



## **Unpacking the ECPE Writing test**

A presentation for language school owners and teachers



**HELLENIC  
AMERICAN  
UNION**

**CENTER FOR  
EXAMINATIONS & CERTIFICATIONS**

# Unpacking

## Writing

ECPE



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## Unpacking the ECPE Writing Test

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Format - Specifications

Preparation

Tips to share

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# Introduction

The Examination for the Certificate of Proficiency in English (ECPE) is a standardized, 4-skill English test at the high-advanced level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR C2). It is a secure exam developed by Michigan Language Assessment and administered by authorized test centers worldwide.



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# Format-Specs

ECPE Writing

Unpacking the ECPE Writing Test

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**Tasks:** 1. Article/Proposal  
or  
2. Essay  
**Length:** approx. 2 A4 pages  
**Duration:** 45 min.

Writing Format

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- ✓ Evaluate multiple viewpoints
- ✓ Test taker's opinion
- ✓ 3 sources provided (visual prompts); incorporate at least 1

Writing Requirements

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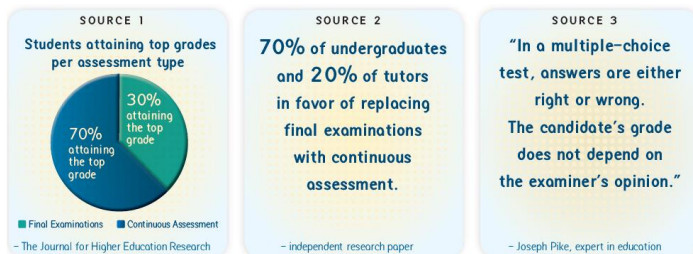
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### Sources (visual prompts) sample:



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## Article – Task Breakdown

- There is a **situation** (that impacts a large number of people)
- There is reference to **multiple viewpoints** (what people think)
- There is **task instruction** (who the audience is and what needs to be discussed - own opinion)
- There is **source instruction** (visual information provided)

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## Article – Sample Task

### Task 1: Article

Brentwood University is planning to replace end-of-year multiple-choice examinations with 'continuous assessment', a system in which tutors evaluate their undergraduate students' written assignments, class participation and attendance throughout the academic year. However, some claim that final examinations are the best way to assess students, not continuous assessment. Write an article for a student magazine about the effects of the proposed change, and give your opinion about this change. Include at least one piece of information given above to support your response.

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Sources (visual prompts) sample:



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## Proposal – Sample Task

**Task 1: Proposal**

Employees who work at Promotech, a marketing company, each have their own private offices, but the company has decided to change to an 'open-plan' design, in which all employees sit together at shared desks in one large office space. Some employees do not agree with this plan. Write a **proposal** to the chief executives of Promotech evaluating the different options, and explain what you think should be done. Include at least one piece of information given above to support your response.

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### Proposal – Task Breakdown

- There is a **situation** (that impacts certain people, e.g. at a company)
- There is reference to **multiple viewpoints** (what people think)
- There is **task instruction** (who the audience is and what needs to be discussed - own opinion)
- There is **source instruction** (visual information provided)

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## Essay – Sample Task

**Task 2: Essay**

At many universities, final examinations are being replaced by 'continuous assessment', a system in which students are graded according to their performance throughout the year. What could be the positive and negative effects of this change? Write an **essay** addressing this topic and give your views about it. Include at least one piece of information given above to support your response.

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## Essay – Task Breakdown

- There is a **claim** (topic description provides context)
- There is a **question** (allowing for multiple viewpoints)
- There is **task instruction** (to include own opinion)
- There is **source instruction** (visual information provided)

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**Are test takers allowed to make a plan/outline?**

Of course! Actually, they can write anything they want in the test booklet (it's not assessed). They don't need to bring their own paper.

**Are they writing their response in the test booklet?**

No, they are given a Writing section answer sheet.

**How many words should they write?**

Counting words might be distracting and it certainly is unnecessary; that's why Michigan Language Assessment does not suggest a particular number of words for ECPE Writing.

**What happens if a test taker does not finish his/her response?**

There are 4 assessment criteria based on which the 2 raters assign their scores. There are several parameters involved in assessment. Not completing the response does not mean that the test taker will fail this section. They may get a high score even with an incomplete response.

Writing FAQs

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# Preparation

ECPE Writing

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## Assessment Criteria

### **Task Completion**

- On topic
- Multiple viewpoints
- Test taker's opinion
- Source integration

### **Development**

- Depth of support
- Organization

### **Language**

- Grammatical control
- Vocabulary range and usage

### **Authorial Voice**

- Originality
- Reader engagement

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## Preparation objectives (based on assessment criteria)

### Objectives

- Relevance to task, consideration of multiple viewpoints along with writer's opinion, integration of at least one visual prompt in the response
- Development of strong arguments, meaningful information flow (organization & connection of ideas)
- Demonstration of a good range of grammar and vocabulary
- Content originality and reader engagement

### Assessment Criteria

- Task Completion
- Development
- Language
- Authorial Voice

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## Level expectations

**Students should be able to:**

- produce clear, smooth, complex responses
- consider multiple perspectives
- distinguish original ideas and opinions from those in sources
- display a variety of organizational patterns
- provide an effective and logical structure
- maintain consistent grammatical control
- convey finer shades of meaning
- use vocabulary accurately
- have a broad lexical repertoire

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# Useful steps for your students

- 1. Listen to the instructions the examiner gives test takers.
- 2. Choose the task you feel more comfortable with (you fully understand it – you have some ideas about it – you have the vocabulary to express your ideas).
- 3. Read again the chosen task and underline key words.
- 4. Make an outline (plan).



- 1. Proofread your response
- 2. Edit your writing (correct the mistakes (in grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, mechanics))
- 3. Make sure you've darkened the circle that corresponds to the task you've chosen on the cover page of your Writing section answer sheet.

**1. Write your introduction:**

Describe the task using your own words (paraphrase instead of copying from the task). At the end of the introduction give the reader an idea of what is going to follow; for example, you can write your opinion (briefly).

2. Start each main body paragraph with a topic sentence (the summary of the paragraph).

3. Analyse and support your ideas using examples.

4. Write your conclusion (re-write your opinion, main points you used) and end your response smoothly (e.g. using a wish)

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## Summary

- Teach your students how to write
- Expose students to the writing process: planning, drafting, editing, re-drafting, submitting
- Use Hellenic American Union publications (The new *build up your Writing and Speaking skills for the ECPE - Revised 2021 format*)
- Have your students take mock tests (under exam conditions)
- Give them feedback that helps them improve!



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Thank you



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