

The Ultimate B2 First Writing Guide

Writing for B2

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Essays

Reviews

Emails

Reports

Articles

300+ expressions

Luis Porras Wadley

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Table of Contents

Introduction	7
What's in the B2 First Writing Paper?	8
Part 1	8
Part 2	9
The Writing Process for B2 First Tasks	10
Writing Part 1: Essays	18
Sample 1	20
Sample 2	22
Sample 3	24
Useful Expressions	26
More Useful Expressions	27
Writing Part 2: Articles	28
Sample 1	30
Sample 2	32
Sample 3	34
Useful Expressions	36
More Useful Expressions	37

Writing Part 2: Reviews	38
Sample 1	40
Sample 2	42
Sample 3	44
Useful Expressions	46
More Useful Expressions	48
Writing Part 2: Reports	52
Sample 1	54
Sample 2	56
Sample 3	58
Useful Expressions	60
More Useful Expressions	62
Writing Part 2: Emails & Letters	64
Sample 1: Informal Email	66
Sample 2: Letter of Application	68
Sample 3: Email of Inquiry	70
Useful Expressions	72
More Useful Expressions	74
Writing Assessment	79
Writing Mark Sheet	81
Writing Tasks Overview	82

Introduction

This guide covers the main writing tasks that appear in the Cambridge Assessment English test called B2 First (FCE). These tasks are: essays, articles, reviews, reports, emails & letters.

This book provides 3 sample tasks and answers for each type of writing, plus a whole set of useful expressions that candidates can use in their writings. Ideally, students should use these samples as models for their own writing tasks, making use of the helpful expressions provided at the end of each section.

Besides the sample tasks and expressions, this guide also contains a brief description of Writing Part 1 and Writing Part 2, a full description of every task type, guidance on developing an appropriate writing strategy, a description of how writing is assessed and a sample mark sheet which can be used to assess students' performance or as a self-assessment tool.

In general, this writing guide is aimed at students of English as a foreign language who are interested in improving their writing skills with a view to obtaining their B2 First certificate, and at teachers who want support writing material to use with their own students.

What's in the B2 First Writing paper?

In the two parts of the B2 First Writing paper, candidates have to show that they can write different types of texts in English. There are two parts, and they have 1 hour and 20 minutes to complete both parts.

Part 1

What's in part 1?

Candidates are given an essay heading and two ideas clearly linked to it. They must write an essay expressing their opinions about the topic and using the ideas provided. They must also add a third idea of their own, which should be linked to the heading. The topic will be a subject of general interest – you will not need any specialised knowledge.

What do students need to practise?

Using language functions, such as evaluating, expressing opinions, hypothesising, justifying, etc.

How many questions are there?

One compulsory question.

How many words do they have to write?

140–190 words

Part 2

What's in part 2?

Candidates have to write a text from a choice of text types: article, email/letter, report or review. To guide them, they are given some information about the context, the topic, the purpose and the target reader.

What do students need to practise?

Writing different types of text that could come up in the exam, focusing on the style of the different task types as well as different language functions.

How many questions are there?

There are three questions, but candidates must choose and do only one.

How many words do they have to write?

140–190 words

For more information, please visit [cambridgeenglish.org/first/exam-format/](https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/first/exam-format/)

The Writing Process for B2 First Tasks

The aim of this section is to provide you with the best strategy to approach a regular B2 First writing task. This approach can be divided into the following steps:

1. Analysis
2. Structure
3. Brainstorming
4. First draft
5. Editing
6. Final piece
7. Final check

So let us take a sample task to illustrate this process step by step.

SAMPLE TASK

In your English class, you have been talking about who does the housework at home. Now your English teacher has asked you to write an essay. Write an essay using all the notes and give reasons for your point of view.

ESSAY QUESTION

Should teenagers and parents do the same amount of housework?

NOTES:

- *who has more time to do house chores*
- *who does house chores better*
- _____ *(your own idea)*

*Write your **essay** in 140 - 190 words in an appropriate style.*

The Writing Process for B2 First Tasks

STEP 1: ANALYSIS

Now that we have the same task (see previous page), we need to analyse what the task is about and what it is asking us to do. So we can identify the following elements:

- **What to write:** an essay
- **What about:** sharing the housework between teenagers and parents
- **How many ideas:** 3
- **How many words:** 140 – 190
- **Style:** appropriate style for an essay (formal)

STEP 2: STRUCTURE

One of the most important things about a piece of writing is its structure. Thankfully, the writing tasks at B2 First usually provide enough information to get a clear idea of the structure the text should have.

