

**ESB Level 1 Award in
ESOL Skills for Life (Writing)
601/5474/3**



Writing

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Updates

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4	References to Wales removed	5
3	Punctuation descriptor added	13
2	Introduction page updated	4
	Reasonable adjustment information updated	5
	Qualification framework information updated – credits removed	7
	Assessment overview – types of text updated; letters, narratives removed	8
	Lists of topics, functions and grammatical structures added	9-12
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Introduction

English Speaking Board (International) Ltd. (ESB International) offers high-quality Speech and Language qualifications in the UK and internationally.

We aim to support learners to possess the oracy and English language skills they need to achieve their aspirations. ESB International has a full range of qualifications for learners of all ages and backgrounds which are designed to stretch the most able, support the least confident and realise the potential of all. Do contact ESB International via our website www.esbuk.org if you wish to find out more about our qualifications and how learners can progress.

Our assessments are marked and administered externally by ESB International. ESB International carries out moderation and standardisation of all its assessors to ensure their assessment of your learners is consistent and of the highest quality.

When you choose to be a centre of ESB International and prepare your learners for our assessments, we offer you support via our website and your centre's online booking hub, along with training and guidance for all of your staff involved with the learning experience. We are here to support you so that your learners achieve and enjoy the experience of assessment with ESB International.



ESB Level 1 Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Writing)

These specifications are designed to assist tutors in preparing learners for the ESB Level 1 Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Writing). The document supports both tutors and learners and describes the content and assessment of the qualification.

Qualification Objective

The ESB Level 1 Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Writing) is part of the portfolio of ESB ESOL Skills for Life qualifications from Entry 1 to Level 2 on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF). ESOL Skills for Life learners are diverse and may be members of settled minority communities, refugees or asylum seekers, migrant workers, or partners or spouses of UK residents. ESB ESOL Skills for Life assessments are designed to assess real-life English language skills for work, further learning and everyday life, encourage progression into further and higher education and employment, support learners' integration into the community and equip learners with the confidence to use English language skills in the real world. They are suitable for learners from the age of 16 upwards and are available in England and Northern Ireland.

ESB ESOL Skills for Life qualifications are based on the National Standards for Adult Literacy and aligned to the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum. They are regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) in England and CCEA Regulation in Northern Ireland. At Level 1, adults can write to communicate information, ideas and opinions clearly using length, format and style appropriate to purpose and audience (National Standards for Adult Literacy).

Prior Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

There are no prior learning or formal qualification requirements for ESB ESOL Skills for Life qualifications. Learners can be entered for the Speaking and Listening, Reading or Writing Awards appropriate for their ability and needs. Learners must have the skills, knowledge and understanding to meet securely the learning outcomes for Level 1 by the assessment date. Learners who have achieved the three Awards at the same level can be awarded an ESB Level 1 Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life.

Reasonable Adjustments

We believe that assessment should be a fair test of learners' skills and knowledge. For some learners the usual format of assessment may not be suitable or accessible, and we recognise that disabilities can be physical or invisible. Some learners may need an access arrangement (also known as a special accommodation or reasonable adjustment) to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment, i.e. the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. We refer to these as Reasonable Adjustments and centres need to apply for a reasonable adjustment before their learners' assessment. Please visit <https://esbuk.org/web/support/equality-diversity-inclusion-safeguarding/> for examples of reasonable adjustments, how to apply for them and further guidance. For more information on access arrangements, please see our Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy [here](#).

Qualification Profile

ESB LEVEL 1 AWARD IN ESOL SKILLS FOR LIFE (WRITING)	
Assessment method	Assessment by external assessors and markers
Grading	Pass / Unsuccessful
Accreditation start date	1 st February 2015
Guided learning hours (GLH)*	90
Total Qualification Time (TQT)*	100
Qualification number	601/5474/3
Age range	16-19, 19 +
An ESOL Skills for Life learner may be anyone who speaks English as an acquired language, for example:	• Learners at further education colleges and adult education centres • Learners attending private training organisations • Learners attending community-based ESOL providers and educational charities • Learners referred from Jobcentre Plus • Young learners (16-18) on ESOL courses • Learners from settled minority communities • Refugees or asylum seekers • Migrant workers • Partners or spouses of UK residents

Learners' educational and employment backgrounds are often highly diverse. English Speaking Board assessments are designed to reflect this diversity. Learners' real-life circumstances are taken into account when assessments are designed and topics include themes such as employability.

