

Activity 2: Finding a school place

Level:

CEFR B2

Time:

60 minutes

Resources:

▶ Handouts

Aims:

- ▶ To encourage learners to exchange views on their own education and education in the UK
- ▶ To give learners practice in writing a neutral article
- ▶ To give learners practice in planning an article
- ▶ To raise learners' confidence in describing a process; making suggestions and recommendations; giving advice and explaining the consequences of different actions

Exam task focus: Task 2

Procedure

1. Tell learners they're going to think back to their school days. Ask them whether or not they have fond memories of their time at school. Briefly share your memories of school. Explain that you want them to think back to their school days by visualising a typical school day.

(If you are new to using visualisation in the classroom, you might find the following link useful:

www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/introduction-using-visualisation)

To do this they need to sit up; take a few breaths; close their eyes if they want to and listen to the questions you ask them. Some learners might prefer to just listen with their eyes open. Explain that, as they listen to your questions, they need to picture themselves back at school. They don't need to answer your questions but just try to think about how they felt, what they saw, heard and so on.

Here is a suggested script:

- i. Imagine you're on your way to school. It's the start of the school week. How do you feel?
- ii. Think about your journey to school. How do you get to school? What are you wearing? Are you carrying anything? Who can you see?
- iii. You arrive at school. Think about how you feel. Are you excited about your day ahead?
- iv. Think about what you can hear as you walk into the school. Is it noisy? What is everyone doing?
- v. You walk into the classroom and your teacher is there. Describe your teacher. What do you think of your teacher?
- vi. It's break time / lunchtime. You're hungry. Think about where you go to eat and what you eat. What can you smell?
- vii. It's home time. How do you feel? Think about what you're going to do now.

Tell learners to open their eyes. Ask them how they found the experience. Display the questions on the board and ask learners to share their experiences of a typical school day with their partner.

Monitor and conduct whole class feedback. Use this opportunity to deal with emerging language. Consider briefly discussing the differences learners think there is between education here compared to their home country.

2. Tell learners you're going to think more about the education system here. Explain that you want them to look at the words in Activity 1B and make some notes in the first column on what they know about the education system here. For example, they might want to make a note of the different school ages; types of schools; exams / qualifications; or other things they know about the education system. Tell them not to worry about words they are unfamiliar with as these will be looked at after they do the activity. Explain that, once they have made a few notes, they need to think of three questions they would like to ask to find out more about education here.

Place learners in small groups to discuss what they know and see if people in their group can answer their questions. Conduct whole class feedback. Refer to the following for information that learners might find useful:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/371342/Additional_text_SR45_2014.pdf

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/>

Depending on where you're teaching (England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) you may need to check other websites.

3. Find out how many learners are familiar with, or have had experience of, applying for primary school places. Briefly discuss how they found the process. Explain that they're going to read comments about applying for a school place on a parents' forum, Activity 2A, and then use the information to give advice on applying for a primary school place. Ask learners to read the comments individually and underline the information in each post which can be used to inform someone who is not familiar with the process. Once they have done this, ask them to compare what they underlined with a partner.

Suggested answers:

I'd advise you to read the OFSTED reports / check the exam results of the local schools.

It's a good idea to go along to the Open Days.

Make sure you accept the place you are offered by the deadline.

If you don't accept the place you are offered by the deadline, you might lose the place.

4. Before learners use the information to give advice on the process of applying for a school place, use the **Language box** to review the different ways of giving advice; making suggestions; and explaining consequences. Focus on meaning, pronunciation, and form.

5. Explain that you want learners to use these structures to complete Activity 2B. Depending on the group this can either be done in pairs or individually. Monitor and conduct whole class feedback.

6. Introduce the learners to Task 2 of the Level 1 Writing exam. Tell them to read the task in Activity 3A and check that they understand what they have to do. Remind learners of the importance of planning and carefully thinking about what to include and what style to write the article in. Explain that in today's lesson they are going to work with a partner to plan the task. Place learners in pairs and ask them to use the prompts and questions to help them with their planning. Monitor closely to get an idea

of what they are noting. Conduct whole class feedback. Focus on features of an article (headline; introduction; main body and closing paragraph; possible layout and writing style as well as content).

Work with a partner to plan your answer.

