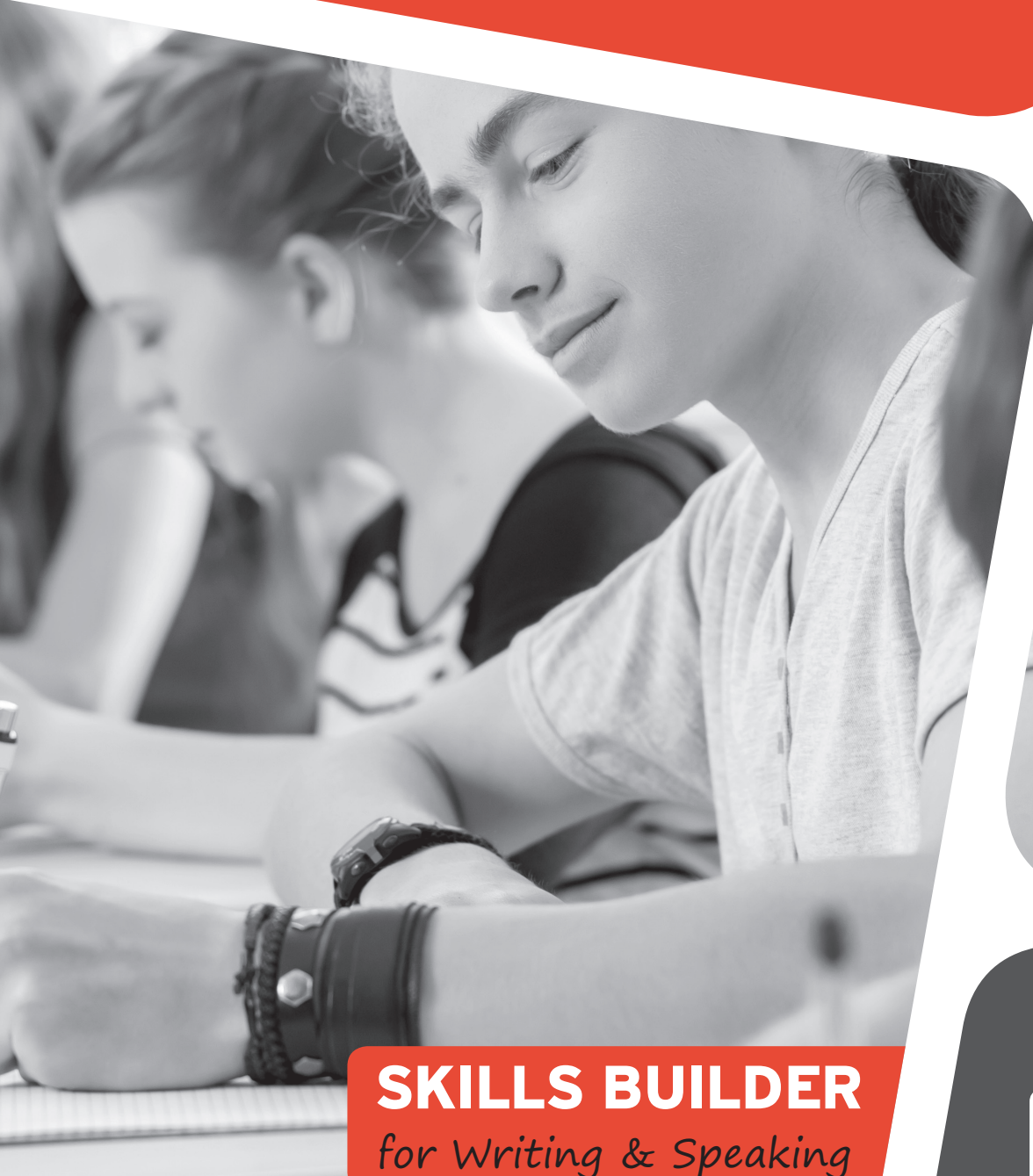


Sean Haughton

Ahead with

FCE

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SKILLS BUILDER
for Writing & Speaking



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The Writing Exam

The basics ...

