

Cambridge English

Cambridge English: Advanced

Lesson Plan: Writing

This lesson plan accompanies *Cambridge English: Advanced 1* Writing Test 4, Parts 1 and 2.

This lesson is suitable for students in the middle and towards the end of their *Cambridge English: Advanced* course.

This lesson may be suitable for any upper intermediate course in order to exemplify what students have to do in a writing exam. It could also be divided into two lessons if the teacher's focus is to improve on both of the sample question answers.

Lesson Goals

1. To outline how the writing tasks are assessed and graded.
2. To exemplify the writing skills which are necessary to use in order to improve students' score.

Activity (see brackets for resources required)	Time needed	Interaction
Warmer (copies of Sample Answers G and H (page 116, 117) for pairs or individuals)	5-10 mins	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write the words content, communicative achievement, organisation and language on the board. Discuss what students think are meant by these words. • Put students into groups of four and refer each group to the marking scheme in the sample essays for Question 1 and Question 3. Elicit the key words and phrases for each descriptor (i.e. relevant, informed, complex ideas, appropriate register, well-organised, cohesive devices, range, does not impede communication, etc.) Briefly discuss what these key words mean, using a dictionary if necessary. • Alternatively, you could ask students to match a pre-prepared definition of words relating to text type (essay, letter, proposal, review) before discussing the differences as a whole group or in pairs. 	3 mins	T-S then S-T
	7 mins	S-S then S-T
	5 mins	S-S then S-T
Main activities (Resource 1 for individuals, copies of Sample Answer G)	30-35 mins	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write Question 1 on the board and discuss which key words students would underline/circle before writing the task. Stress 	5 mins	T-S then S-T

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<p>that students can use the opinions expressed and that they only need to use two of the ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give groups of students a table with 3 columns on it and give each group a different idea to discuss. Title each column with one of the ideas and 'how effective? Reasons' (see Resource 1). Ask students to brainstorm ideas in their groups, before putting groups with different ideas together to report back on their discussions. As a class they could vote on the two most effective ideas. • Put students into pairs. Refer students to Sample Essay G and ask them to discuss the essay's strengths and areas to improve. Elicit suggestions for how the marks could be improved for content, organisation and language. • Ask students to rewrite Question 1, but allow them to refer to the sample and to try their best to get it to a 4 (or 5) band using the ideas generated above. 	10 mins	Ss-Ss then Ss-T
	10 mins	S-S then S-T
	10 mins	S
Extension activity (Resource 1 and Resource 2 for individuals)	15 mins	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pair students and ask them to complete Resource 2. Briefly check their answers. 	10 mins	S-S then T-S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group students and give each group a separate question to discuss from Part 2 of the practice paper. Ask them to circle/underline key words in the question(s) and brainstorm ideas for content and format using the table idea in Resource 1. Re-group students to exchange their ideas. 	5 mins	Ss-Ss
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either set a question as homework or ask students to choose a question to answer. 		S

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Resource 1

Ideas for influencing people to be more environmentally friendly:

Laws and taxes	Education	Media
How effective? Reasons	How effective? Reasons	How effective? Reasons

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Resource 2

- a) Match the following cohesive and referencing words and phrases according to their function.

However	Therefore	As well as	This accounts for	Furthermore
Although	Otherwise		Meanwhile	In spite of

Addition	Contrast	Reason

- b) Match the following phrases for giving an opinion according to whether they are more likely in the written context or the spoken context.

In my opinion	I don't think that	There is no way that	The way I see it
From my point of view	It is not necessarily true that		As far as I'm concerned
It's not always the case that	If you ask me		To my mind

Written	Spoken

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Resource 2 Answer Key

Addition	Contrast	Reason
As well as, Furthermore, Meanwhile,	However, Although, In spite of	Therefore This accounts for Otherwise

Written	Spoken
In my opinion, From my point of view As far as I am concerned It's not always the case that To my mind It is not necessarily true that	I don't think that There is no way that The way I see it If you ask me

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WRITING (1 hour 30 minutes)

Part 1

You **must** answer this question. Write your answer in **220–260** words in an appropriate style.

- 1 Your class has attended a panel discussion on how to influence people to be more environmentally friendly. You have made the notes below:

Ideas for influencing people to be more environmentally friendly:

- laws and taxes
- education
- media

Some opinions expressed in the discussion:

“Governments should make people pay if they damage the environment.”

“Schools and parents should teach children to respect the environment from a very early age.”

“News programmes can tell people how important these issues are.”

Write an essay for your tutor discussing **two** of the ideas for influencing people in your notes. You should **explain which way would be more effective** and **provide reasons** to support your opinion.

You may, if you wish, make use of the opinions expressed in the discussion, but you should use your own words as far as possible.

Part 2

Write an answer to **one** of the questions **2–4** in this part. Write your answer in **220–260** words in an appropriate style.

- 2** You have spent two weeks at a language school in another town. While you were there, you lived in student accommodation, attended language classes, and took part in social activities organised by the school. A friend of yours has written to you asking whether you would recommend the school. Write a letter to your friend identifying which aspects of the school you were happy with, explaining which aspects were disappointing, and saying whether you would recommend the school.

Write your **letter**. You do not need to include postal addresses.

- 3** You work at an international company, and you and your colleagues would like to attend a language course. You decide to write a proposal to your Director suggesting that the company help with the cost of the course.

In your proposal, you should provide information about the time and costs involved and explain the relevance of the course to you and your colleagues' work.

Write your **proposal**.

- 4** An English language magazine is looking at television talent shows around the world. You decide to write a review of a television talent show in your country. In your review, explain what happens on the show and evaluate whether it provides positive role models for young people.

Write your **review**.

