

TEACHERS' GUIDE TO ASSESSING TASK FULFILMENT AND STRUCTURE

C1 WRITING

Task Fulfilment

What do we mean by “Task fulfilment”?

- To what extent has the candidate met the requirements of the task?
- How many of the content points and functions have been covered?

CEFR descriptor for Task fulfilment at C1 level

“Can write clear, detailed, well-structured and developed descriptions and imaginative texts in an assured personal, natural style appropriate to the reader in mind.”

LanguageCert assessment criteria for Task fulfilment at C1 level

Mark	Task Fulfilment
3	Fully and appropriately satisfies the demands of the task, covering both points/functions with good expansion and support. AND Genre and tone totally appropriate.
2	Mainly satisfies the demands of the task, covering both points/functions with sufficient expansion. AND Genre and tone mostly appropriate.
1	Partially satisfies the demands of the task, covering only one point/function AND/OR Genre and/or tone mostly inappropriate.
0	Does not satisfy the demands of the task, responding to neither of the content points appropriately. OR Off topic OR Genre and/or tone inappropriate.

Mark 3

Fully and appropriately satisfies the demands of the task, covering both points/functions with good expansion and support. AND Genre and tone totally appropriate.

“fully and appropriately satisfies the demands of the task, covering both points/functions with good expansion and support.”

- Only mentioning a single content point is not enough.
- Good expansion is expected (some details, examples) but we are only interested in the relevant details (candidates must focus on what they are expected to write about and avoid going off topic).

“genre and tone totally appropriate”

- Potential genres at C1 level: formal / informal letter / email, article, report, essay.
- Candidates can find the intended genre (e.g. email / article), style (formal / informal), function (e.g. persuade / prioritise / evaluate / justify) and audience (e.g. public / schoolmates) indicated in the instructions.

- A common mistake: inappropriate tone (e.g. many formal phrases, expressions used in personal letters – e.g. nonetheless, due to the fact that; formal pieces full of informal phrases – e.g. a really lovely experience, I have no idea; contractions used in formal writings).
- Another common mistake: the characteristics of the given genre are not present in the composition.

An example for genre-related expectations: What makes an **article**?

Questions to be considered before the candidate starts writing the composition:

- What kind of publication will your article appear in (according to the instructions)? What do you know about the readers of your article? In other words, who is your intended audience? These determine the style and tone you will choose.
- For what purpose are you writing the article? In other words, what functions are to be covered (e.g. to describe, compare or explain, etc.)?

A well-written article

- has a lively tone to get the reader's attention,
- often addresses the reader directly (e.g. by asking rhetorical questions),
- incorporates the writer's personal opinion or experience.

+ *required length*

If a piece is 50% shorter or longer than required, the candidate is awarded one mark less for Task Fulfilment than they would have been otherwise.

Structure

What do we mean by “Structure”?

- Structure = coherence + cohesion + punctuation
- How is the text put together?
- Is there an attempt to link the ideas and to organise them in a coherent manner using paragraphs (introduction, conclusion etc.)?

CEFR descriptor for Structure at C1 level

“Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured text, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.”

LanguageCert assessment criteria for Structure at C1 level

Mark	Structure
3	Fully coherent text using cohesive devices and paragraphs where appropriate. AND Any punctuation errors are difficult to spot. AND Structure fully appropriate to text type.
2	Coherent text with cohesive devices and paragraphs where appropriate. AND Few punctuation errors, which do not impede communication. AND Structure mostly appropriate to text type.
1	Not always coherent. AND/OR Little use of cohesive devices. AND/OR No or inappropriate paragraphing. AND/OR Many punctuation errors. AND/OR Inappropriate structure for text type.
0	Frequently incoherent. AND/OR Inappropriate use of cohesive devices. AND/OR No or inappropriate paragraphing. AND/OR Many punctuation errors. AND/OR Totally inappropriate structure for text type.

Mark 3

Fully coherent text using cohesive devices and paragraphs where appropriate. AND Any punctuation errors are difficult to spot. AND Structure fully appropriate to text type.

“fully coherent text”

- Coherence = the candidate’s ideas are logically sequenced, appropriately organized, as a result the text is easy to follow and understand.
- Cohesion = the candidate’s ideas are connected to one another.
- A common misunderstanding: cohesion does NOT ONLY come from linking devices (other methods of creating cohesion: referencing by using pronouns)

“using cohesive devices and paragraphs where appropriate”

- A common mistake: misuse of linking words (e.g. an unnatural abundance of linking words – it is not advisable to start each new sentence with a linking device; formal linking words in personal letters –

firstly, secondly, thus, on the whole; the linking words used do not make sense in the given context or are not in the correct place – in many cases candidates do not seem to be aware of the function or the correct meaning of certain linking words).

