



Unpacking the ECPE Writing test: Q&A

A webinar for teachers



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Administering the ECPE since 1957



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ECPE



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ECPE Writing Specs





Tasks: 1. Article/Proposal
or
2. Essay

Length: approx. 2 A4 pages

Duration: 45 min.

(test takers use pencil)

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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Your questions



Does the writing only include reports, articles, or essays based on advantages/disadvantages, or do candidates also express opinions or suggest solutions?

Is Task 2 always a balanced advantages-disadvantages essay? What types of writing topics are tested? Are they only advantages/disadvantages or can they be problem-solution, cause-effect, etc.?

How can I teach the differences between an article, a proposal, and an essay?

What exactly makes a good article, and how is it different from the other types of writing?

Types of Writing Tasks



Can the infographics shown in the YouTube presentation be quoted, or should they always be paraphrased?

Are all three visuals relevant to both topics, or might one be unsuitable?

Is it OK if the candidate bases all arguments on the three graphs and adds no personal ideas?

Can a visual prompt be included in the conclusion?

How much should students elaborate on the sources?

**Use of Sources
and Visuals**

ECPE Writing: Q & A



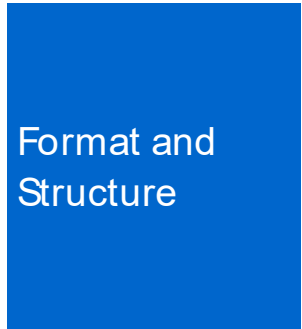
What is the recommended paragraph outline for an advantages/disadvantages essay?

Is the student's opinion obligatory in paragraph one?

Should students write titles above each paragraph when writing a proposal?

What is the word limit for the composition? Model writings are around 350 words—is this sufficient? How many pages is approximately 300–350 words?

Should candidates write in pen or pencil?





How exactly are writings corrected? How are scores assigned?

Can you show us an essay that got 1000?

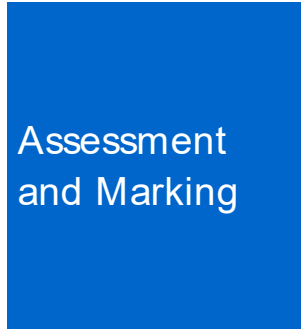
Who marks the essays—a person or AI?

Are disabilities (e.g., dysorthography) taken into account when marking?

Are the published criteria representative of the real marking process? What are the official marking criteria?

Can you explain the criteria with examples for each level?

How are writing topics selected?





Official Writing Rating Scale



Task Completion



Development



Language



Authorial Voice

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ARE ALL TASK REQUIREMENTS FULFILLED?

Has the test taker followed the instructions given in the prompt?

Is the response related to the topic/prompt?

Are multiple viewpoints considered in the response along with the test taker's opinion?

Is there at least one provided source (info from graph, diagram, etc.) integrated into the response?

INCLUSION OF SOURCE (CONSIDERATION):

Has it become part of the response smoothly and naturally or is it just mentioned?



Task
Completion

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

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ARE THE IDEAS SUPPORTED WITH ARGUMENTS?

Are the writer's ideas developed and supported?

Does the response convincingly show consideration of the topic?

Are the ideas clearly and logically organized?

ORGANIZATION OF IDEAS (CONSIDERATION):

- Through linking words and phrases (no overuse)
- Through 'strong' introductory words and phrases (e.g. noun-clauses, gerunds, etc.)

Development

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

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IS THE LANGUAGE USED AT PROFICIENCY LEVEL?

Has the writer used both simple and complex grammar structures in the response?

Are these grammar structures accurate?

Is the vocabulary range broad enough?

Is the vocabulary appropriate, precise, and sophisticated?

Language

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦

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IS THE RESPONSE ORIGINAL AND ENGAGING?

Is the content original?

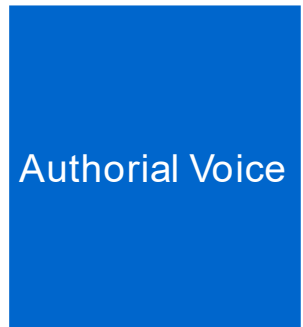
Does the response engage the reader?

RESPONSE ORIGINALITY (CONSIDERATION):

Language is neither formulaic nor copied from information already provided through the task –there are examples supporting the test taker’s opinion and avoidance of generalizations/broad reasoning

RESPONSE ENGAGEMENT (CONSIDERATION):

Is the response appealing to the reader’s emotions? (e.g. through the use of rhetorical questions)



① ② ③



Task Completion	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Response addresses the prompt-specific topic and fulfills all of the task requirements. ▶ Integrates at least one provided source in the response.
	4	*
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Response is in the general topic area and fulfills all of the task requirements. ▶ Includes at least one provided source in the response.
	2	*
	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Response is in the general topic area but does not fulfill all of the task requirements. ▶ Does not include a provided source in the response.
Development	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ideas are extensively supported and developed. Response is a well thought out and convincing consideration of the topic. ▶ Clearly and logically organized.
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ideas are well-supported and developed, and an in-depth consideration of the topic is provided. ▶ Clearly and logically organized.
	3	*
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Support for ideas is given but may not be fully developed. Attempts to provide in-depth consideration of the topic. ▶ Not clearly or logically organized.
	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ideas are not supported. Consideration of the topic is simplistic or generalized. ▶ Not clearly or logically organized.



