



BRAYS
Online English Help

PET Writing

How to pass the Cambridge PET Writing Section



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1. Introduction

Who is this book for?

This book is simply for **students** who want good marks in the writing section of the Cambridge PET Exam. It is also useful for *any* lower intermediate student who would like to improve his or her writing.

It is also for **teachers**. Use it exactly as you like. Forward it to students. Print it out. Use it in class. It's completely up to you.

I hope it works.

Enjoy your English and every success with exams.

Alan Bray

P.S. You can find other free materials to help you prepare for the B1 lower intermediate level (PET) at the following website:

www.brays-ingles.com

Santander, October 2010

Format of the exam

Reading and Writing is a combined paper of 1 hour 30 minutes

For the writing section you will need to show you can use vocabulary and structure.

You complete tasks such as:

- writing notes or a short message of between 35 and 45 words
- writing a story or letter of up to 100 words
- completing exercises involving changing the meaning of sentences

Writing, reading, listening and speaking are each worth 25% of your total marks.

Useful phrases for all writing types

Making comparisons

- *more often than*
- *less often than*
- *as often as*
- *faster than*
- *slower than*
- *as fast as*
- *better than*
- *worse than*
- *as good as*

Saying when something happens

- *before*
- *after*
- *until*
- *when*
- *as soon as*
- *while*
- *during*

2. Writing short notes

Advice

1. Read the instructions carefully and imagine the situation.
2. Make sure you write about **all three points** in the instructions.
3. Remember to address your message to the person named (eg Dear John, Hi Sam).
4. Don't forget to write your name at the end.
5. Don't write less than 35 words or more than 45.
6. Check what you have written for silly mistakes

Sample questions

1. You want a classmate to help you to do something. Write a note to him or her.

In the note you should:

- Explain what help you want
- Suggest a time when your classmate can help
- Offer to do something for your classmate in return

Write 35-45 words

2. You have an American penfriend called Pat who asks what your bedroom is like.

Write an email to Pat. In the email, you should:

- Tell her how big your room is
- Say what's in the room
- Explain why you like it

Write 35-45 words

3. You have arranged to meet a Welsh friend at the bus station, but now you can't go.

Write an email to Ted, an English friend. In your email you should:

- ask Ted to go in your place
- say why you can't go
- describe your cousin

Write 35-45 words

4. You are going to visit an Irish friend called Pat, who lives in a small village in the countryside. Send Pat an email. In the email you should:

- say how you will travel
- sell her what time you will arrive
- say what you'd like to do during the visit

Write 35-45 words.

5. You and your English friend Chris have decided you want to have a healthier lifestyle. Send an email to Pat. In your email, you should:

- tell Chris about your new sleeping habits
- say what type of food you plan to eat in future
- suggest some exercise or sport you can do together

Write 35-45 words

6. You have promised to help your friend Ben to prepare for his birthday party next week, but now you can't go. Write an email to Ben. In your email you should:

- *explain why you can't go*
- *apologise*
- *suggest someone else who can help*

Write 35-45 words.

7. An English family has moved into the house next door. You would like to introduce yourself to them. Write a note to the family. In your note, you should:

- *introduce yourself*
- *tell them something useful about the area*
- *offer to do something for them*

Write 35-45 words.

8. You've just received a present from Tom, an Australian friend. Write a postcard to Tom. In your postcard you should

- *thank him for the present*
- *tell him why you love it*
- *tell him what you are going to send him in return*

Write 35-45 words.

9. You want to invite Sarah, an English girl who has just come to your school, to go out with you and your friends tonight. Write a note to leave for Sarah:

- *inviting her to go out with you all tonight*
- *saying where you are going*
- *suggesting what she should wear*

Write 35-45 words.

10. You are on holiday at the seaside and are sending a postcard to your Scottish friend, Maggie. In your postcard to Maggie you should:

- *explain when your holiday started*
- *tell Maggie where you are staying*
- *say what you like most about the holiday*

Write 35-45 words.

3. Writing stories or letters

4 essentials for good answers

1. Answer the question
2. Plan
3. Use paragraphs
4. Revise your work

Make sure you answer the question exactly *and no more*.

