FCE Writing Part 2 exam tactics discussion questions and tips
Initial discussion
What should you first do when you turn to the Writing Part Two page?

What should you do after that, and in what order?

Which kind of task would you usually pick in Part Two? How would you decide which one to do?

What things about each type of task makes them easier and more difficult to complete?

Brainstorming
Put your ideas on the last question above into the table below.

Text type	Things which make it more difficult	Things which make it easier
Formal letter (e.g. job application or complaint)		
Informal letter		
Review		
Report		
Article		

Put these into the categories above. Most fit in more than one place, and all fit somewhere.

- A strange genre which isn't common in real life
- Can change what you write to match the language that you know
- Can choose the level of formality (as long as you then stick to it)
- Can have a quite boring title
- Can have a quite boring title (though a more interesting one is better)
- Can use lots of topic-specific language
- Can use some phrases in almost any answer
- Can use the same phrases in almost any answer
- Language is quite similar to speech
- Need long words and long phrases
- Need to avoid idioms
- Need to plan before you write
- Needs to catch and keep people's attention
- Organising into paragraphs is quite fixed and easy
- Paragraphing and formatting are very important
- Quite difficult to arrange into paragraphs
- The language you have to use is quite fixed
- There are common topics which you can prepare to write about
- There are common ways of organizing paragraphs which you can often use

Discuss any differences between your own brainstorm and the tasks above.

How can you use the advantages and decrease the disadvantages of each of the text types above?

What can you do outside class to improve your writing skills for the FCE?

Continue the discussion above, including these topics:
- Improving your editing skills
- Your weaknesses/ most common mistakes
- Reading
- Finding and learning typical/ useful phrases
- Learning more advanced language
- Improving your ability to plan and organize
- Improving your ability to finish on time (e.g. stopping wasting time counting words and planning more quickly)

Choose a top five from this list:

- Do timed FCE Writing tasks (even when you can't have those answers marked)
- Give each other feedback on your writing
- Learn typical organisations (= paragraph plans) of formal letters etc
- Make a list of your previous or typical mistakes
- Read and analyse English-language reviews online
- Read and analyse FCE Writing model answers
- Read Cambridge's advice for students
- Read graded readers
- Use a self-study vocabulary book, e.g. an FCE one
- Write English-language reviews online

Suggested answers

Text type	Things which make it more difficult	Things which make it easier
Formal letter (e.g. job application or complaint)	Need long words and long phrases Need to avoid idioms The language you have to use is quite fixed Paragraphing and formatting are very important	Can use the same phrases in almost any answer The language you have to use is quite fixed Organising into paragraphs is quite fixed and easy There are common topics which you can prepare to write about There are common ways of organizing paragraphs which you can often use
Informal letter	Need to plan before you write Quite difficult to arrange into paragraphs	Language is quite similar to speech Can use some phrases in almost any answer
Review	Need to plan before you write	There are common topics which you can prepare to write about Can have a quite boring title (though a more interesting one is better) Can change what you write to match the language you know Can choose the level of formality Organising into paragraphs is quite fixed and easy There are common ways of organizing paragraphs which you can often use Can use lots of topic-specific language
Report	Paragraphing and formatting are very important	Can have a quite boring title Can use some phrases in almost any answer Can change what you write to match the language you know Can choose the level of formality There are common ways of organizing paragraphs which you can often use
Article	A strange genre which isn't common in real life Needs to catch and keep people's attention	