Context validity

Context validity of a language test relates to the linguistic and content demands that must be met for successful task realisation and to features of the task setting that serve to describe the performance required.

Cambridge ESOL recognises that the sample of communicative language ability selected for a test should be ‘as representative as possible’ of real-life situations learners may find themselves in. The test tasks should be selected in accordance with ‘the general descriptive parameters of the intended target situation particularly with regard to the skills necessary for successful participation in that situation’ (Weir 1993:11).

In its tests Cambridge ESOL aims to approximate to situational authenticity. Full authenticity of setting is not attainable but the contextual parameters operationalised in a test should mirror as many of the criterial features of the target situation as possible.

The table below lists the contextual parameters suggested by Weir (2005) as being most likely to have an impact on test performance.

Aspects of context validity for writing (based on Weir 2005)
Please use the hyperlinks below to follow the information for each parameter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contextual parameters (i.e. features that influence performance at different levels of CEFR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task setting:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Response format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge of criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Weighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Text length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Writer–reader relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Linguistic demands:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task input and output</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lexical resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Structural resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discourse mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Functional resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Content knowledge</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Task setting and linguistic demands are conveyed through the wording of the task supplied to the candidates. In the case of a direct test of writing test takers should be clear of any production demands placed upon them. In Cambridge ESOL examinations the task rubric specifies the appropriate task setting parameters and linguistic demands required for the candidate to deal with the task effectively and efficiently. Additional information and exemplification is provided in the handbooks that accompany each examination.

Having established the criterial parameters that characterise task performance, it needs to be shown how these contextual parameters vary across tests set at different levels of language proficiency in CEFR terms in Cambridge Main Suite examinations (KET, PET, FCE, CAE, CPE).

Please use the hyperlinks below to follow the information for each exam/level.

**Contextual parameters as exemplified in Cambridge ESOL**

**KET/A2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task setting:</th>
<th>Linguistic demands:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response format</td>
<td>Task input and output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>▪ Lexical resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of criteria</td>
<td>▪ Structural resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighting</td>
<td>▪ Discourse mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text length</td>
<td>▪ Functional resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time constraints</td>
<td>▪ Content knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer–reader relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PET/B1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task setting:</th>
<th>Linguistic demands:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response format</td>
<td>Task input and output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>▪ Lexical resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of criteria</td>
<td>▪ Structural resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighting</td>
<td>▪ Discourse mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text length</td>
<td>▪ Functional resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time constraints</td>
<td>▪ Content knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer–reader relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Contextual parameters as exemplified in Cambridge ESOL

#### FCE/B2

**Task setting:**
- Response format
- Purpose
- Knowledge of criteria
- Weighting
- Text length
- Time constraints
- Writer–reader relationship

**Linguistic demands:**
- **Task input and output**
  - Lexical resources
  - Structural resources
  - Discourse mode
  - Functional resources
  - Content knowledge

#### CAE/C1

**Task setting:**
- Response format
- Purpose
- Knowledge of criteria
- Weighting
- Text length
- Time constraints
- Writer–reader relationship

**Linguistic demands:**
- **Task input and output**
  - Lexical resources
  - Structural resources
  - Discourse mode
  - Functional resources
  - Content knowledge

#### CPE/C2

**Task setting:**
- Response format
- Purpose
- Knowledge of criteria
- Weighting
- Text length
- Time constraints
- Writer–reader relationship

**Linguistic demands:**
- **Task input and output**
  - Lexical resources
  - Structural resources
  - Discourse mode
  - Functional resources
  - Content knowledge
**Task setting**

**Response format**

The *response format* can affect the test taker’s performance and score. Therefore, a test should include a range of response formats in order to ensure that all candidates will have an opportunity to perform at their best. Accordingly, a wide variety of tasks is employed in all Cambridge ESOL examinations and at the higher levels candidates are offered a choice of tasks.

**Summary of response format across Cambridge ESOL exams**

KET is characterised by controlled tasks at the word level and limited semi-controlled tasks at the text level. PET includes controlled and semi-controlled tasks. At FCE, CAE and CPE there is a mixture of semi-controlled tasks where the task is framed by the rubric and/or input texts but candidates are expected to make their own contribution. For more detail on response format in each Cambridge ESOL Main Suite exams, click on the links below:

KET Response format
PET Response format
FCE Response format
CAE Response format
CPE Response format
**KET Response format**

KET has three papers, covering the four skills. The Reading and Writing component consists of nine parts with Parts 6–9 concentrating on testing basic writing skills. The writing parts of KET embrace a wide variety of formats. These are summarised in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Response format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Part 6 | *Word completion (5 items)*  
In Part 6, candidates have to produce five items of vocabulary and to spell them correctly. The five items of vocabulary all belong to the same lexical field, for example jobs, food, household objects, etc. For each word, candidates are given a ‘definition’ of the type found in a learner’s dictionary, followed by the first letter of the required word and a set of dashes to represent the number of the remaining letters. Each of the 5 definitions contain no more than 16 words. A completed example from the lexical set is given at the beginning. |
| Part 7 | *Open cloze (Gap-filling) (10 items)*  
In Part 7, candidates have to complete a gapped text of 80–100 words (including gaps, addresses and salutations). Deletions in the text focus on grammatical structure and vocabulary. |
| Part 8 | *Information transfer (Form-filling) (5 items)*  
In Part 8, candidates complete a simple information transfer task. They must use the information in two short texts totalling about 90 words to complete someone’s notes. Candidates have to understand the text(s) in order to complete the task, and the focus is on both writing and reading ability. The required written production is at word and phrase level, not sentence level. |
| Part 9 | *Continuous writing (1 task)*  
In Part 9, candidates have to show that they can communicate a written message of an authentic type. This task constitutes a very general, open-ended writing exercise. The input text requires minimal reading on the part of the candidate (maximum 65 words, which includes the entire rubric). The instructions indicate the type of message required, who it is for and what kind of information should be included. Candidates have to respond to all three points. Alternatively, the candidates may be asked to read and respond appropriately to three elements contained within a short note from a friend. |
PET Response format

