

Guidance for Delivery

Functional Skills English Writing

Level 1 (4748)

4748-111 (e-volve)

4848-211 (paper-based)

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Introduction

This guide has been produced in order to help centres understand and prepare candidates for the Reformed Functional Skills English Writing examinations provided by City & Guilds.

The examinations have been designed to reflect the changes made to the subject content of Functional Skills English produced by the Department for Education in 2018, found [here](#). The subject content is also incorporated into City & Guilds' Functional Skills English handbook.

Whilst there are some differences in the Functional Skills English subject content, the examinations will look familiar to centres as many of the previous approaches to assessment design have remained the same.

It is important to stress that the revised Department for Education Functional Skills English subject content is different from the previous Ofqual Functional Skills subject criteria. For more information on the differences, City & Guilds has produced a useful mapping guide to help centres understand some of the changes and is available on City & Guilds' [Functional Skills qualification documents webpage](#).

All Functional Skills qualifications are assessed summatively, and the Writing component of Functional Skills English should only be attempted by candidates once they have completed a period of learning and have successfully completed practice papers or centre-devised exercises that replicate the demands and rigours of the live examination materials. A range of sample papers is available on City & Guilds [Functional Skills qualification documents webpage](#).

Level 1 Writing papers

A Level 1 writing paper will always:

- consist of 2 questions
- require candidates to write approximately 200-250 words per response
- require candidates to write different types of documents
- require candidates to write for different audiences and for different purposes
- assess 100% of the subject content
- have a strict time limit of 1 hour and 20 minutes.

Every question will clearly inform the candidate of the purpose and audience for the writing, and it is important that candidates take note of this and adapt their writing accordingly.

An indication of expected length of response will also be given; this may be in the form of a word count, i.e. *200-250 words*, or indicated by a phrase such as *5 - 6 paragraphs*. However, centres should note that the expectation is that a candidate will write approximately 250 words for each Level 1 response. Responses significantly shorter than this may be penalised to a lesser or greater degree. Responses that are longer than the indicated word count will not be penalised for the length.

Level 1 Subject content

Writing

Scope of study

Text: this should include straightforward texts such as narratives, instructions, explanations and reports of varying lengths.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar

19. Use a range of punctuation correctly (e.g. full stops, question marks, exclamation marks, commas, possessive apostrophes)
20. Use correct grammar (e.g. subject-verb agreement, consistent use of different tenses, definite and indefinite articles)
21. Spell words used most often in work, study and daily life, including specialist words

Writing composition

22. Communicate information, ideas and opinions clearly, coherently and accurately
23. Write text of an appropriate level of detail and of appropriate length (including where this is specified) to meet the needs of purpose and audience
24. Use format, structure and language appropriate for audience and purpose
25. Write consistently and accurately in complex sentences, using paragraphs where appropriate

Department for Education Subject Content Functional Skills English, 2018

Marking of a candidate's responses is broadly split into two categories:

- composition (55% of available marks)
- spelling, punctuation and grammar (45% of available marks)

As indicated above, the writing composition category is made up of four separate subject content statements. Each of these statements is individually assessed and placed within one of the four following bands reflecting performance:

consistently

most of the time

some of the time

with limited accuracy.

Based on these initial bandings, the composition of the response as a whole is placed into one of the four bands and marks allocated accordingly – see mark scheme for further details. Examples of mark schemes are available on City & Guilds' [Functional Skills qualification documents webpage](#).

Consistently: almost wholly accurate and/or entirely meeting the subject content statement, with only a very few minor lapses.

Most of the time: very accurate and/or meeting the subject content statement most of the time, but frequency of errors demonstrates that knowledge is not absolutely secure.

Some of the time: the subject content statements are met at times throughout the response, but there are many instances where this is not the case.

Limited: subject content statements are generally not met in many instances throughout the response.

The performance in each of the spelling, punctuation and grammar categories is also placed within one of the four bands and marks allocated accordingly – see mark scheme for further details.

Examples of mark schemes are available on City & Guilds' [Functional Skills qualification documents webpage](#).

Section 1: Composition requirements for Level 1

1. Communicate information, ideas and opinions clearly, coherently and accurately (SCS 22)

1.1. Clearly

This is about clarity of expression and clarity of purpose. Is the purpose of the communication apparent, and are the points being put across understandable, or are they muddled, ambiguous or incomprehensible?