*GLH (Guided Learning Hours) is an estimate of the time allocated to teach, instruct, assess and support learners. Learner-initiated private study, preparation and marking of formative assessment is not taken into account. TQT (Total Qualification Time) includes both the number of hours which an awarding organisation has assigned to a qualification for Guided Learning, and an estimate of the number of hours a learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, directed by but not under the supervision of a lecturer, supervisor or tutor. Both GLH and TQT are estimates as all learners are unique and will take different times to prepare for and achieve qualifications.

Qualification Framework

Qualification Option
3 Awards • ESB Level 1 Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Reading) • ESB Level 1 Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Writing) • ESB Level 1 Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Speaking and Listening)
ESB Level 1 Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life

Learners are entered for each individual Award and may take Awards at different levels. Once three Awards have been achieved, learners can apply for an ESB Certificate in ESOL Skills. Please see <https://esbuk.org/web/support/policies-and-procedures/>.

Speaking and Listening assessments are conducted on site at approved ESB International centres by a team of trained assessors. All assessors are independent of the centres they visit and subject to moderation following Ofqual guidelines. Assessment takes place in pairs; learner interaction is an integral part of the assessment. Each learner is assessed according to the qualification learning outcomes and assessment criteria. All learners receive a report form with their grade and personalised feedback. Successful learners receive a certificate with the qualification title and level. Results are issued within 5 working days (10 days at peak times) and qualification certificates are issued to centres within 10 working days.

Reading and Writing assessments are set by ESB International and papers are shared securely with centres. Assessments are completed on site at approved centres and subject to ESB International regulations (see Centre Handbook <https://esbuk.org/web/app/uploads/2022/09/ESB-HBK-C29-ESB-Handbook-for-Skills-for-Life-Centres-in-the-UK-v1.pdf>). Invigilation is undertaken by the centre and monitored by ESB International. Papers are marked by ESB ESOL Skills for Life markers and results are issued within 5 working days (10 working days at peak times). Qualification certificates are sent to centres within 10 working days.

Resources and Support for Tutors

Sample papers and resources are available on our website <https://esbuk.org/web/our-tutor-resources/esol-skills-for-life-resources/esol-skills-for-life-level-1/>

For questions about the content and conduct of assessments, contact product@esbuk.org. To find out more about the type of training available for your centre and to arrange bespoke face-to-face or remote training for tutors, contact business@esbuk.org.

Assessment Overview

1. Assessment Format

Length	90 minutes
Number of tasks	3

	Task One	Task Two	Task Three
Text	form	email	account, article, report
Audience	official, employer, organisation	friend, relative, colleague, tutor, official	official organisation, employer, general readers
Approximate word length	150	150	200 (plus plan)
Assessment criteria	3.1 Complete a form with open and closed responses 2.1 Produce content appropriate to purpose 2.5 Use punctuation 2.6 Spell words	2.1 Produce content appropriate to purpose 2.2 Use appropriate language for a given task 2.3 Structure text in a logical sequence for purpose 2.4 Use grammar 2.5 Use punctuation	1.1 Plan text for a specific purpose 2.2 Use appropriate language for a given task 2.3 Structure text in a logical sequence for purpose 2.4 Use grammar 2.6 Spell words

2. Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Adult ESOL Core Curriculum Reference	Learning Outcomes <i>The learner will:</i>	Assessment Criteria <i>The learner can:</i>
Wt/L1.1a Wt/L1.1b Wt/L1.2a	1. Plan text for a given task	1.1 Plan text for a specific purpose
Ww/L1.1a Ws/L1.1a Ws/L1.2a Ws/L1.3a Wt/L1.3a Wt/L1.4a Wt/L1.5a	2. Produce text for different tasks	2.1 Produce content appropriate to purpose 2.2 Use appropriate language for a given task 2.3 Structure text in a logical sequence for purpose 2.4 Use grammar correctly 2.5 Use punctuation correctly 2.6 Spell words accurately
Wt/L1.6a	3. Complete a form	3.1 Complete a form with open and closed responses correctly

