

## Teaching Tips for the London Test of English – Writing 3

### Writing in an appropriate genre

Part of 'task completion' is writing in an appropriate genre. Candidates need to

- identify the genre that a writing task demands of them
- follow the conventions appropriate to that genre

#### **Activity**      *Identifying genres and generic features*

1. Show your students a few brief texts in different genres (e.g. emails, postcards, letters (of different kinds), forms, descriptive, discursive and narrative essays, articles). Get them simply to identify the genre for each text (at this stage they should not worry about details of what the texts mean).
2. For each text, get the students to list features which told them what genre it is (e.g. the layout, the beginning, typical expressions).
3. Get the students to look at each text, and other brief texts of the same genre, and to record common generic features to bear in mind for their own writing. They could look at beginnings and endings, grammatical structures (e.g. passives or relative clauses in academic writing) and vocabulary (e.g. more phrasal verbs in informal writing), layout and punctuation (e.g. use of headings and paragraphs, bullet points and contractions), and typical expressions.

Give your students a variety of genres to read, and encourage them to consciously identify the genres when they start reading.

When setting a writing task, ensure that the students first decide what genre they are to write in, and that they check at the end that their writing conforms to generic conventions.

A good dictionary (e.g. the Longman Exams Dictionary) or course book will often include tips on writing in specific genres.

### **B Checking, correcting and improving written work**

Students need to get into the habit of checking their own work against specific criteria. These can include:

- length (candidates will be penalised if their work is too short or too long.)
- task completion, and relevance (candidates should not include irrelevant material.)
- appropriateness of genre and style
- common mistakes (e.g. verb forms, plural endings, spellings)
- avoidable repetition (using the same words, or copying material from the test paper)
- variety of vocabulary and structures
- linking paragraphs and sentences

You can get them used to checking their work by

- showing them sample answers to exam questions and getting them to discuss whether they meet the criteria.
- getting them to look over and check each others' work.
- giving them checklists of criteria to accompany writing tasks that you give for homework.

If the students know each other well and are confident enough, you can copy their written work for the rest of the class to look at, or copy it onto an OHP transparency, and then

- invite the student who wrote the piece to say what they think about it, what they are happy with, and what they would like help with.
- invite the rest of the class to comment on what aspects they think are well handled, and on any suggestions they can make for improvement.

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*For all parts of the LTE exam, the [LTE Handbook](#) gives details of the language and format for each level.*

*For more ideas for exam classes in general, an excellent book is [How to teach for Exams](#) by Sally Burgess and Katie Head (Longman 2005 ISBN: 0 582 42967 6).*