

**American University of Beirut
English Entrance Examination
(AUB-EN)**

Information for test takers

This booklet includes information and task samples for the listening, reading and writing components of the test. Information for the speaking component, to be introduced later, will be provided in due course.

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Overview

American University of Beirut English Entrance Examination (AUB-EN)

Overall score	0 – 75	
Total time	Listening, Reading, Writing	about 2 hours 20 minutes
Format	Paper-and-pencil test (multiple-choice question [MCQ] items for Listening and Reading)	

	Listening	Reading	Writing
Reported score	0 – 25	0 – 25	0 – 25
Raw score	0 – 30 to 36	0 – 30 to 36	based on two assessors' independent grading against set criteria
Time	about 25 – 35 mins (5 – 8 mins per text)	60 mins	45 mins
Items/task(s)	40 – 48 questions* (10 – 12 questions per text)	40 – 48 questions* (10 – 12 questions per text)	2 tasks; about 400 words in total
Item/task type(s)	multiple-choice questions, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completing a form/short text • matching labels to images • matching summaries or headings to text (sections) • completing a diagram/table 	multiple-choice questions, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inserting an extra sentence into a paragraph • selecting sentences/information to complete a form/create a summary • matching summaries or headings to text (sections) • completing a diagram/table 	<i>Task 1</i> – Situational task – responding to a social or administrative task (150 words) <i>integrated task:</i> <i>read to write</i> <i>Task 2</i> – Essay task – formal discussion on issue/point of view provided (250 words)
Texts	4 texts* <i>* 1 text of the 4 is a trial or anchor text – scores are not included in the final score</i>	4 texts* of 500 – 700 words each	prompts for Situational task and Essay task
Text types	academic, social and administrative texts familiar in the context of the university non-specialist content		
Text format	audio; heard once	text presented to simulate source	
Assessment	1 mark for each item	1 mark for each item	<i>Task 1 criteria</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task achievement • Appropriateness • Organization • Language resources <i>Task 2 criteria</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content • Organization • Lexical resources • Grammatical resources

Introduction

Purpose

The American University of Beirut English Entrance Examination (AUB-EN) is a proficiency (qualifying) test of English for academic purposes for prospective students seeking entry to this university-level educational institution. The test-taker population comprises applicants for both undergraduate and graduate studies who are required to demonstrate they meet the English Language Proficiency Requirement.

It serves to assess a test taker's readiness, in terms of language and communication skills, to participate in academic, administrative and social activities that are frequently encountered by new students as they make the transition into an institution where English is the medium of instruction. The test tasks seek to represent aspects of the general experience at AUB and similar university-level institutions although no specific knowledge of procedures or context is required. The test aims to reflect the diversity of the AUB as a community of people with different languages and cultures along with fulfilling its role as a test of English proficiency.

Format

The test initially covers three macro-skills: listening, reading and writing. (A speaking component will be introduced in due course.) There is some integration of these skills with the aim of modeling real-life tasks more authentically. This is mainly in the writing component, which involves initial reading. There is no separate test component to assess grammar or vocabulary; these areas are considered indirectly, through the macro-skill components.

Task content and format is designed to be relevant to the university context. Required test-taker responses are, however, modified to permit assessment in a practical and efficient way. The listening and reading components use multiple-choice question (MCQ) items. In the writing component, test takers produce two samples of writing.

Structure

Part A comprises the listening, reading and writing components of the test. It is delivered in paper-and-pencil format. Part B, when introduced, will be a speaking interview.

Part A

The three components of the test are administered in the order: listening, reading, writing. The test is administered in a proctored exam room. The table summarizes the test format.

	Total time	No. of tasks	Time per task	Items per task
Listening	about 25 – 35 mins	4*	about 5 – 8 mins	10 – 12
Reading	60 mins	4*	15 mins [^]	10 – 12
Writing	45 mins	2	15 mins + 30 mins [^]	–

* One of the four tasks in each listening and reading test is a trial task being piloted for use in a future version of the test or an anchor task used to equate different versions of the test. Test takers are not informed which task is the trial/anchor task. This task is not part of the scored test. The scores on the three other tasks constitute the final (raw) score.

[^] Suggested time only.

