

Writing reference

What to expect in the exam

The Writing section follows the Reading section of Paper 1. Paper 1 (both Reading and Writing) lasts 1 hour and 30 minutes. You do three tasks.

- In Part 1, there is one task which you **must** do.
- In Part 2, there is one task which you **must** do.
- In Part 3, you choose **one** of two tasks.

Part 1

Sentence transformations

You have practised sentence transformation for Part 1 in Units 1, 3 and 7.

In Part 1:

- there are five questions (Questions 1–5) and an example
- each question has a complete sentence followed by a sentence with a gap in the middle
- all the sentences, including the example, are about the same topic
- you get 1 mark for each correct answer, giving a total of 5 marks.

Part 1 tests your ability to:

- understand grammatical structures at PET level
- rephrase information
- write grammatically correct PET-level sentences.

How to do Part 1

- 1 Make sure you are familiar with all the grammar areas you need to study for PET. See the Grammar Reference on pages 128–144, and the *PET Handbook* published by Cambridge ESOL.
- 2 Study the example. This will introduce the topic of the five questions, and remind you of the kinds of changes you will have to make.
- 3 For each question 1–5, look carefully at the first sentence and think about its meaning.
- 4 Study both sentences and decide what grammar point the question is testing, e.g. active to passive, *too* and *enough*, comparative adverbs, etc.
- 5 Think of different ways of saying the same thing as the first sentence.
- 6 Choose the correct words and fill them in on the question paper. Remember that short forms like *don't* count as two words.

- 7 Read through both sentences again, checking that they mean exactly the same.
- 8 Write the one, two or three words on your answer sheet. Check that you haven't made any spelling mistakes.

Exercise 1

Read the Writing Part 1 instructions and study the example below. Why would each of answers a, b, c and d be wrong?

- a the firrst time
- b the time after
- c the first time that
- d never before that

- Here are some sentences about flying in a helicopter for fun.
- For each question, complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, **using no more than three words**.
- **Write only the missing words on your answer sheet.**
- You may use this page for any rough work.

Example: I had never flown in a helicopter before.
It was the first time I had flown in a helicopter.

Exercise 2

Complete sentences 1–5 using these words.

us to spent the most any flights as cold as

- 1 We went on a Saturday because you can't fly on Sundays.
There aren't on Sundays so we went on a Saturday.
- 2 It was warmer inside the helicopter than I had expected.
Inside the helicopter it wasn't I had expected.
- 3 'Please switch off your mobile phones,' the pilot said.
The pilot asked switch off our mobile phones.
- 4 We stayed up in the air for half an hour.
We half an hour flying.
- 5 I've never had such an exciting experience before!
It was exciting experience I've ever had!

Exercise 3

In the example on page 145, *never before* changes to the expression *it was the (first time)* + past perfect simple. For each question 1–5, look at the difference between the first and the second sentence. What does each question test?

Part 2

You have studied and practised writing Part 2 in Units 2, 6, 8 and 10.

In Part 2, you:

- are asked to write a short message of between 35 and 45 words in the form of an email, note, postcard, etc.
- are told who you are writing to and why
- must include three content points which may ask you to *thank, invite, suggest, explain, apologise*, etc.
- should open and close the letter in a suitable way (e.g. *Hi, best wishes*)
- can get a maximum of 5 marks for this part.

Do not spend too long on this part or you may not have enough time to answer the longer Part 3 writing task where you can get a maximum of 15 marks.

Part 2 tests your ability to:

- read and understand a task
- write a clear message within a word limit
- organise and connect your ideas well.

You **must**:

- include all three content points or you won't be given more than 3 marks, even if it is a very good answer
- make sure your message is clear
- be careful with your grammar, punctuation and spelling
- remember that short forms like *don't* count as two words
- write your answer in pencil on the answer sheet.

You **mustn't**:

- write a lot more than 45 words or your answer might not be as clear as a shorter answer
- write less than 35 words. A short answer is unlikely to include all three content points. If you write 25 words or less, you won't be given more than 2 marks.

How to do Part 2

- 1 Read the task very carefully. Underline the following:
 - why you are writing
 - what you are writing
 - who you are writing to
 - the three content points.

You have just stayed at your English-speaking friend's house for a week.