PET Reading and Writing, like KET, are combined in one question paper. The Reading and Writing component consists of eight parts: Reading (Parts 1–5) and Writing (Parts 1–3). The Writing parts of PET are summarised in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Response format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td><em>Sentence transformation (5 items)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 1 focuses on grammatical precision and requires candidates to complete five sentences, all sharing a common theme or topic. For each question, candidates are given a complete sentence, together with a ‘gapped’ sentence below it. The first and second sentence contain no more than 12 words, including the gapped words. Candidates have to write between one and three words to fill this gap. The second sentence, when complete, must mean the same as the first sentence. A completed example is given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2</td>
<td><em>Short communicative message (1 task)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The wording of this task does not exceed 60 words, including the rubric. Candidates are told who they are writing to and why, and must include three content points, which are laid out as bullet points in the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 3</td>
<td><em>A longer piece of continuous writing (1 from 2)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 3 offers candidates a choice of task: either an informal letter or a story. For the informal letter, candidates are given an extract of a letter from a friend, which provides cues on the topic they must write about. For the story, candidates are given either a short title or the first sentence. The total reading load for the informal letter task does not exceed 60 words and for the story task does not exceed 40 words, including the entire rubric.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FCE Response format

For FCE, Writing is a separate paper and candidates are required to carry out two tasks (summarised in the table below); a compulsory one in Part 1 and one from a choice of four in Part 2. FCE candidates will require greater language knowledge than their KET/PET counterparts in order to process the longer input text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Response format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 1</td>
<td><strong>Transactional letter (1 task)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 1 – a compulsory task – requires candidates to write a transactional letter which may be formal or informal, in response to a request for action or to initiate action. The usual conventions of letter writing, specifically opening salutation, paragraphing and closing phrasing are required but it is not necessary to include postal addresses. The input on which the candidates must base their letter is made up of varied combinations of text and notes, sometimes supported by illustrations. Candidates have to deal with textual material of up to 250 words. These texts are commonly annotated with notes which may be presented on a separate piece of realia, such as a notepad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 2–4</td>
<td><strong>Optional question (1 task from 4 options)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 5 (a or b)</td>
<td>Candidates must choose one from four questions, one of which offers two set-text options. The input for these five tasks is considerably less than in Part 1 but a context, a purpose for writing and a target reader are indicated. Attention to every element in the rubric is essential for effective task achievement. Question 5 consists of a choice of two tasks based on a set of five reading texts, as specified in the Examination Regulations every year. Candidates who base their answer on another book not on the list receive Band 0. The two questions are general enough to be applicable to any of the five set texts. In order to encourage adequate reference to the text which the candidate has read; the target reader is often defined as someone who may not have read the book. A plot summary is not, however, a substitute for the task.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**CAE Response format**

Like FCE, CAE Writing is also a single paper and candidates are required to carry out two tasks (summarised in the table below); a compulsory one in Part 1 and one from a choice of four in Part 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Response format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 1</td>
<td><strong>Compulsory question (1 task)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 1 is a compulsory contextualised Writing task giving candidates guidance to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the content required through instructions and one or more texts and/or visual</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>prompts. The task requires candidates to process up to about 400 words of input</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>material. Candidates are required to transform the input in some way and not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lift large chunks of the input (to expand notes, to summarise, to change the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>register or tone, for instance). The question may occasionally involve candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in writing more than one piece, e.g. an article and a short note.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 2–5</td>
<td><strong>Optional question (1 task from 4 options)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Candidates have to choose one of four contextualised Writing tasks which are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>specified in no more than 80 words. Candidates are given all the necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>information about what they have to write, who they are writing to, and why they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>are writing. The rubric always specifies what genre is required. It could</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>appear as an advertisement, an extract from a letter or in some other ‘authentic’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>form.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**CPE Response format**

CPE Writing is also a single paper and candidates are required to carry out two tasks (summarised in the table below); a compulsory one in Part 1 and one from a choice of four in Part 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Response format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1 Q 1</td>
<td>Compulsory question (1 task)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2 Q 2-5</td>
<td>Optional question (1 task from 4 options)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part 1 Q 1**

**Compulsory question (1 task)**

Part 1 is compulsory and candidates are asked to write in response to instructions and a short text or texts, totalling approximately 100 words. These text(s) may come from a variety of sources, for example, extracts from newspapers, magazines, books, letters or advertisements, or could be quotations from speakers in a discussion. Visuals, such as a diagram, simple graph or picture, may be included with the text(s) to support or extend a topic.

Although stimulus material may have an authentic source, the final input is unlikely to be wholly authentic, as the required number of words restricts the density of the argument. The input text always contains three distinct points which should be addressed by the candidate in their response. Candidates are expected to add their own ideas, so input material is made suitable for them to expand on the discussion points. Examples of appropriate sources are: academic notes, advertisements, book, article, newspaper or magazine extracts, headlines, journals, letters/correspondence notes, opening paragraphs, quotations.

Line drawings to clarify topic and visual material such as pie charts or block graphs are sometimes included for supporting or extending a topic, but are never the sole focus of the input.