An example of a lack of clarity in purpose would be a response that provides no context for the recipient as to why it is being written. Or it does provide context, but this occurs a significant way into the response, initially leaving the recipient confused as to why they are being written to. Candidates should remember that, although the question brief provides bullet points of the detail expected, the recipient/reader would have no knowledge of the expected detail.

An example of a clarity issue within a sentence would be the following sentence:

I am writing to say my car is bought on Monday and shall be late.

OR

When going to work in the morning the local roads already contain a great amount of traffic, which will be a lot more useful to the pupils already at the school.

It is unclear what these sentences mean, and it is difficult to make an accurate judgement.

Clarity can also be affected by poor punctuation, grammar and spelling. If meaning is ambiguous or unclear due to punctuation, grammar or spelling errors, markers will take this into account when allocating an initial band for clarity.

Candidates should be encouraged to proofread the responses to check for clarity issues.

1.2. Coherently

This is about how the candidate's thinking, underpinning standpoint and approach to the writing is consistently maintained throughout, moving logically from one point to the next.

Candidates should aim to demonstrate coherence within, and between, the points being made. A piece of writing that addresses each individual bullet point provided in the question brief without reference to the previous point(s), either through inference or explicit reference, or without any attempt to link the points with devices and language that show logical progression, lacks coherence. In addition, an abrupt ending to a response, with no attempt to bring the response to a suitable conclusion, impacts upon coherence.

Candidates are encouraged to use some of the time to plan their responses, as this should help with maintaining coherence.

1.3. Accurately

Accurately, in this context, refers to the candidate's ability to accurately convey the specific information required; it is not to do with accuracy of spelling, punctuation or grammar but is about the accuracy (linked with clarity and coherence) of the information being presented.

2. Write text of an appropriate level of detail and length to meet the needs of purpose and audience (SCS 23)

2.1. Detail

Each question brief will contain an indication of the detail that should be expanded upon in the response.

Band 4 - Consistently:	all bullet points or required detail sufficiently expanded upon.
Band 3 - Most of the time:	probably only one significant omission of required detail in the body of the text or, in the case of a letter requiring a response, an omitted sender's address/contact details at any place in the letter.
Band 2 - Some of the time:	significant omissions that render the response incomplete and only partially suited to purpose and audience.
Band 1 - Limited:	very limited coverage; significant omissions of the majority of required detail; perfunctory attempts to cover detail, with little or no expansion; a document that is not suited to purpose or audience. a text that writes about something unrelated to the given task.

2.2. Length

Each question brief will contain guidance about the expected length of response. At Level 1, this will be given either in paragraphs, eg, *write 5-6 paragraphs*, or a word count, eg, *write approximately 250 words*. As a general rule, each response at Level 1 should be approximately 250 words long, even if the guidance is given in paragraphs. A response significantly shorter than this may be penalised to a lesser or greater degree. A response that is significantly higher in word count than 250 will not be penalised because of length per se, but candidates should make sure that the response is still suitable for its purpose and audience.

Planning and drafting of responses will not be marked.

Please note: a response that does not address the question brief will be awarded zero marks due to a complete lack of functionality in relation to the task set.

3. Use format, structure and language appropriate for audience and purpose (SCS 24)

3.1. Format and structure

In each Level 1 Functional Skills English Writing paper, candidates will be asked to write two of the following document types:

- a letter
- an email
- a narrative
- a report
- an explanation
- instructions

Minimum format and structure requirements

Document type	Level 1	Format and structure requirements
Formal letter	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sender's address• recipient's address• date• salutation• appropriately matched valediction• name/signature• paragraphs where appropriate• suitable sequencing of information
Email	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• recipient's email address• subject line• salutation• a valediction• name• paragraphs where appropriate• suitable sequencing of information
Narrative	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• title• a sensible sequence to the text, often chronological

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an obvious ending or conclusion • paragraphing
Report	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • title • logical sequencing of information • subheadings • bullet points, if appropriate • paragraphs
Instructions*	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • title • logical sequencing of information • section demarcation, eg numbers, bullet points, sub-headings • paragraphs, if appropriate
Explanation*	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • title • logical sequencing of information • section demarcation, eg numbers, bullet points, sub-headings • paragraphs, if appropriate

* The question may ask candidates to incorporate instructions or explanations into another type of document, such as an email, in which case candidates should format and structure the response based on both the email and instructions or explanation requirements.