It is essential to plan your writing. This should take at least 10 minutes to plan for each question.

In a relatively short piece of writing you will need 4 or 5 paragraphs. The first paragraph will be your introduction. Paragraphs 2, 3 and perhaps 4, will contain the body of your answer, and the last paragraph your concluding comments.

Allow at least 5 minutes for each question to check your answer. Look out for silly mistakes with tenses, word order, spellings etc.

Advice

- read instructions carefully
- choose the one you like best

If you choose **letter**

- plan your letter
- write about the topic and nothing else
- answer all the questions asked by your friend

If you choose **story**

- use title or first sentence to guide you
- ask yourself questions *Who...? Where...? When...? Why...? How did I/he/they feel? What happened in the end?*
- plan your story before you write

Always

- plan
- use separate paragraphs
- read through to correct grammar or spelling mistakes
- write 100 words, or nearly 100, but not many more

Useful phrases for letters

Informal Letters - Greetings:

- *Dear Jim*
- *Hello Jim*
- *Hi Jim*

Introductory sentences for letters:

- *How's it going?*
- *How are you?*
- *How are things with you?*
- *How are things?*
- *Thank you for your letter*
- *It was good to receive your letter*

An informal letter referring to good news:

- *Glad to hear about*
- *I'm really glad to hear about*
- *I'm very happy to hear about*
- *I was very happy to read about*
- *Great news about your*

An informal letter referring to bad news:

- *I'm sorry to hear about*
- *I'm very sorry to hear about*
- *Sorry to read about*

Goodbye sentences for letters:

- *Well, time to go*
- *Well, it's time to go*
- *Well, got to go*
- *Write soon*
- *Make sure you write soon*
- *Love*
- *Lots of love*
- *All my love*
- *Will write again soon*

Sample questions – (Writing letters)

1. You have joined a social site on the internet. Write a description of yourself to put on your page.

Remember to include:

- your personal details, for example, name and age
- what you do or study
- things you like doing

You can write **up to 100 words**.

2. You receive a letter from your penfriend, Susan. Part of it says:

Tell me all about the job you did during the school holidays.

Tell her about the following:

- where the job was
- what kind of work you did
- your workmates
- what you thought of it
- something unexpected that happened
- what you did

Write your **letter** in **up to 100 words**.

3. This is part of a letter you receive from an English penfriend.

*I wanted to buy some shoes this afternoon but I had to go shopping for food in the supermarket instead., which I detest. Do you like shopping?
Are there any good shops near you?*

Write a **letter** answering your penfriend's questions. Write **up to 100 words**.

4. You receive a letter from a Scottish friend. Part of it says:

At my school we have to wear a uniform. I hate wearing it. Tell me about the clothes you like and don't like wearing. What do you wear when you go out with friends at night?

Write a **letter** to your penfriend in reply. Write **about 100 words**.

5. You receive a letter from your English penfriend, part of which says:

I went riding my horse yesterday and then watched a fabulous documentary about eagles. I love all animals! How about you? Have you got a pet?

Write a letter in about 100 words **answering your penfriend's questions.**

6. This is part of a letter you receive from an English friend:

I am ill in hospital. I feel awful and I'm really bored because I'm in bed all day. What can I do to make myself feel more cheerful? Tell me about that time that you were in hospital.

Write your letter in about 100 words.

7. This is part of a letter you receive from an Welsh penfriend.

I'm coming to your area next month. Where can I go? I'm interested in sport, beautiful countryside and anything else you recommend.

Write a letter in about 100 words telling your penfriend about places to visit.

8. This is part of a letter you receive from an American penfriend Laura. She is coming on an exchange visit to your school

Can you tell me what a typical day will be like. What things will I like best about your school? Are there any things I won't like?

Write a letter in about 100 words telling answering your friend's questions.

9. An English friend, Jack, is coming to stay in your town for a month. This is part of a letter he sends to you.

I'm interested in all sorts of sports. Will I be able to join any clubs when I come? What sports are you interested in? Are there any famous sportsmen in your area?

Write a letter in about 100 words answering your friend's questions.

