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**SUCCESS IN WRITING
FOR MATRICULAR EXAMINATIONS
IN ENGLISH**

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INTRODUCTION

Before any composition is written, there needs to be a clear understanding of **WHAT** is going to be written about, **WHO** the reader will be and **HOW** to organize the text. The content, the reader and the purpose of the text will all influence the style. The first important distinction that should be considered is whether the text needs to be formal or informal.

A **FORMAL** piece of writing should include the following:

- Formal expressions, advanced vocabulary, longer and more complicated sentences (e.g. *taking into consideration* instead of *thinking about*)
- Formal linking devices (e.g. however, although, etc.)
- No contractions or short forms (e.g. *do not* and *I have been* instead of *don't* and *I've been*)
- An impersonal tone (i.e. use of passive voice, e.g. *it will be done* instead of *I will do it*)

An **INFORMAL** piece of writing should use the following:

- Colloquial expressions, idioms (e.g. *thanks* and *he lost it* instead of *thank you* and *he was very upset*)
- Informal phrasal verbs (e.g. *he takes after his dad* instead of *he looks like*)
- Simple linking devices (e.g. but, because, etc.)
- Shorter sentences
- A personal tone
- Adjectives and adverbs for vivid description (e.g. It was bitterly cold as he walked slowly through the dark forest.)

Typical COMPOSITION STYLES

- ✎ Description _____ p.4
- ✎ Narrative _____ p.5
- ✎ Recommendation – see Description and Letter
- ✎ Argumentation – see Essay

Typical FORMS of COMPOSITION

- ✎ Letter _____ p.5
- ✎ Report/Article _____ p.7
- ✎ Review _____ p.8
- ✎ Essay _____ p.8

HOW TO GET IDEAS

The best way to get new ideas is to brainstorm.

1. The writer needs to think very carefully of everything related to the given topic, and take notes. The ideas they get will help them to develop words and phrases appropriate to the topic.
2. Similar ideas are grouped and then put into some type of logical order. Doing this will help the writer get rid of ideas that are irrelevant and really do not have anything to do with the topic.
3. The rubric (i.e. the instructions for the exercise) should be read carefully several times to ensure that the ideas are relevant to the given topic.

HOW TO ORGANISE IDEAS

THE LAYOUT OF COMPOSITIONS is very important. All consist of several paragraphs but the layout of most types of writing includes three parts: an introduction, a main body and a conclusion.

Here are some general hints:

A The Introduction

Each composition should start by introducing the topic, the purpose of the text and give the reader a general idea of the subject or point of the composition. This is usually the first paragraph of any composition. A person reading the introduction should have a basic overview of what the author is going to write about.

B The Main Body

This part of the composition usually consists of more than one paragraph, because each new idea or point should be developed properly. If the rubric gives a task in which several points are mentioned, then there will be as many paragraphs in the main body of your text as there are points listed in the instructions. A person should be able to read the first sentence of each paragraph of the main body of the text and be able to see the author's points clearly.

C The Conclusion

The last paragraph should summarise what has already been said, the main idea or the author's opinion, using different words. A person reading the conclusion should know exactly what was written about and the author's opinion on the subject.

DESCRIPTIONS

- I. **DESCRIBING PEOPLE** can be found in various forms and styles of writing. Don't forget that the intended reader and the given situation influence which style will be used.

A The introduction gives general information about the person with specific details, i.e. when, where and how the author met the person being written about.

B The main body should have 3 or more paragraphs focusing on physical appearance (from general features to more details), personal qualities (supported by examples and/or evidence) and hobbies/interests or specific manners.

C The conclusion should include the writer's comments/feelings about the person.

From the language point of view, a variety of adjectives, intensifiers, comparison and ^{simile} simile are expected. If negative qualities are mentioned, use mild language (e.g. he is not very handsome) should be used.

- II. **DESCRIBING PLACES** would usually be found in a composition about a building or some geographic place.

A The introduction needs to include the name and location of the place and why the writer has chosen to write about it.

B The main body gives the main aspects of the building or place in detail, i.e. its exterior, interior, history (e.g. maybe some famous people stayed there, or some historical document was signed there, etc.)

C The conclusion includes the author's comments/feelings, why they think it is a great/terrible place and recommendations.

- III. **DESCRIBING FESTIVALS, EVENTS OR CELEBRATIONS** would usually be found in letters, articles, reports and perhaps narratives.

A The introduction should include the names, time, place and reasons for the celebration (i.e. perhaps the history, tradition, culture or religious significance).

B The main body gives background on the preparations and a description of the actual event. Each aspect should have its own paragraph with detail.

C The conclusion is a overview of the event, based on attendees reactions and feelings towards it, and the author's final comments and thoughts on it.

Expected language: a variety of adjectives and adverbs, use of passive voice, present tenses for annual events, and past tenses for past personal experience

NARRATIVES

NARRATIVES are usually written in either first-person (in which the writer tells a story from his own perspective, i.e. 'I was walking down the road when...') or third-person (in which the writer tells the story from the perspective of another person, i.e. 'He was walking down the road when...').

