

C2 Writing

Cambridge Masterclass

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Cambridge C2 Proficiency Writing

Welcome to this book on the Cambridge C2 Proficiency Writing paper. C2 Proficiency is one of the exams in the series provided by Cambridge Assessment – part of the University of Cambridge. It is the fifth in the range of tests they provide in General English:

A2	Key (KET)	B1	Preliminary (PET)
B2	First (FCE)	C1	Advanced (CAE)
C2	Proficiency (CPE)		

The references next to each test refer to the CEFR Level (Common European Framework of Reference), and show the language level of each test. For CEFR C2 Writing, you will be able to:

- understand the finer points of complex texts
- evaluate the contents of texts and identify relevant content
- write on any subject with good expression and accuracy
- write clearly using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns
- explain your viewpoint and communicate complex ideas effectively
- recognise the reader of texts and use a consistently suitable register
- use a range of simple and complex grammatical structures with flexibility and control
- use a wide range of vocabulary including less common lexis correctly and with precision
- recognise the functional language needed and select language to convey meaning.

How does the test work?

You can take the C2 Proficiency exam on a computer or on paper. The content is the same for both forms of the test. The C2 Proficiency Writing paper gives you the opportunity to show your language skills. The topics of tasks are chosen so that they are relevant to the typical student taking this exam, so you should find that you have enough ideas to write about. Each question will guide you by indicating the context, the purpose for writing and the target reader. It is important to remember that you aren't being tested on the subject content

of the tasks. So, if the topic of the task is, for example, tourism, you aren't expected to be an expert about this topic. The test format is:

Time allowed	1 hour and 30 minutes
Number of parts	2
Number of questions	Part 1: one compulsory question Part 2: one optional question from a choice of three*
Task types	essay, article, formal/informal letter, report, review
Length	Part 1: answer should be 240–280 words long Part 2: answer should be 280–320 words long

* There is also the option of writing about a set text until the end of 2023. The set texts can be found on the Cambridge English website. From 2024 this option will be removed. You should only consider answering one of these questions if you have studied the text as you will need detailed knowledge to answer appropriately at C2 level. Set text questions can be any of the task types.

Task type 1: Essay

Part 1 (Question 1) of the Writing paper is always an essay written for your teacher, and the format of the question is always the same. You will need to read two short texts on a related theme and then write an essay summarising and evaluating the key ideas. Your writing should be discursive and the expected language is that of academic writing. The two reading texts will be at a slightly lower level than C2 to ensure that you aren't being assessed on your reading in this task. You will be expected to identify the key ideas in each text, to recognise any common areas or themes and any ideas that differ, and to use these as a basis for your essay. Your essay should be a combination of a summary of these points, an evaluation of the ideas and your own opinion.

The purpose of the essay is to allow you to show that you can select relevant information and can back this up with supporting argument. Remember, you don't have to tell the truth! The examiners won't know, so if you don't have experience or an opinion you can make something up. Your essay should be well structured with clear and appropriate organisational features. Suitable introductions and conclusions should be included, and the structure of the essay and its paragraphing should guide the reader through the content, to help them understand the argument.

Essays are written in a more formal register as you are writing for your teacher.

Task type 2: Article

An article is written to be published, either online or in a hard-copy publication, for a particular audience. The task will specify where the article will appear and who the target readers are. This will guide you in selecting an appropriate register and tone. If the article is for fellow students, for example, it will be less formal than something to be published on a

more academic topic. Regardless of this, the article should aim to engage the target reader and make them want to read it. Articles often contain descriptive information or a narrative based on personal experience. Headings and possibly sub-headings may be helpful in organising the article.

Articles at C2 are more complex than those at a lower level, and the question will guide you in developing your article to, for example, evaluate or consider the topic in more depth.