Write an email to your friend Adam
In your email you should:

- thank him
- tell him what you enjoyed most
- invite him to stay at your house

Write 35–45 words on your answer sheet.

(a) why

(b) what

(c) who

(d) three content points

- 2 Think of some ways to communicate each content point and note them down, e.g. *Thank you ever so much for ...*
- 3 Think about how you can connect your ideas with words like *but, and* or *because*.
- 4 Decide how you are going to open and close your message. Think about whether the message is formal or informal.
- 5 Write your complete text, including all three content points. Look back at the question, if necessary.
- 6 Don't waste time writing a rough copy. Remember you will need to leave enough time to do Writing Part 3.
- 7 Read the question and your answer again. Make sure you have:
 - included all three content points
 - written a clear message and connected your ideas with *and, but*, etc.
 - checked you haven't made mistakes with grammar, spelling or punctuation
 - opened and closed the message in an appropriate way
 - written 35–45 words.

Messages

Exercise 1

Read the Part 2 writing task below and answer these questions.

- 1 Who are you writing to? Why?
- 2 Will your message need to be formal or informal?
- 3 What are you writing?
- 4 What are the three content points?

You want to borrow your friend's camera.

Write an email to Eva. In your email, you should

- explain why you want to borrow the camera
- suggest when you can collect the camera
- say when you will give it back.

In the PET Writing Part 2 exam you may have to *thank someone, explain, invite, apologise, suggest, ask for something, etc.*

Ways of thanking someone

Thank you / Thanks (ever so much) for (giving me) such a nice present.

It was very kind of you to give me such a nice present.
(FORMAL)

Ways of explaining

I can't come to your party because I have to study for my exams.

I have to study for my exams. That's why I can't come to your party.

Ways of inviting

I'm going to the new Turkish restaurant. Would you like to come?

I'm going to the new Turkish restaurant. I'd like you to come.

Ways of apologising

I'm so sorry for breaking your camera.

I'm so sorry that I broke your camera.

Ways of suggesting

Why don't we go to the cinema?

How/What about (going to) the cinema?

Shall we go to the cinema?

Ways of asking

Can I borrow your camera, please?

Could you lend me your camera, please?

Would it be possible to borrow your camera, please?

Exercise 2

Write what you would say in the following situations.

- 1 You can't meet your friend at the weekend. Apologise.
I'm sorry that I can't meet you at the weekend.
- 2 You want to borrow your friend's camera. Explain why.
- 3 You spent two wonderful weeks at your English-speaking friend's house. Thank him/her.
- 4 Your English-speaking friend has never been to your country. Invite him/her.
- 5 You've arranged to meet an English-speaking friend. Suggest a place to meet.
- 6 You forgot your friend's birthday. Apologise.
- 7 You're going to Hugh's party. Ask him for directions to his house.

Exercise 3

Look at the following expressions we use to open and close messages and answer the two questions that follow.

Expressions used to open messages

Dear ... Hello, ... Hi ...

Expressions used to close messages

Best wishes All the best Yours Love Lots of love See you soon

- 1 Which expressions can we use in both a formal and an informal message?
- 2 Which expressions can we only use in an informal message?

Exercise 4

Read the three answers to the task in Exercise 1 written by PET candidates on the next page. Answer the questions by putting a tick (✓) or a cross (X) in the correct column.

Has each candidate:	A	B	C
1 included all three content points?	X		
2 written a clear message?	✓		
3 connected their ideas with <i>and, but, etc.?</i>			
4 opened and closed the message with an appropriate expression?			
5 written between 35 and 45 words?			

A Dear Eva,
I'd like to borrow your camera next Friday. I'll need it for the weekend since I'm going to take part in a competition and my camera has just broken. I'll return it next Monday. Let's keep in touch.
Love,

B Dear Eva,
How are you? I hope you're fine. I'm going to visit my friend this weekend but I have a big problem. Somebody stole my new camera. Could you lend me your camera? I can visit you on Friday. I'll return it next Monday. Write to me soon.
Love,

C Dear Eva
You told me you can lend me your camera. I will give it back next Friday.
See you,

Exercise 5

Look at the PET Writing Part 2 marking scheme (adapted from the Cambridge ESOL website, with kind permission). What mark would you give each of the three answers in Exercise 4?

