



Cambridge IGCSE™

CO-ORDINATED SCIENCES (DOUBLE AWARD)

0654/32

Paper 3 Core Theory

February/March 2026

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 120

Published

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge International will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge International is publishing the mark schemes for the February/March 2026 series for most Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International A and AS Level components, and some Cambridge O Level components.

This document consists of **16** printed pages.

Generic Marking Principles

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptions for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

Rules must be applied consistently, e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

Science-Specific Marking Principles

1 Examiners should consider the context and scientific use of any keywords when awarding marks. Although keywords may be present, marks should not be awarded if the keywords are used incorrectly.

2 The examiner should not choose between contradictory statements given in the same question part, and credit should not be awarded for any correct statement that is contradicted within the same question part. Wrong science that is irrelevant to the question should be ignored.

3 Although spellings do not have to be correct, spellings of syllabus terms must allow for clear and unambiguous separation from other syllabus terms with which they may be confused (e.g. ethane / ethene, glucagon / glycogen, refraction / reflection).

4 The error carried forward (ecf) principle should be applied, where appropriate. If an incorrect answer is subsequently used in a scientifically correct way, the candidate should be awarded these subsequent marking points. Further guidance will be included in the mark scheme where necessary and any exceptions to this general principle will be noted.

5 'List rule' guidance

For questions that require ***n*** responses (e.g. State **two** reasons ...):

- The response should be read as continuous prose, even when numbered answer spaces are provided.
- Any response marked *ignore* in the mark scheme should not count towards ***n***.
- Incorrect responses should not be awarded credit but will still count towards ***n***.
- Read the entire response to check for any responses that contradict those that would otherwise be credited. Credit should **not** be awarded for any responses that are contradicted within the rest of the response. Where two responses contradict one another, this should be treated as a single incorrect response.
- Non-contradictory responses after the first ***n*** responses may be ignored even if they include incorrect science.

6 Calculation specific guidance

Correct answers to calculations should be given full credit even if there is no working or incorrect working, **unless** the question states 'show your working'.

For questions in which the number of significant figures required is not stated, credit should be awarded for correct answers when rounded by the examiner to the number of significant figures given in the mark scheme. This may not apply to measured values.

For answers given in standard form (e.g. $a \times 10^n$) in which the convention of restricting the value of the coefficient (a) to a value between 1 and 10 is not followed, credit may still be awarded if the answer can be converted to the answer given in the mark scheme.

Unless a separate mark is given for a unit, a missing or incorrect unit will normally mean that the final calculation mark is not awarded. Exceptions to this general principle will be noted in the mark scheme.

7 Guidance for chemical equations

Multiples / fractions of coefficients used in chemical equations are acceptable unless stated otherwise in the mark scheme.

State symbols given in an equation should be ignored unless asked for in the question or stated otherwise in the mark scheme.

Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	correct point or mark awarded
	incorrect point or mark not awarded
	benefit of the doubt given
	follow through
	benefit of doubt was considered, but the response was decided to not be sufficiently close for benefit of doubt to be applied.
	response is too vague or there is insufficient detail in response
	error carried forward applied
	information missing or insufficient for credit
	unclear response
	incorrect or insufficient point ignored while marking the rest of the response

Annotation	Meaning
	incorrect point or mark not awarded
	two statements are linked
	point has been noted, but no credit has been given or blank page seen
	key point attempted / working towards marking point / incomplete answer / response seen but not credited / blank page seen
	blank page

Question	Answer	Marks														
1(a)(i)	Any two from : cell membrane ; ribosomes ; nucleus ; mitochondria ;	2														
1(a)(ii)	glucose ;	1														
1(a)(iii)	carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, <u>all</u> identified ;	1														
1(b)(i)	plasmid ;	1														
1(b)(ii)	support / strength / rigidity ;	1														
1(c)(i)	<table><tr><th>method of transmission</th><th>direct contact</th></tr><tr><td>air</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>animals</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>blood</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>body fluids</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>contaminated surfaces</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>food</td><td></td></tr></table> ;;	method of transmission	direct contact	air		animals		blood	✓	body fluids	✓	contaminated surfaces		food		2
method of transmission	direct contact															
air																
animals																
blood	✓															
body fluids	✓															
contaminated surfaces																
food																
1(c)(ii)	Any two from: skin hairs in nose mucus AVP ;;	2														

Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)(iii)	white cells make antibodies / few(er) antibodies / less phagocytosis ; white cells destroy pathogens / pathogens not destroyed / removed ;	2

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)(i)	T – a line and label to trachea anywhere on the trachea ; D – a line and label to anywhere on the diaphragm ;	2
2(a)(ii)	(gas) Y ;	1
2(a)(iii)	(difference =) 4.00 – 0.04 or 3.96; $\frac{4.00 - 0.04}{0.04} \times 100$ 9 900(%) ;	2
2(b)(i)	glucose + oxygen → carbon dioxide + water ;;	2
2(b)(ii)	Any two from: muscle contraction protein synthesis cell division growth the passage of nerve impulses maintenance of a constant body temperature active transport ;;	2
2(b)(iii)	less oxygen transport / decreases rate of aerobic respiration ;	1

Question	Answer	Marks													
3(a)	<table><tr><th>description</th><th>genetic term</th></tr><tr><td>The allele that is expressed if present in the genotype.</td><td>dominant ;</td></tr><tr><td>The transmission of genetic information from generation to generation.</td><td>inheritance ;</td></tr><tr><td>Having two identical alleles of a particular gene.</td><td>homozygous ;</td></tr><tr><td>The observable features of an organism.</td><td>phenotype ;</td></tr></table>	description	genetic term	The allele that is expressed if present in the genotype.	dominant ;	The transmission of genetic information from generation to generation.	inheritance ;	Having two identical alleles of a particular gene.	homozygous ;	The observable features of an organism.	phenotype ;	4			
description	genetic term														
The allele that is expressed if present in the genotype.	dominant ;														
The transmission of genetic information from generation to generation.	inheritance ;														
Having two identical alleles of a particular gene.	homozygous ;														
The observable features of an organism.	phenotype ;														
3(b)	(Mother's genotype): Ee ; <table><tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="2"></td><th colspan="2">father's genotype</th></tr><tr><th>E</th><th>e</th></tr><tr><th rowspan="2">mother's genotype</th><th>E</th><td>EE</td><td>Ee</td></tr><tr><th>e</th><td>Ee</td><td>ee</td></tr></table> ; probability 25% or 1 in 4 ;			father's genotype		E	e	mother's genotype	E	EE	Ee	e	Ee	ee	3
				father's genotype											
		E	e												
mother's genotype	E	EE	Ee												
	e	Ee	ee												
3(c)(i)	mutation ;	1													
3(c)(ii)	(ABO) blood groups / AVP ;	1													

Question	Answer	Marks
4(a)(i)	spinal cord ; sensory ; gland ; electrical ;	4
4(a)(ii)	P ;	1
4(b)	chimpanzee ;	1
4(c)(i)	(ovary) oestrogen ; (pancreas) insulin ;	2
4(c)(ii)	Any one from: increased breathing rate ; increased heart rate ; increased pupil diameter ; AVP	1

Question	Answer	Marks
5(a)(i)	methane ;	1
5(a)(ii)	methane ;	1
5(a)(iii)	ethanol or carbon dioxide ;	1
5(a)(iv)	poly(ethene) ;	1
5(a)(v)	ethene;	1
5(b)	$\text{MgCO}_3 + 2\text{HCl} \rightarrow \text{MgCl}_2 + \text{CO}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O}$;	1

Question	Answer				Marks												
5(c)(i)	basic and acidic ;				1												
5(c)(ii)	5– 6 ;				1												
5(d)	<table><tr><td>element</td><td>group in Periodic Table</td><td>number of protons in the nucleus</td><td>period number</td></tr><tr><td>carbon</td><td>IV</td><td>6</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>; oxygen</td><td>VI</td><td>8</td><td>2</td></tr></table> ;;				element	group in Periodic Table	number of protons in the nucleus	period number	carbon	IV	6	2	; oxygen	VI	8	2	2
element	group in Periodic Table	number of protons in the nucleus	period number														
carbon	IV	6	2														
; oxygen	VI	8	2														

Question	Answer	Marks
6(a)	copper acts as a catalyst ; copper is a good conductor of thermal energy ;	2
6(b)(i)	alloy ;	1
6(b)(ii)	C ;	1
6(c)(i)	64 ;	1
6(c)(ii)	29 ;	1
6(c)(iii)	–1 ;	1
6(d)(i)	no reaction / copper does not react ;	1