Here is what the Writing Paper looks like:

Time:	1 hour and 20 minutes	
Number of Parts	2: Part 1 and Part 2 (both carry equal marks)	

Part	Task	Write
1	<p><i>Question 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - always <u>essay</u>. - <u>compulsory</u> question. - up to 120 words of input material. 	140-190 words
2	<p><i>Questions 2-5</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - choose ONE question to answer. - up to 70 words of input material. <p><i>Questions 2-4</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 of the following 4 question types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • article • story • letter/email • review <p><i>Question 5</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - based on the set text, 1 of the following 4 question types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • article • review • letter/email • essay 	140-190 words

1 Look at the table and answer these questions about the Writing Paper.

- How many parts are there? 2
- How long do you have to finish the paper in total? 1 hour 20 minutes
- Which part is worth the most marks? neither – equal marks
- How many answers do you have to write in total? 2
- What is the maximum number of words you can write for each answer? 190
- What is the minimum number of words you can write for each answer? 140
- What writing type always appears in Part 1? Essay
- How many questions must you do in Part 2? 1
- What writing types can appear in questions 2-4? Article / Story / Email or Letter / Review
- What writing types can appear in question 5? Article / Review / Email or Letter / Essay
- If you haven't studied the set text, how many different questions can you choose from in Part 2? 3
- And if you have studied the set text, how many then? 4



The Essay

Step 1: Analysing the question and input material.

Save time. Before you enter the exam room, you should already be familiar with the format of the paper. Therefore, you don't need to read these lines because they tell you what you already know: (1) the question is compulsory and (2) you should write 140-190 words.

1 You **MUST** answer this question. Write your answer in **140-190** words in an appropriate style.

In your English class you have been talking about **food**. Now your English teacher has asked you to write an essay for homework.

Write your essay using **all** the notes and giving reasons for your point of view.

These lines always provide some background information. They are not very important, so just read them quickly and highlight the general topic, ie food.

This is your question topic. Highlight it. Remember: you don't have to agree with the statement. You can take the other point of view if you want.

→ **All teens should learn how to cook.**

Do you agree?

Notes

Write about:

1. **whether or not teens should be able to cook**
2. **whether or not cooking is enjoyable**
3. (your own idea)

You are already familiar with the format of the paper, so you are aware Question 1 is always an essay. Therefore, you know that you should write in a FORMAL essay style.

This is important. You must include (write about) all the notes. If you don't, you will lose marks. (Refer to the **Notes** section later.)

Although there is a lot of input material, really, all you need to focus on is the few key pieces of highlighted information. Make sure you answer the question asked: (1) stay on topic; (2) cover both the given points; and (3) include your own idea.

There are always 2 things you must write about in the Notes section. Highlight them and make sure you cover both items in your answer or you will lose marks.

Similarly, you must include another idea of your own. If you don't remember to do this, you will lose marks.

1 After you have read the task and tips above, answer these questions.

Ex. What style of writing should you use?

1. What is the question topic?

2. What are you told to write about?

3. What else must you include?

4. Do you have to agree with the statement?

Formal

Food – all teens should learn how to cook

Whether teens should be able to cook / whether cooking is enjoyable

Your own idea

No



Step 2: Planning your answer ...

Always spend a few minutes planning your answer. Marks are awarded for organisation, so make sure you structure your paragraphs in a logical way.

1 Write the information (A-E) in the correct sections (1-5).

There are different ways to structure your answer, but for this example we have chosen an easy, logical one: use five paragraphs and cover the input material in the order it appears.

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|-------------|----------|
| A | Introduce the topic in my own words. | 1 | Paragraph 1 | <u>A</u> |
| B | Summarise what I've said and make my opinion clear. | 2 | Paragraph 2 | <u>C</u> |
| C | Talk about whether or not teens should be able to cook. | 3 | Paragraph 3 | <u>E</u> |
| D | Talk about my idea. | 4 | Paragraph 4 | <u>D</u> |
| E | Talk about whether or not cooking is enjoyable. | 5 | Paragraph 5 | <u>B</u> |

Brainstorm ideas ...

Don't spend very long on this, but take a minute or two to write down some ideas for the main-body paragraphs – your opinions and reasons to support them.

2a You try: Write as many ideas of your own as you can, for each section below. For this exercise, you are in favour of teens learning to cook.

Paragraph 2: *Should teens be able to cook?*

Yes – homemade usually healthier so important skill; ~~also more delicious~~; also, very busy parents so need help in kitchen

.....

.....

Paragraph 3: *Is cooking enjoyable?*

Yes – ~~you get to have the leftovers~~; if people like your food, feel great; experiment with foreign foods, interesting

.....

.....

Paragraph 4: *My idea*

Culture – learn more about foreign cultures when cooking their food; more respect for them; ~~more motivation to travel~~

.....

.....



Writing | Part 1

2b Now compare your notes with the example notes. If your ideas are different, that's fine. The example is just there to help you.

2c Did you notice some of the ideas in the example were crossed out? That's because you only need one or two good points for each paragraph. Look at your ideas and cross out ones you don't need.

