

Writing Guide: ECL Language Exam Level B2 – Email

Writing Tips:

1. Make sure you understand the task and the genre of writing (e.g. essay, email, etc.). In the sample task below, you're writing an **email** of 150 words. The email should be informal and friendly.
2. If you go over 150 words, make sure it's only 10% over the required amount (165 words max). Try not to write fewer than 150 words.
3. Organize your email in short paragraphs (e.g. introductory paragraph, paragraphs to cover the bullet points, and concluding paragraph). You don't have to keep the bullet points in the order they appear.
4. Do not forget to separate the paragraphs (e.g. indent or one-line space). Don't just write one paragraph that isn't organized into cohesive units.
5. Make sure your handwriting is as clear as possible so the exam graders can read your composition.
6. When writing your application, keep in mind all the graded features (grammar, written accuracy, spelling and paragraphing, vocabulary, style and cohesive devices, and communicative effectiveness).

Sample Writing Task:

You have a special hobby that you would like your friend to pursue, too. Write an e-mail (around 150 words) to your friend and include the following:

- *what the specific hobby is (BULLET POINT 1)*
- *why it would be great for your friend (BULLET POINT 2)*
- *any expenses required (BULLET POINT 3)*
- *what effects a hobby has on one's physical/mental condition (BULLET POINT 4)*

Hi _____,

I would like to tell you... (Writing Starter)

During a live exam, you do not have to make a draft. But you should plan what to write about and how to cover the bullet points. (Your use of English will be scored, not what background knowledge you have.)

Paragraph 1 (15-25 words) – *Don't forget about the genre's features (how a personal e-mail should be organized, etc.).*

Paragraphs 2-4 (100-120 words) – *Content related to the bullet points. Each bullet point can be a short paragraph. Keep your email informal and friendly.*

Paragraph 5 (15-25 words) – *Sum up your overall opinion about your hobby.*

Sample Email (with reference to the bullet points):

Hi Sarah,

My hobby is running. I run on tracks and trails. *(INTRO/BULLET POINT 1)*

Running helps me stay in shape and make friends. In my city, there are running clubs. I'm a member of a trail running club. We run on the mountains around town. You mentioned you don't have many friends in your new town. Running is a great way to make new connections. *(BULLET POINT 2)*

Running is really cheap. It beats going to a gym and paying for membership. You'll need a good pair of running shoes, which will last one year. I recommend getting shoes for pavement and trails. You'll spend less on your shoes than a gym membership. *(BULLET POINT 3)*

This hobby won't just have a positive impact on your physical health. It will also improve your mental health. The more I run, the more positive and relaxed I am. Running gets endorphins to fire in your brain, which increases pleasure and happiness. So buy some running shoes and start running! *(BULLET POINT 4/CONCLUSION)*

Love,
Debbie

Word Count: 161

Features of the composition to be scored:

Formal Accuracy/Grammar – The email has clear and complex grammatical structures required at this level with no mistakes.

Written Accuracy/Paragraphing/Punctuation/Spelling – The email is organized well with no spelling or punctuation mistakes.

Vocabulary/Range of Word Choice – The email is filled with a wide range of vocabulary that is well-chosen, relevant, and precise.

Style/Genre – The email is organized in a clear, coherent, and cohesive way, meeting the requirements for the writing genre.

Communicative Effectiveness/Task Completion – The email has adequate elaboration on all the bullet points. Task is well completed.

Conclusion: If you follow this guide above, you will perform well on the ECL writing section of the exam. Keep in mind that there are different genres of writing that you will be asked to complete on this language exam. You may find samples for all the possible genres. Good luck and happy studies!