

IELTS on Track

TEST PRACTICE General Training

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e-book WRITING

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IELTS PRACTICE TESTS



6 COMPLETE WRITING TESTS

The Writing Test Task 2 prompts are usually short and clear. The aim has been to enable users of this book to focus on their own writing needs.

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME to IELTS on Track! This test practice and preparation book has complete IELTS practice Writing tests and Fast Track strategy and activity sections. It has been written for candidates who are preparing for the IELTS Test (General Training) in order to enter a vocational program or school, or for immigration purposes. IELTS on Track is not an official IELTS publication and, like most other practice and preparation books, is not endorsed officially by IELTS. The IELTS on Track series has its own website – **www.IELTSonTrack.com** which has other helpful test preparation materials.

WHAT IS THE IELTS TEST?

IELTS (International English Language Testing System) is a widely used and recognised international Test of English administered by Cambridge ESOL, formerly the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), the British Council, and IDP Education Australia. There are two versions: Academic (for students wishing to study in an English-speaking university or college) and General Training (for entry to vocational programs, schools or for immigration).

IELTS tests four performance areas: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking.

All candidates receive a test score between 1 (lowest) and 9 (highest). Academic institutions set their own IELTS entry scores.

The IELTS test is taken in this sequence:

Listening	40 questions — 30 minutes (+ 10 minutes to transfer answers)
General Training Reading	40 questions based on texts in three sections — 60 minutes
General Training Writing	2 writing tasks — 60 minutes
Speaking	a standardised interview in 3 parts lasting 11-14 minutes

The current IELTS material for test applicants, which is available at all test centres worldwide gives further information about the test. The official IELTS website: **www.ielts.org** also gives up-to-date information and test data.

***FASTTRACK* SECTION**

WRITING

The first part of this section explores the requirements of the IELTS General Training Writing Test and targets problem areas with hints for improvement. Each of the twelve Writing Tasks has planning assistance plus a Sample Answer, which generate language building activities. 'Notes' following the answers provide additional discourse pointers. Our belief is that IELTS candidates will become better attuned to the type of writing required for the test if they work analytically and interactively with whole sample answers. This is consistent with an inductive approach.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Of course, if you are working alone you will choose how best to use the book, but we would remind you of two principles that we hope may influence you.

Learn by reviewing performance

Our approach is based on an inductive view of learning. This means that we believe that it is better to learn by doing an IELTS test and then reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of your performance. Repeating the test helps to reinforce corrections and build confidence and speed. Your progress will be more efficient working this way than just doing one test after another.

'Use it or lose it'

Again, we strongly encourage you to try the same test several times to make sure you can build on what you have learnt about your performance, monitor and then demonstrate improvement. This is why we say 'Use it or lose it'.

GOOD LUCK!

WRITING UNIT

WHAT'S AHEAD... IN THE WRITING UNIT

- **The IELTS Writing Test**
- **What is the examiner looking for?**
- **Examiners' Suggestions**
- ***Fast Track Writing***
 - **More about Task 1**
 - **More about Task 2**
- **Instructions for Test Practice**
- **Writing Tests 1-6**

**Activities and Sample Answer
for each writing task**

THE IELTS WRITING TEST

Each Writing Test consists of two tasks to be completed in 1 hour.

TASK 1

Write a letter in response to a given problem or situation.

Time: 20 minutes

Length: 150 words minimum

What skills are needed?

- identify and communicate the main purpose for writing the letter
- deal with all three listed aspects of the situation or problem effectively, using clear paragraphs
- write clearly and accurately in the appropriate register, style and tone

WHAT IS THE EXAMINER LOOKING FOR?

Assessment Criteria

In other words...

Task Achievement

Have you tackled all three elements of the letter using an appropriate and consistent style and tone?

Coherence/Cohesion

Have you built and organised your letter so that its purpose is clear, the contents are easy to track and the layout includes appropriate paragraphs? Is your information connected effectively from sentence to sentence?

Lexical Resource

Is your vocabulary appropriate, varied and accurate?

Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Are your sentences grammatically accurate, with a variety of complex as well as simple sentences?

TASK 2

Write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem.

Time: 40 minutes

Length: 250 words minimum

What skills are needed?

- read and understand the essay question
- generate ideas and a viewpoint, or appropriate response to the topic and task
- organise your ideas into paragraphs
- write clearly and accurately in an appropriate style

WHAT IS THE EXAMINER LOOKING FOR?

Assessment Criteria

In other words...

Task Response

Is your response or viewpoint developed clearly and appropriately with enough relevant ideas and supporting examples?

Coherence/Cohesion

Have you built and organised your paragraphs into a short essay so that overall meaning is easy to track? Are your ideas connected effectively between paragraphs and from sentence to sentence?

Lexical Resource

Is your vocabulary appropriate, varied and accurate?

Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Are your sentences grammatically accurate, with a variety of complex as well as simple sentences?

EXAMINERS' SUGGESTIONS

Here's what IELTS examiners have to say about some of the most common problems they see in Writing Tests, along with suggestions for improvement.

Problems	Suggestions
Timing <i>Task 2 answers unfinished if too much time is spent on Task 1.</i>	Stop working on Task 1 after 20 minutes. Task 2 is worth more marks, so give yourself the full 40 minutes to complete your Task 2 answer.
Too short <i>If you write less than the minimum number of words for either task, you will lose marks.</i>	Practise regularly. Once you learn the essay patterns you will be able to write the required number of words without wasting time counting.
Off topic <i>An essay or letter that doesn't address the topic will lose marks, even if it is well written.</i>	Keep going back to the task statement while planning and writing to make sure you relate your response to the task as it is written.
Repetition <i>Saying the same thing in slightly different ways shows you don't have enough ideas.</i>	This is usually a problem of planning. Think of as many ideas as you can before you start to write. Decide on a topic for each paragraph and which examples to include.
Irrelevant information <i>Filling out an essay or letter with information unrelated to the question won't get marks.</i>	Check back to the wording of the task. Is the idea/example relevant to the topic? Does it answer the question as given? If not, leave it out.
Mixed up <i>Some essays have too many ideas and too little organization. They are difficult to follow.</i>	Stick to one main idea per paragraph, stated clearly in the topic sentence. Use the rest of the paragraph to develop and support that idea with examples.
Unreadable <i>It is impossible to give a good mark, if the writing is illegible.</i>	Be kind to the examiner: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• draw a line under your plan to separate it from the answer.• leave space between paragraphs.• cross out words neatly.• write legibly!

FASTTRACK WRITING

More about Task 1 ... and how to do it

Task 1 involves writing a letter in response to a given situation or problem. It may involve giving information, an explanation, a request, a description, or similar reasons for writing. The letter may be to a stranger, a friend, or an organization. There are usually three listed aspects of the problem that your letter is required to include.

Think First

Analyse the Task

Read the task and decide on the main purpose of the letter.
Establish the relationship between you and the person who will receive your letter. Do you know that person well?
Make a plan which shows your ideas for content and the planned paragraph structure for including all three aspects listed in the task.
Decide the order, and balance of importance of the three aspects.

Ask questions

Does my writing style need to be formal, semi-formal or personal?
Is the tone required friendly, neutral, businesslike, enthusiastic?
What kind of language will I need? For example: main tenses? appropriate vocabulary? Will I need to use modals (such as *can*, *might*) to soften the language, to ensure politeness, or to indicate something is not definite?
How can I make a good, clear start to my letter?
How can I write a variety of simple and complex sentences and connect them smoothly without too much repetition?
How can I signal and move smoothly from paragraph to paragraph? How can I finish off the letter in an appropriate way?

This means...

Then write the letter

Introduction

Remember that you do not need to include any addresses.
Explain your purpose in writing if it is a formal letter; perhaps offer a friendly greeting or remark first, if writing to a friend.

Main points

Use your plan to develop clearly the three aspects listed in the task.
Be sure to use clear paragraphs, and topic sentences, if appropriate.
Remember the main overall purpose of your letter at all times.
Monitor your vocabulary choices for appropriacy, and over-use.
Avoid too much repetition; write fluently to help the reader.

Ending

Try to end politely and in a style/tone appropriate to the rest of the letter eg *I hope you will reply to this letter at your earliest convenience* (more formal) ; *I'm really looking forward to hearing from you soon* (more personal).
Choose an appropriate exit expression, eg *Yours faithfully / sincerely* (formal); *Best wishes*, *All the best* (personal)
Use your first name for friends, full name for strangers.

To build your letter-writing skills it is a good idea to work through all six of the Task 1s before starting the Task 2s.

More about Task 2 ... and how to do it

Task 2 essays require you to explore issues by comparing, evaluating or challenging ideas. You may be asked to present a point of view or offer a solution to a problem. This means demonstrating your understanding of the topic by including examples from your own experience. You should think of your audience as a non-specialist, educated reader. Some essay types are outlined below, but you may not meet all of them in General Training Task 2.

Step 1 Analyse the task

- Become familiar with some main **essay types** and how to respond to them.
- Read and highlight/underline **key words** related to (1) the topic and (2) the task.
- If necessary, explain key terms in your introduction.

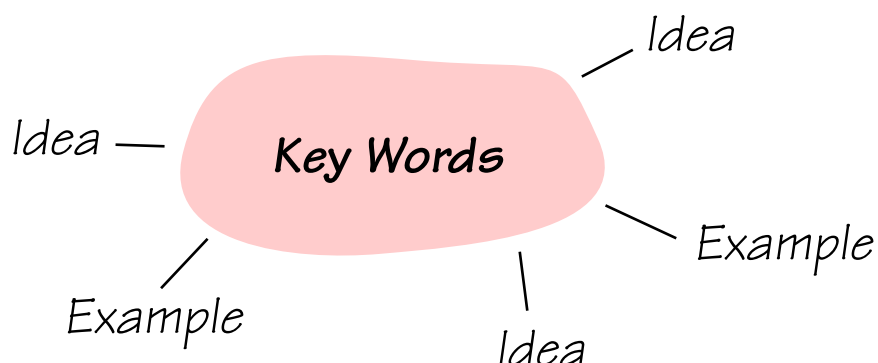
Essay Types	Task words	This means...
Problem/solution	<i>What can be done to solve...? How can this problem be addressed? What challenges...? What strategies...?</i>	Explain 2 or 3 aspects of the issue. (1 paragraph each) Suggest solutions. Make recommendations.
Agree or disagree	<i>Do you agree or disagree? Explain your position. Justify your opinion. Write in support of one of these views.</i>	Take a position. Defend it strongly. Give several reasons to support your position. (1 paragraph each) It is useful to acknowledge the opposite view (counter argument) and say why you don't accept it.
Two sides of an argument	<i>Discuss Compare/contrast Advantages/disadvantages</i>	Give a balanced presentation. This means you should write equally about both sides of the issue. In the conclusion you can indicate your position.
Explain a problem or situation	<i>What are the reasons for...? Why...?</i>	Give reasons or explanations cautiously and support them.
Evaluate an issue or problem	<i>To what extent...? How important/serious...? What do you think?</i>	You will probably take a position which is neither in total agreement (100%) nor total disagreement (0%), but somewhere in between. Explain why.