Once you have completed Exercise 2c, that should leave you with an essay plan. Then, it's time to use the plan to write your essay. However, before you do that, let's read the example answer and tips below.

In the first paragraph, introduce the topic. Try to use your own words and not repeat the words from the question. One technique is (1) make a general statement and then (2) ask a question.

General statements are things most people believe. Start with a phrase like one of these:

- *Most people believe ...*
- *The majority of people believe ...*
- *Nowadays, it is commonly believed that ...*

Notice all the linking words and phrases (highlighted) used in the essay. These help to link your ideas together in a logical flow so that your essay reads well. Make sure you are familiar with and know when to use a good selection of them.

Many people say the art of cooking is being lost. **However**, even if true, does that really matter – should young people learn to cook? **Personally**, I think it is very important for teenagers to learn to cook. **For a start**, home-made food is generally healthier than bought food, so this skill will help them remain healthy throughout life. **Moreover**, parents are busier than ever today; **therefore**, they need their children's support in the kitchen.

Besides, the fact remains that cooking is a very enjoyable and rewarding pastime. **For instance**, when you cook a nice meal and others enjoy it, this is incredibly satisfying. **Additionally**, learning to cook foods from different parts of the world is fascinating.

And that brings me to my final point: that cooking helps us appreciate other cultures. Food is a huge part of culture **and** the more we learn about foreign foods, the more we appreciate the richness of cultures other than our own.

In short, **I firmly believe** that all teens should be able to cook because **not only** is cooking a practical skill, **but** it is also very satisfying and a cultural experience.

Asking a question is a good way to introduce the topic and get the discussion started.

Follow your plan. In the second paragraph, say why you think teens should be able to cook. Remember to support your opinion with one or two good points.

Remember: this is a FORMAL style of writing. Don't use contractions. For example: *cooking is* not *cooking's*.

Conclude by giving your opinion and a brief summary of the reasons why you believe that (these are the points you have already made in the main body – paragraphs 2-4).



Paraphrasing

Remember, try to paraphrase the question in your own words.

3a Rewrite these statements using the words in brackets as in the example.

Ex. It is important for everyone to learn to cook. (there is, need, able to)

There is still a need for everyone to be able to cook.

1. Art should be a compulsory school subject. (students, have to, learn, at school)

Students should have to learn art at school.

2. We need more practical subjects for students. (students, should be, offered, chance, do, at school)

Students should be offered the chance to do more practical subjects at school.

3. The school day should be shorter. (we, shorten)

We should shorten the school day.

4. Schools should ban mobile phones from the classroom. (students, not allowed, in the)

Students should not be allowed to use mobile phones in the classroom.

5. Students should not have to wear uniforms in school. (uniforms, not be, compulsory, at)

Uniforms should not be compulsory at school.

Making topic questions

Remember, you can use questions to introduce your topic.

3b Rewrite your statements from Exercise 3a as questions below.

Ex. *Is there still a need for everyone to be able to cook?*

1. *Should students have to learn art at school?*

2. *Should students be offered the chance to do more practical subjects at school?*

3. *Should we shorten the school day?*

4. *Should students be allowed to use mobile phones in the classroom?*

5. *Should uniforms be compulsory at school?*



Linking phrases

You should become familiar with a range of different linking phrases for different functions.

4 Match the functions (A-H) to the groups of phrases (1-8) in the table.

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|---|---|-------------------------------|
| A | 7 | Giving opinions | E | 2 | Giving supporting information |
| B | 6 | Giving reasons | F | 3 | Contrasting |
| C | 1 | Sequencing | G | 5 | Giving results |
| D | 4 | Giving examples | H | 8 | Summing up |

1	2	3	4
Firstly, ... Secondly, ... Thirdly, ... Lastly, ... First of all, ... Second of all, ... Last of all, ... Last but not least, ...	Additionally, ... Furthermore, ... What is more, ... In addition, ... Not only ... , but also ...	On one hand, ... On the other hand, ... However, ... Nonetheless, ... Nevertheless, ... Despite this, ... In spite of this, , whereas , while , but ...	For instance, ... For example, ; namely, , such as , like ...
5	6	7	8
Therefore, ... As a result, ... As a consequence, ... Consequently, due to (the fact that) since/as/because on account of because of ...	In my view, ... As far as I am concerned, ... From my perspective, ...	In short, ... In conclusion, ... In summary, ... To summarise, ... To conclude, ...

Step 3: Putting it all together ...

Now it's time to write your answer, using your notes. Remember:

- Stick to your simple paragraph plan and follow your notes.
- Introduce the topic in your own words.
- Use linking words and phrases to improve the flow of your ideas.
- Only use formal language.
- Give your opinion and a brief summary of the reasons at the end.

