

Moreland University

M28U3A1 – Writing Rubric

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Background

The assignment and rubric described here is specifically created for a class preparing for the A2 Key for Schools (KET) exam from Cambridge English. The students are in Grade 1. They are working through the COMPLETE Key for Schools coursebook (McKeegan, 2020). This contains chapters for the topic themes and resultant vocabulary that are in the exam. It also contains preparation for each of the language skills.

At the time of writing the assignment, students have been exploring Unit 9 in the book, with the title, ‘What’s On’, focusing on entertainment and TV. The content connects to the topic of ‘Entertainment and media’ in the teaching guide (Cambridge Assessment English, 2020).

The key language functions being practiced are making suggestions and talking about future plans (McKeegan, 2020). This involves use of modals for making suggestions, including, “can”, “could”, “will” and “would”, as well as present, future with “will” and future with “going to” tenses.

The purpose of this assessment is specific preparation for the writing exam, but also general student-centred writing development. With the individual needs and specific needs for the assignment in mind, the marking bands for the KET exam itself have not been used. We bore them in mind, however. In the exam students are marked on Content – keeping the content of their writing relevant to the task, Organization – the writing flows, with sentences following on from each other, with appropriate use of connectives and linking devices, and Language – varied use of vocabulary and control over simple grammatical form (Cambridge Assessment English, 2020).

Assignment, Objective and Standard

Vocabulary related to exhibitions developed in this unit have been “circus”, “concert”, “dance”, “exhibition”, “film”, “party” and “play”.

The assignment is based around inviting a friend out to a place or event in town.

- “Write a note to a friend, inviting them to an event of your choice with you.” (Write at least 25 words.)

Objective

(To allow freedom with appropriate choice of sentence structure, only the use of full sentences and communication through understandability are focused on.)

- By the end of the assignment period, all students will have written a message that could be sent to a friend inviting them to attend an activity in town and is understandable without effort to the native speaking teacher. It uses full sentences with an appropriate use of modal verb or tense.

Can Do Statement (taken from requirements for A2 level):

CAN complete forms and write short, simple letters or postcards related to personal information.

(Cambridge Assessment English, 2020)

Rubric Development

In developing the rubric, students were consulted with. This was to help make it student centred and support students with self-reflection and autonomy over their own development. Two questions were asked.

- (1) What do you think will be most difficult about this assignment?
- (2) What do you want to practice and improve?

In doing this, students looked back at their previous writing assignment and self-reflection on it to support them focus their thinking.

All students highlighted at least one of the following.

- Spelling – students said that spelling lots of words is still challenging and students have a desire to improve this.
- Structure – students said that they find it challenging to put all their ideas together in the correct order in writing, for example, what to say first, what to say second and what to say last.

Both these are important areas of development at students current writing level. Hence, both were included in the rubric.

We noted that spelling comes under ‘Conventions’ and structure under ‘Organization’, as described under the 6 + 1 traits (Culham, 2003). The 6 + 1 structure was chosen for the rubric due to this and because it covers ranging areas of writing with a broad focus to support overall writing development.

To keep the focus on development and progress in line with growth mindset, and also so that the rubric is not made overly complicated for Grade 1 students, we have only two possible results for each category. The first is “I can do it.” and the second is “I still need some help. I will keep practicing. I will be able to do it soon.”

For **Idea**, we put that they must include an activity they want to go to and invite their friend, the key communicative concept of the activity.

For **Organisation**, again, we have the structure. In light of students expressing challenges with knowing how to order their ideas, we set a logical structure. First, students should greet their friend. Second, they should state what they want to do and invite their friend. Third, the most important detail of the day and time. Fourth, the less important initial detail of the method of transport. Finally, a farewell.

While this model is provided here as a scaffold, in following instruction, students will need to be guided in creating a logical order and structure themselves.

For **Voice** to ensure students were personalizing the message and allowing their own voice to come through appropriate to the age and language level, we include that students should include a personal pronoun at least two times. These include “I”, “me”, “my”, “we”, “us” and “our”.

For **Word Choice**, we include that one use of each of the relevant types of vocabulary should be made. These are, entertainment activity, method of transport, day and time of day.

For **Sentence Fluency**, we put that sentences should be complete, and each exclamation, statement or question should be its own sentence. Sentences should start with a capital letter and end with a punctuation mark. This is a skill that has been developed previously and is being consolidated. Students are familiar with the words, “statement”, “question” and “exclamation” and with the three different punctuation marks. The wording of the rubric allows for some grammatical errors within sentences so long as the sentence components are there to make it understandable.

For **Conventions**, again in response to student thoughts, we look at spelling. To focus on growth here, they see if they only need to correct the spelling of a smaller number of words than in the previous assignment, when they review the assignment afterwards. The words and therefore number they had needed to correct in the previous assignment, they have recorded.

The rubric was gone through in detail with students, using appropriate language and concept checking to ensure it was understood.

