


WRITING: SUCCESS CRITERIA

The following information aims to help teachers and students gain a better understanding of what candidates of English taking the Cambridge A2 Key for Schools exam need to do in order to progress and eventually pass the writing paper. The categories are based on the marking criteria for the Cambridge A2 Key for Schools exam. This information can be used by teachers when marking written work, or by students when peer- or self-assessing written work. They can be used to help learners set goals to advance their written skills, as well as to show learners what progress they have made.

Short message

The examples given in this table come from the example Solid, Good and Acing it! messages on the following pages.

	SOLID	GOOD	ACING IT! 
CONTENT			
Task fulfilment	Includes two things in the reply. The reader can understand them clearly.	Includes all three things in the reply. The reader can mostly understand them.	Includes all three things in the reply. The reader can understand them clearly.
Length	The message is 25 words or more.	As Solid.	As Solid.
COMMUNICATIVE ACHIEVEMENT			
Opening and closing	The message starts and ends appropriately, e.g. <i>Hi, / See you soon, / Bye for now,</i>	As Solid.	As Solid.
Functional phrases	Message includes phrases for describing likes, wants, inviting, suggesting, thanking, etc.	Message includes phrases for describing likes, wants, inviting, suggesting, thanking, etc. They are often correct.	Message includes phrases for describing likes, wants, inviting, suggesting, thanking, etc. They are usually correct.
Effort	The reader must sometimes try hard to understand the message.	The reader rarely tries hard to understand the message.	The reader can understand the message easily.
ORGANISATION			
Linking ideas	Uses simple linking words (e.g. <i>and, but</i>).	Uses simple linking words (e.g. <i>and, but</i>) correctly.	Uses simple linking words (e.g. <i>and, but</i>) correctly.
LANGUAGE			
Grammar	Uses simple grammar. Makes some errors.	Uses simple grammar, often correctly.	Uses simple grammar, usually correctly.
Vocabulary	Uses simple, everyday vocabulary.	Uses simple, everyday vocabulary, often correctly.	Uses simple, everyday vocabulary, usually correctly.

Short message task

Read this email from an English-speaking friend and the notes you have made.

You are meeting your friend Maxine tomorrow.

Write an email to Maxine.

Say:

- where you want to meet
- what time you want to meet
- what you want to do.

Write 25 words or more.

Example answer - Solid

I want to go shopping in the city tomorrow. I need buy a new dress because party. I'd like to meet you at 10. Okay?
Bye!

Examiner comments	
Content	Includes two things in the reply. The writer doesn't say where to meet. The reader can understand them all clearly. The message is 25 words or more.
Communicative achievement	The message ends appropriately but there's no introduction (e.g. <i>Hi Maxine</i>). The reader must try hard to understand the second sentence. The message includes useful phrases for communicating the message, e.g. <i>I want, I need, I'd like</i> .
Organisation	Includes <i>because</i> to say why the writer wants to buy a new dress.
Language	The vocabulary is correct. Some grammar is not correct, i.e. <i>I need buy, because party</i> .

Example answer - Good

Hello Maxine,
I'd like to buy a dress and some new shoes tomorrow. Let us meet at the department store. I can to arrive at 10am.
See you soon,

Examiner comments	
Content	Includes all three things in the reply. The reader can mostly understand them. The message is 25 words or more.
Communicative achievement	The message starts and ends appropriately (e.g. <i>Hello Maxine, / See you soon,</i>). The reader must try hard to understand the third sentence. The message includes useful phrases for communicating the message, e.g. <i>I'd like, Let us meet, I can</i>
Organisation	Includes <i>and</i> to say what the writer wants to do.
Language	The spelling of <i>shoes</i> is not correct. <i>Let's</i> is more common in a friendly message than <i>Let us</i> . <i>I can to arrive</i> is not correct.

Example answer - Acing it!

