GAC002 Academic English I: Reading and Writing Skills

GAC Academic English

What this module teaches

GAC002 develops reading and writing skills through communicating, culture, leisure, travel, living things and technology. The skills include understanding general and academic texts, using vocabulary and dictionaries, constructing sentences and paragraphs, avoiding plagiarism, adapting text types, and planning a short essay.

Your teaching centre supplies the actual assessment brief and referencing rules. **reading tasks** , **writing** and **coursework** are useful practice formats; this guide does not establish official task weights, an official final **essay** format, or a rule that organisation always outweighs language accuracy. The six accompanying sheets are original local practice. Their scenarios, sources, word ranges and analytic marks are teaching conventions, not official GAC papers.

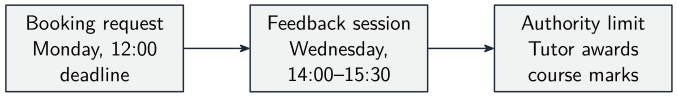
Communicating: read for a purpose and preserve conditions

A practical message can contain several dates with different jobs. In the fictional Writing Desk message, Monday noon is the booking deadline; Wednesday is the session. A number is not an answer until you know what it refers to.

- **Skimming** gives an initial overview using headings and selected sentences.
- **Scanning** locates a target detail, such as a date, place or number.
- **Close reading** checks exact meaning, qualifications and relationships.

Choose a technique for the question. After scanning for a date, read the surrounding sentence closely. Skimming may suggest a text's structure without revealing every qualification. A **topic sentence** states a paragraph's main point; it can occur at the beginning, later in the paragraph, or be implicit in the supporting material.

> **Worked example.** The message says that unbooked visitors may request a walk-in slot, although a slot is not guaranteed. A faithful linked sentence is: "If you have not booked, you may request a walk-in slot, although availability is not guaranteed." Keep both the condition and the limitation. Neither a request nor a possible slot is a confirmed appointment.



Countries and cultures: vocabulary, dictionaries and paragraphs

Context clues include explanations, examples and contrasts. In the fictional craft-exchange note, "shared, not exclusive to one group" suggests that exclusive concerns restricted access. The note does not establish a national rule about how everybody makes a craft.

Word parts can also help: bio- commonly relates to life and -logy to study. Treat them as clues, then check the particular word and sentence. An unfamiliar word may not affect the task; an essential unclear word may need a prompt lookup.

An **English-English dictionary** can supply numbered senses, usage labels, examples and a **part of speech** . Choose the sense matching the context, rather than the first or last one automatically. Grammar belongs to the whole phrase: in "the reservoir", reservoir is a noun; in "the large reservoir", large follows the but is an adjective. Position after the alone is not a noun test.

> **Worked example.** The sheet's original classroom entry gives demonstrate two senses: show how something works by doing it, and give evidence for a claim. The craft task asks a participant to show a process, so the first sense fits. A display is one example, rather than proof of a universal cultural practice.

Build a paragraph around that supported point. Describe what a speaker shows, what visitors can ask and what the example can establish. An ending claiming that all people from a country use the same method goes beyond the supplied evidence.

Modern lifestyles: sentences, paragraph functions and style

A **simple sentence** has one independent clause. A **compound sentence** combines independent clauses. A **complex sentence** contains a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. **Subordination** places a clause within another sentence structure; it does not make its information automatically unimportant.

Connectives express relationships: because gives a reason, although a concession, therefore a supported result and for instance an example. Choose a link that fits the actual evidence. Grammar can express a causal claim without proving it.

> **Worked example.** In the fictional chess-club note, floor repairs explain the hall closure. Room 12 has eight seats, while ten students may attend. Their possible attendance does not cause the room's seat count. A faithful sentence is: "Although ten students may attend, room 12 has only eight seats." The coordinator needs confirmed numbers before choosing an arrangement.

A **run-on sentence** incorrectly joins independent clauses. A comma splice joins them with a comma alone; use a suitable full stop, semicolon or conjunction.

Check the purpose and reader too. A friendly class notice should make actions clear; an academic paragraph should support its claims precisely. Neither style permits invented attendance, approval or outcomes.

Journeys and travel: meaningful messages and paragraph focus

In the fictional visit brief, the meeting is at 08:10 and departure is scheduled for 08:20. Separate travel requires teacher permission. If rain closes the boardwalk, an indoor workshop is offered instead; the whole visit is not automatically cancelled. Adapt these facts into a practical passenger message without removing their conditions.

For an academic comparison, discuss what the brief actually supports: travelling together and permission-based individual arrangements. No comparative fare or emissions data are supplied, so "always cheapest and greenest" is unsupported.

