

Cambridge English

Cambridge English: First for Schools

Lesson Plan: Writing

This lesson plan accompanies *Cambridge English: First for Schools 2* Writing Test 8, Part 1, Question 1.

This lesson is suitable for students at the middle of their *Cambridge English: First for Schools* course.

Lesson Goals

1. Develop students' awareness of what is required in this part of the First for Schools exam
2. Provide students with a structure for writing an opinion essay
3. Give students an opportunity to plan and write a Part 1 answer with guidance
4. Encourage students to analyse their writing based on the four aspects included in the assessment scales: Content, Communicative Achievement, Organisation and Language

Activity (see brackets for resources required)	Time needed	Interaction
Warmer (copies of Part 1 Question 1 for individuals)	5-10 mins	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write FREE TIME on the board. Ask students what hobbies and activities they do in their free time • Write the full title of the essay in Question 1 on the board and discuss with students. Write up their points of view under the title, separating them into those that agree and disagree. Insist on students giving reasons for their opinion. • Give students a copy of the exam question. Ask them what they think about the two aspects included in the notes, giving reasons to justify their thoughts. • Ask students to develop their own idea to include in note 3. They can based this on the notes on the board from the previous discussion or a new idea they have. Feedback ideas as a class 	<p>3 mins</p> <p>3 mins</p> <p>2 mins</p> <p>2 mins</p>	<p>S-T</p> <p>S-T</p> <p>S-T</p> <p>S then S-T</p>
Main activities (copies of Part 1 Question 1, Resource 1, Resource 2, and Resource 3 handouts for individuals, paper and pens)	30-35 mins	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check students understand that the question requires them to write an opinion essay. They should give their opinion <u>and</u> clear reasons based on all the notes provided. They should not give both sides of the argument and must write 140 – 190 words. • Discuss the importance of planning and structuring essay answers. Given that students have about 40 minutes to complete this part, a plan provides structure and helps students to remember to include all of the aspects included in the notes (NB: It's important for students to be aware that they will 	<p>1 min</p> <p>2 mins</p>	<p>T-S</p> <p>T-S</p>

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<p>immediately lose marks if they fail to include one of the points).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give students Resource 1. Look at the five paragraph structure for an opinion essay and check understanding. Read through useful vocabulary and discuss the importance of linking words to provide logical coherence and structure. • Ask students to write their own plan for Question 1 based on the notes they made during the warmer. They should follow the structure in Resource 1 but write ideas in bullet point format. Encourage student to think of specific details to give strength to the reasons for their point of view. • Discuss the aspects included in writing assessment. Ask students if they know how their writing is assessed, then give out Resource 2 and ask them to match the aspects with their correct definitions (Answers: A. iii. B. i C. iv D.ii). • Tell students they are going to imagine they are the examiners and that they have to assess the piece of writing provided in Resource 2 (Model Answer). • Give out Resource 3 and ask students to compare their assessment with the examiners assessment. Discuss any doubts or inconsistencies as a class. • Now tell students they have 15 minutes to write part of their answer to Question 1 based on their plan and considering the assessment scales. 	<p>2 mins</p> <p>5 mins</p> <p>2 mins</p> <p>5 mins</p> <p>3 mins</p> <p>15 mins</p>	<p>T-S</p> <p>S</p> <p>S-T</p> <p>S</p> <p>S</p> <p>then S-T</p> <p>S</p>
<p>Extension activity (copies of Resource 4 for individuals)</p>		
<p>Self and Peer Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write the following questions on the board and ask students to assess their own work based on these questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have you included all the points in your notes? 2. Is your writing organised into clear paragraphs? 3. Have you checked your spelling carefully? 4. Have you given a clear reason to justify each point? 5. Have you used a variety of adjectives/adverbs? If you have repeated words, can you use synonyms? 6. Have you included linking words to connect your ideas? 7. Have you given your opinion in the first and the final paragraph – but using different words? 8. Is your writing too long/short? • Pair students and ask them to exchange their writings. Using the assessment scales in Resource 4, ask them to assess their partner’s writing, giving a mark on the scale of 0 – 5 for each aspect. • Ask students to provide constructive feedback to their partner, giving reasons for their marks and suggesting possible ways to improve their writing 	<p>2 mins</p> <p>4 mins</p> <p>9 mins</p>	<p>S</p> <p>S</p> <p>S-S</p>

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Resource 1

Structure and content plan

Follow this structure for an opinion essay:

Paragraph	Content
1.	Introduce the topic using a general opening statement and <u>give your opinion</u> . Say whether you agree or disagree with the statement.
2.	First reason (point 1 of Notes) to support your opinion. Provide specific justifications for your opinion, using examples if necessary.
3.	As above, but for point 2 of Notes.
4.	As above, but for point 3 of Notes. NB: Make sure this point is a clearly different reason than those given in Notes 1 and 2. It should be original and well justified.
5.	Summarize your ideas and <u>repeat your opinion</u> using different words to provide a strong conclusion.