If not in a letter or some other form of composition, each narrative should have a **title**.

A The introduction sets the stage for the story (the place, time, atmosphere, characters, etc. involved). This paragraph should spark the imagination of the reader, making him want to continue reading.

B The main body develops the story, presenting the events in the order in which they happened. More than one paragraph is necessary to develop each event and its connection to the whole story.

C The conclusion gives the end of the story, final comments and reactions based on the characters feelings.

Expected language: base and strong adjectives referring to emotion, moods and basic description; various adverbs of manner, place and time for vivid description; a wide variety of verbs; direct speech; rhetorical questions; similes; a variety of narrative tenses; present and past participles; and linking devices to show order of events (e.g. then, next, while, during, before, first, etc.)

LETTERS

1. **FORMAL LETTERS** can be letters of complaint, recommendation, application, request or thanks. The **content**, the **task** and the **recipient** will all influence the style of the letter. If it is a complaint, for example, formal language is required with a clear understanding of what the exact problem is, who is being addressed and what the author is expecting from that person.

Layout

1. the author's address (in the top right-hand corner)
 - a. no name
 - b. Slovak addresses should be left Slovak, e.g. *Moyzesova 19* not *19, Moyzeova St.*
2. the date
 - a. below the writer's address, skipping one line
 - b. written in full (e.g. 6 May 2003) since the Slovak way of doing it can lead to confusion (i.e. 6/5/2003 could be either May 6th or June 5th depending on which country the recipient is in)
3. the recipient's address

- a. if the person's function is known, include it (Rudolph Suster, President of the Slovak Republic)
4. greeting/addressing of the recipient
 - a. if the person's name is not known, use one of the following:
 - i. Dear Sir
 - ii. Dear Madame
 - iii. Dear Sirs
 - iv. Dear Sir/Madame
 - v. Dear Sir or Madame
 - vi. American English only: To whom it may concern: (uses a colon)
 - b. if the person's name is known, address them personally, i.e. Dear Mr Robinson, Dear Ms Brown, Dear Mrs Wilson, Dear Dr Jones, etc. (American English requires different punctuation, i.e. Mr. Brown, Mrs. Wilson, etc.)
 - c. there should be a comma after the greeting
5. the introduction – includes opening remarks and the specific reason for writing
6. the main body
 - a. develops the reason for writing in various related points
 - b. each point has its own paragraph and includes evidence or illustrations (if the rubric gives 3 points to mention, then the main body will have 3 paragraphs)
7. the conclusion
 - a. closing remarks
 - b. should include some polite expression (in simple present only)
 - i. I look forward to meeting you/hearing from you soon.
 - ii. Thank you for your time and consideration.
8. ending
 - a. British English
 - i. if the recipient's name is known, use *Yours sincerely*
 - ii. if it is not known, use *Yours faithfully*
 - b. American English
 - i. *Sincerely* and *Yours Sincerely* are both appropriate
 - ii. *Yours Truly* and *Sincerely Yours* are a bit too personal
 - c. there should be a comma after the ending
9. author's signature above the author's printed name in full

II. **INFORMAL LETTERS** are usually written to friends, family members or someone we know relatively well. They are full of everyday common expressions and vocabulary, idioms, informal phrasal verbs, questions and exclamations (e.g. Thanks a lot. Guess what! Get a load of this! Are you serious?). Sentences are usually shorter, more personal and use simple linking devices. Contractions are also the norm. Informal letters are always in first person so the personal tone can be readily felt.

Layout

1. no addresses are necessary
2. date (written in full is still best)
3. greeting
 - a. *Dear* can be used in all informal letters
 - b. *Hi...* can be used for family or a friend
 - c. a comma should be used after the greeting
4. introduction – includes opening remarks and reasons for writing
5. main body – each point has its own paragraph and includes evidence or illustrations (if the rubric gives 3 points to mention, then the main body will have 3 paragraphs)
6. conclusion – closing remarks

- a. might include something like *Looking forward to seeing you/your visit* but only in present continuous.
 - b. phrases like *Drop me a line, Give me a call, Take it easy or Say hi to your folks for me* are also appropriate
7. ending
- a. intimate
 - i. Love
 - ii. Hugs and kisses (this would be typical from that favourite aunt who always gives you socks for Christmas)
 - iii. Lots of love
 - iv. Yours
 - b. less intimate
 - i. Kind regards
 - ii. Regards
 - iii. Best wishes
 - iv. See you later
8. signature – first name only

Expected language: Both formal and informal letters require the use of a wide variety of tenses: present simple, continuous and perfect; narrative tenses and the infinitive (primarily in formal letters).

REPORTS/ARTICLES

Reports are short pieces of writing either for academic or business purposes. Academic reports are related to subjects being studied by the student and may be on anything from an experiment in Chemistry or an overview of Štur's activities to a current event a student is interested in. In business, reports usually have something to do with research, sales and marketing, productivity, or any information that would be further the interests of the company. Academic and business reports may include the writer's opinion but only if it is backed up by evidence or supporting information.

