

Mastering the B2 First (FCE) Writing Paper

By EnglishExam.eu Team | 2/14/2026

Struggling with the B2 First Writing paper? Learn how to structure your essays, manage your time effectively, and use the right linking words to boost your score.

The writing section of the B2 First exam can often feel daunting. You have 80 minutes to produce two pieces of writing: a compulsory essay and a choice from three other tasks (article, email/letter, report, or review). Here is a guide to managing your time and maximizing your score.

1. UNDERSTAND THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Examiners mark your work on four criteria. Knowing these is the first step to success:

- **Content:** Have you answered the question fully? If the task asks for two points, did you include both?
- **Communicative Achievement:** Is the tone appropriate? A letter to a friend should be informal, while a report for a teacher should be formal.
- **Organization:** Is your writing logical? Do you use paragraphs and linking words effectively?
- **Language:** Are you using a range of B2-level vocabulary and grammar? accuracy is important, but showing ambition with language is rewarded.

2. TIME MANAGEMENT IS CRUCIAL

With 80 minutes for two tasks, aim for:

- **Planning (5-10 mins per task):** Never skip this! A clear plan prevents you from going off-topic.
- **Writing (25-30 mins per task):** Follow your plan. Keep an eye on the clock.
- **Checking (5 mins per task):** Look for silly mistakes. Check your verb tenses and spelling.

3. THE ESSAY: STRUCTURE IS KEY

For Part 1, the essay, structure is everything. A fail-safe structure is:

- Introduction: Rephrase the question and state your opinion clearly.
- Paragraph 2 (Point 1): Discuss the first point given in the notes. Give a reason or example.
- Paragraph 3 (Point 2): Discuss the second point.
- Paragraph 4 (Point 3): Introduce your own idea (the third point).
- Conclusion: Summarize your arguments and give a final recommendation or opinion.

4. USE LINKING WORDS

Connecting your ideas improves your Organization score. Don't just use "and" and "but". Try:

- Addition: Furthermore, Moreover, In addition
- Contrast: However, On the other hand, Although
- Result: Therefore, Consequently, As a result

5. CHECK YOUR WORD COUNT

You need to write 140–190 words for each task. Writing too little means you haven't developed your ideas enough. Writing too much increases the chance of making mistakes and wasting time. Practice writing to this length so you know what it looks like on the page.