Step 2 Generate ideas

Brainstorm:

Using Spider Diagrams

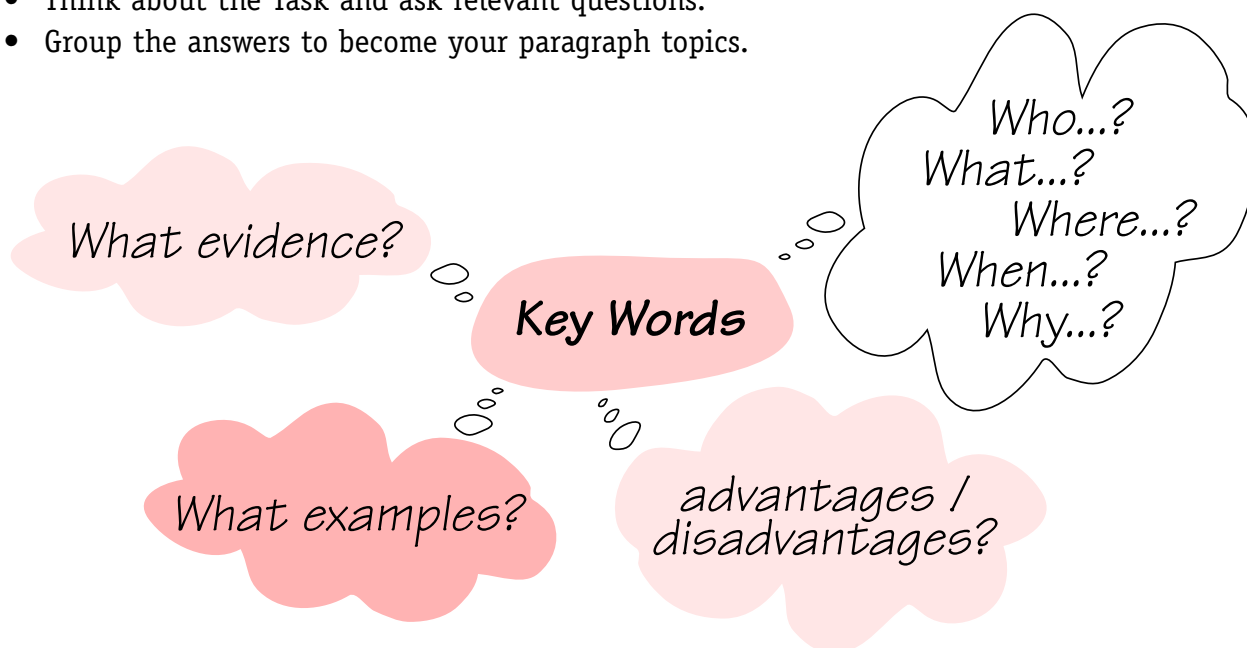
- Write key topic word(s) in the centre of a circle.
- Note down any related ideas or examples that come to mind.
- Do the same for other important words from the Task.
- Group the ideas to become your paragraph topics.



Or

Using Questions

- Start with key topic word(s).
- Think about the Task and ask relevant questions.
- Group the answers to become your paragraph topics.



Step 3 Plan your Essay

Introduction	(1 short paragraph)	General statement(s) about the topic followed by thesis statement (what you are going to write about or what position you intend to take on the question.)
Body	(3–4 paragraphs)	Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence (main idea) followed by examples/evidence for support.
Conclusion	(1 short paragraph)	Summarise , but don't repeat, main ideas. Include recommendation if necessary or (re)-state your position, to bring essay to a close.

Beginning Task 2 practice?

- A good answer is more important than a fast one, so don't worry about time at first.
- It is more important to plan carefully and write a good answer.
- The more you practise, the faster and more proficient you will become.

Remember!

First plan **WHAT** you want to say:

how many paragraphs
what supporting evidence/ ideas to include
what order to put them in

Then focus on **HOW** to say it.

As you write, think about:

grammar
vocabulary
spelling
punctuation

DON'T TRY TO DO BOTH AT ONCE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEST PRACTICE

*There are
SIX Writing
Practice
Tests*



Test section format

Test papers are clearly marked in the next section.

Note: There are 3 pages of activities including a sample answer for Task 1 and Task 2 of each Writing Test.

To practise under test conditions

Total time allowed for each test (Task 1 plus Task 2): 60 minutes

DO NOT use a dictionary.

How to use this section

Test practice focus

Do a complete practice test (Task 1 and Task 2).

Compare your essays with the **Sample Answers**.

Use **Plan your answer** and **Build your language skills**

to improve organisation, grammar and vocabulary.

Re-write your essays if you have found ways to improve them.

Need more help?

Work through all Task 1s before beginning Task 2s.

Use **Plan your answer** to get started.

Do the activities in **Build your language skills** and **Gapped Sample Answer/Editing Workout**.

Study the **Sample Answer** and **Notes**.

...THEN write your own answer.

Sample Answers are a useful reference; however, try not to imitate them when you write your essays. Your own writing style will develop with practice.

WRITING

TEST 1 TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You arranged to visit a friend in England but an important event at home now means that you must change the dates of the visit.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter

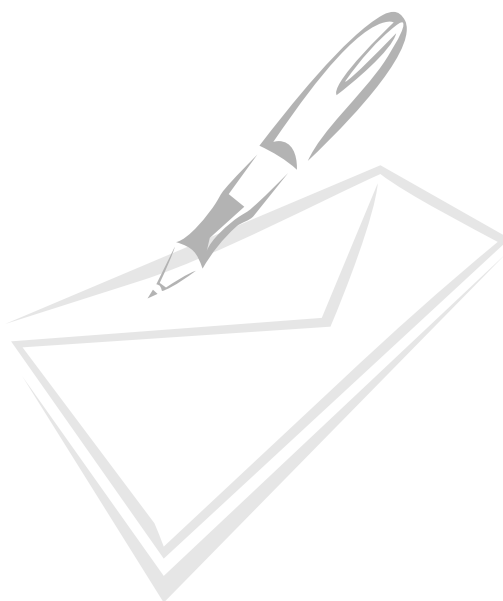
- **explain the important event**
- **apologise for the situation**
- **suggest a new arrangement**

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear



PLAN YOUR ANSWER

TEST 1

TASK 1

Step 1 Analyse the task

Who will receive the letter?
Relationship
Style and tone

Organization or **private individual**
Someone you... know well, ...a little or ...don't know
Formal or **Personal** **Friendly** or Neutral

Step 2 Generate ideas

Explain the important event
Apologise
Suggest alternatives

tennis competition / great honour to play
and give justification for cancellation (need to practise)
can take time off later / can use same airline ticket

Step 3 Think it through

Language needed?

Verb tenses
Use of modals
Checking possibility

How to start?

How to finish?

for apologising / explaining / suggesting new arrangements
present / past / present perfect / future
Can / Could you...? / Would it be possible...?
Is it possible for you to..... ?
(informal) How are you?
Best wishes, / All the best,

Remember to indicate the need for a response (I'm looking forward to hearing from you)

GAPPED SAMPLE ANSWER

GAP focus — VERB FORMS

Using verb forms, complete this sample answer then look at the full sample answer over the page.

Dear Carla,

How things with you? I'm afraid something come up here which probably my visit to England. Last week I to play tennis for my regional team in a national tournament. It was completely unexpected. I'm sorry but this probably means that I be able to visit you for the first week of April, as we planned. I must stay here and practise until the tournament, later that month.

I wonder if it possible for me to visit you later in the year. I can take some time off in early August and my air ticket can be with no problem. Is August a possibility for you?

Please and me know what your reaction I'm sure you realise that it's an honour to be selected to represent your region and so I to miss this great opportunity. I hope you

I'm forward to hearing from you,
Best wishes,
Francoise

1 Synonyms

Which word or expression in the sample answer could these replace?

Sample answer expression

happened (paragraph 1)	.....
selected (1)	.....
totally (1)	.....
starts (1)	.....
get leave (2)	.....
an option (2)	.....
response (3)	.....

2 Prepositions

What prepositions are used in these extracts from the sample answer?
(Try to answer or guess before you look!)

- How are things you?
- I was chosen to play tennis my regional team
- I wonder if it's possible me to visit you...
- I can take some time off early August
- Is August a possibility you?

3 Personalising a request, wish or explanation

Match the feeling that the writer uses to 'soften' and personalise the communication with the appropriate explanation, wish or request from the sample answer.

Feeling	explanation, wish or request
I'm looking forward	you'll understand
I'm afraid	if it's possible
I hope	but this probably means that I won't be able to visit you
I wonder	to hearing from you
I'm sorry	something has come up

Answers: 1 come up / chosen / completely / begins / take some time off / a possibility / reaction 2 with / for / for / in / for
3 ..forward to hearing from... / ..afraid something has / ..hope you'll understand / ..wonder if it's.... / ..sorry but this probably means...

Dear Carla,

How are things with you? I'm afraid something has come up here which will probably affect my visit to England. Last week I was chosen to play tennis for my regional team in a national tournament. It was completely unexpected. I'm sorry but this probably means that I won't be able to visit you for the first week of April, as we had planned. I must stay here and practise until the tournament begins, later that month.