10. An English friend, Dawn, is coming on a shopping trip to your town. This is part of a letter she sends you.

Which are the best shops to go for clothes? Are there any really unusual shops and what do they sell? I want to buy presents for my parents. Can you suggest anything? Not too expensive of course.

Write a letter in about 100 words answering Dawn's questions.

Useful phrases – (Writing stories)

Time phrases:

- *It all began*
- *Shortly afterwards*
- *Meanwhile*
- *Not long afterwards*
- *Some time later*
- *Later that day*
- *A little later*
- *Finally*
- *In the end*
- *Eventually*

Phrases for dramatic effect:

- *Suddenly*
- *All of a sudden*
- *Without warning*
- *Out of the blue*
- *Just at that moment*
- *Quite unexpectedly*
- *As if from nowhere*

Direct speech:

- *“.....”, said Fred*
- *“.....”, shouted Fred*
- *“.....”, screamed Fred*
- *“.....”, whispered Fred*
- *“.....”, announced Fred.*
- *”.....”, thought Fred*
- *“.....”, cried Fred*
- *“.....”, promised Fred*

Concluding stories:

- *When it was all over*
- *Looking back now*
- *In retrospect*
- *In the end*
- *After all that had happened*

Sample questions – (Writing stories)

1. Your English teacher has asked you to write a story with the title:

A day in the city

Write your story in about 100 words.

2. Your teacher has asked you to write a story beginning with this sentence:

When the taxi arrived Susan was ready, dressed in her very best clothes.

Write your story in about 100 words.

3. Your teacher has asked you to write a story beginning with this sentence:

It was 5 in the morning and there was a knock at the door.

Write your story in about 100 words.

4. Your teacher has asked you to write a story ending with this sentence:

I woke up and realised it had all been a bad dream.

Write your story in about 100 words.

5. Your teacher has asked you to write a story entitled:

A frightening film

Write your story in about 100 words.

6. Your teacher has asked you to write a story beginning with this sentence:

John didn't know where he would get the money he needed.

Write your story in about 100 words.

7. Your teacher has asked you to write a story with the title:

A fabulous experience

Write your story in about 100 words.

8. Your teacher has asked you to write a story with the title:

A terrible day

Write your story in about 100 words.

9. Your teacher has asked you to write a story beginning with this sentence:

The train left the station at midnight.

Write your story in about 100 words.

10. Your teacher has asked you to write a story ending with this sentence:

I shall never make the same mistake again.

Write your story in about 100 words.

Sample questions – (Changing sentences)

Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first.
Use **no more than 3 words**.

See page 28 for the answers

1. *Do you play basketball well?*

Are you a player?

2. *Does art interest you?*

Are you art?

3. *What is your age?*

How you?

4. *Which is your favourite school subject?*

Which school subject like best?

5. *How is that spelt?*

How do that?

6. *Each lesson lasts forty minutes.*

Each lesson long.

7. *What's the price of this book, please?*

How this book, cost, please?

8. *I think Spain is a wonderful country.*

Spain is a wonderful country opinion.

9. *I think you are right about the weather.*

I agree about the weather.

10. *I think mobile phones are very useful.*

Mobile phones are very useful opinion.

11. *We'll talk about the price first.*

How about the price first?

12. *Bill is too weak to carry the box.*

Bill isn't to carry the box.

13. *In our school only a few students have blonde hair.*

In our school, not curly hair.

14. *My sister prefers milk chocolate to dark chocolate.*

My sister likes milk chocolate dark chocolate.

15. *In our house, dinner is usually prepared by my father.*

In our house, my father dinner.

16. *My father said, 'Come home at 10.'*

My father toldhome at 10.

17. *Susan asked for paella in the restaurant.*

In the restaurant, Susan said, 'Can paella, please?'

18. *Mary suggested that we order a pizza.*

Mary said, 'Let's a pizza.'

19. Britain is a small island, so everywhere is near to the sea.

Britain is a small island, so nowhere is the sea.

20. Never go for a long run without taking water with you.

Take water with you, if you're a long run.

21. Look at a map of Africa if you want to find Zimbabwe.

You won't find Zimbabwe unless a map of Africa.

