



Writing tests – Education

ALTA's Writing Test is a 5-question test.

The time limit is 1 hour.

All questions must be answered. An effective answer will typically consist of a minimum of 100 words (average 12-15 lines). per question.

The questions are designed to elicit writing samples in a variety of styles and forms. Questions will come from the following pools:

Question 1: School related personal experience.

This is designed to elicit a wide range of writing skills. Lower-level candidates should be able to write short summaries of biographical data and school experience. More advanced candidates should be able to provide detailed descriptions of their experiences and use a variety of stylistic devices.

Question 2: Impersonal question using the present perfect

This prompt is designed to elicit different verb tenses and sentence structures. This question will also serve to balance any potential rater bias, as studies have shown that raters tend to score impersonal questions less harshly than personal ones.

Question 3: Persuasion / Letter or email Writing

This is a critical skill in writing. Lower-level candidates should be able to make the write a basic persuasive letter or email as required by the writing prompt. Higher-level candidates will be able to use more challenging language to persuade the reader.

Question 4: Description

This can elicit a wide range of writing skills and vocabulary. Lower-level candidates should be able to write a straightforward response, while more advanced candidates may choose to shift styles from description into narration.

Question 5: Explanation / Procedural

This is another critical skill. Responses from lower-level candidates may include incomplete sentences and bullet-point lists. Higher-level candidates should be able to write a narrative lesson rather than a list.