I wonder if it is possible for me to visit you later in the year. I can take some time off in early August and my air ticket can be changed with no problem. Is August a possibility for you?

Please write and let me know what your reaction is. I'm sure you realise that it's an honour to be selected to represent your region and so I don't want to miss this great opportunity. I hope you'll understand.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you,

Best wishes,

Francoise

(174 words)

Notes

- Notice that the tone of the letter is friendly but polite and gentle because the receiving friend may be disappointed and is also being asked to change her plans.
- '*as we **had** planned*' is used to indicate that the original arrangements were made before the news of being selected to play tennis for the region.
- The order of words is important in the expression '*...let me know what your reaction is*'. The verb is placed at the end of the sentence, not in its more common position next to 'what'.
- Ending with '*Best wishes*' is one of several options in a letter to a friend — '*All the best*' is another. '*Love*,' might be used between really close friends.

WRITING

TEST 1 | TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

Children in many countries are eating more fast food and convenience snacks.

Why are children doing this and how serious are the consequences?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Step 1 Analyse the task

Read carefully to understand all the details

What type of essay is it?

What are the key words?

evaluate and explain a social issue
children / eating more fast food / snacks / Why? /
how serious / consequences

Step 2 Generate ideas

Ask questions (based mostly on the key words)

Why are children eating more fast food?

What are parents doing?

Some serious consequences

increasing number of fast food outlets
pocket money; peer pressure
image of eating fast food as 'international'
too busy; late home from work;
less discipline; pressure from children;
international food has an attractive image
health problems; loss of nutrition from
traditional diet; money problems

Step 3 Structure the ideas

Introduction

Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

Conclusion

task statement is true – there are more international fast food restaurants;
essay will explain why children eat more fast food and assess consequences
Why are children eating more fast food?
Why don't parents control their children's diet?
consequences are very serious
fast food is a threat to healthy, traditional diets
parents have to think hard and make wise choices for their children

1

TEXT EDITING WORKOUT

Correct these paragraphs. The number of errors to find is indicated below. Check your corrections with the sample answer over the page.

If you travel to almost any city of world you can see western-style fast food outlets serving burgers, pizzas, coffee, fried chicken, and sandwich. Children enjoy these food; however, they parents are not supervise them very carefully. This essay will try explain why and assess some of the consequences.

Why are children eat more fast food? A key reason is the ever larger numbers of fast food restaurant. In addition, children at some countries has more pocket money to spend and seem to associate first food with international culture. Also, young people are affect by peer pressure; so, if fast food seen as 'cool', then eating help them to be accepted by other.

Can you find and correct a total of 16 errors?

Your score? 9 (Good) 7 (OK) 5 (Good Try) 3 (A wake up call!)

1 Use of ...ing expressions

Read the sample answer then write in the missing ...ing words (Try not to look again!)

- ...you can see western-style fast food outlets ing burgers, pizzas, coffee, fried chicken, and sandwiches.
- ...pressure from children who are frightened of ing different from classmates.
- Finally, by ing fast food regularly, children get used to ing money...
- Parents should think through the consequences of ing their children eat fast food.
- Traditional diets may not be fashionable, but they are healthy and worth ing.

2 Using modals (can/could/may/might) to show possibility

Modal forms like 'can', 'may', 'might' are used effectively to indicate that something is possible rather than definitely true. Put a suitable modal into these phrases from the sample answer.

- Eating fast food frequently cause obesity...
- As adults, children experience health problems like diabetes.
- This (spending more money) create poor money management in adulthood.
- Traditional diets not be fashionable...

3 Noun partners

It helps a writer to be economical if nouns can be grouped together to communicate the maximum amount of information quickly. Match each noun on the left with a partner noun on the right. Check the sample answer for help.

Noun 1

peer
pocket
advertising
health
money
eating

Partner Noun 2

management
traditions
problems
pressure
images
money

Answers

1 serving / seeming / eating; spending / letting / protecting 2 can / might / could / may 3* peer pressure / pocket money / advertising images / health problems / money management / eating traditions (*Note, some other combinations are possible)

If you travel to almost any city of the world you can see western-style fast food outlets serving burgers, pizzas, coffee, fried chicken, and sandwiches. Children enjoy this food; however, their parents are not supervising them very carefully. This essay will try to explain why and assess some of the consequences.

Why are children eating more fast food? A key reason is the ever larger numbers of fast food restaurants. In addition, children in some countries have more pocket money to spend and seem to associate fast food with international culture. Also, young people are affected by peer pressure so, if fast food is seen as 'cool', then eating it helps them to be accepted by others.

As it is often children who eat fast food, we can ask why parents don't control their kids' eating habits a little more. Possibly, parents today are working harder and longer and don't talk with their children about diet. Moreover, they have to deal with a lot of pressure from children who are frightened of seeming 'different' from classmates. Added to this, in some societies, parents no longer use strong discipline, and find it hard to resist the powerful advertising images which fast food companies use.

The consequences are really serious, however. Eating fast food frequently can cause obesity in some children, and it may mean an unbalanced diet, with too much processed and sweet food. As adults, children might experience health problems like diabetes. Finally, by eating fast food regularly, children get used to spending money too easily. This could create poor money management in adulthood.

Parents should think through the consequences of letting their children eat fast food. It is not just a question of diet, there is also a threat to cultural values and eating traditions. Traditional diets may not be fashionable, but they are healthy and worth protecting.

(307 words)

Notes

- The introduction ends with the less personal, *'This essay will try to explain...'* rather than *'I will try to explain...'*
- As the essay is giving a range of points in support of topic sentences, there is frequent use of a variety of connecting expressions to signal additional points, for example, *'Moreover'*, *'Added to this'*, *'In addition'*.
- The writer tries to avoid too much repetition of the word *'children'* by using synonyms (*kids*, *young people*, *classmates*).
- Each main paragraph has a single theme (often in the form of a question requiring some answers) which is developed after each topic sentence.

WRITING

TEST 2 | TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You paid a refundable deposit when you rented an apartment. You left the apartment in good condition but the landlord won't return your deposit.

Write a letter to the landlord. In your letter

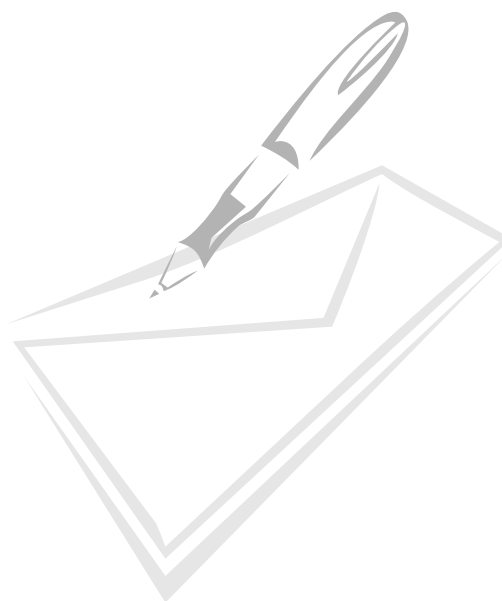
- **explain why you are writing**
- **ask for the return of your deposit**
- **inform the landlord of possible legal action**

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear,



Step 1 Analyse the task

Who will receive the letter?

Relationship

Style and tone

Step 2 Generate ideas

Explain reason for writing

Ask for the return of your deposit

Indicate possible legal action

Step 3 Think it through

Language needed?

Verb tenses

Signal possible, future action

Keeping firm but polite

How to start?

How to finish?

Organization or **private individual**

Someone you... know well, ...a little or ...don't know

Formal or Personal Friendly or **Neutral (firm, but polite)**

you don't understand reason why your deposit hasn't been returned

+ emphasise the good condition of the apartment (clean, no breakages)

say that you kept to the terms of the agreement and so have no other alternative

for explaining the situation from your point of view, requesting, indicating possible legal action

present / past / future forms

If you don't...then I will...

I respectfully... / I shall have no alternative but to...

I'm writing to request... / I am unable to understand the reason...

Yours sincerely, (or 'Yours faithfully' for extra formality)

GAPPED SAMPLE ANSWER

GAP focus — CONNECTING EXPRESSIONS

Using connecting expressions, complete this sample answer then look at the full sample answer over the page.

Dear Mr. Garfield,

I am writing to request the return of the \$200 deposit I paid to you I rented No. 6A, Wayfield Terrace for the month of May. I telephoned your office I was told you are not intending to repay this money I am unable to understand the reason for this.

..... I signed the rental agreement it was my understanding the deposit would be returned the apartment was vacated clean and undamaged. This was the condition of the flat I returned the keys. I cleaned the whole apartment and there were no breakages and no damage to fittings or furniture.

I believe I have kept to the terms of the agreement and I respectfully request my deposit be repaid in full. I shall have no alternative to seek legal advice we are unable to resolve this matter in a satisfactory manner.

Yours sincerely,

Alexei Ivanov

1 Topic vocabulary

This letter is about renting an apartment. Which expressions in the letter are connected to that topic? Add expressions from the sample answer.



2 Prepositions

What are the missing prepositions from the sample letter?

- I am writing request the return the \$200 deposit...
- ...before I rented No.6A Wayfield Terrace the month May.
- This was the condition the flat when I returned the keys.
- There were no breakages and no damage fittings or furniture.
- ...I respectfully request that my deposit be repaid full.
- ...if we are unable to resolve this matter a satisfactory manner.

3 'If' and 'When' sentences

'If' sentences are used here to say what might happen under certain conditions. Complete these sentences from the sample answer.

- ...it was my understanding that the deposit be returned if the apartment vacated clean and undamaged.
- I have no alternative but to seek legal advice if we unable to resolve this matter...

'When' sentences are used here to establish the facts from the past. How many can you find in the sample answer? Write them below:

-
-
-

Answers: 1 deposit / rental agreement / apartment / vacated / returned the keys / terms of the agreement / fittings / repaid
 2 to, of / for, of / of / to / in / in 3 would / was; shall / are; When I telephoned your office.... / When I signed the rental agreement.... / ...when I returned the keys

Dear Mr. Garfield,

I am writing to request the return of the \$200 deposit that I paid to you before I rented No. 6A, Wayfield Terrace for the month of May. When I telephoned your office I was told that you are not intending to repay this money and I am unable to understand the reason for this.

