

Cambridge IGCSE / IGCSE (9–1) English as a Second Language 0510/0511 \ 0993/0991 (for examination from 2024)

Writing a report

Overview

The purpose of a report is to give information and suggestions to the reader. Reports are a mixture of fact and opinion. The audience of the report is often someone in charge or a teacher, so the language and tone of the report tends to be more formal. A report may include headings.

Content

Content covers:

- Task fulfilment (i.e. whether the piece fulfills the task, how relevant the content is and an awareness of style, register, purpose and audience).
- Development of ideas (i.e. the detail/explanation provided).

Language

Language covers:

- Range (i.e. complexity of grammatical and lexical structures).
- Accuracy (i.e. the level of grammatical and lexical accuracy, the type of errors and whether these impede communication).
- Organisation (i.e. whether ideas are organised and sequenced effectively, the range of linking words/phrases and other cohesive devices).

Tips for writing a report

Language

- think about the audience that the report is for, e.g. the head teacher, organisers of an event, etc.
- the tone of the report should be impersonal and relatively formal
- your report should also be informative
- to make your report sound more formal, use the passive voice (e.g. 'no food had been provided', 'we were given plenty of information', 'the seats were damaged', etc.) and reported speech (e.g. 'most students said they would have liked to take part in more activities', etc.)
- include a range of topic related vocabulary.

Organisation

A report should be well-organised and clear. It often has headings to show the reader what information can be found in each section of the report. This helps the reader to locate the information they need more easily.

You should also link your ideas using appropriate, more formal sounding, linking words/phrases (e.g. in addition to that, finally, however, etc.).

Each paragraph should cover a different aspect of the report. A report often follows the following structure:

- Introduction – why you are writing the report, sometimes you can also add how you collected the information (e.g. from a survey).
- Findings – the positive and/or negative things you and other people have noticed.
- Conclusion – this should include a brief summary and your recommendations, solutions or suggestions.

Example task

This is an example of a **Paper 1 Exercise 6** task. We have annotated the question below with some **guidance** for candidates to help them prepare their answer and encourage them to focus on what the question is asking for. This information is not given to candidates in the examination.

Once you have read through the **task** and all the **instructions**, you should also read the **comments**. Before you start writing, **plan** how many paragraphs you will need and what ideas you want to include in each paragraph.

Your class recently took part in a one-day sports festival for local schools. The organisers want students' opinions about the festival, and you have been asked to write a report.

In your report, say what was enjoyable about the sports festival, and suggest how it could be improved.

Here are some comments from students in your class:

It was a chance to meet students from other schools.

There weren't many new sports to try.

I learned a lot about fitness.

We spent too much time listening to instructions.

Now write a report for the organisers of the sports festival.

The comments above may give you some ideas, and you should also use some ideas of your own.

Write about 120 to 160 words.

You will receive up to 6 marks for the content of your report and up to 9 marks for the language used.

The number of words is for guidance: write **about 120 to 160 words**. Paying attention to the guidance for word limits will help you to plan your time in the examination more effectively.

The organisers of the event are the intended **audience** for the report.

The **purpose** of this report is to write about a festival, what people enjoyed about it and suggest how it could be improved.

You can use some of the ideas from the **comments** in your report, but you should expand on them and/or include other **ideas of your own**.

The response to this question needs to be in the form of a **report** for the organisers of the event, so the **register** should be **formal**.

Example candidate response and examiner comments

Example Candidate Response – high	Examiner comments
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sports festival for local schools</i></p> <p>Introduction ①</p> <p>② <i>As requested, I have prepared a report about a sports festival my class attended last week. I have interviewed my classmates and my findings are presented below.</i></p> <p>Positive points</p> <p><i>Most students found the talks about fitness really useful. ③ They particularly liked the practical advice that was provided, for example, how to properly ④ warm up before exercising and which gyms offer reduced membership fees for students. However, the most popular part of the festival was the volleyball tournament between different schools. It was a good chance to meet new people and also to exchange tips on the best way to keep fit.</i></p> <p>Negative points</p> <p>⑤ <i>Nevertheless, some were disappointed as all sports and games offered were relatively mainstream and not new as promised by the organisers. Additionally, a few students felt one day wasn't long enough and some activities felt rushed.</i></p> <p>Suggestions</p> <p>⑥ <i>I therefore suggest allocating more time to the festival in the future. I would also recommend that a wider range of sports activities is provided next year.</i></p>	<p>① The candidate uses clear, relevant subheadings to show organisation and clarity.</p> <p>② The candidate introduces the topic and states how they collected the information for their report.</p> <p>③ The candidate expands on the idea from the prompt by providing examples of useful advice. This shows an excellent sense of purpose.</p> <p>④ The candidate uses a range of topic related vocabulary (e.g. 'warm up before exercising', 'gym... membership fees', 'tournament', etc.).</p> <p>⑤ The candidate's choice of linking words, phrases and grammatical structures are consistently appropriate for the style and register of a report.</p> <p>⑥ The candidate includes a concise conclusion and suggests how the festival could be improved in the future. The candidate links their suggestions to the negative points they highlighted in the previous paragraph.</p> <p>Mark for Content = 6 out of 6 Mark for Language = 8 out of 9 Total mark awarded = 14 out of 15</p>

