



# Skills for Life

## Writing Entry 3 Examination Report

2008 – Test 077

## 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 2007/08.

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 077

The three tasks in this test were a letter to some friends declining an invitation, an email recommending a restaurant to a friend and a description of a festival or celebration for a teacher.

There were 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
Task 1	3	3	3	9
Task 2	6	6	0	12
Task 3	6	6	3	15
Total	15	15	6	36

Candidates scored most highly on Word focus and found Sentence focus the most challenging.

#### Task 1 Letter to Anne and Peter

This task was well answered by most candidates. For Text focus, the majority of learners were able to gain Band 3. Candidates were able to sequence ideas straightforwardly. More effective answers achieved a friendly and apologetic tone. Some candidates put the letter in the past tense, and weaker candidates occasionally misinterpreted the task by making the invitation themselves. In the Sentence assessment focus, good answers used appropriate preposition + ing structures in the opening apology, as well as appropriate use of the conjunction 'because' to make complex sentences. Most candidates were able to use a 'future time' marker such as 'will' or 'going to', though the latter was not always appropriate to the context. Sentence boundaries were generally observed, fitting the basic sentence prompts given in the bullet points. Weaker answers generally demonstrated a lack of control when using more complex forms, or occasionally failed to identify appropriate sentence boundaries, both of which impeded meaning. For Word focus, most candidates were able to achieve at least Band 2; many were able to achieve Band 3. Good candidates were able to use a variety of lexis to describe feelings or reasons for not attending the meal. There was occasional illegibility or misspelling of basic words.

#### Task 2 E-mail to Oskar

This task was generally dealt with effectively by most candidates. In the Text assessment focus, most candidates addressed all the bullet points, with the latter two points overlapping in some answers. Better answers were often longer than the recommended word count indicating good expansion. Middle band answers lacked detail on some points. Weaker answers in the middle band tended to have poor sequencing of ideas. For Sentence focus, most candidates were able to achieve Band 2. Band 2 and 3 answers often demonstrated good use of past and present simple. Effective use of adverbials was also present in better answers. The question did not seem to elicit much use of complex linkers other than basic ones such as 'and', and 'but'. Good candidates used a variety of adjectives to describe food and prices. Weaker answers showed insufficient grammatical control – typically omitting pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and articles – or lacked basic punctuation, which made answers appear somewhat incoherent.

### **Task 3 Description of Festival/Celebration**

This task produced a wide range of marks. For Text focus, most candidates were able to address all bullet points adequately. Better answers expanded appropriately on what they did and why they enjoyed the festival, and were organised in effective paragraphs with an opening and closing. Few candidates answered the question with just one paragraph. Middle band answers were sometimes shorter, less well organised, or lacked cohesion when using time references, making the narrative confusing. Occasionally candidates interpreted the festival as a future event, or offered a more general description of a celebration. For Sentence focus, few candidates achieved the top band as they were unable to maintain sufficient control over past and present simple. Better middle band answers used tenses accurately and were properly punctuated. Linkers were fairly basic but were generally used appropriately. Weaker answers were often too short, lacked control of internal grammar, or contained a number of short sentences. In the Word assessment focus, most candidates were able to achieve Band 3. Better candidates demonstrated a good range. Middle band candidates sometimes misspelt basic words, but overall lexis was spelt appropriately, especially with regard to clothes. Most candidates wrote legibly and used upper and lower case appropriately.

### **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 can benefit from following the Dos and Don'ts from the Skills for Life Teaching Resource website:

[http://www.cambridgeesol.org/teach/SfL/Entry\\_1-3\\_Writing/About%20the%20paper/dos\\_donts.htm](http://www.cambridgeesol.org/teach/SfL/Entry_1-3_Writing/About%20the%20paper/dos_donts.htm)

### **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 077) Sample Scripts and Commentaries

### Entry 3 Script A Task 1

(About 15 minutes)

Your friends, Anne and Peter, have sent you a letter inviting you to have a meal in their new home. Unfortunately, you can't go.

Write a letter to Anne and Peter

- thanking them for the invitation
- explaining why you can't go
- suggesting another time for you to visit them in their new home.

Write about 60 words. You do not need to write the address or the date.