The test is administered in paper format. For the listening and reading components, test takers each receive a copy of the test booklet and a MCQ bubble sheet; they indicate their answers for the two test components on the bubble sheet. The writing component tasks are provided in a booklet. Printed writing answer sheets are provided with space for the test taker's responses for each task.

Part A assessment

The listening and reading components using MCQ format are machine scored. The writing component is graded against specified criteria by trained assessors with experience in teaching English as an additional language. The criteria used are available on the AUB website.

Part B

This will be the speaking component.

Results

The component scores of the test are equally weighted. The raw scores are converted into standardized scores out of 25 for each component. These are summed to provide an overall score out of 75 (to become 100 when the speaking component is introduced). The test does not apply a correction for guessing formula.

Ongoing development and research

New test tasks for the listening and reading components are equated against other tasks for the same component (by piloting them in live test administrations – see above) in order to establish their relative difficulty and the need for any score adjustments when determining the standardized (reported) score for the test component. New test tasks for the writing component are reviewed by an expert panel using criteria to check that they are of a difficulty similar to existing test tasks. The tasks are also pre-tested with groups representative of the test-taker population.

A program of research into the performance of the test and of test components will be carried out as the test is introduced. A validity argument to support the test will be developed and reviewed.

Listening

Skills

The tasks may require the test taker to:

- gain a sense of the text as a whole (gist)
- distinguish main ideas and important information
- pick out specific details
- recognize the use of cohesive devices to structure spoken text
- recognize relationships between ideas in the text
- make inferences/draw a conclusion based on information provided
- distinguish between fact and opinion
- infer the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from their context
- recognize a speaker's intention in context (e.g., sarcasm, advising)
- recognize in its context idiomatic language commonly used in speech
- recognize a speaker's use of intonation and stress to convey particular meanings
- identify audience, purpose and genre of the text

Texts are presented in an authentic manner by the speakers. In more informal dialogic settings, texts may include (e.g.) hesitations and pauses, re-starts and mistakes common in unrehearsed spoken discourse.

All recorded speech is clear and intelligible for the test-taker population. The accents and speech patterns of the speakers in the recordings reflect the diversity of the AUB community. Some speakers may be competent users of English as an additional language. Communicative quality is valued over grammatical correctness.

Test takers are therefore expected to be able to process speech delivered in a range of accents, at different speech rates and by speakers of different ages and social backgrounds.

Text types

Text types are academic, social and administrative genres familiar in the context of the university, including, for example:

- a lecturer introducing new information on a topic
- an adviser explaining an administrative procedure
- a student gathering information about a university facility/service from a staff member
- a student/students presenting opinions in a seminar
- students working together on a project/coursework
- organizers promoting a student organization at a volunteering fair
- a professor introducing a speaker at a talk
- members of a university club planning an event

Texts are between three and five minutes long approximately. At least one of the texts is a monologue. At least one of the texts is a dialogue. Texts may involve up to four participants. Participants will be readily distinguishable (e.g., a male and female voice and/or voices with contrasting qualities will be used in the recordings).

The context of the text is stated, e.g., in an introduction to the task presented aurally and in the test booklet, unless determining the context is part of the task.

No specific or detailed academic or procedural knowledge is expected of test takers. Technical or discipline-specific vocabulary is avoided in texts and tasks. Uncommon terms may be glossed in the test booklet and/or in the recorded text if they might otherwise confuse test takers.

Tasks

Test tasks use MCQ format of various types. They may involve test takers in using information from the text to, for example:

- complete a form or short text
- match labels to images, etc.
- match summaries or headings to the text or sections of the text
- complete a diagram or table

Structure and procedure

The exact timing for this test component depends on the length of the recordings used for the four tasks that constitute the test.

Texts created specifically for the test are presented as audio recordings. The recordings and the audio reproduction equipment used are of high quality. Audio recordings are presented via loudspeakers in the exam room.

Relevant test instructions and signposting are included in English (only) in the audio recording. The instructions given and the format of the recording are standardized for all parallel forms of the test.

The test booklet has a standardized format used for all parallel forms of the test. All text is in English (only). Test takers follow aural and written instructions to synchronize their progress through the booklet with the various elements (e.g., instructions, tasks) of the test recording. All instructions and explanations use straightforward, direct language.