REMEMBER!

- You have to write 140 – 190 words
- Use a variety of grammatical structures and mature vocabulary. Avoid repeating adjectives and adverbs. Think of ways to paraphrase or use an appropriate synonym.
- Check your writing carefully
- If you want to add words to your writing, use a small arrow to indicate where it goes and write it clearly above your original text

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Useful vocabulary for an opinion essay

Giving your opinion:

- In my opinion / view...
- I personally feel that...
- I firmly believe that ...
- I partly / fully agree that ...

Organising your writing and justifying your opinion:

- Firstly / First of all....
- To start with...
- The second aspect is...
- Secondly...
- Another reason why....
- Finally...
- In conclusion....
- To sum up
- In summary

More useful linking words:

- In addition (to this)
- Consequently
- On balance
- What is more
- Furthermore
- Moreover
- As a result
- However
- Therefore

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Resource 2

1. Match the four aspects of the assessment scale for Writing with their definitions:

- i. **Content**
- ii. **Communicative Achievement**
- iii. **Organisation**
- iv. **Language**

- A. the way the piece of writing is put together, in other words if it is logical and ordered, and the punctuation is correct.
- B. how well the task has been fulfilled, in other words if you have done what you were asked to do.
- C. focuses on your vocabulary and grammar. This includes the range of language as well as how accurate it is.
- D. how appropriate the writing is for the type of essay required and whether you have used the appropriate register.

2. Now use the Assessment Scale (see Resource 3), to mark this model answer using a scale of 0 – 5 marks for each part:

Sample G (Test 8, Question 1 – Essay)

Almost every day we get together with our friends and exchange news – details about our current life. But is it a waste of time or just as important as studying? I reckon it isn't a waste of time.

While chatting to friends, we learn how to get on with people. This skill could be useful in the future for example in job interview.

Some people would still disagree and say there was more important thing to do. In my opinion every person needs some time to relax and hit back. Chatting is a good way for that, much better than playing computer games.

However, if you find an English speaking friend you could practice new language while chatting. That way it will benefit you both.

All in all, I think that chatting to friends is as important as studying, while chatting you still learn new skills which will be necessary in your future.

Aspect	Content	Communicate Achievement	Organisation	Language
Mark				

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Resource 3

See how your assessment of the Model Answer provided in Resource 3 compares with the examiners assessment of the same text.

Scales	Mark	Commentary
Content	5	All content is relevant and the target reader would be fully informed. The two points given in the question are covered appropriately and a third point, learning a language, is included.
Communicative Achievement	4	The conventions of essay writing are used effectively to present and develop straightforward ideas. General statements are supported by personal opinions and the target reader is addressed directly to hold their attention throughout.
Organisation	4	The essay is well organised and coherent, with a variety of linking words and cohesive devices. Referencing is used to connect ideas within and across sentences and paragraphs. Although paragraphs tend to be short, they have been used to present each new point clearly.
Language	4	There is a range of everyday vocabulary used appropriately. Good control is shown over a range of simple and some more complex grammatical forms. There are repeated errors with singular/plural forms, but these are minimal and do not impede communication.

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Resource 4

B2	Content	Communicative Achievement	Organisation	Language
5	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate.	Text is well-organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effect.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. Uses a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication.
4	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i>			
3	Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is on the whole informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is generally well-organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices.	Uses a range of everyday vocabulary appropriately, with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control. Errors do not impede communication.
2	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i>			
1	Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task in generally appropriate ways to communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is connected and coherent, using basic linking words and a limited number of cohesive devices.	Uses everyday vocabulary generally appropriately, while occasionally overusing certain lexis. Uses simple grammatical forms with a good degree of control. While errors are noticeable, meaning can still be determined.
0	Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed.	<i>Performance below Band 1.</i>		