TIP BOX!

Don't waste time counting your words in the exam. You should, instead, try to get an idea of what around 190 words looks like in your writing when you write practice answers. You won't be heavily penalised for writing a few words over the limit.



The review

Step 1: Analysing the question and input material.

Again, save yourself time. You don't need to read this section because you already know the information. It's always the same.

Find out and highlight the important information:

What are you reviewing?

- favourite website
- What do you have to talk about?
- how you found out about it
- what you use it for
- anything negative
- recommend or not, and for whom

2 Write your answer in 140-190 words in an appropriate style.

You see this announcement in an educational magazine for teenagers.

Reviews needed!

Do you have a **favourite website**? It could be one that you use to help you with your **schoolwork**, or to find out about a **hobby** you are really interested in, for example. Send us a review of the website, telling us how **you found out about it** and **what you use it for**. Mention **anything not so good** about it, too, and say **whether or not you'd recommend it to other people your age**.

The best reviews will win a prize!

Write your **review**.

Always check your target reader(s). Here it's teenage readers of an educational magazine. Reviews are generally informal in writing style, but make sure your review has an educational value in this case.

Read the question carefully. Do you have to write about a website to do with school or a hobby? No. These are just examples given. Think about what you would find it easiest to write about in that case. Maybe use a real example of a website you like.

Highlight the type of task. If you want to find out straight away before reading the main input material, look at the instruction here. It is always in the same place at the bottom.

The point of a review is to say if you think something is good or bad. Therefore, you always have to give your recommendation at the end: say whether or not you would recommend it and for whom. Do this even if the question doesn't ask you to.

A review can usually be either positive or negative. However, think about this specific question. You are writing about your favourite website. Therefore, it should be a generally positive review.

1 After you have read the task and tips above, answer these questions.

- Ex. What style of writing should you use? *Informal*
1. What is the question type and topic? *Review – favourite website*
2. What must you mention? *how you found out about it / what you use it for / anything not good*
3. What else must you do at the end? *give a recommendation*

Step 2: Planning your answer ...

Always spend a few minutes planning your answer. Marks are awarded for organisation, so make sure you structure your paragraphs in a logical way.



Writing | Part 2

1a Match the information (A-F) to the correct sections (1-3).

There are different ways to structure your review. Here, we will use a simple three-paragraph plan. Think about where you would put the different pieces of information you have to write about.

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|-------------|----------------------------|
| A | The name of the website. | 1 | Paragraph 1 | A, C, F |
| B | The things you dislike about it. | | | |
| C | How you found out about it. | 2 | Paragraph 2 | B, E |
| D | Would you recommend it and for whom. | | | |
| E | The things you like about it. | | | |
| F | What the website is for. | 3 | Paragraph 3 | D |

1b Compare your answer with the suggested one.

Generally, the basic information (what, where, when, etc.) goes in the first paragraph. The main body discusses your experience of the thing being reviewed and what you like and dislike about it. The final paragraph sums up your views and gives your recommendation.

Brainstorm ideas ...

It's harder to brainstorm ideas because you have less guidance on what specifically to write about in Part 2. Let's have a little help ...

2a Look at the lists of good and bad points in the different columns of the table. Use a dictionary if you need help with any words and label the reviews with the matching numbers.

- | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|----------------------------|---|----------------------|
| A | 3 Book review | C | 1 Website review | E | 4 Film review |
| B | 5 Hotel review | D | 2 Restaurant review | | |

1	2	3	4	5
Good points				
- interesting articles - easy to navigate - helpful members' forum - educational videos	- great atmosphere - nice décor - good service - friendly staff - delicious food - convenient location	- great storyline - amazing special effects - interesting plot twist - good chemistry between the lead actors	- great plot - good character development - colourful descriptions - original ending	- great location - clean rooms - excellent range of facilities - beautiful views - good value for money
Bad points				
- a lot of ads - not updated with new content regularly	- limited choice on menu - expensive	- a little slow and dull at the start - story differs from the book it's based on	- a difficult read - very long; over one thousand pages	- staff a little impolite - a little noisy during the night



2b Now brainstorm ideas for your website review. Quickly think of as many as you can for each section below. Refer to Exercise 2a (the website section) if you need some help.

Paragraph 1: *What type of website? How did you find out about it?*

.....

.....

.....

Paragraph 2: *What did you like and dislike about it? (More likes than dislikes – positive review.)*

.....

.....

.....