When I signed the rental agreement it was my understanding that the deposit would be returned if the apartment was vacated clean and undamaged. This was the condition of the flat when I returned the keys. I cleaned the whole apartment and there were no breakages and no damage to fittings or furniture.

I believe that I have kept to the terms of the agreement and therefore I respectfully request that my deposit be repaid in full. I shall have no alternative but to seek legal advice if we are unable to resolve this matter in a satisfactory manner.

Yours sincerely,

Alexei Ivanov

(161 words)

Notes

- Note the use of a variety of verb tenses in this letter – past tense when the writer is reporting events that happened before writing and present or present continuous tenses for the situation at the time of writing.
- The tone of the letter is firm but polite even in the third paragraph (*I respectfully request...*)
- Ending the letter with '*Yours faithfully*,' is a more formal alternative in a letter of this type. These days '*Yours sincerely*' can also be used in such a letter.

WRITING

TEST 2 | TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

Buying fashionable clothes is wasteful because people don't need new clothes all the time. Clothing should be bought and used more wisely.

Do you agree?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Step 1 Analyse the task

What type of essay is it?

Key words

Read carefully to understand all the details

agree or disagree

fashionable clothes / wasteful / don't need /

should be bought / used wisely / ...agree?

Step 2 Generate ideas

Why is fashion wasteful?

Why is fashion powerful?

Are classic styles preferable?

What about comfort?

Ask questions (based mostly on the key words)

it changes quickly, so clothes are only worn for a short time then replaced / may not be recycled;

a) young people are building identity – image conscious

b) it is often elitist (available only to rich people)

are better / last longer, but are more standardised

(accessories can add variety)

most frequently worn clothes are the most comfortable ones

Step 3 Structure the ideas

Introduction

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

Conclusion

express your point of view, either agreeing or disagreeing with the view in the question, give some introductory examples of problems with fashion

argue for benefits of classic styles (+ examples); contrast with lure of fashion for young people

mention elitism of fashion versus cheaper classic styles / uses of accessories to add individuality

favourite clothes are comfortable clothes; re-state economic benefits of clothes that last a long time.

2

TEXT EDITING WORKOUT

Correct these paragraphs. The number of errors to find is indicated below. Check your corrections with the sample answer over the page.

I agree with the fashion industry is wasteful. Every season, the major fashion houses generate popular styles and colours, and people buying clothes in order to look and feeling 'up to date'. Every time we watching TV shows from the past we can tell how old they are because of clothes. Most people have too much clothes in their wardrobes, not because they need or wear all of them but often because they are clothes that are no longer fashionable and so are no longer wore. This is wasteful especially if those clothes are not given away or recycle.

Of course there are classic style which are more durable – denim jeans, for example, are worn by all age in all countries and still seem to feet fashionable. Certain shoe styles, sweaters and coats are also timeless. Young people, however, are often search for their cents of self and likes to experiment with dress, or with new looks. They are vulnerable to exploitation by fashion and it is to this people that the industry direct much of it's marketing.

Can you find and correct a total of 17 errors?

Your score? 10 (Good) 8 (OK) 6 (Try harder) 4 (More work needed!)

1 Comparative and superlative adjectives

Complete this table of adjectives from the sample answer.

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
fashionable	.....	most fashionable
.....	more durable	.....
.....	cheaper	.....
creative	.....	.....
expensive	.....	.....
.....	better	.....
.....	.....	most comfortable

2 Extending sentences to achieve fluency of argument

Sometimes writers use connecting expressions to extend a sentence rather than write several short sentences. This often helps fluency of argument.

Write in the missing linking expressions in these sentences from the sample answer.

- Most people have too many garments in their wardrobes, n..... b..... they need or wear all of them b..... often b..... they are clothes w..... are no longer fashionable and s..... are no longer worn.
- There is a risk of standardisation w..... only limited choice and a small range of styles b..... individuals can be creative with accessories l..... scarves r..... t..... buying expensive ... clothing.
- Usually w..... you ask people about their favourite clothes, they mention n..... their most fashionable items b..... those t..... are the most comfortable, o..... those items t..... have become almost part of them.

3 Using synonymy to avoid repetition of 'clothes'

Which alternative expressions does the writer use to avoid writing the word 'clothes' every time? Find 4 different synonyms in the sample answer.

Synonym 1 Synonym 2 Synonym 3 Synonym 4

Answers

- 1 more fashionable; durable / most durable; cheap / cheapest; more creative / most creative; more expensive / most expensive; good / best; comfortable / more comfortable 2 not because; but; because; which; so / with; but; like; rather than / when; not; but; that; or; that 3 styles / items / garments / fashion wear

I agree that the fashion industry is wasteful. Every season, the major fashion houses generate popular styles and colours, and people buy clothes in order to look and feel 'up to date'. Every time we watch TV shows from the past we can tell how old they are because of the clothes. Most people have too many clothes in their wardrobes, not because they need or wear all of them but often because they are clothes that are no longer fashionable and so are no longer worn. This is wasteful especially if those clothes are not given away or recycled.

Of course there are classic styles which are more durable – denim jeans, for example, are worn by all ages in all countries and still seem to feel fashionable. Certain shoe styles, sweaters and coats are also timeless. Young people, however, are often searching for their sense of self and like to experiment with dress, or with new looks. They are vulnerable to exploitation by fashion and it is to these people that the industry directs much of its marketing.

Fashion wear is also elitist, in the sense that only wealthy people can afford top quality designer clothes. Classic styles, on the other hand, are often cheaper and more available to people. There is a risk of standardisation with only limited choice and a small range of styles, but individuals can be creative with accessories like scarves rather than buying expensive, ephemeral items of clothing.

Usually when you ask people about their favourite clothes, they mention not their most fashionable items but those that are the most comfortable, or those items that have become almost part of them. It would thus be much better to use scarce natural resources like cotton or wool to produce more durable classic clothing styles which are long lasting and enable people to economise.

(308 words)

Notes

- The writer expresses the main opinion in the very first topic sentence. This is direct and creates a strong beginning.
- The essay uses a wide range of vocabulary of an advanced nature (*eg elitist, ephemeral, standardisation, durable, vulnerable*). This makes the essay seem more mature.
- The essay expresses its viewpoint strongly but lacks careful organisation of ideas, so paragraph structure (*eg topic sentences*) is not well crafted.
- A valid essay can be written disagreeing with the topic statement but should still focus on the issue of wastefulness.

WRITING

TEST 3 | TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You saw an advertisement for a skiing course in Canada but you have one or two problems and can't stay for the whole course.

Write a letter to the course director. In your letter

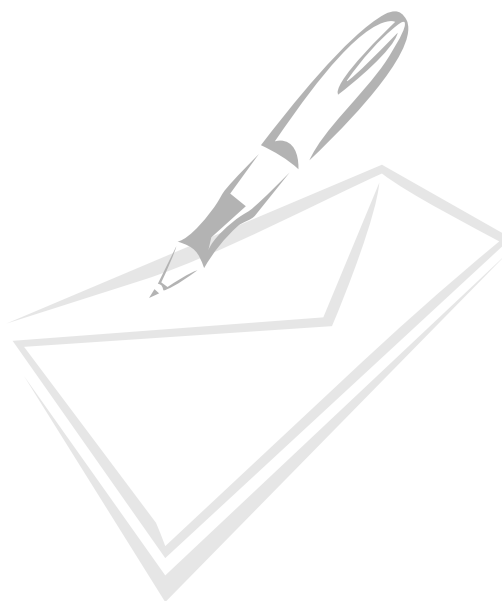
- **explain your interest in the course**
- **describe your problems**
- **find out if a refund is possible**

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear Sir or Madam,



PLAN YOUR ANSWER

TEST 3

TASK 1

Step 1 Analyse the task

Who will receive the letter?

Relationship

Style and tone

Organization or private individual

Someone you... know well, ...a little or ...**don't know**

Formal or **semi-formal** Friendly or **neutral**
(**enthusiastic**)

Step 2 Generate ideas

explain interest

problems

refund possible?

always wanted to ski

no skis / can't buy skis / poor eyesight

can't stay for whole course / partial refund possible?

Step 3 Think it through

Language needed?

Verb tenses

Showing interest

Explaining your situation politely

Checking possibilities

How to start?

How to finish?

for showing interest in a course, describing your problems,
asking about hiring skis, asking about a refund

mainly present simple / present perfect

I'm very interested in / I'm looking forward to... / I'm excited...

I'm afraid that I can't...because...

Is it possible to... / I would like to know if it's possible to...

I'm writing in response to your advertisement in...

Yours sincerely,

GAPPED SAMPLE ANSWER

GAP focus — PREPOSITIONS

Using prepositions, complete this sample answer then look at the full sample answer over the page.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I'm writing response to your advertisement in the Alberta Daily News a skiing course.

I have always wanted ski so I'm very interested joining the course; however, I do not have my own skis and don't wish purchase skis at this time. Is it possible me to hire skis and other equipment the duration the course? Also I have rather poor eyesight and have to wear special glasses all the time. Is your course suitable someone like me?

I'm afraid that I have to be back Thailand 31st January so I am unable to stay the whole four weeks. I would like to know if it's possible receive a small refund if I have leave one week before the end the course.

I'm looking forward very much hearing you. I'm really excited about learning ski.

Yours sincerely,

Tassanee Sriporn

1 Direct questions and indirect questions

Sometimes writers ask sensitive questions indirectly:

Example: **DIRECT:** 'Is it possible for me to score IELTS 6?'

INDIRECT: 'I would like to know if it's possible for me to score IELTS 6.'

Change the questions below from the sample answer.

Direct question

- Is your course suitable for someone like me?
-
- Is it possible for me to hire skis...?

Indirect question

.....
I would like to know if it's possible to
receive a refund.
.....

2 Synonyms – informal to formal

In letters to organizations we often use formal language; in letters to friends we use less formal language. Find the formal language in the sample answer for these expressions.