Task type 3: Letter

Letters need to be written with the target reader in mind. You should ensure that you write in a suitable register for the person who has written to you, and think about how to integrate the points in the task using natural language. They may be written to apply for something, or to give comments on something. The target reader could be a school or college principal, the editor of a newspaper or, for example, the director of a company or organisation or someone who know personally. The task will guide you on the required content, but at this level it could include giving your opinion on a matter or describing an experience and relating this to the topic. You should include a suitable opening and close to your letter, but you don't need to include addresses or the date.

Task type 4: Report

A report is usually written for a teacher or school principal, or a specific group such as the members of a club or society to which you belong. Reports are mostly factual and need to be based on the situation that is presented in the question. Reports at this level go beyond those at lower levels, which are mostly descriptive. At C2, you need to show that you can evaluate the information and use this to, for example, suggest an alternative course of action or to say if an aim has been achieved.

Reports are typically semi-formal and often contain more impersonal language, such as passive forms. Headings can help to show the different sections of your report.

Task type 5: Review

A review may be about a book, film, play, show or concert, but could also be about a product, for example a kitchen gadget, or a service, such as a tour of a museum. You will be asked to give your opinion, but at this level you will also need to address an aspect indicated in the question. This could, for example, be evaluating the subject of the report for a particular group of people or reason. The target reader will be described in the question, and you should make sure that you write your review with them in mind.

Reviews often include a range of different adjectives and, at C2, also language of justifying opinions.

How to use this book

The main section of this book focuses on each task type individually, beginning with its characteristics and guidance on how to plan a response to an example question. For each task type question, two responses from different students are provided. One response is very good and the other will be less good, showing areas that the student could improve on. There are detailed comments on each response, and a breakdown of the marks that the response could get in the exam. You should read these responses and commentaries before you write your own response to the question. When you have written your response, look back at the comments and the mark scheme, and think about what you did well and also how you could have done better.

Preparing for the exam

It is important that you plan your time in the exam. You will need to complete both tasks within the 90 minutes. It is sensible to divide your time equally between the two tasks: about 45 minutes each. You should make sure that you:

- **Read** all of the questions carefully to be certain you understand what they mean.
- **Plan** your writing.
- **Write** your response according to your plan.
- **Check** your writing for errors.

Read the questions

Read the Part 1 texts carefully, and identify the content that you want to focus on in your essay. There will be three Part 2 questions, and you will need to choose one. When making your choice, you will need to think about the task type, the topic and the language that you will need. For example, there may be a question with a review to be written relating to a concert. If you know lots of high-level vocabulary relating to music and the arts, then this could be a good choice. It is good advice to spend time thinking about each question before you start writing. If you start one question and then realise that you don't feel confident about the ideas or language you need, you may need to change question.

Plan your writing

It is tempting to start writing as soon as you decide what question to answer, but spending some time planning is very sensible. Candidates plan their writing in different ways, but the following is an example of a plan for the article response for the question on page 24.

Here, the candidate has noted down some ideas and good vocabulary to use, and has decided what will go in each paragraph:

Intro:	weighed down by studies? getting too much? How I was feeling struck gold!
Para 1:	shoulders hunched stress levels rising random search for topic putting off work found website with collected links could believe my luck go-to site Let me explain
Para 2:	won't do your homework for you not copying site point in right direction functionality superb layout clear link all work what more?
Para 3:	probing site and questioning trust the author? warning – trust? diligent – must cross check saved me hours wading through take advantage treasure precious link!

Write your response

Use your notes to assemble your ideas from your plan into a well-organised piece of writing with a suitable tone and good, accurate language. With good planning technique, this will be easier. Of course, you will also be thinking about the functions, grammar and vocabulary that you considered before you started to produce your plan. This is the best way to make sure that you show the examiner as much of your language ability as possible. At this level you will be expected to be skilled at paraphrasing language you find in the task. So, if the task says 'Say why you found the website useful...', you could answer by saying 'I found the website useful because...'. But to showcase your skill in paraphrasing an alternative, such as 'The benefits of this website became clear when...', will allow you to demonstrate alternative language.