No Score

- ▶ No response is given.
- ▶ Response is completely illegible.
- ▶ Response is written on a different topic than those assigned.
- ▶ Response is written in test taker's L1.



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What are the requirements for using “they” and “we” in essays vs. articles?

How much “out-of-the-box” thinking is valued in grading?

Can you clarify what “authorial voice” really means? Any examples?

Is overreliance on set phrases penalized?

Is copying parts of the prompt penalized?

How do examiners evaluate students’ personal style? Do students have to use scientific language in their responses?

How are cohesion and coherence evaluated?

**Style,
Language, and
Authorial Voice**



Some students struggle to organize a plan. How can I guide them?
Are there any sample compositions (grade A) that can serve as models for young C2 learners?

Teaching
Guidance



If a topic includes unfamiliar terminology (e.g., “green roofs”), can students ask for clarification?

How many of the provided pieces of information should students include —can they use all of them?

Will we receive a handout with all the information after the presentation?

**Practical and
Miscellaneous**

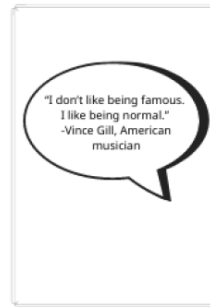
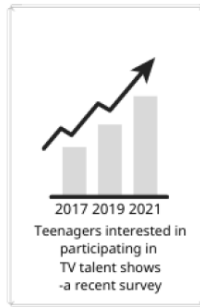
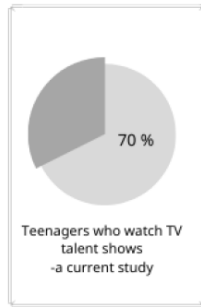
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Samples





Task 1: Article

Taking part in TV talent shows is becoming extremely popular among teenagers. However, a lot of parents do not allow their children to apply for such shows. Write an article for your school newspaper, analyze the impact of this current trend on the society and what you think about it. Include at least one piece of information given above to support your response.

Task 2: Essay

Talent shows on television are currently very popular. In fact, the number of teenagers who are very keen on participating in such shows is constantly increasing. What positive and negative impact might this have? Write an essay addressing this topic, and explain what you think about it. Include at least one piece of information given above to support your response.



Taking part in TV talent shows is becoming extremely popular among teenagers and one of the most commonly debated issues these days is whether teenagers should compete in talent shows or not. The answer is of course not straightforward and participating in such a show can have many positive and negative effects, but I believe that the positive effects prevail so I will agree with the people that support teenagers to participate in talent shows.

On the one hand, several people object that teenagers shouldn't participate in talent shows on television. To begin with, one drawback is that success can bring many negative effects. Being a teenager is very hard nowadays because students are stressed because of school and activities. If they take part in TV talent show, they will lose many lessons, they will not have time for their homework and the stress can disturb their future career. Moreover, if they become famous, they will need to be careful with whatever they say or do cuz everybody will watch what they do on TV and on social media and they will not have privacy and they won't be able to go outside and make friends. With a few words, his whole life will change forever! Last but not least, there is a high possibility of getting rejected. If the critics are really bad, they will feel embarrassed and maybe they will be bullied at school. This disadvantage I wrote can be related from Vince Gill, who is an American musician that as he said "I don't like being famous. I like being normal."

On the other hand, there are many benefits in favour of competing. 70% of teenagers are watching TV talents shows. All teenagers are influenced by celebrities on television and social media and every teenager has a dream of becoming famous on television so everyone can know him too. So, if someone has a talent on music or acrobatics, he can try to achieve his dream if he participates in a talent show and positive critics he will receive can provide more chances of becoming famous and successful. And if he is very talented, the result of the talent show can be the beginning of a new career as a singer, actor, model, etc. Sometimes, becoming famous also comes with being idol or role model for young people and have a positive influence in the teenagers who will admire you and want to copy you: they see you on television becoming successful and it encourages them to follow their dreams, too. They will think that "if he can achieve such things in that age, I need to try at least!"

To sum up I believe that whether teenagers participate in talent shows or not is a complicated issue that has many advantages and disadvantages. However, I feel that the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages.





Comparing both responses



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)



Remember

Practice makes perfect!







Thank you



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