

City & Guilds IESOL
Sample Writing Tasks at C1 Expert level

Introduction

The aim of this booklet is to familiarize teachers who prepare candidates for the City and Guilds ESOL examinations with tasks, performance samples, assessment criteria and benchmark performance samples.

The tasks and performance samples in the current material represent level **C1** according to the Common European Framework of Reference. The CEFR levels and descriptors are embedded in every stage of the production and delivery of the International ESOL and Spoken ESOL tests and are also incorporated in the marking procedures.

The material includes sample tasks from former live tests and authentic performance samples produced by ESOL candidates. An attempt has been made to select samples which represent a wide variety of performance levels within the given CEFR level. All samples have been double marked to ensure that the evaluation criteria are rigorously followed and marking is consistent, accurate and reliable.

Marking the writing tasks

The current guide includes only the *open writing tasks* which are evaluated with the help of task-specific mark schemes.

Each level has a task-specific mark scheme with descriptors for **Task fulfilment**, **Grammar**, **Vocabulary** and **Structure**. The Task fulfilment mark reflects how far the candidate has achieved the task, the Grammar mark measures the range, appropriacy and accuracy of grammar, the Vocabulary mark assesses the range, accuracy and appropriacy of vocabulary as well as spelling accuracy. The Structure mark reflects how coherently ideas are linked in the text and how accurate the punctuation is.

There are four levels of performance with a corresponding mark in each of the above criteria: First Class Pass, Pass, Narrow Fail and Fail. The total marks awarded for the task are the sum of the marks awarded to each criterion.

The writing tasks are marked by trained markers who use the task-specific mark scheme for the evaluation of the tasks. The mark-schemes are regularly updated and markers are trained regularly to ensure that they are marking to standard.

Grading the Writing section

If a task has not been attempted, a zero mark should be awarded for that task.

Once each Writing task has been marked, an overall mark is awarded for the Writing section. This overall mark is translated into one of the following grades: Fail, Narrow Fail, Pass or First Class Pass

Maximum marks for each writing task

Part 1	respond appropriately to a given input to produce a formal response for an intended public audience	Maximum mark: 12
Part 2	produce a personal letter, a narrative or descriptive composition	Maximum mark: 12

Grade table for Writing section for C1

Grade	Total marks: 24
<i>FCP</i>	20-24
PASS	12-19
<i>NF</i>	11
<i>F</i>	0-10

Spelling and capitalisation

American spelling is accepted if used consistently. Inappropriate use of capital letters is generally not penalised unless spelling is the focus of the task.

Over and under length answers

The Task Fulfilment criterion with seriously *under length* answers will probably attract a score of 1 or 0 as there will most likely be no or little expansion of the topic.

Answers which are seriously *over length* are awarded one mark less for the Task Fulfilment criterion than would otherwise have been awarded.

Writing - Tasks

Expert Level – (C1)

Writing 1: respond appropriately to a given input to produce a formal response for an intended public audience 150-200 words

Writing 2: produce a personal letter, a narrative or descriptive composition 250-300 words

Writing –Marking

CEFR Overall Written Production descriptor C1	Can write clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects. Can underline the relevant salient issues, expand and support points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and round off with an appropriate conclusion.
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CEFR descriptors related to assessment criteria

	Task Fulfilment	Grammar	Vocabulary	Structure
C1	Can write clear, detailed, well-structured and developed descriptions and imaginative texts in an assured personal, natural style appropriate to the reader in mind.	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; occasional errors in grammar, collocations and idioms.	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say. The flexibility in style and tone is somewhat limited.	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured text, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

Marking Writing Part 1

Writing a neutral or formal response to a written, graphic or visual input for a public audience:
150-200 words.

