



Cambridge Assessment
English

Assessing writing for Cambridge English Qualifications: A guide for teachers

Cambridge C2 Proficiency

English Qualifications



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Who this guide is for

Just like official examiners, teachers also spend many hours evaluating learners' writing. With lots of practical tips and real examples, this guide will help you to develop and assess learners' writing skills in preparation for the C2 Proficiency exam.

About C2 Proficiency

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tests reading, writing, speaking and listening skills, plus use of English ✓ Shows that learners can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • study demanding subjects at the highest level, including postgraduate and PhD programmes • negotiate and persuade effectively at senior management level in international business settings • understand the main ideas of complex pieces of writing • talk about complex or sensitive issues, and deal confidently with difficult questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Our highest level qualification that comes after C1 Advanced ✓ Tests learners at CEFR Level C2 ✓ Can be taken on paper or on a computer |
|---|---|

How to use this guide

To get the most from this guide:

- Try the practical ideas and reflect on how these techniques affect the processes of learning and teaching in your classroom.
- Discuss different approaches with learners in order to understand their preferences and needs, and to find out what approaches are most helpful to them.
- At the end of the guide, there are some real samples of assessed writing from the C2 Proficiency exam. A top tip before you look at the real examiners' marks and comments: try applying the official assessment criteria to the written samples by yourself! Make a note of whether you gave similar marks or made similar comments.
- You can navigate the document by using the hyperlinks in the text and the buttons on each spread:

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Key terminology

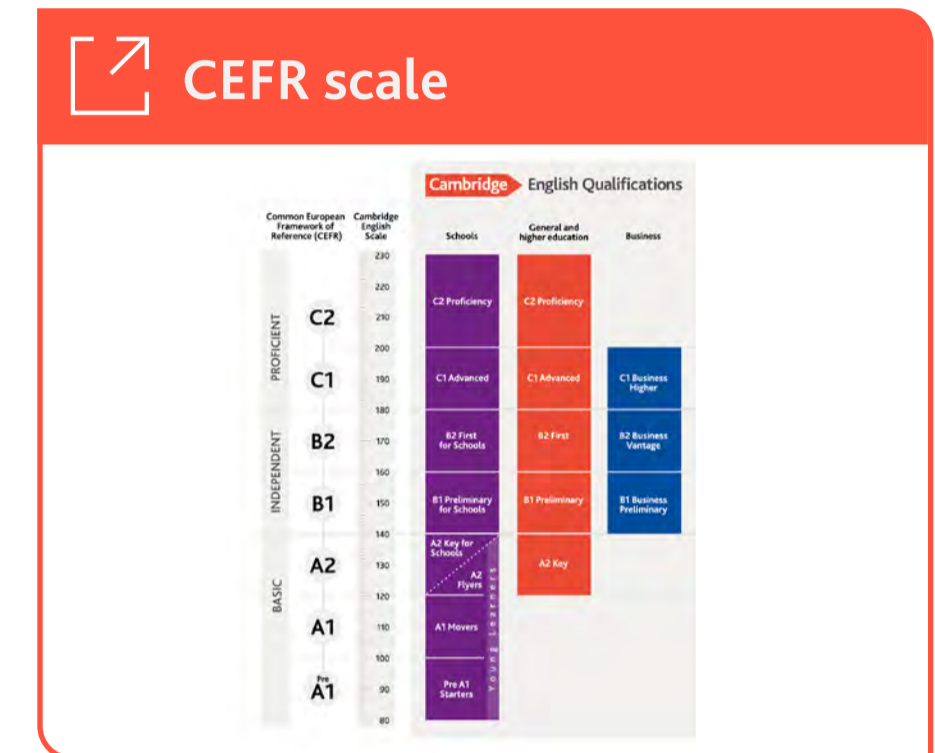
Language assessment is a specialist field and there is some common terminology which might be unfamiliar to you. Learning to recognise these terms will help you to understand this guide.

Definition	Cambridge English writing examiners say ...	Teachers might say ...
A person who is learning English, usually in a classroom.	learner	student / learner / pupil
A person who takes an exam. (This is a more formal word because it refers to work done in the exam, not work done in the classroom.)	candidate	
The things an examiner considers when marking a piece of writing for an exam. For the C2 Proficiency exam, these are: Content, Communicative Achievement, Organisation and Language.	1. Writing Assessment Scale 2. Writing Assessment subscales	1. Assessment criteria 2. Assessment categories
Each piece of writing gets four sets of marks for each of the subscales, from 0 (lowest) to 5 (highest).	Bands (0–5)	marks / scores / grades

These terms are commonly used to refer to our exams. There are also some other terms in this guide which are more widely used in the field of assessment. When these terms appear in this guide, you'll find an explanation nearby in a glossary box like this:

📖 **Key terminology**

The **Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)** is an international standard for describing language ability. It uses a six-point scale, from **A1** for beginners up to **C2** for those who have mastered a language. This makes it easy for anyone involved in language teaching and testing, such as teachers or learners, to see the level of different qualifications.



Understanding the Cambridge English Writing Assessment Scale

Every Cambridge English Qualification targets a specific level of the CEFR and includes a range of tasks that are suitable for learners at this level.

The detailed **descriptors** in the Writing Assessment subscales are slightly different for each exam and are based on its target CEFR level. However, all Cambridge English Qualifications are designed to test a learner's ability to understand and use English effectively in real-life contexts, so the descriptors for different exams have some things in common.

For example, candidates at every level are expected to demonstrate good organisation in their written work, but examiners will expect to see progression and different levels of ability in each exam:

Organisation			
	B2 First for Schools	C1 Advanced	C2 Proficiency
Descriptor	The text is generally well organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices.	Text is a well-organised, coherent whole, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns with flexibility.	Text is organised impressively and coherently using a wide range of cohesive devices and organisational patterns with complete flexibility.

Key terminology

Descriptors are detailed notes to help examiners and teachers use the assessment subscales effectively to evaluate and grade a learner's writing. Descriptors for Bands 1, 3 and 5 indicate what a candidate is expected to demonstrate at lower, average and higher levels of ability.

Cambridge English examiners consider these points when marking a piece of work:

Content	✓ The candidate answered the task. They have done what they were asked to do.
	✗ The candidate did not include everything they were asked to. They have written something irrelevant.
Communicative Achievement	✓ The writing is appropriate for the task. The candidate used a style which is appropriate for the specific communicative context.
	✗ They have written in a way that is not suitable – for example, using a very formal style in an email to a friend or ending an article with 'Best wishes'.
Organisation	✓ The writing is put together well. It is logical and ordered.
	✗ It is difficult for the reader to follow. It uses elements of organisation which are not appropriate for the genre, like beginning an email with a title or forgetting to include a title for an article.
Language	✓ There is a good range of vocabulary and grammar. They are used accurately. Collocations are used appropriately.
	✗ There are mistakes that could make the text difficult or confusing for the reader. Some mistakes are unproblematic. Examiners focus on whether the reader is still able to understand the text.

A learner might be stronger in one area than another – for example, they might be good at fully answering the question (Content) but not very accurate in their use of grammar and vocabulary (Language). For this reason, examiners give each piece of writing a separate mark for each subscale, from 0 to 5. Together, these indicate the learner's areas of strength and weakness in the four different areas of assessment.

For example, if a candidate scores Band 5 for Content and Band 2 for Language, this suggests that they answered the question well and the reader would not feel that any information was missing, but that the use of grammar or vocabulary was not very accurate.

If a candidate scores Band 3 or above in the C2 Proficiency exam, this indicates an ability of CEFR C2 level. Bands 1 and 2 indicate that the learner is still performing at C1 level. Passing C2 Proficiency proves that the learner has mastered English to an exceptional level.



Subscales				
	Content	Communicative Achievement	Organisation	Language
5				
4				
3				
2				
1				
0				

Bands (left column) **Descriptors** (bottom label)

Cambridge English writing examiners are extensively trained to assess learners' writing using these assessment scales, bands and descriptors. The quality and consistency of their marks is closely monitored by a team of senior examiners through an annual certification process and during live testing sessions. This means that learners around the world can feel confident that their exam results reflect their true ability to write in English.

How to assess and develop learners' writing skills in the classroom

It takes time and practice to develop good writing skills, and part of this development is regular formative assessment. Teachers can do this assessment, but learners can also assess their performance for themselves.

The profile of a learner preparing for C2 Proficiency is arguably quite different from other levels, which can influence our choice of teaching and learning strategies. For example:

- Learners at this level may be extremely motivated to improve, but they are also highly capable of expressing complex ideas in writing. Because of their high level of English, they may not notice, or feel as if they are making progress. This can be extremely frustrating.
- They may already be using English on a daily basis in their personal or professional life, leading to them feeling very confident and competent in one area in which they engage quite frequently (such as writing formal letters) but less able in another area in which they have little experience (such as informal communication via text message or email).
- In one class there can be a lot of individual variation in terms of strengths, weaknesses, knowledge and needs. C2-level learners have probably already been studying or using English for a long time and the only obvious remaining areas for improvement can be very specific or personal from learner to learner, such as fossilised habits.