Test takers hear the text (recording) for each task once only. The text (recording) for one task may be split into more than one part.

Test items are presented in the test booklet in the same order as the information relevant to them occurs in the recorded text.

Pauses are included in the recording to allow test takers to complete their answers and/or prepare to answer the next item/task. The length and placement of pauses is standardized across tasks and all parallel forms of the test.

Each test task includes several scored items. A task may involve MCQ items of more than one type (see *Tasks* above).

Test takers mark their answer for each item on the bubble sheet during the time allowed for the test. A period of three minutes is included within the audio recording at the end of the test for test takers to check their answer choices on the bubble sheet. No additional time to transfer answers is given once the audio recording for the test has finished.

Each correct item receives one mark unless it is stated otherwise in the test booklet.

Sample task

A student has come to enroll at the university sports center.

Part 1

Complete the application. Listen and choose the best option – A, B, C or D – for each item.

University Sports Center Online Services – Membership Form	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	
FAMILY NAME:	<input type="text" value="[1]"/>
GIVEN NAME(S):	<input type="text" value="[2]"/>
STUDENT ID:	<input type="text" value="[3]"/>
MEMBERSHIP TYPE	
DAILY ACCESS and DURATION:	<input type="text" value="[4]"/>

1. (A) Pausson
(B) Pallsen
(C) Pawelson
(D)* Paulsen
2. (A) Kaytlin
(B)* Caitlyn
(C) Catelin
(D) Katelyn
3. (A) 91044 11529
(B) 91044 41529
(C)* 91004 11529
(D) 91004 41529
4. (A)* all-day access, one year
(B) off-peak access, one year
(C) all-day access, one semester
(D) off-peak access, one semester

Part 2

Listen and choose the best option – A, B, C or D – for each item.

5. All these membership packages are available EXCEPT:
- (A) gym-only access
 - (B) pool-only access
 - (C)* gym access and fitness class
 - (D) pool and gym access and fitness class
6. The most comprehensive package mentioned costs ...
- (A) \$80.
 - (B) \$120.
 - (C)* \$150.
 - (D) \$180.
7. According to the discussion, the pool is probably available to ...
- (A) students without sports center membership.
 - (B) gym-only members during the winter.
 - (C) the public during the summer.
 - (D)* members all year round.
8. The student decides to ...
- (A) take the pool-only package.
 - (B) take the gym-only package.
 - (C)* enroll online and pay online.
 - (D) enroll in person tomorrow.
9. The clerk appears concerned that ...
- (A) he is missing his scheduled break.
 - (B) he cannot answer the student's queries.
 - (C) the student's needs cannot be met.
 - (D)* the student is making other people wait.
10. The clerk's view is that it is easiest to ...
- (A) enroll at the sports center when it is not busy.
 - (B)* sign up and pay by credit or debit card online.
 - (C) consult information online and pay face to face.
 - (D) sign up first and choose a suitable package later.

Transcript

A student has come to enroll at the university sports center.

Part 1. Listen and complete the application. You now have 30 seconds to preview items for this part.

(pause – 30 seconds)

Now listen and choose the best option – A, B, C or D – for each item.

[2 speakers: Clerk (male) and Student (female)]

- Clerk Next, please.
- Student Oh, hi. I'd like to apply to join the sports center, please.
- Clerk OK. Are you a new student or were you here last year?
- Student No, I'm new this year.
- Clerk Fine. So I'll need to take some details on the computer if that's all right.
- Student Sure.
- Clerk What's your family name?
- Student Paulsen [spelling out] P A U L, S E N.
- Clerk [spelling out while typing] S E N. Right, and your given name?
- Student Caitlyn, with a C – C A I T, L Y N.
- Clerk [typing] Thanks, Caitlyn. And what's your student number?
- Student Oh, I've got my student card here ... [finding card] ... yup, here we are. It's 9 1 double-oh four, double-1 5 2 9.
- Clerk OK, 9 1 oh 4 4, 1 1 5 2 9.
- Student No – oh oh 4, not oh 4 4.
- Clerk Sorry – 9 1 oh oh 4. Thanks for that. ... Now, what kind of membership are you thinking of?
- Student What are the options?
- Clerk Well, they're all laid out on the website. First of all it depends on when you want to come. There's what we call all-day access and you can come any time the center is open, or there's off-peak access – that lets you in only for less busy times: mid-morning and afternoon, or later in the evening.
- Student Well, I guess I'll need an all-day access because ...
- Clerk [interrupting] And then you decide how long to get membership for. You can choose a year or enroll semester by semester.
- Student I see. Perhaps I'll sign up for a semester to start with and see how it goes.
- Clerk You know, it'll work out cheaper if you pay for a whole year ...
- Student Oh well, I'll do that then. I should make the effort to come year round – even when it's cold in the winter.