Supporting sentences develop a point with relevant explanations, evidence or examples. A **concluding sentence** can connect the support to the point or lead to another paragraph. These functions need not always follow one fixed order. **Cohesion** uses clear references, key terms and links so ideas are easy to follow. **Unity** means the sentences serve the paragraph's overall focus.

Check the reasoning. Supporting details may reveal a paragraph's focus even if its topic sentence is deleted. That alone does not prove the topic sentence is useless or the paragraph is poorly built. An academic paragraph can appropriately start with a source or statistic when it serves the purpose; explain relevance and provide real source credit rather than enforcing an absolute rule against such openings.

Living things: accurate source use and plagiarism

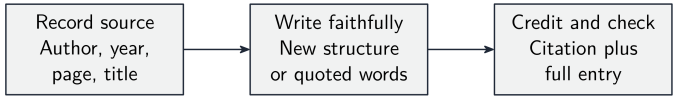
Plagiarism presents another person's words or ideas as your own. Academic source use must distinguish borrowed work from your contribution. Follow your centre's instructions on referencing, permitted collaboration and assistance. Consequences depend on the institution and case; this guide does not claim one universal penalty.

- **Quoting** uses exact words, quotation marks and source credit.
- **Paraphrasing** uses your own wording and sentence structure, retaining the source's meaning and limitations. Borrowed ideas still need credit.
- **Summarising** condenses a longer text to its main points, with source credit.

A **citation** identifies the source in the text; the **reference list** provides the required full details. Record these while taking notes. Label exact words immediately so they cannot later be mistaken for your own wording. A two-column source/comment method can help; it does not make missing credit impossible.

Worked example using an original fictional source. Lin, M. (2026), *Seedling observation notebook*, classroom practice note, page 2, describes a seven-day comparison: shaded seedlings grew more slowly than those beside the window, but conditions were not controlled. This note is not published scientific research.

A faithful paraphrase is "One shaded tray grew more slowly than the window tray, but uncontrolled conditions limit causal conclusions (Lin, 2026, p. 2)." The citation gives credit; the qualification preserves the meaning. "Lin proves that shade always prevents growth" is inaccurate even with a citation. Translating a borrowed passage also does not remove the need for credit. The author-year-page format here is a local practice convention; use the style required for your actual assignment.



Technology: plan and synthesize a short essay

Analyse the question before choosing evidence: identify its command, topic and scope. Compare asks for relevant similarities and differences; evaluate asks for a judgement against suitable criteria. Discuss need not mean two equal sides. Read the specific brief rather than assuming a universal format.

Brainstorm then select: collect possible relevant ideas, then retain those supported by the available evidence. An **Outline** names paragraph points, source support and connections to the answer. There is no fixed requirement for three body points or five paragraphs in every essay.

The **introduction** gives context and a **thesis** answering the question. A thesis should guide the argument at an appropriate level of certainty. It need not be controversial or exaggerate what the sources establish. **Synthesis** combines source ideas around your argument, retaining their credit and limits. The **conclusion** answers the question from the reasoning already developed, without adding unexplained new evidence or claiming unobserved outcomes.

Worked outline for the fictional device-free-room task.

1. Introduction: propose a limited optional trial while retaining a device-permitted room.
2. Distraction paragraph: 18 of 30 self-selected respondents reported interruptions (Rao, 2026); this is not representative proof or measured learning improvement.
3. Access paragraph: some students use devices for dictionaries, accessible text or necessary messages (Chen, 2026); connect this to voluntary participation.
4. Conclusion: propose recording use and inviting access/interruptions feedback before deciding whether to continue. Do not invent marks, attendance or trial results.

The two supplied notes are original fictional classroom sources. Combining their concern and access condition creates a reasoned limited proposal; copying each note in turn does not supply that synthesis. The accompanying sheet asks for an outline and a short credited paragraph, not an official full GAC assessment essay.

Vocabulary card meanings

reading tasks: Exam or class work that is answered from a written text. writing: Producing a text, as distinct from reading or speaking. essay: A piece of writing that develops one argument in paragraphs. Scanning: Moving quickly through a text to find one fact. Close reading: Reading slowly to notice how the words build the meaning. Word parts: The root and the affixes that a longer word is built from. Connectives: Words that join ideas, such as however or therefore. Supporting sentences: Sentences that give reasons or examples for the topic sentence. Quoting: Copying another writer's exact words and marking them as theirs. Paraphrasing: Rewriting someone else's point in your own words. Summarising: Giving only the main points of a longer text. Analyse the question: Working out exactly what a task asks before you answer it.