



# Skills for Life

## Writing Entry 3 Examination Report

2011 – Test 106

## Skills for Life Writing Examination Report: Entry 3

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This report is based on candidate performance on one version of the Skills for Life Writing Entry 3 tests in 2010/11.

The report is intended as an aid to teachers and colleges in preparing candidates for future Cambridge ESOL Skills for Life Writing tests. It includes a number of sample candidate answers accompanied by examiner comments.

### Test 106

The three tasks in this test are: an email to a friend about a trip, a letter to a landlord about problems in a flat, and a college writing task about a hobby/activity.

There are 36 marks available on the paper: 9 for Task 1, 12 for Task 2 and 15 for Task 3. The breakdown of marks available for each assessment focus (Text, Sentence and Word) is shown below.

	Text	Sentence	Word	Total
<b>Task 1</b>	3	6	0	9
<b>Task 2</b>	6	3	3	12
<b>Task 3</b>	6	6	3	15
<b>Total</b>	15	15	6	36

Scores for all three focuses were very similar.

#### Task 1 Email to friend about trip

**Text focus:** The majority of candidates achieved Band 3. Top-band answers typically expanded point 2, and achieved a friendly and enthusiastic tone via a casual conversational style. They were also well organised through effective use of sequence markers and paragraphing. There were relatively few weak answers, which were characterised by insufficient detail and lack of coherence.

**Sentence focus:** The majority of candidates achieved at least Band 2. Better answers showed customary structural control of tenses, effective use of relative clauses, and appropriate suggestion language. Band 2 answers occasionally lacked verb-noun agreement and clear punctuation, and there were sometimes problems with more complex sentences, resulting in isolated loss of clarity. Weak answers were characterised by significant basic error, such as omission of verbs, or high error frequency which impeded meaning.

#### Task 2 Letter to landlord

**Text focus:** This was, in general, a good task which allowed candidates to draw on their own experiences. Top-band answers were well expanded, especially when describing the problem, had appropriate complaint letter tone and format, and helpful textual sequencing and paragraphing. Middle-band answers offered a only a brief description of the problem, and often lacked a close. There was also occasional inconsistency in register. There were very few weak answers.

**Sentence focus:** Better answers were characterised by good use of complex sentences, linkers and modal forms. Middle-band answers communicated the overall message but occasionally lacked clarity when attempting more complex structures. Band 1 answers were less common, but contained frequent errors of omission (pronouns and auxiliaries), and/or impeded meaning.

Word focus: The majority of candidates scored well here, being able to draw on a number of familiar words to describe the problems. Generally, misspellings remained intelligible, apart from at Band 1, where there were also frequent misspellings of functional words.

### **Task 3 Writing about a hobby/activity**

Text focus: The task dealt with a familiar theme and was generally well addressed with few omissions. The majority of candidates scored well; they developed each point fully, were well organised and had a helpful, contextualising frame. Band 2 answers were briefer and/or omitted one or two of the content points. Weaker candidates offered very limited information, in some cases due to incomplete answers.

Sentence focus: The majority of candidates achieved Band 2, though there were a noticeable number of Band 1 answers. Strong candidates showed good control of compound sentences, tenses and conjunctions. Middle-band answers showed less consistent control and range of tenses and attempts at complexity sometimes led to lack of clarity. Weaker answers lacked basic structural control and were often poorly punctuated.

Word focus: The vast majority of candidates were able to use vocabulary relevant to the topic of hobbies. Better candidates had few misspellings and used a wider range of adjectives. Middle-band answers contained some minor misspellings. Weak answers often contained misspellings of basic words, and misspellings that impeded meaning, even in context.

### **Recommendations for Candidate Preparation**

All Cambridge ESOL Skills for Life tests are based on the *Adult ESOL Core Curriculum* and cover all the Basic Skills Standards in each mode at each level. Therefore, by following the *Adult ESOL Core Curriculum*, teachers will be preparing their students for the tests. Candidates will benefit from being reminded of the following Dos and Don'ts:

#### **Do**

- Do read all the task instructions carefully.
- Do make sure you know all the task types by looking at practice tests.
- Do make sure that your handwriting is clear and easy to read.
- Do read the task carefully and plan an answer which addresses all the content points of the task. Try to develop each point fully.
- Do consider who you are writing to and try to write in an appropriate style and tone.
- Do think carefully about whether the task requires you to ask, describe, invite, etc and make sure you do this in your answer.
- Do allow time to check through what you have written.