(pause – 15 seconds)

Part 2. You now have 60 seconds to preview items for this part.

(pause – 60 seconds)

Now listen and choose the best option – A, B, C or D – for each item.

Clerk And then you can choose what facilities you want to use. There are several packages available: you can get pool-only access, gym-only, pool with gym, or a complete package which includes gym, pool plus one fitness class of your choice each week.

Student What does each one cost? Are they about the same price?

Clerk [slightly irritated] Well, like I said all this information is on the website, but basically, given the access times and membership length you've chosen, the pool-only and gym-only options are 80 dollars each for students. The complete package, with the fitness class, is 150 dollars.

Student What about the pool and gym together, without the class?

Clerk That's 120 dollars.

Student And can I pay to use the gym all year but the pool only in the summer?

Clerk No, no, the system isn't set up for that. You choose how long first and then the package you want. It's too complicated otherwise.

Student And what about the classes? What sort of things do they offer?

Clerk I'm sorry but there's a queue building up behind you and I'm the only person on duty.

Student Oh, I see. But ...

Clerk [interrupting] All the information's on the website and you can enroll there as well. You don't need to come to the sports center to sign up.

Student Well, maybe I'll just pay to use the gym for now.

Clerk It'll be difficult to change if you decide later you want to add something else.

Student No, I'm sure it's the gym that I need ... or a class ... definitely not the pool.

Clerk Like I said, it'll be hard to cancel anything you pay for now if you haven't decided exactly what you want.

Student Well, if you say so. I suppose I'll look online then and come back enroll tomorrow.

Clerk But remember, students can enroll online, and pay as well using a credit or debit card. You really don't need to come here in person.

Student All right, I'll use my computer. But how do I get my membership card? Do you mail it to me?

Clerk No, no, we'll keep it here for you to pick up – just ask whoever's on duty at the reception desk the next time you come.

Student Well, I suppose that makes sense. OK, thanks for your help. Bye.

Clerk Not a problem. See you again. (short pause) [wearily] Next, please.

(pause – 15 seconds)

Reading

Skills

The tasks may require the test taker to:

- gain a sense of the text as a whole (gist)
- locate and distinguish main ideas and important information
- locate specific details
- summarize or paraphrase information
- recognize the use of cohesive and other structural devices in written text
- locate sequences, contrasts, causes and effects in the text
- make inferences/draw a conclusion based on information provided
- distinguish between fact and opinion
- infer the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from their context
- recognize the writer's intention in context (e.g., sarcasm, advising)
- identify audience, purpose and genre of a text

Text types

Text types are academic, social and administrative genres familiar in the context of the university, including, for example:

- an extract from a course textbook or reader (expository)
- an extract/section from an academic article
- extracts from course-related materials (e.g., syllabus, assessment information)
- instructions for students (e.g., sports center application, club rules, hostel regulations)
- official text from a university publication (e.g., catalogue, absence policy)
- a public announcement (e.g., for a lecture, official event, social occasion, celebration)
- direct written communication (letter/email/online forum post) from an instructor (e.g., project feedback, reply to a query)

The four texts in each test represent a variety of topic and genre. At least one of the texts is from an administrative/social genre. At least one of the texts is from a course textbook.

Texts used are either adapted from an authentic source (i.e., unrelated to testing) or written specifically for the test.

The context of each text is stated, e.g., in an introduction to the task in the text booklet, unless determining the context is part of the task.

