

BASICS

Overview & grading

How the Writing section works and how your texts are graded.

TOTAL TIME	TASKS	CRITERIA	TOLERANCE
120 min	2 (~400 + ~250)	4 × 0-10	±10%

THE WRITING SECTION

You have **120 minutes** for **two tasks**: one longer (~400 words, usually the essay) and one shorter (~250 words). Writing is one of four equally weighted parts of the written exam, alongside Reading, Listening and Language in Use. A time split that works: about 65 minutes for the long task including planning, about 40 for the short one, and the rest for proofreading both.

THE FIVE TEXT TYPES

Text type	Word count	Register	Key feature
Essay	~400 words (360–440)	Formal	Argue your position with evidence
Article	~250 or ~400	Match the audience	Write for real readers
Report	~250 or ~400	Formal, objective, neutral	Present findings and recommend action
Blog	~250 or ~400	Informal to semi-formal	Personal voice, invite interaction
E-Mail	~250 words (225–275)	Formal (mostly at B2)	Clear purpose, proper format

HOW YOU ARE GRADED: THE FOUR CRITERIA

01 Task Achievement (Erfüllung der Aufgabenstellung)

All content points covered with supporting detail; text type conventions followed; appropriate title/greeting/closing; word count within ±10%.

02 Coherence & Cohesion (Kohärenz und Kohäsion)

Clear overall structure; effective paragraphing; logical development; variety of linking devices; clear relationships between sentences.

03 Lexical & Structural Range (Spektrum sprachlicher Mittel)

Variety of vocabulary and structures; complex sentence forms; not repeating the same phrases; appropriate register; not lifting from the prompt.

04 Lexical & Structural Accuracy (Sprachrichtigkeit)

Grammar control; correct word choice; spelling; punctuation; accurate use of linking devices.

WHAT THE BANDS MEAN (SIMPLIFIED)

9-10 · Excellent

Everything the task asks for, fully developed. Text type conventions confidently used, wide range of vocabulary and complex structures, only occasional slips.

7-8 · Good

All content points covered and mostly well developed. Clear structure, good range, errors do not cause misunderstanding.

5-6 · Satisfactory

The task is fulfilled, but development is thin in places, range is solid but unspectacular, or errors become noticeable.

3-4 · Below the line

Content points missing or barely developed, conventions partly ignored, mostly simple structures, frequent errors.

0-2 · Inadequate

The task is largely missed or the language is too limited / too inaccurate for B2.

TWO RULES THAT COST THE MOST MARKS

Key tip. VETO rule: if a text does not address the set task at all (an off-topic or clearly pre-prepared text that ignores the actual prompt), Task Achievement is rated 0 and the other three criteria are not assessed. Writing in the wrong text type alone does not trigger this. Read every task twice.

Key tip. The $\pm 10\%$ rule: more than 10% off the target word count costs you one band in Task Achievement. That is 360–440 words for a 400-word task, 225–275 for a 250-word task.

THE 8 MOST EXPENSIVE MISTAKES

Mistake	What it costs	The fix
Writing only 2 of 3 bullet points	Task Achievement drops sharply	Tick off each bullet as you write it
Wrong text type conventions	e.g. no headings in a report	Check the layout box before starting
Copying words from the prompt	Range drops	Rephrase the prompt in your own words

Word count off by more than $\pm 10\%$	Task Achievement drops one band	Count your words; practise estimating
Essay style in a blog, or vice versa	Wrong register, lower Task Achievement	Decide formal or informal, then commit
Only simple linking words	Low Coherence score	Use the B2 linking words
No topic sentences	Paragraphs feel random, weak Coherence	Open each paragraph with its main point
Forgetting to proofread	Errors you would catch in three minutes	Always save 5 to 10 minutes at the end