Writing Part 2 marking scheme

Mark	Reason
5	Candidate has included all 3 content points appropriately. The message is very clear.
4	Candidate has included all 3 content points. The message is generally clear.
3	Candidate has tried to include all 3 content points. The message is not clear in places. OR Candidate has only included 2 content points but these are clear.
2	Candidate hasn't included 2 content points or these 2 points are not clearly communicated. The message is not completely communicated. OR The answer is a little short (20-25 words)
1	Content points hardly included and/or message difficult to understand. OR The answer is short (10-19 words)
0	Content points not included OR message impossible to understand OR too short (under 10 words)

Exercise 6

Read the following Part 2 writing task and underline:

- 1 why you are writing
- 2 what you are writing
- 3 who you are writing to
- 4 the three content points.

You are going to miss an English-speaking friend's birthday party tomorrow.

Write a note to your friend Ian. In your note, you should

- apologise for missing his party
- explain why you can't be there
- suggest meeting another day.

Write 35-45 words on your answer sheet.

Exercise 7

Read three students' answers and decide which one was given the maximum 5 marks.

A Hello, I am sorry but tommorrow I can't go to your party because I have my sister's wedding and she live in the USA. I must bring the train from Lyon and afterwards the plan from Paris. Shall we meet next weekend? Tanks,

Good idea to use your own words

There are 6 mistakes which make the message a little unclear

B Dear Ian, 'I would like to apologise for missing your birthday party. ²I will have to go to the doctor with my younger brother because our parents won't be able to go with him. ³Why don't we meet on Saturday so I can give you a gift? Best wishes,

All 3 content points included

Clear message connected with *because* and *so*

C Hi Ian, I'm sorry for not going to your party yesterday. I had a bad cold and my sister had an accident. I went to the hospital and the doctor told her that she had a broken leg, so I couldn't be there. I will see you tomorrow. Yours,

2 content points are not correct. The party is tomorrow and the writer doesn't **suggest** another day

Exercise 8

Rewrite the other two answers so that they could also be given the maximum 5 marks.

Part 3

In Part 3, you must choose from **one** of two writing tasks.

- The tasks you choose from are an informal letter and a story.
- You are given some written information, but you must answer the task with your own ideas.
- You must write about 100 words.
- Your letter or story is marked out of a possible 15, so this is the most important part of the Writing section.

Part 3 tests your ability to:

- complete the task you have chosen
- organise your text well
- use a variety of grammatical structures and vocabulary
- link your sentences together
- write in a suitable style, e.g. friendly and informal in a letter to a friend
- use correct spelling and punctuation
- avoid making many mistakes
- avoid errors that make it difficult to understand your writing.

In this part you might need to show you can:

- describe a place, something you own, or a person you know
- give somebody practical information
- describe how something happened
- say how you feel about something, or about something that has happened
- express your opinions or say what makes you happy
- say what you hope for or what you regret.

How to do Part 3

- 1 Read the questions and choose the task you think you can do better. When you are deciding, think about what you are good at and what you are not so good at. Are you more confident writing letters to friends, or telling a story?
- 2 Read the task that you choose very carefully. Underline the following:
 - **who** will read your text, e.g. an English-speaking friend, your English teacher
 - the **key words** in the instructions, e.g. *story*, *begin*, *holidays*
 - the main points you must write about, for example:

There's a really big shopping centre quite near my apartment. I go there every Saturday.

What are the shops like near where you live?

What do you like buying most?

Main points that you must answer

- 3 Think about the topic and how you will write about it. Quickly note down as many ideas as you can.
- 4 Choose your best ideas and write a brief plan, putting these ideas under separate headings.
- 5 Think of some useful words and phrases for each paragraph and note them down, but don't write a full, rough copy. You won't have time to write it all twice.
- 6 Decide what style you need to write in: formal or informal.

- 7 Write your text, following your plan and keeping to the topic.
- 8 Try to make your handwriting as clear and easy to read as possible.
- 9 Use as many different kinds of grammatical structures and as much vocabulary as you can.
- 10 Form longer sentences by using linking expressions like *so* and *because*.
- 11 At the end, check you have written about the right number of words. If you have written fewer than 80 words, you will lose marks. If you write many more than 100, you might make more mistakes.
- 12 Make sure you leave enough time to check your completed text for mistakes and correct them. Making a lot of corrections doesn't matter if they are easy to read.