To prepare for the C2 Proficiency exam, learners should:

- Read widely to familiarise themselves with the conventions and styles of different types of writing (articles, reports, essays, reviews, etc.).
- Read plenty of authentic texts (that is, not designed specifically for learners but written for readers of English worldwide). The internet is invaluable for finding examples of such texts.
- Develop the habit of writing frequently, such as 10 minutes every day in a personal journal, emails, notes, etc.
- Write 10-minute plans for a variety of questions in past papers, so that planning becomes automatic, efficient and quick.
- Have chances to practise exam tasks with clear time limits and word limits, just like in the real exam.
- Make sure they can write clearly so that examiners can read their answers easily.



They must also understand:

- what they're being assessed on in the exam
- their own strengths and weaknesses
- how they can improve any areas of weakness.

The key to this understanding is regular, effective assessment.

It's a good idea to use a mix of teacher assessment, peer assessment and self-assessment during an exam preparation course. This variety can make lessons more interesting and engaging, but it's also useful for learners to write for different audiences and to get feedback from different sources, as we all have different strengths and notice different things.

Key terminology

Formative assessment is when a teacher gives learners feedback on their progress during a course, rather than at the end of it, so that the learners can learn from the feedback.

Teacher assessment

★ Top tips

- Assessment isn't just about correcting mistakes, and three of the four Writing Assessment subscales in C2 Proficiency are not about language accuracy. So it's important to respond to what learners write, not just how they wrote it. This is particularly challenging at very advanced levels, as learners may have studied for many years and be self-conscious about their common mistakes or feel they haven't made much progress recently. It's easier to see your progress when you're a beginner!
- Teaching learners at very advanced levels often requires observation of what they're not doing. Perhaps there are areas of language which they've studied and understand, but which do not feature actively in their own speaking or writing. **Activity 1** is one way that you can help learners improve their range of language by identifying and filling gaps in their active knowledge.
- Hearing the teacher's voice can feel more personal and supportive than receiving written feedback in red pen. For example, you could make a short video or voice recording with your comments. Adopting different approaches to giving feedback is particularly helpful to support learners with specific learning needs, such as dyslexia.



 Activity 1

Assessment focus: Language.

Aims: To identify gaps in learners' already-strong knowledge of English, to build on this knowledge and to push them to use a wider range of language in their active repertoire.

Steps:

1. Before class, take a sample exam response and highlight three sentences which could be expressed differently. For each one, create a gapped sentence for learners to complete, just like in Part 4 of the Reading and Use of English paper (key word transformations).
2. In class, review the format of this part of the exam. Although key word transformations are not part of the Writing paper, students should be able to identify some ways in which this is relevant to their writing. Possible answers:
 - Regular reading and attention to language can help develop learners' own use of vocabulary, grammar, style and collocations.
 - There are often different ways to express the same idea, sometimes with only subtle differences in style or usage, which are more or less appropriate for different types of text with different communicative purposes.
3. Now give learners the sample exam response and the gapped sentences. They should spend approximately 15 minutes looking at these and attempting to reformulate the highlighted sentences. Remind them of the instructions for this part of the exam: they must not change the word given, and they must fill the gap with between three and eight words, including the word given.

Here is an example, using **sample answer 7** (a Part 2 letter):

- i. Citizens are normally wary of strangers and would never stop to help others.
reluctant
Citizens are normally wary of strangers and _____.
- ii. Every Sunday a market and fair is held in Smithfield Square where families and friends get together.
gather
Every Sunday, _____ for a market and fair.
- iii. Despite the often foul weather, Dubliners look relaxed and never in a hurry.
across
Dubliners _____ and never in a hurry, even despite the often foul weather.

 Activity 1

4. In pairs, learners now compare their ideas and discuss what difference (if any) these alternatives make to the style, formality or appropriateness of the writing.
5. Give learners time to discuss these different language choices and to record any in their notebooks that they wish they had thought of!
6. For homework, give learners back a recent sample of their own writing with two or three sentences highlighted which they can 'transform' in a similar way to the exercise you did in class, above.

 Answer key to step 3

1. Citizens are normally wary of strangers and **(are) reluctant to help others**.
2. Every Sunday, **families and friends gather in Smithfield Square** for a market and fair.
3. Dubliners **come across as relaxed** and never in a hurry, even despite the often foul weather.

 Follow up

After step 6, you can build in peer assessment by getting learners to bring their edited texts to class and evaluating each other's transformations of the selected sentences. Prompt them to reflect:

- Are their transformations accurate?
- What difference do their transformations make, if any, in terms of style, formality and appropriateness for the communicative purpose(s) of the text?
- Are there any other ways to transform these sentences? What difference would this make?
- What have they learned from their partner's work, which they could incorporate into their own work in future?

Encourage learners to discuss the impact of certain choices of language. Learners at this level in particular need to appreciate nuance. In some cases, they might think there is a huge difference between certain words, phrases or structures when in fact the effect of choosing one over another is really quite subtle.

Activity 2

Assessment focus: Individual style, strengths and weaknesses.

Aims: To tailor teacher feedback to a specific student's needs and interests.

Steps:

1. Show learners a sample writing task from the C2 Proficiency exam. Put them in pairs to plan (but not write) a response. For example, you could use the **article task** which appears in this guide:

A magazine has invited readers to contribute to a series of articles entitled 'An Unforgettable Event'. You decide to write an article briefly describing an event that is especially memorable for you. You should also evaluate the benefits for people, in general, of recalling memorable events.
Write your **article**.

2. Now show them two sample answers to this task prompt. In pairs, they should play the role of teacher, reading the answers and identifying the different strengths and weaknesses of each writer. They should summarise these in note form.

Here is an example, using sample answers 3 and 4 from the end of this guide. The **highlighted** strengths are things that the other learner might like to 'borrow' and use in their own writing in future.

	Strengths	Areas to develop
Sample answer 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content – all relevant, reader fully informed. • Communicative Achievement – combination of direct and indirect speech (appropriate to article); natural tone; appropriate use of language to balance detail with emotion and show writer's enthusiasm. • Language – wide range of vocabulary including collocations; effective use of style; suitable structures for tone and topic of text; minimal errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation – clear paragraphing; appropriate use of punctuation after subordinate clauses (such as <i>As I had expected</i>); wider range of organisational patterns and cohesive devices. • Language – less use of first person <i>I remember; I believe; I sometimes find myself</i>, etc. and more use of other means to express or imply the writer's own attitude and beliefs.
Sample answer 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content – all relevant, reader fully informed. • Communicative Achievement – rhetorical question in introduction (<i>And what's not to like?</i>). • Organisation – a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns; clear story development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language – word order; appropriate word choice; accuracy of spelling. • Communicative Achievement – better use of the conventions of the article genre, such as presenting opinions and views with more sophisticated expressions than <i>I believe</i>. • Organisation – wider range of cohesive devices and organisational patterns.

3. Now set learners a different writing task, either for homework or in class. They should write their responses individually. Collect these and tell the learners to expect to receive your feedback in the next class in a similar way, i.e. a summary of their top strengths and areas to develop.

Adaptation – Activity 2

You could adapt this activity for peer feedback, rather than (or before) teacher feedback. Collect and read the range of responses that the learners wrote and try to identify pairs of responses where learners' strengths and weaknesses generally complement each other. For example, one learner struggles with accuracy but has excellent organisation and another learner has the reverse problem! In the following lesson, you can incorporate peer assessment by putting these students together and inviting them to read and comment on each other's texts. Can they share any top tips from their own areas of strength which would help their classmate develop their writing skills?

Check out the peer assessment top tips for more ideas on how to help learners support and gain inspiration from one another.



Peer assessment

★ Top tips

- At Level C2, the notion of 'peer' has a wider reach than it does with lower-level exams. It can include other learners who are preparing for the exam, but it might also include other highly competent users of English globally. This means it's a good idea to use authentic materials and to practise writing with other English users in general (as opposed to learners). **Activity 4** demonstrates one way of using authentic online texts to help learners make frequent, brief writing a natural and enjoyable habit.
- Every piece of writing has an audience. When learners read each other's work, they should look back at the task, identify who the target reader is, and then read the text to see whether it has been written with a specific reader in mind. This will help them to get a better understanding of the concept of 'target reader' which is mentioned in the 'Communicative Achievement' subscale.

A lifestyle magazine has asked readers for their views about the quality of life in today's towns and cities. You decide to write a letter in which you briefly describe one or two personal experiences that illustrate what urban life is like for you and other people in your neighbourhood. You should also explain which factors are crucial for a good quality of life in towns and cities generally, and why.

Write your **letter**. Do not add any postal addresses.
- At Level C2, the target reader(s) for the writing tasks is often implied rather than explicitly stated. Here, the target readers include both the editor and readers of this lifestyle magazine.
- Some learners can feel nervous and uncomfortable about getting feedback from peers instead of a teacher. This is especially common in accuracy-focused or exam-focused contexts. Talk to learners about the benefits of peer assessment and the importance of being constructive in order to inspire (rather than destroy!) peers' confidence and development.
- Learners at very high levels can engage in really rich discussion of more subtle, nuanced uses of language. It's important that they recognise the benefits of this for learning. High-level peers have the ability to compare in detail the impact of their linguistic choices.
- When asking for feedback, learners must be specific and make it clear what they would like their peers to look at. If they don't know how to begin, you could suggest a 'feedback sandwich': one positive point, one thing to develop and, finally, one more positive point.
- Peer feedback is most effective when it's included as a regular part of a course. You could also consider including teacher feedback as a final step, after learners have had a chance to revise their writing based on peer feedback.