Additional information regarding document types

3.2. Formal letter

A formal letter is a letter written using formal language. It is often sent to a business or public body, and usually to someone who is not personally known by the writer.

A typical example of a question is as follows:

You have recently stayed at a hotel for two nights. During your stay, you lost your bag that contained your wallet or purse, your laptop and your car keys. A member of staff called Sophie was very helpful in calming you down and helping you report the loss and eventually helping you find your bag.

You decide to write a letter to Krishnan Tamar, the Manager of the hotel, to give them feedback about their member of staff.

You should include:

- *why you are writing*
- *what happened*
- *how the member of staff helped you*
- *what made her help so exceptional.*

The address of the hotel is The Boardwalk Hotel, 4 Derring Street, Hunton, HF4 5TY.

You should write approximately 250 words.

3.3. Email

A piece of written communication between two people, sent electronically using the internet and email servers. It may be formal or informal in nature.

A typical example of a question is as follows:

You work in an office and have been asked to organise the Christmas party.

Write an email to your colleagues outlining your first ideas about where to hold it and what entertainment to have. You also need help to organise the event.

You should cover:

- *why you are writing the email*
- *what your first ideas are*
- *what sort of entertainment you are planning*
- *what you would like help with.*

The email address is colleagues@typ.co.uk

You should write approximately 250 words.

3.4. Narrative

This is essentially a story or an account of a day or an event, most likely to be most effectively written in a chronological order.

Centres should be aware that the question brief may refer directly to a narrative but may also ask candidates to write *'the story of their day'* or the *'sequence of events'* or something similar.

For example:

You have started a work placement for a company that sells VIP hot air balloon rides. One of your tasks is to go on the balloon ride and then write a description of the day out for the website, to help readers of the website understand what the experience is like.

Write approximately 250 words telling the story of your experience.

You should cover:

- *how the day started*
- *how you felt before the balloon took off*
- *how you felt when high up above the ground*
- *what you could see*
- *the highlight of the day.*
- *how the day ended.*

3.5. Report

A report is a written account of something that has been carried out, seen or investigated, written in formal language.

Candidates will be asked to write a report that will typically require them to present information on a generic topic such as the role of technology in modern life, or about a certain event that has taken place.

A formal report will usually contain several sections:

Introduction – explains the topic and purpose of the report

The body – often sub-divided into brief sections using sub-headings or numbers

Conclusion – summing up the main points and offering personal conclusions regarding the topic, and it may also suggest further recommendations or actions.

A report into an event, for instance reporting on a sports match, will have a less structured format and may contain only a title and paragraphs. There would be no requirement for sub-headings, but it is still important that there is an obvious introduction paragraph and a concluding paragraph that brings the report to a logical close.

A typical example of a question requiring a report is as follows:

Write a report of approximately 250 words about vandalism in your area. Your report is for people in your area who attend a local neighbourhood meeting.

Your report should cover:

- *what vandalism occurs*
- *the scale of the problem*
- *who you think is responsible*
- *the financial cost to the community*
- *how it can be prevented.*

3.6. Explanation

A text that explains something in order to make it clear to the reader.

Candidates will be asked to provide an explanation. Examples of the types of explanations required are:

- *explaining something they witnessed*
- *explaining a process or procedure that has to be carried out*
- *explaining the benefits of an item or a course of action.*

At times, this will form a part of another document type, for instance an email. For example:

Write an email to a friend to explain the type of event you want to hold and the role you would like them to have in organising the event. Choose one of the following events:

a wedding reception

a charity fundraising day

a family sports day

a 21st birthday celebration.

Your email should explain the following:

- *what type of event you are planning*
- *specific details about the event (eg, theme, timings, guest numbers, seating arrangements or anything else relevant to the event)*
- *your friend's role in helping to organise the event*
- *your friend's role on the day.*

Your email should be approximately 250 words long.

3.7. Instructions

A written piece that provides clear, structured guidance about how to perform a task.

Candidates will either be asked to write a stand-alone set of instructions or to incorporate a set of instructions into another document type, for instance an email or a letter.

Candidates should use appropriate language and tone for the instructions, knowing that effective instructions:

1. use short sentences and short paragraphs
2. arrange points in logical order
3. contain specific statements
4. use the imperative mood
5. usually have the most important term in each sentence at the beginning
6. say one thing in each sentence.