Articles are reports on current events or situations written for print or electronic media, i.e. newspapers, magazines or the Internet. Writers of articles do not usually put their opinion in their work directly. They say things in a way that the reader will know what they think or quote someone else who has a similar opinion but they do not come straight out and say what they think. E.g. *the pressure on students is enormous. One student said he had not slept in three days...* instead of *Students have too much to do.*

Each report or article should have a **title or headline**. Headlines use a specific kind of abbreviated and eye-catching language.

A The introduction gives a brief summary of the who, what, where and when of the event.

B The main body gives a more detailed chronological description of the event and those involved, usually in at least two (2) paragraphs. The how and why of what happened should be included, as well. Each piece of information should be supported by a detailed description.

C The conclusion sums up people's reaction and comments to the events, actions to be taken and expected future developments.

Expected language: past tenses, passive voice, indirect speech and a variety of appropriate reporting verbs (e.g. say, tell, state, deny, warn, advise, etc.)

NB: The Council of Europe does not recommend asking students to write on controversial issues which might influence their performance from a psychological or emotional point of view (e.g. local natural disasters, wars, family break-ups, etc.)

REVIEWS

REVIEWS are short descriptions of books, computer games, TV programmes, plays, exhibits and other forms of entertainment. They are a form of report, usually published for the general public in print or electronic media. Their purpose is to inform the readers and make recommendations as to whether or not the reviewed material is worth the time and money.

A The introduction gives a summary of background information, i.e. the title, author, style/type, setting, etc.

B The main body usually consists of at least two paragraphs. The first gives a more detailed chronological summary of the book, play or computer game. The second is used to comment on the plot, the characters, the performers, the lighting, the directing, the graphics, the style and anything else that went into the work.

C The conclusion is used to give the author's final opinion on the work and either recommend it to readers or discourage them from spending their time and money on it. The writer must support his final evaluation of the work with clear reasons and/or illustrations.

Expected language: a variety of present tenses and adjectives

ESSAYS

Basic Steps to Writing an Essay

It's been said that 50% of writing an essay is the time and effort that goes into thinking about and brainstorming on the topic and then producing an outline. Another 25% is spent on writing the rough draft. The final 25% goes into editing it and checking grammar, clarity, punctuation, layout and style for the final copy.

1. **Look at the topic carefully.** What main point or thought would you like the reader to remember when they finish reading your essay on the topic given?
2. **Brainstorm** – what aspects of our lives could help you prove your point? How does the topic relate to our lives? 'HER SAM PASTE' is an acronym to use to remember some aspects to consider.
 - a. Historical
 - b. Ecological/Environmental
 - c. Religious
 - d. Social
 - e. Academic
 - f. Moral
 - g. Political
 - h. Artistic/Aesthetic
 - i. Scientific
 - j. Technological
 - k. Economic

3. **Omit the irrelevant ideas.** Choose the three to five aspects (points) which are the most relevant to proving your point and get rid of all the others. (Think of the points as legs on a chair. A chair needs at least 3 legs to be functional, stable and support a person. An essay also needs at least 3 legs (points) to be functional and support your opinion; 4 or 5 make it even more stable.)
4. **Start writing.**
 - a. Thesis statement: this sentence is usually the last sentence of your introduction and clearly states what you plan of proving or discussing in your essay.
 - b. Topic sentences: there is one of these for each point (3-5) you use to prove or discuss your thesis statement. They are usually the first sentence of each paragraph of the main body.
5. **Fill out each paragraph of the main body** with clear support for each point, using illustrations, facts, quotes or some other type of evidence. As you write, be sure to stay relevant to the original topic.
6. **The introduction:** Come up with an attention-grabbing first sentence for your essay, relevant to the topic but not giving away everything you want to write about. This sentence should hook the reader so they will want to continue reading to the end. The introduction begins with a broad idea and works its way down to the specific topic of the thesis statement.
7. **The conclusion** should remind the reader briefly of what has been written and reiterate (i.e. restate but using other words) what the writer's main point is. The reader should not have to read an essay twice to figure out what was said.
8. Put together **the final copy**, checking for spelling and grammar mistakes. Almost all essays are formal pieces of writing so do not use contractions.

Expected language: a wide variety of tenses (usually present), adverbs, adjectives and linking devices

Useful expressions:

- a) *One major advantage/disadvantage of, one point of view in favour of/against*
- b) *In the first place, first of all, to start with, secondly, thirdly, finally, last but not least*
- c) *What is more, in addition to this, apart from this, not to mention the fact that*
- d) *On the one hand, on the other hand, in spite of, however, even though, although*
- e) *For example, for instance, such as, like, especially*
- f) *To sum up, all in all, in conclusion, on the whole, taking everything into account, all things considered*
- g) *It is argued that, some argue/say/agree, opponents of this view insist, contrary to popular opinion/what most people believe, as opposed to the ideas above, on the contrary*
- h) *As far as ... is concerned, regarding, as for, with regard to*
- i) *In fact, as a matter of fact, in practice, the truth is, actually*
- j) *Because, owing to/due to the fact that, for this/that reason*
- k) *Thus, therefore, as a result, consequently, so*
- l) *Obviously, clearly, needless to say, in particular*
- m) When expressing opinion, it is good to use some of the following phrases but unnecessary to put them in every sentence or paragraph because it is clear that the opinions and thoughts expressed in any given essay belong to the author unless he states otherwise.
In my opinion, in my view, as I see it, the way I see it, I strongly believe, it seems/appears to me

'FOR AND AGAINST' ESSAYS

are a type of discursive essay in which the advantages and disadvantages of a specific topic are discussed.