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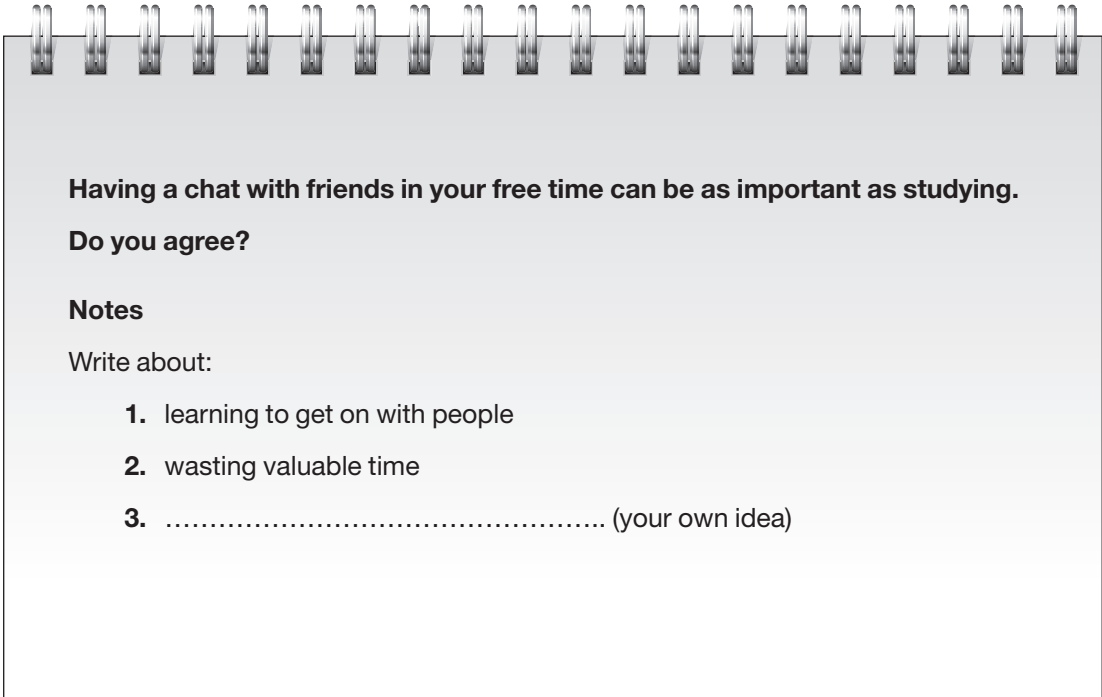
WRITING (1 hour 20 minutes)

Part 1

You **must** answer this question. Write your answer in **140–190** words in an appropriate style **on the separate answer sheet**.

- 1 In your English class you have been talking about free time. Now your English teacher has asked you to write an essay for homework.

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



Having a chat with friends in your free time can be as important as studying.

Do you agree?

Notes

Write about:

1. learning to get on with people
2. wasting valuable time
3. (your own idea)

Marks and results

Reading and Use of English

Candidates record their answers on a separate answer sheet. One mark is given for each correct answer in Parts 1, 2, 3 and 7. For Part 4, candidates are awarded a mark of 2, 1 or 0 for each question according to the accuracy of their response. Correct spelling is required in Parts 2, 3 and 4. Two marks are given for each correct answer in Parts 5 and 6.

Candidates will receive separate scores for Reading and for Use of English. The total marks candidates achieve for each section are converted into a score on the Cambridge English Scale. These are equally weighted when calculating the overall score on the scale (an average of the individual scores for the four skills and Use of English).

Writing

Examiners look at four aspects of your writing: Content, Communicative Achievement, Organisation and Language.

- Content focuses on how well you have fulfilled the task, in other words if you have done what you were asked to do.
- Communicative Achievement focuses on how appropriate the writing is for the letter or story and whether you have used the appropriate register.
- Organisation focuses on the way you put the piece of writing together, in other words if it is logical and ordered, and the punctuation is correct.
- Language focuses on your vocabulary and grammar. This includes the range of language as well as how accurate it is.

For each of the subscales, the examiner gives a maximum of 5 marks. Examiners use the following assessment scale:

Marks and results

B2	Content	Communicative Achievement	Organisation	Language
5	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate.	Text is well-organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effect.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. Uses a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication.
4	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i>			
3	Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is on the whole informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is generally well-organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices.	Uses a range of everyday vocabulary appropriately, with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control. Errors do not impede communication.
2	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i>			
1	Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task in generally appropriate ways to communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is connected and coherent, using basic linking words and a limited number of cohesive devices.	Uses everyday vocabulary generally appropriately, while occasionally overusing certain lexis. Uses simple grammatical forms with a good degree of control. While errors are noticeable, meaning can still be determined.
0	Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed.	<i>Performance below Band 1.</i>		

Length of responses

Make sure you write the correct number of words. Responses which are too short may not have an adequate range of language and may not provide all the information that is required. Responses which are too long may contain irrelevant content and have a negative effect on the reader.

Varieties of English

You are expected to use a particular variety of English with some degree of consistency in areas such as spelling, and not for example switch from using a British spelling of a word to an American spelling of the same word.

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Some people would still disagree and say there was more important thing to do. In my opinion every person needs some time to relax and hit back. Chatting is a good way for that, much better than playing computer games.

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All in all, I think that chatting to friends is as important as studying, while chatting you still learn new skills which will be necessary in your future.

Scales	Mark	Commentary
Content	5	All content is relevant and the target reader would be fully informed. The two points given in the question are covered appropriately and a third point, learning a language, is included.
Communicative Achievement	4	The conventions of essay writing are used effectively to present and develop straightforward ideas. General statements are supported by personal opinions and the target reader is addressed directly to hold their attention throughout.
Organisation	4	The essay is well organised and coherent, with a variety of linking words and cohesive devices. Referencing is used to connect ideas within and across sentences and paragraphs. Although paragraphs tend to be short, they have been used to present each new point clearly.
Language	4	There is a range of everyday vocabulary used appropriately. Good control is shown over a range of simple and some more complex grammatical forms. There are repeated errors with singular/plural forms, but these are minimal and do not impede communication.