

Exploring Skills for English Tests

Writing Part 2: C1 and C2

Format of the task

The task begins with a statement setting out an issue or providing a viewpoint. This is followed by one or two questions or a sentence indicating how candidates should respond.

The initial statement will introduce a topic that can be explored and discussed by the candidates. The topic and language within the task are level appropriate and will draw from everyday life situations. The statement will be followed by one or two questions or a sentence providing guidance to candidates as to how they should respond to the task (for example, discuss these two views and ...).

The candidate response should address the question(s) they have been asked and/or instructions they have been given. The candidate response should be well-structured with an introduction, the main body of their response and a conclusion. The response should also be appropriately paragraphed.

The task may ask candidates to present their own opinions and candidates should ensure they provide this in their response.

Skills/functions being assessed

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

- Giving one's own opinion about an issue and providing support for the opinion
- Recommending actions
- Discussing a problem or an issue and providing a solution
- Discussing advantages and disadvantages of a proposal
- Discussing two opposing views and presenting one's own position
- Agreeing or disagreeing with a given view and presenting reasons or a case to support own position

Tips for teachers

Provide candidates with:

- practice in writing discursive pieces which have an introduction, a main body and a concluding sentence/paragraph
- practice in paragraphing and organisation of ideas in a discursive text
- practice in writing in a neutral style and within the word limit: very short responses may be penalised as they often won't address the task fully

- language for presenting and discussing different points of view, considering advantages and disadvantages of an action/position and exploring solutions to a problem
- opportunities to explore different common life situations and questions (for example the climate, social media, pollution)

Tips for learners

- Read the task carefully and write within the given word limit: very short responses may be penalised as they won't address the task fully
- Think about how your answer is paragraphed and make sure you have an introduction, a main body and a conclusion, and that your ideas are linked together well
- Check that your response has addressed all the different elements of the task
- Practice supporting arguments, thoughts and opinions

Sample Writing Part 2 Task

Some people believe that it is better for mothers to remain at home and look after their families. Others believe that the government should provide all the resources necessary, such as free nursery schools, for mothers to be able to go out to work.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

You should write between 250-300 words.

Task presents candidates with two different viewpoints on a single topic.

Task requires candidates to discuss **both** views and give **own** opinion.

Word count shows how much candidates should write.

Sample Writing Part 2 Response

The question of whether women, who are also mothers, should be supported so that they can go out to work is a difficult one and in many cases depends on the economic circumstances of the family.

Most people agree that young children need the support of both parents, but in many cases the caring activities are undertaken by mothers rather than fathers. However, at a certain stage in a child's development, it becomes important to be able to interact with others of the same age. Therefore, the mothering role changes as the child grows up from a baby to a toddler and so on.

However, it is also true that many women are keen to work and have a career alongside motherhood and may want to return to work after a period of maternity leave. In some cases though, women have no choice but to return to work because their income is needed to support the family. The issue for these groups is one of costs of childcare. Either

First paragraph introduces the given topic.

Second paragraph deals with first statement in the task: mothering and childcare.

Paragraphs 2 and 3 discuss the two views presented in the task.

This paragraph addresses the second statement: the possibility of mothers going out to work.

women have to rely on extended family to support them with childcare or have to pay for childcare. This can be a burden for those families under some financial strain.

The question here is really about the choices provided to women and the way governments can support them. It is important for the economy of a country that both women and men participate in work and pay taxes. It is also important for individuals to feel that they are valued members of society at large as well as within their family groups. If we want women to have the choice, then governments must provide free childcare facilities to allow women to return to work and continue with their careers.

Final paragraph presents the writer's own views and provides a conclusion.

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/>