

Writing Guide: ECL Language Exam Level B2 – Essay/Composition

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 a short **essay** of 200 words.
2. If you go over 200 words, make sure it's only 10% over the required amount (220 words max). Try not to write fewer than 200 words.
3. Organize your essay in 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 composition, keep in mind all the graded features (grammar, written accuracy, spelling and paragraphing, vocabulary, style and cohesive devices, and communicative effectiveness).

Sample Writing Task:

A magazine has just issued a public survey on who would get the greatest number of votes for "The Man/Woman of the Year" award. They are asking their readers to write an essay (200 words) on the following:

- *who you would vote for and why (BULLET POINT 1)*
- *how you got to know this person (BULLET POINT 2)*
- *how this person affected/changed your life (BULLET POINT 3)*
- *what your opinion is on giving such an award (BULLET POINT 4)*

I recently came across the public survey about... (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 (20-30 words) – *Don't forget about the genre's features (how you start an email or essay, etc.) Introduce the main points on the topic.*

Paragraph 2 (100-150 words) – *Content related to the bullet points. This can be one paragraph, or broken down into several paragraphs.*

Paragraph 3 (20-30 words) – *A quick conclusion summarizing the main points.*

Sample Essay (with reference to the bullet points):

I recently came across the public survey about “The Man/Woman of the Year” award. I would like to share my opinion in your magazine. *(SHORT INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH ABOUT THE TOPIC AND THE GENRE RELATED TASK – AN ESSAY).*

I nominate Elon Musk for the award. I learned about him from the media because he’s always on talk shows. I also read about him in magazines like *Green Cars (BULLET POINT 2)*. He is an exceptional individual with many ideas that are moving humanity into the future. His *Space X* company is pushing us to explore the universe, and his *Tesla* electric cars are helping us cut down on CO2 emissions *(BULLET POINT 1)*. Musk’s initiatives have inspired me to change my driving habits, and I would like to buy a hybrid to use cleaner energy and protect the environment. He makes me want to get around with minimal pollution. *(BULLET POINT 3)*. I’m convinced that such awards are necessary because they raise awareness about all of the innovations people around the world are developing. These awards help us learn about people like Musk who will find new planets if earth becomes uninhabitable *(BULLET POINT 4)*.

Elon Musk would get the most number of votes and he should be recognized as one of the most important individuals of 2018. His ideas create a brighter future for humanity. *(CONCLUSION/SUMMARY OF MAIN IDEAS).*

Word Count: 200

Features of the composition to be scored:

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

Written Accuracy/Paragraphing/Punctuation/Spelling – The essay is organized into three clear paragraphs with no spelling or punctuation mistakes.

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

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

Communicative Effectiveness/Task Completion – The essay 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!