Public Version Mark scheme C1 - Part 1				
	Task Fulfilment	Grammar	Vocabulary	Structure
3 First Class Pass	Fully and appropriately satisfies the demands of the task, with good expansion & support.	Extensive range of grammar used with clarity, assurance and precision	Extensive range of vocabulary used with clarity, assurance and precision.	Very few if any errors of coherence, structure or punctuation.
2 Pass	Mainly satisfies the demands of the task, with adequate expansion of the topic.	Adequate range of grammar used, with no impeding errors.	Adequate range of vocabulary used, with no impeding errors.	Cohesive & coherent text adequately using a wide range of linguistic devices. Punctuation errors are difficult to spot & do not impede communication.
1 Narrow Fail	Partially satisfies the demands of the task, with little expansion of the topic.	Relatively narrow range of grammar used, with some impeding errors.	Relatively narrow range of vocabulary used, with some impeding errors.	Attempts to use linguistic devices though not always consistent. Errors, including punctuation, make the text difficult to follow.
0 Fail	Does not satisfy the demands of the task, with no expansion of the topic OR off topic.	Only a rudimentary range of grammar used. Many errors, often difficult to follow.	Only a rudimentary range of vocabulary used. Many errors, often difficult to follow.	Lacks cohesion and/or uses linguistic devices inappropriately. Punctuation errors make the text almost impossible to follow.

Marking Writing Part 2

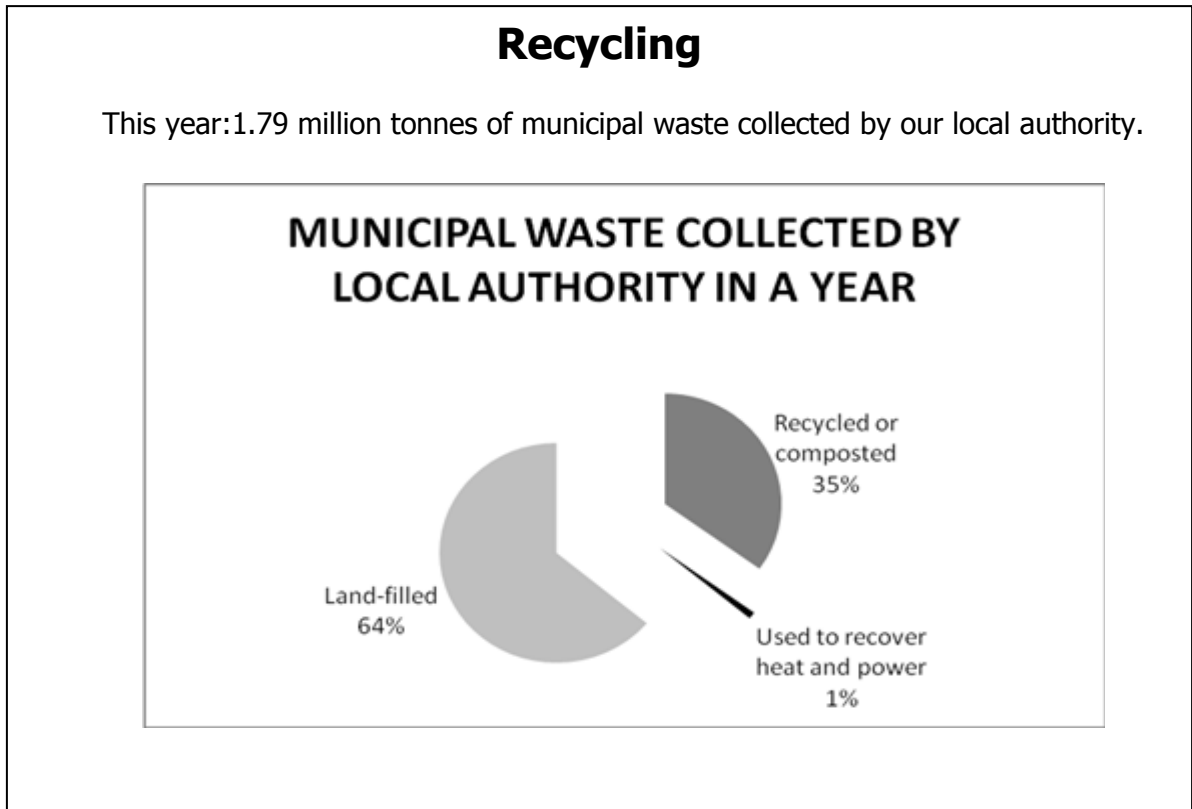
Free writing to produce a text using informal language: 250-300 words.

