

Comparing different Cambridge First Writing tasks with Writing tasks on accommodation and useful FCE Speaking Part 2 phrases

Look at the examples of each different possible task in the Cambridge B2 First Writing exam below. Compare and contrast the different tasks and what your writing should be like in each case, finding as many similarities and differences as you can.

Change groups. Try to use as many different comparing and contrasting phrases below as you can to find things in common and contrasts between the tasks below and what you need to do to write those genres. Your teacher will tell you if/ when you should use the suggested topics.

Useful phrases for comparing and contrasting

- and ... as well.
- and also
- and in ... too
- and so...
- and the same thing is true for a review.
- but
- In both ... and...
- In contrast
- One small but important contrast between ... and ... is that...
- The biggest difference between ... and ... is that...
- The most important difference between ... and ... is that ...
- The most obvious difference between ... and ... is that...
- whereas
- while

Possible similarities and differences between Cambridge First Writing tasks

- Expressions that you can almost always use when you write that kind of task
- Final paragraph
- Final sentence
- First sentence
- First paragraph
- Formality
- How easy or difficult they are
- How similar your answer can be every time you try that kind of question
- How different each answer needs to be every time you see that kind of task in the exam
- How to show that you know high-level language/ How to show off your knowledge of advanced language/ How to impress the examiner
- Length
- Organisation/ Structure/ Paragraphing
- Planning process (brainstorming etc)
- Things that you shouldn't do
- Titles and headings
- What is difficult about writing answers to that kind of task
- What is easy about writing an answer to that kind of task
- What you have to do to achieve what the task asks you to do
- What the reader should get from reading your writing / The purpose of writing that thing

Part 1

You **must** answer this question. Write your answer in **140-190** words in an appropriate style on the separate answer sheet.

1. In your English class you have been talking about housing. Now, your English teacher has asked you to write an essay.

Write an essay using **all** the notes given, giving reasons for your point of view.

“Everyone in the world has a fundamental human right to a roof over their heads (= a place to live.)” Do you agree?

Notes

Write about

1. Reasons why people might not have somewhere to live.
2. How easy or difficult it might be to provide a living space for everyone.
3. ... (your own idea)

Write your **essay**. You must use grammatically correct sentences with accurate spelling and punctuation in a style appropriate for the situation.

Part 2

Write an answer to **one** of the questions 2-6 in this part. Write your answer in **140-190** words in an appropriate style on the separate answer sheet.

2. You see this announcement on an English-language website.

Articles wanted

What would be your perfect home?

Tell us about a dream place to live for you, and why you would choose that kind of place.

Write us an article answering these questions. The best will be posted on our site.

Write your **article**.

3. You have received this email from your English-speaking friend, Alex.

Thanks for all your great advice on visiting your country. I almost feel ready!

Could you also let me know something about places to stay? What different kinds of short-term accommodation are there in your city? Which one do you think is best for me, and what's the best way to book it?

Thanks!

Best wishes

Alex

Write your **email**.

4. You have seen this advertisement in your local English language newspaper.

Hosting overseas students

Do you want to practice your English at home? Would you like to help make foreign guests welcome in your country?

We need host families for students who will attend our language school next summer. If you are interested in hosting a foreign student for two to four weeks in August, write to Mr Case, including:

- why you are interested in hosting a foreign student
- what will be available for them in your home
- what things you could do together with the foreign guest

Write your **letter of application**.

5. You recently saw this notice on an English-language website.

Reviews wanted.

The best hotel I have ever stayed in!

Have you stayed somewhere nice that you think other readers would like too? Write us a review of the hotel. You should include information on:

- where it is
- why you liked it
- who you would recommend it to

The best reviews will be posted on the website next month.

Write your **review**.

6. Your college is thinking about opening a new student dorm (= student halls) especially for exchange students who come there from abroad to study for one year. Your English teacher has asked you to write a report giving your suggestions about:

- how big the dorm should be
- what facilities it needs to have
- how much it should cost students

Write your **report**.

Statements about different genres of Cambridge First Writing – plain version

Choose a line below to compare two different kinds of writing and see if your partner agrees. Then do the same with other lines, trying to use different contrasting language each time.

the reader should be convinced by your arguments and change their mind if they had a different opinion/ the reader should just be interested in what you write about and want to read to the end

the reader should understand why you made the recommendations that you made and accept them/ the reader should know whether they would like the thing that you are describing or not

needs an interesting title/ can have quite a boring title

has (underlined) section headings/ has paragraphs starting with expressions showing the topic like “Turning to the disadvantages,...” and “As for the third argument against...”

you can impress the examiner with your knowledge of informal English such as idioms/
you can impress the examiner with your knowledge of formal fixed phrases that are always used in that kind of writing

the main purpose of the first sentence should be to get the reader’s attention and make them interested in reading more

if you include data, you will need to make up imaginary figures and how you found them out (e.g. a survey)/ if you include data, it should be something that you could realistically know

it’s very important to stay on topic and answer the questions in the task

different levels of formality can be okay as long as you are consistent

planning the organisation of the writing is very quick and easy

can start with a single sentence and then move onto a new paragraph

a memorable last line is nice

needs strong, colourful language like “wonderful”, “awful” and “definitely”/ should have quite reasonable, academic-sounding language like “considerable” and “probably”

Compare your ideas with those below. Other contrasts might be possible, so please check with your teacher if you have included other contrasting language and/ or statements about different Cambridge B2 First Writing tasks.