**Part 2 Q 2-5**

**Optional question (1 task from 4 options)**

Candidates have to choose one of four contextualised Writing tasks one of which offers three set-text options. The tasks are specified in no more than 70 words excluding the standard rubric. Candidates are given all the necessary information about what they have to write, who they are writing to, and why they are writing. The rubric always specifies what genre is required.

Question 5, requires illustrated description and discussion within the context of the task as evidence of having read and appreciated a text rather than merely a reproduction of the plot of the book.
**Task purpose**

The test rubric must present candidates with clear, precise and unequivocal information regarding the purpose for completing the Writing task. Giving the writer a clear and acceptable communicative purpose is thought to enhance performance. The purpose of a test task is critical to any macro-planning that might take place. Having a clear purpose will facilitate *planning* and *monitoring* – two key cognitive strategies in language processing.

The dominant intention or purpose of the task needs to be clearly laid out to test takers in the task rubric: is the text the candidate is writing intended to inform (referential), persuade/convince (conative), convey emotions or feelings (emotive), to entertain, delight or please (poetic), keep in touch (phatic), or to learn (metalingual) (terms used by Jakobson 1960)?

In addition, Weigle (2002:10) details ‘how writing for these purposes can be further categorized according to three different levels of cognitive processing: reproduction, organizing known information, and generation of new ideas and information’. Reproduction involves writing down information that has already been linguistically encoded as in dictation or filling out a form. Organisation involves arranging already known information such as a narrative report, a description or biography. Generation of new ideas as in expository writing or argument places the greatest demands on cognitive processing. These categories are useful in that they help to explain the important distinction between the cognitive processes involved in knowledge telling and knowledge transformation.

The importance of giving test takers a clear purpose for each task, albeit often involving a degree of simulation/role play, is recognised by Cambridge ESOL. The tasks are framed with a clear purpose for the candidate and the rubric makes this as explicit as possible.

**Summary of task purpose across Cambridge ESOL exams**

There is a transition from KET to CPE in terms of purpose with the possibility of having to deal with conative purpose (purpose to persuade or convince) from the FCE level upwards. Only at CPE, however, is the discursive task compulsory. Within the
higher levels (FCE, CAE, CPE) the same broad range of purposes for writing may occur at each of the three levels.

For more detail on task purpose in each Cambridge ESOL Main Suite exams, click on the links below:

KET Task purpose
PET Task purpose
FCE Task purpose
CAE Task purpose
CPE Task purpose
KET Task purpose
In terms of continuous writing KET candidates in Part 9 need to show their ability to complete one short everyday Writing task. This provides candidates with the opportunity to show that they can communicate a written message of an authentic type, for example, a note, letter or postcard to a friend. The focus of the guided Writing task is on the communicative ability of the candidate. The purposes for writing are referential (and possibly phatic) and may include:
• carrying out certain transactions: making arrangements
• giving and obtaining factual information: personal, non-personal (places, times, etc.)
• establishing and maintaining social contacts: meeting people, extending and receiving invitations, proposing/arranging a course of action, exchanging information, views, feelings and wishes.
PET Task purpose

PET candidates need to be able to give information, report events, and describe people, objects and places as well as convey reactions to situations, express dreams, hopes, ambitions, pleasure. The focus of the Part 1 sentence transformation task is on the identification and accurate production of the target structure. Part 2 is a guided Writing task with a communicative purpose. Purposes are mainly referential but sometimes emotive and/or phatic. Part 3 comprises a choice of extended Writing tasks. The introduction of choice (from March 2004) has meant that the exam better reflects the range of Writing texts that PET-level students are currently producing in the ESOL classroom. For one of the tasks, candidates are asked to create a story from a title or an initial sentence.
FCE Task purpose

At FCE level, tasks are usually referential in orientation, and sometimes conative. Less often is the focus emotive and only occasionally is phatic use of language required. However, as language for conative purposes is often a required dimension of the compulsory task in Part 1, language used for this purpose can be considered as a differentiating feature from the level below. In Part 2, conative use of language is currently required in a number of questions but not all. Conative purpose makes an appearance for the first time in the Main Suite in some of the FCE Writing tasks.

In Part 1 (Q1), candidates are required to write a compulsory transactional letter which may be formal or informal, in response to a request for action or to initiate action. The range of functions of this letter may include: providing information, requesting information, giving opinions, agreeing and disagreeing, making complaints, correcting erroneous information, making suggestions, stating preferences, giving reasons.

In Part 2 (Q2–4) candidates may be asked to write a letter of application, an article, a composition, an informal letter, report or story. Each of these text-types is described more fully below.

letter of application: The letter of application will probably be for a job (of a temporary or part-time nature). Since candidates will probably not have any work experience, the jobs are normally suitable for a school leaver, e.g. temporary holiday jobs. Referential and conative language is often required.

article: The question makes reference to where the article will be published. This information, together with an indication of the magazine’s readership defines the style of the article. Often, the question includes an ‘authentic’ announcement from the magazine itself and the request for articles may take the form of a competition. The main purpose is to inform, but the candidate will also have to interest the reader.

composition: Candidates write a composition in answer to a question, or give their opinion on a statement. Always written for a teacher, the context and reason for writing is usually established through reference to a previous class activity. Compositions are generally intended to inform.
**informal letter:** This letter is non-transactional and might involve sharing an experience or explaining feelings or personal opinions, providing information, giving a choice or making suggestions.

**report:** The focus of the report is factual and impersonal, although candidates are often asked to include their own recommendations or suggestions.

**story:** A short story is normally written for a magazine or anthology for which the typical reader might be a fellow-student. The immediate purpose of the story is to engage the interest of the reader.