- ▶ Think about what writing an article involves. What features do you want to include? Discuss the layout of your article.
- ▶ Think about what you know and have learned about applying for primary school places in this country. Decide which key points to include in your article.
- ▶ Decide what advice to give to your reader. Think about which structures you will use to give the advice.
- ▶ Think about the consequences of not following the procedures. How are you going to include these in your article? What language can you use?
- ▶ Think about how to end your article.

7. Tell learners to use the notes they have made in Activity 3B to complete the email individually. Monitor the learners whilst they are writing to see how they are getting on and to offer guidance where necessary. Conduct whole class feedback on how they felt about the lesson.

8. Extension activity. Suggest that learners who have children do some research on schools in their local area.

Notes on cultural awareness and appropriacy

Education systems vary from country to country so it's useful for learners to compare what happens in different countries regardless of whether or not they have children. If they don't, they are likely to know people who do and who will be involved in the education system. This lesson also provides an opportunity for learners to familiarise themselves with aspects of education in the UK. In addition, they will learn about the process of applying for a primary school place in England. This may vary in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales but information is available for all countries.

<https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962463/English only - web accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962463/English_only_-_web_accessible.pdf)

Handout activity 1

Activity 1A

Listen to the questions your teacher asks you and think about a typical school day.

Share your experiences of a typical school day with your partner. How similar or different were your school days?



Activity 1B

Look at the words in the table below. Make some notes on what you know about the education system here in the first column. In the second column, think of three questions you would like to ask to learn more about the education system in this country.

*Nursery Schools *Primary Schools *Secondary Schools *Colleges of Further Education *6th Form Colleges * Universities * Key Stages 1,2 and 3 *SEN * EHC *Ofsted	
What I know about	What I would like to know about

Discuss what you know and what questions you have with your partner.

Handout activity 2

Activity 2A

Read the comments about applying for a school place on a parents' forum. Underline the key points in each post.

Don't make the same mistake as us! We went to visit a few local school Open Days to get an idea of the school in our area and really liked one in particular so only put that one on the admission form. To our horror, our daughter didn't get in so the only ones with places are schools with bad Ofsted reports and poor exam results. Apparently, we should have listed at least five schools in order or preference to get one we wanted. Ashwati

Help!!! We've missed the deadline to accept the place my son was offered at our chosen school. I didn't think it was that important as he'd been offered the place and now it's been given away. I'm not sure what to do. Has this happened to anyone else? Bulent