Less formal expression

Formal expression in the sample answer

ad. (paragraph 1)	.....
don't fancy (2)	.....
buy (2)	.....
stuff (2)	.....
quite bad (2)	.....
can't (3)	.....
get (3)	.....
a lot (4)	.....

3 Prepositions

Correct these prepositions. (Try to answer before looking at the sample answer!)

I'm writing **for** response **of** your advertisement...

I'm very interested **to** joining your course...

Is it possible **of** me **for** hire skis... **in** the duration of the course?

Is your course suitable **to** someone like me?

I'm looking forward very much **of** hearing **for** you.

I'm really excited about learning **for** ski.

Answers

- 1 I would like to know if your course is..... / Is it possible to receive a refund? / I would like to know if it's possible for me to hire skis
2 advertisement / wish / purchase / equipment / rather poor / unable / receive / 3 in, to / in / for, to, for / for / to, from / to

Dear Sir or Madam,

I'm writing in response to your advertisement in the Alberta Daily News for a skiing course.

I have always wanted to ski so I'm very interested in joining the course; however, I do not have my own skis and don't wish to purchase skis at this time. Is it possible for me to hire skis and other equipment for the duration of the course? Also I have rather poor eyesight and have to wear special glasses all the time. Is your course suitable for someone like me?

I'm afraid that I have to be back in Thailand by 31st January so I am unable to stay for the whole four weeks. I would like to know if it's possible to receive a refund if I have to leave one week before the end of the course.

I'm looking forward very much to hearing from you. I'm really excited about learning to ski.

Yours sincerely,

Tassanee Sriporn

(156 words)

Notes

- The purpose in writing the letter is made clear in the first sentence.
- Sometimes letter writers mention the date of a newspaper in which an advert appears (eg '...in the Alberta Daily News of June 2nd') but this letter omits that detail.
- 'for the duration of...' is a useful expression when you want to talk about the whole period of time taken by something like a holiday or a course.
- After 'I'm looking forward to' there is usually an '...ing' expression (eg 'hearing', 'receiving'). Many English learners forget this and write 'hear' or 'receive'.

WRITING

TEST 3 | TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

You are thinking of moving to a new country.

Outline some of the factors and questions you must consider before you make a final decision.

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Step 1 Analyse the task

Read carefully to understand all the details

What type of essay is it?

Key words

describing, analysing problems / factors

moving / new country / Outline / factors / questions

Step 2 Generate ideas

Ask questions (based mostly on the key words)

Possible factors in / effects of migration:

How are families affected?

What about education?

And income / finances?

leaving family is difficult, especially for elderly relatives;
language problems, making new friends, stress
going from high income to low income country or
vice versa, example: Switzerland to Laos

Step 3 Structure the ideas

Introduction

Paragraph 2 (Topic: families)

Paragraph 3 (Topic: education)

Paragraph 4 (Topic: finance)

Conclusion

express a general response to the idea of emigration,
introduce discussion of issues
discussion of factors affecting families
outline of educational issues
discussion of financial issues
emphasise that positive attitude can help to
overcome problems.

3

**Correct these paragraphs. The number of errors to find is indicated below.
Check your corrections with the sample answer over the page.**

Other issue, of course, is education. Children who moves country are confronting by powerful challenges. They may have to master a new language, make new friend, feel like outsiders, at least from some of the time, and learn new paterns of behaviour. This can to cause stress unless there are sensitive support from parents, who themselves will dealing with adjustment issues in any new society.

Money problem are also and important factor. Undertaking a new life in a different country with higher salaries and a higher standard of living might means a need to send money to home to help relative who struggling. Conversely, moving to country with lower incomes may mean adopt a much simple lifestyle. I have friends who move from university jobs in Switzerland to live in Laos and they had great difficulty, at first, adjusting too small incomes and a very different lifestyle.

Can you find and correct a total of 20 errors?

Your score? 12 (Good) 10 (OK) 8 (Keep trying) 5 (Ask a teacher or friend!)

TEXT EDITING WORKOUT

1 Listing factors

In essays that ask for a discussion of different factors, each factor needs to be introduced. Find 3 different expressions the writer of the sample answer uses to introduce each factor.

- 1
- 2
- 3

What do you notice about the position of those expressions in each paragraph?

2 Use of modals

Modals help a writer to express information or opinion with an element of doubt. Change these sentences by using modals (can, may, might). Use the sample answer.

- This is difficult for elderly parents (paragraph 2)
- They have to master a new language (3)
- This causes stress (3)
- Moving to a country with lower incomes means adopting a much simpler lifestyle (4)
- ...it is this dream that provides the motivation... (5)

3 Synonymous phrases

The essay title includes the phrase ‘...moving to a new country’. It is important to use phrases that don’t repeat words in the title.

Find some phrases or expressions that the sample answer uses instead of ‘moving to a new country’.

*If you find 2 phrases or expressions – good
 3 phrases or expressions – very good
 4 or more phrases or expressions – excellent!*

Answers

- 1 One major question / Another issue is / ..are also an important factor / (position - Topic (first) sentence in each paragraph)
- 2 can be / may have to / can cause / may mean / can provide
- 3 to live in (NZ) / migrate / to seek a new life in a new country / move country / undertaking a new life in a different country / new life

My family would very much like to live in New Zealand and we are seriously thinking of applying to migrate there. There are many issues, however, that need to be considered before a decision can be made. I'll talk briefly about some of them.

One major question concerns the effect on families. When one family decides to seek a new life in a new country, they nearly always have to leave members of their family behind. This can be particularly difficult for elderly parents who suddenly lose the support of a son or daughter.

Another issue, of course, is education. Children who move country are confronted by powerful challenges. They may have to master a new language, make new friends, feel like outsiders, at least for some of the time, and learn new patterns of behaviour. This can cause stress unless there is sensitive support from parents, who themselves will be dealing with adjustment issues in any new society.

Money problems are also an important factor. Undertaking a new life in a different country with higher salaries and a higher standard of living might mean a need to send money home to help relatives who are struggling. Conversely, moving to a country with lower incomes may mean adopting a much simpler lifestyle. I have friends who moved from university jobs in Switzerland to live in Laos doing aid work and they had great difficulty, at first, adjusting to small incomes and a very different lifestyle.

There are many other factors and questions but the key thing is to have a strong, positive dream of a new life, since it is this dream that can provide the motivation to overcome all the inevitable problems of migration.

(283 words)

Notes

- The writer personalises the introduction ('We'). This is acceptable as the topic is a slightly more personal one.
- The essay is well structured with very clear paragraphing of ideas, as well as topic sentences which avoid repetition (*question / issue / problems*).
- The use of ...ing forms in paragraph 4 helps with the fluency of expression of the views expressed in that longer paragraph.
- The example in paragraph 4 helps the essay to conform to the task instructions.

WRITING

TEST 4 | TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You travelled by long distance bus recently and your suitcase was damaged.

Write a letter to the bus company. In your letter

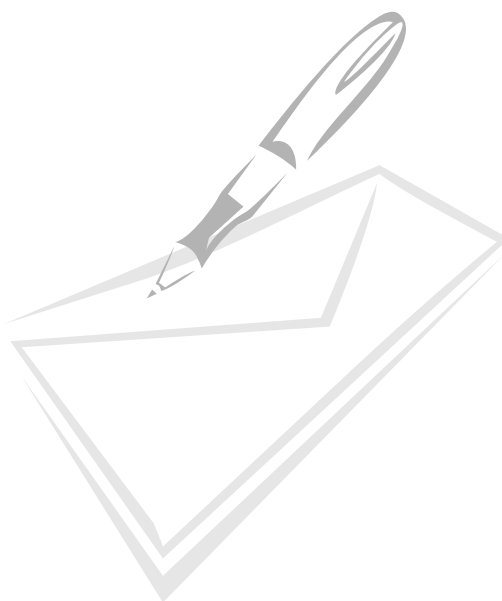
- **inform the bus company of when and to where you travelled**
- **describe your suitcase and what happened to it**
- **explain why the company should pay for a new suitcase**

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter:

Dear Sir or Madam,



PLAN YOUR ANSWER

TEST 4

TASK 1

Step 1 Analyse the task

Who will receive the letter?

Relationship

Style and tone

Organization or private individual

Someone you... know well, ...a little or ...**don't know**

Formal or Personal Friendly or **Neutral**

Step 2 Generate ideas

travel information

describe suitcase/damage

explain company's liability

Denver to Houston / November this year

soft, black, with wheels / wheel broken off / handle cracked

bus company is liable for damage to personal property

Step 3 Think it through

Language needed?

Verb tenses

Informing

Describing suitcase

Explaining liability

Requesting refund

How to start?

How to finish?

informing bus company of journey details, describing suitcase

and damage; explaining company's liability / request refund

mainly past tense / some present / present perfect / future

On I travelled from to on one of your...

My is a one with a...

The advice I have received...your company is liable for...

I am requesting a refund...

On I travelled from to / I am writing in connection with...

I trust you will respond appropriately to.. / Yours faithfully,

GAPPED SAMPLE ANSWER

GAP focus — NOUNS

Using nouns, complete this sample answer then look at the full sample answer over the page.

Dear Madam or Sir,

On 12th November this y.....r, I travelled from Denver to Houston on one of your Intercity b.....s.

I am writing in c.....n with damage caused to my s.....e during that j.....y.

The case is black with a soft material c.....r and wh.....s. During the journey the suitcase must have moved in the l.....ge com.....nt under the bus because in Houston I discovered that one of the wheels had broken off and the h.....le was cracked. The c.....e is only 10 months old.

The ad.....e I have received indicates that your c.....y is liable for d.....ge to personal pro y during a journey. Therefore I am requesting a full re.....d in order to purchase a re.....t case. The suitcase is beyond repair, according to the s..... from which it was bought. I have the original receipt as p.....f of purchase.

I trust you will respond appropriately and speedily to this l.....r.

Yours faithfully,

Ignacio Perez

1 Writing economically

In writing, we sometimes try to avoid writing too many words. Can you write these sentences in a shorter way? Use the sample answer and your own ideas to help you.