Key terminology

Peer assessment is when learners give feedback on each other's language, work, learning strategies, or performance. Research shows that people who are similar to the learner in age, gender, first language and learning goals are very motivating as role models.



Activity 3

Assessment focus: Communicative Achievement.

Aims: Rather than a classroom 'activity' as such, the following suggestion is a useful general approach to writing skills projects which can improve learners' participation, enjoyment and development over a longer term. Learners are encouraged to focus on writing for a real-world audience with real-world communicative purpose(s).

Steps:

1. With learners, identify some examples of writing opportunities outside class which involve several rounds of writing, responding and possibly editing. This might take place over a few lessons, including homework, to allow time for online research. Here are some ideas to get you started:
 - A **Twitter thread**. A 'thread' is 'a series of connected Tweets from one person'. The particular challenge for learners here is that each Tweet must be written in a maximum of 240 characters (letters + spaces) and they should be linked coherently to form a larger narrative or argument. Writing in such strict conditions helps learners express themselves succinctly and organise their thoughts to be easily accessible to a wide international (online) audience. Posting them on Twitter also encourages others to interact, including people outside the learners' normal personal or professional worlds.
 - **Postcrossing**, a global network of people who enjoy writing and receiving real postcards. Anyone in the world can write and receive these postcards, which encourages authentic communication rather than classroom-focused 'practice' language. (An electronic alternative for learners who don't want to pay or wait for postage is **Penfriends**, a great way to connect online with learners around the world).
 - **NaNoWriMo**^{*}, a community-focused month-long writing competition with a goal of writing 50,000 words of a novel in just 30 days. Originally aimed at younger writers, the competition allows anyone to take part, and there's no reason why learners can't run their own event whenever it suits them. Although the C2 Proficiency exam does not include a creative writing task, successful creative writing requires meticulous planning, which is a transferable skill for the exam. If your learners like creative writing, this is a great option for them to explore.

Steps 2/3 on next page

^{*}Works best with Chrome, Firefox and Safari.



Activity 3

2. Invite learners to identify advantages of developing their writing in these ways. For example:
- The purposes and audiences are authentic, i.e. not learners in classrooms but simply other English users worldwide. This exposes them to a much wider range of uses and styles of English from which they can borrow and develop their own writing.
 - By writing without a fixed task, they can focus on their own areas of personal or professional interest. This can boost motivation and help address individual needs, which can be very diverse when working with such high-level learners.
 - Creative writing, such as story-writing, pushes learners to make different choices about language according to the requirements of particular characters or genres. This helps them extend their active use of language beyond their usual range. And in the C2 Proficiency exam, it's important that candidates can demonstrate a wide range of language which is suitable for different styles, texts and audiences.
3. Encourage learners to begin and continue writing without too much guidance from you. The objective here is peer development and assessment:
- Peer development: If learners want feedback before sharing their writing, they should ask a classmate first for feedback on specific areas. This encourages them to listen and 'borrow' from each other, pushing them to use what they already know and to give each other feedback which is truly constructive.
 - Peer assessment: The 'peers' in this approach are other English users in the world (such as people who read and respond to Twitter threads). By participating in natural communication with other English users, learners get an authentic, real-world response and feedback on their writing, which will be different from the instructional tips or corrections they might receive from a teacher or classmate.

Activity 4

Assessment focus: Content, Communicative Achievement, Language.

Aims: Rather than a classroom 'activity' as such, the following suggestion is a useful general approach to encouraging learners to write little and often. This helps them make fluent writing a natural, enjoyable daily habit.

Steps:

1. Learners spend a few minutes reading online news sources and/or social media (such as Twitter or a news website) for headlines and topics that interest them.
2. Pairs discuss their thoughts and responses to the topic(s). Even very advanced learners often feel stronger in one of the two productive skills (writing and speaking), so this step encourages them to use one skill to practise and develop the other.
3. Conduct whole-class feedback, helping them develop and expand on key ideas.
4. Learners now spend just 10 minutes writing freely on their chosen topic(s). They can write in any format they like, for example:
 - A brief plan for an essay about the topic.
 - 'From the heart!' A personal response to the topic, such as a short diary entry or poem.
 - 'On the contrary ...' Create an argument in response to the topic, which you do not agree with. (This challenges learners to use higher-order thinking skills and not to rely on the same ideas or language that they ordinarily use.)
 - 'Report it!' Write a short newspaper article or report on the topic.
 - 'Magazine feature.' Write just the opening paragraph of an article for a magazine in response to the topic.
 - 'Dear Sir/Madam ...' Write a letter to your local government representative to summarise your response to the issue discussed.
5. Peers read each other's brief texts and respond briefly to the ideas. Their focus here should be to comment on the content and praise interesting language, not to critique or correct. Ideally, learners will work in different pairs from the ones in step 2, above, so they don't feel they're merely repeating this step.



Self-assessment

★ Top tips

- Include self-assessment as a regular part of your course. For example, circle mistakes in learners' writing and ask them to find the corrections themselves. Talk to learners about why it's helpful to take personal responsibility for their own learning.
- Get learners to count the number of words in their writing every time they do exam practice. It can waste valuable time during the real exam if they stop to count all the words in what they've written, so they need to know what texts of 240–280 words or 280–320 words typically look like in their own handwriting. For some learners, this will fill two or three pages but for learners with smaller handwriting it could be much less!
- At the highest levels, learners should be using things they already know in new ways or contexts – for example, less common expressions with high-frequency prepositions and adverbs like 'around' or 'out of', or inversion structures used for emphasis in addition to more familiar question forms ('Not only did we ...', 'little did they know ...'). **Activity 6** includes more examples and will help support learners in doing 'new things with old language'.

📖 Key terminology

Self-assessment is when learners decide for themselves if they think they are making the progress they need to for their particular level, to showcase their extensive language knowledge and to develop their ability to use a wide range of grammar and vocabulary. Developing good self-awareness is important for becoming an effective independent learner.

📄 Activity 5

Assessment focus: Genre conventions and style.

Aims: To practise 'reading for writing'; to help learners notice subtle and specific uses of language in authentic texts and adopt these into their active repertoire.

1. Tell learners they're going to practise 'investigative reading'. Invite them to speculate on what you mean by this before confirming:
 - They should investigate a topic of their choice by researching online and identifying two or three texts that they are genuinely interested to read.
 - These texts can be of any length and from any source, but ideally they should reflect the type of text the learners will need to write in their C2 Proficiency exam (a review, an essay, a letter, a report or an article).
 - Later, they will examine these texts for useful elements that they can incorporate into their own writing.

📄 Activity 5

2. Before they read the texts, they should identify or create a task prompt that these texts would respond to. For example:
 - If they have chosen an article, essay or report, what is the title or headline? Does the text seem to be divided into clear sections? Is there a brief summary or introduction at the beginning?
 - If they have chosen a letter, what information do they have about why it was written? For example, did a magazine editor specifically request letters from readers, or does the letter appear in the 'letters to the editor' section of a newspaper in response to recent news items?
 - If they have chosen a review, what is being reviewed – a film, book, restaurant, etc.? Why is it being reviewed? Where is it being reviewed – what type of publication does the review appear in? Who is the audience – a general population or a specific demographic such as students or subject specialists?
3. Now they have a task prompt, they should write their own text of this type (an article, a review, etc.).
4. After writing, they should put their own text aside and now read the original. The first time they read, they are reading just for interest. They should consider how similar or different the writer's opinions, style and approach are to their own.
5. Now they read again and make specific notes on:
 - the attitude and opinions of the writer
 - any parts of the text in which the writer is trying to convince or persuade
 - the style and tone of the writing (humorous, sarcastic, serious, provocative, etc.).They should collect examples in their notebooks of the vocabulary, structures and any specific references or examples used by the writer (such as cultural references).
6. Finally, they revisit the version of the text which they wrote and reflect:
 - Would they make any changes? Why/why not?
 - Is there any vocabulary or structure in the text they found online which they can 'borrow' and use in their own writing? What effect would this have?
 - Can they see any patterns in the text they investigated? For example, if the tone is generally very humorous, how does the writer achieve this?

 Activity 6

Assessment focus: Language.

Aims: For learners to reflect on and expand their range of active vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Steps:

- Discuss why keeping a reflective language journal can be very useful for language learning. Some ideas might be:
 - to maintain motivation over a long period
 - to keep a record of things learners don't see/hear very often, so they don't forget them
 - to identify common challenges that they face, so they can begin to think about how to overcome them
 - to give them daily practice of writing so it becomes more natural and comfortable.
- Get learners started with three to four examples of high-frequency vocabulary or grammar structures. Invite them to write each one at the top of a clean page, leaving space to add notes and examples later. (Ideally, these would be things that you know are coming up later in your course syllabus, which are already familiar to your students but now appear in new or less familiar contexts.) For example:

Word/structure	Common/familiar usage	Less common/advanced usage
particular (adj.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Are you looking for anything in particular?' 'This particular one is my favourite.' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'for no particular reason' 'He's very particular in his choice of music.' 'You need to complete this form with all your particulars.' (n.)
escape (v./n.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'The cat has escaped!' escape the daily routine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Oh, I'm so sorry – I was so distracted, your message completely escaped my notice.' 'I recognise that woman but her name escapes me.' 'a narrow escape' 'to make [my] escape'
Past participles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loved learned eaten 	Adjectival use with different pronunciation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> beloved (3 syllables) learned (2 syllables) In perfect participle clauses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'I can remember every single word of the story, having been told it countless times as a child at bedtime.' 'Not having eaten at all that day, I was absolutely famished by 4pm!'

