

Blog Post – Exam-Style Writing Tasks

English

Level 2 Writing

Two exam-style tasks · planning grid · mark scheme · model answer with examiner notes

Know the format: a blog post

Layout: a title → optional date/author line → an opening that speaks directly to the reader → short paragraphs (blogs are read on screens) → a closing that asks a question, gives advice or invites comments. Subheadings are fine for longer posts.

Tone: personal and conversational – first person, direct address, questions to the reader, humour if it fits. But still: full sentences, paragraphs, no text-speak, no slang the audience would not use.

Know your audience: a personal blog can be chatty; a company blog for customers is friendly but professional.

Useful phrases

- If you are reading this..., this one is for you.
- Two years ago I would have laughed if...
- The hard part was not... It was...
- What was easier? ...
- So here is my advice.
- Sign up for one..., not three.
- What is stopping you?
- Tell me in the comments.

Task 1 – exam-style (Pearson layout)

Task 1

21 marks · about 35 minutes

Information

A website for adult learners hosts blogs written by people who have gone back to studying. The editor wants posts on the theme '**What I wish I'd known before I started**', aimed at readers who are thinking about returning to learning but feel nervous.

Writing task

Write a blog post for the website about returning to learning as an adult.

In your writing, you should:

- describe what made you decide to go back to learning
- explain what was harder, and what was easier, than you expected
- give advice to readers who are thinking about doing the same

You should aim to write about **250 to 300** words.

(21 marks)

Plan first (5 minutes)

Title

Opening: hook + what this post is about

Para 2: why I went back

Para 3: harder than expected

Para 4: easier than expected

Advice + closing question

Write your answer

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Task 2 – exam-style (Highfield layout)

Task 2

27 marks · about 30 minutes

Information

You work for a small independent café. The owner has started a blog on the café's website to keep customers informed and has asked staff to write posts.

You make these notes: new opening hours from 1 October (7 am–6 pm weekdays, 8–4 weekends) · why: early commuters asked, staff wanted evenings · loyalty card – 6th drink free · new menu items: porridge, soup of the day · ask customers what else they'd like

Writing task

Write a blog post for the café's website telling customers about the changes.

In your writing, you should:

- explain what is changing and when
- describe the reasons for the changes
- encourage customers to give feedback

You should aim to write about **200 to 250** words.

(27 marks)

Write your answer

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Blog Post – Exam-Style Writing Tasks – Mark Scheme and Model Answer

How the examiner marks it, what a full-marks answer must include, and a model answer at a secure Level 2 pass standard.

Want a tutor to mark your work? Functify Learning runs live 10-week Functional Skills Level 2 English and Maths courses (small groups, mock exam included) and a 5-day self-paced revision course. Start with our free mini mock test at funtifylearning.co.uk.

How writing tasks are marked

Marks	Composition (what the examiner looks for) – Grid A	Spelling, punctuation and grammar – Grid B
Top band 9–12 (Task 1) 7–9 (Task 2)	Ideas are consistently clear, with detail used <i>effectively</i> for the purpose and audience, at the right length. Format and structure are right for the text type; paragraphs are used effectively and the writing is held together with organisational markers. A range of sentence types, including complex sentences, used accurately. Language and register suit the audience, with a wide, well-chosen vocabulary.	Top: spelling of everyday and specialist words is accurate; a range of punctuation is used correctly and for effect; grammar is consistently accurate, including tense and subject–verb agreement.
Middle band 5–8 / 4–6	Ideas are reasonably clear with an appropriate level of detail. Format and structure are appropriate; paragraphs generally accurate; cohesion mostly maintained. Range of sentences with general accuracy. Wide vocabulary appropriate to purpose and audience.	Middle: mostly accurate spelling with some errors in harder words; sentence punctuation mostly accurate; grammar generally correct.
Lower band 1–4 / 1–3	Straightforward ideas with some clarity. Some use of appropriate format, paragraphs and cohesion. Some range of sentences with some accuracy. Some appropriate vocabulary.	Lower: errors in spelling and punctuation that sometimes affect clarity; limited or inconsistent grammatical control.

Based on the published Pearson Edexcel Level 2 writing grids (Task 1 = 21 marks: 12 composition + 9 SPaG; Task 2 = 15 marks: 9 + 6). Highfield, City & Guilds and NCFE mark the same strands with different totals (e.g. 27 per task).

Indicative content – what a full answer to Task 1 must cover

- A clear reason for returning to learning (a job that needed a qualification, a child starting school, a failed exam at 16, a promotion)
- Specific things that were harder (finding time, confidence, remembering how to study) and easier (support from tutors, other adults in the same position, online resources)
- Practical advice addressed to nervous readers (start with one course, tell your family, use the free mock test, plan two evenings a week)

- Blog conventions: title, personal voice, direct address, short paragraphs, an ending that invites a response

The examiner's list is "not prescriptive" – any relevant, developed ideas score – but every bullet point in the task must be addressed.

Model answer – Task 1 (298 words)

Back to the classroom at 34: what I wish someone had told me

Posted by Sam · adult learner, Level 2 English [title + author line]

Two years ago I would have laughed if you had told me I would be sitting an English exam at 34. If you are reading this with a college prospectus open in another tab and a knot in your stomach, this one is for you. [hook; direct address to the nervous reader named in the task]

I went back because of a job. I had been a team leader at a warehouse for six years, and when the supervisor role came up I was told, kindly but firmly, that I needed Level 2 English and maths to apply. I had left school at sixteen with neither. It was that or watch someone else get the job. [bullet 1: specific, honest reason]

The hard part was not the work. It was walking into the first session convinced everyone would be eighteen and cleverer than me. They were not: the woman next to me was a care worker in her fifties, and the youngest person in the room was 24. The other hard part was time. Two evenings a week does not sound much until you have done a nine-hour shift first. I got through it by telling my family the exact nights I was studying and treating them like shifts I could not miss. [bullet 2 harder: two things, each with a fix]

What was easier? The teaching. Nobody talked at us for an hour. We looked at real letters, real adverts, real forms, and the tutor explained exactly how the exam gives marks. I finally understood what a paragraph was for, which is more than school ever managed. [bullet 2 easier: contrast with school; rhetorical question as a paragraph opener]

So here is my advice. Sign up for one course, not three. Do the free mock test first so you know what you are walking into. Tell people you are doing it – it makes it harder to quit. And on the first evening, look around the room: nobody there thinks you are too old, because half of them are older. [bullet 3: numbered-feel advice using imperatives]

I got the supervisor job in March. What is stopping you? Tell me in the comments. [ending: result + question + invitation, as blogs do]

Why this scores in the top band

- The voice is personal and direct throughout – 'this one is for you', 'What is stopping you?' – exactly what a blog needs, yet every sentence is complete and correctly punctuated.
- Short paragraphs, each with one job, mirror how blogs are read on screen; the task's three bullets map onto paragraphs 2, 3–4 and 5.
- Detail is specific enough to be believable: 34, six years, two evenings a week, the care worker in her fifties, March.
- The advice paragraph uses imperatives ('Sign up', 'Do the free mock test', 'Tell people') – language that suits the purpose of advising.
- The ending invites comments, which is a blog convention the examiner will recognise as format.

Where Level 2 students lose marks on this text type

- Writing it as a formal essay – no 'I', no 'you', no title. A blog without a voice loses format and register marks.

- Going too far the other way: slang, 'lol', no paragraphs. Conversational is not the same as careless.
- Answering 'what was harder' but forgetting 'what was easier' – both halves of the bullet count.
- No ending. Blogs finish with a question, a tip or an invitation, not mid-thought.