

Review Writing Frame

English **Level 2 Writing** Format guide · planning grid · exam-style task · self-marking checklist · model answer

What a review has to do

A review **informs** (what is it, where, how much) and **evaluates** (was it good, for whom, and why). The mark scheme rewards a **balanced** judgement backed by **specific detail**. "It was great, I'd recommend it" scores almost nothing; "The pasta was fresh and arrived in eight minutes, but the £4.50 charge for tap water left a bad taste" scores well.

Feature	What to include
Title	Name of the thing reviewed, often with a rating: <i>Riverside Lido – 4/5</i> .
Opening	The basics in two sentences: what it is, where, when you went, who with, what it cost.
Body	2–3 paragraphs, each on one aspect (e.g. food / service / value; or staff / facilities / atmosphere). Positives <i>and</i> negatives, with examples.
Tone	Lively but fair. Adjectives and comparisons help ("cleaner than most", "the friendliest staff I've met"). First person is expected.
Ending	Verdict: who it's for, who should avoid it, would you go back, rating.

Template

[Name of place / product / event] – ★★★★★

Reviewed by [your name] · [date or "visited in July"]

Para 1 – the basics: what, where, when, cost, who it's aimed at.

Para 2 – the best thing about it, with a specific example.

Para 3 – what let it down, with a specific example (be fair – say if it was a small thing).

Para 4 – value for money / one more aspect.

Para 5 – verdict: who should go, who shouldn't, would you return, rating.

Vocabulary bank

Positive: welcoming, spotless, generous, efficient, well-organised, excellent value, exceeded expectations, a real highlight, worth every penny

Balancing: on the plus side... / on the other hand... ; admittedly... ; despite this... ; it's worth noting that...

Negative (but fair): disappointing, overpriced, cramped, slow, let down by, the one weak point, not quite living up to, could be improved by

Verdict: ideal for... ; less suited to... ; I would happily return ; I'd think twice before... ; overall...

Exam-style task

Your workplace has a staff intranet with a "Days Out" section where colleagues review places they have visited with family or friends.

Write a review of a place you have visited (for example a park, attraction, restaurant, café, cinema or sports centre) for the "Days Out" section. Give information about the place, describe what was good and what was not so good, and say whether you would recommend it to colleagues.

Suggested word count: 250–300 words. **(27 marks)**

Planning grid

Place + rating

Basics: where / when / cost / who for

Best thing + example

Weakest thing + example

Value for money / other aspect

Verdict: who for, would I return

Write your answer here (250–300 words)

Self-marking checklist

- ☐ Title with the name of the place and a rating
 - ☐ Paragraphs each cover one aspect
 - ☐ Basics covered in the first paragraph
 - ☐ Descriptive vocabulary – not "good", "nice", "bad"
 - ☐ At least one positive AND one negative, each with a specific example
 - ☐ 250–300 words
 - ☐ Verdict says who it suits and whether I'd recommend it
 - ☐ SPaG check: apostrophes, capitals, full stops, homophones

Model answer and commentary

Written at a secure Level 2 pass standard – 284 words

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Hollow Farm Adventure Park – 4/5

Reviewed by Aisha Begum, Payroll · visited Saturday 6 September

If you have children between about four and twelve, Hollow Farm is one of the best-value days out within an hour of the office. It is just off the A38 near Wellford, costs £14 per adult and £11 per child (under-threes free), and we spent a full six hours there without running out of things to do.

The highlight was the outdoor play area. It is enormous – zip wires, a climbing tower, a sand-and-water pit and a proper tractor ride that runs every twenty minutes. My eight-year-old did not want to leave. The staff were also genuinely friendly: one of the animal handlers spent ten minutes showing my daughter how to hold a guinea pig properly rather than just rushing us through.

The one weak point was the café. At 12.30 p.m. the queue took twenty-five minutes, the hot food had run out apart from chips, and a sandwich, a drink and a packet of crisps came to nearly £9. Admittedly, you can bring your own food and there are plenty of picnic benches, which is what I would do next time.

Value for money is otherwise excellent. Our family of four paid £50 and every attraction is included, unlike some parks that charge extra for the "premium" rides. Parking is free and the toilets were spotless, even at the end of the day.

Overall, I would happily go back, but I would pack a picnic. It is ideal for families with primary-age children; teenagers may find it a bit tame. Four stars – it would be five with a better café.

Why this scores well

- **Format:** title with rating, reviewer byline, clear paragraphs by aspect, verdict at the end.
- **Communication:** every judgement is backed by a specific example (£9 lunch, 25-minute queue, guinea pig moment). The negative is fair and comes with a workaround.
- **Audience:** written for colleagues – "within an hour of the office", practical tips – exactly what the task asked.
- **Language:** varied vocabulary (highlight, genuinely, spotless, tame) and balancing phrases ("Admittedly", "otherwise", "Overall").

Where students lose marks on reviews

- All praise, no criticism (or the reverse) – the mark scheme wants a *balanced* evaluation.
- Vague adjectives: "good", "nice", "bad", "fun" – with no example to show *why*.
- Forgetting the basics (where it is, what it costs) – the review must *inform* as well as give an opinion.