 Activity 6

- Encourage learners to spend 15 minutes every day looking at the material they've studied and identifying any examples of 'old' language appearing in a 'new' way, then record this in their journals. They should include:
 - the word/structure **in the context** in which they heard/read it (a full example sentence)
 - how** it is used (the surrounding language, such as dependent prepositions or gerund/infinitive patterns, etc.)
 - the **pronunciation** of the word/structure (especially any stress or intonation features that are different from how the word/structure is used in other contexts)
 - a **translation(s)** of the whole phrase in their L1, which may help them better appreciate the infrequent or specific nature of this particular usage (compared to its everyday usage).
- Invite learners to share their reflective diaries with you regularly, for example every Monday. Without regular attention, diary projects may begin well but quickly get forgotten. Regular attention provides three key opportunities:
 - By keeping diaries, learners are effectively collecting a rich bank of vocabulary that could be exploited as a resource for classroom warmers, fillers and vocabulary games.
 - Learners are all keeping their own individual diaries, with vocabulary they personally find interesting or important, which could support peer teaching.
 - If you notice any efforts to use this more sophisticated language in their written work, you can praise them for their ambition and creativity!

How to assess writing for C2 Proficiency

The texts and tasks in Cambridge English Qualifications are designed to reflect real-world communication and to test learners' true abilities in English, so preparing learners for the Writing test shouldn't be very different from developing and assessing their writing skills in general. But of course, the tasks, timings and assessment scales for an exam are very specific and learners should have plenty of practice before they take the real exam.

The C2 Proficiency Writing paper has two parts and lasts for 1 hour and 30 minutes in total. Candidates have to show that they can write different types of text in English.

	Part 1: Writing an essay	Part 2: Writing an article, a letter, a report, review, or a set text essay question
How many tasks are there?	One. The candidate must answer this task.	Four. The candidate must choose one task to answer.
How many marks are there?	20 (maximum)	20 (maximum)
What do candidates have to do?	Write a discursive essay of 240–280 words. Candidates read two texts of approximately 100 words each and must write a coherent essay which integrates a summary of the key points contained in these texts, an evaluation of the abstract arguments involved and their own ideas on the topic.	Write 280–320 words. The rubric for each question will set out the purpose for writing, indicate the target reader and therefore suggest the appropriate format and register required in the answer. Candidates are strongly advised to only choose the question for the set text if they have read the text.

Writing Assessment subscales for C2 Proficiency

As with other Cambridge English exams, candidates' writing for C2 Proficiency is assessed in terms of Content, Communicative Achievement, Organisation and Language. The detailed band descriptors are as follows:

C2	Content	Communicative Achievement	Organisation	Language
5	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	Demonstrates complete command of the conventions of the communicative task. Communicates complex ideas in an effective and convincing way, holding the target reader's attention with ease, fulfilling all communicative purposes.	Text is organised impressively and coherently using a wide range of cohesive devices and organisational patterns with complete flexibility.	Uses a wide range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, with fluency, precision, sophistication and style. Use of grammar is sophisticated, fully controlled and completely natural. Any inaccuracies occur only as 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 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 occur as slips.
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 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.
0	Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed.	<i>Performance below Band 1.</i>		



These subscales and descriptors were designed to be used by Cambridge English writing examiners, so some of the specialist terminology may be unfamiliar to you. Now, you can see what these descriptors mean in practice. For each subscale, there's an explanation of the descriptors, followed by a real example of an exam task, a candidate's response and the comments given by a Cambridge writing examiner.

At the end of this section, you can find eight sample responses written by real candidates in the C2 Proficiency exam, along with full examiner comments and band scores.

Content

Band	Content	What does this mean?
5	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	<p>The writer included everything that the task required them to include.</p> <p>Who would read this text? (For example: an academic tutor, a boss or a peer.)</p>
3	Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is on the whole informed .	<p>Would the reader have all the information they need? The task always tells the candidate what information to include. Some of these content requirements do not need much development (for example, <i>state what ...</i>) and some parts require more development (for example, <i>describe ...</i> or <i>explain ...</i>).</p>
1	Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.	<p>The writer included something that wasn't necessary or related to the task.</p> <p>The writer clearly didn't understand something in the task. (For example: a Part 1 task asked the candidate to discuss the issue of local authorities giving money to museums, sports centres and public gardens, but instead they wrote about fundraising for such organisations.)</p>
0	Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed.	

Did you notice?

Look again at the descriptors for each band. You can see that they include similar sentences but with slightly different words, such as *minor irrelevances*, *irrelevances*, *totally irrelevant*. This should help you to compare the bands more easily when you're looking at a piece of writing and trying to decide which mark to give it. For example:

The task requires the candidate to **describe** a personal example and **evaluate** the topic more generally.

A magazine has invited readers to contribute to a series of articles entitled 'An Unforgettable Event'. You decide to write an article **briefly describing** an event that is especially memorable for you. You should also **evaluate the benefits** for people, in general, of recalling memorable events.
Write your **article**.

Look at Sample answer 4 on **page 42**, near the end of this guide.

Although the candidate scored poorly on the other three subscales, they scored a Band 5 for Content because the target reader is fully informed and everything they wrote was relevant to the task.

(You can read the examiner's full comments opposite the candidate's answer.)



Communicative Achievement

Band	Communicative Achievement	What does this mean?
5	Demonstrates complete command of the conventions of the communicative task . Communicates complex ideas in an effective and convincing way, holding the target reader's attention with ease, fulfilling all communicative purposes .	These include genre, format, register and function. For example, a personal letter should not look like a formal report, and an email to a teacher would probably be more formal and polite than an email to a close friend! The communicative purpose of the piece of writing is specified in the task, for example <i>make a complaint</i> , <i>suggest alternatives</i> , etc.
3	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.	Complex ideas are more abstract than straightforward ideas, or cover a wider subject area, which means the candidate must have more rhetorical resources to bring together and express these ideas.
1	Uses the conventions of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate.	This is a good thing! It means the reader is interested, not distracted, and it's not difficult for the reader to understand the text. Straightforward ideas are usually concrete, limited in subject and are communicated with relatively simple style, words and grammar.

✓ A real example: Part 2 letter

A lifestyle magazine has asked readers for their views about the quality of life in today's towns and cities. You decide to write a letter in which you briefly describe one or two personal experiences that illustrate what urban life is like for you and other people in your neighbourhood. You should also explain which factors are crucial for a good quality of life in towns and cities generally, and why. Write your **letter**. Do not add any postal addresses.

Dear *Life and Style* magazine,

I am writing in response to your monthly topic, this one being "A Good Life", **to share my view** about the quality of life in Dublin, where I live.

Dublin possesses two strong points that makes it stand out as one of the cities with the best quality of life in Europe: the pace of life and a sense of community. Firstly, the pace of life in Dublin is considered to be stress-free. Despite the often foul weather, Dubliners look relaxed and never in a hurry even when going to work. After work, they would normally take share a few pints with colleagues before heading home, and all these without a scowl on their face. Secondly, there is an omnipresent sense of community. For example, where I live in my neighbourhood Smithfield, every Sunday a market and fair is held at Smithfield Square where families and friends get together to eat or listen to see the live shows, and where it is quiet quite normal to share a laugh with a stranger. Tourists often agree to point out that Dubliners and Irish alike are welcoming, who would come to your aid when in need.

In my opinion, both a tranquil pace of life and a solid sense of community are crucial to enhance the quality of life of any town or city. Both have an impact on the perception of a place, and affect the atmosphere either positively or negatively. An example of a city with a poor quality of live, which lacks the two factors above mentioned, would be my hometown birthplace Buenos Aires, Argentina. People in the streets are constantly stressed due to work, traffic or other issues, they walk hurriedly and tend to push others out of their way. Additionally, because of high crime rates, citizens are normally wary of strangers and would never stop to help others due to paranoia.

In conclusion, I believe Dublin serves as a good example of a city where an outstanding quality of life has been made possible.

I hope you can consider my letter to publish it on your next month issue.

I will be looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours respectfully,

Maria

Examiner comments on Communicative Achievement:

The conventions of formal letter writing, such as **appropriate opening and closing salutations** and a **neutral tone**, are used flexibly: *I am writing in response ... to share my view; I hope you can consider my letter; I will be looking forward to hearing from you*. Complex ideas are communicated in an effective and convincing way, holding the target reader's attention with ease, and fulfilling the communicative purposes of the task.

Band: 4

? Why not Band 5?