Each text has between 500 and 700 words. It may also include diagrams, pictures, tables, graphs, charts and sub-headings. The text is reviewed using criteria to check it is of high quality, accurate and coherent, reflecting the standard of texts published in academia or intended for communication or dissemination in an institutional context. Any text will consistently meet the expectations of one variety of English (e.g., American, British, etc.). A text is presented with a layout, font and style to simulate its source.

No specific or detailed academic or procedural knowledge is expected of test takers. Technical or discipline-specific vocabulary is avoided in texts and tasks, unless determining its meaning is part of the task. Uncommon terms may be glossed in the test booklet if they might otherwise confuse test takers.

Tasks

Test tasks use MCQ format of various types. They may involve test takers in using information from the text to, for example:

- insert an extra sentence into a paragraph
- select sentences or other information to complete a form or create a summary
- match summaries or headings to the text or paragraphs of the text
- complete a diagram or table

Structure and procedure

Test takers proceed through the four test tasks at their own pace. Each task is estimated to require 15 minutes. Four tasks create a test of 60 minutes.

Texts are presented in the test booklet, which has a standardized format used for all parallel forms of the test.

Each test task includes several scored items. A task may involve MCQ items of more than one type (see *Tasks* above).

Test takers mark their answer for each item on the bubble sheet during the time allowed for the test. No extra time is given after the test for test takers to transfer answer choices to the bubble sheet.

Each correct item receives one mark unless it is stated otherwise in the test booklet.

Sample task

The text is from a book chapter giving an introduction to social media for new users. Choose the best option (A, B, C, D or E) for items 1-11.

5 **[Paragraph I]** In the past, if you wanted to know about an organization or a company it was relatively easy – you would simply go to your favourite search engine, type in the name of the company and then click on the link to their website. Of course, you can still do that, but now it's more important to think of exactly what it is that you want to do, with what sort of information. For example, if you simply need **their** address or phone number, getting that via the website is still the obvious course of action. However, if you wish to talk to a representative of the company is it better to contact them via their Twitter account (and if so, which one, if they have several), or their Facebook page? Perhaps they have a profile on Pinterest, or they may be active on some other social networking site.

10 **[Paragraph II]** The information that people can make available now has not only increased exponentially, but the places where you can find the information has similarly increased. A couple of years ago the National Trust (a cultural and historical body in the UK) produced, in conjunction with a television company, a fascinating programme ('The Manor Reborn') on the restoration of a run-down property. I watched it with interest, but had lots of questions
15 about what was being done to the property, so I visited the National Trust website. All that was able to tell me was that the programme was on television at a particular time on a particular channel; not terribly useful, since I already had that information. However, I then went to the National Trust Facebook page and the top update on the site mentioned the programme and pointed out that several experts were online at that moment, waiting to
20 take questions and get involved in discussions around issues that the programme aired. Doubtless I could also have got involved via Twitter with an appropriate hashtag as well.

[Paragraph III] So as a consumer of content it's increasingly necessary to spread the net much wider to get access to all sorts of information that's made available in different places. As creators of content, we are in a similar position. A dozen or so years ago I would write an
25 article and share it directly on my website for people to view it. Then in 2003 I started writing my own blog and I was faced with the dilemma of what to put where – **exacerbated** by creating a second blog a short while after. **<A>** I can now tweet material that I think is interesting, share it on a news curation or magazine site such as Scoop.it!, pin images to my Pinterest account, let my friends and colleagues see it via Facebook or Google+ updates,
30 update my Flickr account with new photographs; the list is almost endless. **** I then also have to decide if I am going to cross-reference this material to other resources. If I tweet something, should I also share it on Facebook, annoying the people who follow me in both places? **<C>** A particular skill in using social media is to know where to publish material, in what format (a long blog post or a short tweet for example), to which group(s) of people,
35 and when this process should take place. **<D>** The blessing of real-time media is also the curse; multiplying sources of content multiplies the work we need to do to find or publish our own content.

Bradley, P. (2015). *Social media for creative libraries*. London, UK: Facet Publishing. Adapted.

Match each paragraph (I-III) with the most suitable summary (A-E).

