**English Level 1 Writing practice paper: guidance for centres**

**NCFE** **Level 1 Functional Skills Qualification in English**

**QN: 603/5058/1**

**Overview**

This guide has been created to support centres preparing learners for assessment in NCFE Level 1 Functional Skills Qualification in English (603/5058/1). The information relates to the Level 1 Writing practice paper and mark scheme, which can be found on the NCFE website [here](https://www.ncfe.org.uk/qualification-search/qualification-detail/ncfe-level-1-functional-skills-qualification-in-english-588). The guide should be used in conjunction with the question paper and mark scheme. The marked samples included in this document correspond to Activity 1 in the question paper and mark scheme. Only Activity 1 from the practice paper is included in the guide, as both activities are equally weighted.

**Mark scheme and skills descriptors**

The descriptors in the mark scheme indicate the different skills learners need to demonstrate in their written responses. The information below gives further details on how learners need to meet the skills descriptors; it will also provide some insight as to how marks have been allocated in the sample learner answers which follow.

**General guidance**

**Detail and content**

In tasks without a set word count, learners should aim to write over 100 words.

Learners should take care to address the full requirements of the task and check their work to ensure the written response covers **all** aspects of the question.

**Format, structure and language**

**Structure:** 1 mark is awarded for an appropriate beginning, middle and end.

**Language:** 1 mark will be awarded if it is appropriate for the needs of the task.

**Format:** a maximum of 2 marks are awarded; each task has its own requirements depending on the text type, as follows:

* **Advertisement features**

(up to 2 marks available for formatting)

* **heading**
* sub-heading
* strapline
* bullet points
* attribution
* columns.

As a minimum, advertisement features **must** have a heading to achieve 1 mark. Learners will be given an additional mark for including one of the other format features listed.

* **Emails**

(up to 2 marks available for formatting)

* **recipient’s address**
* subject title
* salutation
* close (if the task is formal, the sender’s surname is required).
* **Letters**

(up to 2 marks available for formatting)

* **sender’s address**
* recipient's address
* date
* salutation
* close
* signature / sign-off.

The addresses are the most important components of the letter. A letter **must** include the sender’s address to access any marks.

* **Reports**

(up to 2 marks available for formatting)

* **heading**
* sub-headings
* bullet points
* indentation
* numbering.
* **Reviews**

(up to 2 marks available for formatting)

* **heading**
* sub-heading
* strapline
* bullet points
* attribution
* columns.

**Organisation**

Many level 1 learners do not write in paragraphs, or they write very short one or two sentence paragraphs. Learners should attempt to write paragraphs with more than two sentences and should be taught how to construct complex sentences. Paragraphs **and** some complex sentences are a requirement before even 1 of the 2 marks available can be awarded.

**Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)**

For top marks, examiners are looking for:

* **Accurate spelling**, including some ambitious / irregular words. Two-syllable words with double consonants, the doubling of consonants with suffixes, and verbs such as ‘would’ and ‘could’ should be correct. Errors are ‘one-off’ mistakes and are not repeated.
* **Punctuation used accurately**, including capital letters, full stops, question marks, exclamation marks, commas, and apostrophes. Meaning is clear.
* **Grammar used accurately and to good effect,** including accurate subject-verb agreement and verb tenses, accurate and effective syntax and sentence structure. Definite and indefinite articles are used accurately. Grammar is used to good effect.

The **minimum awardable** content for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) at level 1 includes:

* **Spelling** of many straightforward words is correct (including some with irregular prefixes and suffixes, as well as homophones). Errors may affect meaning.
* **Punctuation** at the start of sentences is correct. Commas usually used accurately in lists with occasional errors in clauses. Some inconsistent use of other punctuation marks. If learners use all lower case or block capitals throughout, no marks will be awarded. Errors may affect meaning.
* **Grammar**: basic grammatical constructions are accurate (use of definite and indefinite articles; subject-verb agreement). Errors may affect meaning.

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| **Activity 1: Write an email [20 marks]** |
| This notice in your workplace is inviting staff to apply for a grant to develop their skills.  Graphical user interface, text, application  Description automatically generated  Write an email to apply for the funding. In your email, you should:   * + describe the skills you want to develop   + explain how the grant will benefit you at work   + say how this will also benefit the workplace. |

**Sample marked learner responses**

**Learner A**

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| --- |
| To: jhayes@dint.biz  Subject: grant  Dear Sir or madam  I saw your advert today, i want to apply for the funding.  I want to develop my IT skills so I can do office work, i work shifts so have to fit training around that.  Also, because I need maths, training will help me get a better job.  I personally think it will also benefit the workplace to have the money to train people.  Kind regards  Jayden  *75 words*  **Marks available: 20**  **Marks awarded: 10** |

