

GAC002 Academic English I: Reading and Writing Skills

GAC002-aligned reading and writing practice; the centre's assessment brief and referencing rules set the requirements.

Reading and writing across six themes

GAC002 develops reading and writing through six themes, from purposeful reading to a planned short essay.

What this guide does not decide

- Your teaching centre supplies the assessment brief and referencing rules.
- Reading tasks, writing and coursework are useful practice formats.
- No official task weights or final essay format is established here.
- No rule that organisation always outweighs language accuracy.

Your turn: what the guide leaves open

Your turn

Which of these does the guide establish?

- A. Official task weights for reading and writing
- B. A required five-paragraph essay format
- C. Practice formats for building the skills
- D. A rule that organisation always beats accuracy

Three reading techniques, three jobs

Technique	What it does
Skimming	An initial overview using headings and selected sentences
Scanning	Locates a target detail: a date, place or number
Close reading	Checks exact meaning, qualifications and relationships

A topic sentence is not always first

- A topic sentence states a paragraph's main point.
- It can open the paragraph, appear later, or stay implicit in the support.
- Supporting material can carry the focus without a stated topic sentence.

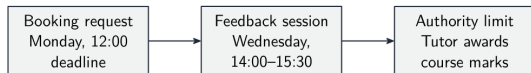
Worked example: two dates, two jobs

- 1 **Find the numbers** The Writing Desk message contains Monday noon and Wednesday.
- 2 **Ask what each is for** Monday noon is the booking deadline; Wednesday is the session day.
- 3 **Answer the actual question** A deadline answers "by when"; a session answers "when is it".
- 4 **Keep each number's job** Swapping them answers a question nobody asked.

Decision

A number is not an answer until you know what it refers to.

A request is not an appointment



- The message: unbooked visitors may request a walk-in slot, but a slot is not guaranteed.
- Faithful sentence: "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.

Your turn: the faithful sentence

Your turn

Which sentence faithfully preserves "unbooked visitors may request a walk-in slot, although a slot is not guaranteed"?

- A. Unbooked visitors will get a walk-in slot
- B. If you have not booked, you may request a walk-in slot, although availability is not guaranteed
- C. Everyone must book in advance
- D. Walk-in visitors are guaranteed a place after booking

Clues from context and word parts

Clue	Example	Caution
Context clues	"shared, not exclusive to one group" suggests restricted access	Context narrows meaning; it does not set a national rule
Word parts	bio- relates to life; -logy to study	Check the particular word and sentence
Task need	An unclear word may not affect the task	Look up essential words promptly

Worked example: choosing a dictionary sense

- 1 Read the entry** The classroom entry gives demonstrate two senses: show how something works by doing it; give evidence for a claim.
- 2 Read the task** The craft task asks a participant to show a process.
- 3 Match sense to context** The first sense fits; the task is about doing, not proving.
- 4 Bound the conclusion** A display is one example, not proof of a universal cultural practice.

Decision

Choose the sense matching the context, never the first 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.
- A part of speech is a property of the phrase, not the word alone.

Build the paragraph on what the evidence carries

From a supported point to a paragraph

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.

The supported point carries the paragraph; the overclaim loses it.

Notice

The paragraph stops where the evidence stops.

Three sentence types

Sentence type	Structure
Simple sentence	One independent clause
Compound sentence	Combines independent clauses
Complex sentence	A main clause with one or more subordinate clauses

Use the evidence

Subordination places a clause within another structure; it does not make the information unimportant.

Connectives carry relationships

Connective	Relationship
because	A reason
although	A concession
therefore	A result the support earns
for instance	An example

Use the evidence

Choose a link that fits the actual evidence; grammar can express a causal claim without proving it.

Worked example: attendance is not a seat count

- 1 **Separate the facts** Floor repairs explain the hall closure; room 12 has eight seats; ten students may attend.
- 2 **Test the false link** Possible attendance does not cause the room's seat count.
- 3 **Write the faithful sentence** "Although ten students may attend, room 12 has only eight seats."
- 4 **Keep the need visible** The coordinator needs confirmed numbers before choosing an arrangement.

Decision

A concession connective can join true facts without inventing a cause.

Run-ons, splices, and the reader

- A run-on sentence incorrectly joins independent clauses.
- A comma splice joins them with a comma alone.
- Fix: a full stop, a semicolon, or a conjunction.
- Check purpose and reader: a friendly notice makes actions clear; an academic paragraph supports claims precisely.

Your turn: join these two facts

Your turn

Which is a correct join of "The hall is closed for floor repairs" and "the chess club meets in room 12"?

- A. The hall is closed for floor repairs, the chess club meets in room 12
- B. The hall is closed for floor repairs, so the chess club meets in room 12 because repairs cause meetings
- C. The hall is closed for floor repairs; the chess club meets in room 12
- D. The hall being closed for floor repairs which the chess club it meets in room 12

The visit brief: every fact has a condition

Detail	Its condition
Meeting 08:10	A fixed time
Departure 08:20	Scheduled, ten minutes later
Separate travel	Requires teacher permission
Rain closes the boardwalk	An indoor workshop is offered instead

Use the evidence

The whole visit is not automatically cancelled when one activity changes.

