

WRITING

Individual Component Checklist

for use with ONE task

ENGLISH VERSION



INTRODUCTION

This checklist has been designed for use as a practical tool for describing **ONE TASK** in a test of writing.

General Notes

In this checklist the following terminology is used:

- ◆ **Component**
One subtest in an examination. Usually an examination is made up of subtests in the different skills, and components are commonly called by the names of skills. This checklist concerns the speaking component of an examination. Components are also often referred to as 'papers'.
- ◆ **Input**
The material provided by the candidate for use in order to produce an appropriate response. In a test of speaking it may take the form of written, pictorial or oral prompts.
- ◆ **Item**
Each testing point which is given a separate mark or marks. It may consist of, for example, one gap in a written text, or one multiple choice question with three or four options.
- ◆ **Response**
The candidate's written or spoken response to a task. The term 'answer' is often used in this context. However, for reasons of precision, it is not used here.
- ◆ **Rubric**
The instructions given to a candidate on how to respond to a particular input. An example of a rubric for a writing test is: *You have had a very difficult week with a lot of problems at home and at college. Using the information in the diary, write a letter of about 100 words to a friend, telling him / her you have had a bad week..*
- ◆ **Section**

The parts each component can be subdivided into. Each may be testing a different area of skill or usage.

- ◆ **Task**
A task is defined precisely as a combination of rubric, input and response. For example, a reading text with several multiple choice items, all of which can be answered by referring to a single rubric, can be classified as a task. If another set of items relates to the same text, but requires a different rubric in order for a response to be produced, then that combination of text, rubric and items constitutes a different task. Thus the same text can form part of the same input for one or more tasks.

The term 'question' which is often used when referring to tasks, whether or not they are presented as grammatical questions, is avoided here because of its ambiguity.

- ◆ **Text**
In the context of a reading component of an examination, a text is any piece of written language which is used as part of the input to a task.

Please note

Some of the questions in this checklist are to be answered with a couple of words or numbers, and some have boxes to tick 'yes' or 'no'. Others, which involve making some qualitative judgement, ask for an assessment on a scale of 1 – 4, where 1 represents the most negative judgement and 4 the most positive.

Instructions for Individual Questions

1. INPUT

3 Topic used in task

The likely extent of topic areas used in tests of spoken language is covered by the 'notions' in **Threshold Level 1990**.

2. LANGUAGE ABILITY TESTED

1 Main focus of testing

By this it is meant the main focus of what is being tested in language terms, although it may also touch on other areas. It is taken as understood that there is a great deal of ambiguity in this area.

3. INSTRUCTIONS

1 Length of expected response

The approximate length of the text the candidate is expected to produce is usually indicated on the paper.

3 Is register important?

This refers to the degree of formality expressed in the text, which is determined by the purpose of writing and the relationship between the writer and the intended reader.

4 Target reader

Depending on the degree to which the writing task is contextualised, it may be made more or less clear to the candidate who is seen as the reader of the text produced.

7 To what extent are non-linguistic skills being tested

This question attempts to gauge the extent to which skills other than language ability are required in order to provide a response. An example of this would be an item which demands some type of mathematical calculation in order to get the correct answer, or an item which involves the candidate reading a map or interpreting a plan or diagram.

8 To what extent is there an overlap with testing another area of linguistic skill?

This question attempts to gauge the extent to which testing one area of language skill involves the candidate's ability in another area of skill. It is difficult to separate the skills completely from one another. For example, it is likely that any test of writing will involve candidates in reading instructions and rubrics.

5. MARKING

1 What are the criteria for marking?

Extended writing can be marked according to various criteria, laying a more or less heavy emphasis on mechanical correctness as opposed to the achievement of the task..

5 How many examiners mark each writing component?

As marking compositions or types of extended writing may be rather subjective, the possibility of unfairness arising from this may be counteracted by having each paper marked independently by two examiners. Where the opinions of the two examiners differ widely on which mark to give, the paper can be marked a third, or even fourth time.

6 What type of marking is used?

These can be characterised as follows:

- a) **Examiner marking:** marking carried out by experts, who are often referred to as examiners. They are required to make use of their professional judgement in awarding marks.
- b) **Clerical marking:** marking carried out by non-experts, who have to deal with letters, numbers or words. They are generally required to exercise only very limited judgement, of a non-expert type.
- c) **Computerised marking:** Marking carried out by a machine such as an optical mark reader. Multiple choice tests are often marked in this way.