In Part 2 (Q5 a and b – the set-text question), questions are of a universal nature and commonly focus on such aspects as action, character and place. The five texts include at least one set of short stories (candidates are asked to write about one of these stories). The tasks require one of the types of writing given above, i.e. article, letter, composition or report, and usually involve both informational and conative use of language.
CAE Task Purpose

At CAE level comprehension and processing of the input texts is essential for successful completion of the Part 1 task. The objectives of task, or combination of tasks, that might form the basis of Part 1 are, for example:

- finding differences between one text and another (correcting an inaccurate newspaper report compared with an accurate eye-witness account)
- transferring from one register to another (e.g. writing a formal complaint on the basis of informal notes)
- collating different pieces of information in order to come up with one piece of writing (e.g. writing a report on possible locations)
- transferring from one format to another (e.g. expressing information from a table/questionnaire in an article or a report).

These Part 1 tasks involve mainly referential and conative use of language. Boyd (2005) argues that:

there is a cline of persuasion in Part 1 CAE tasks ranging from overtly and strongly persuading someone to do something (for the writer or a general body), to a milder form where the writer is merely trying to persuade the audience to accept his or her point of view or simply that the writer has a case.

Three elements feed into the strength of persuasion: what the writer wants to achieve (e.g. action or agreement); who the persuasion benefits; what form the persuasion takes.
(a) The strongest form of persuasion is where the writer wants action and presents this in the form of a proposal. This is perhaps where the writer is most involved and most concerned about the outcome.
(b) Slightly weaker is persuasion by describing a problem(s) and suggesting a solution or resolution that the audience should consider.
(c) A more subtle form of persuasion is persuading by describing something in an enticing way – but clearly wanting a positive response, e.g. an invitation.
(d) At the opposite end of the scale to (a) is where the writer merely wants the audience to accept his or her view and presents that view in an article. In
this case, the writer has no personal involvement with the audience and, as no overt response is required, this could be said to be the mildest form of persuasion.

Boyd (2005) thus argues that persuasion is not only a distinctive element in all the nine Part 1 tasks she surveyed but is in fact the focus of the tasks.

Part 2 covers a range of task types, such as articles, reports and leaflets, proposals, character references, text for guidebooks, reviews, etc. and includes a work-oriented task as the last of the four questions. Candidates must be aware of the need to adopt an appropriate style, layout and register for the text type of each Writing task since the overall aim of the task is to have a positive effect on the target reader. These tasks normally involve conative use of language as well as referential use.

The work-oriented task in Question 5 is aimed at candidates with some experience of the workplace rather than candidates with specialist business knowledge. Candidates are unlikely to be able to do the task well if they have just followed a course of business study but not had any significant work experience.
CPE Task purpose

CPE Part 1 is compulsory and candidates are asked to write an article, an essay, a letter or a proposal in response to instructions and a short text or texts which may be supported by a visual. All questions in this part have a discursive focus. For example, candidates may be required to defend or attack a particular argument or opinion, compare or contrast aspects of an argument, explain a problem and suggest a solution, or make recommendations having evaluated an idea.

In Part 2, candidates choose one from four tasks, one of which offers three set-text options. Candidates are able to select the task and topic which best suits their interests or which they think they can perform best on. The focuses are mainly referential but some also involve conative use of language and occasionally emotive use of language is called for. Candidates are expected to be able to produce the following text types for this part of the Writing paper:

article: An article will usually be activated by a central idea which provides a point or purpose to the writing or reading of the article. Referential and conative uses of language are usually involved.

letter: An example would be a letter to a newspaper giving an opinion and making a point. The purpose of the task, simulated by the input given and further developed with the candidate’s own ideas, is usually referential but sometimes involves a conative dimension.

report: Candidates are given an appropriate prompt, in response to which they then have to produce a report for a specified audience, which could be a superior, e.g. a line manager at work, or a peer group, e.g. colleagues. A report will involve candidates in giving information, describing, analysing, summarising, hypothesising, etc. and requires candidates to draw upon their ability to persuade the specified audience. Compared to some of the other formats in Part 2 this task invariably involves conative use of language.

proposal: A proposal has a similar format to the report but contains an added element of making recommendations for discussion. The proposal is not used for set texts. An example of a proposal would be a bid for funds for a project defined in the task, and
would entail outlining the way the funds would be spent, the benefits which would accrue, and the way progress would be monitored and evaluated if the bid were to be successful. A proposal in Part 2 will not have as a main focus the discursive requirement. It will rely more on the presentation of ideas and recommendations rather than a justification of and argument for a particular point of view, although justification could be involved in terms of persuasion. Thus both conative and referential use of language is often required.

**review:** A review of a book, film, concert or play should be informative and interesting as well as draw on skills such as evaluating, summarising, describing, comparing/contrasting, drawing conclusions. Emotive as well as referential uses of language may be called for.

**set texts:** The set-text option in Part 2 consists of three tasks based on the set reading texts, as specified in the Examination Regulations issued every year. This option is intended to encourage extended reading (an intended washback feature) as a basis for the enrichment of language study, and a variety of texts is included in the list of prescribed titles. Questions on set texts may use the following types: article, essay, letter, report, review. This task largely requires referential use of language.

**essay:** The essay in Part 2 only appears in the set-text question. The essay should be complete in itself and be united by a central concept which provides a purpose to the writing and reading of the essay.
Knowledge of criteria

Weir (2005) points out that, as well as having a clear idea of what they are expected to do in the task and how to set about this, candidates should also be fully aware which criteria are to be used in the marking. This will have an effect on planning and monitoring in the cognitive processing involved in task completion. Published information about how the tasks are scored, including criteria for correctness, and procedures used for scoring, are provided in the Cambridge ESOL Examination Handbooks. The handbooks for each examination include details of the General Mark Scheme (GMS) for each level and examples of Task Specific Mark Schemes (TSMS) which relate to specific questions. In combination, these mark schemes address what is expected of candidates at each level. An adequate performance at each level is further explained through the Cambridge ESOL Common Scale for Writing (CSW). The scale attempts to aid the production of a framework of descriptor bands including key criteria for the assessment of writing across exams at levels already specified by the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe 2001).

