

Frequently Asked Questions

TASK ACHIEVEMENT

1. When is a content point considered **included**?

A content point is to be considered included if the candidate mentions it in the script (and provides one **supporting detail** in connection with it).

Content point: *"picking someone up at the airport"*

"... [Sorry, I can't pick you up at the airport.] (topic sentence) We will see us in the evening. ..."
(16 words)

Content point: *"present for parents"*

"... [Oh it's difficult] (topic sentence) [however I think my parents are very happy about something typical of Australia.] (supp. detail 1) I don't know what is typical from Australia but I'm sure you know something. ..."
(29 words)

2. When is a content point considered **elaborated**?

A content point is elaborated if the candidate provides two additional ideas/**supporting details** in connection with it.

Content point: *"must-sees and must-dos"*

"... [Well, you asked me for popular sightseeing spots in your last e-mail, right. First of all you must visit the Oktober-Fest in Munich.] (Topic sentences) [It's not just the biggest folk-festival in the world] (supp. detail 1) [- you also can see a lot of celebrities like Paris Hilton there, too.] (supp. detail 2) ..."
(45 words)

Content point: *"additional idea – making new friends"*

"... [I'm sure that when you visit us, you will find many friends in these month.] (Topic sentence) [I've got an idea, if you want we can do a big farewell party. With music, snacks and freaky drinks nonalcoholic of course.] (supp. detail 1) [I have yummy cocktail recipes which we can test before.] (supp. detail 2) You can think about it and if you want you can write back. ..."
(48 words)

3. When is a content point considered **fully elaborated**?

A content point is fully elaborated if the candidate provides three or more additional ideas/**supporting details** in connection with it.

Content point: *"must-sees and must-dos"*

"... [There are some must-sees.] (Topic sentence) [One is the Olympia-park. In this park is the tower of TV and a beautiful nature.] (supp. detail 1) [Besides you have to visit the castle of Nymphenburg. It is one of the most famous castles in Germany.] (supp. detail 2) [Of course you have to go to the Oktoberfest. The festival is a beautiful experience.] (supp. detail 3) It is really a must-see! ..."
(54 words)

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Content point: "picking someone up at the airport"

"... [You ask in your letter if we can pick you up at the airport but there's a big problem.] (Topic sentence) [My parents had to work on this day and I must go to school.] (supp. detail 1) [Even if I don't go to school I haven't got a car with which I can pick you up.] (supp. detail 2) [But you can drive with the S-Bahn, it's very easy to find.] (supp. detail 3) I hope that will be no problem for you. ..."

(64 words)

4. What shall I do if all the content points are there but are only included?

Since there is no elaboration (Band 3), the script cannot be awarded more than 2 points.

5. What shall I do if only one content point is missing but all other content points are fully elaborated?

Since not all content points are included (Band 5), the scripts can only be awarded 4 points.

6. What shall I do if the candidate misunderstands the task and writes about a completely different topic?

The script is an off-task script which means that it is totally irrelevant (Band 0) and automatically receives 0 points for all the criteria.

COHERENCE AND COHESION

1. What am I to do if the candidate is not using paragraphs at all, just writes the text in one block?

For B1+ level, a text written in one paragraph is acceptable.

2. What shall I do if the original order of the content points has been changed?

There is no penalty for changing the order if the script is logical. (See if the script becomes even more logical or determine whether this change resulted from some point the candidate aimed to communicate.)

3. Does a sentence linking two other sentences or longer stretches of the script count as a linking device?

Yes, it does.

Example:

"... A another Reason is that our German Speaking Guide didn't come to the travels although the hole group must go without the guide and we couldn't understand anything in the musem! But that's not all. we didn't have all entrance fees and the London nightlife was a joke, we have only see one club in the hole holydays. ..."

GRAMMAR

1. What am I to do if the candidate uses only simple structures but is doing it without errors?

Since the simple structures are used correctly, the script can be awarded 4 points.

It cannot be awarded 5 points because the script does not contain attempts at more complex structures (Band 5).