- (A) A range of places to share information exists for content producers
- (B) An example of how different sources provide different information
- (C) How a major organization disappointed its members on the internet
- (D) Social media provide cost-effective ways to reach a target audience
- (E) Where best to find information depends on what you are looking for

1. Paragraph I key: E
 2. Paragraph II key: B
 3. Paragraph III key: A

 4. The word **their** in line 5 refers to a ...
 - (A) website.
 - (B) representative.
 - (C)* company.
 - (D) search engine.
 5. What is the writer's main point in paragraph I?
 - (A)* Modern technology requires greater awareness among users.
 - (B) Using social media simplifies very much access to information.
 - (C) New online search techniques have replaced out-of-date ones.
 - (D) It is becoming more difficult to contact an organization quickly.
 6. According to paragraph II, the writer found the organization's website content ...
 - (A) up to date.
 - (B) repetitive.
 - (C) informative.
 - (D)* insufficient.
 7. According to line 21, the writer ... to participate via Twitter.
 - (A) managed
 - (B)* didn't try
 - (C) refused
 - (D) was unable
 8. The word **exacerbated** in line 26 is closest in meaning to ...
 - (A) resolved.
 - (B)* worsened.
 - (C) duplicated.
 - (D) postponed.
-

9. In paragraph III, the four letters – <A>, , <C> and <D> – indicate where the following sentence could be added.

What about those on Facebook who don't follow me on Twitter, though?

Where would the sentence best fit?

- (A) <A>
(B)
(C)* <C>
(D) <D>
10. In paragraph III, the writer implies that the options available to social media users ...
- (A) encourage innovation.
(B) are often overwhelming.
(C)* demand many decisions.
(D) simplify content-sharing.
11. What is the most appropriate title for this text?
- (A) Using social media in the workplace
(B)* Many choices for social media users
(C) Effective online content development
(D) Getting the most out of the internet

Writing

Skills

The test taker is required to demonstrate the ability to:

- present relevant content for the task
- organize content to meet the expectations of the intended audience
- use register and tone suited to the intended audience
- use accurately an appropriate range of vocabulary and grammar structures

Tasks

Test takers respond in writing (using pen or pencil and paper) to two tasks. No choice of topic or task is offered. Tasks simulate those likely to be required of students in the university context.

No specific or detailed academic or procedural knowledge is expected of test takers. Information is provided for each task indicating its scope. Test takers may draw on their own experience to elaborate their responses; however, sufficient detail (i.e., ideas for content) is provided for this not to be required of test takers.

Task 1 – the situational task – involves producing the text of an email (reply, enquiry, etc.) addressed to a target reader (specified audience) and dealing with a social or administrative issue. This issue is set out in instructions provided and/or a short written prompt.

Task 2 – the essay task – involves the discussion of an issue, requiring the presentation of different points of view on a given argument, with introductory and concluding sections. The purpose of the text and its intended audience are specified. In general, the essay is to be written in a neutral or formal style for an educated reader. Content is provided that may be included in the response.

Minimum word limits are given for the two tasks. The tasks are designed to require sufficient writing to meet these limits naturally. The minimum for Task 1 is 150 words; the minimum for Task 2 is 250 words. Responses with fewer words than the minimum word limit are penalized.

Text types

The prompts for the tasks simulate texts and/or instructions familiar in the context of the university.

Task 1 may involve, as a prompt, a short email message or similar text (e.g., poster, flyer, online forum post) that the test taker is required to respond to in a written message (e.g., email, forum post). For example, the test taker may be asked to reply to an email sent by a department administrator or course instructor.

Task 2 may involve task instructions that simulate an assignment set for a university course. The ideas for content provided for the task may take a variety of forms; they will always be brief and may be given in note form. They will most likely need to be transformed into a register appropriate for the written response (e.g., converted from note form or an informal spoken idiom to a more formal written idiom).

Task instructions and any prompts provided for Task 2 are not intended as a further test of reading skills. The reading demands of these texts are reviewed using criteria to check they are reasonable for the test-taker population.

Structure and procedure

Tasks are presented in the test booklet, which has a standardized format used for all parallel forms of the test.

Test takers write their responses to the tasks in answer booklets using pen or pencil. Any rough work is not considered by the assessors.