Hello Anne and Peter

Thank you for inviting me your house

I'm very happy your bought new house.

I hope everything is okey. How is your son and your daughter? I hope they are okey and how are you? I find and my husband is okey but my son so ill.

I thank you invite me your house but I can't come ~~with~~ my son need to see a doctor if you want to any day I visit their house I want to next week if you okey can you call me what they you want me I visit you. I hope my son get better I'm very worried about him.

Thank you for writing me

See you soon

Gulbeyaz

(Total: 9 marks)

**Entry 3 Script A Task 1**

Commentary		Band	Mark
Text focus	All 3 content points are addressed with some expansion. Tone is friendly. Organisation and cohesion is adequate.	3	<b>3</b>
Sentence focus	Sentences are sufficiently controlled and meaning is communicated. While there is isolated lack of clarity, meaning remains clear, in spite of lack of punctuation in paragraph 2. There is sufficient control over statements, negatives and questions.	2	<b>2</b>
Word focus	Can spell the majority of words used in daily life. There are some common words misspelt or misused, e.g. 'I find', 'okey'.	2	<b>2</b>

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

**(About 15 minutes)**

Your friends, Anne and Peter, have sent you a letter inviting you to have a meal in their new home. Unfortunately, you can't go.

Write a letter to Anne and Peter

- thanking them for the invitation
- explaining why you can't go
- suggesting another time for you to visit them in their new home.

Write about 60 words. You do not need to write the address or the date.

Hi, Anne and Peter,  
I received your invitation. I'm very happy because you are giving me this opportunity to now your new home.

My dear, I can't come because my mother is sick and actually I'm in hospital I'm so sorry by that. I need ~~with~~ to stay with her in hospital.

I think, I'm going to visit you another time when my mother will be right. I will give you a call.

Thank you again.

your Friend  
LAB.

**(Total: 9 marks)**

**Entry 3 Script B Task 1**

Commentary		Band	Mark
Text focus	All points are addressed 'I am very happy' is sufficient for point 1 and 'when my mother will be right' for point 3. Three distinct paragraphs are given. Suitably appropriate register and format including opening and closing.	3	<b>3</b>
Sentence focus	Sentence grammar is generally accurate and natural language is in evidence, e.g. 'you are giving me this opportunity'. Full stops and capital letters are used as sentence boundaries.	3	<b>3</b>
Word focus	The majority of words are spelt correctly. The vocabulary is appropriate, e.g. 'received'. Upper and lower case are used appropriately and handwriting is legible.	3	<b>3</b>

## Entry 3 Script C

### Task 2

(About 20 minutes)

You have received the following email from your friend, Oskar, who lives near you.

<b>From:</b>	Oskar@alo.com
<b>Subject:</b>	a good restaurant
Some members of my family are coming for a visit soon, and I want to take them out for a nice meal. Do you know a good restaurant somewhere near us?	

Write an email to Oskar. In your email:

- tell him about a local restaurant you have been to
- describe your last visit there
- say what you particularly like about the restaurant.

Write about 80 words.

<b>To:</b>	Oskar@alo.com
<b>Subject:</b>	Re: a good restaurant
<p>Hi Oskar.</p> <p>I had your email today, wich is you ask me about a good restaurant, I think the restaurant I have been, is not to far from here, and the food is quit good, and their service is nice as well, last week I went with my family to have a meal, but if you want some more. Juice you have to pay. but I prefer to go there, is very nice place and your. Visiter they will like it I hope so.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">best wishes Nour</p>	

(Total: 12 marks)

**Entry 3 Script C Task 2**

Commentary		Band	Mark
Text focus	Addresses all 3 points, but there is some lack of detail in points 1 and 2. Organisation is adequate. Register is appropriate. Has opening and closing formulae.	2	<b>4</b>
Sentence focus	Evidence of ability to construct compound sentences despite punctuation errors. Sentence grammar is sufficiently controlled.	2	<b>3</b>
Word focus		<b>Not assessed in this task</b>	

## Entry 3 Script D

### Task 2

(About 20 minutes)

You have received the following email from your friend, Oskar, who lives near you.

<b>From:</b>	Oskar@alo.com
<b>Subject:</b>	a good restaurant
Some members of my family are coming for a visit soon, and I want to take them out for a nice meal. Do you know a good restaurant somewhere near us?	