22. I became a policeman five years ago.

I a policeman for five years.

23. I came to Spain in 2005.

I in Spain since 2005.

24. My mother asked me if I wanted an ice-cream.

My mother said, 'Would an ice-cream?'

25. Yesterday a photographer took my photo.

Yesterday my photo a photographer.

26. My book is heavier than my brothers.

My bother's book isn't mine.

27. At first, you'll have difficulty understanding the rules.

At first, understanding the rules will be for you.

28. *I have to find accommodation before I look for a job.*

I can't look for a job accommodation.

29. *I've promised to write home and so as my sister.*

My sister and I to write home.

30. *Last night I took a tablet to stop my tooth aching.*

Last night I took a tablet, because aching.

31. *My sister does exercise because she must keep fit to play in the basketball team.*

My sister does exercise to play in the basketball team.

32. *If you don't stop drinking coffee in the evening, you'll never sleep well.*

You'll never sleep well unless coffee in the evening.

33. *People with influenza should stay in bed for a couple of days.*

Stay in bed for a couple of days if you influenza.

34. *Smoking isn't allowed in pubs in England.*

You in pubs in England.

35. *The earliest clocks used the sun's shadow to tell the time.*

With the earliest clocks, people the time by using the sun's shadow.

36. *Modern clocks are more accurate than old fashioned ones were.*

Old fashioned clocks weren't as modern ones are.

37. *The most famous clocks in the world are made in Switzerland.*

In Switzerland, they the most famous clocks in the world.

38. *An alarm clock helps you to wake up early.*

An alarm clock is helpful you need to wake up early.

39. *People without watches are often late for appointments.*

People without watches are often not for appointments.

40. *My uncle prefers travelling by car to travelling by plane.*

My uncle thinks travelling by car is better plane

41. *My dad is confused by internet.*

Internet my dad.

42. *Whose are these glasses?*

Who do these glasses to?

43. *When I read for too long, I find it tiring.*

I get when I read for too long.

44. *Why don't you phone Sam up?*

If I were you, phone Sam up.

45. *My father said, "Don't burn the toast!"*

My father told burn the toast.

46. *Bread is more expensive than last year.*

Last year, bread than it is now.

47. *The school phone is often engaged.*

It is often phone the school.

48. Susan said, "Why don't you go to the shop?"

Susan said, "How to the shop?"

49. Many shops accept credit cards.

In many shops you credit card.

50. You can't smoke in pubs in England.

Smoking in pubs in England.

51. My brother has borrowed my bike.

I my brother my bike.

52. He hasn't seen a play by Shakespeare before.

This is play by Shakespeare he has seen.

53. This play is longer than Shakespeare's other plays.

Shakespeare's other plays are not this one.

54. How much does the meal cost?

What is the meal?

55. I hope my brother returns the bike to me soon.

I hope my brother back my bike soon.

56. Last year wasn't as warm as this year.

This year is last year was.

57. *How much is it to go scuba diving?*

What to go scuba diving.

58. *Do you know who this pen belongs to?*

Do you know pen this is?

59. *Sam can swim well.*

Sam is swimming.

60. *Running in boots isn't easy.*

Heavy boots make it run.

61. *A ticket for the football match costs 30 euros.*

The cost of a ticket for the match 30 euros.

62. *Entrance for league matches is more expensive than for cup matches.*

Entrance for cup matches than for league matches.

63. *You don't have to pay to watch the second team.*

You can watch the second team paying.

64. *There are no foreigners in the team now.*

The team doesn't any more.

65. *The new bar has been open for a week.*

The new bar last week.

66. *The criminal escaped in a car.*

The criminal made in a car.

67. *The teacher said she wouldn't punish him this time.*

The teacher said she would let this time.

68. *I didn't know it was illegal to smoke in the restaurant..*

I didn't know it was against to smoke in a restaurant.

69. *Not many people in England speak Chinese.*

Not a people in England speak Chinese.

70. *The bomb exploded late last night.*

The bomb went late last night.

71. *There weren't many people watching the film.*

There were only people watching the film.