Public Version Mark scheme C1 - Part 2				
	Task Fulfilment	Grammar	Vocabulary	Structure
3 First Class Pass	Fully and appropriately satisfies the demands of the task, with good expansion & support.	Extensive range of grammar used with clarity, assurance and precision.	Extensive range of vocabulary used with clarity, assurance and precision.	Very few if any errors of coherence, structure or punctuation.
2 Pass	Mainly satisfies the demands of the task, with adequate expansion of the topic.	Adequate range of grammar used, with no impeding errors.	Adequate range of vocabulary used, with no impeding errors.	Cohesive & coherent text adequately using a wide range of linguistic devices. Punctuation errors are difficult to spot & do not impede communication.
1 Narrow Fail	Partially satisfies the demands of the task, with little expansion of the topic.	Relatively narrow range of grammar used, with some impeding errors.	Relatively narrow range of vocabulary used, with some impeding errors.	Attempts to use linguistic devices though not always consistent. Errors, including punctuation make the text difficult to follow.
0 Fail	Does not satisfy the demands of the task, with no expansion of the topic OR off topic.	Only a rudimentary range of grammar used. Many errors, often difficult to follow.	Only a rudimentary range of vocabulary used. Many errors, often difficult to follow.	Lacks cohesion and/or uses linguistic devices inappropriately. Punctuation errors make the text almost impossible to follow.

Sample answers and scores with examiner's comments

C1 Expert Writing Part 1

You have seen this information in your local newspaper about recycling.



Write a **letter** to your local authority to:

- comment on their recycling performance
- persuade them to recycle more
- give your ideas about what they should do
- explain why you think they should do this.

Write between 150 and 200 words.

Sample answer 1

Dear Madam/Sir,

I was pleased to see your report on municipal waste collection released recently, as I have long been interested in the data you published. It was also great to see that the percentage of land-filled waste is lower compared to other regions and I was particularly glad to see that the utilisation of waste to recover heat and power has at least been started even if its proportion is still negligible in the overall treatment of waste.

It is my firm conviction that the proportion of recycled waste needs to grow during the coming year(s) with shrinking the amount of land-filled waste quantities – to avoid the detrimental effect this latter has on the health conditions of the local population. Due to this I would like to propose that you involve locally based companies in decision making, since they are likely to have a stake in maintaining a clean local environment while eager to utilise recycled raw materials for their manufacturing processes.

It is imperative that you take my proposal into serious consideration, because the growing number of illnesses caused by toxic waste in the soil increases the municipality's social security expenditures, while ruining the lives of local families.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Paole

Score

Task Fulfilment	Grammar	Vocabulary	Structure	Total
3	3	3	2	11

Examiner's comments

All content points are adequately covered and are well organized, although the linking of the paragraphs could be better. There are quite a lot of ideas and while some of these are supported better than others, the letter reads well on the whole. Register and format are appropriate to the purpose of the task. The candidate demonstrates a good range of structure and vocabulary and the script has a positive effect on the reader.

Sample answer 2

Dear Sirs,

I am writing this letter concerning the article, which was published in our local newspaper last monday. I was expecting a report about recycling for a long time because I think that it is important to live in a clean and healthy world. It is also very easy because every family can help by dividing their rubbish. Every family should do this and they should be strongly controlled, otherwise a fine has to be paid. The concept of recycling should be thought at school. People have to understand the importance and necessity of cleanliness. If things happen differently in twenty years we will live among garbage. I find that you have don good work because I know that other towns do not recycle anything. Although I have to say that I was surprised because I thought that a small town such as Aston recycle more than what I have observed in your report.