Cambridge Common Scale for Writing

The user-oriented Common Scale for Writing, as it appears in the revised FCE Handbook, for example, is reproduced here together with accompanying explanatory text. The Cambridge ESOL Common Scale for Writing has been developed to allow users to:

- interpret levels of performance in the Cambridge tests from beginner to advanced
- identify typical performance qualities at particular levels
- locate performance in one examination against performance in another.

The Common Scale is designed to be useful to test candidates and other test users (e.g. admissions officers or employers). The description at each level of the Common Scale is not intended as a specification for the test content, but rather aims to provide a brief, general description of the nature of written language ability at a particular level in real-world contexts. In this way the wording offers an easily understandable
description of performance which can be used, for example, in specifying requirements to language trainers, formulating job descriptions and specifying language requirements for new posts.

Cambridge ESOL Common Scale Levels for Writing

LEVEL MASTERY C2 (CEFR)
CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH (CPE):

Fully operational command of the written language
• Can write on a very wide range of topics.
• Is able to engage the reader by effectively exploiting stylistic devices such as sentence length, variety and appropriacy of vocabulary, word order, idiom and humour.
• Can write with only very rare inaccuracies of grammar or vocabulary.
• Is able to write at length organising ideas effectively.

LEVEL EFFECTIVE OPERATIONAL PROFICIENCY C1 (CEFR)
CERTIFICATE IN ADVANCED ENGLISH (CAE):

Good operational command of the written language
• Can write on most topics.
• Is able to engage the reader by using stylistic devices such as sentence length, variety and appropriacy of vocabulary, word order, idiom and humour though not always appropriately.
• Can communicate effectively with only occasional inaccuracies of grammar and vocabulary.
• Is able to construct extended stretches of discourse using accurate and mainly appropriate complex language which is organisationally sound.

LEVEL VANTAGE B2 (CEFR)
FIRST CERTIFICATE IN ENGLISH (FCE):

Generally effective command of the written language
• Can write on familiar topics.
• Shows some ability to use stylistic devices such as variety and appropriacy of vocabulary and idiom though not always appropriately.
• Can communicate clearly using extended stretches of discourse and some complex language despite some inaccuracies of grammar and vocabulary.
• Can organise extended writing which is generally coherent.

LEVEL THRESHOLD B1 (CEFR)
PRELIMINARY ENGLISH TEST (PET):
Limited but effective command of the written language
• Can write on most familiar and predictable topics.
• Can communicate clearly using longer stretches of discourse and simple language despite relatively frequent inaccuracies of grammar or vocabulary.
• Can organise writing to a limited extent.

LEVEL WAYSTAGE A2 (CEFR)
KEY ENGLISH TEST (KET):
Basic command of the written language
• Can write short basic messages on very familiar or highly predictable topics possibly using rehearsed or fixed expressions.
• May find it difficult to communicate the message because of frequent inaccuracies of grammar or vocabulary.

In addition to the criteria, the front covers of Main Suite Examination Question Papers carry details of marks. The KET Reading and Writing question paper informs candidates that there are nine parts to the combined test (it does not distinguish between Reading and Writing sections) and that Questions 36–55 (in Parts 6, 7, and 8) carry one mark each and Question 56 in Part 9 carries five marks. PET separates information on the reading parts from that on the writing parts, showing: Questions 1-5 carry one mark each, Part 2 (Question 6) carries five marks and Part 3 (Question 7 or 8) carries fifteen marks. FCE, CAE and CPE Question Papers inform candidates that each part carries equal marks.
Weighting

Weighting occurs when a different number of maximum points are assigned to a test item, task or component in order to change its relative contribution in relation to other parts of a test. Weir (2005) points out that if different parts of the test are weighted differently then the timing or marks to be awarded should reflect this and any such differential weighting should be made clear to the test takers so that they can allocate their time accordingly, particularly in the macro-planning phase of processing. At the individual task level, if any of the marking criteria to be used in assessing a Writing task are to receive differential weighting, then candidates need to know this and allocate time and attention for monitoring their output accordingly.

Summary of weighting across Cambridge ESOL exams

At the lowest level, KET, the direct Writing tasks carry a greater weighting per question, but the greater number of questions overall for the more form-focused elements in the test mean that greater weighting is actually given to these microlinguistic elements. By PET level, the direct tasks are weighted more highly, putting the emphasis in the test overall on productive writing. In FCE, CAE and CPE all tasks are equally weighted as are the criteria of assessment employed to evaluate them, so this parameter (along with input type and nature of information) does not contribute to any differentiation between these higher levels of ability.

