

Checklist for assessing writing: B1 Preliminary for Schools

This checklist is designed to help you assess your students' writing. It includes a summary of the assessment criteria and useful questions tailored to each writing type in the B1 Preliminary and B1 Preliminary for Schools Writing paper. Use these questions to help you and your students decide if their writing satisfies the assessment criteria and which areas they need to improve.

How the Writing paper is assessed

Cambridge English examiners consider four things when marking the Writing paper. Part 1 is marked out of a total of 20 marks and Part 2 is marked out of a total of 20 marks. Each criterion is worth 25% of the total mark.

Content
✓ The text includes everything asked for in the task. It includes all the important information.
✗ The text doesn't include everything asked for. Perhaps it includes something irrelevant or the student hasn't understood what they had to write about.
Communicative Achievement
✓ The style of writing is appropriate for the task. It is an email, an article or a story and uses an appropriate style and relevant functions such as agreeing or giving an opinion.
✗ The writing isn't suitable for the task – for example, a story is written in the style of an email.
Organisation
✓ The writing is well organised, logical and ordered. The ideas are connected using linking words and cohesive devices.
✗ It is difficult for the reader to follow. For example, the paragraphing is poor, there aren't many linking words, the ideas aren't organised logically so it's difficult for the reader to follow, etc.
Language
✓ The text uses a range of everyday vocabulary appropriately, uses simple grammatical forms accurately and includes some complex grammar. If there are mistakes, the reader can still understand the text.
✗ There are mistakes that make the text difficult to understand. There are a lot of inaccuracies with simple grammatical structures and only basic vocabulary.

A good piece of writing at B1 Preliminary and B1 Preliminary for Schools level should be able to answer 'yes' to every question in this list. See page 27 of the **B1 Preliminary for Schools handbook** for further guidance on assessing writing.

Top tip!

Give students their own version of the checklist so they are aware of the different areas they will be assessed on. Often, students are unaware of the criteria beyond language accuracy. Knowing they can gain valuable marks from good organisation or including all the relevant points can be very motivating.

Writing Part 1: email

Content

- Is the email to and from the right person?
- Does it address all four notes mentioned in the task?
- Does the email include all relevant information in about 100 words?

Communicative Achievement

- Is the text in the format of an email?
- Is it written in a style and tone suitable for the recipient (for example, more formal for a teacher and more informal for a friend)?
- Is the purpose of the writing clear (agreeing, disagreeing, giving an opinion, offering or explaining)?
- Does the text use appropriate language and phrases to respond to the four notes?

Organisation

- Does the text use paragraphs appropriately to organise ideas?
- Does the text use other organisational features of an email (for example, openings, closings, references to the original email)?
- Are the ideas presented in a logical order? Is the text easy to follow?
- Does the text use a variety of linking words or cohesive devices (such as *although*, *and*, *but*, *because*, *so that*, *whether etc.*, and referencing language)?
- Are the ideas balanced appropriately, with suitable attention and space given to each one?
- Is punctuation used correctly?

Language

- Does the text use a range of vocabulary?
- Does the text use a range of simple grammar accurately (such as basic tenses and simple clauses)?
- Does it use some complex grammatical structures (such as relative clauses, passives, modal forms and tense contrasts)?
- Is the spelling accurate enough for the meaning to be clear?

Top tip!

Check page 30 of the **handbook** for a glossary of key terms used in the assessment criteria such as 'linking words', 'everyday vocabulary' and 'complex grammatical forms'.

Writing Part 2: article

Content

- Is the article about the topic stated in the task?
- Does it answer the question(s) in the task?
- Does it include all relevant information in about 100 words?

Communicative Achievement

- Does the text use the conventions of an article (addressing the reader directly, expressing an opinion, sharing personal information)?
- Is it written in a style suitable for the magazine stated in the task (often for a school, club or website and therefore informal)?
- Is the purpose of the writing clear?

Organisation

- Does the text use paragraphs appropriately to organise the ideas?
- Does the text use other organisational features of an article (for example, a title, introduction of the topic)?
- Are the ideas presented in a logical order? Is the text easy to follow?
- Does the text use a variety of linking words or cohesive devices (such as *although, and, but, because, first of all, finally, as a result* etc., and referencing language)?
- Is punctuation used correctly?

Language

- Does the text use a range of vocabulary?
- Does the text use a range of simple grammar accurately (such as basic tenses and simple clauses)?
- Does it use some complex grammatical structures (such as relative clauses, passives, modal forms and tense contrasts)?
- Is the spelling accurate enough for the meaning to be clear?

Top tip!

Give students their own version of the checklist to use before they submit writing tasks. They can use it on their own for homework or in class in pairs to help check each other's work.

Writing Part 2: story

Content

- Does the story start with the given sentence?
- Is the content of the story related to the starting sentence?
- Is the story about 100 words?

Communicative Achievement

- Does the text use the conventions of a story (use of narrative tenses, a clear beginning, middle and end, use of direct speech)?
- Does it follow the patterns provided in the opening sentence (use of third person, for example)?

Organisation

- Does the text use paragraphs appropriately to organise ideas?
- Does the text use other organisational features of a story (a clear beginning, middle and end, language for sequencing)?
- Are the ideas presented in a logical order? Is the text easy to follow?
- Does the text use a variety of linking words or cohesive devices? (such as *although*, *and*, *but*, *because*, *in the end*, etc., and referencing language)?
- Is punctuation used correctly?

Language

- Does the text use a range of vocabulary?
- Does the text use a range of simple grammar accurately (such as basic tenses and simple clauses)?
- Does it use some complex grammatical structures (such as relative clauses, passives, modal forms and tense contrasts)?
- Is the spelling accurate enough for the meaning to be clear?

Top tip!

Use the checklist to assess the sample answers in the **handbook**. Then compare your ideas with the examiner's comments.