

# Guidance for Delivery

**Functional Skills English Writing**

**Level 2 (4748)**

**4748-114 (e-volve)**

**4748-214 (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 2 Writing papers

A Level 2 writing paper will always:

- consist of 2 questions
- require candidates to write approximately 250-300 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, ie *250 – 300 words*, or indicated by a phrase such as *6 – 8 paragraphs*. However, centres should note that the expectation is that a candidate will write approximately 300 words for each Level 2 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 2 Subject content

### Writing

#### Scope of study

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

#### Spelling, punctuation and grammar

20. Punctuate writing correctly using a wide range of punctuation markers (e.g. colons, commas, inverted commas, apostrophes and quotation marks)
21. Use correct grammar (e.g. subject-verb agreement, consistent use of a range of tenses, definite and indefinite articles) and modality devices (e.g. to express probability or desirability)
22. Spell words used in work, study and daily life, including a range of specialist words

#### Writing composition

23. Communicate information, ideas and opinions clearly, coherently and effectively
24. 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
25. Organise writing for different purposes using appropriate format and structure (e.g. standard templates, paragraphs, bullet points, tables)
26. Convey clear meaning and establish cohesion using organisational markers effectively
27. Use different language and register (e.g. persuasive techniques, supporting evidence, specialist words), suited to audience and purpose.
28. Construct complex sentences consistently and accurately, 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 six 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 2

### 1. Communicate information and ideas clearly, coherently and effectively (SCS 23)

#### 1.1. Clearly

This is about clarity of expression and clarity of purpose. Is the point that is being put across understandable, or is it 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. Effectively**

This concerns the extent to which the clarity and coherence work in combination to produce an effective piece of writing. Candidates should consider the purpose, the document type and the audience and decide how best to effectively communicate the information.

## 2. Write text of an appropriate level of detail and length to meet the needs of purpose and audience (SCS 24)

### 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 2, this will be given either in paragraphs, eg, *write 6-8 paragraphs*, or a word count, eg, *write approximately 300 words*. As a general rule, each response at Level 2 should be approximately 300 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 300 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. Organise writing for different purposes using appropriate format and structure (SCS 25)

#### 3.1. Format and structure

In each Level 2 Functional Skills English Writing paper, candidates will be asked to write two of the following document types:

- a letter
- an email
- a narrative
- a blog
- a report
- an explanation
- an article

#### Minimum format and structure requirements

Document type	Level 2	Format and structure requirements
a formal letter	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sender's address</li><li>• recipient's address</li><li>• date</li><li>• salutation</li><li>• appropriately matched valediction</li><li>• name/signature</li><li>• paragraphs where appropriate</li><li>• suitable sequencing of information</li></ul>
an email	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• recipient's email address</li><li>• subject line</li><li>• salutation</li><li>• a valediction</li><li>• name</li><li>• paragraphs where appropriate</li><li>• suitable sequencing of information</li></ul>

Narrative	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• title</li> <li>• a sensible sequence to the text, often chronological</li> <li>• an obvious ending or conclusion</li> <li>• paragraphing</li> </ul>
Report	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• title</li> <li>• logical sequencing of information</li> <li>• subheadings</li> <li>• bullet points, if appropriate</li> <li>• paragraphs</li> </ul>
Article	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• title</li> <li>• logical sequencing of information</li> <li>• conclusion/logical ending</li> <li>• paragraphs</li> </ul>
Explanation*	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• title</li> <li>• logical sequencing of information</li> <li>• section demarcation, eg numbers, bullet points, sub-headings</li> <li>• paragraphs, if appropriate</li> </ul>
Blog	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• title</li> <li>• logical sequencing of information</li> <li>• conclusion/logical ending</li> <li>• paragraphs</li> </ul>

\* The question may ask candidates to incorporate 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 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 recently went on a day out to a water park but did not enjoy the experience and felt it was not very good value. On returning home you started to feel unwell and think this was due to the cleanliness of the centre and the water.*

*Write a formal letter to John Ellis, the manager of the water park, to explain why you felt it was poor value and what could be improved. His address is 4 Wheaton Gardens, Stevely, SG2 5HG.*

*You should cover:*

- *What you disliked*
- *Why it was poor value*
- *Your illness*
- *What they could do to improve the water park.*

*You should write approximately 300 words.*

### **3.3. Email**

A piece of written communication between two people, sent electronically using the internet and email servers. It will be a formal email at Level 2.