This is a very good response to the task overall. To get a higher mark for Communicative Achievement, the candidate could have used **genre conventions** which are more suitable for a letter (avoiding those which are more suited to an essay, such as structuring paragraphs and linking the ideas with *Firstly, Secondly, In my opinion, In conclusion*, etc.).

Organisation

Band	Organisation	What does this mean?
5	Text is organised impressively and coherently using a wide range of cohesive devices and organisational patterns with complete flexibility.	Cohesive devices include linking words and other phrases that connect ideas and words within a text, such as pronouns (<i>she, theirs</i> , etc.), substitution (<i>the last one, this</i> , etc.), relative clauses (... <i>which is why</i> ...) and so on.
3	Text is a well-organised, coherent whole, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns with flexibility.	Organisational patterns are ways of connecting sentences which help the reader understand the writer's intended meaning and flow of ideas. This includes things like starting a new paragraph with a direct question to the reader, arranging sentences in an order which leads from simpler to more exciting ideas, etc.
1	Text is well organised and coherent , using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effect.	Easy to understand because the ideas and sentences are well connected.

✓ A real example: Part 2 review

An international magazine is running a series of reviews of children's books and has asked for contributions from its readers. You decide to send in a review of one book you read when you were a child. You should briefly describe the story and explain the impact the book had on you. You should also assess the extent to which the book is likely to remain relevant for young people in the future. Write your **review**.

Children's book

A book that brings back endless memories of my childhood is "The Hobbit" by J. R. R Tolkien. This Story is a prequel of the trilogy "The Lord of The Rings" and narrates the life of an extraordinary dwarf named Bilbo Baggins.

The reason why this book has a special place in my heart is because of the euphoria and excitement it brought as I was flipping through the pages as a kid after reading. The story is based on an adventure that Bilbo Baggins undergoes after being persuaded by an eccentric wizard called Gandalf to join him and other dwarfs. Bilbo's life takes a quick turn – from living in a "Hobbit Hole" to battling bizarre creatures and monsters in the woods. The story had no intense moments that as a child left me completely hooked to the plot.

The ultimate goal of the protagonist was to defeat a dragon malevolent and sinister dragon called "Smaug" and reclaim all of the gold that he stole from the dwarves. In The book had Even up to this day, I still consider Bilbo Baggins as a heroic one of the most heroic fictional characters of because all time. He was a normal man living a normal and ord ordinary life before he transformed into the benevolent man that made the most memorable heart-touching and ecstatic memories in this plot.

The impact this book had on me was colossal. I learnt so-m a great deal of values and ethics from all the characters that made a worthwhile contribution to the story – from learning to remain humble to respecting your kins and one another; to the significance of strengthening the bond between your associates and mustering the courage to take up any challenge, no matter how difficult it may seem. I strongly will also venture in to the fact that this book, although in classical remains highly relevant for the youth in upcoming generations, not only because of the valuable lessons it has to offer, but because of the mixed feelings of melancholy, merriness, disappointment bafflement and adrenaline rushes you may experience while reading.

Examiner comments on Organisation:

The text is a well-organised and coherent whole. The paragraphs are well structured and a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns, such as substitution, are used with flexibility to link ideas across sentences and paragraphs in a very natural way: *A book; "The Hobbit"; This Story; this book; is because of; takes a quick turn – from living in a "Hobbit Hole" to; not only because of ... but because of the*. Although there is a lack of more overt cohesive devices, the sentences are constructed to reference preceding and following ideas.

Band: 3



Language

Band	Language	What does this mean?
5	Uses a wide range of vocabulary, including less common lexis , with fluency, precision, sophistication and style.	Less common lexis is vocabulary which is not used very often in this context, perhaps because it expresses quite specific ideas or concepts.
	Use of grammar is sophisticated, fully controlled and completely natural.	This means the writer is clearly in control of their grammar – they are not making lucky guesses! They can consistently use grammar that is accurate and suits the context.
	Any inaccuracies occur only as slips .	A slip is when the candidate has clearly learned a vocabulary item or grammatical structure and uses it accurately most of the time, but still makes an occasional mistake.
3	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.	Flexibility means the writer can adapt their choice of words and style, rather than using the same form over and over. This allows a writer to communicate more effectively and efficiently.
	Errors , if present, are related to less common words and structures, or occur as slips.	Errors are usually repeated mistakes, where it's clear the candidate is unable to be consistently accurate in using a particular item of vocabulary or grammatical structure.
1	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately .	Vocabulary is appropriate when it fits the context of the task and the other words around it. For example, if a candidate writes <i>Big snow makes getting around the city difficult</i> in an article, the expression <i>getting around the city</i> suits the style of an article but <i>big snow</i> is not appropriate, because the usual expression is <i>heavy snow</i> .
	Uses a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility.	
	Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication .	<i>Big snow</i> is a good example of an error which does not impede communication . The reader can probably understand what the writer means, but they might be distracted for a moment while they think about it.

✓ A real example: Part 2 essay

Technology in our lives

Despite the obvious advantages of new technology, the speed with which we are confronted with new developments leaves many feeling overwhelmed. How we respond to new technologies is often a reflection of how able we are as individuals to cope with change in other areas of our lives. If we feel in control, we are more likely to embrace innovation; if we are less confident, we may avoid situations which threaten or challenge us.

Technology at work

Whether it be new software for the office, or state-of-the-art equipment for the factory, the successful introduction of new technology in the workplace requires effective, practical training in how to use it. This training allows staff to become familiar with the technology before using it for real in their daily tasks. Getting everyone on board by preparing them psychologically for change is the first step, as unless they are persuaded that they, too, will benefit by learning new skills or doing less interesting tasks more quickly, then whatever form the change takes, it will meet with a certain amount of resistance.

Write your **essay**.

MAN VS. COMPUTER:

It is an **undeniable truth** that technology has become a **mainstay** in our lives. From our personal lives to our public sphere tasks, there is a **perpetual flow of gadgets and gizmos** creeping into our environments to assist us with our activities. And what's not to like? For the most part, even the most **monotonous** of tasks have become more quicker and easier with the help of these inventions.

~~However, it has, however~~ Of course, there are those who are not yet completely comfortable with this notion. The sheer acceleration with which new technologies are brought to life is enough to make anyone with any tradition-oriented person **run for the hills!** In fact, there are studies which it has been proven that an individual's ability to 'cope' with this phenomenon is **is a doorway to mirrors their character**; people who are more steady in their lives with **hold tighter reins on the happenings in their lives** tend to welcome the change, whereas those who are less confident see this it as a threat to a certain degree.

This ~~distinction comes~~ leads to an impasse in the workplace; an employee probably cannot avoid working with new technology altogether first simply because they are less confident. Therefore, it is **imperative** that works are effectively and practically trained so that they can ~~nurture more~~ be in control, and thus have **no qualms** about new innovations. The first step here would be to **instill the right mindset** in employees by assuring them that they will would gain greatly from this change. In fact, this is a vital step in any situation effort to **seamlessly integrate humans and technology**, as it paves the way for far greater developments in the future.

Examiner comments on Language:

A range of less common lexis is used with **sophistication and precision**: *undeniable truth; mainstay; a perpetual flow of gadgets and gizmos; monotonous; run for the hills; mirrors their character; imperative; no qualms; instill the right mindset*, but also with some examples of **less appropriate usage** arising from ambition: *hold tighter reins on the happenings in their lives; seamlessly integrate humans and technology*. Use of grammar is natural and sophisticated and errors are minimal.

Band: 4



? Why not Band 5?

This is a very good response to the task overall. To get a higher mark for Language, the candidate would have shown fewer **errors** (such as *hold tighter reins on ...*) and used language in a **consistently** appropriate way.

🔧 Try it yourself!

Now, you'll find eight sample answers from real C2 Proficiency candidates, including the ones we looked at above. These include the band scores and full comments given by real Cambridge writing examiners. Together, these will help you understand what to expect from learners with stronger and weaker abilities.

But first, why not try marking these samples yourself using the Writing Assessment Scale? It's a good idea to practise, because using these scales when marking your own learners' writing will help you to:

- analyse their strengths and weaknesses when they practise writing
- form an impression of how ready they are to take the Writing part of the C2 Proficiency exam.

You'll find a **blank, photocopiable teacher assessment template** at the end of this guide which you can print and use for assessing any of the samples below. You should also refer to the detailed C2 Proficiency band descriptors on **page 25**.

Sample tasks with examiner comments

Part 1

✍️ Task: Part 1 – essay

Technology in our lives

Despite the obvious advantages of new technology, the speed with which we are confronted with new developments leaves many feeling overwhelmed. How we respond to new technologies is often a reflection of how able we are as individuals to cope with change in other areas of our lives. If we feel in control, we are more likely to embrace innovation; if we are less confident, we may avoid situations which threaten or challenge us.

Technology at work

Whether it be new software for the office, or state-of-the-art equipment for the factory, the successful introduction of new technology in the workplace requires effective, practical training in how to use it. This training allows staff to become familiar with the technology before using it for real in their daily tasks. Getting everyone on board by preparing them psychologically for change is the first step, as unless they are persuaded that they, too, will benefit by learning new skills or doing less interesting tasks more quickly, then whatever form the change takes, it will meet with a certain amount of resistance.

Write your **essay**.