A The introduction/introductory paragraph presents and gives general remarks on the topic without personal opinion.

B The main body should have at least three paragraphs, each concerning a different pro or con with justification and/examples.

C The conclusion includes personal opinion or a balanced summary of the topic.

Style note: rhetorical questions, while not used in most other types of essays, are allowed in 'for and against' essays.

'OPINION' ESSAYS

allow the author to speak their mind on a given topic or issue.

A The introduction/introductory paragraph includes the opinion to be discussed and justified.

B The main body has at least three paragraphs, each giving one piece of support for the opinion with justification and examples. One paragraph explaining the opposing view should also be included.

C The conclusion sums up what has already been said, emphasising the original opinion and using different vocabulary.

PERSUASIVE (ARGUMENTATIVE) ESSAYS

are a type of opinion essay in which the author tries to convince the reader of some opinion on some issue/problem, using clear evidence and argumentation.

A The introduction/introductory paragraph clearly states the issue to be discussed and gives the opinion of the author in general.

B The main body has at least three paragraphs, each giving a clear argument for the author's opinion with evidence, justification and examples.

C The conclusion sums up what has already been said, emphasising how the arguments given support the author's opinion. It should also show the importance and influence of the opinion on the reader or their world.

Appendix 1 – Sample Essay Outlines

To show how the process of putting together an essay might work with different students, we have provided these examples of various outlines based on the same topic. These are just a few suggestions. Students are sure to come up with their own combinations and do not have to agree with the statement given. As long as each point has some connection to the other two and is supported by facts or illustrations, any combination is acceptable. If a more controlled piece of writing is desired, points should be given by the teacher.

1. Topic: 'MONEY – can't live with it, can't live without it'

A Past	A Family	A Description	A School
B Present	B Friends	B Use	B Work
C Future	C Me	C Importance	C Play (Leisure Time)
A Men	A Home	A Childhood	A Psychological
B Women	B Town	B Adulthood	B Physical
C People in general	C Nation	C The Senior Years	C Social

2. Topic: All exams should be abolished.

Student ONE– agrees

- A. Too much work for students
 - 1. too much knowledge required for each subject
 - 2. too many tests given on one day
- B. Too much work for teachers
 - 1. too much work creating tests
 - 2. too much work marking test
- C. Results differ from school to school
 - 1. every teacher has their own standard
 - 2. every school has its own quality of teacher and student

Student TWO– agrees

- A. Students cannot possibly learn all the knowledge that is required of them
 - 1. the national curriculum requires a lot of knowledge
 - 2. every teacher thinks their subject is the most important
- B. Grades/marks have no meaning after secondary school
 - 1. grades are only a method of control for parents and teachers
 - 2. no one looks at secondary school grades after matricular exams
- C. Universities do not accept secondary school exam results
 - 1. no university considers secondary school leaving exam results to be objective
 - 2. most universities require all students, no matter how good their grades were, to take entrance exams

Student THREE – agrees

- A. It's a waste of time
 - 1. Many students spend hours studying for exams which will have no future value in life.

2. Many teachers lose time with family and friends marking exams which will eventually just be thrown away.
- B. It's a waste of energy
1. Brain-work is often considered more exhausting than physical labour
 2. Both the student's and the teacher's physical health suffer because of too much energy spent sitting inside
- C. It's a waste of natural resources
1. an enormous amount of paper is used only once and later thrown away
 2. the heat put out by copy machines all over the world must be damaging the ozone layer

Student FOUR – disagrees

- A. Exams force students to study
1. Students do not realize that knowledge is important and must be pushed to study.
 2. Students would not make time to learn everything they need to know if they did not have exams.
- B. Exams give teachers feedback about their teaching
1. Teachers need to know if students know what they have been taught
 2. Teachers need to know if they are teaching well
- C. Exams provide a clear picture of the situation in the classroom
1. For the school administration
 2. For parents

Appendix 2 – Sample Rubrics

A. Letters

1. Formal

a. Application

You have seen the following announcement and would like to try for the scholarship. Write your letter in 220-250 words.

Collingwood University has 2 full 4-year scholarships for Slovak students available, one for studies in humanities and one for science, for the 2003-04 school-year. All interested applicants should write a letter of application to Dr. Duncan MacDonald, Chair of International Studies, giving their educational background, field(s) of interest and future career goals. All applications must be returned by May 31st, 2003.

Collingwood University • 15 Maple Boulevard • Collingwood, ONT • L9Y 1Z1 • Canada

b. Complaint

Last week, you bought an expensive jacket as a gift for someone. Later, when there were problems with it, you tried to return it but the salesperson was very rude. Write a letter of complaint (160-200 words) to the manager demanding immediate action.