Yours faithfully

Claudia Maroso

Score

Task Fulfilment	Grammar	Vocabulary	Structure	Total
2	2	2	2	8

Examiner's comments

The first and most substantial part of the letter is about the importance of selective collection of garbage and recycling which covers only one of the four content points. Little information is given regarding the recycling performance of the local authority. The reasoning is done with simplistic arguments and basic language. The final two sentences commenting on the central issue include fairly contradictory views (you have don good work, I thought ... Aston recycle more). The script includes mistakes in spelling and grammar (monday, thought).

Sample answer 3

Dear Mr. Rossi,

I'm writing to you regarding recycling because nowadays it is one of the most important topics of our life. Recycling is a way of turning old stuff into new stuff, of changing used house hold materials be throw away into the products we buy and use lots of things we consider trash can be reproduced into new products and used again: plastic bottles, newspapers, soft drink cans, jam jars and many more. Recycling is collecting, reproducing, marketing and using these materials. Making new plastic containers from old plastic bottles is a good example of recycling.

Plastic containers can also be turned into stuffing for pillows, or made into car dash boards.

It is important to recycle because recycling makes sense!

To slow down the rate at which we use landfills, to conserve natural resources, and to reduce manufacturing pollutants and save energy.

When we throw things into the trash, we add to the amount of materials going into landfills.

Recycling is important as a way to save energy. For examples, recycling aluminium takes only 5% of the energy needed to make aluminium from new material.

Recycling an aluminium can saves enough electricity to operate a tv for three hours!

Lost of things can be recycled, paper, cans, plastic can all be recycled.

Remember to store your recyclables in the cabage or in some other safe dry area.

Keep collecting them and when you set them outside your house or on the pavement or you drop them off at a recycling center.

I look forward to receiving a reply.

Thank you for your time.

Yours faithfully,

Michel Zilli

Score

Task Fulfilment	Grammar	Vocabulary	Structure	Total
0	2	2	1	5

Examiner's comments

The task is completely misinterpreted. Although it looks like a letter it reads like an essay on recycling and also exceeds the required length. Some sentences ("Remember to store your recyclables...") are definitely addressed to the general public instead of the local authority. The grammar range is adequate though with some errors ("materials be throw away") that occasionally make reading difficult. Sentence boundaries are not always clearly indicated and there is little cohesion between the ideas listed at the end.

Sample answers and scores with examiner's comments

C1 Expert Writing Part 2

You recently spent a night camping in a forest and found the experience unnerving. Write a **letter** to a friend, evaluating your experience and suggesting why you may have reacted in the way in which you did. Write between 250 and 300 words.

Sample answer 1

Dear Bob,

I hope you're well, I'm fine and I'm relaxing after having spent a terrible weekend at the camp with one of my friends.

At the moment I've some free time so I have decided to write to you because I want to tell you what happened during the weekend.

It was the first year we attended the camping site in fact we bought all the usual things you need when you go camping (flash light, disposable camera, sunscreen, bug spray, etc.) so we wouldn't have had any problems but all was useless because we had to face a lot of problems.

First of all, when we arrived there we discovered that the camp we had booked wasn't as we expected because the ground was very dirty and the services advertised were not present.

Anyway, we started to put up our tent but unfortunately we saw a hole in it, so during the night we couldn't sleep very well because it was cold.

To solve this type of problem we needed a blanket but it was the only thing we had forgotten at home. The next day we had a walk in the forest and we met a terrible wolf who wanted to eat us and immediately we ran away.

At the end of the day we wanted to go out to have dinner because near the camp there was a special restaurant, where you could eat particular steak by Bryan unfortunately got the temperature.

For this, we decided to go home and during the travel our car broke down because of a problem with the engine in fact the crankshaft was broken.

To include, before leaving for a campsite I want to give you some advice to plan your perfect weekend so you'll not have any kind of problems and you'll have a lot of fun.

First of all, remember to ask someone if the camp is a hospitable place without rubbish, check your tent and check if there are any holes in it, bring a blanket with you to protect from the cold air and above all check the engine so you could avoid a lot of trouble.