Paragraph 3: *Would you recommend it for teens? Anyone else?*

.....

.....

.....

2c Now, have a look at the examples below. Remember, it's just an example. Your ideas are probably very different.

Paragraph 1: *What type of website? How did you find out about it?*

Football website; my English pen pal

Paragraph 2: *What did you like and dislike about it? (More likes than dislikes – positive review.)*

Good: live match updates; detailed match reports from all the major leagues; footballer profiles; video highlights; info in different languages – great for my language learning

Bad: pay a subscription fee to use after free trial

Paragraph 3: *Would you recommend it for teens? Anyone else?*

Yes, but only football lovers (especially if love languages too); people of any age who like football



Writing | Part 2

Once you have completed Exercise 2b, that should leave you with a full plan. Then, it's time to use the plan to write your review. However, before you do that, let's read the example answer and tips below.

Always give your review a title. Typically, this is the name of what you are reviewing; in this case, a football website.

Football Magic

In your review, you can use an informal style of writing, so contractions like *I'm* are OK instead of *I am*.

A review is written from your perspective, so always include your own opinions.

One of the aims when you write a review is to keep your readers' interest. To do this, you can use more colourful descriptive language. For example, instead of *great* say *fantastic*.

My favourite website is *Football Magic*. I've been a massive fan of football for many years and this is by far the best dedicated site I've ever seen, so *I'm* really grateful to my English pen friend for showing it to me.

What I love most about the site is that it has live updates and really detailed match reports and statistics for every game in every major league globally. What's more, the video highlights of matches are *fantastic*: really well edited and you only see the best action. And another thing, the information is available in five different languages, including mine and English, so it's helpful for my studies, too. The only downside is the fact that the fee you have to pay after your month's free trial ends is quite a lot. However, if you are a lover of football like me, I think it's worth the money.

I'd have no hesitation whatsoever in recommending this site to my fellow teens, provided you are football lovers, too. In fact, I think it's the perfect site for footie fans of any age.

Remember: Follow your plan closely. So, in paragraph 1, mention the name of the site, what type of site it is, and how you found out about it.

Remember: If you do not answer all the input points in the question, you will lose marks. You must talk about:

- what you use the site for
- any bad points
- your recommendation for teenage users

Remember: Every review must have a recommendation. That's the most important part.

It's useful to know a few stock phrases like this for making recommendations.

Here are some more stock phrases:

Positive: *I'd highly recommend ... I can't recommend ... highly enough. ... gets a huge thumbs up from me and I would definitely recommend it.*

Negative: *I couldn't possibly recommend ... I simply cannot recommend ... There's simply no way I could recommend ...*



Using more colourful language

In order to interest your reader, get into the habit of using more colourful language in your review. Here's a simple exercise to show how easy it can be ...

3 Replace the words in italics in the text with more colourful words/phrases from the list below.

absolutely no cost *amazing* *fascinating* *incredibly*
massive *'m crazy about* *tiny*

I (1) *love* the website Free Games because it has a (2) *big* selection of (3) *interesting* computer games you can play for (4) *no charge*. That's (5) *great* value. Some of the games are a (6) *little* bit slow to load, but that's a(n) (7) *very* small criticism.

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | <i>'m crazy about</i> | 5 | <i>amazing</i> |
| 2 | <i>massive</i> | 6 | <i>tiny</i> |
| 3 | <i>fascinating</i> | 7 | <i>incredibly</i> |
| 4 | <i>absolutely no cost</i> | | |

Giving your impressions – talking about what you liked and disliked ...

Here are some useful phrases for giving your impressions about your experience of the thing you are reviewing (rather than simply saying *I liked* or *I disliked* all the time).

4 Label the columns. Which expressions are for *likes* and which are for *dislikes*?

1 <i>Likes</i>	2 <i>Dislikes</i>
I was very impressed by/with ...	I was not terribly keen on ...
I was pleasantly surprised by ...	I was slightly/incredibly disappointed with/by ...
I really appreciated ...	I felt let down by ...
I thought ... was/were superb.	I was not completely/remotely satisfied with ...

Examples:

I was slightly disappointed with the behaviour of staff, though. I found them very impolite.

I really appreciated the low price. This product was excellent value for money.

Step 3: Putting it all together ...

Now it's time to write your answer, using your notes. Remember:

- ✓ Stick to your simple paragraph plan and follow your notes.
- ✓ Write about all the input material.
- ✓ Use a title.
- ✓ Use linking words and phrases to improve the flow of your ideas.
- ✓ Use informal language.
- ✓ Always give your recommendation at the end and say who (if anyone) you'd recommend it for.

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