After completion of the assignment, teachers will go through the rubric together with students to mark their work. When students fall into the ‘I still need some help. I will keep practicing. I will be able to do it soon.’ category, teachers will accompany with a short comment of feedback.

Both when introducing the rubric to students, and going through work with students individually, the focus will be on effort, progress and growth mindset.

For the +1 part, due to the age of the students, and to allow for personalization, there will be a space for an overall comment on progress and one on possible areas of growth by the teacher, and a space for student self-reflection.

Final Rubric

See the final rubric [here](#).

Note for Teachers:

The relevant vocabulary and language have previously been taught during the unit. Below are some examples of language that may fit the rubric. However, accept other appropriate language that fit the rubric. The goal is natural development of writing using student’s entire language knowledge, not only use of the specific words and sentences that have been studied.

Example sentences for inviting a friend to an activity: “Do you want to go _____.”, “Do you want to come _____.”, “Can you come _____?”, “Could you come _____?”

Accept others – the focus is the communicative function not the specific words.

Examples of entertainment activities: play, film/movie, concert, dance, exhibition, party, circus.

(accept others).

Example methods of transport: bike, bus, train, car, taxi, walk

(accept others).

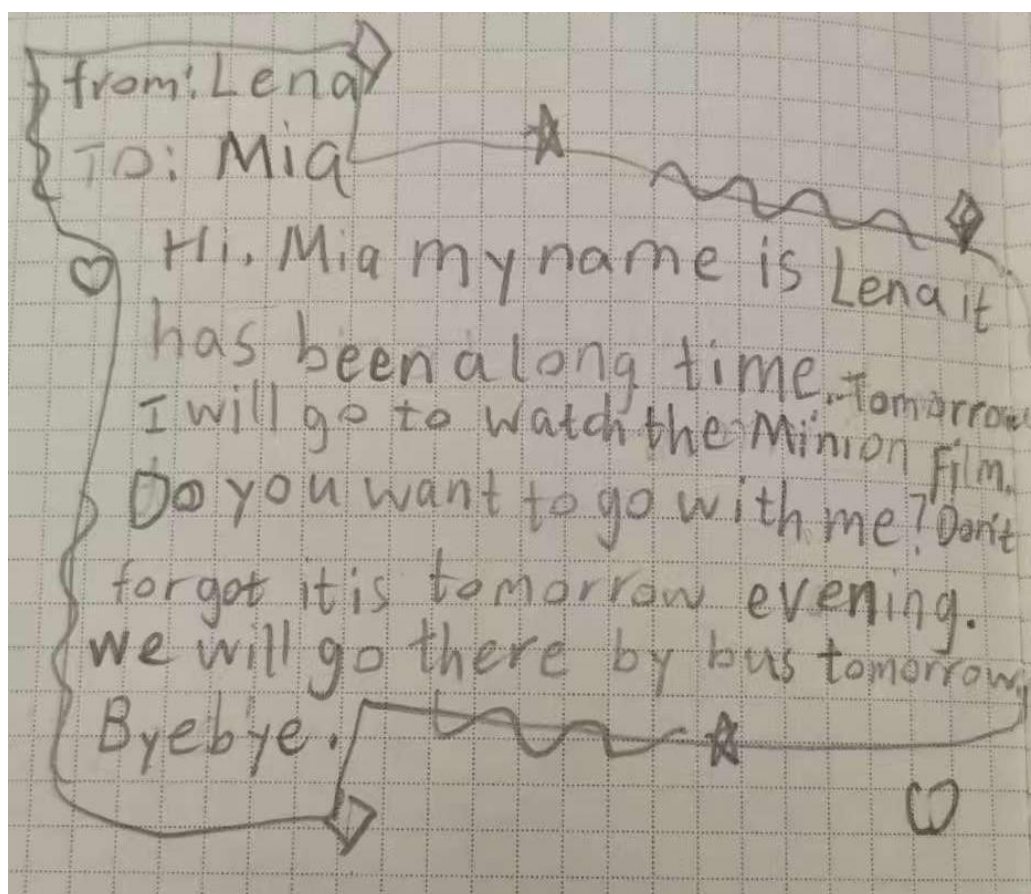
Examples of words to say what day it is: Monday, Tuesday, yesterday, tomorrow.

Examples of times of the day: “2pm”, “10am”, “8 o’clock”, “morning”, afternoon”, “evening”.

Overlook errors with prepositions of time in applying the rubric, but draw student’s attention to it if appropriate for their current development during individual feedback.

Student Work and Assessment with the Rubric

See here the work of one student, Lena.



See [here](#), Lena’s marked Rubric, completed digitally.

References

- Cambridge Assessment English. (2020). *A2 Key: Handbook for teachers for exams*. Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/504857-a2-key-handbook-for-teachers.pdf>
- Culham, R. (2003). *6 + 1 traits of writing: The complete guide for the primary grades*. Scholastic.
- McKeegan, D. (2020). *Complete Key for Schools: Student's book without answers* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.