**Breakdown of marks awarded for** **learner A**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject content** | **Marks awarded** | **Rationale** |
| **Detail:**  the response is an appropriate length | **0/1** | There are 0 marks due to insufficient detail. One task on each paper will give a word count and learners must write within this given word count to get the detail mark. In this case no word count was given, but the learner has written just 75 words. Answers below 100 words are generally considered to be self-penalising as they do not allow learners to demonstrate a range of skills. The detail mark will usually not be awarded for an answer below 100 words. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Content** | **2/4** | The response is scant, but it clearly hits the first bullet point in the question. The second and third bullet points have not been clearly addressed. There is some misreading of the scenario. The workplace is asking for a comment on how the grant will be of benefit at work and the learner writes suggesting that new skills will enable them to get a different job. This demonstrates misunderstanding of the audience and purpose. |
| **Format, structure and language** | **3/4** | Language is fit for purpose and the audience. The email address is correct, there is an appropriate subject heading and the email has a beginning, middle and end. The learner cannot know the gender of the addressee, so ‘Dear Sir’ or ‘Madam’ are awardable. However, the email is formal, so the learner should have included the sender’s surname. |
| **Organisation** | **0/2** | There is possibly some attempt at paragraphing here but sentences tend to be compound or simple. There is one attempt at a complex sentence but very limited demonstration of these skills. |
| **Spelling** | **2/3** | No errors. However, as the learner wrote less than 100 words, they have demonstrated only limited range. Learners should aim to write more than 100 words in order to be able to access all the marks for SPaG. Responses that are less than 100 words are unlikely to demonstrate the range of skills needed and will usually not be awarded more than 2 marks for each component. |
| **Punctuation** | **1/3** | Commas are used in place of full stops, lower case ‘i’ is used for the personal pronoun and the subject title starts with lower case. |
| **Grammar** | **2/3** | No fundamental errors. However, as the learner wrote fewer than 100 words, they have not been able to demonstrate a range of accurate and effective sentence constructions. |

**Learner B**

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| To: [hayees@dint.biz](mailto:hayees@dint.biz)  Subject: advetisment  I am riting about your advetisment. I think the £1000 wood help me a lot. I am in my first job as I have only just left school. I am not sure which skills wood be best to work on right now but maybe ICT because I am working in an office. I think my workplace would like that I am trying to lern more.  Urs sincrly  R Ross  *73 words*  **Marks available: 20**    **Marks awarded: 7** |

**Breakdown of marks awarded for** **learner B**

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| **Subject content** | **Marks awarded** | **Rationale** |
| **Detail:**  the response is an appropriate length | **0/1** | There are 0 marks due to insufficient detail. Answers below 100 words are generally considered to be self-penalising as they do not allow learners to demonstrate a range of skills. The detail mark will usually not be awarded for an answer below 100 words. |
| **Content** | **2/4** | The response does not cover all aspects of the task. There is an attempt to address the first and third bullet points in the question but the comments are under-developed. There is some misunderstanding of the audience. |
| **Format, structure and language** | **2/4** | Language is appropriate for purpose and the audience. The email address is incorrect, which caps the potential mark at 2. The subject heading is not very clear; there is an introduction, but no conclusion; there is no salutation. |
| **Organisation** | **0/2** | One single paragraph cannot be awarded a mark. There are no complex sentences. |
| **Spelling** | **0/3** | There are several repeated errors, including some basic words. |
| **Punctuation** | **1/3** | There is no range demonstrated, however, beginnings and ends of sentences are correct. |
| **Grammar** | **2/3** | No fundamental errors. However, as the learner has written fewer than 100 words, there has been no opportunity to demonstrate the use of grammar ‘to good effect.’ |

**Learner C**

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| --- |
| To: jhayes@dint.biz  Subject: £1000 skills development grant  Dear J Hayes,  I’d like to apply for the grant as I want to improve my customer service skills. I know about a training course that takes a weekend and you do practical skills all weekend. The thing is it costs nearly £1000 and my boss can’t afford to send me. On top of that I need travel costs. It will help me because I want to give excellent service to customers, that will be good for the business too.  The company I work for is great to work for and the team are very helpful. I want to apply for a full-time job in the brasserry when it comes up and the training will help me get that.  Kind regards,  Louisa May  *127 words*  **Marks available: 20**  **Marks awarded: 16** |

**Breakdown of marks awarded for learner C**

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| **Subject content** | **Marks awarded** | **Rationale** |
| **Detail:**  the response is an appropriate length | **1/1** | There is sufficient detail. |
| **Content** | **3/4** | The response hits all the requirements of the brief but comments lack development. The question prompts are all briefly addressed: they wish to develop their ‘customer service skills’, this will ‘be good for the business’ and the grant will help them to apply for a ‘full-time job’. |
| **Format, structure and language** | **4/4** | All the expected elements are present: correct email address, appropriate subject heading, appropriate salutation and close, introduction and conclusion (though the conclusion is weak). Note that the salutation mix of Dear J Hayes and Kind regards or Best wishes would get 1 mark (out of the 2 marks available for formatting) as it is generally appropriate, although Dear Mr/Mrs Hayes would be more accurate. In formal letters, the close would need to be either Yours faithfully (with Dear Sir / Madam) or Yours sincerely (with a given name). |
| **Organisation** | **1/2** | There is an attempt to write in paragraphs and there are some complex sentences, which are mostly accurate. |
| **Spelling** | **3/3** | There is only one error (‘brasserry’). |
| **Punctuation** | **2/3** | A limited range is demonstrated, with the correct use of a hyphen and apostrophes for omission. Some sentences are missing commas, although a comma has been used correctly once. |
| **Grammar** | **3/3** | Sentences are accurate in terms of grammar use. |