Weighting of tasks in Cambridge ESOL Main Suite examinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examination</th>
<th>Parts</th>
<th>Weighting Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KET</strong></td>
<td>Parts 6–9</td>
<td>are unequally weighted. Part 6 consists of 5 questions (Q36–40), Part 7 consists of 10 questions (Q41–50), Part 8 consists of 5 questions (Q51–55) and Part 9 consists of one question (Q56). Each item carries one mark, except for the Part 9 question which is marked out of 5. This gives a maximum total of 60 marks (Reading and Writing combined), which is weighted to a final mark out of 50, representing 50% of total marks for the whole examination (including Reading).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PET</strong></td>
<td>Parts 1–3</td>
<td>are unequally weighted. Part 1 consists of 5 questions (Q1–5), Part 2 consists of 1 question (Q6) and Part 3 consists of 1 question (Q7 or Q8). Questions 1-5 carry one mark each. Question 6 is marked out of 5; and Question 7/8 is marked out of 15. This gives a maximum total of 25 which represents 25% of total marks for the whole examination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FCE</strong></td>
<td>Parts 1 and 2 are equally weighted. Each question in the paper carries equal marks (20 marks spread over five band levels per question). The maximum total for both parts is 40 which constitutes 20% of the examination total.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAE</strong></td>
<td>Parts 1 and 2 are equally weighted. Each question in the paper carries equal marks. The first examiner’s total mark for both parts is out of 10 which is double weighted, i.e. a mark out of 20.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The second examiner’s total mark for both parts is out of 10 which is double weighted, i.e. a mark out of 20.
The maximum total number of marks from both examiners is 40 which constitutes 20% of the examination total.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parts 1 and 2 are equally weighted. Each question in the paper carries equal marks. (20 marks spread over five band levels per question). The maximum total for both parts is 40 which constitutes 20% of the examination total.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Text length**

Text length potentially has an important effect in terms of the executive resources that will be called into play in cognitive processing. In general, the longer the text candidates have to produce, the greater the language, content knowledge, organisational and monitoring metacognitive abilities that might be required in processing. If short texts are not making the demands on these resources that occur in real-life situations cognitive validity is compromised.

**Summary of text length across Cambridge ESOL exams**

In KET and PET candidates are not sufficiently proficient to be able to cope with extended direct Writing tasks, though attempts are made to encourage them in this direction. The minimally sufficient length for production of written text that can be considered a test of direct writing is reached in PET Part 3 but not Parts 1 and 2. In FCE, CAE and CPE candidates are expected to produce text of a sufficient length to ensure that all appropriate generic criteria can be applied. All pieces of written work in these examinations meet the stipulations for a direct Writing task, i.e. all require texts of a length that far exceed the minimal requirement for valid assessment as suggested by Hamp-Lyons (1990).

**Text length in Cambridge ESOL Main Suite examinations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam</th>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Task Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KET</strong></td>
<td>Part 6</td>
<td>Candidates are expected to supply five items of vocabulary.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 7</td>
<td>Candidates are expected to supply one word for each gap.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 8</td>
<td>Candidates have to write between five and ten words filling in five gaps on a form or set of notes.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 9</td>
<td>The output text could be a note, postcard, or e-mail of between 25 to 35 words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PET</strong></td>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td>Candidates are expected to supply no more than three words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 2</td>
<td>Candidates are expected to write the task within the word limit stipulated (35–45 words).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 3</td>
<td>Candidates are expected to produce about 100 words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Expectation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCE</td>
<td>In both parts the candidates are expected to produce between 120–180 giving an overall word length of between 240–360 words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAE</td>
<td>In both parts the candidates are expected to produce approximately 250 words giving an overall word length of 500 words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPE</td>
<td>In both parts the candidates are expected to produce between 300–350 words giving an overall word length of between 600 and 700 words.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In general there is an increase of about 100 words between each of the first three levels if one takes the minimum amount required as the benchmark. The upper word limit at FCE is substantially greater than that which is expected of KET and PET candidates. There is also substantial difference between the minimum required at CAE and at FCE. Longer pieces of writing will in themselves add to the cognitive pressures on the writer.
Time constraints

In writing, test constructors are concerned with the time available for task completion: speed at which processing must take place; length of time available to write; and the number of revisions/drafts allowed (process element). However, considerations such as time constraints and reliability issues make longer, process-oriented tests impractical in most situations.

Weir (2005) points out that the texts we ask candidates to produce obviously have to be long enough for them to be scored in a valid manner. If we want to establish whether a student can organise a written product into a coherent whole, length is obviously a key factor. Issues associated with the allocation of time are inevitably related to the number of tasks in a Writing test. This raises the concept of information yield. More tasks, it could be argued, will produce more useful information about the candidate’s ability. Weigle (2002) argues that there are validity arguments for both enlarging and limiting the number of tasks presented to a candidate in a Writing test. A greater number of tasks offers the candidate more choice and an opportunity to demonstrate their best work. Conversely, many short and easily written tasks may well be less challenging and less representative of the types of writing students encounter in their respective fields of study or work. In the final analysis, the number of tasks and the time given over to those tasks will depend on the proficiency of the candidate and the level of the examination. ‘To discriminate between higher levels of writing proficiency, therefore, it may make sense to provide fewer longer tasks rather than more shorter tasks’ (Weigle 2002:102–3).

Henning (1991:288) contends that though in general reliability is improved through providing more time and by sampling across a range of tasks and increasing the number of raters, any improvement in reliability soon reaches a point of diminishing returns.

These considerations have affected time allocation in Cambridge ESOL examinations. The aim is that there should be sufficient time available for candidates to produce a situationally and interactionally authentic written product appropriate to level. These parameters of time and length are always systematically checked at the trialling stage.
Summary of time constraints across Cambridge ESOL exams

Although the overall time available for the whole test is printed on the front of each question paper, the time which should be spent on each Main Suite task is not specified on the question test paper. Centre invigilators and test administrators are expected to adopt a non-interventionist stance, as time management is seen as the responsibility of the test taker. Despite this, candidates sitting Main Suite examinations do receive ten- and five-minute warnings from the administrators.