To pass the assessment, learners are required to achieve every assessment criterion once. Learners have to meet assessment criterion 3.1 in Task 1, there is one opportunity to meet AC1.1 in Task 3, and there are two opportunities to meet the remaining criteria throughout the assessment.

Pages 9-12 list the topic areas, functions and grammatical structures expected of learners by the time they have completed their course of study and undertake the assessments for the ESB ESOL Skills for Life awards at this level. The topics, functions and structures are from the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum <https://esbuk.org/web/app/uploads/2023/09/Adult-ESOL-Core-All-files.zip>. In addition to those listed here, learners should already be confident with the topic areas, functions and grammatical structures of Entry 3.

3. List of Topic Areas

Area and community
Aspirations
Cultural variations
Daily interactions
Describing people, places, friends and things
Describing processes
Education systems, studying and courses
Environment e.g. recycling, water, power
Events, celebrations, festivals and special occasions
Food and diet
Health and fitness
Historical places, stories
Hobbies and leisure/free time – sport, TV, books, films, music
Home and home life
Instructions
Known country/town/country of origin
Language and communication
Shopping
Social roles
Special places
Technology e.g. mobile phones, computers, tablets, games
Training and professional development
Travel and transport
Trips, visits and days out
Weather and climate
Work, careers and voluntary work

4. List of Functions

Ask about past events
Ask about people's feelings, opinions, interests, wishes, hopes
Ask about processes
Ask for advice and suggestions, make suggestions and give advice
Ask for confirmation
Ask for definitions
Check back
Compare people, places, things in detail
Complain
Describe places and things and ask for descriptions of things, places
Describe self/others and ask for descriptions of people
Explain, and give reasons
Express absence of obligation
Express feeling, likes and dislikes, hopes
Express obligation and reasons
Generalise
Give examples
Give factual accounts – classify
Give factual accounts – define
Give factual accounts – describe a simple process
Give and ask for personal information
Give views and opinions
Hypothesise
Interrupt
Introduce others
Make recommendations
Make requests in informal and formal situations – ask for something, ask someone to do something for you, ask for permission
Narrate events in the past
Persuade
Praise and compliment
Report information
Respond to request for confirmation
Respond to request for instructions
Show contrast, reason, purpose, consequence, result
Take leave
Warn and prohibit

5. Grammatical Structures

Simple, compound and complex sentences, with more than one subordinate clause
Word order in sentences with more than one subordinate clause: <i>I will tell you the story at work tomorrow because I don't have time now.</i>
There had been: <i>There had been a farm on the land before the storm.</i>
A range of conjunctions to express contrast, reason, purpose, consequence, result, condition, concession Contrast: <i>although, however</i> ; reason: <i>because, due to</i> ; purpose: <i>in order to, so that</i> ; result: <i>therefore, for this reason</i> ; concession: <i>but, yet</i> . Conditional forms, using <i>if</i> and <i>unless</i> with past and use of <i>would</i> Non-defining relative clauses Defining relative clauses with <i>where</i> or <i>whose</i> : <i>This is a person whose interest in the past led to digging up ancient cities.</i> Participial clauses to describe accompanying actions with <i>-ing</i> : <i>The baby, crying loudly and continuously, kept her parents up all night.</i> Clause as subject or object
Reported speech with a range of tenses including use of <i>would</i> and <i>had</i>
A range of embedded questions using <i>if</i> and <i>whether</i> : <i>Could you tell me whether or not she has gone out?</i> <i>Reported questions</i> with <i>if</i> and <i>whether</i> Use of <i>had</i> and <i>would</i> in reported questions Reported requests: <i>They asked me to help them on Saturday.</i> Reported instructions: <i>The tutor told them not to play in there.</i>
Statements with question tags, using Level 1 tenses: <i>The shop had shut down a long time ago, hadn't it?</i>