Tapp's Department Store
1450 Harding St.
Cornwall, NY
12020

c. Thank-you

You spent last summer with a foreign family, the Wilsons, abroad, communicating in English. Write a letter of thanks (160-200 words). Make up an address and names for them to use in your letter.

2. Informal – to a friend, person you know well or family

Write a letter (180-220 words) telling an Australian friend you made last year about your prom (green-ribbon party)/getting your driver's license/a trip you took with friends.

Jo Barnes
23 Ocean Blvd., Apt. 3A
Sydney 0009
Australia

B. Descriptions

1. People

You've met the person you'd like to spend the rest of your life with. Write a letter (180-220 words) to a foreign friend telling them all about it.

You've just started studying at a new school. Write a letter (160-200 words) describing the best/worst professor you have to a cousin who lives Chicago.

The school newspaper at the English-speaking university you attend is holding a writing competition on what is a best friend. Entrants should write a full description (180-220 words) of their best friend.

2. Places

Write a letter (160-200 words) to an English-speaking friend you met several years ago about the new cabin/cottage your family just bought/built in the mountains/by a lake/in a village.

Write a descriptive essay (180-220 words) on what you consider or would consider the best place to be. This place can be real or imaginary.

3. Festivals, Events and Celebrations

Write a letter (240-280 words) to your cousin in Sydney telling them about this last Christmas/Easter/a recent concert you attended.

Write a composition (180-220 words) describing a special event or festival in the area where you live.

C. Narratives

1. First Person

a. It Came to Stay

You have decided to enter a story competition. The winner will get an all-expense paid month-long stay in Edinburgh. Your story (200-250 words) must have the title **It Came to Stay**.

b. Did You Hear That?

2. Third Person

a. A Holiday to Forget

b. A Day in the Life of A Cat/ A Pet/an Animal

3. First/last lines

a. It had been an incredibly beautiful/wonderful/horrible day.

b. 1st line – I don't know why I hadn't thought of it earlier.

c. Last line – He would never be able to look at chocolate cake again.

D. Reports/Articles

Local secondary school students are very unhappy with the current situation in education and have decided to go on strike. Write an article (250 words) on the demonstration held yesterday and the situation in general for the English-language newspaper in town.

You work for a cell phone operator and your employer has asked you to research and write a report on who, in Slovakia, uses cell phones and for what purpose. Write a 180-220 word report on the subject.

Write an article (120-160 words) for an English-language school newspaper about the discovery of a gun in one of the students' bags. You may be creative but not violent.

E. Reviews

Write a review on the last book you read for an international-student newspaper. (250-350 words)

Write a review of one of the worst/best films or plays you have ever seen for the school newspaper. (160-200 words)

Write a review for the school newspaper on the best new computer game to come out this year. (160-200 words)

F. Essays

Write a persuasive essay (400 words) on the following topic for your school head.

All exams should be abolished.

Titles

Educational Issues

Free University Education

A University Education is Getting Expensive

Exams are useful as a means of testing students' knowledge.

The Slovak Educational Dilemma

Solutions to the Slovak Educational Dilemma

Discipline or Democracy in School

Social Issues

Equality of the sexes

Is there equality between men and women in our society?

The institution of marriage should be abolished

Who needs marriage?

On being famous (the pros and cons)

How does living in another culture influence your life?

Nudity in Advertising

Discrimination is a part of every day life

On Living in One World with Diverse Cultures

The Legalization of 'Recreation' Drugs

Smoking should be banned in all cafes and restaurants

Crime and Punishment

Convicted criminals should pay restitution to their victims

Prison is not the answer

The 'Three Strikes, You're Out' Law

National Issues

All Slovak young people, both male and female, should be involved in mandatory military or civil service for 2 years.

Being European

Slovak Citizen, European, Citizen of the World or Just Me

The Slovak Ice-Hockey Team

An (The Most) Important Person in Slovak History/Culture/Society

An (The Most) Important Event in Slovak History/Culture/Society

Slovak traditions and folklore are old-fashioned.

Environmental Issues

Alternative sources of energy should be utilized

Reducing global litter is vital

The bicycle is the healthiest means of transport

How Climate Influences Lifestyle

Vehicles that run on fossil fuels should be banned

Ways of Recycling

Animal Rights

Fur – no skin off my back

Socio-Economic Issues

People spend too much money on luxuries and luxurious living

Slovaks spend too much money on being fashionable

The pros and cons of a package holiday

Be Your Own Boss – good or bad?

Children in Advertising (Orange...)

Commercial Television vs. State-sponsored Television

All people should be able to move freely anywhere in the world he wants for what ever reason

Borders should be abolished

Science and Technology

The increasing use of technology is harmful.

Genetic engineering has gone too far.

Genetically modified foods are the solution to hunger around the world.

Cloning is playing God.

Automated machines are making factory workers obsolete.

(Robots are taking our jobs!)

Space exploration is a waste of time and money.

Health, Healthcare and Disease

It is critical to invest more finances into the global AIDs crisis.

More money should be invested into cancer research.

Solutions to the Slovak Healthcare Dilemma

The Slovak Healthcare Dilemma

Money in Healthcare

Health above Gold

Smoking should be outlawed.