Marks and results

Reading and Use of English

Candidates record their answers on a separate answer sheet. One mark is given for each correct answer in Parts 1, 2 and 3 and up to two marks are given for each correct answer in Part 4. For Parts 5, 6 and 7 two marks are given for each correct answer and in Part 8 one mark is given for each correct answer. The total score is then weighted to 40 marks for the whole Reading and Use of English paper.

Writing

Examiners look at four aspects of a candidate's writing: Content, Language, Organisation and Communicative Achievement. The total is weighted to give a mark out of 40 for this paper.

Content focuses on how well the candidate has fulfilled the task; in other words if they have done what they were asked to do.

Communicative Achievement focuses on how appropriate the writing is for the situation and whether the candidate has used the appropriate register.

Organisation focuses on the way the piece of writing was put together; in other words if it is logical and ordered, and the punctuation is correct.

Language focuses on the candidate's vocabulary and grammar. This includes the range of language as well as how accurate it is.

For each of the subscales, the examiner gives a maximum of 5 marks. Examiners use the following assessment scale:

C1	Content	Communicative Achievement	Organisation	Language
5	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task with sufficient flexibility to communicate complex ideas in an effective way, holding the target reader's attention with ease, fulfilling all communicative purposes.	Text is a well-organised, coherent whole, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns with flexibility.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, effectively and precisely. Uses a wide range of simple and complex grammatical forms with full control, flexibility and sophistication. Errors, if present, are related to less common words and structures, or are slips.
4	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i>			
3	Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is, on the whole, informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate.	Text is well organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effect.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. Uses a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication.

2	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i>			
1	Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is generally well organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices.	Uses a range of everyday vocabulary appropriately, with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control. Errors do not impede communication.
0	Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed.	Performance below Band 1.		

Length of responses

Candidates need to make sure that they write the correct number of words. Responses which are too short may not have an adequate range of language and may not provide all the information that is required. Responses which are too long may contain irrelevant content and have a negative effect on the reader.

Varieties of English

Candidates are expected to use a particular variety of English with some degree of consistency in areas such as spelling, and not for example switch from using a British spelling of a word to an American spelling of the same word.

Sample G (Test 4, Question 1 – Essay)

Our planet is a wonderful place to live on, but unfortunately we are destroying it. After a discussion among the classmates, we have reached some interesting conclusions on how we could encourage people to become more environmentally friendly.

Since the situation nowadays is pretty dramatic, some argued that the government should join the cause in a practical way with specific laws and taxes because they said that the only way to open people's eyes is to talk about money. These students explained that people should pay more attention on rubbish, for example, and that politicians should do their part making pay higher taxes to those who do not differentiate their trash, contributing to the ecological disaster we are living in.

On the other hand, other students claimed that new taxes are not the only way to solve the problem. They said that it is important to change people's mentality, starting from elementary school or earlier. Particular lessons on ecological matters should be introduced; teachers should talk about how every person can do her/his part in preserving the environment, such as having a shower instead of a bath, switching the light off everytime you do not need it, differentiating well rubbish, trying to avoid using the car too much, and so on. In this way, little kids would grow up knowing how to contribute to the earth's preservation in everyday life.

In the end, we decided to accept both points of view since one does not exclude the other. We agreed that this is an urgent matter to take in serious consideration.

Scales	Mark	Commentary
Content	3	All content is relevant to the task and the target reader is on the whole informed. Although two ways have been discussed, there is no decision made about which would be the most effective.
Communicative Achievement	4	The essay uses the conventions of the task effectively to communicate both complex and straightforward ideas in an effective way using an appropriate register and tone. The reader's attention is held through the use of topic sentences to introduce ideas and the strong introduction and conclusion to the essay.
Organisation	3	The text is well organised and coherent and organisational patterns, such as the external references to the contrasting opinions which were offered during the initial discussion, are used to generally good effect. The text is connected by a variety of cohesive devices.
Language	3	There is a range of vocabulary which is used appropriately, including some less common lexis (<i>politicians should do their part; differentiate; ecological disaster</i>). There is a range of grammatical forms used with control and flexibility and the errors generally occur when more complex language is attempted.

Sample H (Test 4, Question 3 – Proposal)

Dear Director,

I am writing to ask the company for financial support. My colleagues and me would like to enroll in a language course to improve our skills, for we are an international company and need to speak a few languages fluently.

We have already made some research in this field and we have found a suitable course. It is 2 months long and is held in the evening hours so that we would attend it after work. The location of it is also very practical for us, as it is only a few streets away. The cost of this course is very reasonable, it is £200 per capita, so I hope the company could cover that for us. As my colleagues, some time they, often have to go abroad for business trips, I think this would be very helpful for us and also it would improve our results at work e.g. we could make deals with bigger advantage for our company. There are also benefits arising from that. Having fewer but better educated workers than a lot of worse educated enables our company to save money and give bigger salaries or to refurbish the offices.

To conclude, this letter is a polite request to cover the costs of a 2 month language course for my colleagues and me. We would be very pleased if the company would do us this favor.

Yours sincerely

John Smith

Scales	Mark	Commentary
Content	5	All content is relevant to the task and the target reader is fully informed. Details of the course are given and there is a request for funding.
Communicative Achievement	2	Although this proposal is set out as a letter, some of the conventions of a proposal are used to communicate straightforward and some more complex ideas. The register and tone are appropriately formal and the details of the course and the benefits to the company are clearly stated in a factual manner, which would hold the reader's attention.
Organisation	3	The text is well organised and coherent overall. The idea of the language course is introduced and developed, and the text links how both the employees and the company would benefit, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns within sentences. However, across sentences, the linking is used to generally good effect.
Language	3	There is a range of topic specific, business vocabulary used appropriately. There is a range of grammatical forms used with control. However, there are errors with word order and linking across sentences. Although this does not impede communication, they affect the overall communicative achievement.