What language do you need?

There are three things to consider when you have read the questions. There is some overlap between them, but it is still a good idea to think about all three.

1. What functions does the task need?

For example, do you need to make a suggestion, evaluate something or justify a decision?

2. What grammar can you use in the task?

This may be linked to the functions of the question. For example, if you are asked to give or justify a decision, you can use the infinitive to show purpose and cohesive devices like 'due to this' or 'as a result of...'. Sometimes the grammar you use will be your choice. If you

know that you are confident when using complex conditional sentences, can you include one in your response?

3. What vocabulary is related to the task topic and links in with the functions?

If you are giving recommendations in the task, for instance maybe in a report, you should think about what phrases you can use to make sure that there is variety. For example, it is better not to start each idea with 'I think...'. You could use 'One perspective I have considered...' or 'It cannot be denied that...' as alternatives to make sure that you show the examiner a good range of different phrases.

Check your writing

You should always leave five minutes to read through each response you write. Check that you haven't left anything important out, but also check the language for errors. For example: Have you used the right tenses? Are there any spelling errors? It's a good idea to make your own checklist while you prepare for the C2 Proficiency Writing paper. It will help you to think about what to check for, and also to think about mistakes that you often make. Here is a suggested checklist to use, but it's a good idea to add things that you know you sometimes make mistakes with. What would you add to this checklist?



- Does your response cover all of the content points in the task?
- Is your response in the right style for the task type?
- Have you used the right register for the task?
- Have you used paragraphs to separate different ideas?
- Have you used linking devices correctly?
- Have you got a range of linking devices?
- Are all tenses correct?
- Have you used articles with nouns where needed?
- Are the prepositions correct?
- What about errors you've made in the past?

The assessment criteria

Each piece of writing is marked against four assessment criteria, each carrying a maximum of five marks.

Content

This criterion focuses on whether you have answered the question and whether the reader would have all the information they need. You must make sure that you identify what the question is asking you to do and plan your answer so that you stay on the topic. In Part 1 you must summarise and evaluate the texts in the question, adding your own perspective as relevant. In the Part 2 questions, you must identify what you will need to write about from the question.

Max. 5 marks

Communicative achievement

This criterion focuses on how well you communicate with the reader. This includes whether your writing is suitable for the task you are writing, and it also involves register. Register means whether your writing is more formal (e.g. writing for someone you don't know) or less formal (e.g. writing for your classmates).

Max. 5 marks

Organisation

This criterion focuses on how your ideas are organised into paragraphs, if these are needed. It includes the use of discourse markers that act to make the text cohesive. It also includes things like how pronouns are used to refer to nouns to avoid repetition. For example, 'He never liked school and hated going there.' In this sentence 'there' means that the student doesn't repeat the word 'school'.

Max. 5 marks

Language

This criterion focuses on vocabulary and grammar. It isn't just about using vocabulary and grammar without making mistakes. It also considers whether your writing uses more complex grammar and more unusual words and phrases. It is sometimes hard to focus on both, and, of course, it's great if you don't make any mistakes! However, if this means that your language isn't as complex it may mean that you can't get to the top marks here.

Max. 5 marks

When all four criteria have been assessed your total mark is given out of 20.

Planning Guide

Write the question you are going to answer below, and underline or highlight the important words that will help you to focus your response.

What **functions** does the task need?

What **grammar** could you use?

What **vocabulary** could you use?

Bring your ideas together in a plan, and think about the organisation and register you need.

- How many paragraphs do you need? How will you link ideas?
- Who is your reader? What is your relationship to them?
- Do you need to use more formal or more informal language?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to write their plan based on the prompts above.

In Part 1 of the Writing paper you will have to write an essay. **Remember:**

- Identify what the key points of each text are.
- Evaluate the ideas and consider your views on them.
- Think about how to summarise the ideas using your own words.
- Consider how to give your opinion in the essay.

