

Additional Guidance

Essential Skills Wales Portfolios

April 2013

In order to provide additional guidance to centres on how to assess Essential Skills Wales Communication skills in such a way to address issues raised in the Comparability Study, Pearson have produced a series of short additional guidance documents for Assessors and Internal Verifiers.

Please refer to the *Essential Skills Wales Comparability Study on Communication Skills Level 1-3*, Welsh Assembly Government (January 2013).

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Portfolio assessment guidance

Writing Plans, Drafts and Final Documents

Summary:

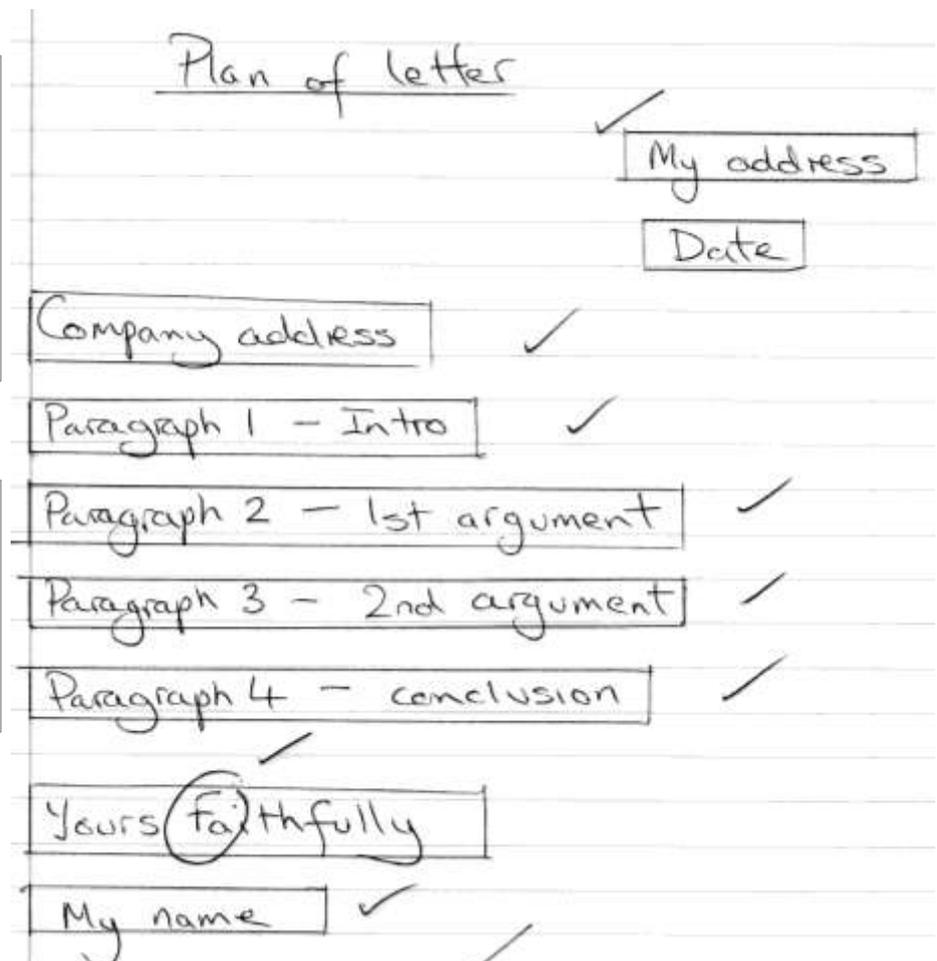
For each written document, there must be evidence of planning and at least one draft. The plan, the draft(s) and the final document must be checked by the tutor and there must also be evidence of the learner checking their work and revising their written documents. In most portfolios sampled there was little evidence of the learners planning and preparing drafts for both of their written documents or checking their own work.

Example:

An example of a hand written plan completed by a learner.

The plan has been assessed by the tutor, who has included ticks. There is no feedback to the learner, although that would be considered to be good practice.

The learner has annotated the plan to correct the error in the misuse of a capital letter for 'faithfully'.



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Writing Plans, Drafts and Final Documents

Example:

The draft written document had been checked and amended by the learner and assessed by the tutor.

The draft has been assessed by the tutor and includes feedback to the learner.

The written draft includes evidence of the learner checking his/her own work and making amendments.

