

Activity 2: Becoming a school governor

Level:

CEFR C1

Time:

60 minutes

Resources:

▶ Handouts

Aims:

- ▶ To make learners aware of the roles of school governors
- ▶ To practise writing a short, informal email to persuade, reassure, speculate, and request
- ▶ To give learners practice in proofreading their work
- ▶ To feel confident in ways of persuading, giving reassurance, warning, giving praise speculating and requesting

Exam task focus: Task 4

Procedure

1. Start the lesson by asking learners what they know about the role of a school governor. Find out whether they exist in other countries. Direct them to the statements in Activity 1A and tell them to decide whether they are true or false. You could do this individually or in pairs and then get learners to compare their answers with another learner or pair. Conduct whole class feedback and go through the answers.

Answers:

1. Governors don't need to have a background in education. *True – anyone can be a school governor*
2. Governors get paid. *False*
3. Governors don't have to have a child at the school. *True – there are different types of governors*
4. Part of a governor's role is to get involved in the day to day running of the school. *False (the role is strategic not operational)*
5. There are different types of school governors. *True – For example: Staff governors (members of staff such as teachers or support staff); parent governors (someone with a child / children at the school); local authority governors (appointed by the local authority from political parties and the local council); co-opted governors (appointed from the local community because of specific skills and experience they can bring to the governing body)*
6. Governors are chosen by parents at the school. *False (only the parent governor is chosen by the parents)*
7. Governors make decisions on which pupils can attend the school. *False*
8. School governors serve for four years. *False (a normal term is four years, but you can be reappointed onto the governing board and serve longer)*

2. Direct learners' attention to Activity 1B. Ask them why they think it would be a good idea to become a school governor: for example, to get involved in the local community; if they have a child – to influence what happens in their children's school; to get some experience to put on their CV; to get involved in the local community etc.

3. Set the context by telling learners that Ervin received a leaflet from the local school through his door encouraging people to become school governors. He thinks the role would be suitable for his cousin Anna. Tell learners to read through the exchange of text messages in Activity 2 to find examples of **persuasion, reassurance, speculation and warning**. Do an example or two with them. Suggest that they work on their own then tell them to compare their answers with a partner. Conduct whole class feedback when going through the possible answers. There may be some overlap eg 'you'll be fine' – this could be used both to persuade someone or reassure them. You might also want to focus on the fact that many functions are close in meaning for example, persuading and encouraging. There may be some lexical phrases that need some focus eg 'there's no way ...'; 'I've got nothing to lose'; 'go for it'. Spend some time eliciting ideas of ways of fulfilling each of the functions noted in a piece of writing. You may want to focus on the difference between formal and informal ways of doing this.

Suggested answers:

examples of persuasion

You'd be perfect for the role.
Istvan's still at the school.
You're so efficient at everything you do!
Go on, they'd love you.

examples of reassurance

I know you worry about your level of English, but you understand what people say and people have no problem understanding you.
You'll be fine.
You can do that!

examples of speculation

I'm pretty sure you won't have to speak in public.
I reckon, once you've been there for a while, you'll feel more confident and start speaking. [could also be reassurance]

example of warning

You'd have to be careful though and make sure you don't work too hard as they'll want you to be on all of their committees.

example of praise

You're so good at everything you do.

4. Introduce the learners to Task 4 of the Level 2 Writing exam. Tell them to read the task in Activity 3A and check that they understand what they have to do. Conduct whole class feedback focusing on the context and what needs to be included in their response. Then tell them to complete the task as best they can. You might want to recap on the language they could use to persuade their friend. You could give students a time limit to complete the task as this replicates an exam situation in which they will need to produce texts under pressure.

5. Before drawing the learners' attention to Activity 3B, elicit the stages involved in producing a piece of writing then tell them to look at Activity 3B if they haven't already. Explain the importance of proof-reading and editing any piece of writing. Learners often think that they only need to focus on grammar, so elicit ideas for what they should be thinking about and note these on the board. Then talk about the value of checklists in proof-reading and focus on the checklist in Activity 3B. You may want to talk to the learners about producing their own checklists when they do a piece of writing. Whilst focusing on the elements noted in the checklist, you may need to explain the meaning of 'critical friend' and 'legible'. You might also find it useful to show learners the marking assessment criteria and amplifications for the Level 2 Writing exam on the Trinity website. These describe what candidates are expected to do and what they will be marked on.