#### **Don't**

- Don't use a pencil.
- Don't worry if you make a few grammatical errors in tasks. Communicating the message is the most important thing.
- Don't write answers which are much shorter or longer than the recommended number of words.

- Don't spend too long on one answer.
- Don't write a full, rough copy of your answer. Just write brief notes to plan your answer.

## **Sample Scripts**

Sample scripts are provided for each task in the question paper. Please note that it is not possible to reproduce the candidate answers in the original handwriting, and so any references in the commentaries to quality of handwriting will not be reflected in the samples provided.

## Entry 3 (Test 106) Sample Scripts and Commentaries

### Entry 3 Script A Task 1

(About 15 minutes)

You recently went on a trip for two weeks. While you were away, your friend, Ken, looked after your home.

When you return, you decide to write an email to Ken. In the email:

- thank Ken for helping you
- tell Ken what you did on your trip
- suggest a time to meet Ken.

Write about 60 words.

<b>To:</b>	ken61@coolpost.com
<b>Subject:</b>	my trip

Hi!

How Are you? Thank you for your help it was really impotent for me go somewhere. I enjoyed very much. Because you looked after my home so I had confidence. I will tell you what we did, we went to musum, cinema, restaurant, we met new people.

Can I ask you to go out together to chat and have something to there. so let me know when we can meet to make a disson.

I hope to see you soon

from hamid

**Entry 3 Script A Task 1**

Commentary		Band	Mark
Text focus	Candidate addresses three points, although point 3 is confusing.	2	2
Sentence focus	Sufficient control of grammar for message to be communicated. Isolated loss of clarity. Evidence of ability to construct compound sentences.	2	3
Word focus		<b>Not assessed in this task</b>	

**Entry 3 Script B**  
**Task 1**

**(About 15 minutes)**

You recently went on a trip for two weeks. While you were away, your friend, Ken, looked after your home.

When you return, you decide to write an email to Ken. In the email:

- thank Ken for helping you
- tell Ken what you did on your trip
- suggest a time to meet Ken.

Write about 60 words.

<b>To:</b>	ken61@coolpost.com
<b>Subject:</b>	my trip

Hi Ken!

I just came back from my holidays.

Thank you for looked after my home. Was everything ok? How was my dog? I hope he didn't make troubles for you.

I went to Brazil. It's lovely country. I met nice people and the weather was fantastic. My and my friend rented a room by the seaside. Every day we watched sunrise. I really enjoy it. I bought nice present for you. I want show you photos from this trip.

What are you doing in weekend? Shall we meet if you are off.

I'm waiting for your replay. Hope see you soon.

Thank you for help. All the best.

Elisa

**Entry 3 Script B Task 1**

Commentary		Band	Mark
Text focus	Points covered. Paragraphed. Appropriate opening and closing formulae.	3	3
Sentence focus	Simple conjunctions used to construct some compounds. Punctuation mostly accurate. A lot of simple sentences.	2	4
Word focus		<b>Not assessed in this task</b>	

**Entry 3 Script C**  
**Task 2**

**(About 20 minutes)**

You are renting a flat from your landlord, Mr Martin. There are some problems in the flat.

Write a letter to Mr Martin. In the letter, describe the problems and tell Mr Martin what you would like him to do.

Write about 90 words. You do not need to write the address or the date.