✓ My address
9 March 2011

BBC
Villiers House
London W5 2PA Full address ✓

Dear Sir/Madame ✓

1

- I am concerned about violent progs on TV.
- Violent images are disturbing.
- Effects young children.

2

- Younger brother watched and had tantrums. ✓
- He's ^{he is} aggressive
- Effects his sleep and school work.

3

- Researched subject.
- Boy in China murdered family. ^{good use of research.}
- Blamed on TV shows

4

- Stop showing violent TV shows.
- Only show after 9pm. - when children ✓
f are in bed.

Yours Faithfully

My name.

A well argued letter which contains lots of valid points.

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Writing Plans, Drafts and Final Documents

Example:

The final written document had been assessed by the tutor. The fact that the draft is handwritten, and the final document is word processed, is immaterial to the judgement on whether or not it meets the assessment criteria.

The final document has been assessed by the tutor and includes feedback to the learner.

My address

9th March 2011

BBC
Villiers House
The Broadway
Ealing
London
W5 2PA

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am very concerned about the amount of violent programmes that you have displayed on your TV channel. I would like to complain about the violent images as I found them disturbing. I think these images will affect young children.

My first argument is that my younger brother watched a violent programme and his tantrums became more frequent and he is now aggressive. It has had a negative effect on his sleep and his school work.

My second argument is that I researched this subject and it turns out that a 13 year old boy in China murdered his family and blamed it on violent TV shows.

After concluding my points I would appreciate it if you stopped showing violent programmes or at least limited them to after 9pm when children are in bed. Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

My name

The correct format for this type of letter has been used.

Corrections to the first draft have also been made.

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Using Contractions in Written Documents

Summary:

The use of contractions in formal written documents can be acceptable, depending on circumstance. General agreement between Awarding Organisations is that formal writing is in general flux - the purpose of the writing and its audience should be clear and then the appropriateness of language can be gauged. In some instances learners use contractions inappropriately in formal documents.

Example: *An example of a letter of application where contractions have been used incorrectly; and an extract from an essay which includes correct use of language in a formal document.*

'I'm' as the shortened form of 'I am' being used incorrectly.

'I'd' as the shortened form of 'I would' being used incorrectly

Correct use of language in a formal document.

Incorrect contractions for a letter of application:

I'm writing to ask for the job of junior apprentice. I saw your advert in the local paper and **I'd** like to gain experience in your salon.

I'm currently attending the local College of Further Education on an E2E course working towards a hair and beauty qualification.

I'm reliable and honest and a good time keeper. **I'd** like the chance of working in your salon.

Example of the correct use of language within an essay:

It is important to see to a distressed child so that you know the problem and you are able to deal with it straight away. It is also important that the child knows they have got someone to talk to.

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Use of Images

Summary:

When using images within written documents the learner must use relevant images to help the reader understand the main points in the document. A piece of writing can never be said to NOT meet the requirements of the standards because it does not include an image. It is most important to judge when an image is appropriate. Many learners include images in their written work that do not add meaning to the text but are included as ornamentation.

Example A: *This example of a leaflet includes the use of an image, however the image used does not aid understanding of the written document.*

The image of water flowing from a tap into a glass does not aid understanding of the text. If the image were removed from the example, it would not detract from the meaning of the text.

Fibre & Water

Fibre

Eating plenty of fibre prevents disease such as bowel cancer, colon cancer and diabetes.

Functions

Fibre is good for eliminating waste products from the bowel.

Sources

Wholegrain, cereal, rice, vegetables, fruit, nuts.

Water

The body consists of around 60% water which constantly needs to be replaced, a lack of water causes headaches, irritability, inattention, dehydration. No system can survive without water.



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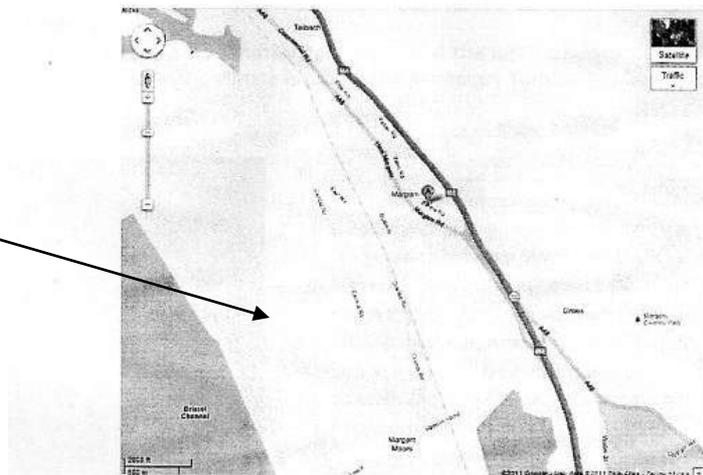
Use of Images

Example B:

An example of an image used in a report to help the reader to understand the main point of the text.