72. *I didn't recognize him until he removed his sunglasses.*

I didn't recognize him until he off his sunglasses.

73. *Make sure you have everything before you leave the plane.*

Make sure you have everything before you off the plane.

74. *Why didn't you go to school today.*

You should to school today.

75. *It's possible that John remembered to turn off the lights.*

John might to turn off the lights.

76. *There was a chance we'd win the competition, but we didn't.*

We could the competition, but we didn't.

77. *I didn't invite Sarah to the party, and now I regret it.*

I Sarah to the party.

78. *I can't wait for Christmas.*

I'm really Christmas.

79. *I didn't see the film because my TV was broken.*

I would the film if my TV hadn't been broken.

80. *We've got too few people to make a team.*

We haven't people to make a team.

81. *I'll get fat if I carry on eating a lot.*

I'll get fat stop eating a lot.

82. *We'll have a barbecue this weekend, unless the weather's bad.*

If the weather's bad this weekend, we a barbecue.

83. *Loud planes annoy many people.*

Many people loud planes.

84. *They are going to build a new shopping centre here next year.*

A new shopping centre is going here next year.

85. *People send billions of emails every day.*

Billions of emails every day.

86. "Can you come tomorrow, Sandra?"

Sandra was asked if she tomorrow.

87. "Do you have any questions, Bill?"

Bill was asked any questions.

88. Where are you living at the moment?

Can you tell me where at the moment.

89. Why have you quit your job?

Could you explain quit your job.

90. What did you say to the headmaster.

I'd like to know to the headmaster.

91. Robert apologised for being late.

Robert was for being late.

92. I didn't like curry at all.

I never like curry.

93. Who broke the window?

Who was responsible the window?

94. If you ask me, footballers get too much money.

In footballers get too much money.

95. *The programme wasn't interesting so I turned off the TV.*

I wouldn't have turned off the TV if the programme interesting.

96. *We went to class because it was an important lesson.*

We wouldn't have gone to class if it an important lesson.

97. *You are too young to have a girlfriend.*

You are not to have a girlfriend.

98. *That man's dog chased me yesterday.*

That's the man chased me yesterday.

99. *Car fumes pollute our cities.*

Our cities car fumes.

100. *There was too much noise to hear the teacher.*

There was noise that I couldn't hear the teacher.

See page 28 for the answers

9. Finally

We at Brays hope that the information you have read helps you reach B1 PET level.

The fact that you have read this far should prove useful. But, obviously, the more you write, the better you become, especially if you have a good teacher to guide you.

To get the best from what you have read you need now to go to the next important stage:

- Select a question!
- Answer it
- Ask a tutor to guide you through the correction
- Repeat the process
- Repeat again and again

The more practice and guidance you have, the better you will become.

If you don't have someone with a high level to guide you [then contact us](#). We will be happy to revise your work and set you on the right path.

Remember also that there are lots of help on our website to help you improve your English.

[Click here](#) for free online materials.

[Click here \(Spanish\)](#) or [Click here \(English\)](#) to buy a Complete PET Course

Every success with your exams and in life.

Enjoy your English,

Alan Bray

Answers – (Changing sentences)

1. Are you a *good basketball* player?
2. Are you *interested in* art?
3. How *old are* you?
4. Which school subject *do you* like best?
5. How do you *spell* that?
6. Each lesson *is forty minutes* long.
7. How *much does* this book, cost, please?
8. Spain is a wonderful country *in my* opinion.
9. I agree *with you* about the weather.
10. Mobile phones are very useful *in my* opinion.
11. How *about talking* about the price first?
12. Bill isn't *strong enough* to carry the box.
13. In our school, not *many students have* curly hair.
14. My sister likes milk chocolate *better than* dark chocolate.
15. In our house, my father *usually prepares* dinner.
16. My father told *us to come* home at 10.
17. In the restaurant, Susan said, 'Can *I have* paella, please?'
- 18..Mary said, 'Let's *order* a pizza.'
19. Britain is a small island, so nowhere is *far from* the sea.
20. Take water with you, if you're *going for* a long run.
21. You won't find Zimbabwe unless *you look at* a map of Africa.
22. I *have been* a policeman for five years.
23. I *have been* in Spain since 2005.
24. My mother said, 'Would *you like* an ice-cream?'
25. Yesterday my photo *was taken by* a photographer.
26. My bother's book isn't *as heavy as* mine.
27. At first, understanding the rules will be *difficult* for you.