<https://www.trinitycollege.com/resource/?id=9271>

6. Tell learners they are going to be working with a partner and checking each other's work and getting ideas for each other. Give them a few minutes to look at their partner's email then encourage them to start by telling each other what they think they have done well. Then tell them to go through their partner's email using the checklist before giving them feedback on their email. Conduct whole class feedback focusing on what the learners had done well and what sort of changes were suggested.

7. Tell learners to revise / rewrite their emails based on the feedback they have been given. Once they have completed the task, you might consider sticking all the responses on the wall for everyone to look at and get ideas for future similar tasks.

8. Extension activity. Suggest that learners do some research on becoming a school governor if it is something that would appeal to them.

Notes on cultural awareness and appropriacy

The role of school governor may be unique to the UK so it is worth discussing with the learners. You could direct them to various links which will give them more information about the role.

<https://www.governorsforschools.org.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/The-role-of-a-school-governor.pdf>

<https://governorsforschools.org.uk/volunteers/about-the-role/>

Handout activity 1

Activity 1A

What do you know about school governors? Decide whether the statements are **True** or **False**.



1. Governors don't need to have a background in education. **True / False**
2. Governors get paid. **True / False**
3. Governors don't have to have a child at the school. **True / False**
4. Part of a governor's role is to get involved in the day to day running of the school.
True / False
5. There are different types of school governors. **True / False**
6. Governors are chosen by parents at the school. **True / False**
7. Governors make decisions on which pupils can attend the school. **True / False**
8. School governors serve for four years. **True / False**

Activity 1B

Think of at least three reasons why someone might decide to be a school governor. Note them below.

Handout activity 2

Activity 2

Ervin has received a leaflet through his door inviting people to apply to be a governor in the local primary school. He thinks the position would suit his cousin Anna.

Read the exchange of text messages and find at least one example of:

persuasion

reassurance

speculation

warning

praise

Ervin

Hey Anna
I've just seen the perfect role for you!
Did you know Clifford Manor are looking
for parent governors? We had a leaflet
through the door earlier today. You'd be
perfect for the role. Istvan's still at the
school, isn't he, and you're so efficient
at everything you do.
Ervin

Anna

Really? Do you think so?
There's no way they'd want
me. Surely, I'd need to
improve my English, wouldn't
I?

Ervin

I don't think you would. I
know you worry about your
level of English, but you
understand what people say
and people have no problem
understanding you. You'll be
fine.

Anna

I just don't know. You
know I hate talking in
public or giving speeches.

Ervin

I'm pretty sure you won't have
to speak in public. The leaflet
just says you have to attend
meetings. You can do that!! And
I reckon, once you've been there
for a while, you'll feel more
confident and start speaking.

Anna

Well perhaps I should
apply then. I guess I've
got nothing to lose.

Ervin

Go for it, they'd love you.
You'd have to be careful
though and make sure you
don't work too hard as they'll
want you to be on all of their
committees. I know you!

Anna

Go on then, you've
convinced me. I will – can
you send me a photo of
the leaflet?

Handout Activity 3

Activity 3A

Look at the task below.

You have seen an advert for school governors at the local primary school. Your friend can't decide whether to apply. Write an email to your friend persuading him / her to apply for the position and say why you think s/he is suitable for the role.

Write about 100 words.

Write your answer below.

From:

To:

Subject:

Exam hint

In the Level 2 Skills for Life Writing exam, you have to produce an informal email or online message for Task 4. The purpose of the text is to speculate, persuade, request, reassure or ask about past events or for advice.

Activity 3B

When you finish writing it's important to proof-read your work. It can be difficult to notice any mistakes yourself as you wrote it! It's useful to work with a critical friend who can point things out that you didn't notice yourself.

Work with a partner and use the checklist below to proof-read each other's emails. Remember to tell your partner what they did well as well as what they need to amend.

Have I / Has my partner ...	√ or X?
fulfilled the task? eg done everything that the task specifies.	
kept roughly within the word limit?	
used an appropriate register for the task?	
used grammar and vocabulary correctly?	
used language appropriate for the level of the exam?	
used the correct spelling throughout?	
used appropriate punctuation?	
written correctly, making use of simple and complex sentences and appropriate paragraphing?	
avoided any confusion?	
produced a legible piece of writing?	