In accordance with the task, we can identify the following structure:

- **Title:** Yes: *“Should teenagers and parents do the same amount of housework?”*
- **Paragraphs:** 5
 - ✓ introduction (every writing task needs an introduction)
 - ✓ who has more time
 - ✓ who does chores better
 - ✓ become responsible (my own idea)
 - ✓ conclusion (every writing task needs a conclusion)

The Writing Process for B2 First Tasks

STEP 3: BRAINSTORMING

Now that we know the structure we are going to follow, we need to brainstorm ideas for each paragraph and make sure that these ideas show a logical progression.

At this point, writing proper, full sentences is not necessary, as our aim is simply to get ideas to write about in the following step. It is advisable, however, to divide these ideas into the paragraphs that our text is going to have. This can be done as follows:

introduction	<i>problem nowadays with chores at home → everything parents → What about teens and youngsters? → three aspects to consider</i>
who has more time	<i>teenagers have more time and fewer responsibilities / parents work + other responsibilities</i>
who does chores better	<i>a matter of practice → learn by doing</i>
becoming responsible	<i>take on responsibilities → learn values and good manners</i>
conclusion	<i>Answer to title "YES" → no reason against → benefit everyone</i>

At this point, it might also be useful to brainstorm some vocabulary related to the topic of the writing task.

The Writing Process for B2 First Tasks

STEP 4: FIRST DRAFT

Only when we have a clear idea of what we are going to write should we actually start to do so. This first piece of writing is commonly known as the first draft, which is basically a provisional version of the final result.

Should teenagers and parents do the same amount of housework?

Nowadays, many people are angry with teenagers because they don't do nothing at home. Parents do everything and this is not fair. We have to consider three aspects.

First, teenagers usually have more time. And they have fewer responsibilities. Also, parents work and have other things to do.

Second, some people say that parents do the chores because they do them better. But teenagers can learn. Learning to do chores is very easy, so they should learn.

Doing chores at home is a good way to be more responsible. You learn the value of time, to be organised and good manners.

In conclusion, I think teenagers and young people should do the same housework than their parents.

The purpose of writing a draft is no other than having the base of our final text. So we will now edit it and improve it until we are content with the result. Without editing and improvements, the result is usually not the best we can achieve. That is the reason why this draft is very simple and contains several intentional mistakes.

The Writing Process for B2 First Tasks

STEP 5: EDITING

The editing step consists only in rereading the task several times to spot mistakes and elements that we can improve. In this case, we can make the following changes and improvements:

- **Pick better words:**

- ✓ *are angry with* → *complain about*

- ✓ *think* → *believe*

- **Improve structures:**

- ✓ *We have to consider three aspects.* → *Let us take into account three aspects.*

- ✓ *some people say* → *it is sometimes said*

- **Add connectors:**

- ✓ *Finally,*

- ✓ *Therefore,*

- **Correct typos and other mistakes:**

- ✓ *don't do nothing* → *do not do anything*

- ✓ *do not help* → *do not give their parents a hand at home*

- ✓ *the same ... than* → *the same ... as*

- **Add the “expert element”:**

- ✓ *psychologists believe that...*

The Writing Process for B2 First Tasks

- **Add more advanced structures:**
 - ✓ *it makes sense for teenagers to...*
- **Adapt to formal language:**
 - ✓ no contractions
 - ✓ less subjective
- **Adjust number of words**
- **Other improvements**

The Writing Process for B2 First Tasks

STEP 6: FINAL PIECE

Should teenagers and parents do the same amount of housework?

Nowadays, many people complain about teenagers because of the little housework they do. Parents end up doing everything and this is certainly not fair. So I wonder if youngsters and parents should share housework equally. Let us take into account three aspects.

First, teenagers usually have more time and fewer responsibilities. On the other hand, parents have jobs and many other duties. So it makes sense for teenagers to take care of some house chores.