Fast food should be outlawed.

All prescription drugs should be given free of charge.

Appendix 3 – For the teacher

Cieľom tejto publikácie je zjednotiť požiadavky na formálnu, ako aj obsahovú stránku písomných prejavov v anglickom jazyku. Publikácia je určená nielen učiteľom, ale najmä ich prostredníctvom i študentom anglického jazyka. Obraciame sa na kolegov, aby sprostredkovali dané informácie nielen študentom končiacich ročníkov, ale už aj študentom v prvých ročníkoch stredoškolského štúdia. Je potrebné, aby študenti systematicky uplatňovali zásady správnej komunikácie v písomnom prejave a používali formu jednotlivých slohových útvarov v anglickom jazyku.

Kritériá hodnotenia je vhodné uplatňovať pri nácviku jednotlivých slohových postupov a slohových útvarov, ako i pri celkovom vyhodnocovaní domácich a školských slohových prác. Predkladané kritériá je nevyhnutné uplatňovať v súlade s požiadavkami Katalógu cieľových požiadaviek pre jednotlivé jazykové vedomosti a komunikatívne zručnosti pre dve úrovne B1 a B2.

Ako uplatňovať kritériá hodnotenia písomného prejavu.

Obsah:

Pri uplatňovaní tohto kritéria sa musíme vždy stanoviť, čo všetko sme v obsahu očakávali na základe zadania, napr. študent má v zadaní uvedené, že má spomenúť 3 kladné stránky a 3 záporné stránky riešenia daného problému.

Po obsahovej stránke musí práca obsahovať načrtnutie problematiky (1), 3 klady (3) a 3 zápory (3) a záverečné stanovisko (1) – čiže spolu osem stanovísk. Ak uvedie všetkých osem, automaticky sa orientujeme v kritériu obsahu v počte udelenia bodov 5, ale zároveň si prečítame všetky deskriptory, aby dané bodové ohodnotenie naozaj zodpovedalo danej slohovej úlohe. Ďalej postupujeme: 7 – 6 stanovísk (4 body), 5 – 4 (3 body), 3 – 2 (2 body), 1 (1 bod) až po neudelenie žiadneho bodu. Ide o orientačné zaradenie danej slohovej práce a potom si dôkladne prečítame deskriptory pre danú bodovú úroveň, či daná slohová práca zodpovedá uvedeným popisom.

Stavba a členenie textu:

Každý slohový útvar má určitú stavbu textu a jeho členenie. Napr. anglická kompozícia (essay) musí mať úvodný odsek, jadro a záver. Jadro sa zvyčajne skladá z viacerých odsekov na základe počtu položiek/stanovísk, ktoré bolo treba spomenúť. Ak zoberieme do úvahy vyššie uvedené zadanie, jadro by sa v tomto prípade malo skladať alebo zo šiestich odsekov (3 výhody a 3 nevýhody), alebo z troch odsekov, ak výhody a nevýhody študent porovnával súbežne. Opäť si stanovíme počet odsekov, ktorý v písomnom prejave hľadáme a nami uvedené čísla nám opäť pomôžu zaradiť sa do istej bodovej škály. V danej škále si podrobne prečítame uvedené deskriptory a rozhodneme sa, ktorá škála lepšie vystihuje danú slohovú prácu.

Ak je práca po obsahovej stránke výborne vypracovaná a udelili sme jej plný počet bodov, nesmieme sa dať ovplyvniť predchádzajúcou bodovou hodnotou pri hodnotení stavby a členenia textu. Ak je napr. slohová práca nevhodne členená do odstavcov, aj pri plnom počte bodov za obsahovú stránku, udelíme iba 2 body za členenie textu. Ak práca neobsahuje žiadne členenie, študenta musíme za daný nedostatok penalizovať a udelíme mu jeden, prípadne nula bodov. Záleží to od druhého deskriptora – usporiadanie myšlienok.

Gramatika:

Správne používanie gramatických štruktúr je ovplyvnené úrovňami B1 (základná) alebo B2 (vyššia). Ak študent použil nesprávne istý gramatický jav, ktorý na základnej úrovni nemusí ovládať, nepenalizujeme ho za chybu.

Pravopis je súčasťou gramatiky. V prípade, že žiak zlyhá pri uplatňovaní pravopisných pravidiel v rámci morfológie napr. lie – lying, stop – stopping, penalizujeme ho za pravopisné chyby v kritériu gramatika. V písomnom prejave si v kritériu gramatika všímame schopnosť študenta vyjadriť sa zreteľne, jasne a správne a s nadhľadom opravujeme jeho gramatické chyby. Z gramatiky sme ho už dôkladne preverili v časti Language in Use. Napr. ak je veta I learn English na základe kontextu nejasná, či sa práve učí, alebo sa už učil, alebo sa chystá učiť, penalizujeme študenta za chybu z hľadiska komunikatívnosti. Pri opravovaní si nedomýšľame, čo chcel študent povedať, ale hodnotíme, či to naozaj povedal tak, že by mu porozumeli anglicky-hovoriaci ľudia.