The term marking as it is used here often refers to the process of assigning a mark to an item, and not in the way a mark is recorded or read. Computerised marking means that the candidate's response goes directly to the computer for the mark to be assigned, and no human marker is involved.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

NAME OF EXAMINATION

NAME OF COMPONENT

NAME / NUMBER OF TASK

1 INPUT

1 Length of written input (in words)

2 Is there any other form of input? Yes
No

If so, what?

a) drawings a
b) photographs b
c) maps c
d) diagrams d
e) tables e
f) graphs f
g) other (please specify) g

3 Topic used in task

a) personal identification a
b) house, home and environment b
c) daily life c
d) free time, entertainment d
e) travel e
f) relations with other people f
g) health and bodycare g
h) education h
i) science and scholarships i
j) current affairs j
k) shopping k
l) food and drink l
m) services m
n) places n
o) language o
p) weather p
q) other (please specify) q

4 What type of text is used as input

a) letters
b) notes, messages, memos
c) advertisements
d) programmes
e) forms
f) excerpts from books or articles
g) other (please specify)

2 LANGUAGE ABILITY TESTED

1 Main focus of testing:

- | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| a) describing | a | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) reporting events | b | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) requesting information | c | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) responding to requests for information / explaining | d | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) giving examples | e | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) agreeing or disagreeing | f | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) expressing opinions/preferences | g | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) giving instructions | h | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i) making suggestions | i | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j) persuading | j | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k) complaining | k | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| l) apologising | l | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| m) expressing possibility | m | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| n) expressing purpose | n | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| o) comparing and contrasting | o | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| p) classifying | p | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| q) summing up | q | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| r) appropriate social exchange | r | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2 Task type used

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| a) free composition (title only) | a | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) written task with text input | b | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) summary | c | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) expansion of notes | d | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) other (please specify) | e | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3 INSTRUCTIONS

- | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| 1 How clear is it what kind of written response is expected? | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 How clear is it what length of response is required? | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 To what extent can the writing task be described as guided? | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4 EXPECTED RESPONSE

1	Length of expected response (in words)		<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
2	Text type candidate is expected to produce		
	a) descriptive composition	a	<input type="text"/>
	b) narrative composition	b	<input type="text"/>
	c) discursive composition	c	<input type="text"/>
	d) letter / note	d	<input type="text"/>
	e) article	e	<input type="text"/>
	f) review	f	<input type="text"/>
	g) report	g	<input type="text"/>
	h) summary	h	<input type="text"/>
	i) other (please specify)	i	<input type="text"/>
	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>		
3	Is register important?	Yes	<input type="text"/>
		No	<input type="text"/>

4	Target reader		
	a) examiner only	a	<input type="text"/>
	b) friend or relative	b	<input type="text"/>
	c) colleague	c	<input type="text"/>
	d) general public	d	<input type="text"/>
	e) other (please specify)	e	<input type="text"/>
	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>		
	f) not indicated	f	<input type="text"/>
	g) unclear	g	<input type="text"/>
5	To what extent is specialist knowledge assumed?	1	<input type="text"/>
		2	<input type="text"/>
		3	<input type="text"/>
		4	<input type="text"/>
6	To what extent is cultural knowledge assumed?	1	<input type="text"/>
		2	<input type="text"/>
		3	<input type="text"/>
		4	<input type="text"/>
7	To what extent are non-linguistic skills being tested?	1	<input type="text"/>
		2	<input type="text"/>
		3	<input type="text"/>
		4	<input type="text"/>
8	To what extent is there an overlap with testing another area of linguistic skill?	1	<input type="text"/>
		2	<input type="text"/>
		3	<input type="text"/>
		4	<input type="text"/>

5 MARKING

1 What are the criteria for marking?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| a) grammatical accuracy | a | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) range of structure and vocabulary | b | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) register | c | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) organisation of text | d | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) task achievement | e | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) other (please specify) | f | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2 Are marking criteria indicated to the candidate on the examination paper? Yes
No

3 How many marks does each task carry?

4 Is the number of marks available indicated to the candidate on the examination paper? Yes
No

5 How many examiners are involved in each writing component?

- | | | |
|----------------|---|--------------------------|
| a) one | a | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) two or more | b | <input type="checkbox"/> |

6 What type of marking is used?

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| a) examiner marking | a | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) clerical marking | b | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) computerised marking | c | <input type="checkbox"/> |