- I am writing in connection with the damage which was caused to my suitcase.....
(save 3 words)
- The case is a black one and it has a soft material cover... (save 4 words)
- The advice which I have received indicates that your company is liable for damage which is caused to personal property.... (save 4 words)
- The suitcase is too damaged to enable it to be repaired by anyone satisfactorily
(save 9 words!)

2 What's the next word?

Read the sample answer quickly, then without looking try to remember the word that came immediately after each of the words listed.

- soft (paragraph 2)
- must have (2)
- luggage (2)
- 10 months (2)
- liable for (3)
- a full (3)
- a replacement (3)
- Yours

3 Verb tenses

Often letters need to use a variety of verb forms. Find one example of each of these verb forms in the sample answer.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| i) Simple past | ii) Present progressive |
| iii) Present simple | iv) Present perfect |
| v) Future | vi) Past passive form |
| vii) Past perfect | |

Answers 1 I'm writing in connection with the damage to my suitcase / The case is black with a soft material cover / The advice I have received indicates that your company is liable for damage to personal property/ The suitcase is beyond repair 2 material / moved / compartment / old / damage / refund / case / faithfully 3 I travelled / I am writing / is / I have received / you will respond / was bought / had broken off

Dear Madam or Sir,

On 12th November this year, I travelled from Denver to Houston on one of your Intercity buses. I am writing in connection with the damage to my suitcase during that journey.

The case is black with a soft material cover and wheels. During the journey the suitcase must have moved in the luggage compartment under the bus because in Houston I discovered that one of the wheels had broken off and the handle was cracked. The case is only 10 months old.

The legal advice I have received indicates that your company is liable for damage caused to personal property during a journey. Therefore I am requesting a full refund from you in order to purchase a replacement case. The suitcase is beyond repair, according to the shop from which it was bought. I have the original receipt as proof of purchase.

I trust you will respond appropriately and speedily to this letter.

Yours faithfully,

Ignacio Perez

(157 words)

Notes

- Sometimes it is appropriate to use 'Dear Madam or Sir' to show gender balance.
- Choice of lexis in formal letters makes the tone more business-like (eg. 'in connection with' (not 'about'), 'indicates' (not 'says'), 'requesting' (not 'asking for'), 'purchase' (not 'buy'), 'trust' (not 'hope')).
- The tone is firm but neutral; there is no expression of anger or emotion.

WRITING

TEST 4 | TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

It seems that many companies today are becoming much more concerned with profit than with the happiness of their workers.

How could companies take better care of their workers in the future?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Step 1 Analyse the task

Read carefully to understand all the details

What type of essay is it?

Key words

solving a problem

companies / concern with profit / happiness / workers
/ better care / future

Step 2 Generate ideas

Ask questions (mostly based on key words)

What's happening to companies?

Can I give another example?

How to make workers happier?

manufacturing industries moving to low-cost countries
salaries/conditions in richer countries not expanding
rapidly. Why?

universities; shorter work contracts, no pensions;
affects loyalty

building stronger relationships with workers

Step 3 Structure the ideas

Introduction

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

Paragraph 4

Conclusion

take a position on the viewpoint in the essay question; say what the essay is going to achieve

How are companies maximising profit – in manufacturing / service sectors?

detailed example of universities

How to make workers happier? building trust and loyalty

implications if things don't change for the better.

4

Correct these paragraphs. The number of errors to find is indicated below. Check your corrections with the sample answer over the page.

Globalised world trade is control by simple economical realities – making the biggest profits at the smaller expense. How is being achieved? During last twenty years many manufacturing companies in the USA and Europe have move their factories to economies like China, Mexico or Thailand which having lower labour costs. Service industries in wealthier country have be able to use low interest rates, weaker trade unions and rising unemployment rates to keep wage and conditions for improving rapidly.

In education there are other example of business-style practices, and worsen conditions for staff. Many university now employ academic staff on short contracts, releasing themselves from making expansive pension provisions or other long-term benefit. Lecturer are force to re-apply for there own jobs every few year. A sense of loyalty is not promotion for such processes.

Can you find and correct a total of 21 errors?

What's your score? 13 (Good) 11 (OK) 9 (Try a bit harder) 6 (Help needed?)

1 Rhetorical questions

Asking a rhetorical question is a common way of announcing the next part of your discussion. Look at this example from the sample answer:

Example: Globalised world trade is controlled by simple economic realities – making the biggest profits at the smallest expense. **How is this being achieved?**

Match the appropriate rhetorical question to these sentences from the sample answer.

Sentence from sample answer

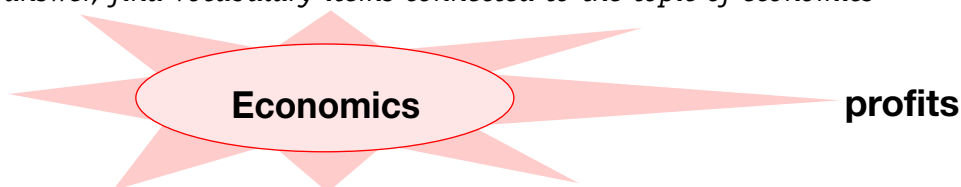
- 1) Many universities now employ academic staff on short contracts, releasing themselves from expensive pension provisions or other long-term benefits. (para 3)
- 2) In education there are other examples of 'business-style' practices, and worsening conditions for staff. (para 3)
- 3) To change the situation requires a major shift in attitudes. (para 4)
- 4) The only possible source of change must come from companies themselves. (para 4)

Rhetorical question

- a) What are they?
- b) Is such a shift likely to take place?
- c) So, what must they do?
- d) What is the result?

2 Vocabulary of business and economics

In the sample answer, find vocabulary items connected to the topic of economics



3 Using noun pairs to compress information

It is common in essays to use pairs of nouns in which one noun acts like an adjective. Find the nouns in the sample answer that follow these:

First noun	Following noun	First noun	Following noun
• pension	• world	.....
• health	• labour	.....
• management	• unemployment	.....
• interest	• trade	.....
• manufacturing	• service	.....

Answers 1 1d / 2a / 3b / 4c 2 Companies, profits, world trade, economic realities, expense, manufacturing, labour costs, service industries, wealthier, low interest rates, wages, unemployment rates, pension provisions, jobs, laissez-faire, global economics, employees, units of labour 3 pension provisions / health care / management philosophy / interest rates / manufacturing companies / world trade / labour costs / unemployment rates / trade unions / service industries

It seems to be the case that in many countries companies are concentrating on profits and are neglecting the welfare of their staff. A range of examples will be presented to support this position and some possible improvements offered.

Globalised world trade is controlled by simple economic realities – making the biggest profits at the smallest expense. How is this being achieved? During the last twenty years many manufacturing companies in the USA and Europe have moved their factories to economies like China, Mexico or Thailand which have lower labour costs. Service industries in wealthier countries have been able to use low interest rates, weaker trade unions and rising unemployment rates to keep wages and conditions from improving rapidly.

In education there are other examples of business-style practices, and worsening conditions for staff. Many universities employ more academic staff on short contracts, releasing themselves from making expensive pension provisions or offering other long-term benefits. Lecturers are forced to re-apply for their own jobs every few years. A sense of loyalty is not promoted by such processes.

To change the situation requires a major shift in attitudes. It is difficult to see how this might be achieved, as governments embrace more and more the laissez-faire approach of global economics. The only possible source of change must come from companies themselves. They need to see their employees as members of a family not as costly units of labour. They should collaborate with workers' groups to build good levels of pension protection and health care. A worker who trusts that his employer is trying to protect his interests is a better worker. Companies still need loyalty and continuity.

Without major changes in management philosophy the future looks like becoming tougher and more stressful for many workers, especially those from the next generation, whose hopes need to be nurtured, not dashed.

(305 words)

Notes

- The introductory paragraph manages to paraphrase many of the words used in the task prompt. This shows good command of vocabulary and creates a positive impression.
- The essay has many noun pairs to help to communicate complex information more efficiently.
- The essay has a good mixture of simple sentences and complex ones. The final paragraph, for example, consists of only one complex sentence.
- The variety of vocabulary suggests that the writer has some background knowledge of business/economics terminology.

WRITING

TEST 5 | TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Your friend from England is making a business trip to your town. She has never visited your country before and wants to know what you can do together in her free time.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter

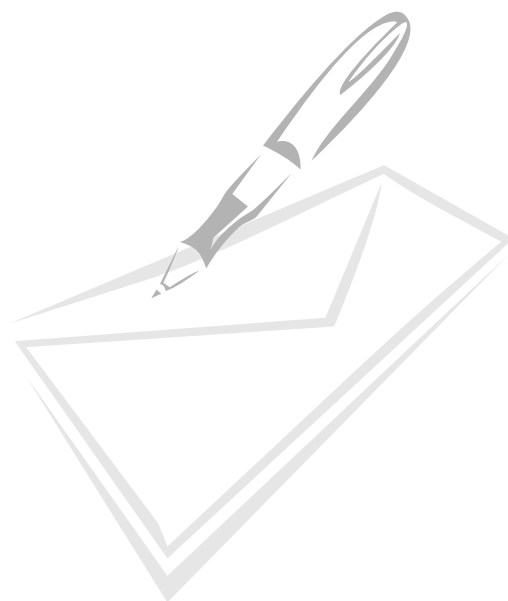
- **describe some activities for her free time**
- **suggest some restaurants/food in your town**
- **offer to meet her**

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter:

Dear



Step 1 Analyse the task

Who will receive the letter?

Relationship

Style and tone

Organization or **private individual**

Someone you... know well, ...a little or ...don't know

Formal or **Personal** **Friendly** or Neutral

Step 2 Generate ideas

some activities

restaurants/food

meeting

visiting temples / singing karaoke

tofu restaurant / udon noodles

ask about arrival times

Step 3 Think it through

Language needed?

Verb tenses

Suggesting activities

Anticipating pleasure

Offering to meet

How to start?

How to finish?

describing and suggesting activities; explaining briefly about food and restaurants, offering to meet

mainly present tense / some future / occasional imperative

you might enjoy / like to... / Let's try some...