★ Top tip

Before you read the examiner's comments below, try making your own assessment using the official subscales. Then, compare your assessment with the band scores and comments given by the real examiners.



 Task: Part 1 – essay

Sample answer 1

MAN VS. COMPUTER:

It is an undeniable truth that technology has become a mainstay in our lives. From our personal lives to our public sphere tasks, there is a perpetual flow of gadgets and gizmos creeping into our environments to assist us with our activities. And what's not to like? For the most part, even the most monotonous of tasks have become more quicker and easier with the help of these inventions.

However, ~~it has, however~~ Of course, there are those who are not yet completely comfortable with this notion. The sheer acceleration with which new technologies are brought to life is enough to make ~~anyone with any tradition-oriented person~~ run for the hills! In fact, ~~there are studies which it has been proven that an individual's ability to 'cope' with this phenomenon is is a doorway to mirrors their character; people who are more steady in their lives with~~ hold tighter reins on the happenings in their lives tend to welcome the change, whereas those who are less confident see this it as a threat to a certain degree.

This ~~distinction comes~~ leads to an impasse in the workplace; an employee probably cannot avoid working with new technology altogether ~~first~~ simply because they are less confident. Therefore, it is imperative that works are effectively and practically trained so that they can ~~nurture more~~ be in control, and thus have no qualms about new innovations. The first step here would be to instill the right mindset in employees by assuring them that they ~~will~~ would gain greatly from this change. In fact, this is a vital step in any situation effort to seamlessly integrate humans and technology, as it paves the way for far greater developments in the future.

Subscale	Mark	Commentary
Content	5	All content is relevant to the task. The target reader is fully informed about the main ideas in the two texts. The writer covers how people react to the development of technology both in our everyday lives and at work: <i>The sheer acceleration ... run for the hills; ability to 'cope' with this phenomenon mirrors their character; effectively and practically trained; instill the right mindset in the employees.</i> The writer's own views are evident throughout the text.
Communicative Achievement	4	The conventions of essay writing are used naturally and with flexibility. The evaluation of the key points from the input texts is combined with the writer's opinions: <i>it is imperative that works are effectively and practically trained; this is a vital step</i> and complex ideas are communicated convincingly. The writer has adopted an informal tone which is used consistently to engage and hold the interest of the reader with ease: <i>And what's not to like?; run for the hills!; 'cope' with this phenomenon.</i>
Organisation	3	The text is a well-organised, coherent whole. The shift between the different points in the input texts develops naturally: <i>In fact, it has been proven that; This leads to an impasse; The first step here would be</i> , enabling the writer to express opinions on the central topic effectively. Cohesive devices and organisational patterns are used with flexibility: <i>From our personal lives to our public sphere tasks; there are those who are; with which; whereas those who are less confident; and thus; as it paves the way.</i>
Language	4	A range of less common lexis is used with sophistication and precision: <i>undeniable truth; mainstay; a perpetual flow of gadgets and gizmos; monotonous; run for the hills; mirrors their character; imperative; no qualms; instill the right mindset</i> , but also with some examples of less appropriate usage arising from ambition: <i>hold tighter reins on the happenings in their lives; seamlessly integrate humans and technology.</i> Use of grammar is natural and sophisticated and errors are minimal.



 Task: Part 1 – essay (continued)

Sample answer 2

First text suggest that nowadays the population is experiencing the new innovations and technologies with extremely fast tempo. This process has a massive impact on both: older and younger generations. Youngsters cope with the new technologies in different way in comparison to elderly people. They adapt new things rather quiet easily, because they do get used to things rather quickly. Often, older people require more time to accept changes in order to start feeling comfortable around with them. Our respond and positive attitude is crucial if we are willing to progress and make changes for a future generations. If the society opens up for the new innovations we are going to face a bright future in front of us. Exploring things is the key to success.

Second text on the other hand suggest that society should not feel rushed to use new technologies as every human being needs a decent amount of time for the ~~esen~~ essential practice and preparation, especially in workplaces. The proper training is highly important as it gives a chance to get familiar with the up-coming innovations before using them on the daily basis. As the result people will experience more effective ways of for of making tasks.

Both text shows the importance of having accepting the new technologies. It does come with a variety of different benefits for the entire population.

To add up, the future lies in our hands. Everyone should put some effort into exploring and allowing the new innovations to become the part of our lives without treating them in un-ordinary way.

Subscale	Mark	Commentary
Content	4	All content is relevant to the task. The target reader is on the whole informed. The writer has taken a clear stance on the topic and has discussed three of the main ideas in the texts. The speed of change is addressed: <i>technologies with extremely fast tempo ... massive impact</i> , as is training: <i>the essential practice and preparation, especially in workplaces</i> . The discussion of older and younger generations relates to how people cope with change generally. However, the need to prepare staff psychologically has been omitted.
Communicative Achievement	1	Although there is no introduction, the conventions of an essay such as an objective tone, discussion of different aspects of the topic, and a conclusion stating an opinion are used effectively to hold the target reader's attention and to communicate straightforward and complex ideas: <i>The proper training is highly important ... ways of making tasks; To add up, the future lies in our hands</i> .
Organisation	1	The text is well organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effect: <i>First text suggest; Second text on the other hand; This process ... both: older and younger; Youngsters ... in comparison to elderly people; As the result; Both text shows</i> .
Language	1	There is a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, used appropriately: <i>has a massive impact; to face a bright future; a decent amount of time; the future lies in our hands</i> . A range of simple and complex grammatical forms is used with control: <i>Often, older people require ... comfortable with them; society should not feel rushed to use new technologies; put some effort into exploring and allowing</i> . Errors do not impede communication: <i>quiet easily; Our respond; face a bright future in front of us; Second text ... suggest; As the result; the part of our lives; un-ordinary</i> .



Part 2

Task: Part 2 – article

A magazine has invited readers to contribute to a series of articles entitled 'An Unforgettable Event'. You decide to write an article briefly describing an event that is especially memorable for you. You should also evaluate the benefits for people, in general, of recalling memorable events.

Write your **article**.

Sample answer 3

'An Unforgettable Event'

I remember it as if it was yesterday that when my English teacher came to me during a school break and asked me: 'how would you like to go to Canada for a month to study at a local high school, all expenses paid?' As you can imagine, my jaw dropped something like ten feet at the mere thought of it. I was sixteen at the time and it seemed like the world was opening in front of me. After I recovered from the immediate shock I said I would go in a heartbeat, and so we went into the Principal's office to call my mother. It wasn't me making the phonecall but I could perfectly imagine what my mom's face was at the other end of the line. First of all, she would be completely puzzled that I was at the Principal's office because I never got into trouble. Second After that, I imagine she was in utter disbelief when she heard the words: 'your daughter is going to Canada for a month, if that is okay with you of course of course.' They passed me the phone and my mom asked me: 'do you want to go?' to which I said: 'YES!' And that was it, my future had taken a new direction and I was going to be in Canada by the end of the year.

As I had expected I made a lot of new friends, I fell in love with all the members of the family that took me in, and I was completely blown away by their completely different way of life.

It is funny though how, despite having had all those wonderful experiences once I got there, I sometimes find myself thinking about the time I was told that, if I wanted to, the opportunity was mine, rather than about the time I spent in the actual country.

I believe that recalling memorable events in our lives has a very positive effect on us. It makes us feel special, it makes us think back on happy times and that joy spreads and it is contagious. Suddenly we find ourselves feeling that happiness on every fiber of our beings. Not to me for

Subscale	Mark	Commentary
Content	5	All content is relevant to the task. The target reader is fully informed about the writer's memorable event, both the moment of learning about it and the event itself, and of the benefits for people in general of recalling these kinds of events.
Communicative Achievement	4	The conventions of article writing, with an appropriate combination of direct and indirect speech and a consistent, natural tone, are used with flexibility to communicate the writer's experience and thoughts in a convincing way. Appropriate language choices are used to communicate the writer's enthusiasm for the event recalled, balancing details of the event with reflections on the emotions felt: <i>It is funny though how, despite having had ... in the actual country</i> and the reader's attention is held with ease: <i>As you can imagine; It makes us feel special; Suddenly we find ourselves.</i>
Organisation	2	The text is well organised and coherent. The organisation of the text is logical and easy to follow: the writer leads the reader through the experience from beginning to end, combining details and emotions, before moving on to a summary of the experience and the impact of similar experiences on people in general. A variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns are used to good effect: <i>After I recovered; to which I said; And that was it; As I had expected; despite having had all those wonderful experiences; It makes us feel ... it makes us think ... and that joy spreads and it is contagious.</i>
Language	4	There is a wide range of vocabulary, with some very natural turns of phrase and appropriate use of collocation, used effectively and with style: <i>all expenses paid; my jaw dropped; at the mere thought of it; I would go in a heartbeat; I could perfectly imagine; completely puzzled; got into trouble; in utter disbelief; completely blown away.</i> The wide range of structures is used naturally and they are well suited to the tone and topic of the text. Control and flexibility are demonstrated throughout, for example in the paragraph beginning <i>It is funny though how.</i> Errors are minimal and occur either as slips with spelling or are due to ambitious use of vocabulary: <i>harcyon times; contagious; on every fiber of our beings.</i>



 Task: Part 2 – article (continued)

Sample answer 4

EXPERIENCING TRADITIONS

How about travelling abroad just to find out that the most popular celebration is the setting of a market? This is exactly what happened to me while I was living in Ireland.