A typical example of a question is as follows:

*Your local police station is being closed down.*

*Write an email to your local councillor, Mary Wright, explaining why you feel the local police station should remain open. Her email address is MW@localcouncil.gov.uk*

*Your email should cover the following:*

- *Why you are emailing*
- *Why you think the police station is needed*
- *How it helps the community*
- *The effects it would have on the area if it was closed.*

*You should write approximately 300 words.*

### 3.4. Narrative

This is essentially a story 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.

A typical example of a question is as follows:

*You have started a work placement for a company that sells VIP tickets to the most exclusive restaurant and nightclub in the UK. One of your tasks is to go on the VIP experience and then write a description for the company website, to persuade people to book the experience.*

*Write approximately 300 words telling the story of your experience.*

*You should cover:*

- *how you were treated in the restaurant*
- *what the food and service were like*
- *what made the nightclub so special*
- *which celebrity guests were there*
- *the highlight of the day*
- *why people should book the experience.*

### 3.5. Blog

A blog is a web page that aims to inform the reader about a particular topic, often written in an informal or conversational style.

A blog is typically characterised by less formal language than is contained in an article, but it has much of the same format and structure requirements: a title, an introductory paragraph and a conclusion, and it may or may not contain additional elements such as subheadings or bullet points.

A typical example of a question is as follows:

*Write a blog aimed at people between the ages of 18 and 25, discussing the role and usefulness of public recreational facilities in today's society.*

*Your blog should cover:*

*Facilities available in your local area (swimming pools, parks, youth clubs, sports halls etc)*

*If they are used much and by whom*

*Are fees charged, and is this appropriate?*

*Do we need them in today's society?*

*You should aim to write approximately 300 words.*

### **3.6. 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 300 words about cars racing on your local streets on Saturday evenings. Your report will be handed out to members of the local community committee at their next meeting.*

*You should cover:*

- *the scale of the problem in your area*
- *who it affects*
- *the effect on the community*
- *possible solutions.*

### **3.7. Explanation**

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

Candidates will typically be asked to explain something they witnessed, a process or procedure that they or a friend have to carry out or explaining the benefits of an item or a course of action, for example.

At times, this will form a part of another document type, such as an article.

For example:

*Write a 300 word article explaining the problems faced by young people working on zero hour contracts.*

*Your article should explain the following:*

- *what zero-hour contracts are (employment with no guaranteed hours of work)*
- *how they may be useful for some people (students can pick when available for work)*
- *the problems caused by no guarantee of work or income*
- *what you would urge government or employers to do to help*

### 3.8. Article

A piece of writing on a particular subject to be included in a newspaper, a magazine. or on a website.

A typical example of a question is as follows:

*It is well known that celebrities use the media to help their careers, but they don't seem to like it when the media covers their private lives.*

- *Is it right how the media treats celebrities?*
- *How do celebrities benefit from the media and how does the media benefit from celebrities?*
- *Should anything be off-limits or can the media cover everything about celebrities and their private lives?*

*Your task: Write an article for a student magazine exploring the extent to which it is fair that the private lives of celebrities are covered in the media.*

*Suggested word count is 300 words*

## 4. Convey clear meaning and establish cohesion using organisational markers effectively (SCS 26)

Clear meaning, in this instance, is not concerned with clarity of expression on a word, phrase, sentence or paragraph level (covered by SCS 23 – see section 1.1 above), but with the writer's use of cohesion to more effectively and clearly convey the meaning of the text.

Cohesion is the use of grammatical devices to make sure a text has coherence. Discourse markers and organisational markers are just some examples of techniques that give a text cohesion, allowing the writer to convey the message with greater clarity.

There are many devices used to establish cohesion. Discourse markers are perhaps the most common and include phrases such as *firstly*, *secondly*, *on the other hand*, *in addition*, *however*, *despite* etc.

