**English Level 2 Writing practice paper: guidance for centres**

**NCFE** **Level 2 Functional Skills Qualification in English**

**QN: 603/5054/4**

**Overview**

This guide has been created to support centres preparing learners for assessment in NCFE Level 2 Functional Skills Qualification in English (603/5054/4). The information relates to the Level 2 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-2-functional-skills-qualification-in-english-187). 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**

In tasks without a set word count, learners should aim to write over 100 words to gain this 1 mark. In tasks with a set word count, only responses within the word limits will be awarded the mark.

**Content**

Learners should take care to address the full requirements of the task and check their work to ensure the answer written covers all aspects of the question. For top marks, responses must fully meet the needs and purpose of the brief, be appropriate for the given audience, and be detailed, communicating information clearly, coherently and effectively.

**Format and structure**

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

**Format:** a maximum of 2 marks are awarded; each document type has its own requirements, as follows:

* **Articles**

(up to 2 marks available for formatting)

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

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

* **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 both sender’s and recipient’s address to access the marks.

* **Reports**

(up to 2 marks available for formatting)

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

As a minimum, reports must have a heading to achieve one mark. Learners will be given one additional mark for inclusion of any other listed format feature.

**Language and Register**

Learners need to consider the audience for each task and tailor the level of formality accordingly. They should guard against writing anything overly informal.

**Organisation**

Many level 2 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 a complex sentence and use organisational markers correctly. Organisational markers include any word or phrase used to make the writing flow (then, also, not only, however, finally, to conclude, after that). Paragraphs **and** some complex sentences are a requirement before even 1 of the 3 marks available can be awarded.

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

For top marks at level 2, examiners are looking for:

* **Accurate spelling** (including specialist words, some uncommon words, words with complex sound / symbol relationships and words with unstressed syllables. Competence should be shown in the spelling of possessive pronouns, words with prefixes and suffixes and homophones). Errors are ‘one-off’ mistakes and are not repeated.
* **Wide range of punctuation used accurately** (this may include colons, commas, inverted commas, apostrophes and quotation marks) in a variety of sentence structures, used for effect.
* **Full range of grammar used accurately throughout**,which adds to the effectiveness of the document (including subject-verb agreement and consistent use of verb tense, definite and indefinite articles, as well as modality devices).

The **minimum awardable** content for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) at level 2 includes:

* **Spelling** of simple, everyday words, including some correct plurals, but there may be frequent errors with more complex words. Errors may affect meaning.
* **Punctuation** at the beginning and end of sentences is correct with some attempt at punctuating complex sentences. There may be some inconsistent use of other punctuation marks. Errors may affect meaning. If learners use lower case or block capitals throughout, no marks will be awarded for punctuation.
* **Grammar**: basic grammatical constructions are used accurately most of the time (including definite and indefinite articles). There may be some inaccuracies that affect meaning.

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| **Activity 1: Write a report [22 marks]** |
| There aren’t enough parking spaces for the people who come to your place of work.  You have been asked to write a report outlining the problems this causes. Your report should describe problems caused to staff, visitors and people in the local area. Make suggestions about how parking spaces should be allocated and prioritised.  Your report should be between 250–350 words. |

**Sample marked learner responses**

**Learner A**

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| Parking spaces at work  Parking today has become a real problem and so many of us drive to travel to work in our own vehicles instead of using public transport. this can lead to staff and visitors parking in the local area This leads to people not having access to their own homes which aint right  It also leads to disraption and acess problems for emergency vehichles like amblans and police  Staff parking is usually given priority as easy access to the workplace is seen as an important ‘perk’ as well as a right by some of those working here.  When considering parking for staff, senior management and those who come here full-time should be get a heads up over more junior and part time. Spaces for enior management could be highlited with names to stop no one else parking in there spots  Visitors could have specific spaces set aside for them which should also be named. these need to be kept free for visitors at all times.  Disabled parking spaces should be close to the building and have wheelchair access. This space should also be kept free specially for those who need it.  *194 words*  **Marks available: 22**  **Marks awarded: 9** |

**Breakdown of marks awarded for learner A**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject content** | **Marks awarded** | **Rationale** |
| **Detail:**  the response is an appropriate length | **0/1** | There are 0 marks because the response is too short. In this task, learners must write within the given word count (250-350 words) to get this mark. Learner A has written 194 words.  As at Level 1, when no word count is given 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** | **3/4** | The response hits most aspects of the brief but needs more development to get full marks. There is no discussion of the problems caused to visitors or staff. |
| **Format and structure** | **1/3** | There is a title and an introduction, but there is no real conclusion and there are no other formatting features present. |
| **Language** | **1/2** | Some aspects of language use are too informal for a report. |
| **Organisation** | **0/3** | There is some attempt at paragraphing; however, there are no correctly written complex sentences. |
| **Spelling** | **2/3** | There are some errors, but sense can be made of them, and use of other complex words compensates. |
| **Punctuation** | **0/3** | There are 0 out of 3 marks available. End of sentence punctuation is not always present and some sentences begin with lower case letters. |
| **Grammar** | **2/3** | There are no fundamental errors, but syntax is compromised in some sentences. A range of grammatical constructions are not used for effect within the response. |

