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| [**Links for Students**](http://www.amit.org.il/learning/english/castlead/index.htm)**Check out the links for High School.****They are very helpful for practicing Bagrut exams.****Hot Tips for the Bagrut Exam**1.   The Oxford English English-Hebrew Dictionary (the ONLY one that is permitted on the Bagrut exam).2.   Two (2) good pens that **write**. A highlighter (marker).3.   A ruler (to draw your margins for your composition).4.   Food for the exam (sandwiches and soft drinks/water).5.   Tissues, medicines, hair gel—anything you need to survive these hours. 6.  If you must listen to a CD of the exam, get yourself a personal CD player/radio. Don't forget to bring it with you to the exam even if it means attaching it to your head with Crazy Glue the day before the exam. Be sure it is equipped with new batteries that will not die on you in the middle of the listening comprehension section of the exam.7.   Come to the Bagrut half an hour before the exam. Find your room. Find a good place to sit that is out of the sun. Check the reception of the radio  in the room where you will be sitting. Tune it to get max reception.**Access to Written Information: Reading Comprehension**The reading passage is followed by comprehension questions. In your lifetime, you probably have done ten thousand of these, so there should be nothing new for you.Read the instructions for each question carefully. Sometimes the instructions limit the number of words you can have in your answer. If you use more than that number of words in your answer, you will be penalized.As you read the text, use your highlighter to mark important information that you may want to include in your composition**Common Question Types:**1.   Complete answer questions. When answering this type of question, you do not have to repeat the question in your answer.QUESTION: What is one way the cigarette companies planned to steal young smokers away from its competitors.ANSWER: The company created a special brand of cigarette for boys.2.   In a question that asks you to define a word or expression in your own words, do just that. You cannot use the original words that make up the expression you have been asked to define.QUESTION: What does the expression "targeted teenagers" mean?Incorrect: targeted people who are teenagers in their advertising.Correct: made their advertising attractive to young people In addition, your answer must be*grammatically parallel* to the original word or expression.QUESTION: Define the expression "a sense of unity" (line 8). Incorrect: girls feel together. Correct: a feeling of togetherness.3.   You may have a question like this:*Write an X beside the statements which are true*. The word STATEMENTS indicates that there may be more than one.4.   When you are asked to give examples of something, be sure to word your answer correctly. Furthermore, if you are asked for two examples, make them grammatically similar.QUESTION: Give TWO examples of smoking habits:Incorrect: 1. He smokes after meals. 2. A pack a day.Correct: 1. *Smoking* after meals. 2. *Smoking* a pack a day.5.   You will also find "complete the sentence" questions on the exam. To complete a sentence you must read the part given to you and then expand it into a full and complete sentence that contains the information required. This is a two-part task: writing a grammatically correct sentence and including in it the relevant information. After you complete such a question go back, read it and see if it meets both of these criteria.For Example: Even though the company said it never surveyed anyone under 18, there*is evidence that it had done so.*You must pay even greater attention to the grammar of a sentence which requires you to complete two parts. For example:According to Paragraph II, girls prefer to *have a career* rather than*find a husband.*6.   Sometimes a mini-cloze question will require you to use *an unfamiliar* word that appears in the text. In such a case, you probably will have to change the word by using a different part of speech or a different tense.*In the text:* This generation of girls are outdoing teenage boys in school. In the past, girls' academic achievements tended to fall off in their mid-teens.QUESTION: In the past, teenage boys \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ teenage girls in school. The word we are talking about here is *outdo.* It is used in the present progressive in the text, but in order to answer the question, the tense must be changed. Correct Answer: In the past, teenage boys *outdid* teenage girls in school. (Of course you can use a totally different word such as *surpassed.*)7.   You may be asked to choose a*connector* that demonstrates the *relationship between two paragraphs.*QUESTION: Which of the following can be used to connect paragraphs II and III?a. Eventually b. However c. Nevertheless d. FurthermoreIf paragraph II tells a story or gives a series of events and paragraph II tells what finally happened, you would choose EVENTUALLY. If Paragraph III contrasts what was said in paragraph II, you would choose*However* or *Nevertheless.* Note that in a case where there are two connectors, it is likely that neither is the correct answer. If paragraph III adds more facts, examples, opinions or other information, furthermore would be the correct choice.8.   You may be asked to explain *what a particular word in the text refers to.*This is generally a very simple thing to do, but you must be sure to remember the following:a. If you are asked what "these" "those" or other plural words refer to, your answer will be something in the plural.b. Some "referring words" refer to a phenomenon, rather than a specific person, place or thing. *In the text:* And as relationships with the opposite sex become less important, female relationships are coming to play a more central role in the lives of young girls and women. This reflects yet another aspect of girl power. Question: What does the word "this" (line 17) mean?Answer: *The fact that female relationships are coming to play a more central role in the lives of young girls and women.