

Exploring Skills for English Tests

Writing Part 1: All Levels

Format and requirements

Candidates are presented with a scenario or situation followed by a series of 3 bullets.

The scenarios will draw from everyday life situations and will be authentic in nature, requiring some kind of response from the candidate. The response may need to be formal, neutral or informal depending on the scenario.

Candidates will need to address the requirements of the scenario and all three bullets in order to be able to achieve maximum marks available for the Appropriacy and Relevance of Response criterion. The task will give candidates an indication of the number of words they should write.

Candidates may be asked to write an email, a blog post, a forum post or a similar digital piece of communication. Candidate responses should follow expected conventions, for example:

- Emails should have an appropriate start and finish. There is no need for the candidate to put in email addresses or a subject line.
- Other digital formats should also have an introduction, a main section which addresses the bullets, paragraphed if appropriate, and a closing section, which may summarise or provide conclusions as appropriate.
- Language and structure suitable for the level and use appropriate cohesive devices

Skills/functions being assessed

The following list provides examples of the skills or functions which may be elicited:

- Explaining a situation
- Describing something that has happened
- Requesting information
- Recommending a course of action
- Giving own opinion

Tips for teachers

Provide candidates with

- practice in writing in a formal or informal style
- language for a variety of functions: for example, inviting or recommending
- opportunities to explore different everyday scenarios where they may be required to produce different types of writing

- practice in writing to the required length. Very short responses may be penalised as they won't cover all the required bullet points.

Tips for learners

- Read the task carefully and try and write within the word limit: very short responses may be penalised as they won't cover all the bullet points
- Include a greeting and the name of the person you are writing to
- Address all the bullet points in the task. You can add your own information if you want but you must keep to the word limit
- Practise organising writing into paragraphs and using cohesive devices
- If writing a blog or a forum post, make sure that you have an introduction and a closing or conclusion

Sample Writing Part 1 Task

You visited a friend recently and left something of yours behind.

Write an email to your friend. In your email

- describe the object you left behind
- explain where you think you left this object
- say what you would like your friend to do.

You should write between 80-120 words.

The scenario provides some background to the task and identifies the recipient.

The required response will usually be digital, for example an email.

The bullets give an indication of what candidates should include in their answer.

The word count gives an indication of how much candidates should write. The word count is dependent on your test level.

There is a clear greeting.

Sample Writing Part 1 Response

Hello John,

Thanks for the dinner last Saturday, I really enjoyed seeing your new house.

I am afraid I think I left my umbrella behind in your house. It's a large, red and black one. I must have left it behind the front door when I arrived. I remember it was raining and the umbrella was wet.

Will you let me know if you find it? If you do, perhaps we can meet again next weekend for a coffee, and you can give the umbrella back to me. It's my favourite.

Thanks again, see you soon.

Mary

The scenario provides some context.

Bullet 1 is addressed here.

Bullet 2 is addressed here.

Bullet 3 is addressed here.

This informal email ends with appropriate wording.

Note: this sample task is for guidance purposes only. For examples of level-specific listening tasks, please refer to the Skills for English Practice Tests available through the Skills for English website: <https://skillsforenglish.com/language-learning/>