Noun phrases
More complex noun phrases with pre- and post-modification: <i>The girl sitting on the left is waiting for me.</i> Word order of determiners: <i>the, my, this, twenty, each, any</i> Use of definite, indefinite and zero article with a wide range of nouns in a range of uses Range of expressions to indicate possession

Verb forms and time markers in statements, interrogatives, negatives and short forms
Present perfect continuous Past perfect Present and past simple passive Use of <i>would</i> in conditional sentences Causative use of <i>have</i> and <i>got</i> Modals: <i>ought</i> to express obligation; negative of <i>need</i> and <i>have to</i> to express absence of obligation; <i>would</i> to express hypotheses; use of forms, e.g. <i>be able to</i> to refer to the future; <i>would like</i> + object + infinitive, e.g. <i>would like you to</i> ; <i>be supposed to</i> , <i>be meant to</i> , <i>appear to</i> and <i>tend to</i> Use of simple modal adverbs: <i>possibly, probably, perhaps</i> A range of phrasal verbs

Adjectives

Comparisons using *fewer* and *less*

Collocation of adjective + preposition: *She was enthusiastic about the idea.*

Adverbs and prepositional phrases

Prepositions to express concession

Collocations of verbs + prepositions; nouns + prepositions

A range of adverbial phrases of time, manner, degree, extent, place, frequency, probability: *anyway, well, right, now, OK, so*

Comparative and superlative forms of adverbs

A wide range of intensifiers

Discourse

A range of discourse markers expressing: addition, cause and effect, contrast, sequence and time

Markers to structure spoken discourse: *accordingly, therefore, subsequently*

Use of ellipsis in informal speech and writing: *sounds good, spoken to Jim today, nice idea*

Punctuation

Full stops, exclamation marks, question marks

Commas: *Listing items in connected prose, between clauses in complex sentences, after connectives*

Semi-colons, colons

Bullet points, dashes, brackets

Apostrophes: *for omission and possession*

Inverted commas/speech marks: *for direct speech, quotations, to indicate attitude*

Assessment, Moderation and Quality Assurance

All Reading and Writing scripts are marked and moderated by ESB International's team of ESOL Skills for Life markers and moderators according to ESB International policies.

Our markers are standardised and grade all written papers according to the ESB ESOL Skills for Life mark scheme which is based on the National Standards for Adult Literacy and aligned to the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum.

To ensure additional quality assurance throughout the process, all markers are moderated within each marking session and a proportion of all written scripts are second marked to maintain standardisation levels.

Speaking and Listening assessments are carried out by trained assessors according to our policies. Speaking assessments are marked as they happen, based on the ESB ESOL Skills for Life mark scheme linked to the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum.

All ESOL Skills for Life Speaking and Listening assessors are trained and standardised by our Chief and Senior Assessors. In addition to this, ESB International conducts live moderations of a proportion of assessors every year.

Marking Guidance

ESB International has a policy of marking positively: in other words, learners are given credit for what they have achieved successfully, and are not penalised for errors. Where reference is made to 'accurate' or 'correct', markers would expect approximately 75% of what the learner has written to be accurate for that level in order to achieve the assessment criterion.

All word counts are approximate. Responses are not penalised for being over or under-length, but those that are more than 10% shorter than the recommended word length are likely to be too brief to achieve all of the criteria securely, and those that are longer are likely to be verbose and contain irrelevant information.

