

# Linguaskill sample candidate responses and commentaries – CEFR levels B1 to C2



# Introduction

This set of candidate responses represents performances at different levels of the CEFR from B1 to C2. The responses and accompanying commentaries are intended to help teachers and learners understand the features of these examples of writing which contribute to the text being at a particular CEFR level. As you read through, you may also wish to refer to the Linguaskill Writing Assessment Criteria.

# Linguaskill

## Essay task: sample essay question

Read the following statement:

**Playing a team sport should be compulsory for students in all schools.**

Write an **essay** in which you:  
discuss and evaluate arguments both for and against the statement above  
indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statement.

Below are some different views that you may wish to consider in your essay:

'Schools should concentrate on improving students' academic grades.'

'Team sports can teach us valuable life skills.'

'Sport should be about enjoying physical exercise not winners and losers.'

You can also include any other ideas you think are relevant.

Write **at least 250 words**.

Use your own words as far as possible.

## Essay task: responses and commentaries

### B1 candidate response

*Playing team sport is really good activity . That improves many skills such as team working , listining to others , leadership skills , problem solving skills , leadership skills etc.*

*schoos should promote sports as exercise makes person physically fit and even helps in improving mental stability, as children can improve their body strength as well as their brain grabing skills, children will be healthy and show full intrust in academics also.*

*while comming to sports , lam a TAEKONDO athelete it is a game if taking points by using your leg as a fence , by the way it is a induvidual game but , to develop the skills and strength team work is required there will be a coach and apponent similar to your whight that helps you to motivate and go on developing your skills in this game.*

*sports is not only about winning and loosing, one of the great sports man a boxing champion Mohammed ali said loosing in a game teaches you many things that you will never do it again , and learn from your failure , you will get more motivated and you will get the skills of god i.e., patience that gives you sweet result.*

*Schools is not a pltform for education it is a platform of creating good athelits also . so parents and teachers should think about the intrests of the students .Education is mandatory so students should not feel it as a burden , to work on it teachers and parents should be their guides and motivators.*

### Commentary

The CEFR says that B1-level writers can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects by linking a series of short discrete elements into a linear sequence.

The text is on topic and discusses how team sports can help develop relevant life skills and build resilience in defeat, and argues against the idea that schools should concentrate only on improving academic grades. Overall, the writer uses the conventions of the communicative task in generally appropriate ways to communicate straightforward ideas (e.g., *'That improves many skills such as...'*; *'schools should promote sports as exercise makes...'*). While the writer produces a number of arguments in favour of team sports, these appear in a rather list-like fashion. The writer uses their own experience as backing for the benefits of sports, which is not problematic in itself, but the writer does not clearly indicate to the reader that this is their intention (*'while comming to sports... it is a game by taking points...'*) and this makes the text hard to follow here.

The text is connected and generally coherent, using basic linking words and a limited number of cohesive devices (e.g., *That*; *'such as'*; *even*; *as*; *while*; *but*; *i.e. also*). Paragraphs are used to organise the text into idea units, which is helpful, but there is a lack of signposting which at times places the burden on the reader to impose coherence on the text. Overall, the line of argument can be followed, however.

The writer uses everyday vocabulary generally appropriately (e.g., *'leadership skills'*; *'problem solving skills'*; *'physically fit'*; *motivate*; *patience*; *platform*; *'guides and motivators'*) and uses simple grammatical forms with a good degree of control (e.g., *'schoos should promote sports as exercise makes person physically fit'*; *'that helps you to motivate and go on developing your skills in this game'*; *'one of the*

*great sports man a boxing champion Mohammed ali said loosing in a game teaches you many things that you will never do it again , and learn from your failure'). While language errors are noticeable, meaning can still be determined ('it is a game if taking points by using your leg as a fence; Schools is not [only] a plattform for education it is [also] a platform of creating good athelits also.').*