A typical example of a question is as follows:

Write a set of instructions for a website covering one of the following topics:

how to cook a meal

how to carve a Halloween pumpkin

how to maintain a bicycle/car/scooter

how to perform a trick on a skateboard

how to create a hairstyle

You should aim to write between 200 and 250 words.

3.8. Language

This category is principally concerned with tone and expression. Candidates should read the task and then decide on a style of language and tone that suits the document type, the purpose and the intended audience.

3.8.1

Tone (or register) relates to the candidates' abilities to use language with the correct degree of formality to suit the situation. If they are writing a letter to a friend, it is perfectly acceptable to start with *Hi John*. However, they should not sign off with *Yours faithfully*. If they are writing a formal letter, they should not be starting with *Dear John*, or *Hi*. Similarly, they should not close it with *Thanks*, for instance, but should use the correct formal closure of *Yours faithfully* or *Yours sincerely*. The correct degree of formality should be maintained throughout the piece of writing.

3.8.2

Language should be suited to the purpose and audience. At Level 1, a candidate may be asked to write a set of instructions, for example. Good instructions generally involve simple or compound sentences, or may even be in bullet point form, with articles omitted, all of which may be appropriate in the context. Markers will take account of the task and look for appropriate language use.

3.8.3

Clumsy or incorrect expression is also taken into account in the language category. For instance, if a candidate were to write *I am writing to complain on my car*, this would be an incorrect expression, as it should be *complain about*.

Similarly, if a candidate were to write *I work in that shop and the shop opens at 9 and the shop closes at 8*, it can be seen that the writing style is not succinct and contains unnecessary repetition of *the shop*. It is not grammatically incorrect but can be seen as clumsy.

4. Write consistently in complex sentences, using paragraphs where appropriate (SCS 25)

Candidates should aim to vary their sentence construction. Effective writing uses a combination of simple, compound and complex sentences. The frequency of complex sentences depends, to some extent, on the type of document that is being written. A set of instructions would normally contain succinct, simple or compound sentences; a report would be characterized by fewer simple sentences.

Paragraphing also depends, to some extent, on the type of document being used. Candidates should know when it is appropriate to use paragraphs and when paragraph breaks should occur. Once again, some instructions may not contain paragraphs, but letters, reports, narratives, emails and explanations are very likely to require them.

Please note: for ease and standardisation of markers, certain elements of the subject content statements have been rearranged on the mark schemes.

Appropriate language (from SCS 24) has been paired with *Writes consistently and accurately in complex sentences* (from SCS 25); *using paragraphs where appropriate* (SCS 25) has been paired with *Use format and structure appropriate for audience and purpose* (SCS 24). See marks schemes here.

Examples of mark schemes are available on City & Guilds' [Functional Skills qualification documents webpage](#).

Section 2: Spelling, punctuation and grammar requirements for Level 1

1. Spelling (SCS 21)

Spelling marks (SCS 21)	Marks
Spell correctly words used most often in work, study and daily life, including specialist words.	
Spelling is consistently accurate, including ambitious and/or irregular words where used.	4
Spelling is mostly correct, with occasional errors.	3
Spelling is accurate some of the time, with some accurate spelling of more complex or irregular words.	2
Limited accuracy: some accurate spelling of simple or regular words.	1
Spelling errors significantly impair meaning, or insufficient evidence to judge ability.	0

Centres should be familiar with the spelling demands at Entry Level of Functional Skills English Writing, details of which can be found [here](#). This will inform centres of the minimum spelling demands at the higher levels, as lower level demands are subsumed into the levels above.

To achieve 4 marks for spelling, candidates will have to spell accurately throughout the response. The response will also include accurately spelt ambitious and/or irregular words. 100% accuracy is not required, but only a few errors are permissible.

To achieve 2 or 3 marks, the response must contain words that are deemed to be ambitious and/or irregular. The frequency of errors in all word types and the frequency of accurate spelling of ambitious and/or irregular words will inform the mark to be awarded. Centres should be familiar with the spelling demands of Functional Skills English Entry Levels 1-3, as they will provide an indication of the minimum levels required.

To achieve 1 mark, the response must contain some accurate spelling of simple or regular words. It is unlikely that the response will contain many instances of accurate spelling of ambitious or irregular words.

Zero marks will be awarded if the frequency of spelling errors is very high, with no instances of ambitious or irregular words spelt correctly.