- An introductory and a closing paragraph are necessary even in case of a relatively short text (Part 1 – Write between 150 and 200 words).
- A common misunderstanding: organising the text into paragraphs does not necessarily and automatically mean that mark 3 is to be awarded for Structure (the criterion of “Structure” consists of coherence, cohesion and punctuation).
- A paragraph must consist of at least 2 sentences.
- Each paragraph must have a role in the text, and each sentence must have its own role within the paragraph (topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentence).
- The closing paragraph must not contain any new ideas or arguments but it should be a summary of the text.

“any punctuation errors are difficult to spot”

- A common mistake: overuse of commas / exclamation marks (candidates often apply the punctuation rules of their mother tongue)

“structure fully appropriate to text type”

- Structure is not only examined at text level but also at sentence level. At C1 level a high complexity of sentence structure is required.
- Using paragraphs is an expectation even in informal letters / emails.
- The structural requirements of a given genre must be satisfied, e.g. an article must have a title.

*An example for structure-related expectations: What makes an **article**?*

Questions to be considered before the candidate starts writing the composition:

- What opinion will you represent all the way through your article?
- What arguments would you like to mention? (one paragraph = one theme)
- What conclusion do you want to draw?
- What are your topic sentences going to be?
- What title will your article have?

A good introductory paragraph should

- be relevant and focus on the theme of the article,
- grab the reader’s interest and make them want to read the rest of the article,
- be longer than one sentence.

A good concluding paragraph should

- be linked to the previous paragraphs, and somehow link back (thematically) to the introductory paragraph,
- may carry a punch, rather than give a predictable and boring ending to the article,
- may ask a question or make a clear statement,
- be longer than one sentence.

A well-written article

- has an appropriate and original title,
- is organised into clear and easy-to-follow paragraphs,
- has a topic sentence in each paragraph, which is expanded and illustrated,
- contains statements which are all justified by giving explanations and examples,
- does not include anything that may be considered irrelevant,
- avoids over-generalisations,
- expresses the writer’s opinion clearly,
- has a conclusion that rounds off the article and makes it feel complete.

Sample exam

The instructions of a Part 1 writing task:

You read the following statistics reported in the popular press. Write an article, incorporating the main findings, saying whether you agree or not according to your own experience. Add any other observations which would be relevant. Write between 150 and 200 words.

Are we happy?

49% of us claim to lose sleep from money worries.

60% of 16-25-year-olds worry they won't get a job.

41% of the elderly are so worried about finances that they cut down on electricity.

But are we all equally miserable?

53% of secretaries enjoy a good laugh every working day compared to just 0.4% of taxi drivers.

The happiest group of all appears to be teenage boys: 87% say they're happy at home and 81% of them are happy at school.

What do we expect here as for Task Fulfilment?

- genre: article
- style: formal
- functions: evaluate, express opinion, justify
- the demands of the task are fully satisfied only if all details mentioned in the instruction are followed in the article, namely the main findings of the statistics are mentioned and interpreted to some extent, the candidate's opinion is clearly stated and supported with some own experience, at least one relevant observation is added.
- 2 content points to be covered: say whether you agree with the findings of the statistics or not, add any other relevant observations.

What do we expect here as for Structure?

- coherence at text level and sentence level
- a logical organisation of thoughts when elaborating on the subject
- cohesive devices and structure which are appropriate to text type (article)
- appropriate paragraphing
- correct punctuation

Sample 1 (143 words)

Dear Readers,

In this world where everything getting faster people don't claim to be happy. Almost half of the people can't sleep suffer of lose sleep because their money problems or worries. Men and women between 16-25 stressing about getting a job. Elderly people worrying about money so much, that they cut down on their electricity use.

Some of us don't have these worries, problems about of their every day life. Researchers show that secretaries enjoying their lifes more, than taxi drivers do. Statistics show that the happiest group of all are teenage boys. More than 80% of them as happy home as happy at school.

People who stress and worries too much usually have shorter life than the ones who enjoys life. Being happy can influence your social life and your career.

I wish you a happy and successful life!

Best wishes,

Bence Kiss

Task Fulfilment: mark 1

Partially satisfies the demands of the task, (more or less) covering only one point/function: attempts to reflect on the input (although without expressing his own opinion), there is no added relevant observation. Genre is partly inappropriate: the text is a list of thoughts, an "analysis" of the statistics with no further interpretation; a letter instead of an article.

Structure: mark 1

Not always coherent. Little use of cohesive devices: neither sentences nor paragraphs are really linked to one another. The complexity of sentence structure is below what is expected at C1 level, certain sentences have a chaotic structure. Although the text is divided into paragraphs, it is a compilation of ideas and not a well-structured composition (both the first and the second paragraphs are just lists of facts on after the other). Punctuation errors: misuse of commas (find some examples underlined). Inappropriate structure for text type: this piece of writing is rather a letter than an article (no title, inappropriate ending).