Other devices include:

Reference / referring words, eg, personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns (this, those, etc), relative pronouns (which, who, whom, etc)

Words or phrases that act as determiners – eg, *some of these...*, *all three attributes...*

Ellipsis - omission of words or phrases to avoid repetition, eg, *You've got more use of it than I have; I was sure it would be worth it, and it was.*

Cohesive nouns

Substitution – *I need shoes; the blue ones are perfect*

Candidates who fail to write with cohesion will typically address the detail required in the response with very little or no attempt to connect the points being made. On a sentence level, wording may be clumsy, tautologous or long-winded. In addition, each bullet point (or detail requirement) is simply addressed in its own right, almost as a checklist exercise. If this occurs throughout the response, it would be acceptable to judge the candidate as having had *limited success* in establishing cohesion.

## 5. Use different language and register suited to audience and purpose (SCS 27)

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.

### 5.1

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 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.

### 5.2

The type of language used, and the register, will also depend upon the task given to the candidate. If the task involves persuasion, for instance, candidates should use persuasive language and/or techniques. An article aimed at young people may have a more informal approach compared to a letter of complaint.

### 5.3

Clumsy or incorrect expression is also taken account of under 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.

## **6. Construct complex sentences consistently and accurately, using paragraphs where appropriate (SCS 28)**

The emphasis for this category should be on the appropriate use of complex sentences for the type of document that is being written. Candidates should consider whether the use of simple sentences is appropriate or not, or whether complex sentences are under-used (too many simple sentences), over-used or absent altogether. Effective writing would typically use a combination of simple, compound and complex sentences.

Paragraphing also depends, to some extent, on the type of document being used, but at Level 2, all document types should contain paragraphs. Candidates should know when it is appropriate to use paragraphs and when paragraph breaks should occur.

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

*Paragraphs* (from SCS 28) has been paired with *Organise writing for different purposes using format and structure appropriate for audience and purpose* (SCS 25). 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 2

### 1. Spelling (SCS 22)

Spelling marks (SCS 22)	Marks
Spell correctly words used in work, study and daily life, including a range of specialist words	
Spelling is consistently accurate, including ambitious and /or irregular words where used.	<b>4</b>
Spelling is mostly correct, with occasional errors.	<b>3</b>
Spelling is accurate some of the time, with some accurate spelling of more complex or irregular words.	<b>2</b>
Limited accuracy: some accurate spelling of simple or regular words.	<b>1</b>
Spelling errors significantly impair meaning, or insufficient evidence to judge ability.	<b>0</b>

Centres should be familiar with the spelling demands at Entry Level and Level 1 of Functional Skills English Writing, details of which can be found [here](#). This will inform centres of the minimum spelling demands at Level 2, as lower level demands are subsumed into the levels above.

To achieve 4 marks for spelling, candidates will have to spell accurately consistently throughout the response. The response will also include suitably ambitious and/or irregular words for Level 2. 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 suitably ambitious and/or irregular for Level 2. 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.

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 20)

Punctuation marks (SCS 20) Punctuate writing correctly using a wide range of punctuation markers (e.g. colons, commas, inverted commas, apostrophes and quotation marks)	Marks
A range of punctuation (e.g. colons, commas, inverted commas, apostrophes, quotation marks) is used consistently accurately to mark the structure of sentences and give clarity and emphasis.	4
A range of punctuation is used mostly accurately, including punctuation within the sentence, e.g. commas used correctly to mark phrases or clauses and commas within lists.	3
Some accuracy / range in punctuation: some sentences are correctly demarcated, with some use of other punctuation, e.g. commas to mark phrases or clauses or within lists.	2
Limited accuracy / range in punctuation.	1
Punctuation errors significantly impair meaning, or insufficient evidence to judge ability.	0

At level 2, the examples of punctuation marks given include colons, commas, inverted commas, apostrophes and quotation marks. 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.

Lower level requirements are subsumed into Level 2, so upper and lower case letters, apostrophes for omission, exclamation marks and question marks should be used correctly.

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. 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 (ie 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 21)

<b>Grammar marks (SCS 21)</b>	<b>Marks</b>
Use correct grammar (e.g. subject–verb agreement, correct and consistent use of a range of tenses, definite and indefinite articles) and modality devices (e.g. to express probability or desirability)	
Grammar is consistently accurate: e.g. length, focus and structure of sentences are varied to add clarity and emphasis; tenses and verb forms such as modals (would have been...) 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 often incorrectly used or omitted when needed.	2
Limited accuracy in grammar: e.g. errors in verb forms and tenses are frequent and tense choice is often incorrect; definite and indefinite articles are frequently inaccurate 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 21 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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