Slightly more lenience will be applied in responses that are longer than the suggested word count, but weaker candidates should be aware that longer responses are likely to contain more errors.

2. Punctuation (SCS 19)

Punctuation marks (SCS 19)	Marks
Use a range of punctuation correctly (e.g. full stops, questions marks, exclamation marks, commas, possessive apostrophes).	
A range of punctuation (e.g. full stops, question marks, exclamation marks, commas and possessive apostrophes) is used consistently and accurately to mark the structure of sentences and give clarity and emphasis.	4
Punctuation is mostly accurate, including punctuation within the sentence if required, e.g. commas used correctly to mark phrases and clauses or within lists.	3
Some accuracy in punctuation: some sentences are correctly demarcated, with some correct use of other punctuation if required, e.g. commas to mark phrases or clauses and commas in lists.	2
Limited accuracy in the punctuation required for the document type.	1
Punctuation errors significantly impair meaning, or insufficient evidence to judge ability.	0

The punctuation demands at Level 1 are now higher than in the legacy Functional Skills English qualification (3748).

The standards specify the use of commas to mark phrases or clauses within a sentence as well as to separate items within lists, and the use of possessive apostrophes. These were previously Level 2 requirements.

In order to achieve full marks, a range of punctuation must be used accurately and consistently. Correctly demarcated sentences with some other types of punctuation within the sentence, eg, commas, apostrophes, capital letters on proper nouns, or other punctuation marks, must be evident. Please note, these do not all have to be used for a candidate to achieve full marks; however, where they are used, they should be used accurately. Whilst errors will be taken into account when awarding marks, the focus for markers is more on the frequency of accurate use of a range of punctuation as dictated by the type of document being written.

In order to achieve 2 marks or above, there must be some evidence of accurate use of punctuation other than sentence demarcation (i.e. correct beginning and end to a sentence).

To achieve 1 mark, the response will contain only instances of correct sentence demarcation, with no instances of correct punctuation going beyond this.

Zero marks will be awarded if the frequency of punctuation errors is very high and there is no correct punctuation beyond simple sentence demarcation.

Slightly more lenience will be applied in responses that are longer than the suggested word count, but weaker candidates should be aware that longer responses are likely to contain more errors.

3. Grammar (SCS 20)

Grammar marks (SCS 20)	Marks
Use correct grammar (e.g. subject–verb agreement, correct & consistent use of a range of tenses, definite & indefinite articles).	
Grammar is consistently accurate: e.g. length, focus and structure of sentences are varied to add clarity and emphasis; tenses and verb forms are controlled; definite and indefinite articles are used accurately when needed.	4
Grammar is mostly accurate: e.g. a range of verb forms is used mostly correctly; a range of appropriate tense choices is mostly maintained; definite and indefinite articles are mostly correct when needed.	3
Some accuracy in grammar: e.g. some sentences are grammatically sound; there is some variation in verb forms; tense choice is appropriate some of the time; definite and indefinite articles are sometimes incorrectly used or omitted when needed.	2
Limited accuracy in grammar: e.g. errors in verb forms are frequent and tense choice is often incorrect; definite and indefinite articles are frequently incorrect or omitted when needed.	1
Grammar errors significantly impair meaning, or insufficient evidence to judge ability.	0

The examples of grammar requirements in the standards (SCS 20 in table above) are examples only; other errors will be taken into account, such as incorrect word order, omitted words, incorrectly repeated words, incorrect subject-verb agreement and incorrect verb-tense agreement.

100% accuracy is not required to achieve 4 marks, but candidates must be able to demonstrate consistently accurate grammar in order to do so.

To achieve 3 marks, the frequency of grammar errors will be higher than a response receiving 4 marks but will still maintain accuracy most of the time. Meaning will generally not be impacted by any grammar errors,

To achieve 2 marks, candidates will need to demonstrate accuracy some of the time, so frequency of errors will be greater than in the previous two categories, but meaning is unlikely to be affected on many occasions.

1 mark or zero marks will be awarded if the frequency of errors is high and meaning and clarity are impacted by the errors. Word order will often be inaccurate, and articles frequently omitted or used incorrectly. Subject-verb agreement and verb-tense agreement will be inaccurate on occasions.

Slightly more lenience will be applied in responses that are longer than the suggested word count, but weaker candidates should be aware that longer responses are likely to contain more errors.

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5-6 Giltspur Street, London EC1A 9DE.

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