Slovná zásoba:

Pri hodnotení slovnej zásoby si všímame jej rozsah ako i vhodnosť použitia. Penalizujeme študentov, ktorí stále používajú tie isté slová, alebo je ich prejav veľmi jednoduchý.

Pravopis je súčasťou slovnej zásoby v prípade, že študent nesprávne napíše slovo, napr.: accommodation namiesto accomodation, english namiesto English, atď. Opäť pri posudzovaní slovnej zásoby si nedomýšľame, čo chcel študent povedať, ale penalizujeme ho za nesprávne používanie slov a interferenciu materinského jazyka.

Na záver je nevyhnutné podotknúť, že pri pravopise uznávame iba jednu pravopisnú normu, alebo študent píše britskou angličtinou, alebo používa pravopis americkej angličtiny.

Appendix 4 – Marking Criteria

Kritériá hodnotenia písomného prejavu.

OBSAH:

- 5 – zodpovedá téme, dôkladne rozpracovaný a zrozumiteľne napísaný
- 4 – zodpovedá téme, dobre rozpracovaný, chýbajú niektoré informácie
- 3 – takmer zodpovedá téme, rozpracovaný, chýba viac informácií
- 2 – časté odbočenie od témy, väčšina informácií chýba
- 1 – minimálne zodpovedá téme, neobsahuje požadované informácie
- 0 – úplné odbočenie od témy, nepochopenie zadania

STAVBA A ČLENENIE TEXTU

- 5 – koherentný text, správne členenie do odsekov, široký rozsah spojok a spájacích výrazov
- 4 – dobre štylizovaný text, menšie nedostatky v členení textu do odsekov, používanie spojok a spájacích výrazov
- 3 – zreteľne naznačený vzťah medzi hlavnými myšlienkami, odseky zamerané na hlavné myšlienky, nerozvíjajú ich
- 2 – lineárne usporiadanie myšlienok, nevhodné členenie odsekov, nedostatočné používanie spojok a spájacích výrazov
- 1 – nejasné usporiadanie myšlienok, nečlenenie textu do odsekov
- 0 – žiadna stavba a členenie textu

GRAMATIKA

- 5 – správne používanie gramatických štruktúr vzhľadom na tému, žiadne pravopisné chyby
- 4 – niekoľko chýb v používaní gramatických štruktúr, prevažne súvetia a zložené vety, málo pravopisných chýb
- 3 – niekoľko závažných gramatických chýb, nenarúša komunikáciu, prevažne jednoduché vety, niekoľko pravopisných chýb
- 2 – väčšina závažných gramatických chýb, vety z komunikatívneho hľadiska nezrozumiteľné, veľa pravopisných chýb
- 1 – závažné gramatické nedostatky, obtiažnosť porozumenia textu, veľa pravopisných chýb
- 0 – nedostatočné gramatické vedomosti narúšajú komunikáciu

SLOVNÁ ZÁSoba

- 5 – široký rozsah slovnej zásoby, ktorá zodpovedá téme, vynikajúci pravopis
- 4 – primeraný rozsah slovnej zásoby s menším pravopisnými chybami
- 3 – obmedzený rozsah slovnej zásoby, nenarúša komunikáciu, väčší počet gramatických chýb
- 2 – základná slovná zásoba, niektoré výrazy narúšajú komunikáciu, časté pravopisné chyby
- 1 – minimálna slovná zásoba, nezrozumiteľnosť textu, časté pravopisné chyby
- 0 – slovná zásoba nezodpovedá téme, text nespĺňa komunikatívne hľadisko

Appendix 5 – Sample Written Work

A. Formal Letter – Application – B2 – 245 words

Košická 17
Horná doľňa
080 101
The Slovak Republic

October 1, 2002

Dr. Duncan MacDonald
Chair of International Studies
Collingwood University
15 Maple Boulevard
Collingwood, ONT L9Y 1Z1
Canada

Dear Dr. MacDonald,

I have seen Collingwood University's announcement about full scholarships for Slovak students and would like to apply. I am interested in studying Psychology and heard Collingwood has a very good program.

I am now a secondary school student in Horná doľňa, Slovakia, and will graduate next May. I attend Alexander Dubček Secondary School, which specializes in humanities, so I have had advanced classes in History, Literature and Social Studies, as well as all the regular subjects, like Biology, Physics and Mathematics. I have always done well in school and been on the Honour Roll for the past three years. I am also taking a special course to improve my English.

I have a lot of interests besides studying. I have been on the School Council for two years and enjoy organizing events for the students. Last year, the International Children's Day Festival at the local primary school was my responsibility. I love dance and teach a hip-hop dance class of 12-year old girls twice a week. In my free time, I enjoy hiking and reading books.

The world is very complicated today and I would like to learn how to help people, especially children, professionally. Even when I was younger, my friends used to come to me for advice whenever they had problems. It is my dream to open a place where Slovak children can go when they need help.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Jana Kollárová

Jana Kollárová

B. Informal Letter – Description – B1 – 257 words

December 25, 2003

Dear Mike,

How's it going? I couldn't wait to tell you about yesterday. Man, you really should've been here!