When I was fourteen I went to the Emerald Country to study. It was autumn when I first arrived and everyone was expecting excited about the big event of the year: the ploughing market. I must admit that the general excitement dragged me too. So the big day arrived and my host Irish family – as I call the family that hosted me for the year – brought me to the market. Ignorant of me, I had thought imagined it as was some kind of tradition, and that there I would find dancers, singers and all that Irish party committee.

However, things did not go quite as well. Hadn't I not arrived, I started to smell the cattle "perfume". There were a lot of people going from one place to another, chit-chatting with farmers and admiring the superb cows, but the dancers and musics were nowhere to be found. In that situation I tried to make the most of the day, and it turned up to be a phenomenal experience and a great anecdote to be telling friends.

From looking back at this experience I learned that no matter it does not matter if at some point things do not live up to your expectations, we must be able to take advantage of every opportunity that is presented to us. For this reason, I strongly believe that recalling memorable events in our past can help us grow as a person. Although, I am We should always try to learn from what we have lived, although it might be difficult sometimes to face the past, the benefits of it will always and satisfaction of it will always be bigger than the pain.

Subscale	Mark	Commentary
Content	5	All content is relevant to the task. The target reader is fully informed about an event in the writer's life which was memorable and why it is beneficial for people to recall events from their past.
Communicative Achievement	2	The conventions of writing a magazine article, such as an engaging tone and a personal viewpoint, are used effectively to hold the target reader's attention with ease and communicate straightforward and some more complex ideas. The use of a rhetorical question in the introduction sets the tone well and the build-up to the event, including the anticipation, is well described: <i>It was autumn when I first arrived; I must admit; So the big day arrived; things did not go quite as well.</i>
Organisation	2	The text is a well-organised and coherent whole. The structure is very clear and the story of the event develops at a good pace. There is a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns, such as repetition and some effective punctuation, used to generally good effect: <i>event of the year: the ploughing market; there I would find dancers, singers; but the dancers and musics were nowhere to be found; Looking back at this experience.</i>
Language	1	A range of vocabulary, including less common vocabulary to describe specific aspects, is used appropriately and sometimes to good effect: <i>The Emerald Country; ploughing; cattle "perfume"; phenomenal; anecdote.</i> A range of simple and complex grammatical forms is used with control and flexibility: <i>I had imagined it as; and that there I would find; to be telling; things do not live up to; is presented to us.</i> Errors are present, but these are commonly connected to word order problems, word choice or spelling and do not impede communication: <i>dragged me too; Ignorant of me; tradicion; Had I not arrived, I started; it turned up; alway.</i>



Task: Part 2 – review

An international magazine is running a series of reviews of children’s books and has asked for contributions from its readers. You decide to send in a review of one book you read when you were a child. You should briefly describe the story and explain the impact the book had on you. You should also assess the extent to which the book is likely to remain relevant for young people in the future.

Write your **review**.

Sample answer 5

Children’s book

A book that brings back endless memories of my childhood is “The Hobbit” by J. R. R Tolkien. This story is a prequel of the trilogy “The Lord of The Rings” and narrates the life of an extraordinary dwarf named Bilbo Baggins.

The reason why this book has a special place in my heart is because of the euphoria and excitement it brought as I was flipping through the pages as a kid after reading. The story is based on an adventure that Bilbo Baggins undergoes after being persuaded by an eccentric wizard called Gandalf to join him and other dwarfs. Bilbo’s life takes a quick turn – from living in a “Hobbit Hole” to battling bizarre creatures and monsters in the woods. The story had ~~no~~ intense moments that as a child left me completely hooked to the plot.

The ultimate goal of the protagonist was to defeat a dragon malevolent and sinister dragon called “Smaug” and reclaim all of the gold that he stole from the dwarves. ~~In The book had~~ Even up to this day, I still consider Bilbo Baggins as ~~a~~ heroic one of the most heroic fictional characters of ~~because~~ all time. He was a normal man living a normal and ~~ord~~ ordinary life before he transformed into the benevolent man that made the most memorable heart-touching and ecstatic memories in this plot.

The impact this book had on me was colossal. I learnt ~~so m~~ a great deal of values and ethics from all the characters that made a worthwhile contribution to the story – from learning to remain humble to respecting your kins and ~~one another~~; to the significance of strengthening the bond between your associates and mustering the courage to take up any challenge, no matter how difficult it may seem. I strongly will also venture in to the fact that this book, although in classical remains highly relevant for the youth in upcoming generations, not only because of the valuable lessons it has to offer, but because of the mixed feelings of melancholy, merriness, disappointment, bafflement and adrenaline rushes you may experience while reading.

Subscale	Mark	Commentary
Content	5	All content is relevant to the task. The target reader is fully informed about a children’s book which the writer has read. The story is briefly described, giving some information about the characters and a plot synopsis, and the impact on the writer is explained. The conclusion expresses the relevance to future generations: <i>this book, although classical remains highly relevant for the youth in upcoming generations.</i>
Communicative Achievement	4	The conventions of writing a review, such as the use of an informative tone and a positive viewpoint, are used to communicate complex ideas in an effective and convincing way. The book is described appealingly and enthusiastically, and the impact the book has had on the writer is clear: <i>the euphoria and excitement it brought as I was flipping through the pages as a kid; intense moments that ... left me completely hooked to the plot; I still consider Bilbo Baggins as one of the most heroic fictional characters of all time.</i> The target reader’s attention is held with ease and all communicative purposes of the task are fulfilled.
Organisation	3	The text is a well-organised and coherent whole. The paragraphs are well structured and a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns, such as substitution, are used with flexibility to link ideas across sentences and paragraphs in a very natural way: <i>A book; “The Hobbit”; This Story; This book; is because of; takes a quick turn – from living in a “Hobbit Hole” to; not only because of ... but because of the.</i> Although there is a lack of more overt cohesive devices, the sentences are constructed to reference preceding and following ideas.
Language	3	A range of topic-specific vocabulary, including less common lexis, is used effectively and precisely to communicate specific emotions and ideas: <i>endless memories; prequel; euphoria; flipping through the pages; eccentric; battling bizarre creatures; hooked; protagonist; malevolent; reclaim; benevolent; colossal; humble; mustering the courage; melancholy; bafflement; adrenaline.</i> A wide range of simple and complex grammatical forms is used with full control, flexibility and sophistication: <i>after being persuaded; no matter how difficult it may seem.</i> There are occasional errors, but these do not impede communication: <i>hooked to the plot; heart-touching.</i>



 Task: Part 2 – review (continued)

Sample answer 6

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone: The Review

Harry Potter is a series of books written by J.K. Rowling, that describes a life of a young child of the same name. The twist is, that However, Harry Potter is a wizard and as such by birth and as such, he attends a special wizarding school called named Hogwarts.

The first book, ~~Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone~~ is an origin story. It begins by introducing introduces our main hero, an eleven years old boy, and the fact that he lives with his abusive aunt and uncle, who are muggles – people without the ability to do magic. During this period, Harry starts to experiences strange occurrences, that are the result of his untapped magical potential. Eventually, Hogwarts' groundskeeper named Hagrid delivers a formal school invitation to Harry.

Harry's first real contact with wizarding world wo Harry eventually gets to a train that leads to Hogwarts, where he meets Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, who eventually become his best friends.

As the school year progresses in Hogwarts, Harry starts to uncover some information about his past and the history of the world of magic. He learns, that not so long ago, wizards were in a terrible sta engaged in a terrible civil war, when dark sorcerer Voldemort tried to conquer conquer the wizarding world, and enslave the muggle one.

He also learns that Hogwarts contains an artifact, Philosopher's Stone, which can grant eternal life, and that Voldemort, who is still alive, is after it. In the finale showdown, Harry and his friends defeat Voldemort using their wits, magic and the power of love and magic.

I've read the book when I was eleven years old, which I consider the perfect age to pick up the Harry Potter series. It is a whimsical urban fatasy w with plotline simple enough, that the child understands it, but deep enough, so it stays engaged. While there is a clean definition of who the »bad guys» are, the people occupying Hogwarts are still fleshed out and nuanced. And, Also, despite it being part one, it gives its readers a satisfying conclusion to the story ending.

The book is not some revolutionary work of literature, so I believe it's relevancy will fade over tiem. It does however, remain a superb book story that is well worth the read.