The inclusion of an extract from a map helps the reader to understand the location of the wind turbine in relation to the coastline. In example B, the image is integral to the overall meaning of the document.

Information from BERR data base suggests that a wind turbine could be sustained on the site, as smaller turbines need a wind speed at 4m/s to generate power.



Location

The map above shows the close proximity of the site with the coast. This allows the site to enjoy winds at speed at and above the sustainable rate. The site survey would determine the best location for a wind turbine but the highest point on the site would be ideal.

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Writing for Different Audiences

Summary:

Learners are required to present written documents that are aimed at and are appropriate for different audiences. At level 1, the requirement is for learners to communicate information to a familiar audience, eg their tutor. Levels 2 and 3 require learners to give different information to different audiences, eg a formal document to their tutor, or to an employer, or a newspaper article or a critique of a piece of art work or a film etc. In some portfolios sampled the intended audience was not apparent, and very often the intended audience for both of the written documents was the tutor.

Example A: *An extract from an information leaflet written for the learner's peer group or for those suffering from anorexia.*

The text is aimed at the learner's peers or someone suffering from anorexia; the needs of the audience have been taken into account as the writer has given advice and considered the needs of the reader.

Overcoming anorexia!

It may seem like there's no escape from your eating disorder but remember you are not alone in your struggle. With treatment, support from others and smart self-help strategies, you can overcome your eating disorder. The road to recovery starts with you admitting you have a problem.

Admit you have a problem. Up until now you've been invested in the idea that life will be better if you lose more weight. That's not true the success to happiness is being happy with yourself without needing to change!

Talk to someone. It can be hard to talk about but it is important to understand you are not alone, find a good listener- someone who will support you as you try to get better.

Stay away from people, places and activities that trigger your obsession with being thin. You may need to avoid fashion magazines and spend less time with friends who diet and talk about weight loss.

Seek professional help. Advice and support can help you regain health and develop better attitudes about food and your body.

Just remember things can only get better

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Writing for Different Audiences

Example B: *An example of a letter of application written to a prospective employer.*

The text is aimed at a prospective employer. The writer has given the audience the information about the writer in relation to the job for which they are applying. Appropriate formal language and letter writing format is used.

My address

1st August 2008

The Manager
Company address

Company postcode

Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter to apply for the job advertised on www.fishforjobs.co.uk for a Coded Welder in the TIG and MMA welding processes.

I am a coded welder in MMA, TIG and MIG. While I was an apprentice I completed my NVQ Levels 2 and 3, BTEC National Award and HNC.

I have learnt how to set up all machines that are used within the welding industry. I also have the codings for MMA, TIG and MIG welding processes. I have a full UK driving license and a full UK passport and am able to work abroad if necessary.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully,

My name

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Defining Complexity

Summary:

The mandatory terms in the Essential Skills Wales Standards state that, 'Complex subjects or materials deal with abstract or sensitive issues and lines of enquiry that depend on clear reasoning which may not be immediately clear. The subject matter must have several strands and must be challenging to the candidate in terms of the ideas it presents. Specialist vocabulary and complicated sentence structures may be used.' However, at Level 2 learners are required to use complex sentences in their writing. It is therefore possible to treat a simple subject in a complex way. It does not have to be a complex subject.

Examples:

An example of a simple subject, treated in a simple way.

The subject 'Disposing of waste' had been handled in a simple way. Using bullet points and short sentences

Disposing of waste

Care workers need to ensure that waste is disposed of correctly. This is achieved by colour coding waste.

- Yellow bag: used dressings and incontinence pads
- Yellow box: needles and other sharps
- Red bag: soiled linen

Yellow bags and boxes go in the clinical waste bin outside the home. Red bags disintegrate in the wash.

An example of a simple subject, treated in a complex way.