Suggested times for test takers to spend on each task are given in the instructions: 15 minutes for Task 1 and 30 minutes for Task 2. These reflect the intended demands of each task and the marks available. Test takers may allocate the time available as they wish.

Test takers may write their responses using any recognized set of English spelling conventions (e.g., American, British). A task response should represent one set of conventions consistently.

Test takers' handwriting is not mentioned directly in the assessment criteria. However, responses that are easily legible allow the assessors to focus on their strengths. Assessors are instructed not to make assumptions about the quality of a performance that is illegible.

Criteria used to assess the writing component are presented separately below.

Sample task 1 – Situational task

Suggested time: 15 minutes

You are a new student at university. You receive the email message below from Dr. Alex Hillman, who is your adviser.

Write an appropriate response giving the information required. Your reply should be at least 150 words long. Start your message “Dear Dr. Hillman”.

Dear ...

Welcome to the university! I’m one of the advisers for first-year students. Our role is to help you settle into life on campus. I also teach in the department where you’ll take courses in the first semester, so I’ll probably be teaching you soon, too.

I’m sorry but I have to go away tomorrow for a few days to attend a conference. We can meet face to face on Monday, when I return, but it would be useful if you could introduce yourself first by email. Tell me about your background, what you plan to study at university, and what other interests you have (e.g., sport, music, free time). I’m sure there are university clubs that you’ll want to join.

Also, let me know when you are free to meet on Monday. I’m available any time after 10.30am.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

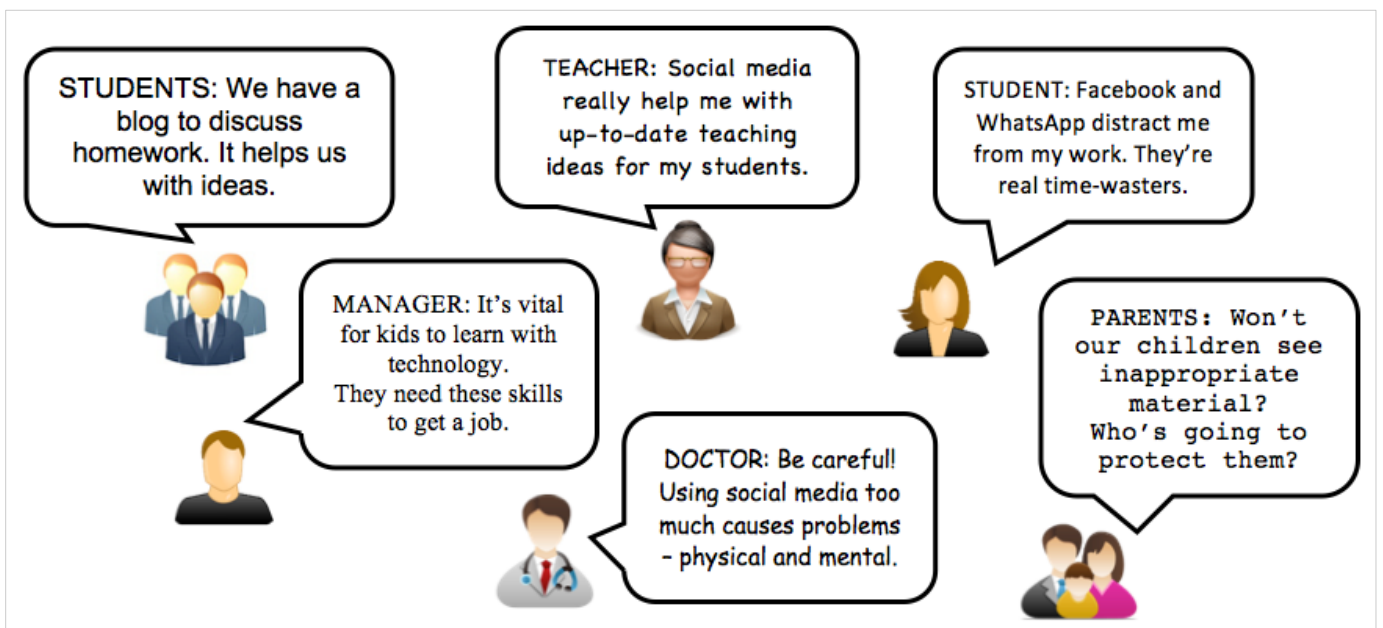
Alex Hillman

Sample task 2 – Essay task

Suggested time: 30 minutes

Social media are technological tools for communicating and sharing information, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter. Nowadays they are an important part of many people’s personal lives. Your school principal has suggested using social media in the classroom. Some students are excited about this idea, while others do not like it.

