

1. Let's start with some questions....

What are the writing task for First B2(FCE)? And for First B2 for Schools?

What are the writing tasks for Preliminary B1(PET)? And for Preliminary B1 for Schools?

2. Which questions should your students choose? Which is the easiest for FCE? And for PET?

3. Look at the following list. Do you think these aspects are assessed when doing a writing exam? There are four aspects which are **not** officially assessed. Find them and cross them out.

1. Are there many grammar or spelling mistakes?
2. Is the handwriting easy to read?
3. Is the writing well organised?
4. Has the student answered the question fully?
5. Does the writing achieve its purpose?
6. Is all the information in the answer actually true?
7. How long does it take to read?
8. Does it make the reader want to laugh?
9. Are linking words used effectively?
10. Does the writing include all information required by the target reader?
11. Is formal or informal language used correctly?
12. Does the writer use appropriate vocabulary?

4. What are the four criteria for assessing writing for both PET and FCE?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

5. Can you match the subcriteria to each descriptor?

- Relevant, target reader informed
- Conventions of the task(format, genre, register), holding target reader's attention, purpose of writing achieved, straightforward vs. Complex ideas
- Linking words, cohesion devices, patterns
- Vocabulary, appropriate of vocabulary, grammatical forms(simple/complex), grammatical control, range, overuse, errors vs slips

6. Now look at these descriptions of each assessment area. Can you match them with the areas?

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Content | Focuses on the way the text is organized. For example, does the text have a logical sequence and ways of connecting the sentences? |
| Communicative Achievement | Focuses on how appropriate the writing is. For example, is the text an email, an article or a story, and does it use the correct style of writing and appropriate functions such as offering advice or apologising? |
| Organisation | Focuses on vocabulary and grammar; for example, how accurate and/or relevant is the grammar and vocabulary in the text and is there a variety of language? |
| Language | Focuses on how well the task has been completed; for example, has all the important information been included in the piece of writing? |

6. Now, go back to question 3 and match the questions to their criteria

7. Can you match the sub **criteria** to the **descriptor**?

+++Relevant, target reader informed

+++Conventions of the task(format, genre, register), holding target reader's attention, purpose of writing achieved, straightforward vs. Complex ideas

+++Linking words, cohesion devices, patterns

+++Vocabulary, appropriate of vocabulary, grammatical forms(simple/complex), grammatical control, range, overuse, errors vs slips

8. Checklist to use for B2 level self assessment

Content

- Have I covered all the key information required by the task?
- Have I written only information which is relevant to the task?
- Have I developed the basic points in the task with my own ideas?

Communicative Achievement

- Have I achieved the main purpose(s) of the text (for example, explaining, persuading, suggesting, apologising, comparing, etc.)?
- Have I communicated a balance of straightforward and more complex ideas?
- Have I used a suitable style and register (formal or informal) for the task?

Organisation

- Have I used paragraphs appropriately to organise my ideas?
- Have I used other organisational features appropriately for the genre of the text (for example, titles, headings, openings, closings, etc.)?
- Is the connection between my ideas clear and easy for the reader to follow? (For example, have I used appropriate linking words, pronouns, etc. to refer to different things within the text?)
- Are the ideas balanced appropriately, with suitable attention and space given to each one?

Language

- Have I used a wide range of vocabulary?
- Have I avoided repeating the same words and phrases?
- Have I used a range of simple and more complex grammatical structures?
- Have I correctly used any common phrases which are relevant to the specific task or topic?
- Is my use of grammar accurate?
- Is my spelling accurate?

Cambridge English

The Assessment Scales

The B2 Assessment Scales are divided into six bands from 0–5, with 0 being the lowest and 5 the highest. Descriptors for each criterion are provided for Bands 1, 3 and 5 and indicate what a candidate is expected to demonstrate at each band. The descriptors for Band 3 and above generally indicate performance of at least B2 level.

| B2 | CONTENT | COMMUNICATIVE ACHIEVEMENT | ORGANISATION | LANGUAGE |
|----|--|---|--|---|
| 5 | All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed. | Uses the conventions of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate. | Text is well organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effect. | Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. Uses a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication. |
| 4 | <i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i> | | | |
| 3 | Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is on the whole informed. | Uses the conventions of the communicative task to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward ideas. | Text is generally well organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices. | Uses a range of everyday vocabulary appropriately, with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control. Errors do not impede communication. |
| 2 | <i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i> | | | |
| 1 | Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed. | Uses the conventions of the communicative task in generally appropriate ways to communicate straightforward ideas. | Text is connected and coherent, using basic linking words and a limited number of cohesive devices. | Uses everyday vocabulary generally appropriately, while occasionally overusing certain lexis. Uses simple grammatical forms with a good degree of control. While errors are noticeable, meaning can still be determined. |
| 0 | Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed. | <i>Performance below Band 1.</i> | | |

As you look through the scales, it may help to highlight words which make one band different from another.

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Task: Part 1 – essay

Writing Part 1

You **must** answer this question. Write your question in **140–190** words in an appropriate style **on the separate answer sheet**

1. In your English class you have been talking about learning languages. Now your English teacher has asked you to write an essay for homework.

