

Plan a Writing Task in 5 Minutes

English **Level 2 Writing** Print one per task · works for letters, emails, articles, reports, reviews, forum posts

5 min PLAN

20 min WRITE

5 min CHECK

Timings for a 30-minute task – two tasks in a 60-minute exam means doing this twice. Students who plan finish more often, not less.

1 Read the task twice · 1 minute

Underline the form, the audience, the purpose and every bullet point. Then fill in:

FORM letter / email / article / report / review / post	AUDIENCE who reads it?	PURPOSE inform / persuade / complain / explain / review	TONE formal / semi- formal	WORDS suggested count
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2 The must-cover list · 1 minute

Copy every bullet point or instruction from the task. If you miss one, you lose communication marks no matter how well you write.

Must cover 1	
Must cover 2	
Must cover 3	

3 Paragraph plan · 2 minutes

One idea per paragraph. A few words each – not sentences. Add one specific detail (a number, a name, a time) to every paragraph.

Paragraph	Main point	Detail / example / technique
Opening – why I'm writing		
Para 2		
Para 3		
Para 4		
Ending – what I want / verdict		

4 Format and techniques · 1 minute

Tick what this form needs. Aim for two or three techniques, not ten.

Format features

- ☐ Addresses + date
- ☐ To / From / Subject
- ☐ Dear ... / Yours sincerely (name) / faithfully (Sir/Madam)
- ☐ Headline + byline

- ☐ Title, To/From/Date
- ☐ Subheadings
- ☐ Introduction
- ☐ Conclusion / Recommendations
- ☐ Rating / verdict

Techniques

- ☐ Rhetorical question
- ☐ Statistic / fact
- ☐ Rule of three
- ☐ Direct address
- ☐ Emotive language
- ☐ Expert opinion
- ☐ Imperative
- ☐ Connectives (however, as a result...)
- ☐ Balanced view ("although...")

Final 5 minutes – check only these: ☐ every must-cover point is in ☐ apostrophes (it's / its) ☐ capital letters for names, places, days, months ☐ full stops – no comma splices ☐ their / there / they're · your / you're ☐ word count ☐ correct sign-off

Worked example

The same sheet filled in for a real exam-style task, so you can see how little you need to write to have a strong plan.

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Task: Your local library is threatened with closure to save money. The council has invited residents to email their views. Write an email to the council. Explain why the library matters, describe the effect closure would have, and suggest an alternative. Suggested word count: 200–250 words.

FORM	AUDIENCE	PURPOSE	TOPE	WORDS
Formal email	Council – strangers, decision-makers	Persuade (keep it open)	Formal – no contractions	200–250
Must cover 1	Why the library matters			
Must cover 2	Effect of closure			
Must cover 3	Alternative suggestion			
Paragraph	Main point	Detail / example / technique		
Opening	Writing re proposed closure – strongly oppose	Resident 12 yrs, use it weekly		
Para 2	Why it matters – more than books	Job club Tues, homework club, only free wifi in town – triple		
Para 3	Effect of closure	Nearest library 6 miles, bus £4.80 return – statistic; "cut off" – emotive		
Para 4	Alternative	Reduce to 4 days + volunteers (Ashby did this, saved 40%) – expert/fact		
Ending	Ask for meeting / response before vote	Rhetorical q: "Is £X really worth...?" + Yours faithfully		

Format features ticked

☒ To / From / Subject ☒ Dear Sir or Madam → Yours faithfully ☐ headline ☐ subheadings

Techniques ticked

☒ statistic ☒ rule of three ☒ emotive language ☒ rhetorical question ☒ connectives

Why this plan works

- All three must-cover points map to a paragraph – nothing can be missed.
- Every paragraph has a specific, invented detail ready (the £4.80 bus fare, the Ashby example). Inventing detail is expected and rewarded.
- Techniques are decided *before* writing, so they appear naturally instead of being crammed in at the end.
- It took about 40 words to write. That is the whole point – a plan is a map, not a draft.

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