

Web Forum 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 web forum or discussion post

Layout: a thread title or subject line → your username or name → an opening that says who you are in relation to the topic and your overall view → 3–4 short paragraphs, at least one of which responds to what other users have said → an ending with a suggestion or a question to the thread → sign-off with your name/username.

Tone: semi-formal – 'a letter to strangers who share your interest'. Contractions are fine; slang, text-speak and emojis are not. Disagree politely: 'I can see why some people feel..., but...'.
The trap: the task nearly always says 'respond to points others have made'. If you ignore the other users, you lose communication marks.

Useful phrases

- I have been following this thread and wanted to add...
- Speaking as someone who...
- Several people have said... I understand the worry, but...
- Others have raised... I take that seriously because...
- On balance, I am in favour – with two conditions.
- A sensible compromise would be...
- Has anyone here actually...?
- That seems like the obvious next step.

Task 1 – exam-style (Pearson layout)

Task 1 21 marks · about 35 minutes

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Information

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Writing task

Write a post for the discussion giving your views on the Saturday car ban.

In your writing, you should:

- give your opinion on the proposal and your reasons
- respond to points that other users have made
- suggest what should happen next

You should aim to write about **250 to 300** words. (21 marks)

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Plan first (5 minutes)

Thread title + username

Opening: who I am + my overall view

Reason 1 + example

'Several people have said...' → my response

Reason 2 / a compromise

Ending: suggestion or question to the thread

Write your answer

Task 2 – exam-style (Highfield layout)

Task 2

27 marks · about 30 minutes

Information

Your company has an internal discussion board. A manager has posted asking whether the staff canteen should be replaced by vending machines and a microwave area to save money. Several colleagues have already replied.

You make these notes: canteen is where teams actually meet · hot food matters on early shifts · £2.50 lunch vs £4+ from machines · agree costs are high – maybe reduce hours instead · survey all staff before deciding

Writing task

Write a post for the discussion board giving your views.

In your writing, you should:

- say what you think about the proposal
- respond to what other colleagues have said
- suggest an alternative

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

(27 marks)

Write your answer

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Web Forum 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 functifylearning.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 view on the car ban with reasons (safety, footfall, air quality – or loss of trade, displaced traffic)
- Direct responses to the two sides described in the Information box – agree, disagree or partly agree, with a reason
- A next step: a trial period, a survey of traders, extra parking nearby, a review after three months
- Forum conventions: subject line, username, opening that establishes who you are, semi-formal register, engagement with other users, sign-off

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 (300 words)

Re: Saturday car ban on the high street – for or against? · **Posted by:** LeilaM [thread subject + username]

I have lived on Mill Road, just behind the high street, for six years and I work in one of the shops that would be affected, so I can see this from both sides. On balance I am in favour – but only as a trial, and only with two conditions. [who I am + overall view, with a hint of balance]

Several people have said the ban will kill trade because customers cannot park outside. I understand the worry, but the evidence from towns that have tried it points the other way: when people are not dodging cars they stay longer, and staying longer means spending more. On our busiest Saturday last year the street was so choked with traffic that customers were queuing on the road to get into the bakery. That is not good for anyone's trade. [bullet 2: responds to the opposing view politely, with evidence]

Others have raised the traffic being pushed onto Mill Road and Station Road. As someone who lives on Mill Road, I take that seriously – it is my street. That is why the first condition has to be temporary one-way signs and a 20 mph limit on the side roads on Saturdays, so we are not simply moving the problem. [second response; personal stake makes it credible]

The second condition is the car park behind the library. If the council made it free on Saturdays for the length of the trial, most of the 'nowhere to park' argument disappears, and shoppers would still be within two minutes' walk of every shop. [bullet 3: concrete conditions]

So my suggestion is a three-month trial starting in November, with the side-road measures and free parking in place from day one, and a proper count of visitors and takings before and after so we are arguing about numbers next time rather than opinions. Has anyone here actually asked the traders' association what they think? That seems like the obvious next step. [next step + question to the thread; sign-off]

Leila

Why this scores in the top band

- The post opens by establishing a credible position (resident and shop worker) and states a clear, nuanced view.
- It responds directly to both objections named in the task – 'Several people have said...', 'Others have raised...' – which is the specific skill this text type tests.
- Disagreement is polite and evidenced ('I understand the worry, but...'), which keeps the register right for a public forum.
- The suggestion is concrete (three months, November, side-road measures, free parking, before-and-after counts) and it ends with a question to keep the thread going.
- Contractions are used sparingly and correctly; no slang; complete sentences; short screen-friendly paragraphs.

Where Level 2 students lose marks on this text type

- Writing a one-paragraph rant with no greeting, no structure and no reference to what others have said.
- Going fully formal – 'Dear Sir or Madam... Yours faithfully' – which is the wrong format for a forum and loses marks.
- Ignoring the other users. If the task says 'respond to points others have made', quote or summarise them and answer.

- Ending abruptly. A forum post finishes with a suggestion, a question or an invitation to reply.