I have to go now but write to me soon, because I want to know how your experience will be.

With love

Michel

Score

Task Fulfilment	Grammar	Vocabulary	Structure	Total
2	3	3	2	10

Examiner's comments

Although the candidate seems to have dealt with the content points, there are just a few routine problems mentioned (and an unrealistic adventure with a terrible wolf). There is no discussion of the reasons why they may have reacted the way they did although the task required that. Moreover, the third part goes off the point giving advice to the friend even though the rubric never suggested that. Therefore the candidate loses a point on content. On the positive side, the candidate uses an extensive range of grammar structures with precision (including the past perfect) and wide range of vocabulary with occasional (surprising) mistakes. There are some well-built complex sentences along with some clumsy structures where the candidate is trying to cramp too much information into one sentence (because of a problem with the engine in fact the crankshaft ...)

Sample answer 2

Dear Matt,

I heard you are going to go on camping trip next summer. If I were you, I wouldn't go.

I'm writing to you because I want to tell you an experience in a campsite.

It was terrible. I spent a night camping in a forest in Croatia two months ago.

That campsite was a natural campsite: it means you had to sleep in the forest with every type of animals. I slept in my tent. I was alone and during the night I was scared by everything. There was a strong wind that moved trees. I was very scared.

I was hosted by a friend of mine but she obviously slept in her own house.

I heard also lots of noises by animals such as birds, insects such as scorpions and bats.

If I were you I wouldn't go in tent because you should be more protect.

I suggest to bring some books in order to sleep well. In the middle of the night I woke up put down my tent and I slep into my car. There I felt safer thahn in the tent. I think that I will go on camping if I have a friend and if I can choose one house.

My experience was unnerving and I think I will never go on camping in the forest alone. My parents had told me that camping is particular but I didn't think so.

I hope you will have a better experience than mine. Moreover I hope you will change those palce. It was boring because it was too far from the centre of town.

Take care,

Elisa

Score

Task Fulfilment	Grammar	Vocabulary	Structure	Total
2	1	2	2	7

Examiner's comments

This text starts as an ambitious attempt. In the first part of the text the candidate tries to give clear justification why the experience turned out to be unnerving. The second part of the script, however, lacks a clear line of thought and coherence and the mixture of ideas with a number of mistakes (e.g. you should be more protect, I slep, you can change those palce) result in a weak conclusion.

Sample answer 3

Hi Monica,

How are you?

I'm a little bit nervous because the last week I went with my boyfriend on a campsite and it was a horrible experience.

I went on a campsite near the bear mountain and first of all when I arrived, the secretary didn't have my reservation.

Secondly I had another problem with my room because was dirty and full of dirt from any years ago. Another problem of the campsite in general is that you don't have your privacy and I don't want that other people can see me in my bad moments.

Finally in this campsite there was often the possibility to see bears doing your daily walk. So if you want to go on a campsite I'll give you some advice: if you have the possibility you must to choose another campsite (also because I remember that was faraway from the centre, so there was only animals and a lot of green).

Then if you have scared about animals you can look for another campsite more clean, because where I went, in my room there was also spider and snakes.

I hope that you don't laught about my new experience but I'm sure of one thing: I don't go never a campsite.

Write me soon!! (or call me)

A lot of kisses

Sophie

P.S. I hate the campsite!!! For my next trip I want an hotel with an extra room and a swimmingpool on the outside. ☺

Score

Task Fulfilment	Grammar	Vocabulary	Structure	Total
1	1	1	1	4

Examiner's comments

Half of the text is off the point giving advice to the friend for their upcoming camping holiday. Another indication of a misunderstanding is the description of a dirty room (annoying but not unnerving). Even simple grammar structures are inaccurately used (I don't go never a campsite). Vocabulary is simplistic for the level. Although the candidate uses several linking words, an actual logical link is sometimes missing and, consequently the text lacks cohesion (possibility to see bears ... So if you want to go on a campsite I'll give you some advice).