## **B2 candidate response**

*Does playing in a team sport by compulsory is a good idea?*

*Sports contribute in a several categories in human life. Therefore, it is extremely important to incorporate in dayli habbits in order to improve mental and body health.*

*Observing the debate, having the idea of making team sports a compulsory thing in schools is a controversial theme. In one side, there are people that believe that it promotes health, social skills, and teamwork, others argue that it could distract from the academic pursuits and make uncorfotable some students.*

*Those who argue that schools should concentrate on improving academic grades have a point to be considered, because schools have to develop academic learning, and the sttudents' school life will determinate their future prospects.*

*Although, the students should have different sports' categories to assing on, and the school will need to be prepared to attend all demands.*

*Howhever, it is really important to recognize the benefits that sports can contribute to the students' lives in general. Sports can develop physical strength, logical think, strategical think, discipline, cooperation, dedication, socialization, leadership, and communication. Moving to this perception, all of these skills are essential in both academic and personal life.*

*Practising team sports can help to reduce risk of diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity. Therefore, it will be helpful to increase all aspects of students' lives, such as personal goals, relationships, studies, and work.*

*In conclusion, while there are valid arguments for making team sports compulsory in schools, it should ultimately be left to the discretion of individual students and parents. Schools should certainly encourage sports participation and provide adequate resources, but it should not be forced upon all students. Although, it is crucial to prioritize a education that considers both academic and personal growth.*

## **Commentary**

The CEFR states that B2 writers can produce an essay which develops an argument, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

The text is on topic and addresses the task requirements. The text maintains a consistent objective tone throughout and the writer uses the conventions of a discussion essay to hold the reader's attention. There is an introduction which sets out the issue and previews the arguments ('Observing the debate, having the idea of making team sports a compulsory thing in schools is a controversial theme. In one side, there are people that believe that...others argue...'), and arguments for and against are then considered in turn ('*Those who argue...*'; '*Howhever, it is really important to recognize the benefits...*'). In the conclusion, the writer states their own position, which could be more developed and link back better to previously discussed arguments.

The text is generally well-organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices (e.g., '*In one side*'; '*because*'; '*others argue*'; '*Those who*

*argue*; *Those*; *However*; *'all of these skills'*; *Therefore*; *'In conclusion'*). The use of *'Although'* results in a slight lack of clarity for the reader as it is not being used as a subordinating conjunction.

Ideas are separated into paragraphs mostly appropriately but the transition within some paragraphs is not always effective (i.e., in the penultimate paragraph, the link between the first idea, playing sports can reduce diseases, and the point after *'Therefore'* is unclear).

The writer uses a range of everyday vocabulary and some less common lexis appropriately (e.g., *contribute*; *'promotes health'*; *'distracts from'*; *'academic pursuits'*; *discretion*; *'future prospects'*; *'valid arguments for'*). There is, however, also some inappropriate use of less common lexis (e.g., *'improve mental and body health'*; *determinate*; *'logical think'*; *'strategical think'*; *'Moving to this perception'*). Despite this, the lexical range and control is strong for B2 level.

The writer also uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control. The text includes some very nicely constructed complex sentences (e.g., *'while there are valid arguments for making team sports compulsory in schools, it should ultimately be left to the discretion of individual students and parents.'*; *'Those who argue that schools should concentrate on improving academic grades have a point to be considered, because schools have to develop academic learning, and the students' school life will determinate their future prospects'*). However, there are also some examples of less successfully constructed sentences (e.g., *'Does playing in a team sport by compulsory is a good idea?'*; *'...and make uncorfotable some students; the students should have different sports' categories to assing on, and the school will need to be prepared to attend all demands.'*). While errors are present they mostly do not impede communication.