**Learner B**

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| Parking situation at Kip Foods  The car park currently has space for 100 cars. Kip Foods currently employs 250 people. During weekdays there is a rush to get a space before 8.30.  Problems  Non workers are using the car park to use the bakery or the newsagents. Visitors sometimes park overninght and are still there when workers want to park in the morning. There have been arguments, dangerous parking, and a fight almost broke out one day. Staff are under enough stress at the minute with job cuts and doing longer shifts. The last thing they need is to come to work and have nowhere to park the car. It adds to stress. Lots of workers do car share but with the car park being short of more than a hunfred spaces, it doesn’t sort the issue.  Suggestions  Some of us at Kip got together to find some answers. We suggest that parking spaces should be allocated and certain people get prioritised. This would have to get reviewed every month. People with health issues or young children should get permits. Also people who car share. We also suggest:   * Put on a bus for local workers * Advertise car shares * Fine non workers for using the car park or clamp them   Overall  Overall action has to happen quickly to avoid more problems, even an accident. The situation can’t stay like this. Kip Food has to make changes happen quickly. Workers need to come to work and not be stressed about parking the car.  *251 words*  **Marks available: 22**  **Marks awarded: 17** |

**Breakdown of marks awarded for learner B**

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| **Subject content** | **Marks awarded** | **Rationale** |
| **Detail:**  the response is an appropriate length | **1/1** | There is 1 mark for sufficient length (251 words). |
| **Content** | **3/4** | This response is more detailed than Learner A’s, but it does not discuss problems caused to visitors or people in the local area. |
| **Format and structure** | **3/3** | There is a clear introduction and conclusion, a title, then there are subheadings and use of bullet points. |
| **Language** | **2/2** | Only one phrase (‘sort the issue’) is not entirely appropriate for a formal report. |
| **Organisation** | **1/3** | There is 1 mark out of 3 available. There is some attempt at paragraphing and a few correct complex sentences. There is one attempt to use an organisational marker (‘overall’). |
| **Spelling** | **3/3** | There are only a couple of minor errors. |
| **Punctuation** | **2/3** | Punctuation to demarcate sentences is correct. Some range has been demonstrated via the use of commas in listing and, in one instance, for defining a clause. The correct use of a colon and an apostrophe for omission place the response securely in the 2 mark band. |
| **Grammar** | **2/3** | There are no fundamental errors. However, there are some fragments in place of sentences (‘Also people who car share.’) and some clumsy sentence structures. |

**Learner C**

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| **Parking problem at the workplace** – a report by J Smith  Today, our work car park is not fit for purpose. It needs extensive repairs where there are holes in the tarmac, and there are not enough spaces. It’s not only used by warehouse staff, but all kinds of people use this car park. Visitors from out of town use it because it’s handy for the cafes, locals use it because it’s free and handy for work or shopping. Clearly the sign saying it’s private don’t work. When workers park in the streets around the office, this annoys people living in the area. We need to find a solution.  **Effect on workers of low spaces for parking**  The knock on effect of low spaces for parking is an unhappy work force. People are turning up late to work due to taking more than 15 minutes to park their car. It’s not clear who is parking there legitimately and who’s a visitor and there’s no controls so no one gets challenged. The car park also attracts crime as on more than one occasion staff’s cars have been broken into and valuables stolen.  **Solution**  First of all, there needs to be a proper system put in place for security. The old secutirty hut is still in place but the company needs to invest into paying someone to man this and monitor who comes and goes.  You need to allocate spaces properly and not leave it as first come first served basis. Allocate the spaces to staff on early and late shifts so they don’t have to stress about finding somewhere to park.  Some spaces should be prioritised for vulnerable staff. Also, staff who car share should be given priority places. If you reward car sharing more people will do it.  **Conclusion**  Finally, new parking spaces cannot just appear out of the blue, but with car-sharing, allocation of spaces and perhaps some working from home, we could come to a solution. Resolving the parking problem will mean less stress for everyone and a happier workforce and contented local people.  *345 words*  **Marks available: 22**  **Marks awarded: 22** |

**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 1 mark for sufficient length (343 words). Had the response exceeded the word count given (ie more than 350 words) then the Detail mark would not have been awarded. |
| **Content** | **4/4** | There are 4 out of 4 marks available. The response hits all the requirements of the brief. |
| **Format and structure** | **3/3** | All the required elements are present. Structure: an introduction and conclusion (1 mark). Format: a heading (1 mark) plus subheadings and an attribution (a maximum of 2 marks are available for format). |
| **Language** | **2/2** | Language is entirely appropriate for a formal report. |
| **Organisation** | **3/3** | There are 3 out of 3 marks available. Paragraphs are generally correct. There are several correct complex sentences and some organisational markers. |
| **Spelling** | **3/3** | There is only one error (‘secutirty’). |
| **Punctuation** | **3/3** | A range is demonstrated, with the correct use of hyphens and apostrophes for both possession and omission. Some sentences are missing commas, though a comma has been used correctly once. |
| **Grammar** | **3/3** | There are some subject / verb agreement errors (‘the sign…don’t work’); however, a range of sentences are used for effect with the use of imperatives as evidence of conscious crafting. |