Compare only what the brief supports

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

The jobs inside a paragraph

Sentence function	Its job
Topic sentence	States the paragraph's main point
Supporting sentences	Develop the point with explanations, evidence or examples
Concluding sentence	Connects the support to the point, or leads onward

Use the evidence

These functions need not always follow one fixed order.

Cohesion, unity, and honest reasoning

- Cohesion uses clear references, key terms and links so ideas are easy to follow.
- Unity means the sentences serve the paragraph's overall focus.
- Supporting details may reveal the focus even if the topic sentence is deleted — that does not prove the topic sentence is useless.
- An academic paragraph may open with a source or statistic when it serves the purpose; explain relevance and give real credit.

Your turn: the unsupported comparison

Your turn

A student writes "Travelling together is always cheapest and greenest." What is wrong?

- ☐ A. Nothing; it is a reasonable opinion
- ☐ B. The brief supplies no fare or emissions data, so the comparison is unsupported
- ☐ C. The sentence is too long
- ☐ D. Only "cheapest" is wrong

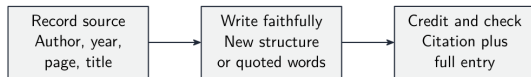
Plagiarism and honest source use

- 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 the case; no universal penalty is claimed here.

Quoting, paraphrasing, summarising

Technique	What it does
Quoting	Exact words, quotation marks, source credit
Paraphrasing	Your own wording and structure, keeping the meaning and limitations; ideas still need credit
Summarising	Condenses a longer text to its main points, with credit

Citation, reference list, and note-taking



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

Worked example: a faithful paraphrase

The source: Lin (2026), Seedling observation notebook, p. 2

A seven-day classroom comparison: shaded seedlings grew more slowly than those beside the window, but conditions were not controlled.

Faithful paraphrase: "One shaded tray grew more slowly than the window tray, but uncontrolled conditions limit causal conclusions (Lin, 2026, p. 2)."

"Lin proves that shade always prevents growth" is inaccurate even with a citation.

Your turn: the faithful paraphrase

Your turn

Lin (2026, p. 2) reports shaded seedlings growing more slowly under uncontrolled conditions. Which paraphrase is faithful?

- A. Shade always prevents growth (Lin, 2026)
- B. One shaded tray grew more slowly than the window tray, but uncontrolled conditions limit causal conclusions (Lin, 2026, p. 2)
- C. Lin proves shade is harmful
- D. Seedlings grew slowly for unknown reasons, so no citation is needed

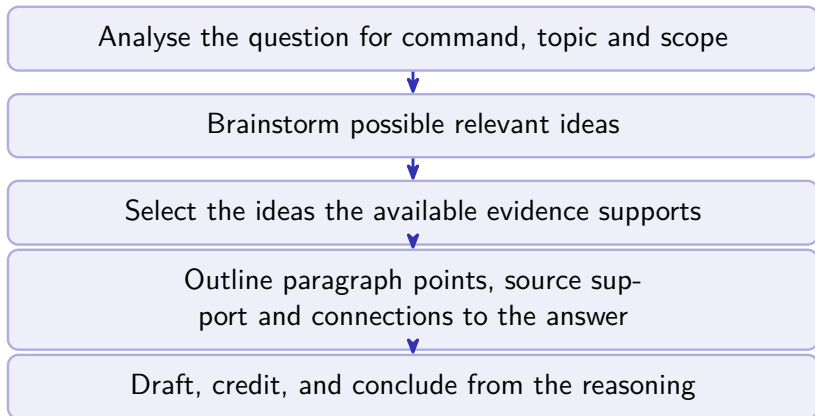
Analyse the question before choosing evidence

Command	What it asks
Compare	Relevant similarities and differences
Evaluate	A judgement against suitable criteria
Discuss	Need not mean two equal sides

Use the evidence

Identify the command, the topic and the scope; read the specific brief rather than assuming a universal format.

Brainstorm, select, outline



Introduction, thesis, synthesis, conclusion

- The introduction gives context and a thesis answering the question.
- A thesis guides the argument at an appropriate level of certainty — it need not be controversial or exaggerated.
- Synthesis combines source ideas around your argument, retaining credit and limits.
- The conclusion answers from the reasoning already developed, adding no unexplained new evidence.

Worked outline: the device-free room

- 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 and interruption feedback before deciding whether to continue.

Decision

Do not invent marks, attendance or trial results.

Your turn: what makes it synthesis

Your turn

What makes the device-free-room outline a synthesis rather than a copy of the two notes?

- A. It uses longer sentences than the notes
- B. It combines both sources around one argument, keeping their credit and limits
- C. It quotes each note in full, one after another
- D. It avoids citing sources so the writing looks original

Check yourself

- A message contains Monday noon and Wednesday. What must you know before answering?
- Why is "Lin proves that shade always prevents growth" inaccurate even with a citation?
- What does a comma splice join, and what repairs it?
- What must survive, together, in a faithful paraphrase?