

Review – 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 review

Layout: a title naming what is reviewed, usually with a rating (★★★★☆ or 4/5) → a byline → opening paragraph with the basics (what it is, where, when you went, cost) → body paragraphs each on one aspect (facilities, staff, value, food...) with positives *and* negatives → a verdict: who it suits, who should avoid it, would you go back.

Tone: lively and fair. First person is expected. Use comparisons ('cleaner than most', 'the friendliest staff I've met') and balancing phrases ('on the plus side... however...', 'admittedly...').

Detail wins marks: 'the queue took twenty-five minutes' beats 'the queue was long'.

Useful phrases

- If you are looking for..., ... is hard to beat.
- The highlight was... / The weak point is...
- Admittedly, ... / On the plus side, ...
- ... which is rarer than it should be.
- Value for money is...
- I would recommend it without hesitation to...
- If ... matters to you, ...
- I would happily go back / think twice before...

Task 1 – exam-style (Pearson layout)

Task 1

21 marks · about 35 minutes

Information

A local website called **Days Out Near You** publishes reviews written by readers. It is used mainly by families and older people looking for places to visit at weekends.

You recently visited a place – for example a park, museum, café, leisure centre, market or attraction – and had a mixed experience.

Writing task

Write a review of the place you visited for the website.

In your writing, you should:

- give information about the place – where it is, what it offers and what it costs
- describe what was good and what was not so good
- say who you would recommend it to and why

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

(21 marks)

Plan first (5 minutes)

Title + rating

Para 1: the basics (where, when, cost, who for)

Para 2: the best thing + example

Para 3: what let it down + example

Para 4: value for money / another aspect

Verdict: who for, would I return

Write your answer

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Task 2 – exam-style (Highfield layout)

Task 2

27 marks · about 30 minutes

Information

Your employer sent you on a one-day customer service training course. The HR team has asked staff who attended to write a short review for the company intranet, to help decide whether other staff should go.

You make these notes: trainer knew the subject, good real examples · morning too slow, lots of slides · afternoon role-plays really useful · lunch not provided · £180 a head · would suit new staff more than experienced

Writing task

Write a review of the training course for the company intranet.

In your writing, you should:

- describe what the course involved
- explain what was good and what could be improved
- recommend whether other staff should attend

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

(27 marks)

Write your answer

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Review – 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.

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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

- Information: where the place is, what it offers, opening times or cost – at least three facts
- At least one positive and one negative, each backed by a specific example
- A clear recommendation: which readers it suits (families, older visitors, budget days out) and why
- Review conventions: title, rating, first person, balanced judgement, verdict
- Language suited to a general website: descriptive vocabulary, comparisons, some direct address

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 (297 words)

Riverside Country Park – ★★★★★

Reviewed by J. Mensah · visited Saturday 12 September [title, rating, byline]

If you are looking for a free day out that will tire out children without emptying your wallet, Riverside Country Park is hard to beat – with one warning about the café. The park is two miles from the town centre on the number 14 bus route, entry and parking are free, and it is open from dawn to dusk all year. [bullet 1: where, cost, transport, opening – in one tight paragraph]

The highlight is the adventure playground, rebuilt last spring. There is a proper zip wire, a climbing net that older children actually find challenging, and a fenced toddler area with a sand pit, so my four-year-old and my ten-year-old were both happy for two full hours. The three-mile lakeside path is flat and well surfaced; we saw two wheelchair users and several pushchairs managing it easily, which is rarer than it should be. [bullet 2 positives: specific, comparative, aimed at the website's readers]

The café is the weak point. On a busy Saturday there was one person serving, the wait for two hot drinks was twenty-five minutes, and a sandwich, a drink and a cake came to £9.40. Admittedly, there are plenty of picnic benches by the lake, and next time we will bring our own food – but for older visitors who rely on somewhere warm to sit, the café is not yet good enough. [bullet 2 negatives: fair, specific, then a workaround]

Value for money is otherwise excellent. A family of four spent nothing apart from that café bill, the toilets near the car park were clean, and there is a small visitor centre with a free trail sheet for children. [extra aspect; keeps evaluating]

I would recommend Riverside without hesitation to families with primary-age children and to anyone who wants a gentle, level walk. If a good café matters to your day, pack a flask for now – and I would happily go back to see whether they have fixed it. [bullet 3: who it suits, who should be careful, would return]

Why this scores in the top band

- The first paragraph gives every basic fact the task asks for and signals the balanced verdict to come.
- Each judgement carries evidence: two hours of play, twenty-five-minute wait, £9.40, wheelchair users on the path.
- The negative is fair – it acknowledges the picnic benches – which is what the mark scheme means by a balanced review.
- The recommendation names specific groups of readers, matching the audience in the Information box.
- Varied sentence lengths, controlled punctuation (dashes, semicolons) and a descriptive vocabulary throughout.

Where Level 2 students lose marks on this text type

- All praise or all complaint. A review with no 'however' cannot reach the top band.
- Missing the information bullet – no cost, no location, no opening times.
- Vague adjectives ('nice', 'good', 'bad') with no example to show why.
- Forgetting the recommendation. The last paragraph must say who it suits.