

## B1 Preliminary for Schools Writing Part 1 – Teacher’s notes

### Description

Students think how they communicate in writing and look at how to approach task 1 of the B1 Preliminary for Schools writing paper.

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**Time required:** 30 minutes

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**Materials required:**

- Student handouts 1, 2 and 3

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**Aims:**

- to familiarise students with *Preliminary for Schools Writing Part 1*
- to highlight the importance of identifying the four core elements of the task
- to provide guidance on how to approach the task

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### Procedure

1. Ask students how they communicate in writing. Do they write text messages, emails, letters? How often? Elicit answers from the whole class and then ask students what makes emails different from other ways of communicating in writing. Ask them in what situations they use emails. Encourage as many answers as possible. Establish that emails are used both in formal and informal situations (e.g. with a teacher, at work, with a classmate, with a friend) as well as the fact that emails allow for more ideas to be included in a single piece of writing (as opposed to a text message).
2. Ask students to look at **Handout 1** and discuss the questions on it with a partner. Give the students about 5 minutes for this and then elicit some answers from the class.
3. Ask students to look at **Handout 2**. Students work alone or in pairs to re-order the segments of text into a coherent email. Then clarify order as a class, identifying any useful clues noted (e.g. the use of ‘Also’ to introduce another idea/point).
4. Explain to students that in the task they are given four ‘notes’ which they need to respond to. Write the following ‘notes’ on the board and ask them to decide which part of the email each one links to: **Great! Explain, Suggest...** and **Tell Mrs Lake**. As a class, identify which note links to which section of the email.
5. Elicit some ideas as a class on what you might write in response to the first segment of the email: eg: ‘*A party for our class sounds like a brilliant idea!*’ [*Great!*] etc. It may be useful at this point to refer to the sample answers in the **Handbook for teachers**, which show how candidates could answer these points and to show how they can use language to organise and expand on ideas. Below is a summary:

Email segment	Note (prompt)	Examples of candidate language from handbook sample answer
I'd like our class to have a party to celebrate the end of the school year.	<i>Great!</i>	I think it's a great idea to have a party to celebrate the end of the school year.
We could either have a party in the classroom or we could go to the park. Which would you prefer to do?	<i>Explain</i>	I prefer to do the party at school, in the classroom, because we've spend a lot of time there, and I think it would be better, so that we can remember all the good things that have made this year so special.
What sort of activities or games should we do during the party?	<i>Suggest ...</i>	I think we could bring some games like domino, or one of us can bring his Play Station and we can play together.
What food do you think we should have at the party?	<i>Tell Mrs Lake</i>	If you want, I will buy some pizza, and also something to drink like coca-cola or water. The other students will bring some potatoes, and the girls will make a cake. Do you like the idea?  See you!

The samples above help show that candidates do not need to repeat the note verbatim (e.g. the 'Great!' in this case is dealt with slightly differently and the candidate has incorporated it into their opening line, similarly where the candidate has to 'explain' they have not simply stated a choice but given a rationale as well. This is very much in line with what the task is intending to elicit.

Similarly, the '*If you want, ... Do you like the idea? See you*' add to the communicative effectiveness of the reply and the use of referencing, which makes the text flow very naturally, '*a party; the party; at school, in the classroom, because; there, and I think it would be better; so that; the good things that; this year; like; one of us; also; other students*' all add to the organisation of the message.

- Point out to students that each note/prompt is trying to focus on a different function (for example, compare prompts 2, 3 and 4 – explaining preference, making a suggestion and telling Mrs Lake about something).
- Ask the students to write their own reply to Mrs Lake either within class or at home within 20 minutes so that they get used to writing within the exam timeframe (**Handout 3** provides a clean version of the task input).

### Answer key

#### Student handout 1

1. Can you choose not to answer this question? **No**
2. How many words can you write for this task? **About 100 words is expected in this task. You can write more or fewer words as long as you answer all of the points required by the task.**
3. Who has written this email? **Mrs Lake, your English teacher**
4. Is Mrs Lake your friend? **Yes and no. The tasks are written in quite an informal style and the teacher is asking about something fun however it tries to balance preferences for a more formal or informal response as this is likely to be dependent on the culture in which the candidate is writing from. This is something considered when writing and reviewing these scenarios. This is why the first and last name of the teacher is usually included so if a candidate wants they can be more formal 'Dear Mrs Lake' or informal 'Hi Mrs Lake' etc.**
5. What is this email about? **'End of year party'**

Who is it for? **This is a useful point to highlight for learners that these 'emails from your English teacher' are often to 'all students' or the 'class'. Candidates can answer these from the perspective of just themselves as an individual student in the class – there is no need to try and answer for a collective group.**

6. Can you think of one thing that might be in this email? **E.g. practical arrangements: time of the visit, arrangements to meet, activities etc. or features of an email: greeting, layout, signoff.**

#### Handout 2

Dear Class,

I'd like our class to have a party to celebrate the end of the school year.

We could either have a party in the classroom or we could go to the park.  
Which would you prefer to do?

What sort of activities or games should we do during the party?

What food do you think we should have at the party?

Reply soon!  
Anna Lake

Look at the task below and answer the questions that follow.

#### Part 1

You **must** answer this question.

Write your answer in about **100 words** on the answer sheet.

#### Question 1

Read this email from your English teacher Mrs Lake and the notes you have made.

#### EMAIL

From: Mrs Lake

Subject: End of year party

Dear Class,

1. Can you choose not to answer this question?
2. How many words can you write for this task?
3. Who has written this email?
4. Is Mrs Lake your friend?
5. What is this email about and who is it for?
6. Can you think of one thing that might be in this email? For example, something you or Mrs Lake will need to write about?

**These are sentences taken from the email Mrs Lake has sent you. Put them in the correct order.**

Anna Lake

What sort of activities or games should we do during the party?

Reply soon!

We could either have a party in the classroom or we could go to the park.

I'd like our class to have a party to celebrate the end of the school year.

Dear Class,

What food do you think we should have at the party?

Which would you prefer to do?

#### Part 1

You **must** answer this question.

Write your answer in about **100 words** on the answer sheet.

#### Question 1

Read this email from your English teacher Mrs Lake and the notes you have made.

**EMAIL**

**From:** Mrs Lake

**Subject:** End of year party

Dear Class,

I'd like our class to have a party to celebrate the end of the school year.

We could either have a party in the classroom or we could go to the park. Which would you prefer to do?

What sort of activities or games should we do during the party?

What food do you think we should have at the party?

Reply soon!

Anna Lake

*Great!*

*Explain*

*Suggest ...*

*Tell Mrs Lake*

Write your **email** to Mrs Lake using **all the notes**.