Write your essay using **all** the notes and giving reasons for your point of view.

| |
|---|
|  |
| <p>'There are more reasons to learn a foreign language than just to pass a test.'</p> <p>Do you agree?</p> |
| <p>Notes</p> <p>Write about:</p> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. pleasure2. personal challenge3. (your own idea) |



Task: Part 2 – email

3. You have just received an email from your English-speaking friend, Jo.

From: Jo

Hi,

You know I've joined my local swimming team – well, I love it! We train every Tuesday and Thursday after school. Now my parents want me to go to an extra maths class on Tuesdays, so I won't be able to swim then.

How do you think I can persuade them to change their minds?

Write soon,

Jo

Write your **email**.

Sample answer 4

Hi Jo,

It is good to receive news from you! I bet you are swimming like a fish. Do you remember when we were kids and we made a few races in Angelina's pool?

I understand why you are trying to persuade them but remember that they want your best. If I were you firstly I would try to talk with your swimming coach and ask him about the possibilities of training another day. Then if the answer would have been negative I will probably try to do the same with yours future math teacher. I am sure that everyone knows the importance of practising sports while studying. So they will find a solution.

If everything goes don't doesn't happen as you and I expect ensure that your parents don't get mad with your decision. They are giving their best! Put your education in front first place. Opportunities to swim you will have a lot during your life. Moreover, you can come to Barcelone and try to catch me in the pool.

Good luck,

Sam

Nice!!!

I woke up in the morning and looked out the window. It was a nice day. I went with my nice friend to a nice park. We had a nice time because my friend took her nice dog. After that we went to a nice restaurant and had a nice lunch. The waiter was really nice and the food was nice. After lunch we met my cousin. She's really nice and we decided to give her a nice present for her birthday, a nice t-shirt.



You could make up a similar exercise about very:

| WORDS TO USE INSTEAD OF "VERY" | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very angry Very beautiful Very big Very boring Very noisy Very poor Very creative Very crowded Very dear Very deep Very empty Very excited | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furious Gorgeous Massive Dull Deafening Destitute Innovative Bustling Cherished Profound Desolate Thrilled | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very fancy Very fat Very friendly Very glad Very great Very heavy Very calm Very ugly Very small Very funny Very quiet Very rich | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lavish Obese Amiable Overjoyed Terrific Lead Serene Hideous Petite Hilarious Hushed Wealthy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very accurate Very afraid Very clever Very cute Very dull Very eager Very evil Very fast Very fierce Very light Very lively Very lovely | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exact Fearful Intelligent Adorable Tedious Keen Wicked Quick Ferocious Luminous Animated Adorable |
| WORDS TO USE INSTEAD OF "VERY" | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very cheap Very clean Very short Very difficult Very dry Very quick Very pale Very perfect Very powerful Very pretty Very rainy Very scared | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stingy Spotless Brief Arduous Arid Rapid Ashen Flawless Compelling Beautiful Pouring Petrified | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very scary Very serious Very sharp Very shiny Very shy Very simple Very expensive Very dirty Very tall Very easy Very wet Very slow | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chilling Grave Keen Gleaming Timid Basic Costly Filthy Towering Effortless Soaked Sluggish | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very sweet Very talented Very tasty Very thirsty Very tight Very careful Very tired Very wide Very willing Very windy Very wise Very worried | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoughtful Gifted Delicious Parched Constricting Cautious Exhausted Expansive Eager Blustery Sage Distressed |

Write 3 alternatives for the following words.

- | | | | |
|------------|----|----|----|
| a. Great | 1. | 2. | 3. |
| b. Think | 1. | 2. | 3. |
| c. As well | 1. | 2. | 3. |
| d. Animal | 1. | 2. | 3. |
| e. Explain | 1. | 2. | 3. |
| f. Bad | 1. | 2. | 3. |
| g. At once | 1. | 2. | 3. |
| h. Make | 1. | 2. | 3. |

OLD SCHOOL, BUT.....

Read this review and the examiner's comments. Correct the underlined mistakes and then replace five uses of the adjective 'good' with one of the adjectives below.

excellent fine high-quality positive successful

Review of the movie 'Tiempo de Valientes'

There is no doubt that the gold medal for thriller-making goes to Hollywood. They really know how to pull your attention out through a whole movie. Actually, most of the good thrillers are made in Hollywood.

So, when you find a good thriller that is made in a different country, it's a very good experience, because you get amused but also gladly surprised by the cultural differences. 'Tiempo de Valientes' is a good example of this.

'Tiempo de Valientes' is an Argentinian production which contains all the basic elements of a good thriller, and all of them are used perfectly to maintain your attention in the story. But also is a funny movie. The characters are built under an Argentinian culture point of view, and the movie has a very good sense of humor. Certainly 'Tiempo de Valientes' is a very good thriller which I strongly recomend to watch if you are interested in international cinema. And there is no doubt that with this kind of production Argentina will be fighting for the silver medal in thriller-making.

Examiner's comments

A clear and interesting review, with:

- ✓ an original beginning and end (reference to gold / silver medal).
- ✓ a good attempt at long and complex sentences.
- ✓ some excellent phrases used, such as 'maintain your attention' and 'fighting for the silver medal'.
- ✓ relevant vocabulary, such as 'thriller', 'cultural', 'international cinema'.
- ✗ some basic errors, such as 'But also is'.
- ✗ over-use of the adjective 'good'.

(Objective First, Cambridge)

All material adapted from Cambridge Assessment materials and books...