I'll enjoy the chance / I'd love to be your guide

Let me know..... and I'll meet you....

I was delighted to hear about your visit.....

Please write again soon, / All the best,

GAPPED SAMPLE ANSWER

GAP focus — VERB FORMS

Using verb forms, complete this sample answer then look at the full sample answer over the page.

Dear Sally,

I delighted to hear about your visit to Kyoto in September. I'm sure you my city a fascinating place and I enjoy the chance to show you some of its beauty.

I not sure how much free time you have but any visitor to Kyoto to see the famous temples. There too many to describe but I love to be your guide. Perhaps singing with microphones not a common leisure activity in western countries but you might still enjoy an evening of karaoke, Japanese style. Most karaoke places the words to songs in English so don't worry! Just it as a chance to unwind.

I know that you interesting food so let's some while you here. There are some great udon noodle bars and I a nice restaurant that specialises in tofu dishes – very healthy!

..... me know your arrival times and I meet you at the airport. I don't you to get lost here on your first day!

Please again soon,

All the best,

Sachiko

1 Use of 'it', 'its', 'some', 'here', 'that' to refer to other words

Sometimes writers try to be more economical, or avoid repetition, by using little words like 'it', 'its', 'that' instead of repeating words or previously used expressions.

In the various paragraphs of the sample answer, find the little words listed below. What do these little words refer to?

(para 1) I'll enjoy the chance to show you some of **its** beauty ('its' refers to)

(para 2) Why don't we do **that** on one or two of the days. ('that' refers to)

(para 2) Just treat **it** as a chance to unwind ('it' refers to)

(para 3) I know you love interesting food so let's try **some** while you are here ('some' refers to)

(para 4) I don't want you to get lost **here** on your first day ('here' refers to)

2 Polite suggestions

When you are expecting a guest you sometimes make suggestions for good things to do.

Find 3 different examples in the paragraphs of the sample answer of how to make suggestions politely.

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

3 Synonyms

Find synonyms in the sample answer for these expressions.

Synonym in sample answer

very interesting (paragraph 1)

opportunity (1)

relax (2)

lyrics (2)

taste (3)

good for you (3)

Tell me (4)

Answers 1 Kyoto / see temples / singing karaoke / interesting food / Kyoto

2 Why don't we... / ...how about.../ let's 3 fascinating / chance / unwind / the words / try / healthy / Let me know...

Dear Sally,

I was delighted to hear about your visit to Kyoto in September. I'm sure you will find my city a fascinating place and I'll enjoy the chance to show you some of its beauty.

I'm not sure how much free time you'll have but any visitor to Kyoto loves to see the famous temples so why don't we do that on one or two of the days. There are too many to describe but I'd love to be your guide. Perhaps singing with microphones is not a common leisure activity in western countries but how about trying at least one evening of karaoke – Japanese style? Most karaoke places have the words to songs in English so don't worry! Just treat it as a chance to unwind.

I know that you love interesting food so let's try some while you are here. There are some great udon noodle bars and I know a nice restaurant that specialises in tofu dishes – very healthy!

Let me know your arrival times and I'll meet you at the airport. I don't want you to get lost here on your first day!

Please write again soon,

All the best,

Sachiko

(197 words)

Notes

- The use of future tense forms is common in letter which talks about future actions (eg *I'll enjoy the chance to show you...* / *I'll meet you at the airport*)
- The letter has conversational features which add to its friendly feel (eg *...how about...* / *Just treat it as a chance...* / *I don't want you to get lost...* / *I know that you...*)
- Use of 'so' as an informal link between a description and suggestion/advice (eg *Most karaoke places have... so don't worry* / *any visitor... loves to see the...temples so why don't we...*)

WRITING

TEST 5 | TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

To learn a foreign language successfully you need to spend time in the country where the language is spoken.

Do you agree or disagree?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Step 1 Analyse the task

What type of essay is it?

Key words

Read carefully to understand all the details

take a position – agree or disagree with question
learn / foreign language / successfully / time / country
agree / disagree.

Step 2 Generate ideas

What is situation of language learning in schools?

What are some examples of good schemes for learning languages overseas?

What are some counter-views?

Ask questions (mostly based on key words)

generally not always successful

study abroad schemes for pupils; learning new language in context
intensive study overseas for adults – increasing proficiency / cultural contact
some gifted people learn languages without travel or contact / effect of Internet options

Step 3 Structure the ideas

Introduction

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

Paragraph 4

Paragraph 5

Conclusion

take a position on the central viewpoint in the essay question; say what the essay is going to achieve
children in schools – many don't learn languages well; going abroad helps
study abroad schemes for pupils – benefits
adults on intensive language courses overseas – benefits
gifted learners of languages who don't go abroad
possible effect of Internet on language learning

5

TEXT EDITING WORKOUT

Correct these paragraphs. The number of errors to find is indicated below. Check your corrections with the sample answer over the page.

Much adults too are take several months or longer away from working to study languages intensively oversea. It seems a successful way both of lifting language proficiently and of understanding the cultural pattern of native speakers.

It is a true that some successful language learners are never been to the country where that language is speaking. Such learner probably have gift for learning languages and would be success under any circumstances with regular effort. For most peoples, however, learning in a social context are central to motivation and enjoyment in learn.

With the available of language learning options online, it will being interested to see if quality of language learning improve, especially for that people in isolated places who doesn't have the resources to aford expensive courses overseas.

Can you find and correct a total of 23 errors?

Your score? 14 (Good) 11 (OK) 9 (Try harder) 7 (One more chance to improve!)

1 Prepositions

Prepositions are an important part of grammatical accuracy in writing.

Put in the missing prepositions from these parts of the sample answer (Don't look yet!)

- ...and their thoughts are other things
- ...the opportunity speak people the target culture the new language a regular basis.
- most children emerge their school years very little command a foreign language
- ...a successful way both lifting language proficiency, and understanding the cultural patterns
- Such learners probably have a gift learning languages and would be successful regular effort
- especially those people isolated places

2 Referencing — (B)efore or (L)ater?

We use words like 'it' or 'this' to refer to things already mentioned. This aids cohesion in writing. Do these expressions from the sample answer refer to things mentioned (B)efore or (L)ater?

- Paragraph 2
- **It's** possible that the culture of that foreign language is very far away **B or L**
 - ... **that** is excellent **B or L**
- Paragraph 3
- ... and **this** gives excellent opportunities to really become proficient **B or L**
- Paragraph 3
- **It** seems a successful way both of lifting language proficiency **B or L**
- Paragraph 4
- **It** is true that some successful language learners have never been to the country where that language is spoken **B or L**
 - **Such** learners probably have a gift for learning languages **B or L**
- Paragraph 5
- ...**it** will be interesting to see if the quality of language learning improves **B or L**

3 Unscrambling 'chunks'

Words often go around together in groups, and may be best learnt in 'meaning chunks'.

Unscramble these groups of words before checking the sample answer.

- If to have is enough lucky a child
- opportunities country to have visit the to
- as take a pupils can as year much
- opportunities excellent gives
- language to proficient really in foreign become a
- way a seems it successful
- gift a languages for have learning
- circumstances any successful under
- of with availability the

Answers

1 on / to; with; from; in; on / from; with; of / of; of; / for; with / for; in 2 L / B / B / B / L / B / L 3 if a child is lucky enough to have / to have opportunities to visit the country / pupils can take as much as a year / gives excellent opportunities / to become really proficient in a foreign language / it seems a successful way / have a gift for learning languages / successful under any circumstances / with the availability of

It is not clear that learning a foreign language necessitates time in the country of that language but this essay will argue that it is extremely beneficial to learning.

When children learn foreign languages at school, they probably have classes for only a few hours a week. It's possible that the culture of that foreign language is very far away and their thoughts are on other things. If a child is lucky enough to have opportunities to visit the country in which the language is spoken, that is excellent. Even better is the opportunity to speak with people from the target culture in the new language on a regular basis. Unfortunately, however, most children emerge from their school years with very little command of a foreign language, and whatever command they have often is lost through lack of practice.

Many schools now have schemes whereby pupils can take as much as a year of their school studies abroad, and this gives excellent opportunities to become really proficient in a foreign language, since inside its own environment, the language is embedded in its natural social context. Many adults too are taking several months or longer away from work to study languages intensively overseas. It seems a successful way both of lifting language proficiency and of understanding the cultural patterns of native speakers.

It is true that some successful language learners have never been to the country where that language is spoken. Such learners probably have a gift for learning languages and would be successful under any circumstances with regular effort. For most people, however, learning in a social context is central to motivation and enjoyment in learning.

With the availability of language learning options online, it will be interesting to see if the quality of language learning improves, especially for those people in isolated places who don't have the resources to afford expensive courses overseas.

(314 words)

Notes

- The introduction is short but clear.
- The writer has generated a good range of ideas and examples to maintain interest.
- There is not a conventional conclusion summarising again the main points, but the speculation about the future acts to round off the essay in a reasonable way.
- Because the essay topic is open to debate, the writer uses a fair amount of language to show uncertainty ('is not clear', 'seems', 'is possible', 'probably', 'it will be interesting to see')

WRITING

TEST 6 | TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

**You are going to visit New Zealand for an 'English and Homestay' program.
You have just received details of your homestay host family.**

Write your first letter to the family. In your letter

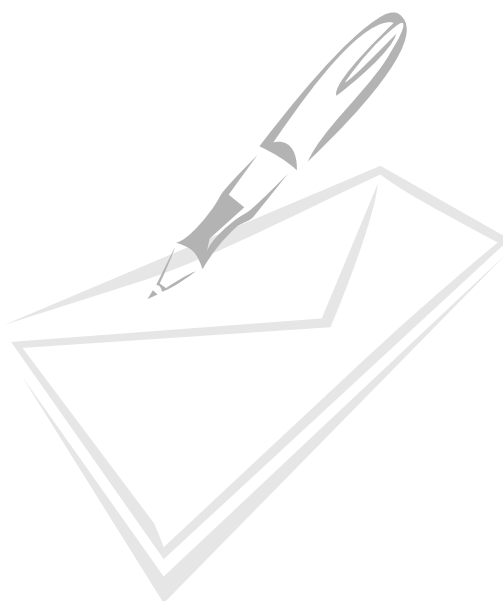
- **introduce yourself**
- **ask the family some questions to get information that is important to you**
- **tell the family about your arrival date and time**

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter:

Dear



Step 1 Analyse the task

Who will receive the letter?