Informal letter

You have practised writing an informal letter for Part 3 in Units 4, 5 and 11.

When you write your letter, you **should**:

- imagine the short text you read is written to you
- organise your text properly, using short paragraphs
- put the opening, e.g. *Dear Amy*, the closing, e.g. *Love*, and your name on separate lines
- use friendly, informal language
- give reasons and examples, using linking words.

Expressions used at the beginning of an informal letter

Dear ... Hello ... Hi ...

Thanks (very much) for your letter. It was great to hear from you.

Sorry I've taken so long to write back, but ... Sorry I haven't written for so long, but ... I've got so much to tell you. I'm writing to say ... This is just a quick note to say ...

Expressions used at the end of an informal letter

Well, that's all for now. I'd better finish now because ...

Say 'hello' to your family from me. Give my love to everyone.

Don't forget to write soon. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Love, Lots of love, Best wishes, All the best, Bye for now,

Exercise 1

Read the Part 3 writing task on the right and answer these questions.

- 1 What are the key words in the instructions?
- 2 Who must you write to?
- 3 What does your English-speaking friend tell you?
- 4 What questions does your English-speaking friend ask?

- This is part of a letter you receive from an English-speaking friend.

I've just had my fourteenth birthday! I had a great time with all my family. Please tell me about your birthdays. What happens? What do you do?

- Now write a letter, answering your friend's questions.
- Write your **letter** in about 100 words **on your answer sheet**.

Exercise 2

Study this model letter and the comments next to it. Answer these questions.

- 1 How does Stefan reply to Sam's questions?
- 2 Find as many informal words in the letter as you can.
- 3 What else shows that the style of the letter is informal?
- 4 Find an example and two reasons in the last two paragraphs. What linking words does he use?

Model letter

Dear Sam,

Thanks for your letter and congratulations on your fourteenth birthday! I hope you had lots of cool presents.

Mine isn't till July, but I'm already getting excited. I always get nice presents from my mum and dad, as well as loads of birthday cards – some of them are quite funny. There's a cake, too. This year it'll have 14 candles on it.

Later on, my mates take me out somewhere special, like a concert. That's always fun. But the best thing is that I can do what I like all day and no one can say anything because it's my birthday!

Anyway, that's all for now because I've got to go out. Write soon.

All the best,

Stefan

Friendly beginning

Thank the other person for their letter and say something about what they wrote

Answer their questions

Say why your letter is quite short, and ask for a reply

Friendly ending

Exercise 3

Read the Part 3 writing task below and answer these questions.

- 1 What are the key words in the instructions?
- 2 Who are you writing to?
- 3 What information does your friend give?
- 4 What does your friend want to know?

This is part of a letter you receive from an English-speaking friend.

*I've just bought my tickets, so next month I'll see you!
Please tell me more about your country. Which are the best places to visit? What can I do there?*

- Now write a letter to this friend.
- Write your **letter** in about 100 words **on your answer sheet**.

Exercise 4

🔍 Read the letter written by a PET candidate and answer questions 1–8.

- 1 Zoe has made one grammar mistake in each paragraph (1–4). Can you correct the mistakes?
- 2 Has she made any spelling mistakes?
- 3 Has she organised her letter well?
- 4 Is her letter about the right length?
- 5 Is her writing formal or informal? Give some examples.
- 6 Does she answer all Jamie's questions? In which paragraphs?
- 7 Which four common expressions does she use at the beginning and end of her letter?
- 8 Which linking words does she use to give reasons?

PET candidate's letter

Hi Jamie,

- 1 Thanks for your letter – that's such a good news! I can't believe you are going to visit my country!
- 2 I think it's best to spend your time in a city because there are more things for do than in the countryside. Generally, in the cities you can watch films, go shopping and eat in good restaurants.
- 3 The nightlife in my country is wonderful! There are famous discos here and lively cafés. On Sundays there are cultural attractions for people which are visiting the cities.
- 4 I recommend you to visit the capital, as it's huge and there are lovely sandy beaches too. Also because I live here!

Please write again soon.

Best wishes,

Zoe

Story

You have practised writing a story for Part 3 in Units 9 and 12.

