

Writing for FCE

Cambridge English: First (FCE) Writing

Difficulty level: [B2](#) /Upper Intermediate

What is the First (FCE) Writing test like?

The test has two sections and takes about 80 minutes:

1. **Part 1** -[write an essay](#) based on prompts
2. **Part 2** - write one from a choice of 4 questions: [an article](#), [an essay](#), an e-mail, a letter, [a report](#), a story, a review

Scoring

Each part has the same number of marks

How to prepare for the First (FCE) Writing test

- Choose a question that you are interested in. You will write better if you know the subject.
- Read the instructions carefully before you start. Make notes. You must include all the points in the instructions
- Make a plan before you start writing. Decide what information to put in each paragraph
- Think about who you are writing to and use an appropriate style of language
- Try to use a range of complex language

How to prepare for the First (FCE) Writing test: ESSAY

- **Read the instructions, the question or statement and the two notes you are given**
- **Decide whether to write for or against, or whether to give arguments both for or against**
- **Think of a third idea to add to the notes you are given. Write this down, then make a plan**
- **Write a short introductory paragraph, commenting generally on the topic, e.g. "The climate is changing, so many people are saying...." You can give your own opinion here and/or in your last paragraph.**
- **Write in a fairly formal style, including linking expressions**
- **Write at least two sentences about each main point, giving reasons and possibly also examples**
- **Give your opinion by summarising your main points in a concluding paragraph**

- **Check your essay for mistakes – and that you have written at least 140 words**

Difficulty level: [B2](#) /Upper Intermediate **Writing an ESSAY**

Write 140-190 words in an appropriate style.

In your English class you have been talking about old people in society. Now your English teacher has asked you to write an **essay**.

Around the world, people are living and staying healthy for longer and longer. What changes does this bring to today's society? Are these changes good or bad?

Notes

Write about:

1. Caring for the elderly
2. Jobs
3. _____ (your own idea)

Disadvantages of an ageing population

Around the world , people are living much longer . Although we all hope for a long life and none of us wish for our elderly family members to die , this trend brings a number of problems .

Firstly , more people are needed to care for the elderly . Few people like this kind of work because it is badly-paid and uninteresting . As a result , elderly people get bad quality care.

Another problem is employment . Elderly people don't want to stop working because they want an income and a social life . They want to stay active for as long as possible , so they don't quit their jobs . As a result , young people find it more difficult to find work.

Thirdly , an elderly population brings economic problems . Governments have to pay money for old age pensions . In many countries , there simply isn't enough money for this . In the future , we are likely to see a lot more poverty among old people.

To sum up , although it is great that people are staying healthy and living longer lives , it will bring a lot of problems to today's society .

See a sample answer for [the benefits of an ageing population](#)

Features and advice:

- The essay task in Part 1 tests your ability to write an opinion essay for the teacher of an English class
- There is a question or statement to discuss and you are also given some notes to guide your writing. You should write between 140 and 190 words.
- You should allow about 40 minutes for this task, including time to plan your work and check for mistakes at the end.
- Your essay must be well organised into paragraphs, with good linking expressions.
- As your reader will be a teacher, you should use fairly formal language.

- You should write full sentences with correct grammar and punctuation, using a good range of language with accurate spelling.

Difficulty level: [B2](#) /Upper Intermediate – Writing a REVIEW

How to prepare for the First (FCE) Writing test: REVIEW

- Read the instructions and try to think of something relevant that you have seen, heard or read to review. Or just use your imagination
- Think about who the reader of your review will be and what they will want to know
- Note down some points to mention, and spend a few minutes making a plan that includes a description, an explanation and a recommendation. Decide how many paragraphs you will use
- Give your review **a title** that tells readers what it is about
- Write your text in a style that is appropriate for the publication and the readers
- Use some expressions to praise, criticise, advise or recommend
- Use some contrast links to describe unexpected things or to make both positive and negative points
- Finish by recommending or advising readers against the subject of your review.

Write 140-190 words in an appropriate style.

You see this announcement in a Film and TV Magazine.

Film / TV show reviews wanted

Next month is National Science month. In next month's issue, we want to celebrate films and TV shows that promote science.

Do you know any shows or film which promote science? Write us a review, explaining what it is about, why you enjoy it and why it encouraged you to learn about science.

The best reviews will be published in our next issue.

Review of Jurassic Park

One of my favourite films which promotes science is Jurassic Park . The film is about some scientists who manage to recreate dinosaurs . They build a park on a tropical island where visitors can view the dinosaurs . But the dinosaurs escape and start to kill people . Eventually , the visitors escape from the island. The film is enjoyable because it is exciting and full of suspense . The acting isn't great , but it has amazing special effects and I enjoyed every minute of it . It's perfect for families with older children and adults who like

action movies.

Although the film is primarily an adventure film , it helped me to become interested in science . When I was young , I found science difficult and uninteresting . But this film made me wonder whether it actually is possible to create dinosaurs . I started to pay more attention in my biology classes , and I even started to read books on the subject.

Even though I probably won't become a scientist in the future , I appreciate films like Jurassic Park . They help us understand that science can create both wonderful and terrible things .

Features and advice:

- The REVIEW task in Part 2 tests your ability to describe something you have experienced (e.g. a TV programme or a product) and give your opinion of it, with a recommendation to the reader
- You read a description of a situation and then write a review of it in 140-190 words. You should allow about 40 minutes for this task, including time at the end to check your work.
- The instructions also tell you where your review will be published, you therefore have to write in an appropriate style
- Your review must be well organised into paragraphs, with good linking expressions.
- You should write full sentences with correct grammar and punctuation, using a good range of language with accurate spelling.