Relationship

Style and tone

Organization or **private individuals**

Someone you... know well, ...a little or ...don't know

Semi-formal or Personal Friendly or neutral (and polite)

Step 2 Generate ideas

introduce yourself

asking for information

meeting

name, nationality, age, occupation, interests; your family

pets? / vegetarian food? / piano?

Christchurch / airline name and flight / arrival time

Step 3 Think it through

Language needed?

Verb tenses

Talking about self

Polite questions

Talking about arrival

How to start?

How to finish?

talking about yourself, asking questions to get information, informing of arrival date and time

present tense / present progressive (..ing) / occasional future

I'm a .../ I have .../ I like...

...if you don't mind / Do you have... by chance

Another question I'd like to ask

I'm arriving at...on... / I hope you'll be able to...

Greetings from....! (*friendly and enthusiastic*)

I'm really excited about... / Yours sincerely (or 'Best wishes')

GAPPED SAMPLE ANSWER

GAP focus — LITTLE WORDS (*NOT prepositions*)

Complete this sample answer then look at the full sample answer over the page.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Macintosh,

Greetings from Germany! name is Gudrun and I'm coming to New Zealand soon to be homestay guest. I'm writing to tell about and to ask questions. I'm getting really excited about the trip.

First then, information about I'm 19 years old and I'm a medical student in Berlin. father and mother are doctors. I have an older brother who is studying business in Geneva. I like reading and cooking, and I also play piano.

There are things I'd like to ask , if you don't mind. Do you have pets? I've always wanted to stay with a family with dog or cat! Another question I'd like to ask is whether not you can cook vegetarian food. Finally, do you by chance have piano? I really should keep practising, if possible.

I'm arriving in Christchurch on SIA 337 at 15.35 on 12th January. I hope you will be able to meet

I'm looking forward to hearing from soon.

..... sincerely,

Gudrun

1 Sequencing information

When we want to write personal information or ask questions in a letter we often use connecting expressions which show the relationship between parts of the letter more clearly. Which connecting expression below could replace ones in the sample answer?

Connecting expression	Sample answer expression
First of all
Next
Lastly

2 Use of present progressive

The present progressive is used to talk about either what is happening now or in the future. Read the sentences from the sample answer. Are they about the Future or Now?

Sample answer expression	Future Event (F)	Now (N)
I'm coming to New Zealand soon		
I'm writing to tell you		
I'm getting really excited about the trip.		
...a brother who is studying business in Geneva		
I'm arriving in Christchurch on SIA 337		

3 Using expressions to soften requests or needs

It is important not to be too direct with someone you don't know.

Study these examples. The expressions can be at the beginning or the end.

(If you don't mind, there....) There are some things I'd like to ask you, **if you don't mind**.

Finally, do you **by chance** have a piano? (OR '...do you have a piano, **by chance**?)

(If possible,) I really should keep practising, **if possible**.

'Soften' these sentences from another homestay letter, using similar expressions

- I need to ask about smoking in your house
- I should phone home every day.
- Have you got a computer in your home?
- I like to wash my towels every day.
- Do you have air conditioning in your bedrooms?

Answers

1 First, then, / Another question (I'd like to ask...) / Finally, 2 F / N / N / N / F

3 If you don't mind, I need to ask..... / If possible, I should phone..... / Have you by chance got a computer.....? / I like to wash my towels every day, if possible / Do you, by chance, have air conditioning.....?

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Macintosh,

Greetings from Germany! My name is Gudrun and I'm coming to New Zealand soon to be your homestay guest. I'm writing to tell you about myself and to ask some questions. I'm getting really excited about the trip.

First, then, some information about me. I'm 19 years old and I'm a medical student in Berlin. My father and mother are both doctors. I have an older brother who is studying business in Geneva. I like reading and cooking, and I also play the piano.

There are some things I'd like to ask you, if you don't mind. Do you have any pets? I've always wanted to stay with a family with a dog or cat? Another question I'd like to ask is whether or not you can cook vegetarian food. Finally, do you by chance have a piano? I really should keep practising, if possible.

I'm arriving in Christchurch on SIA 337 at 15.35 on the 12th January. I hope you will be able to meet me.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Gudrun

(176 words)

Notes

- Use of ellipsis (leaving out of words without damaging grammar or meaning) helps written flow (eg *There are some things (that) I'd like to ask you / Another question (that) I'd like to ask you ...*).
- Appropriate use of contracted forms helps to make the letter a little less formal (eg 'I'm', not 'I am', 'I'd' not 'I would', 'I've' not 'I have').
- Use of 'about' is common in letters of this kind (eg *tell you about... / information about... / excited about...*).
- It's fine to use 'Best wishes' or 'All the best' if you want to sound more friendly when the letter ends. 'Yours sincerely' is a safe, neutral option, if that feels more comfortable for a first letter.

WRITING

TEST 6 | TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

Some people say that friends are more important than family in today's world; others say that family is always more important.

Write in support of one of these views.

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Step 1 Analyse the task

What type of essay is it?

Key words

Read carefully to understand all the details

agree or disagree

friends / family / today's world / more important

argument / support / one / views

Step 2 Generate ideas

What are some effects of geographical mobility?

Isn't family vital at key life stages?

What about family and identity?

But aren't friends even more vital?

Ask questions (mostly based on key words)

causing friends to replace families to some degree?
salaries / conditions in richer countries not expanding rapidly. Why?

birth, marriage, death and care of elderly relatives
family tells you who you are / where you are from
are important, can be chosen; better than some families which have problems or breakdown

Step 3 Structure the ideas

Introduction

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

Paragraph 4

Conclusion

say what view you are going to argue for, and why

effects on family of moving

family takes major responsibility during key life stages

family and family history give you your identity.

some families break up; we can choose friends, but in the end family more likely to take responsibility for its members.

6

Correct these paragraphs. The number of errors to find is indicated below. Check your corrections with the sample answer over the page.

There are crucial time in life when families seem replaceable. These including the main life changes such as marriage, birth and deaths. With life expectancy increasing, caring for olderly relatives is also becoming a vital role for family members. Although friends can be rely upon to offer support and loyalty, they may no always be willing to sacrifice their lives for long-terms care of an elderly or sick person who is not relative.

Family ties create a long, unbroken history stretching far into past and this means that member of a family feel a share sense of identity and genetic correction. In Australia, for example, it seems that a popular pastimes involves the tracing of family trees back to original countries from which migrating families come.

Friend are obviously vital to everyones wellbeing and it is truth that we choose our friends but cannot choose our family. Sad, there are numerous story of families who deliberately lose contact with another because of disputes or dart secrets. Nevertheless, it is the family, ultimatum, which accept and carries responsibility to its members.

Can you find and correct a total of 26 errors?

Your score? 16 (Good) 12 (OK) 10 (Try harder) 8 (Time's running out!)

TEXT EDITING WORKOUT

1 Avoiding over-use of 'is/are' and 'has/have'

In essays, weaker writers sometimes use verbs like 'is/are' and 'has/have' too much. Find the sentences below in the sample answer. Which verbs replace 'is/are' or 'has/have'?

- the strong sense of responsibility that family members **have** for one another
- Blood ties **are** the most powerful shapers of long-term relationships in most cases.
- ...crucial times in life when families **are** irreplaceable
- These **are** the main life changes such as marriage, birth and death
- ...members of a family **have** a shared sense of identity
- a popular pastime **is** the tracing of family trees
- ...it is the family ultimately which **has** the responsibility for its members.

2 Verb forms with prepositions

Write the prepositions that follow each of these verbs from the sample answer.

to rely to care to feel
to split to lose contact

3 Using adverbs to communicate attitude to the reader

In essays, writers sometimes use adverbs to communicate an attitude or feeling to the reader in addition to information or viewpoint.

Could these adverbs replace the ones used in the sample answer appropriately and not alter meaning very much? Tick 'YES' or 'NO'.

Adverb in the sample answer	Replacement of similar meaning?	YES	NO
• principally	mainly		
• certainly	truly		
• Clearly	Obviously		
• obviously	apparently		
• Sadly	Unfortunately		
• ultimately	lastly		

Answers

- 1 feel / represent / seem / include / feel / involves / accepts; carries
2 rely on / care for / feel for / split up / lose contact with
3 Y / N / Y / N / Y / N

This essay will argue that families are more important than friends, principally because of the strong sense of responsibility that family members feel for one another. Blood ties represent the most powerful shapers of long-term relationships in most cases.

It is certainly true that in many modern societies, people move more often – because of work, economic migration and even wars. Clearly this means that many families are split up geographically and that strong friendships replace the extended family, at least for those people who have moved far from their parents' original area.

There are crucial times in life when families seem irreplaceable. These include the main life changes such as marriage, birth and death. With life expectancy increasing, caring for elderly relatives is also becoming a vital role for family members. Although friends can be relied upon to offer support and loyalty, they may not always be willing to sacrifice their lives for long-term care of an elderly or sick person who is not a relative.

Family ties create a long, unbroken history stretching far into the past and this means that members of a family feel a shared sense of identity and genetic connection. In Australia, for example, it seems that a popular pastime involves the tracing of family trees back to the original countries from which migrating families came.

Friends are obviously vital to everyone's wellbeing and it is true that we choose our friends but cannot choose our family. Sadly, there are numerous stories of families who deliberately lose contact with one another because of disputes or dark secrets. Nevertheless, it is the family, ultimately, which accepts and carries the responsibility for its members.

(276 words)

Notes

- The introduction gives a clear indication of the writer's position and the essay's direction.
- There is no separate concluding paragraph; the writer uses the final paragraph to give the other view and uses the final sentence as a sort of conclusion. This saves time if under pressure.
- There is a good range of complex sentences and these aid the flow of ideas being put forward.
- The vocabulary is varied and appropriate and this contributes to a strong answer.