Subscale	Mark	Commentary
Content	4	The content is relevant to the task. The target reader is on the whole informed. There is information about the story, and how relevant the book is likely to remain in the future. However, a description of the impact the book had on the writer when they read it as a child has been omitted.
Communicative Achievement	3	The conventions of a review, such as an equal amount of description, opinion and recommendation, are used with sufficient flexibility to communicate complex ideas. The writer's feelings towards the book are communicated effectively through careful choice of lexis and the reader's attention is held with ease: <i>It is a whimsical urban fatasy; the people occupying Hogwarts are still fleshed out and nuanced.</i>
Organisation	3	The text is a well-organised and coherent whole. Paragraphing is used effectively to organise the key points in the review and ideas are connected within and across sentences using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns, such as referencing pronouns, with some flexibility: <i>a young child of the same name; as such; As the year progresses; He also learns that ... and that ... is after it; which I consider the perfect age; While there is ... of who the 'bad guys' are, the people occupying Hogwarts are still; Also, despite it being part one, it gives.</i> Control of punctuation is variable, and there is some awkwardness of sentence structure in the penultimate paragraph: <i>with plotline simple enough ... so it stays engaged</i> , but these issues do not impact on the overall flow of the text.
Language	2	A range of vocabulary, including less common lexis specific to the book and to book reviews in general, is used effectively and precisely: <i>abusive; strange occurrences; untapped magical potential; uncover information; conquer; engaged in a civil war; an artifact; grant eternal life; whimsical; fleshed out and nuanced.</i> A range of grammatical forms is used, generally with control and flexibility. Occasional errors, for example with verb agreement and tense choice, do not impede communication.



 Task: Part 2 – letter

A lifestyle magazine has asked readers for their views about the quality of life in today's towns and cities. You decide to write a letter in which you briefly describe one or two personal experiences that illustrate what urban life is like for you and other people in your neighbourhood. You should also explain which factors are crucial for a good quality of life in towns and cities generally, and why.

Write your **letter**. Do not add any postal addresses.

Sample answer 7

Dear *Life and Style* magazine,

I am writing in response to your monthly topic, this one being "A Good Life", to share my view about the quality of life in Dublin, where I live.

Dublin possesses two strong points that makes it stand out as one of the cities with the best quality of life in Europe: the pace of life and a sense of community. Firstly, the pace of life in Dublin is considered to be stress-free. Despite the often foul weather, Dubliners look relaxed and never in a hurry even when going to work. After work, they would normally take share a few pints with colleagues before heading home, and all these without a scowl on their face. Secondly, there is an omnipresent sense of community. For example, where I live in my neighbourhood Smithfield, every Sunday a market and fair is held at Smithfield Square where families and friends get together to eat or listen to to see the live shows, and where it is quiet quite normal to share a laugh with a stranger. Tourists often agree to point out that Dubliners and Irish alike are welcoming, who would come to your aid when in need.

In my opinion, both a tranquil pace of life and a solid sense of community are crucial to enhance the quality of life of any town or city. Both have an impact on the perception of a place, and affect the atmosphere either positively or negatively. An example of a city with a poor quality of live, which lacks the two factors above mentioned, would be my hometown birthplace Buenos Aires, Argentina. People in the streets are constantly stressed due to work, traffic or other issues, they walk hurriedly and tend to push others out of their way. Additionally, because of high crime rates, citizens are normally wary of strangers and would never stop to help others due to paranoia.

In conclusion, I believe Dublin serves as a good example of a city where an outstanding quality of life has been made possible.

I hope you can consider my letter to publish it on your next month issue.

I will be looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours respectfully,

Maria

Subscale	Mark	Commentary
Content	5	All content is relevant to the task. The target reader is fully informed. The writer has described her personal observations, illustrating what life is like where she lives. The crucial factors for a good quality of urban life are given, and explained using the example of another city.
Communicative Achievement	4	The conventions of formal letter writing, such as appropriate opening and closing salutations and a neutral tone, are used flexibly: <i>I am writing in response ... to share my view; I hope you can consider my letter; I will be looking forward to hearing from you.</i> Complex ideas are communicated in an effective and convincing way, holding the target reader's attention with ease, and fulfilling the communicative purposes of the task.
Organisation	3	The text is a well-organised and coherent whole. A variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns are used flexibly: <i>two strong points; where families and friends ... and where; alike; both ... Both; An example of; two factors above mentioned.</i> Punctuation is used to good effect.
Language	3	A range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, is used effectively and precisely: <i>stand out; foul weather; share a few pints; heading home; omnipresent sense of community; share a laugh; come to your aid; wary of strangers.</i> A wide range of simple and complex grammatical forms is used with control, flexibility and sophistication: <i>Despite the often foul weather ... going to work; in my neighbourhood ... with a stranger; An example of a city ... Buenos Aires, Argentina; Dublin serves as a good example ... has been made possible.</i> A few errors are related to less common structures or occur as slips: <i>who would come to your aid; quality of live.</i>



 Task: Part 2 – letter (continued)

Sample answer 8

Dear readers sirs,

I have read come across your request in one of your magazines and couldn't help writing to you as the topic discussed is highly relevant to me.

I've been a citizen of a huge metropolisce my whole life. As almost everything in our lives, it it has both advantages and disadvantages. I live in the capital of Russia, Moscow. As far as we all know, the quality of life in any capitals is usually better than in a province. But what is the cost? I've been reconsidering lately whether it is worth or not to live in a large city.

Urban life seems appealing to the majority of population and consequently a lot of people tend to move to a cities. Therefore, we confront with overpopulation there. It's getting more and more complicated, to go out somewhere without en being stuck in endless traffic jams or lines. Of course, there are far more places to visit and activities to do, and entertaining things to see, but you'll spend eternity waiting in line for them. Rush hours are the worst. They affect your mood, productivity and the interaction between people. City dwellers are tend to be ruthless and extremely impolite.

Although, there is a vast range of opportunities in cities. I myself have got a job worth doing as wages are higher here. But I had to it was a rather nerve-racking experience as there were a lot of candidates eager to get it, as well. Now I reckon I would prefer living in a quiet area with and eating healthy natural products than having untrustable food and drinks imported from an unknown place.

Hope my letter will be in your magazine, it might encourage people to think twice before moving to cities.

Sincerely yours,

Anna

Subscale	Mark	Commentary
Content	3	There is an omission in this response. The target reader is on the whole informed. The topic of life in cities has been addressed, with some reference to personal experience and a discussion of some of the advantages and disadvantages of living in a large city. However, the second strand of the question, what factors are crucial for a good quality of life, has not been dealt with explicitly.
Communicative Achievement	2	The conventions of writing a letter to a magazine have been used effectively to communicate complex ideas, though the style seems to be more appropriate for an advantages/disadvantages essay in places: <i>I have come across; it has both advantages and disadvantages; But what is the cost?; Of course; I reckon I would prefer; Hope my letter will be in your magazine.</i>
Organisation	2	The text is a well-organised, coherent whole. A variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns is used to generally good effect: <i>the majority of population; a lot of people; overpopulation; a vast range of opportunities.</i>
Language	2	A range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, is used appropriately, and sometimes effectively and precisely: <i>a huge metropolis; province; reconsidering; stuck in endless traffic jams; waiting in line; ruthless; a rather nerve-racking experience; think twice.</i> A range of simple and complex grammatical forms is used with control and flexibility: <i>I've been ... life; Urban life seems appealing to; you'll spend eternity waiting in line for them; Now I reckon I would prefer living in a quiet area and eating.</i> There are occasional errors, but these do not impede communication, and some of them could be slips: <i>it is worth or not; we confront with; untrustable.</i>



Extra resources

Lesson plans and resources for teachers

- [Free resources for preparing learners for Cambridge English Qualifications](#)
- [Resources published by Cambridge University Press for C2 Proficiency learners](#)
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- [Free resources for learners on the Cambridge English website](#)

Webinar recordings about teaching writing and giving feedback

- [Preparing your students online for Writing papers in Cambridge English Qualifications](#)
- [The 'Write' Criteria: Improving writing the right \(and easy\) way](#)
- [Different ways to give useful feedback on writing](#)
- [Writing at CEFR Level B2 and above](#)

Write & Improve

- [For learners](#)
- [For teachers](#)

Write & Improve uses technology developed at the University of Cambridge to mark English writing accurately in seconds. Learners submit their work and Write & Improve will give it a mark and show them the parts of their text that may need improvement.

Penfriends

[Connect](#) with another school and find English-speaking pen pals to start exchanging cards with your learners.

Learn more about research into second language learning

Cambridge University Press has published over [20 free and easy-to-read research papers](#) about second language learning and teaching. Some papers which are especially relevant to this guide are:

- [Giving feedback to language learners](#)
- [Motivational aspects of using near peers as role models](#)
- [Test anxiety in adult learners](#)

Blank template to help teachers to assess learners' writing using the Writing Assessment Scale

A4 and US letter versions of this form are attached to this PDF, for you to print.

C2 Proficiency Writing paper – teacher assessment	
Task:	
Candidate:	
Content	Has the candidate answered the task? Have they done what they were asked to do? (Or have they missed anything from the question which they should have included? Have they written something irrelevant?)
Band:	Comments:
Communicative Achievement	Is the writing appropriate for the task? Has the candidate used a style which is appropriate for the specific communicative context? (Or have they written in a way that is not suitable – for example, using a very formal style in an email to a friend or ending an article with 'Love'?)
Band:	Comments:
Organisation	Is the writing put together well? Is it logical and ordered? (Or is it difficult for the reader to follow? Does it use elements of organisation which are not appropriate for the genre, like beginning an email with a title or starting every sentence in an article on a new line instead of using paragraphs?)
Band:	Comments:
Language	Is there a good range of vocabulary and grammar? Are these used accurately? (Or are there mistakes? Do these cause any confusion for the reader?)
Band:	Comments:



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