Look at the following question. **Think about:**

- what aspect of tourism is common to each text; the perspectives the different authors have on the topic; and how your experience fits with what they say.

Read the two texts below.

Write an essay summarising and evaluating the key points from both texts. Use your own words throughout as far as possible, and include your own ideas in your answers.

The travel industry

The travel industry supports a growing number of jobs around the world. Estimates are that one in ten of those in full-time employment worldwide is contributing to the travel and tourism sector. It's big business. Even for so-called independent travellers, there are numerous resources to guide them and to make sure they get the most from their hard-earned travel fund. Whatever your budget though, there's the perfect tour, trip or experience for you. Tourist destinations are springing up in the most unlikely locations to exploit this travel addiction. You really just have to log-on, make your choices, turn up and make memories.

Travelling for a living

Travel teaches you more than you realise. It is about so much more than visiting interesting places. As a travel vlogger, I feel lucky to earn a living writing about the amazing places I get to see. Each video I post to my site takes hours to prepare, but I take pride in exploring new ways to present places to my followers. Sometimes I pause to take a step back and really consider my life. Would I have the same values and priorities if I were working a normal 9–5 job with the pressures that modern life brings? My world would be narrower in so many ways!

Read the following sample answers and see how two students have answered this task.

Student Response A

It cannot be denied that tourism is an economic force and that over the past decades it has gone from strength to strength. Both texts give us some insight into one important link for the industry, and that is the internet.

The student has identified the point that both texts have in common, and has stated it clearly in their introduction.

The first text makes it clear that travel, whether doing so on a restricted budget or with no such limitations, is facilitated with the amount of online material to choose from. This may, of course, include such things as travel vlogs, such as the ones produced by the author of the second article. This second author writes from a personal viewpoint and her perspective confirms that the world wide web is indeed a rich resource.

In this opening sentence of the paragraph, the student has selected points made in the first text and has paraphrased them well.

Reading between the lines, the travel vlogger appears to show her passion and extraordinary enthusiasm for travel. This is somewhat missing in the first text where the process of identifying where to go and what to do is made to sound so much more mechanical. The vlogger thinks beyond what is in front of them and considers deeply what the experiences bring her in terms of the things she thinks are most important and valuable. The writer of the first article almost dismisses this aspect by focusing on the simplicity of taking a trip.

The student is evaluating the content of both texts here and this communicates their ideas clearly.

Although I have not travelled extensively, I can relate to the vlogger and feel any tourism company would benefit from the clear delight behind each experience in promoting their company.

The final paragraph is short but adds the student's own opinion and is a suitable way to conclude the essay.

Content

The essay has good representation of content from both texts and the student has understood them well. All content is relevant to the task and the target reader would be fully informed. The student's own ideas are integrated well into the summary.

5 / 5**Communicative achievement**

The student has communicated convincingly and very naturally. They have used a suitable register and tone with ease. They have used the conventions of an essay to communicate some complex ideas in an effective way, and this holds the reader's interest well.

5 / 5**Organisation**

The essay is clearly organised with suitable paragraphing. There is some range of cohesive devices used that help to organise ideas, and generally the student has used structures with some flexibility to organise their ideas. There could have been some more use of cohesive devices in the third paragraph, but overall the essay is well organised.

4 / 5**Language**

There is a wide range of simple and more complex grammatical structures used with accuracy (e.g. 'It cannot be denied...'; 'doing so...'), along with some complex sentences (e.g. 'This is somewhat missing...more mechanical.'). In addition, there is a fairly wide range of suitable vocabulary chosen (e.g. 'an economic force'; 'a rich resource'; focusing on the simplicity').

4 / 5**Total marks: 18 / 20**

The student has produced a well-written essay that fully addresses the task, and it is well organised with an appropriate register. The language used is extremely accurate while still demonstrating a wide range of structure and vocabulary. The essay flows well and is easy for the target reader to read.