2. How can we define good range?

Good range means that the candidate uses a variety of grammatical structures (*simple tenses, auxiliary verbs, modal verbs, etc.*) and some complex structures (*passive constructions, relative clauses, comparative forms, complex sentences, conditional clauses, reported speech, etc.*) instead of resorting to a few of these.

3. What do I have to look for when I am assessing range?

Look for the variety of grammatical structures.

4. If mistakes reoccur, how many times do they count?

It depends on the range. If the same few structures are used throughout and the candidate never gets them right, they will count as many times as they occur. The consistent use of incorrect structures affects the awarded score negatively.

VOCABULARY

1. Are spelling mistakes penalised?

Yes, under the Vocabulary criterion. They are to be considered one type of error.

2. When is the candidate's range of vocabulary good?

Good range means that the script contains a large number of different relevant words not lifted from the prompt. Repetition and lexical gaps are avoided with the use of synonyms and paraphrases.

3. What do I have to look for when I am assessing range?

Look for the variety of words.

4. Do we penalise for contractions?

At B1+ Level contractions are allowed even in formal texts.

5. What shall I do if the candidate lifts (several individual words or several words following one another) from the task?

Words lifted from the task do not count towards range.

IMPRESSION OF GENERAL QUALITY

1. What should I do if the candidate wrote a story instead of a letter?

Give 0 points for the Impression of General Quality criterion.

2. How many points do I award if the candidate uses rude language in a formal letter?

You can award 0 points for the Impression of General Quality criterion if the problem is consistent or 1 point if there are occasional informal lapses.

3. What does “Fulfil its purpose” mean?

The script fulfils its purpose if you, as a reader, feel that the candidate achieves his or her communication goal.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What shall I do about too short scripts?

Candidates who write short scripts will lose points on the Task Achievement criterion for lack of elaboration and on the Grammar and Vocabulary criteria for insufficient range.

2. What shall I do about too long scripts?

Scripts that are more than 10% over the word limit will no longer be penalized. If a script, however, contains several grammatical and lexical inaccuracies in the extra component, this will have to be reflected in the marks.

3. What should I do about unfinished scripts?

If the candidate wrote only 1/3¹ of the script, it must be rated but maximum Band 1 can be awarded for Coherence and Cohesion, Grammar and Vocabulary.

If the candidate wrote only 1/2 of the script, it must be rated but maximum Band 3 can be awarded for Coherence and Cohesion, Grammar and Vocabulary.

If the candidate wrote only 2/3 of the script, it must be rated but maximum Band 5 can be awarded for Coherence and Cohesion, Grammar and Vocabulary.

In any of the above cases Task Achievement and Impression of General Quality must be rated as it is done with scripts of adequate length, using the appropriate sections of the scale.

¹ The extent of completion can be decided by a simple word count (1/3 ~ 70, 1/2 ~ 100, 2/3 ~ 140 words).

Linking Devices

PURPOSE	LINKING WORDS ²
Time	afterwards, as soon as, BEFORE , meanwhile, THEN , until, after a few hours...
Sequence	to begin with, at the beginning, in the beginning, as a start, first, ... second, ... third, then, NEXT , BEFORE , AFTER , afterwards, as soon as, last, finally, at the end, in the end
Addition	AND , as well as, besides, furthermore, also, moreover, in addition, not only ... but also
Cause/Reason	BECAUSE , as, since, this is why, due to, for this reason
Result	SO , as a result, therefore, as a consequence
Comparison	also in comparison, similarly
Contrast	BUT , although, even though, in contrast, however, whereas, on the one hand/on the other hand, neither ... nor
Concession	naturally, OF COURSE , yet, still, however, although, nevertheless
Conclusion/Summary	on the whole, therefore, SO , in brief, summing up, in conclusion
Paraphrase	in other words, that is to say, to put it another way
Illustration/Exemplification	FOR EXAMPLE , for instance, to illustrate, that is, namely, such as

Grammatical structures

SIMPLE STRUCTURES	COMPLEX STRUCTURES
affirmative sentences negative sentences interrogative sentences imperative direct speech modals basic tenses	conditional sentences passive (progressive tenses) participle constructions reported speech modals + perfect ("should have done") present perfect/past perfect

² The expressions in capital letters are considered **BASIC** linking devices.