


Writing

- ◆ Learners can choose from three writing tasks. They should choose a title that interests them, and then go through it carefully, underlining the key words and planning what they can include in their response. Learners who plan their writing task are more likely to write well-organised, clearly structured responses that demonstrate the full range of their abilities. There is space on the exam paper for planning.
- ◆ Learners should be aware to whom they are writing (the target reader in the email) and choose an appropriate style for the genre (informal email, formal email, story or essay) that they choose.
- ◆ Each writing task usually asks learners to provide more than one piece of information, for example, they may have to give advantages and disadvantages. If a B2, C1 and C2 candidate doesn't answer all the parts of the question, the response can only be awarded a maximum grade of 6 out of 10. If learners carry out the set task but use the wrong genre (e.g. produce an essay but write it as a letter) the task is incomplete and can only be allocated a maximum grade of 6. Please note that this does not apply at the B1 level.
- ◆ The number of words that learners need to write is important. If learners do not write the minimum number of words, then they will receive a lower mark. If they write more than the maximum number of words, they will not lose marks, but they will also not gain any extra marks. Learners should not waste time in the exam by counting words as they go. If they practise writing texts of the appropriate length, they will become familiar with how much they need to write.
- ◆ Even advanced learners make elementary mistakes based on first language interference (e.g. machine/motorcycle). It is helpful to make students aware of these problems, and also of 'false friends'.



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ESOL International

B1, B2, C1, C2

Tips for teachers

- **Listening**
- **Reading**
- **Use of English**
- **Speaking**
- **Writing**

Listening

- ◆ It is important for learners to use the time they are given at the beginning of the exam to read through the questions so they have a clear idea of what they are listening for.
- ◆ The answers to the listening questions do not occur right at the very beginning of the listening passages so learners can use the opening moments to familiarise themselves with the voices of the speakers.
- ◆ The listening texts play twice. It is very helpful to use the first listening to get an idea of the content of the passage. Learners can also answer any of the questions they feel confident about. For the questions they feel less confident about, it is a good idea to wait for the second listening before making a final decision about their answers. If students concentrate for too long on the questions they find more difficult in the first listening, they may miss out on the answer to the following question.
- ◆ In some questions, learners have to recognise the intention and attitude of the speakers. To help them with this, use videos, listening texts and live conversations to show students how English speakers use stress and intonation.

Reading

- ◆ Learners should first read the text through to get a general understanding without trying to answer the questions.
- ◆ It's important to read the stem of each question carefully, to have a clear idea of what is being looked for.
- ◆ Learners should practise all the different reading skills, including skimming and scanning as well as reading for detail and specific information. This will help them to use the time effectively by searching for the exact point in the text where they can find the answer to a specific question.
- ◆ In the multiple choice questions, an option which contains a word from the text is not necessarily the correct answer so 'word spotting' can be risky!

Use of English

- ◆ Learners who do well in this paper have a good knowledge of grammar and vocabulary appropriate for their level. They are aware of meaning, structure, register, collocation and derivatives. Good language learners develop an effective personal system for recording new vocabulary and for incorporating it into their active and passive production of English, so it is helpful to encourage these habits of effective learning.
- ◆ The right answer may depend on the correct verb form, dependent preposition, collocation or phrasal verb.
- ◆ In the cloze passages, learners should read the whole passage first so they can understand the text as a whole. They should then go through the gaps one at a time, making sure they look carefully as to what precedes the gap and what follows it, as the correct answer often depends on this.
- ◆ Do not leave out any questions. Even if learners do not know the answer, they can make an intelligent guess.

Speaking

- ◆ The most important part of the speaking exam is communication, with active, authentic and natural interaction between the learners and the interlocutor.
- ◆ The best way to be an effective communicator is to listen and respond constructively, so learners should listen very carefully to the interlocutor's questions and try to answer them as fully as possible.
- ◆ Learners should avoid monosyllabic responses and give expansive answers where possible. Sometimes the examiner will have to interrupt the learners to keep to the timing of the exam, so they shouldn't worry if this happens to them.
- ◆ Plenty of speaking practice in a mock exam situation is helpful for learners as it familiarises them with the test format and the timing of each part.
- ◆ Learners should speak clearly so that both examiners can hear them.
- ◆ In the interactive part of the test, learners should look at each other and initiate and respond appropriately. They should listen to each other, respond to what their partner says and keep up a flow of conversation. They should try to avoid long, unnatural silences and remember that they are responsible for the interaction - the examiner will not participate in their discussion.