## **C1 candidate response**

*Team sports are not a compulsory subject in every school, but have we ever thought how valuable it can be? Are we really aware of its benefits? Sports must not only be about making students care about their health, but it should also be used to grow a team unity among the class through team sports.*

*Teams are a part of everybody's life. At work, we are sometimes obliged to work in teams; at school, we are always required to work with our teammates; even when we organize our family's vacation we must work as a team to design the perfect holiday plan. So, why aren't we taught how to work as a team when we are children? Aren't there tools to teach us? Well, there are: team sports can be a great tool to develop students' team abilities while they are having a great time.*

*Not all students like learning, but they most certainly enjoy playing sports. Team sports are a great tool for them to learn important life skills. When they play, they have to learn about sacrifice when they are really tired but they continue playing because the team needs them; they have to learn about coordination when they pass the ball; they have to learn about trust when they let the other try to score the goal; they have to learn about effort and empathy when they plan their attack. Team sports unite students, they develop a feeling of belonging, and they instinctively protect their team as it is their family.*

*When students are a part of a team, both the wins and the loses are shared among all. And even though they might have lost, they have enjoyed the match, they have given their best and they must be proud of themselves. Sports are about*



*enjoying: enjoying the physical exercise, the feelings or the efforts. And when they are a team, it is much easier to understand that sports are not about winning or losing, but about everything else.*

*However, is it really necessary to teach team sports in school? Shouldn't schools only focus on making students improve their academic grades? This is a common opinion among parents. Well, no, school is not only about studying and getting the best grades. School is about growing, it is about developing both academic and social skills, it is about sharing, cooperating, learning and helping others. School is a bridge to the future, and it is where we must build a great base so we can construct big and strong buildings afterwards.*

*In conclusion, every school should encourage their students to play team sports. Students enjoy it as much as they learn with it and improve their health. Can we even see any disadvantages to that?*

## **Commentary**

At C1 level the CEFR says that writers can produce clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples.

The writer uses the conventions of an exposition essay effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas (e.g. *'So, why aren't we taught how to work as a team when we are children? Aren't there tools to teach us? Well, there are: team sports can be a great tool to develop students' team abilities while they are having a great time'*; *'School is about growing, it is about developing both academic and social skills, it is about sharing, cooperating, learning and helping others.'*). The text makes for smooth reading and has developed a clear argument, including a rebuttal of the argument that schools should focus on academic subjects. However, the writer does not make fully clear to the reader if they believe team sports should be mandatory in school.

The text is well-organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices (*So; However; And even though; This; in conclusion*) and organisational patterns to generally good effect. There is an attempt at parallelism in the second paragraph (*'At work... at school...even when we organize our family's...'*) and an attempt at climactic order in the penultimate paragraph (*'School is about... it is about... and it is where we must build a great base so we can construct big and strong buildings afterwards'*). The writer also uses questions effectively as an organisational pattern, although the way the writer answers these questions (*'well, there are'; well, no,*) might be considered a little informal within the context of an essay task.

The writer uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately (e.g., *unity; obliged; sacrifice; empathy; attack; instinctively*) and a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility (e.g., *'Not all students like learning, but they most certainly enjoy playing sports'*; *'School is about growing, it is about developing both academic and social skills, it is about sharing, cooperating, learning and helping others'*; *'When students are a part of a team, both the wins and the loses are shared among all. And even though they might have lost, they have enjoyed the match, they have given their best and they must be proud of themselves.'*). Errors are present but do not impede communication.

## C2 candidate response

*Today many institutions have taken the stand of making team sports a mandatory part of their curriculum. However, in the midst of this scenario, the question arises of whether this is a necessary approach.*

*In my opinion, participating in a team sport is highly beneficial, yet making such a participation compulsory in schools could have some negative effects on students and might, therefore, not be the best approach for institutions to take.*

*Indeed, team sports are highly beneficial as they can help students to develop valuable and lasting life skills. For example, they require them to learn to communicate their feelings and ideas effectively, to work together towards a common goal, and to develop conflict resolution skills, all of which are essential abilities to succeed in life regarding of the professional direction an individual may take.*