Hi Mr Martin
How are you? I am you Amir
I have a problem in the flat. problem is boylur is dousen't work I can't sweeh
on the boylur house is to soo much could. I need to Repair quickly I had
soo many Problem in the flat anther Problem is your gas cooker douse woke
proparly. I cant use kitchen shink some time it is blocked.
I live in doun stairs. Who live in up stairs they make us nosye every time they
got one dog two cat's I cant sleep for them I need to sort at out emidetly.
See you soon.
Ali
North Street

**Entry 3 Script C Task 2**

Commentary		Band	Mark
Text focus	Response covers the point about problems with some expansion. Asking the landlord to respond is only minimally addressed. Some organisation, opening and closing formulae.	2	4
Sentence focus	Sentence grammar sufficiently controlled for most of the message to be conveyed. Meaning impeded on occasions. Punctuation inconsistent.	1	1
Word focus	Some illegibility. Some common words spelled incorrectly, e.g. 'kitchen shink'. Letter formation impedes.	1	1

**Entry 3 Script D**  
**Task 2**

**(About 20 minutes)**

You are renting a flat from your landlord, Mr Martin. There are some problems in the flat.

Write a letter to Mr Martin. In the letter, describe the problems and tell Mr Martin what you would like him to do.

Write about 90 words. You do not need to write the address or the date.

Hi Martin

I am writing to tell you about the flat as I rented. There is a  
broke window in the bathroom, At the moment. I can't take a shower  
which means people can see through the window. Also it is very cold  
and it isn't safe. I am worried that my child falls down from it. So I hope  
you come to check and find someone else to fix it as soon as possible.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sinerely

Yumi

**Entry 3 Script D Task 2**

Commentary		Band	Mark
Text focus	Letter covers both points with expansion. Lacks paragraphing, and opening and closing formulae do not work together. Lack of appropriate letter format brings it into Band 2.	2	4
Sentence focus	Sentence grammar sufficiently controlled for message to be communicated, with isolated losses of clarity, e.g. '...which means people can see through the window.' Full stops used consistently as sentence boundaries.	2	2
Word focus	Vocabulary appropriate to task. Handwriting clear and legible. Spelling accurate.	3	3

**Entry 3 Script E**  
**Task 3**

**(About 25 minutes)**

In class you are talking about hobbies and activities. Your teacher asks you to write about one hobby or one activity you enjoy doing.

Write about:

- what you do
- where you do it
- how you got interested in it
- why other people should try it.

Write about 110 words.

My favourite free time is surfing the net. I used to surf whenever I got home. I always chat with my friends way back home and do some designing as well. Obviously, I do it at home. I got interested in it because I'm totally bored and stressed in this country. It makes me feel happy and not alone. Actually, my laptop is my best friend here. I got interested because there is a website that I can find a new friends and be close with them. You should try doing it because It can ease your boredom and make you feel happy. there's a lot of things to discover by surfing the net. You can search for the things which is unfamiliar to you or you didn't know. I'm so lucky that I have this kind of free time.

**Entry 3 Script E Task 3**

Commentary		Band	Mark
Text focus	Covers four points with expansion. Appropriate register, and text is coherent. Only one paragraph, but has introduction and conclusion.	3	<b>5</b>
Sentence focus	Shows evidence of ability to construct compound sentences. Grammar is sufficiently controlled. Adjectives used effectively. Some language above level.	3	<b>6</b>
Word focus	As per descriptor, some vocabulary above level, e.g. 'stressed', 'ease my boredom'.	3	<b>3</b>

**Entry 3 Script F**  
**Task 3**

**(About 25 minutes)**

In class you are talking about hobbies and activities. Your teacher asks you to write about one hobby or one activity you enjoy doing.

Write about:

- what you do
- where you do it
- how you got interested in it
- why other people should try it.

Write about 110 words.

*My favourite free time is go out with friends, and have a fun.*

*sametime we go to the shisha place, and smoke shisha. sametime we go to eat meal. I play football as well but not all the time.*

*I smoke shisha in sout ealing. same of my friend told me to try it, and I try it so that is How I got interested. I play football in southall park with friends.*

**Entry 3 Script F Task 3**

Commentary		Band	Mark
Text focus	Covers three points with some repetition and little expansion. Lacks paragraphing. Introduction but no conclusion.	2	<b>3</b>
Sentence focus	Evidence of compound sentences. Sentence grammar is sufficiently controlled. Capital letters are not consistently used as sentence boundaries.	2	<b>3</b>
Word focus	Handwriting is legible. Most common words spelt correctly. Most letters formed to be unambiguous. NB. Band 3 despite missing capital letters for place names.	3	<b>3</b>