Student Response B

Both of the texts relate to travel and the tourism business. The first text is more factual and gives industry background in a way that the second one doesn't. It is possibly from an economic guide to the industry.

This opening is very obvious and does not help to engage the reader.

The text tells us that the sphere of tourism is large and that it is open to those from all walks of life. It provides employment opportunities for a significant minority of the workforce in the world, and in doing so caters to travellers of all economic abilities. It highlights the ease of finding interesting places to visit and being able to make bookings for them.

The student has tried to use their own words here, but 'sphere' doesn't collocate well in this sentence.

The second text is written from a personal self-perspective and contains more emotional language and ideas. The writer works in tourism but in an unusual way, earning their living from posting travel videos. They show their love for their work in that they tell us how much time it takes for them to make each video and the effort that goes into each single one. They highlight the different things they gain from their work, in terms of personal satisfaction and learning.

The student has chosen to write about each text in turn and in doing so has missed the opportunity to effectively contrast them.

Overall, in conclusion, the second text more closely mirrors my thinking as I adore travel and feel that it offers much more than just seeing great places. It can broaden the mind and make you really appreciate how much you have in your life and how much you can learn from travel.

This phrase is lifted from the text, and although the student has changed the pronoun, it doesn't demonstrate alternative phrasing.

There is repetition of the end of the previous paragraph here and the conclusion doesn't add very much.

Content

The student has shown understanding of the two texts and has summarised them well. They have chosen to discuss each one in turn rather than integrating them as Student A did. In doing so there is less comparison and evaluation of the texts. For example, the student hasn't mentioned that both writers refer to the internet and have used this to offer their point of view on this aspect from the texts. Despite this, the target reader would be informed.

4 / 5

Communicative achievement

The opening paragraph of the essay aims to analyse the text types more than communicate the ideas included in the two texts and isn't really necessary. However, the essay uses a suitable tone and register overall, and, despite the repetition of ideas towards the end, communicates the student's ideas with sufficient flexibility to hold the reader's attention.

3 / 5

Organisation

The student has organised their essay into simple paragraphs with an introduction, a paragraph on each of the two texts and a conclusion. Better integration of the points in the two texts could have provided alternative paragraphing. Internal cohesion is simple, with basic cohesive devices used, and most sentences stand alone and could have been linked more effectively.

2 / 5

Language

Overall, the language used is fairly accurate, despite some spelling errors, (e.g. 'concllusion', 'appreaciate'). There is an attempt to use more complex lexis, some of which is used effectively (e.g. 'all walks of life'; 'effort that goes into'), but this does not always collocate well (e.g. 'the sphere of tourism'). The range of structure is more limited, with mostly simple grammatical structures used.

2 / 5

Total marks: 11 / 20

The student has made a good attempt at the task and has shown understanding of the two texts. Overall, their language level is slightly below C2, and this is demonstrated particularly in the lack of range in structures. The organisation of the essay could have been improved with better internal cohesion, which in turn would have had an impact on the way the essay communicates as a whole.

Now have a go at writing a response to this question yourself.

Read the two texts below.

Write an essay summarising and evaluating the key points from both texts. Use your own words throughout as far as possible, and include your own ideas in your answers.

The travel industry

The travel industry supports a growing number of jobs around the world. Estimates are that one in ten of those in full-time employment worldwide is contributing to the travel and tourism sector. It's big business. Even for so-called independent travellers, there are numerous resources to guide them and to make sure they get the most from their hard-earned travel fund. Whatever your budget though, there's the perfect tour, trip or experience for you. Tourist destinations are springing up in the most unlikely locations to exploit this travel addiction. You really just have to log-on, make your choices, turn up and make memories.

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Highlight or underline the important words.

Outline plan:

Refer to the Planning Guide on page 12 for guidance on how to plan your response.