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How to prepare for the First (FCE) Writing test: ARTICLE

- Read the instructions. Do you know enough about the topic to write an article?
- Think about who the reader of your article will be and what they will want to know
- Spend a few minutes making a plan based on all parts of the task, noting down points and language for each paragraph. Use adjectives.
- Give your article **a title** that tells readers what it is about, to attract your readers' attention and an interesting introduction to make them want to keep reading
- Write your text in a lively way that will hold readers' interest. You can describe your own experiences and give your own opinions.
- Use language that is fairly informal. Try to include some interesting expressions, e.g. *it's well worth it* and perhaps questions like *I wonder what would happen if...*
- Make the ending interesting by encouraging readers to think about what they have read
- Check your article for mistakes

Write 140-190 words in an appropriate style.

Articles wanted for our new page on family life.

Are you an only child or do you have brothers and sisters?

Are you the oldest, the youngest or a middle child?

What are the advantages of being in your place in the family? What are the disadvantages?

Do you wish you had fewer or more siblings? Have you always felt this way?

Family life

I have two half sisters, but they are much older than me. I haven't lived with them since I was five years old. I spent most of my childhood and all my teenage years so far as an only child.

There are a few advantages of being the only child in the family. First of all, my parents and grandparents have more money to spend on me. As a result, I can do interesting sports like sailing and skiing and I can go on exciting holidays. They also have time to spend with me. We have interesting discussions and they can help me with my homework.

It is boring sometimes though. When I was younger I wanted a brother or sister to play with. Holidays were especially boring because I couldn't visit my friends. As I got older, I learnt that brothers and sisters are

sometimes annoying , and I stopped minding so much.

On the whole , I think the advantages of being an only child outweigh the drawbacks . But I am aware that my feelings may change again when I get older !

Features and advice:

- The ARTICLE task in Part 2 tests your ability to write an interesting text for a magazine or newsletter
- You may need to write descriptions, give examples, make comments or give your opinions
- You are writing for readers who are already interested in the topic
- You should write 140-190 words.

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How to prepare for the First (FCE) Writing test: REPORT

- **Read the instructions.** Do you know enough about the topic to write an article?
- **Decide who will read your report and what they will want to know**
- **Think about any knowledge and/or personal experience you could mention, and note down some ideas**
- **Decide if you will use headings and think of a good title that indicates the content of the report**
- **Spend a few minutes making a plan based on all parts of the task, including recommendations or suggestions**
- **Write your text in a style that is appropriate for your readers. Try to make it interesting; if possible, include some facts that may be new to them**
- **Use useful expressions from your book**

Write 140-190 words in an appropriate style.

A report about sports facilities

Your local tourist office has asked you to write a report on the sports facilities in your area to give out to English-speaking visitors.

Exeter has a comprehensive selection of sports and leisure facilities . These include sports centres , running tracks , indoor bowling greens , a golf course and a driving range as well as swimming pools , sports pitches and an artificial turf pitch . Tennis courts are available in many of the public

parks , and are free to use .

The main swimming pool in Exeter has recently been renovated and is now very attractive . A fitness centre and sauna are also available . There is an open-air swimming pool for use in the summer months .

The local countryside provides the perfect opportunity for horse-riding , which needs to be booked in advance . There are many lovely walks on the nearby

hills . Cycling in Exeter is popular both as a recreational activity and as a convenient way of getting to work or the shops .

Features and advice:

- The Report task in Part 2 tests your ability to give factual information and make recommendations or suggestions
- The instructions include a description of a situation. You have to write a report of between 140-190 words
- Allow about 40 minutes for this task, including time at the end to check your work
- The report may be for a teacher or school director, or classmates, members of the same club, etc. You therefore have to write in an appropriate style.
- Organise your text into report format and use headings if needed
- Write full sentences and try to use correct grammar and punctuation, with a good range of language with accurate spelling.

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How to prepare for the First (FCE) Writing test: [EMAIL](#)

You are keen to study English in London. Read the school advertisement and the notes from your teacher. Then write an email to Mr Williams at the Big Ben Language School asking for details.

Language courses in London at the Big Ben School of English

Our well-equipped school offers English language courses in the heart of London.

The school has a friendly atmosphere and organises a full range of sporting and social activities as well as excursions out of London.

The school is conveniently located near the museums and the river. Accommodation can be arranged with carefully selected British families.

Contact Jim Williams by email (jw@bigbenschool.org.uk) for further details.

When you write to the school make sure you find out:

- how many students there will be in the school and in each class
- what qualifications the teachers have
- what resources the school has
- what is included in the price
- what amenities there are in the area

Email to a language school

Dear Mr Williams ,

I saw your advertisement for language courses in London and I am writing to find out more about the courses you offer . I am thinking of attending a course for two or three weeks in August . Could you please send me more information and details of prices ?

I would particularly like to know how many students attend the school , and how many students there are in a class . I'd also like to know what resources the school has . For example , is there a library where I can study in the evenings ? Could you tell me something about the staff ? Are they all qualified teachers ?

I would be interested in having more details of the social and sports programme . Are the activities included in the price of the course ? Could you tell me about the cost of accommodation too ?

Also , can you tell me what amenities there are near the school ? For example , is there a park or cinema nearby ?

I look forward to receiving your reply .

Regards ,