

Extended writing (Email to school principal)

Level: ISE I (CEFR B1)

Time: 45 minutes

Focus: Extended writing task (Reading & Writing exam)

Aims: To write a formal email about ideas for entertainment at an end-of-term party, and give reasons for these ideas

Objectives: Reading and organising an email into a logical sequence, putting sentences into appropriate paragraphs, recognising formal language, planning and writing a formal email

Subject area: Entertainment

Language functions: Giving opinions, preferences and reasons

Materials needed: One copy of the student worksheet, blank pieces of paper, pens, sellotape and Blu-Tack

In class

1. Tell the students that putting information in the right order and in logical paragraphs is an important requirement of the Extended writing task of the ISE I Reading & Writing exam. In this lesson the students will practise this skill.
2. Give out the student worksheet. Put students in pairs and ask the students to complete **task A**, putting the sentences into a logical order to make a complete email. Tell them that they need to read the sentences carefully to do this. Allow 5-8 minutes for this task. Check answers together as a group.
3. Ask the students to discuss the questions in **task B**, which focus on explaining and giving reasons for decisions. Tell them to make notes next to the questions. While they are doing this, encourage them to practise asking for reasons as well as giving reasons. For example: '*What's the reason you think that?*' and '*Why do you think that?*' In question 2, encourage them to underline words and expressions that show that the writer is giving reasons. Allow students 8-10 minutes for this. Check answers together as a group (answers: as, because).
4. On the board, write down the reasons students gave which they believe make this email formal, and add any the students have missed (see answer key on page 2). Tell the students that in the exam, the examiner will check their writing to see if they are using an appropriately formal or informal style.
5. Tell students that using paragraphs appropriately is a requirement of all parts of the ISE I Reading & Writing exam. Ask them to complete **task C** by deciding in pairs how to put the sentences into the correct paragraphs and using one or two words to describe the content of the paragraphs. For example, 'Paragraph 1 = Purpose of email'. Allow students five minutes for this. Check answers as a group.
6. Tell students that they are now going to write an email to the school principal with their ideas for an end-of-term party (**task D**). First they must plan what they are going to write. Put students in groups of three and give them five minutes to discuss the type of party they would like and to plan the email by making notes on the content of each paragraph. Go around and monitor/help students.
7. Still in groups of three, ask students to write their emails to the principal, using their plans to help them. Give each student a blank piece of paper and a pen. Allow the students 10-12 minutes to write their email.
8. After students have written their emails, put them on the walls of the classroom using sellotape or Blu-Tack. Students should then read the emails and choose the best party idea. Get the whole class to vote. Ask the students if they managed to do the message in 130 words (which is a requirement of the Extended writing task). Ask them if planning helped them to write more quickly.
9. At the end of the lesson collect the messages so you can take them away and mark them. Give them back to students in the next lesson with comments.
10. Finally, remind students that they may have to write an email in the Extended writing task of the ISE I exam. This could be a formal or informal email. They have 40 minutes for this task, and if they spend some of that time planning they will be able to write a more organised email and may receive a better mark.

Extension activity

Ask students who have finished their emails to check their grammar carefully and see if they can make improvements.

Further support activity

Ask students to look at the model email and use it to help them plan their own messages.

Answers

Task A

Correct sentence order: a, g, k, b, c, e, i, d, l, h, f, j, m

Task B

1. Accept all answers.
2. Borrowing sheets to dress up in is cheap for students, Romans ate the same kind of food, students have worked hard so deserve a treat, the school orchestra needs practice.
3. This email is more formal as salutations used are 'Dear principal' and 'Kind regards', no contractions are used, clear paragraphing, formal linking expressions such as 'furthermore'. The writer uses longer, more formal words such as 'opportunity' (instead of 'chance'), 'inexpensive' (instead of 'cheap') and 'certainly' (instead of 'sure'). The writer also uses 'would' throughout, and 'I look forward to' which shows a polite and formal tone.

Task C

1. Paragraph 1 = g, Paragraph 2 = k, b Paragraph 3 = c, e, i Paragraph 4 = d, l, h Paragraph 5 = f
2. Suggested answers: Paragraph 1 = Introduction/purpose of email, Paragraph 2 = Theme/clothes, Paragraph 3 = Food, Paragraph 4 = Music, Paragraph 5 = Next communication

Model email

Dear Principal,

I am writing with some ideas I have for a theme for the end-of-term party.

I was thinking that a Roman theme will be a wonderful opportunity for us to dress up. The students can borrow sheets from home to wear as togas as this would be inexpensive.

We could have food that the Romans ate such as grapes, olives and chicken legs. Furthermore, staff could serve this to us. This would be a special treat for us because we have worked so hard recently.

Personally, I would prefer to listen to classical music at this event. Perhaps the school orchestra might play while we are relaxing. As they certainly need some practice before their annual summer concert.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Kind regards

Thomas

Student worksheet – Email to school principal

Task A

The school principal has asked students to email their ideas for entertainment at the end-of-term party. In pairs, look at Thomas's email below and put the sentences into the correct order.

- a) Dear Principal
- b) The students can borrow sheets from home to wear as togas, which would be inexpensive.
- c) We could have food that the Romans ate such as grapes, olives and chicken legs.
- d) Personally, I would prefer to listen to classical music at the party.
- e) Furthermore, staff could serve this to us.
- f) I look forward to hearing your thoughts.
- g) I am writing with some ideas I have for a theme for the end-of-term party.
- h) As they certainly need some practice before their annual summer concert.
- i) This would be a special treat for us because we have worked so hard recently.
- j) Kind regards
- k) I was thinking that a Roman theme will be a wonderful opportunity for us to dress up.
- l) Perhaps the school orchestra might play while we are relaxing.
- m) Thomas

- | | | | | |
|----------------|----|----|-----|-----|
| 1. a (example) | 4. | 7. | 10. | 13. |
| 2. | 5. | 8. | 11. | |
| 3. | 6. | 9. | 12. | |

Task B

Discuss in pairs.

1. Would you like to attend this end-of-term party? Why/why not?
2. What reasons does the writer give for each of his ideas?
3. What makes this email more formal than informal?

Task C

1. Now group the sentences together to make paragraphs. For example, Paragraph 1 = sentence g.
2. Choose one or two words to describe the topic of each paragraph. For example, Paragraph 1 = Purpose.

Task D

In groups of three write an email to the principal with your ideas for an end-of-term party. First, discuss your ideas for the party and plan your message using the email plan below. Decide on topics for your paragraphs and give reasons for your choices.

Email plan

| | Topic | Supporting information/reasons |
|-------------|-------|--------------------------------|
| Paragraph 1 | | |
| Paragraph 2 | | |
| Paragraph 3 | | |
| Paragraph 4 | | |

Write your email together, using your plan. It should be no more than 130 words.