five compulsory questions using multiple sources of evidence. Tasks include evaluating evidence, analysing the structure of an argument, identifying weaknesses and writing a short argument. It has the same weighting as Paper One.

A Level candidates also take Papers Three and Four.

Paper Three, Problem Analysis and Solution, lasts two hours and carries fifty marks. It contains five compulsory scenario-based questions. These require more detailed analysis, modelling and the combination of several problem-solving skills. It contributes twenty-five per cent of A Level.

Paper Four, Applied Reasoning, lasts one hour and forty-five minutes and carries fifty marks. Using several documents on a shared topic, you analyse and evaluate reasoning, assess inferences from evidence and construct a substantial argument. It contributes the final twenty-five per cent.

Calculators are permitted in all papers, strongly recommended for Paper One and essential for Paper Three. Clear working and explanation are important because unsupported answers may not receive full credit.

AS Level can be taken independently, carried forward through an approved staged route, or combined with Papers Three and Four in one series for the full A Level.

AS grades range from lowercase a to e, while A Level grades range from A-star to E.

Preparing the right kind of response

Separate a conclusion from the reasons offered for it. In problem solving, represent information clearly, check constraints and test whether a proposed solution satisfies them. In argument work, explain the effect of an assumption or weakness rather than simply attaching a label.

The assessment objectives are visible in the response itself: relevant knowledge, appropriate use of the stimulus or task, a clear method or explanation, and a conclusion where requested. The command word and mark allocation help show the depth required. An answer should respond to the actual question, not reproduce a memorised passage that only partly fits.

Timing and examination arrangements

Begin preparation with accurate, untimed work, then move towards the duration and conditions of your required component. Use mark allocations to guide pacing while allowing time to read instructions and check the response. Any practice pacing advice is study guidance, not a new Cambridge time rule.

Examinations are available in the June and November series, and private candidates may enter.

An approved examination centre confirms entries, available component options, deadlines and any practical or speaking arrangements. Preparation-course access does not itself constitute an examination entry.

Key pointers: Know your required components, follow question choices precisely and practise the relevant response formats. **Next:** Open **Learning Resources** to see which materials support this preparation.