28. I can't look for a job **until I find** accommodation.
29. My sister and I **have promised** to write home.
30. Last night I took a tablet, because **my tooth was** aching.
31. My sister does exercise to **keep fit to** play in the basketball team.
32. You'll never sleep well unless **you stop drinking** coffee in the evening.
33. Stay in bed for a couple of days if you **have (got)** influenza.
34. You **can't smoke** in pubs in England.
35. With the earliest clocks, people **used to tell** the time by using the sun's shadow.
36. Old fashioned clocks weren't as **accurate as** modern ones are.
37. In Switzerland, they **make** the most famous clocks in the world.
38. An alarm clock is helpful **if (when)** you need to wake up early.
39. People without watches are often not **in (on) time** for appointments.
40. My uncle thinks travelling by car is better **than travelling by plane**
41. Internet **confuses** my dad.
42. Who do these glasses **belong** to?
43. I get **tired** when I read for too long.
44. If I were you, I **would (I'd)** phone Sam up.
45. My father told **me not to** burn the toast.
46. Last year, bread **was cheaper** than it is now.
47. It is often **impossible to** phone the school.
48. Susan said, "How **about you going** to the shop?"
49. In many shops **you can pay by** credit card.
50. Smoking **is forbidden (is not allowed)** in pubs in England.
51. I **lent** my brother my bike.
52. This is **the first** play by Shakespeare he has seen.
53. Shakespeare's other plays are not **as long as** this one.
54. What is **the price of** the meal?
55. I hope my brother **gives me** back my bike soon.

56. This year is **warmer than** last year was.
57. What **does it cost** to go scuba diving.
58. Do you know **whose** pen this is?
59. Sam is **good at** swimming.
60. Heavy boots make it **difficult to** run.
61. The cost of a ticket for the match **is** 30 euros.
62. Entrance for cup matches **is cheaper** than for league matches.
63. You can watch the second team **without** paying.
64. The team doesn't **have foreigners** any more.
65. The new bar **(was) opened** last week.
66. The criminal made **his escape** in a car.
67. The teacher said she would let **him off** this time.
68. I didn't know it was against **the law** to smoke in a restaurant.
69. Not a **lot of** people in England speak Chinese.
70. The bomb went **off** late last night.
71. There were only **a few** people watching the film.
72. I didn't recognize him until he **took off** his sunglasses.
73. Make sure you have everything before you **get off** the plane.
74. You should **have gone** to school today.
75. John might **have remembered** to turn off the lights.
76. We could **have won** the competition, but we didn't.
77. I **should have invited** Sarah to the party.
78. I'm really **looking forward to** Christmas.
79. I would **have seen** the film if my TV hadn't been broken.
80. We haven't **got enough** people to make a team.
81. I'll get fat **unless I** stop eating a lot.
82. If the weather's bad this weekend, we **won't have** a barbecue.
83. Many people **are annoyed by** loud planes.

84. A new shopping centre is going *to be built* here next year.
85. Billions of emails *are sent* every day.
86. Sandra was asked if she *could come* tomorrow.
87. Bill was asked *if he had* any questions.
88. Can you tell me where *you are living* at the moment.
89. Could you explain *why you (have)* quit your job..
90. I'd like to know *what you said* to the headmaster.
91. Robert was *made to apologise* for being late.
92. I never *used to* like curry.
93. Who was responsible *for breaking* the window?
94. In *my opinion* footballers get too much money.
95. I wouldn't have turned off the TV if the programme *had been* interesting.
96. We wouldn't have gone to class if it *hadn't been* an important lesson.
97. You are not *old enough* to have a girlfriend.
98. That's the man *whose dog* chased me yesterday.
99. Our cities *are polluted by* car fumes.
100. There was *so much* noise that I couldn't hear the teacher.