

Writing Guide: ECL Language Exam Level B2 – Formal Email/Letter

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 **formal email** of 150 words. The email should be formal and informative.
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, formal 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 formal email, 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 recently purchased a product from an online vendor, but you would like to return or exchange it because it has malfunctioned. Write a formal email/letter (around 150 words) of complaint to the manufacturer to explain the situation. Include the following:

- *what product you purchased, as well as when and where the purchase was made (BULLET POINT 1)*
- *description of what the problem is with the product (BULLET POINT 2)*
- *expectations you have for the return, refund, or exchange (BULLET POINT 3)*
- *promise to give positive online review if issue is resolved (BULLET POINT 4)*

To Whom It May Concern,

I recently purchased... (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 formal e-mail/letter 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 formal and informative.*

Paragraph 5 (15-25 words) – *Sum up your overall requests in email/letter of complaint.*

Sample Formal Email/Letter (with reference to the bullet points):

To Whom It May Concern,

I purchased a LED light for my bike online on 3/7/2018 – a Bikolite (model number JBK-L122). (*INTRODUCTION/BULLET POINT 1*)

Unfortunately, the light is no longer functioning. I attached the light to the handle bar and used it to commute to work. It got wet in a rainstorm, but the product description claims its waterproof. Currently, it won't charge. Please see the attached photos – the LED lights are dim. (*BULLET POINT 2*)

This light is advertised as having a 1-year guarantee. Therefore, I'm requesting either a full refund to the credit card, or a free exchange. I would also expect that you deliver the replacement Bikolite with free shipping to compensate me for this inconvenience. During the commute home on Friday at night, the light failed at it was extremely dangerous getting home without reliable illumination in the streets. (*BULLET POINT 3*)

Thanks for your prompt attention to this matter. If we can resolve this quickly, I can provide a positive review on your website despite the faulty product. (*BULLET POINT 4/CONCLUSION*)

Sincerely,
Jen Davis

World Count: 164

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!