So, you remember little Aunt Marta? Well, like usual, she came Christmas Eve morning to help with the cooking and baking. You know, Mom's been preparing for weeks already, but Aunt Marta thinks the holidays would never happen without her. The pastries and cakes were already stored in the pantry. The 2.5-meter pine Dad bought last week was in the living room. And, of course, the most enormous 'golden' carp, which Mom had forced me to buy, was swimming peacefully in the tub.

So, Mom and Aunt Marta were in the kitchen, while Dad and I were decorating the tree and Danka cleaned the bathroom. Except for Aunt Marta's non-stop gossiping, everything was going well till she decided to take care of the fish for Dad. Suddenly, we heard a loud splash and scream. Everybody rushed to the bathroom where we saw two legs sticking straight up out of the bathtub and a large fin waving back and forth in the toilet bowl. Can't you just see it? We almost died laughing! Fortunately, Aunt Marta hadn't broken any bones. The fish didn't do so well. It died of shock and toilet-bowl cleaner poisoning.

We ended up having chicken breast, but the sauerkraut stew was delicious, the potato salad perfect and Baby Jesus came right on time after dinner. Aunt Marta didn't eat much though and stayed in bed for a week.

Have to go. Danka says hi. Write soon, ok?

Love,

Jano

C. Narrative – B2 – 235 words

It Came to Stay

As a little girl, I wanted a dog more than anything else in the world. It seemed that all my friends had one. I only had an old teddy bear.

When I was eight, my mom told me, 'Misa, you are going to have a little brother or sister.' I said to myself, 'Now, I'll never get a dog.'

In April, my mom went into hospital alone but came home holding a small bundle. 'Misa, meet your sister, Sisa,' my mom said. I knew I didn't want a baby sister so I didn't say anything. When I looked inside the bundle, I saw a little pink wrinkled face and tiny hands. That night, I told my bear, 'Maybe that bundle will just go away.'

Sisa controlled our house. If she cried, they fed her, changed her, held her or just talked to her. I didn't remember them ever treating me that way. And I only wanted a dog.

One day, Mom went to the store and left me alone with 'the bundle' for half an hour. I didn't even look at her. She was sleeping, while I watched TV. Then I heard strange noises from her bed, so I got up to check on her.

When Sisa saw me, she smiled for the first time. Smiled at me! Suddenly, the dog wasn't important anymore. I was finally glad that 'the bundle' had come to stay.

D. Article – B1 – 248 words

Students on Strike

Bratislava - Yesterday morning, thousands of Bratislava high school students took part in a demonstration on SNP Square. They shook keys, waved banners, listened to speeches and sang protest songs. Students started arriving around 7am and, by the time the organizers were ready with the program, more than 5,000 had filled the square. Among other things, they were protesting having to wear school shoes and being given too much homework.

The organizers, Jan Hraško and Jozef Makovinský, have been using the internet to bring students together. Yesterday, the two 3rd-year students from Potter Secondary School encouraged their peers to go on strike for one month, not changing shoes, doing homework or taking any tests. One young man, Igor Cibulka, challenged the Minister of Education to bring in 'education with a human face'.

Most of the teenagers said they felt it was time to stand up for their rights. 'It's a new day and the system needs to change,' 17-year old Tomas declared. His friend added, 'We've been treated like little kids for so long but, at the same time, they try to put too much into our heads. It has to stop.'

No one is sure what will happen this month, but, at one high school this morning, teachers were beside themselves. 'My students just sit there. How can I get them ready for exams? And the dust! I'm sure I'll get asthma!' An emergency meeting of high school heads will be held tomorrow at the Ministry of Education to discuss the situation. The students, however, have already planned another demonstration for next Thursday.

E. Review – B1 – 348 words

The Baron's Apprentice

George MacDonald, a contemporary of Charles Dickens, wrote of the places and times he knew personally. The Baron's Apprentice takes place in both the city of London and on the open moors of Scotland in the second half of the 19th century. MacDonald used both vivid description and humorous dialogue to bring his characters and the world they live in to life.

Richard, a poor bookbinder from London, travels to visit his grandfather in Scotland. While there, he finds a job restoring the magnificent but neglected library of one of the local barons. Over time, the baron's wife notices that Richard looks very much like her husband and is approximately the same age as the child born to the baron's first wife who died in childbirth. That child had been kidnapped by his nurse and was never heard from again. Suddenly, the certainty of a wealthy inheritance for her own children is not so certain and she forces Richard to leave. Richard, who knows nothing of his past, must search for the truth.

Even though MacDonald's plots are typical for the time they were written in, his characters live. Richard is a real young man, full of doubt and fear but also ready to take on the world before him. MacDonald's use of indirect description is particularly felt with both the baron and his wife. Their arrogance, pride and lack of honesty come through in living colour.

George MacDonald was one of the finest writers of his time and The Baron's Apprentice is one of his best works. He had the ability to breathe life into his characters in such a way that finishing one of his books is always like saying good-bye to a good friend. The way Richard's love of and for books is described makes the reader want to feel the same. Richard's petite Australian friend,