***The Composition**The exam contains a composition in Modules D, F, G. We are looking for a well-constructed piece of writing which demonstrates that you have thought about the topic and about how you present it to your reader.1.   **Give your work a title**. Remember that the first word in a title is capitalized as are all other words except *the, a, an, prepositions* (in, on, etc.) and other "little" words.2.   **Divide your composition into paragraphs**. Each paragraph is indented 2 cm. in from the margin. A paragraph is not just a physical division. You don't start a new paragraph just because you think you have enough words in one paragraph and now it's time to start another. **A paragraph is a unit for separating individual ideas**. Each paragraph you write should contain one main idea. This idea should be supported by opinions, facts, examples and details.3.   **Choose to write short, clear sentences** (rather than long and possibly confusing) sentences. End each sentence with a period. *Do not write sentences like this one:* More and more accidents are taking place on Israeli roads, I think that this must stop and we need stricter laws and better roads - and to raise the driving age and to better educate young people - I hope that the day will come when we won't have young people dying on the roads. *Do write*: More and more accidents are taking place on Israeli roads. I think that this must stop. We need stricter laws and better roads. In addition, we need to raise the driving age and to better educate young people. I hope that the day will come when we won't have young people dying on the roads.4.   **Write neatly and clearly**. Don't lose points because your answer is illegible.5.   **Use a ruler to draw margins** along the sides of your test paper.6.   **A dash (–) is a very rare form of punctuation in English**. If you have more than one set of dashes in your composition, you've got too many. In general, my best advice is not to use them at all. Use commas instead.7.   **Connectors** are used to link ideas, sentences and paragraphs. You cannot simply write a string of ideas and connect them with commas or "and" as many students tend to do. (See 3 above).8.   **Use vocabulary that you are familiar with**. If you are not a native speaker of English, it is likely that you will not be able to express yourself in English on the same level that you are able to express yourself in Hebrew. Accept this fact and work with words and expressions that you know.9.   **Use formal language**. Words such as *pretty* (the experiment was pretty successful) is not appropriate for this kind of writing. Avoid slang words (use children, not kids) and contractions (use would not, not wouldn't). Do not use *etc.* Use: *and more and others* instead.10.       **If asked to describe something imaginary or theoretical**, use the "would" form. For example: *The ideal world for teenagers would have free fast food restaurants on every street corner. There would be no school and no teachers.*11.       **Do not talk to your reader** using expressions such as:*So now you can see that … You have to realize that … I'm sure you know that.* Use instead: *It is now clear that … One must realize that … I'm sure it is a known fact that …*12.       **How to write a composition: a *very* brief guide**.        Read the topic carefully and write down any idea that comes to mind.        Go back and edit this list by choosing the best ideas.        Arrange the ideas you have chosen into logical order.        Write out your composition using the edited list as a guide.        Go back and edit (including a spelling check).        Copy your draft.        Proofread your final copy.13.       **Use capital letters when needed**. Every new sentence begins with a capital. In the title of your composition, the first word is ALWAYS capitalized. All other words in the title are also capitalized, except *a, an, the* and other "little" words like *to, in, for, from,* and *with.*14.       **Save your three dots (…) for your next love letter**. (I really need to be with you …). Do not use them on a composition.15.       **In English, every verb has a sentence form and a question form**. Question forms are, of course, used in questions, but not in sentences. In the following examples, although each sentence contains a question word—it is not a question.Incorrect: I can describe what do I think is the ideal world for teenagers.Correct: I can describe what I think the ideal world for teenagers is. Incorrect: They feel they have to know how do people expect them to behave.Correct: They feel they have to know how people expect them to behave.**Important!**You may be asked to write a descriptive essay. Be sure you do just that: describe. If you are describing your best friend, for example, don't talk about how you were hurt on the soccer field and how you were rushed to the hospital and how you were scared to death of the doctors and then maybe add a few words about her and how she helped you. The assignment is to describe her. For example:*My best friend is a really incredible human being. Although he has only been in Israel for three years (He is originally from the U.S.), one would never suspect that he was not born and raised here. Aside from having a perfect command of Hebrew, he is totally a part of the local teenage culture. He is well-liked by just about everyone. He is a fine athlete, he plays the piano and the guitar and he is the coolest person I know. In addition, he is an excellent student and has big plans for the future, all of which, I am certain will materialize.**But perhaps the most important quality he has is his ability to be a true friend. I know he will always be there when I need him. He knows how to keep a confidence and I feel I can tell him absolutely anything. He has a lot of common sense and is able to look at any situation objectively. I know I can trust his good judgment to give me sound advice.*Sum up in the last paragraph.\*\*\*You may be asked to write a formal letter. You **must** use the correct format for the formal letter. You were given examples describing this format in detail. Find it. Read it. Learn it.    |
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