Second, it is sometimes said that parents do the chores because they do them better. However, we can all agree that housework is generally very easy to do, so it is only a matter of learning. "Practice makes perfect", or so they say.

Finally, psychologists believe that by doing chores, teenagers become more responsible. Therefore, it is the perfect way to learn good manners, the value of effort, and to be organised.

In conclusion, I believe teenagers and young people should do the same amount of housework as their parents, as there is no reason to support that they should do less.

The Writing Process for B2 First Tasks

STEP 7: FINAL CHECK

The final step is really simple. In this phase, we should ask ourselves:

- *Did I address every point in the task?*
- *Does my conclusion answer my title?*

If the answers to these questions are positive, then we have probably done a good job. If not, we should go back and revise the whole text until it meets these requirements.

B2 First: Writing Essays

Writing Part 1: Essays

PURPOSE OF AN ESSAY

An essay is a piece of writing in which you are asked to discuss a topic that might be controversial or relevant somehow. It usually follows a class discussion.

LANGUAGE

The language of an essay should be formal. Also, make sure that you justify all your ideas and that you use appropriate connectors to link your sentences and paragraphs.

STRUCTURE

When writing an essay, you can choose whether to give it a title or not. This could be the same question provided in the task. As for the structure, it should have an introductory paragraph, and a conclusion at the end. The body should consist of 2 or 3 main paragraphs, depending on how you decide to structure your ideas.

GIVING YOUR OPINION

Typically, in an essay we tend to express our opinion at the end, although it is acceptable to do so at the beginning, too.

COMMON TOPICS

Some common topics to write essays about are the environment, health and fitness, work and employment, friendships and family, money, celebrities, etc.

Writing Part 1: Essays

SAMPLE TASK 1

In your English class you have been talking about different ways in which you can protect the environment. Now, your English teacher has asked you to write an essay.

What can people do to help protect the environment?

Notes:

1. *Recycle*
2. *Using bicycles and walking*
3. *..... (your own idea)*

Write an essay using **all** the notes and give reasons for your point of view.

Write your **essay**.

BRAINSTORM YOUR OWN IDEAS

Writing Part 1: Essays

SAMPLE ESSAY 1

Protecting the Environment

One of the things that worries people most nowadays is the environment. In the last few decades, humans have been polluting way too much, which has had a negative effect on the environment. For this reason, we must protect it from now on.

First, we ought to start paying attention to the 3 Rs: reducing, reusing and recycling. By doing so, we will reduce the quantity of rubbish, we will not throw away so many things and we will be able to recycle most of our waste.

Second, a very good idea is to stop using cars so much and start cycling or walking a little more. For example, instead of commuting by car, we should try to do it on foot or by bike.

Finally, if we really want to change things, we must teach young pupils about the dangers of contamination and pollution. It is the only way to change the world, because they are the future citizens of the earth.

In conclusion, I believe that if we do these three things, we can still prevent humans from destroying the environment.

Writing Part 1: Essays

SAMPLE TASK 2

In your English class you have been talking about work in your country. Now, your English teacher has asked you to write an essay.

Write an essay using **all** the notes and give reasons for your point of view.

Which is more important: to earn a high salary or to enjoy your job?

Notes:

1. *Type of work*
2. *Time you spend working*
3. *..... (your own idea)*

Write your **essay**.

BRAINSTORM YOUR OWN IDEAS

Writing Part 1: Essays

SAMPLE ESSAY 2

Enjoying Your Work or Earning a High Salary?

Nowadays, people find it difficult to find a suitable job. Some people think the salary is too low, while others may have a good salary but do not like what they do. However, there are other things to consider, too.

Firstly, we must think about how long we work for. If we work long hours, the salary should be good. However, maybe the most important thing if we work a lot is to enjoy our job. Otherwise, we will get tired quickly.

On the other hand, the type of work is also important. For instance, if we do a job we like but it is dangerous, the salary should be good. If we are not paid generously, maybe it's not worth risking our lives.

Finally, we should also take into account holiday periods. If our job has few holiday periods during the year, maybe we can accept a higher salary in exchange.