Write an email to Oskar. In your email:

- tell him about a local restaurant you have been to
- describe your last visit there
- say what you particularly like about the restaurant.

Write about 80 words.

<b>To:</b>	Oskar@alo.com
<b>Subject:</b>	Re: a good restaurant
<p>Dear Oskar,</p> <p>I have been recently to a restaurant near your house. It is an Italian Restaurant called "Toscana". I went there with my husband, and we really enjoyed the food. We had a delicious pasta with a tasty sauce, vegetables, red wine and a typical italian dessert. I particularly like the warm environment in that restaurant: it is elegant, has a beautiful decoration and you can listening to a nice and romantic italian music. The customer service is very good as well, and the prices are reasonable. I strongly recommend you that restaurant, I am sure you and your family will enjoy it.</p> <p>Best, Silvana.</p>	

(Total: 12 marks)

**Entry 3 Script D Task 2**

Commentary		Band	Mark
Text focus	Text is coherent and covers all three points fully. Register and format are appropriate.	3	<b>6</b>
Sentence focus	There is evidence of ability to construct compound sentences with good linking and use of punctuation, e.g. 'we had a delicious pasta with a tasty sauce'.	3	<b>6</b>
Word focus		<b>Not assessed in this task</b>	

## Entry 3 Script E

### Task 3

(About 25 minutes)

As part of your English course, your teacher has asked you to write about a festival or celebration you have been to.

Write a description of the festival or celebration, saying

- why it took place
- what you did
- what clothes you wore
- what you enjoyed about it.

Write about 120 words.

#### Description of the festival

Because my house is too little we're not fitting in there we need to go to some large place.

I want to invite my friends and family about 20 people. I ready cook, drink and some fruit, we're wore new clothes and we give to present to each other. because my festival end of this month (Ramazan bayrami) I enjoy. for my Easter coming because we're prefer some Siwwite and chocolate and food I prefer for my guest and we listen to music, watch television and some people tell a story about festival and we're call we family because my family in the Turkey and I sent to some present to my sister and my brother.

(Total: 15 marks)

### Entry 3 Script E Task 3

Commentary		Band	Mark
Text focus	Answer addresses the main points but it is not clearly organised. There is little attention paid to the introduction and it lacks a conclusion. Answer lacks cohesion especially with regard to time references.	2	<b>3</b>
Sentence focus	There is a willingness to attempt compound sentences but there is an overall lack of control. Most of the message is conveyed but meaning is frequently impeded.	1	<b>2</b>
Word focus	Most words are spelt correctly. Errors in spelling remain intelligible in context. Handwriting is not always clear.	2	<b>2</b>

## Entry 3 Script F

### Task 3

(About 25 minutes)

As part of your English course, your teacher has asked you to write about a festival or celebration you have been to.

Write a description of the festival or celebration, saying

- why it took place
- what you did
- what clothes you wore
- what you enjoyed about it.

Write about 120 words.

In my country one day I went to the festival, in a town Which called Tamale. We celebrate this festival every year in July. We called it Yam festival.

We did this festival because every year when the yam comes to the harvest, So the farmers took the yam from the farm and sent it to the Chief of the town first and he cooked it and eat before everybody of the town eat it.

Before we did that we had to put on our curlture clothes and we took a fire wood which it lightered on fire and we lined up matching on the town street and sing a song in our language. We did all in a middle of the night.

After that we came back our homes and Cooked some of the yams and eat and drink before we brought the yam to the market to sell.

(Total: 15 marks)

### Entry 3 Script F Task 3

Commentary		Band	Mark
Text focus	Good expansion of 3 points and point 4 implied. Well organised and paragraphed. Coherent and appropriate register.	3	<b>5</b>
Sentence focus	Candidate shows ability to construct compound sentences, e.g. 'Before we did that we had to put on...'. Sentence grammar is controlled though use of past tense is a little inconsistent. Word order is controlled. Capital letters used at sentence boundaries.	3	<b>5</b>
Word focus	Despite some good spelling and range of vocabulary, e.g. 'lined up', legibility is quite poor in some cases.	2	<b>2</b>