Question	Answer	Marks
6(d)(ii)	hydrogen identified ; magnesium + hydrochloric acid $\rightarrow$ magnesium chloride + (hydrogen) ;	2
6(d)(iii)	magnesium is higher in the reactivity series than iron ; ORA	1

Question	Answer	Marks
7(a)(i)	(chlorine molecule) contains 2 chlorine atoms ;	1
7(a)(ii)	ionic ;	1
7(b)	(element) contains only one type of atom ; (compound) contains two (or more) elements (chemically combined) ;	2
7(c)	2,8 ;	1
7(d)(i)	electrolyte correctly labelled as E using a label line that ends in the solution in beaker ;	1
7(d)(ii)	cathode correctly labelled as C using a label line that points to the electrode on RHS ;	1
7(d)(iii)	carbon / graphite / platinum ;	1
7(d)(iv)	(positive electrode) chlorine / Cl_2 ; (negative electrode) hydrogen / H_2 ;	2

Question	Answer	Marks
8(a)(i)	stopwatch ;	1
8(a)(ii)	100 (s) :	1
8(a)(iii)	50 (cm^3) ;	1

Question	Answer	Marks
8(a)(iv)	A – no mark and slowest rate of reaction or took longest to finish ;	1
8(a)(v)	steeper line (than C) ; finishing at same volume of gas (50 cm ³) ;	2
8(b)(i)	nitrogen and oxygen ;	1
8(b)(ii)	strategy: Any one from: planting trees reduction in livestock farming decreasing use of fossil fuels increasing use of hydrogen and renewable energy, e.g. wind, solar ; explanation: Any one from: removes CO ₂ from atmosphere / CO ₂ used in photosynthesis less CO ₂ / methane released less CO ₂ released less CO ₂ released ; ;	2

Question	Answer	Marks
9(a)(i)	Mercury Venus Earth Mars Jupiter Saturn Uranus Neptune 2 correct ; 5 correct ;	2
9(a)(ii)	the Sun contains most of the mass of the Solar System; gravitational attraction of the Sun;	2

Question	Answer	Marks
9(b)(i)	solid cannot move freely / vibration only solid regular arrangement gas random motion gas random arrangement 2–3 correct ; 4 correct ;	2
9(b)(ii)	fixed and not fixed ;	1
9(c)(i)	conduction and convection need a medium / space is a vacuum / contains no particles ;	1
9(c)(ii)	infrared (radiation) ;	1

Question	Answer	Marks
10(a)(i)	weight ;	1
10(a)(ii)	constant (speed) ;	1
10(a)(iii)	evidence of conversion $35 \text{ km} = 35\,000 \text{ m}$; time = distance / speed (in any form) or $35\,000 / 5$; 7 000 (s) ;	3
10(b)(i)	Nuclear fission ;	1
10(b)(ii)	no radiation can pass through / shielding etc. ;	1
10(b)(iii)	proton – (one) positive and neutron – neutral / no charge ;	1
10(c)	any value above 20 000 Hz ;	1

Question	Answer	Marks
11(a)(i)	all symbols correct ; series circuit with component symbols correctly connected ;	2
11(a)(ii)	voltmeter connected across lamp ; correct symbol used for voltmeter ;	2
11(a) (iii)	$R = V / I$ (in any form) or $3.0 / 0.25$; $12 (\Omega)$;	2
11(b)	angle of incidence = <u>e</u> and angle of refraction = <u>b</u> ;	1
11(c)(i)	orange yellow green blue indigo ;	1
11(c)(ii)	longest wavelength = red highest frequency = violet ;	1
11(c)(iii)	$v = f \times \lambda$ (in any form) or $f = 3 \times 10^8 / 7 \times 10^{-7}$; 4.3×10^{14} ;	2

Question	Answer	Marks
12(a)	$t = 5$ s accelerating $t = 12$ s moving at constant speed $t = 20$ s decelerating $t = 45$ s at rest ;;	2
12(b)	$65\% + 35\% = 100\%$;	1
12(c)	electrons ;	1

Question	Answer	Marks
12(d)	moment = force $\times$ distance (in any form) or force = $150 / 0.50$; 300 ; N ;	3
12(e)	power = voltage $\times$ current (in any form) or current = $6.0 / 12$; 0.50 (A) ;	2
12(f)	varying strength ; switch on / off ;	2