

Sample writing examination task: Task type 1

The following is a transactional writing task (Type 1). The candidate must write a formal letter to the headmaster of a school and request information about the school in response to an advertisement.

You have a 10-year-old brother. Your parents would like to send him to an English-speaking school. They have read this advertisement in a Budapest newspaper:

British International School

- British international education for students aged 5 to 19
- Academic and personal development
- Foreign languages
- Social, cultural and sporting programmes

For more information, write to: Dr. Paul Gregg, Headmaster
Budapest, H-1113 Pasa u. 8.

Your parents have asked you to write a letter to the headmaster of the school. In your letter say:

- why you are writing

and ask about:

- the subjects taught in the school
- class sizes
- the school uniform
- the fee to pay.

Write a letter of about 100-120 words in an appropriate style. Do not write any dates or addresses.

Dear Dr. Gregg,

Rating scheme

Content points and requirements for raters

The following description of content points and requirements is specifically designed for the “British international school” task. Such a description is drafted for each task.

British International School

Content points

- introduction / purpose of writing
- asking about school subjects
- asking about class sizes
- asking about school uniform (if any)
- asking about fee
- closing formula

Requirements that raters should pay attention to

The candidates should:

- write a **formal** letter in about **100-120** words
- cover the content points
- use adequate paragraphing
- vary the structures of questions
- use appropriate style (formal and polite)
- use modal auxiliaries

Sample writing script

Script 0103

Dear Dr. Gregg,

I am writing to you, because I've read the advertisement of your school in a newspaper and I would like to know more about it. My ten-year old brother is supposed to attend an English speaking school.

I would like to know more about the subjects you teach in that school, which are the most popular with the students and what kind of other subjects you teach besides foreign languages.

I'm interested in how big the classes are and I would like to know if they have to wear a school uniform and if we should have it made or we can buy it in your school.

I have another important question: how much is the fee that we have to pay? Because we are not so wealthy and I would like to know if there's any chance to pay the it in parts. I'm looking forward to your answers.

Yours sincerely:

A.G.

(152 words)

MY MARKS:

Task achievement	Coherence and cohesion	Grammar	Vocabulary	Total

Final marks and justification: Script 0103

FINAL MARKS:

Task achievement	Coherence and cohesion	Grammar	Vocabulary	Total
6	6	7	7	26

JUSTIFICATION:

Task achievement

Most content points are elaborated. The one about class size is only mentioned briefly. The treatment of three content points include original and relevant ideas adding to the communicative value of the letter (*which [subjects] are the most popular with the students, if we should have [the school uniform] made or we can buy it in your school, because we are not so wealthy and I would like to know if there's any chance to pay the [fee] in parts*). A polite letter of request written in formal English except for three contracted forms and informal closing sentence.

Coherence and cohesion

The text shows good sentence and paragraph level cohesion, the text reads smoothly. It is divided logically into paragraphs. The last sentence should form a new paragraph. There is good sentence level cohesion: *I am writing to you, because I've read the advertisement of your school in a newspaper and I would like to know more about it*. Incorrect use of *because* in the last paragraph to link two sentences. Unclear reference *they* in the third paragraph. In the third paragraph there should also be a full stop instead of the first *and*. In the second paragraph a comma is missing before the last *and*. Overall good coherence and cohesion.

Grammar

The candidate uses a wide range of structures, practically error-free. There are two inaccuracies (*to pay the it in parts*, plural – *looking forward to your answers*). Candidate varies complex and simple sentences well and makes no word order mistakes. Variety of question types: direct and indirect.

Vocabulary

The candidate uses an appropriate range of vocabulary to get information about the issues in question. No chunks are lifted from the task. The candidate shows good command of vocabulary and a sufficient degree of lexical sophistication (*attend, popular, besides, important, wealthy*). Spelling mostly accurate (except *sincerely*), the use of *supposed to* is incorrect. Misspelled *sinclery*.