On the whole, I am of the opinion that in order to be happy, the salary is less important than enjoying the job. However, it is difficult to be happy working for peanuts.

Writing Part 1: Essays

SAMPLE TASK 3

In your English class you have been talking about friendships. Now, your English teacher has asked you to write an essay.

Write an essay using **all** the notes and give reasons for your point of view.

What should we do to make and keep friends?

Notes:

1. *Being honest*
2. *Keeping in touch*
3. *..... (your own idea)*

Write your **essay**.

BRAINSTORM YOUR OWN IDEAS

Writing Part 1: Essays

SAMPLE ESSAY 3

Making and Keeping Friends

After family members, friends are the most important people in our lives. So we can all agree that making and keeping friends is essential. But what can we do to make friends and not lose them?

First of all, the best way to make new friends is probably to get involved in group activities. Maybe it is advisable to join a book club or take up a new team sport like soccer or basketball.

Another important aspect is keeping in touch. Calling and meeting your friends regularly is the only way of keeping the friendship alive. However, this can be difficult if they live far away, so texting is another acceptable alternative.

Finally, helping your friends when they need you is also an essential part of any friendship. As a result, your friend will value you and your friendship will become stronger.

To sum up, I should say that honesty and keeping in touch are very good ways of supporting your friends. However, the best thing you can do is to love them and help them whenever they need you.

Writing Part 1: Essays

USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

• Sample 1

- *One of the things that*
- *In the last few decades,*
- *For this reason,*
- *First, / Second, / Third,*
- *Finally,*
- *By doing so,*
- *For example,*
- *In conclusion,*

• Sample 3

- *we can all agree that*
- *First of all,*
- *it is advisable to*
- *However,*
- *Finally,*
- *As a result,*
- *To sum up,*

• Sample 2

- *Nowadays,*
- *However,*
- *Firstly, / Secondly, / Thirdly,*
- *Otherwise,*
- *On the other hand,*
- *For instance,*
- *Finally,*
- *take into account*
- *On the whole,*
- *I am of the opinion,*
- *in order to*

Writing Part 1: Essays

MORE USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

• **Linking devices**

- *on the one hand, / on the other hand,*
- *nevertheless*
- *Even so,*
- *Even though*
- *However,*
- *In spite of*
- *Despite*
- *but*
- *although*
- *because of this/that*
- *Therefore,*
- *It is therefore*
- *thus*
- *As a result,*
- *As a result of this/that*
- *For this/that reason,*
- *Consequently,*
- *As a consequence,*

• **Giving someone else's opinion**

- *Some people say*
- *Many experts claim*
- *According to*
- *It is said that*
- *It is believed*
- *It is a fact that*
- *The truth is that*

• **Concluding**

- *In conclusion, I am of the opinion that*
- *On the whole, I would say that*
- *In my view,*
- *The way I see it,*
- *To sum up, if you ask me*

• **Providing examples:**

- *such as*
- *for example*
- *for instance*
- *like*

Writing for B2 FCE

15 FCE Writing Sample Tasks and 300+ Useful Expressions

This **Writing Guide for B2** provides teachers and students with a **range of practical examples** covering all the possible writing task types featured in the **B2 First Writing** test. With 15 sample tasks and over 300 helpful expressions, ***The Ultimate B2 First Writing Guide*** is the **perfect writing resource** for anyone preparing for B2 First.

Contents of this book

- ✓ **80+ pages** of exclusive and original content
- ✓ **Step-by-step writing strategy** to produce any type of writing task easily
- ✓ **3 examples of every task type** (essays, articles, reviews, reports & emails/letters)
- ✓ **3 sample answers** of essays, articles, reviews, reports & emails/letters
- ✓ **300+ useful expressions** ready to use in your writings
- ✓ **Description of the B2 First Writing paper** and every type of task
- ✓ **Sample mark sheet** and **assessment criteria** for B2 First Writing



About the author

Luis Porras Wadley is the owner and director of KSE Academy®, an English academy and official Cambridge Exam Preparation Centre based in Granada. As an English teacher, Luis has been preparing Cambridge candidates successfully for over ten years. He is also the author of other successful test preparation books, including *Speaking First*, *Speaking CAE*, *Speaking CPE* and *Use of English C1*.

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