From the timings shown in the table below it is clear that as language proficiency increases, the time available for completion of Main Suite tasks extends. The speed at which any processing takes place and the length of time given over to writing, by necessity, need to increase with improving language ability and with the demands placed upon candidates. Moreover, the texts that candidates are expected to produce need to be long enough for them to be marked in a reliable manner. If we want to establish whether a candidate can organise a written product into a coherent whole, length – and time available – are key factors. FCE, CAE and CPE examinations require that candidates produce between 240 and 700 words in one-and-a-half to two hours; KET and PET examinations require (for the continuous Writing tasks) that candidates produce between 25 and 100 words. In the case of CAE and CPE, additional time is given to candidates to reflect the greater complexity of the tasks set and the longer pieces of writing required as output.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KET</th>
<th>PET</th>
<th>FCE</th>
<th>CAE</th>
<th>CPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70 minutes (including Reading Test)</td>
<td>90 minutes (including Reading Test)</td>
<td>90 minutes</td>
<td>120 minutes</td>
<td>120 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At FCE the time available is dedicated time for the Writing tasks alone rather than time being shared with the Reading tasks as in KET and PET. There is a substantial increase in the amount of time available at CAE and CPE. This increase in time allocation matches the increase in length of writing output.
**Writer–reader relationship**

Hyland (2002:5) suggests three general approaches to the teaching and researching of writing which focus on:

- the *products* of writing by analysing texts in a variety of ways (e.g. Systemic Functional Linguistics, Discourse and Genre Analysis)
- the *writer* and the processes employed to generate textual output
- the nature and role that *readers* and *social community* play in writing, i.e. writing as social interaction and writing as social construction.

In language teaching and testing, we have moved on from the perspective of those theoretical linguists who restrict their attention to form and treat texts as autonomous objects and ignore completely the dimensions of communication in real-world contexts. For researchers like Hyland (2002:22–48) communicative writing is viewed from a different paradigm and most usefully seen as interactive and socially constructed, as well as cognitive, i.e. concerned with the orientation of both the reader and writer (see also Hamp-Lyons and Kroll 1997). We have discussed the cognitive approach in relation to the individual writer in detail in Chapter 3, so in this chapter we will broaden our perspective to the social context and consider reader-oriented approaches which help explain the influences outside the individual that clarify problems and solutions and shape writing.

The reader-oriented dimension of writing can be thought of in terms of social interaction and social construction:

**Writing as social interaction**

Writing viewed as interaction between writers and readers adds a communicative dimension. Nystrand (1989:75) sees writing as developing text in accordance with what the reader is likely to know or expect and reading as a process of predicting text in line with what is assumed to be the writer’s purpose. Both parties presume an ability on the part of the other to make sense of what is written or read. The reader or audience is, according to Grabe and Kaplan (1996:207), critical to the generation of text and meaning. Ede and Lunsford (1984) describe two models of audience: *audience addressed* and *audience invoked*. Audience addressed refers to the real or intended
readership definable by the writer who exists apart from the text. Audience invoked is a fictitious readership invoked by the reader for a rhetorical purpose.

It is clear that a notion of audience – the taught reader will have a profound impact on the discourse of the written product. Grabe and Kaplan list five factors (‘parameters of audience influence’) they consider to be responsible for constraining decisions taken by the writer and which have implications for textual variation:

1. The numerical size of the readership, that is, the number of persons expected to read the text.
2. The degree to which the readership is either known or unknown.
3. The status of the reader.
4. The extent of shared background knowledge possessed by the readership.
5. The extent of specific topical knowledge both reader and writer share.

Expressivists, cognitivists and interactionists: views of audience

For expressivists, the audience is a construction of the writer (Ede and Lunsford 1984) because, essentially, writing is for its own sake. Clearly, this might be difficult to support in an L2 situation in which writers very often write in real-world contexts for specific audiences and specific purposes (although this said, the audience is often the teacher). The extent to which this mainly L1 approach to teaching writing may be relevant relates to the make-up of the Cambridge ESOL candidature. The candidature is predominantly young in KET and PET (approximately 70 per cent of the test-taking population are under 20). In KET and PET opportunities are provided for candidates to use their own experience and tasks which for the most part involve only knowledge telling, narrative or description.

The issue of audience is complicated for cognitivists and interactionists. Both recognise the importance of anticipating the informational and linguistic needs of the audience. However, English as a Second Language (ESL) reading research literature makes it clear that the relationship between reader and text is extremely complex (Carrell et al 1988) and as a consequence text is often open to multiple interpretation.

Social interactionists see the writer as an ‘outsider’ to the discourse community with the reader being all powerful. This is particularly appropriate in EAP tests in which the marker can mirror the role of academic tutor (as in IELTS). However, in most of the Cambridge ESOL range this is not the case. For these tests, the marker is not the
invoked or notional audience indicated by the task rubric even though he or she effectively makes the assessment decision about the writing and is constrained by having to mark to a specific standard for assessment purposes. However, particularly in FCE, CAE and CPE it is considered essential that the candidate is able to address properly the audience specified by the task. The marker is required to assess a candidate’s performance for its effectiveness in doing this.

**Writing as social construction**

Writing as a social activity is a view which has become widely accepted and is premised on social structures (Cooper 1986:336). Hyland (2002:69) argues that in an attempt to legitimise their sense of membership and create identity through discourse, writers characteristically locate themselves and their own ideas with respect to other ideas and texts within their communities. He notes that despite reservations in the research literature, the notion of *discourse community*, the location of writing in wider social and discursive practice, has nevertheless become a useful way of making connections between writers, texts and readers on which there is now a fair degree of agreement and one that has proved important to research in the field.

Hyland (2002:69) suggests that all acts of writing are part of wider social and discursive practices which assume certain things about relationships between those involved and how practices are carried out. Whether a personal or a business letter or an email, each has conventional ways of transmitting content and addressing readers, which, Hyland argues, are based on legitimate ways of conducting such relationships. He notes that for a text to have an appropriate impact on the target reader the writer has to gauge accurately the reader’s capacity for interpreting it and probable reaction to it.