You have chosen this topic for a writing assignment. Write an essay for your English teacher presenting different views on **using social media in the classroom**. You should include your own opinion on the topic and provide introductory and concluding sections. Your essay should be at least 250 words long. You may use the ideas suggested below in your essay but you do not have to.



Writing – Assessment

WRITING CRITERIA: Task 1 – Situational task

Criterion	Focus
1 Task achievement	The extent to which the test taker's performance ... presents relevant content as required by the task
2 Appropriateness	uses register and tone suited to the specified reader(s) and the task
3 Organization	arranges content to meet the expectations of the specified reader(s)
4 Language resources	employs vocabulary and grammar structures appropriate to the task

Level descriptors

	(1) Task achievement	(2) Appropriateness	(3) Organization	(4) Language resources
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> deals with all points required content is fully relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is fully tailored to the reader use of genre conventions appears effortless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> content flows naturally coherence is smooth throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wide range of resources is used with precision there are very few errors
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> responds to most points required content is mostly relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly recognizes reader's status follows genre conventions well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> content is mainly sequenced clearly cohesive devices are mainly used effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a range of resources is used effectively message is not affected by error
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> responds to some points required some content is relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some awareness of reader's status and genre conventions is shown; may be inconsistent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use of sequencing and of cohesive devices is apparent; may be awkward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> resources used are sufficient; may be limited error may reduce clarity of message
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> responds to points only indirectly content is mainly irrelevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> awareness of reader's status and genre conventions is minimal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack of structure impedes message discourse is confused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> resources are insufficient to manage task error may impede any message

The minimum word limit for Task 1 is 150 words. If a response is under-length, it is graded as usual, then 1 mark is deducted for the criterion Task achievement (e.g., 3 becomes 2). A very short response may also affect grading on other criteria if it prevents evidence from being available to justify the selection of a higher level descriptor.

WRITING CRITERIA: Task 2 – Essay task

Criterion		Focus
		The extent to which the test taker’s performance ...
1	Content	presents content relevant to the essay topic and argument
2	Organization	arranges content to meet the expectations of the specified reader(s)
3	Lexical resources	employs vocabulary appropriate to the task
4	Grammatical resources	employs grammatical structures appropriate to the task

Level descriptors

	(1) Content	(2) Organization	(3) Lexical resources	(4) Grammatical resources
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> content is fully relevant a clear argument is presented and developed thoroughly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> content flows naturally coherence is smooth throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wide range of resources is used with precision there are very few errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wide range of resources is used with precision there are very few errors
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> content is mostly relevant an argument is presented and developed; this may be incomplete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> content is mainly sequenced clearly cohesive devices are mainly used effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a range of resources is used effectively message is not affected by error 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a range of resources is used effectively message is not affected by error
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some content is relevant an argument is evident; development may be limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use of sequencing and of cohesive devices is apparent; may be awkward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> resources used are sufficient; may be limited error may reduce clarity of message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> resources used are sufficient; may be limited error may reduce clarity of message
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> content is mainly irrelevant an argument is difficult to discern; any development is minimal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack of structure impedes message discourse is confused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> resources are insufficient to manage task error may impede any message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> resources are insufficient to manage task error may impede any message

The minimum word limit for Task 2 is 250 words. If a response is under-length, it is graded as usual, then 1 mark is deducted for the criterion Content (e.g., 3 becomes 2). A very short response may also affect grading on other criteria if it prevents evidence from being available to justify the selection of a higher level descriptor.

The final score for writing is a standardized score out of 25. This combines the scores given for a test taker’s Task 1 and Task 2 performances. Task 1 provides 35% of the final score and Task 2 provides 65%.