When you write a story, you **should always**:

- check whether the words you are given in the instructions are the title or the first line
- write about the topic suggested by the title / use the first sentence you have been given
- get ideas by asking yourself *who?*, *what?*, *where?*, *when?* and *how?*
- decide before you start writing what will happen at the beginning, in the middle and at the end. Will the ending be happy, sad – or a mystery?
- make sure each part of your text develops the story
- use time expressions, e.g. *before*, *after*, *during*, *when*, *while*, *until*, *first*, *then*, *next*, *immediately*, *as soon as*, *suddenly*, *finally*, *in the end*
- use a variety of tenses, e.g. the past simple for events, the past continuous to describe the background, the past perfect for things that happened before something else when you are already talking about the past.

You **should try to**:

- set the scene at the beginning by using description
- include some interesting details
- use some unusual vocabulary to make the story more lively
- include some direct speech, e.g. *'What was that strange noise?'*

- say how you, or the main character, felt at different times in the story
- create interest during your story, possibly with a surprise at the end.

Exercise 1

Read this Part 3 task and answer the questions that follow.

- Your English teacher has asked you to write a story.
- Your story must have this title:
The lost wallet
- Write your **story** in about 100 words **on your answer sheet**.

- 1 What are the key words in the instructions?
- 2 Do the instructions give the title or the first line?
- 3 How many words should the answer be?

Exercise 2

Study this model story and the comments next to it. Answer these questions.

- 1 Is the text written in the first person (*I*), or the third person (*he/she/it*)?
- 2 What adjectives and adverbs are used to describe the scene and the people?
- 3 What kind of ending does it have?
- 4 Match each of comments a–f with words in the text.

Model story

a Good use of tenses to set the scene

The lost wallet

Rafa was standing on the crowded platform of a busy underground station when his wallet was stolen. Upset and angry, he realised that with it he had lost his identity card and all his cash.

b Describes how he felt

He never expected to see it again, but months later there was a knock at the door. 'I believe this is yours,' said a nervous stranger, who handed him his wallet and then hurried off into the night. Rafa looked anxiously inside it.

c Direct speech brings the story to life

He couldn't believe his luck, because his money was there and so was his ID card. Something, though, was wrong. That was his card, but with someone else's photo on it. Then he understood: they had wanted to steal his identity.

e Surprise at the end

d Creates interest

f Partly explains what happened

Exercise 3

Read the Part 3 writing task below and answer these questions.

- 1 What are the key words in the instructions?
- 2 Who will read your story?
- 3 Which words do you have to use? Where?
- 4 What are the key words in the sentence you are given?
- 5 Do you have to write in the first person (*I*), or the third person (*he/she/it*)?

- Your English teacher has asked you to write a story.
- Your story must begin with this sentence:
When the phone rang, I knew immediately who was calling.
- Write your **story** in about 100 words **on your answer sheet**.

Exercise 4

Quickly read the story written by a strong PET candidate and answer this question.

- The story has three paragraphs 1–3. Which paragraph is mainly about the time:
 - a before the phone rang
 - b after the phone rang
 - c when the phone was ringing?

PET candidate's story

- 1 When the phone rang, I knew immediately who was calling. Before answering, I thought back to when I was taking part in the dance competition.
- 2 I had passed through the first, second, third and fourth rounds. After I had completed my dance in the fifth round, the judges said the winner would perform around the world. I was informed that the results will be announced in two weeks, and now it was time.
- 3 Nervously, I took the call. 'You've won the National Dance Competition,' a voice said. I was amazed. I couldn't beleive it; it was a dream come true. After all, I was just 13 years old and at that age anyone would be the happiest person of the world.

▶ page 131 Grammar reference: *Past simple and past continuous*

▶ page 140 Grammar reference: *Past perfect*

Exercise 5

Read the story more carefully and answer questions 1–9.

- 1 Does the story keep to the topic of the first sentence?
- 2 Is it about the right length?
- 3 Find one incorrect verb form, a spelling mistake and a preposition error.
- 4 What verb tenses does she use? Give an example of each, e.g. past simple: *rang*.
- 5 Which time expressions, e.g. *when*, does she use?
- 6 Is her writing mainly formal or informal? Give some examples.
- 7 Where and how does she create interest?
- 8 Where does she use direct speech?
- 9 Which words and phrases describe how she felt?