Hyland (2002:72) gives the example of a thank-you letter written by a child to his or her friend and argues that this will probably differ from one written to an older relation who is not well known to the writer, in terms of what is disclosed about self, level of formality, amount, if any, of deference and whether topic elaboration is needed to achieve common ground.

Hayes (1996:5) similarly emphasises the social dimension of writing noting that it is a social artifact conducted in a social context, constrained by social convention
and influenced by our own personal history of production in such social interaction and by our exposure to the writing of others.

In English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) examinations in the Cambridge examinations, there is a clear expectation that the norms of the relevant discourse community are observed. Thus in IELTS the relevance and adequacy of content, the organisation of ideas and appropriate register are regarded as important criteria to be met in completing test tasks just as in academic life (see Bridgeman and Carlson 1983, Horowitz 1991, Weir 1983). For its General English examinations, the criteria employed are generic across levels and cover the criteria that examination stakeholders in society at large regard as important. Appropriate criteria have been established for these more general Writing tasks in the Main Suite examinations through extensive discussion with the discourse community of teachers and users of test information (see Weir and Milanovic 2003).

At higher levels, there is a progressive need to address the wider social and discursive practices identified by Hyland, for example in terms of context, purpose, audience and genre. At all levels (with the exception of KET) the effect of the writing on the reader is taken into account in the marking.

**Summary of writer–reader relationship across Cambridge ESOL levels**

Efforts are made to address this important aspect of writing in Cambridge ESOL Writing examinations by providing candidates with an audience and social context in the ways described in the table below.

**The writer–reader relationship in Cambridge ESOL Main Suite examinations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| KET  | In view of the divergent KET candidature, which comprises students at school and college, and general adult learners, material is accessible to the younger learner (i.e. not too cognitively demanding for a 14-year-old) and reasonably appealing (i.e. not puerile) to an adult.  
Part 9  
The writer communicates a written message of an authentic type to an intended target reader (friend). |
| PET  | Again, in view of the divergent PET candidature, material is accessible to the younger learner (i.e. not too cognitively demanding for a 14-year-old) and reasonably appealing (i.e. not puerile) to an adult.  
Part 2  
The task involves a defined and named reader.  
Part 3  
The target audience (defined in the task) tends to be appropriate to both a school-age focus (14–16) or |


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Task Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FCE</td>
<td>In Part 1, the writer must be aware that the overall aim of the task is to achieve a positive effect on the target reader and write in a style (appropriacy of register and format) appropriate to that reader. The different task types in Part 2 are intended to provide frameworks for the candidates so that they can put together ideas on a topic with a reader in mind. For example: A composition is always written for a teacher. An article would be written for a magazine for which the reader may be someone with a similar interest to the writer or, as in the case of a college magazine, be in the writer's peer group. A report could be written for a superior (e.g. a teacher) or a peer group (club members, colleagues) A letter of application could be written to an individual or a formal reader such as an employer. An informal letter would always be written for a known reader, e.g. a pen friend. A story would be written for a magazine (or anthology) for which the typical reader might be a fellow-student. The target reader in the set text question is defined as someone who may not have read the book in order to encourage adequate reference to the text which the candidate has read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAE</td>
<td>As with FCE, task types in Part 1 vary and may include formal letters, informal letters, reports, articles, notes or any combination of these. Scope is given to the candidate to assess and define their own relationship to the target reader. Like FCE, Part 2 offers a range of different task types: A letter would not be a personal letter to a friend as this would not generate CAE level language. A proposal or a report is predicated on there being a likely reason for the target reader to elicit the candidate’s opinion, i.e. who wants the report/proposal and why is both clear and convincing to the candidate. A competition entry would require candidates to persuade the ‘judges’ who are the target readership. A contribution to a guidebook, etc. should be appropriate for the intended readership of the text. A work-related task might be addressed to a superior (requesting some personal development fromboss e.g. to work abroad); management (making suggestions for the department in which the candidate may work e.g. more equipment); peers (reporting back on a particular work experience e.g. attendance at a trade fair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPE</td>
<td>Candidates are expected to write within an appropriate context in an appropriate register and to demonstrate sensitivity to their audience. Part 1 task types include: A letter which is addressed to a target reader who would need to understand the writer’s point of view, for example, an editor selecting appropriate responses for inclusion in a newspaper; a store manager receiving a letter of complaint. An article which is written for a specified audience which may be an editor of a newspaper, magazine or newsletter. A proposal, which is similar to a report and is written for a specified audience. The proposal/report readership more often than not is a superior (e.g. a boss at work) or a peer group (e.g. one’s colleagues); An essay which will be structured to suit a particular audience, for example a tutor. The task types for Part 2 are similar to those of Part 1 and the potential readers for Part 2 would be the same as for Part 1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a gradual progression through the levels from personally known (e.g. friend or teacher) to specified audiences with whom candidates are not personally
acquainted (e.g. an editor or magazine readers). Addressing a broader range of audience is required between PET and FCE as candidates only write to people they know personally in KET and PET. By PET, the candidates also need to take greater account of their audience by considering what the potential reader is likely to know about the subject, the amount of explanation required and what can be left implicit. By CAE, candidates are no longer writing to people they know personally. A slightly wider range of unacquainted audience distinguishes CAE and CPE. At these two levels candidates must decide what sorts of evidence the reader is likely to find persuasive. With the exception of KET, the effect of the writing on the reader is taken into account in the marking.

This document is a summary of Chapter 4 (Context Validity) of Shaw and Weir (2006) Examining Writing. The full chapter can be read in Volume 26 of Studies in Language Testing.
References