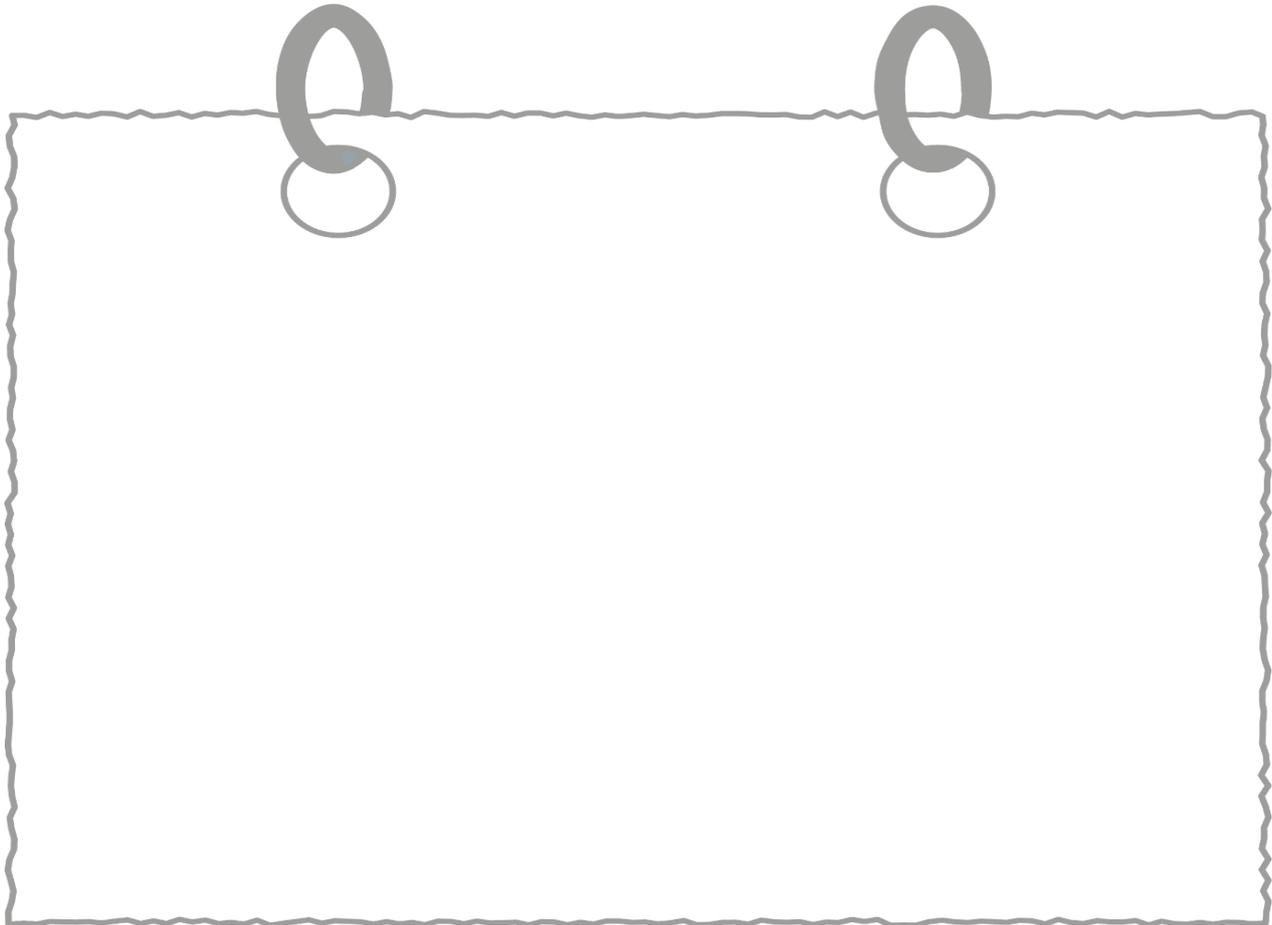
We're thrilled as our daughter has just got into the school we wanted. We're lucky as it's really popular round here. I know she only got in because her older sister already goes there. We have friends who live closer than us but their children didn't get in. It's definitely worth checking the admission criteria for different schools before putting in your application. This is on each school's website. Kimi

I need some advice. I had no idea that you have to apply for a school place at least a year in advance. My son will be 5 in June so we've just started looking for a school for him. I've just been told we're too late and we should have done it when he was 3 or 4 - at least a year in advance. It seems all the places for September this year have already been allocated. Please help us. Ionela

Compare the information you underlined with your partner.

Activity 2B

Use the information you underlined to give advice on the process of applying for a primary school place.



Language box

Giving advice and making suggestions:

I'd advise you + infinitive with to

I suggest + -ing

It's a good idea + infinitive with to

Make sure you + infinitive without to

I'd strongly recommend + -ing

My advice would be + infinitive with to

Explaining consequences:

If you X, you will / are more likely + infinitive with to

If you don't X, Y might (not) + infinitive without to

Handout activity 3

Activity 3A

Look at the task below.

Write an article about the process of applying for a primary school place in this country. This article is for parents who are not familiar with the process.

Explain how to apply for a school place; give advice on applying for a school place and describe what happens if you do not follow these procedures.

Write about 250 words.

Work with a partner to plan your answer.

- ▶ Think about what writing an article involves. What features do you want to include? Discuss the layout of your article.
- ▶ Think about what you know and have learned about applying for primary school places in this country. Decide which key points to include in your article.
- ▶ Look back at the advice you wrote in Activity 2B. Can you use this in your article?
- ▶ Think about the consequences of not following the procedures. How are you going to include these in your article? What language can you use?
- ▶ Think about how to end your article.

Planning section

Use this section to plan your answer

Exam hint

In the Level 1 Skills for Life Writing exam, you will be asked to write a report or an article for your teacher describing, reporting, and recommending something. Unlike the other tasks which are either formal (Task 1 and Task 3) or informal (Task 4), this piece of writing needs to have a neutral tone.

Writing an article

Things to think about:

- key features of an article (headline, introduction, the main body and a concluding paragraph)
- the audience
- the purpose of the article

Activity 3B

Use your notes to write your answer.