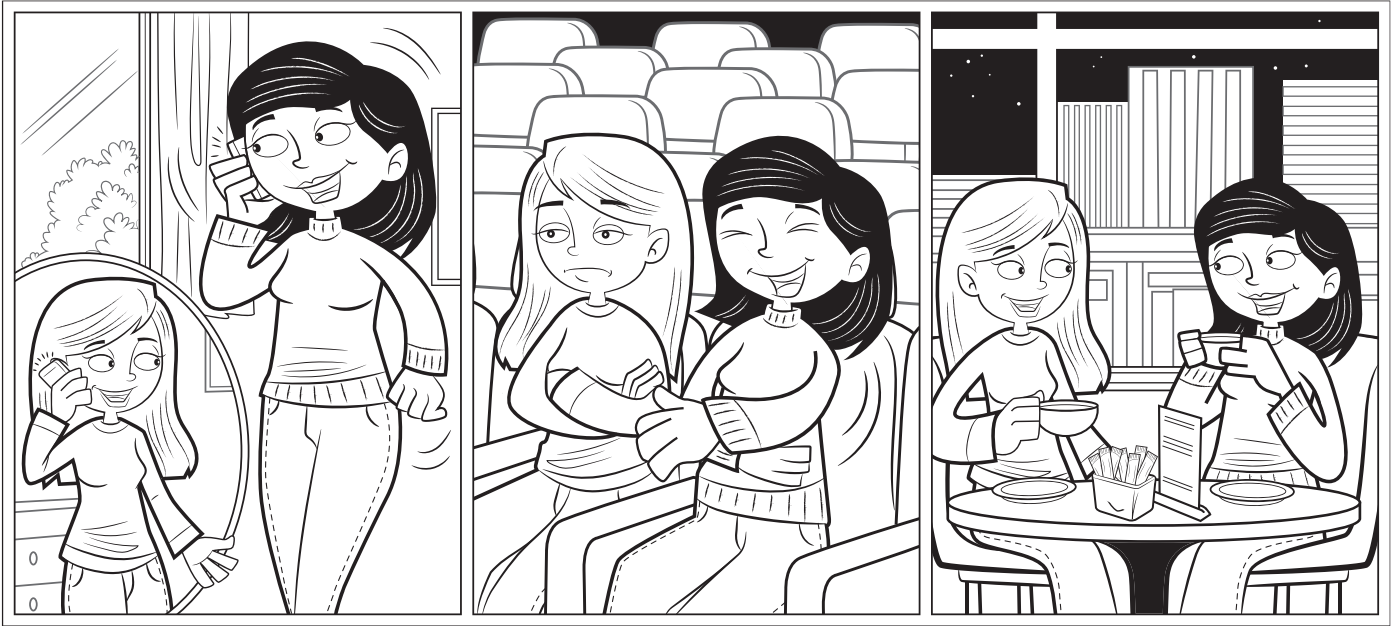
Hi Maxine,
Let's meet tomorrow at 10am. I'd like to go to the shopping centre because I need to buy a new dress for a party.
We can meet outside the coffee shop.
See you tomorrow!

Examiner comments	
Content	Includes all three things in the reply. The reader can understand them all clearly. The message is 25 words or more.
Communicative achievement	The message begins and ends appropriately (<i>Hi Maxine, / See you soon,</i>). The reader can understand the message clearly. The message includes useful phrases for communicating the message, e.g. <i>Let's meet, I'd like to, I need to, We can</i> .
Organisation	Includes <i>because</i> to say why the writer wants to go to the shopping centre.
Language	The vocabulary and grammar are correct.

