

How to Pass the Writing Exam B2/C1

Students struggle with writing for various reasons:

- lack of practice
- lack of knowledge
- fail to understand the system
- how to structure ideas
- functioning under pressure

We are going to focus on:

- the writing rubric
- Writing structures
- register and tone
- linking words
- cohesive devices
- plugging in appropriate grammar

1. Writing Rubric - What the examiner is looking for

- Content / Task Fulfillment
 - Have you answered all the content questions? How clear is it that you answered the questions?
- Communicative Achievement
 - Does it translate well from Spanish to English? Is it difficult to read/understand?
 - Does it leave space for doubt? Who? Why? How?
 - Have you justified your reasoning with examples?
 - Does the writing match the tone? An essay - is it balanced or argumentative?
- Organisation
 - Have you organised your paragraphs correctly?
 - Are you using the correct writing structure? Does it need a title, for example?
 - Are you using linking words and cohesive devices? Does the writing have flow?
 - Have you used (;) or other interesting punctuation? 1 sentence is NOT 1 paragraph
 - What are the requirements of the writing? B2 Cambridge essay is different to a C1 Cambridge essay
- Language
 - Are you using the correct grammar and vocabulary for the register of the writing? Is it formal or informal?
 - Are you demonstrating the appropriate grammar and vocabulary for the level?

- You can make errors at your level, but not a level lower, eg. C1 can't make errors at a B2 level

2. Writing Structures - how to set up the writing

- Understand what type of writing you are creating.
 - Cambridge essay - 4-5 paragraphs
 - Cambridge essay: formal (discursive) VS Languagecert essay: more informal (narrative)
 - Reports, proposals, articles require titles
 - Formal letters vary - complaint, commentary, application
 - understand letter structures
- Make sure each writing that you must produce FEELS distinctly different
- USE your introduction to tell the examiner what they are going to read without saying 'I'm going to talk about...'

3. Register and Tone - how must the writing sound

- Is the writing formal?
 - keep it neutral
 - your opinions are not important, your job is to debate your point
 - if your opinion is necessary, keep it for the end OR convince me your opinion is the correct one
 - avoid contractions
 - do not use flowery vocabulary, ie. adjectives, phrasal verbs and idioms (within reason)
- Is the writing more informal?
 - try add a rhetorical question
 - add more flowery vocabulary
 - know your audience (even informal letters shouldn't be addressed as Sup my buddy)

4. Linking Words - join ideas or sentences

- Specifically for formal writings:
 - But - however, nevertheless, although, etc
 - And - moreover, in addition, furthermore, etc
 - Because - since, due to, because of, owing to
 - Result - thus (de este modo), therefore (por lo tanto), hence (por eso), etc

5. Cohesive devices: create natural flow to a writing

- This means that...
- Despite the fact that...
- For instance, ...
- As a result, ...
- We live in a society where...
- Another aspect to take into consideration is...

6. Grammar: how to plug in appropriate grammar structures

The only advice here is to look at the major grammar points in your level and make an effort to add them to your writing

B2 - passive voice, phrasal verbs, reported speech, making comparisons, to or ing patterns, etc

C1 - negative inversions, cleft sentences, participle clauses, dependent prepositions, etc

★ Aurelia's Personal Tips

- try your best to avoid repeating the same vocabulary (good good good)
- the way you write shouldn't sound like the way you speak
- use a highlighter system to help you analyse your writing