Task One

Text	Audience	Word length
Form	Official, employer, organisation	150
3.1 Complete a form with open and closed responses correctly Information required on the form is written correctly. Appropriate responses indicate form-filling instructions and conventions have been understood. The form should be functional, i.e. it communicates sufficient meaningful information to the reader to serve its purpose. The open response should be appropriate and easily intelligible. Grammar and spelling errors are not taken into account to achieve this criterion.		
2.1 Produce content appropriate to purpose The learner must include relevant information to achieve the purpose, i.e. the response must be relevant to the task, with every part of the question addressed. If appropriate layout is considered as part of the AC, instructions for learners will be included in the paper.		
2.5 Use punctuation correctly Candidate uses a range of Level 1 punctuation accurately and appropriately, e.g. capital letters and full stops to indicate the beginning and end of sentences; commas in lists, between clauses and after connectives; apostrophes for possession and omission; bullet points and dashes.		
2.6 Spell words accurately The learner can spell personal key words, words appropriate to Level 1, and context and key specialist words correctly. Errors do not impede communication. If there are errors in attempts to use specific special interest vocabulary or a broad range of lexis, these are not penalised.		

Task Two

Text	Audience	Word length
Email	Friend, relative, colleague, tutor, official	150
2.1 Produce content appropriate to purpose The response is laid out following conventions for the genre and purpose of the task. The learner must include relevant information to achieve the purpose, i.e. the response must be relevant to the task, with every part of the question addressed. If appropriate layout is considered as part of the AC, instructions for learners will be included in the paper.		
2.2 Use appropriate language for a given task The learner can use a range of Level 1 lexis appropriately, and appropriate register that is currently acceptable for this type of functional text. Spelling is not considered in this AC as it is marked in AC 2.6.		
2.3 Structure text in a logical sequence for purpose Writing is logically ordered using connectives, discourse markers and conjunctions appropriate to Level 1. However, if these are not present but there is a well-structured and clearly organised sequence, this is acceptable to credit the AC. Paragraphs are used correctly.		
2.4 Use grammar correctly There are at least 5 accurate sentences using Level 1 grammar, i.e. simple, compound and complex sentences with correct subject-verb agreement. The learner uses Level 1 tenses and voice correctly, e.g. simple and continuous past, present and future tenses, and the active and passive voice as appropriate to the task. If the learner has used complex sentences which may contain errors, then correct clauses are taken into account. Spelling and chronology are not considered in these sentences as these are marked in ACs 2.6 and 2.3. A repeated error (e.g. failure to use a direct or indirect article) is not penalised twice. Errors do not impede communication.		
2.5 Use punctuation correctly The learner uses a range of Level 1 punctuation accurately and appropriately, e.g. capital letters and full stops to indicate the beginning and end of sentences; commas in lists, between clauses and after connectives; apostrophes for possession and omission; bullet points and dashes. Learners should use appropriate Level 1 punctuation and are not expected to use the full range suggested in the mark scheme or specifications when they are not appropriate.		

Task three

Text	Audience	Word length
Account, article, report	Official organisation, employer, general readers	200 (plus plan)
1.1 Plan text for a specific purpose Candidate writes a relevant plan which must relate to the purpose and topic of the final text. The plan can be in any form e.g. list, mind map, spidergram.		
2.2 Use appropriate language for a given task The learner can use a range of Level 1 lexis appropriately, and appropriate register that is currently acceptable for this type of functional text. Spelling is not considered in this AC as it is marked in AC 2.6.		

2.3 Structure text in a logical sequence for purpose

Writing is logically ordered using connectives, discourse markers and conjunctions appropriate to Level 1. However, if these are not present but there is a well-structured and clearly organised sequence, this is acceptable to credit the AC. Paragraphs are used correctly.

2.4 Use grammar correctly

There are at least 5 accurate sentences using Level 1 grammar, i.e. simple, compound and complex sentences with correct subject-verb agreement. The learner uses Level 1 tenses and voice correctly, e.g. simple and continuous past, present and future tenses, and the active and passive voice as appropriate to the task. If the learner has used complex sentences which may contain errors, then correct clauses are taken into account. Spelling and chronology are not considered in these sentences as these are marked in ACs 2.6 and 2.3. A repeated error (e.g. failure to use a direct or indirect article) is not penalised twice. Errors do not impede communication.

2.6 Spell words accurately

The learner can spell personal key words, words appropriate to Level 1, and context and key specialist words correctly. Errors do not impede communication. If there are errors in attempts to use specific special interest vocabulary or a broad range of lexis, these are not penalised.

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