The subject 'Disposing of waste' had been handled in a complex way with the use of complex sentences

Disposing of waste in a residential home

Care workers need to ensure that waste is disposed of correctly and this is achieved by colour coding waste.

Clinical waste- such as used dressings and incontinence pads must be placed in a yellow bag and they must then be clearly labelled. The bag is then placed in the clinical waste bin outside of the residential home; these bins are then taken away regularly and the contents are incinerated.

Sharps- such as needles and syringes must be placed in a yellow box and sealed; these do not go into a yellow bag because they could go through the plastic bag and penetrate someone's skin leading to infection. The yellow boxes are then placed in a clinical waste bin outside the residential home and, they too, will be incinerated.

Soiled linen- such as bedding and clothing must be placed in a red bag and taken to the laundry room. Red bags must be used when a service user has MRSA, or any other infectious disease, their contaminated bed linen and clothing must be placed in a red bag which disintegrates when it is put in to wash.

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Writing Using Pre-set Formats

Summary:

The Essential Skills Wales Standards state that 'in final work, sentences must be formed correctly, with correct punctuation, spelling and grammar. Paragraphing must be appropriate.' Also learners need to know how to: 'present relevant information in formats that suit your purpose and audience' Therefore, the requirement for correctly formed sentences and appropriate paragraphing cannot be met when learners are directed to write documents using pre-set formats, including CVs and job sheets as these usually consist of a bullet pointed list. Many centres are directing learners to present CVs, posters and PowerPoint slides as written documents for the third component; these documents do not allow learners to display writing skills at the appropriate level.

Example A: *An example of a pre-set format being used to enable to learner to complete a work based activity, in this case in relation to completing an activity in an NVQ workbook.*

The learner has completed this activity in order to note where the fire extinguishers are situation within the work place and the type of extinguishers available.

Activity: use the table and a walk about to answer the following questions. Walk around the whole building and identify where the fire points are. What type of extinguishers are there and what sort of fires are they for?

Location of fire points	Extinguisher type, what would you use it for?
Front door	Red Wood, paper, textiles, solid materials
Back door	Red Wood, paper, textiles, solid materials
Kitchen	Yellow Oil, fat etc. Fire blanket
Office	Blue Paper, wood, textiles, solid materials and electrical appliances

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Writing Using Pre-set Formats

Example B:

Whilst it is not necessary to use a pre-set format to produce a PowerPoint presentation, an example of a PowerPoint slide, which has been assessed for component three writing documents, does not allow the learner to display the appropriate writing skills of using sentences, paragraphs and punctuation. The written document below shows how the learner could have approached the task to show appropriate use of sentences, paragraphs and punctuation.

In the PowerPoint slide the learner uses a short sentence and a bullet pointed list, this does not show the use of sentences, paragraphs and punctuation.

Conflicts and how to resolve them

Importance of children dealing with conflict

- Children socialise
- Vital for development
- Due to similar interests
- Learn about other people's feelings

This written document shows how the learner could have approached this writing task.

As children get older and start to socialise more, they begin to start having conflicts and disputes with others. This is a natural part of growing up and a vital stage in development for a child to know how to handle difficult situations and conflict between themselves.

Although adults feel like they need to intervene all the time, sometimes it is better just to step back and let the children sort the argument out by themselves. Children normally argue over simple things such as sharing or rules of a game, this is because children choose friends with similar interests to themselves.

The written evidence presented does not display the appropriate use of sentences, paragraphs or punctuation.

It is important to let children deal with conflicts themselves as children pick up on the behaviour and needs of another very quickly. Therefore when they argue they will learn when to say sorry to someone and realise by themselves that they have hurt

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Length of Written Documents and Errors

Summary: One or two errors are permitted within written documents. It is not possible to allow for more errors within a document just because the piece of writing is extra-long.

Guidance: At Level 1, learners are required to write two short documents, one must be at least 250 words long; at Level 2 learners are required to write two documents, one must be 500 words in length. However, at Level 3 learners are required to write two 1,000 word documents. One or two spelling errors are permitted, at all levels, provided, that the meaning is still clear. Untypical, one-off slips can therefore be overlooked. The same mistake occurring more than once in a single document counts as a single mistake. It is not possible to allow for more errors if the piece of writing is longer than the standards require. At Level 4, there must be no spelling mistakes.