How the candidate could have improved their answer

The example answer fulfils the task and shows excellent understanding of purpose and audience. The candidate uses some of the ideas from the prompts but these are well developed and clearly organised into paragraphs with consistently appropriate linking words. The use of subheadings also helps with the clarity of the organisation. The candidate shows very good awareness of the style and register required in a report. The appropriate choice of vocabulary (e.g. 'as requested', 'my findings are presented below.', 'nevertheless', 'additionally', etc.) and grammatical structures (e.g. 'advice that was provided') further enhances the appropriateness of a more formal tone. Despite using some less common vocabulary (e.g. 'tournament', 'mainstream', 'allocating', etc.) and a few more complex structures (e.g. 'it was a good chance to meet'), this was one of the weaker areas where the candidate could have improved. There is a high level of accuracy throughout.

Common mistakes

Candidates often write a report more like a summary and will just recount the events of the day or the place in a very simplistic manner. Candidates must remember that they are presenting their findings in order to suggest that something could be changed or improved. Therefore, they should not focus too much on the individual details of what they did or how things are, but should focus on what they discovered and how these discoveries have informed what they would like to happen next.

Another problem can be the use of sub-headings. Sub-headings should be used to make it clear to the reader what each section is about and what can be found in each one. Some candidates will use sub-headings which do not match the content of the paragraphs; they should be encouraged to reflect on how sub-headings can be used to show what the sections are about in a clear way.

Examination preparation

In class learners should practice writing reports, e.g. write a report about the facilities for young people in your local area and how they can be improved.

After brainstorming for ideas, planning and drafting is then completed. Learners then compose their own work. Final drafts can be shared with each other for help with proof-reading and peer evaluation. Learners can read some good examples aloud to the class for discussion and peer feedback.

Classroom activities

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Learning objectives	Suggested teaching activities
<p>AO2 Writing</p> <p>W1 communicate information, ideas and opinions</p> <p>W2 organise ideas into coherent text using a range of linking devices</p> <p>W3 use a range of appropriate grammatical structures and vocabulary</p> <p>W4 use appropriate register and style for the given purpose and audience</p>	<p>Writing strategies:</p> <p>Writing a report</p> <p>Learners are able to plan and draft writing.</p> <p>Learners are able to understand the purpose, audience and form of texts and use this in their own writing.</p> <p>Learners are able to use specific vocabulary to make suggestions and to report on their local area.</p> <p>Learners are able to organise their writing into a coherent structure that matches the appropriate</p>	<p>Starter: In pairs, learners list all the facilities for young people in their local area, e.g. youth clubs, social groups, leisure centres, gyms, parks. They discuss with another pair to decide which are their favourite facilities, and why.</p> <p>Extension (optional): Groups feedback to each other and decide which facilities as a class they value the most, backing up their ideas with reasons.</p> <p>Development: Learners mind-map ideas for ways the facilities for young people could be improved or what new facilities they would like to have.</p> <p>They should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• what kind of facilities they would like• why these facilities would be useful• who might want to use these facilities

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Learning objectives	Suggested teaching activities
	style and format of writing a report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why these facilities would help young people. <p>As part of this planning stage, suitable vocabulary for places and for making suggestions could be explored. Ensure that learners understand the target audience and the formality that this requires.</p> <p>Main task: Learners draft their report on the facilities in their local area and suggest ways that these facilities could be improved or developed. They should write in formal English and use subheadings if possible. Encourage learners to stay within the 120 to 160 word count.</p> <p>Plenary: Learners peer assess this work by reading each other's to help with proof-reading and suggestions for improvement.</p>

Useful resources

The **School Support Hub** at www.cambridgeinternational/support provides teachers with a wide range of practical resources, detailed guidance and innovative training and professional development so that you can give your learners the best possible preparation for Cambridge IGCSE.

Teaching and learning resources (for examination from 2024)

- Scheme of Work
- Writing a report
- Writing a review
- Writing an article
- Writing skills lesson plans
- Specimen Paper Answers
- Example Candidate Responses (January 2025)

Please note: The website links listed provide direct access to internet resources. Cambridge Assessment International Education is not responsible for the accuracy or content of information contained in these sites. The inclusion of a link to an external website should not be understood to be an endorsement of that website or the site's owners (or their products/services). The website pages were selected when this document was produced. Other aspects of the sites were not checked.

[B2 First](#) is a handbook for teachers preparing candidates for *Cambridge English Qualifications: B2 First*. Pdf and digital versions are available.

www.bbc.com/education/guides/z94sk7h/revision/4

This *BBC Bitesize* link could be a good starting point to thinking about structure of a report, and how to make suggestions.