*In addition, although some may affirm that schools' primary focus should be the improvement of students' academic grades, meaningful education also has the holistic mission to develop all aspects of an individual's life: the intellectual, the physical and even the emotional aspect. Team sports provide an ideal opportunity to strengthen and care for a person's physical body, which will contribute to his/her entire wellbeing.*

*Finally, team sports are positive activities in that they contribute to the development of a different mindset, which is engaging in an activity for enjoyment alone and not with the many times egotistic drive to win or lose.*

*Nonetheless, despite the benefits that team sports entail, there are certain drawbacks to their being mandatory in educational institutions. The first one is simply that not all students are physically able to engage in sports. Some may feature physical impairments such as diseases or simply weaker muscles or respiratory systems, which might prevent them from engaging in physical exercise. Others might have poor hand-eye or hand-foot-ball coordination. For these individuals, far from being an enjoyment, sports are a source of humiliation before their peers, whose rejection can cause significant harm to their self-esteem. Finally, other students' personalities are simply not physical exercise-oriented; to them physical activity is more of a torture than a leisurely endeavour, and their personality traits should be respected as well.*

*Nevertheless, should a person's lack of physical ability deprive him/her from the benefits of team sports? Fortunately that is not the case as there are other alternatives that can help individuals develop cooperation, communication, conflict resolution, team work and even physical movement. For example, an institution can design tasks or projects such as product development, presentations, events, debate teams, and even choirs to develop such skills. And activities such as group dancing, gardening or engaging in community work outdoors might also contribute to the strengthening of students' physical bodies as well.*

*As can be seen, while team sports offer important benefits, they are not the only option for skill development and should therefore not be mandatory in our country's schools.*

## Commentary



The CEFR states that at C2 level writers can produce clear, smoothly flowing, essays which present a case and can provide an appropriate and effective logical structure which helps the reader identify significant points.

The writer uses the conventions of the communicative task with sufficient flexibility to communicate complex ideas in an effective way. The writer examines the topic from both sides, developing nuanced arguments for and against the proposition before indicating their opinion. The text is able to hold the reader's attention with ease as it makes for smooth reading and it is easy to extract meaning.

The text is a well-organised coherent whole, using a variety of cohesive devices. Explicit linkers (e.g., *However; therefore; 'for example'; 'In addition'; Finally; Nevertheless; 'As can be seen'*) are used to signpost to the reader the relationship of ideas in the text. In addition to this, grammatical devices such as pronouns and demonstratives (*'all of which'; 'not all students ... some... others... For these individuals'*) are also used effectively to organise the text and refer backwards and forwards, and there are examples of lexical cohesion too (*'there are other alternatives... design tasks or projects... And activities such as...'; 'cooperation, communication, conflict resolution... such skills'*). Questions are also used to good effect (*'Nevertheless, should a person's lack of physical ability deprive him/her from the benefits of team sports? Fortunately that is not the case as there are other alternatives'*).

The writer uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, collocations and nominalisations, effectively and precisely (e.g., *'the question arises'; 'valuable and lasting'; 'conflict resolution skills'; 'essential abilities to succeed in life'; 'hollistic mission'; wellbeing; 'development of a different mindset'; 'certain drawbacks'; 'physical impairments'; self-esteem; 'personality traits'*). The text includes a range of simple and complex grammatical forms which are used with control and flexibility (e.g., *Nonetheless, 'despite the benefits that team sports entail, there are certain drawbacks to their being mandatory in educational institutions'; 'For these individuals, far from being an enjoyment, sports are a source of humilliation before their peers, whose rejection can cause significant harm to their self-esteem.'*). The writer is able to use their lexico-grammatical resources to effectively indicate a nuanced stance (*'participating in a team sport is highly beneficial, yet making such a participation compulsory in schools could have some negative effects on students and might, therefore, not be the best approach for institutions to take'*). All of the above allow the writer to express their ideas with precision. While occasional errors are present, they relate to less common words and structures.

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