Sample 1 – modified version (191 words)

Don't worry, be happy

In this world, where everything is getting faster, a significant proportion of people do not seem to be happy – at least according to the statistics I have read. The statistics suggest that nearly half of us suffer from insomnia because of financial problems. Men and women between 16 and 25 stress about getting a job. Elderly people worry about money so much that they even choose to seriously limit their electricity usage. I am afraid I must say this is my experience, too.

However, some of us do not have these worries about everyday life. Researches show that secretaries enjoy life more than, for instance, taxi drivers do. Statistics also reveal that the happiest group of all is teenage boys: more than 80% of them are as happy at home as at school. This result surprises me a little, at least I personally was not a really happy teenager.

The way I see it, people who stress and worry too much usually have shorter lives than the ones who enjoy life. Besides, you must not forget that being happy can influence your social life and your career.

Task Fulfilment: mark 2

Mainly satisfies the demands of the task, covering both points/functions: reflects on the input, expresses his own opinion, there is one added relevant observation (see the last paragraph). Genre and tone are mostly appropriate.

Structure: mark 2

Coherent text with cohesive devices and paragraphs where appropriate, although the sentences are not always skillfully linked to one another (see an example underlined). Few punctuation errors, which do not impede communication. Structure is mostly appropriate for text type. (Please note: no new idea, argument, etc. should be brought up in the closing paragraph.)

Sample 2 (242 words)

Some people say, happiness is only a decision.

You know, if you watch everything in a positive way, don't care too much with your problems you will be able to live a better life.

But is this true? Can we just forget our worries and live like everything is perfectly fine? According to the statistics we can't.

On my opinion lot people have money issues these days. According to the statistics almost fifty percent have sleeping problems because of their problems. In my neighbourhood I can experience the same.

However even if you aren't lack of money, or you are still studying, you can be stressed about your future.

For example how will you be able to be independent, or will you get a great job. Naturally the elder generation has their own worries as well, like how to help their family or the electricity, like my own grandparents.

To tell the truth your job can provide the happiness of your life, like secretaries who have a kind of enjoyable work compared to a doctor (who has a daily connection with death and disease).

Moreover I can see that most of people can't be happy about small things in life like a smile.

But anyways as you can see everybody has his or her own problems, there is no exception. On my opinion we are equally miserable, just not in the same way. Nobody can be 100% happy with his life.

Task Fulfilment: mark 2

Mainly satisfies the demands of the task, covering both points/functions with sufficient expansion: interprets the findings, expresses his views and adds some observations, comments (the elderly worrying about helping their family, being happy about small things). Genre and tone are partly appropriate (contractions and some informal phrases – you know, like, kind of – are used).

Structure: mark 1

Not always coherent. The complexity of sentence structure is below what is expected at C1 level. Use of inappropriate cohesive devices (some are informal, e.g. you know, anyways; some are used incorrectly, e.g. on my opinion, anyways). Many punctuation errors (e.g. lack of commas after linking words). Inappropriate structure for text type: no title, inappropriate paragraphing (too short paragraphs (first three) vs. too long paragraphs (the fourth one); there is no real structure within paragraphs).

Sample 2 – modified version (277 words)

Does every cloud have a silver lining?

Some say happiness is only a matter of decision, suggesting that by focusing on the bright side of life rather than on your problems you will be able to lead a better life. But is this true? Can you just ignore your worries? According to certain statistics you cannot.

As for your degree of happiness, statistics reveal several crucial factors, all of which are linked to financial matters in one way or another. For a start, apparently almost fifty percent of people have sleeping issues caused by such problems; I have to admit that I myself can experience the same. However, even if the burden of earning a living does not rest on your shoulders, for instance because you are still studying, you might have other worries to be stressed about, such as how you will be able to become independent.

Naturally, the elderly generation has their own worries as well, such as paying their bills on due date.

Somehow contrary to the above research, what I personally experience is that for many, an optimistic attitude is a conscious decision, irrespective of their financial background. It may be commonplace but a little happiness can be found on every corner, even in the simplest things like a sunny afternoon, a smile or an enjoyable Sunday picnic.

So, how can you profit from all this? To me, the answer seems clear-cut: whether you are an adolescent, a middle-aged secretary or a retired taxi driver, you are prone to become unhappy, but everyone should keep in mind that it is your own responsibility to seize the highlight of each day of your life.

Task Fulfilment: mark 3

Fully and appropriately satisfies the demands of the task, covering both points/functions with good expansion and support: interprets the findings, expresses his views and adds some observations, comments (see the third paragraph and the conclusion). Genre and tone are totally appropriate.

Structure: mark 3

Fully coherent text using cohesive devices and paragraphs where appropriate. There are no punctuation errors. The structure of the text is fully appropriate to text type. The complexity of sentence structure is in line with what is expected at C1 level. The text is built up in a logical way: introduction (comes up with a dilemma), two well-structured paragraphs presenting and supporting the details, concluding paragraph.