Story

	SOLID	GOOD	ACING IT!
CONTENT			
Task fulfilment and relevance	Includes information about two of the pictures. The reader can understand them clearly.	Includes information about three of the pictures. The reader can mostly understand them.	Includes information about three of the pictures. The reader can understand them clearly.
Length	The story is 35 words or more.	As Solid.	As Solid.
COMMUNICATIVE ACHIEVEMENT			
Beginning, middle and end	The story has a beginning, middle and end.	As Solid.	As Solid.
Making the story interesting	Includes verbs and adjectives to make the story interesting.	Includes a few different verbs and adjectives to make the story interesting.	Includes a few different verbs, adjectives and adverbs to make the story interesting.
Effort	The reader must sometimes try hard to understand the message.	The reader rarely tries hard to understand the message.	The reader can understand the message easily.
ORGANISATION			
Linking	Uses simple linking words (e.g. <i>and</i> , <i>but</i> , <i>so</i>).	Uses simple linking words (e.g. <i>and</i> , <i>but</i> , <i>so</i>) correctly.	Uses simple linking words (e.g. <i>and</i> , <i>but</i> , <i>so</i>) correctly.
LANGUAGE			
Grammar	Uses simple grammar, e.g. the past simple tense. Makes some errors.	Uses simple grammar, often correctly, e.g. the past simple tense.	Uses simple grammar, usually correctly, e.g. the past simple tense.
Vocabulary	Uses simple, everyday vocabulary.	Uses simple, everyday vocabulary, often correctly.	Uses simple, everyday vocabulary, usually correctly.

Story task



Look at the three pictures.

Write the story shown in the pictures.

Write 35 words or more.

Example answer - Solid

Last Saturday, Lydia decide see film at the cinema. She went with frend called Ana. It was good film. They like it and felt happy. Later, they drank coffee in café. They talked for long time.

Examiner comments	
Content	Includes two pictures in the story but the writer doesn't talk about picture 1 or say that Lydia's friend didn't enjoy the film. The reader can understand the story clearly. The message is 35 words or more.
Communicative achievement	The story has a beginning, middle and end. The writer uses some different verbs and adjectives in the story.
Organisation	The writer links one sentence. It's possible to link more (e.g. <i>It was a good film and they liked it.</i>). The writer uses <i>Later</i> to give the order of actions.
Language	The vocabulary is mostly correct but <i>frend</i> is spelt wrongly. The writer makes mistakes with past simple verbs and articles, i.e. <i>call</i> , <i>the film</i> , <i>It was good film</i> , but some verbs are in the correct past simple tense.

Example answer - Good

Last week, Lydia wanted go to the cinema. She called Ana. They went together and watch a film. It was very funny. Lydia really enjoy it but Ana didn't like it. After the cinema, they were thersty. They drank coffee and talked.

Examiner comments	
Content	Includes all three pictures in the story. The reader can mostly understand them. The story is 35 words or more.
Communicative achievement	The story has a beginning, middle and end which the reader can mostly understand. It's not clear where Lydia and Ana had coffee. The writer uses different verbs and adjectives to tell the story.
Organisation	The writer uses <i>and</i> and <i>but</i> . It's also possible to use <i>so</i> (<i>Lydia wanted to go to the cinema so she called Ana</i>).
Language	There are some errors, e.g. <i>wanted go</i> , <i>watch</i> and <i>enjoy</i> are not in the past simple tense. <i>Thersy</i> should be <i>thirsty</i> .

Example answer - Acing it!

Last weekend, Lydia called her friend Ana. She invited Ana to the cinema. Ana say yes so they went to see a film together. It was very funny. Lydia really enjoyed it but Ana didn't like it. After, they went to a café and had a cup of coffee. They chatted together and have a fun time.

Examiner comments	
Content	Includes all three pictures. The reader can understand the story clearly. The message is 35 words or more.
Communicative achievement	There is a beginning, middle and end which the reader can understand clearly. The writer uses adverbs and adjectives to make the story interesting (<i>very funny</i> , <i>really enjoyed</i> , <i>a fun time</i>).
Organisation	The writer uses <i>so</i> , <i>and</i> to link ideas correctly. The writer also uses <i>After</i> to show the order of actions.
Language	The vocabulary and grammar are almost correct. There are two past simple errors (<i>say</i> , <i>have</i>). The writer uses some higher level vocabulary correctly (<i>invited her</i> , <i>chatted</i>).