Statements about different genres of Cambridge First Writing – gaps version

Fill the gaps below with the correct genres of writing from the exam.

In _____ the reader should be convinced by your arguments and change their mind if they had a different opinion. In complete contrast, with _____ the reader should just be interested in what you write about and want to read to the end.

In _____ the reader should understand why you made the recommendations that you made and accept them but with _____ the reader should know whether they would like the thing that you are describing or not.

_____ needs an interesting title whereas _____ can have quite a boring title.

The most obvious difference between _____ and _____ is that _____ has (underlined) section headings but _____ has paragraphs starting with expressions showing the topic like “Turning to the disadvantages...” and “As for the third argument against...”

The most important difference between _____ and _____ is that in _____ you can impress the examiner with your knowledge of informal English such as idioms, while in _____ you can impress the examiner with your knowledge of formal fixed phrases that are always used in that kind of writing.

In both _____ and _____ the main purpose of the first sentence should be to get the reader’s attention and make them interested in reading more.

One small but important contrast between _____ and _____ is that if you include data in _____, you will need to make up imaginary figures and how you found them out (e.g. a survey), but if you do so in _____, it should be something that you could realistically know.

It’s very important to stay on topic and answer the questions in the task in _____, _____, _____, _____, and also _____.

In _____, different levels of formality can be okay as long as you are consistent, and the same thing is true for _____.

Planning the organisation of the writing is very quick and easy for _____, _____, _____, and _____ as well.

_____ can start with a single sentence and then move onto a new paragraph, and so can _____.

A memorable last line is nice in _____, and in _____ too.

The biggest difference between _____ and _____ is that _____ needs strong, colourful language like “wonderful”, “awful” and “definitely” but _____ should have quite reasonable, academic-sounding language like “considerable” and “probably”.

Suggested answers

In an essay the reader should be convinced by your arguments and change their mind if they had a different opinion. In complete contrast, with an article the reader should just be interested in what you write about and want to read to the end.

In an essay the reader should understand why you made the recommendations that you made and accept them but with a review the reader should know whether they would like the thing that you are describing or not.

An article needs an interesting title whereas a report can have quite a boring title.

The most obvious difference between a report and an essay is that a report has (underlined) section headings but an essay has paragraphs starting with expressions showing the topic like “Turning to the disadvantages,...” and “As for the arguments against,...”

The most important difference between an email and a letter is that in an email you can impress the examiner with your knowledge of informal English such as idioms, while in a letter you can impress the examiner with your knowledge of formal fixed phrases that are always used in that kind of writing.

In both an article and a review the main purpose of the first sentence should be to get the reader’s attention and make them interested in reading more.

One small but important contrast between a report and an essay is that if you include data in a report, you will need to make up imaginary figures and how you found them out (e.g. a survey), but if you do so in an essay, it should be something that you could realistically know.

It’s very important to stay on topic and answer the questions in the task in an essay, a report, a letter, an email, a review, and also an article.

In an article, different levels of formality can be okay as long as you are consistent, and the same thing is true for a review.

Planning the organisation of the writing is very quick and easy for an email, a letter, a review, and a report as well.

An email can start with a single sentence and then move onto a new paragraph, and so can a letter.

A memorable last line is nice in an article, and in a review too.

The biggest difference between a review and an essay is that a review needs strong, colourful language like “wonderful”, “awful” and “definitely” but an essay should have quite reasonable, academic-sounding language like “considerable” and “probably”.

Comparing and contrasting language presentation

Write a different word in each gap below (even if using the same word again is possible).

With an essay the reader should be convinced by your arguments and change their mind if they had a different opinion. In complete _____, with an article the reader should just be interested in what you write about and want to read to the end.

With an essay the reader should understand why you made the recommendations that you made and accept them _____ with a review the reader should know whether they would like the thing that you are recommending or not.

An article needs an interesting title _____ a report can have quite a boring title.

The _____ obvious difference between a report and an essay is that a report has (underlined) section headings but an essay has paragraphs starting with expressions showing the change in topic like “Turning to the disadvantages,...” and “As for the arguments against,...”

The most important difference _____ an email and a letter is that in an email you can impress the examiner with your knowledge of informal English such as idioms, while in a letter you can impress the examiner with your knowledge of formal fixed phrases that are always used in that kind of writing.

In _____ an article and a review the main purpose of the first sentence should be to get the reader’s attention and make them interested in reading more.

One _____ but important contrast between a report and an article is that if you include data in a report, you will need to make up imaginary figures and how you found them out (e.g. a survey), but if you do so in an essay, it should be something that you could realistically know.

It’s very important to stay on topic and answer the questions in the task in a report, letter, email, essay, review _____ article.

In an article, different levels of formality can be okay as long as you are consistent, and _____ same thing is true for a review.

Planning the organisation of the writing is very quick and easy for an email, a letter, a review, and a report _____ well.

An email can start with a single sentence and then move onto a new paragraph, and _____ can a letter.

A memorable last line is nice in an article, and in a review _____.

The biggest _____ between a review and an essay is that a review needs strong, colourful language like “wonderful”, “awful” and “definitely” but an essay should have quite reasonable, academic-sounding language like “considerable” and “probably”.