

REPORT ON ALN CORE SKILL MAPPING

This report looks at 15 pieces of writing and maps them to Core Skills in Communication at Access Three.

1 WHO AM I?

a) Is it suitable for purpose and audience?

Yes. It covers 3 topics all of them relevant to the set subject. The language is reasonably formal – suitable for a tutor or class. The layout is appropriate with 3 separate paragraphs and headings (although the use of brackets is strange!)

b) Does it seem complete?

Yes. There is sufficient material and three different topics. They give a sense of the writer's life experiences so the question 'Who am I?' is answered for the reader.

c) Is there some evidence of structure?

Yes – the three paragraphs, the spacing and the headings all indicate some awareness of structure. The second and third paragraphs have a clear development indicated by 'so I had to...'

d) Are spelling, grammar and punctuation sufficiently accurate for the meaning to be clear?

Yes. There are some infelicities (of for off, commas for full stops etc.) but they do not seriously impede understanding.

SCQF LEVEL - Access 3.

2 'I watched Eastenders...'

a) **Is it suitable for purpose and audience?**

Hard to say without knowing the remit.

b) **Does it seem complete?**

No

c) **Is there some evidence of structure?**

Not really. There are no paragraphs. It does take the reader through the programme chronologically but it rambles.

d) **Are spelling, grammar and punctuation sufficiently accurate for the meaning to be clear?**

Spelling is surprisingly accurate, grammar is basic but clear, punctuation is erratic and does impede understanding.

This piece appears to be incomplete so it is difficult to assess it.

COMMENTS

Although incomplete, the following points can be made about this piece:

- It has no semblance of structure. For a piece of writing to be placed at Access 3 it would have to have some attempts at paragraphing.
- Punctuation is erratic. The sentence beginning 'Chrissie comes in and acts drunk...' appears to cover 13 lines. Understanding is strained if not impeded. This again places the piece at Access 2 which allows that meaning should be grasped after further reading.
- It is not made clear what its purpose is (another weakness) but a requirement of Access 3 is: 'use conventions which are mainly appropriate for the purpose and audience'. One struggles to imagine an audience for whom this would be appropriate. Access 2 has a less stringent requirement and it could be accepted that this piece just meets it.

The piece is not without merit – the writer uses the apostrophe correctly – but without serious revision, it could not be placed any higher than Access 2.

SCQF LEVEL - Access 2.

3 My Reasons

a) Is it suitable for purpose and audience?

Yes. It gives reasons (for taking up further education) It uses mainly formal language and sentence structure. It is well focused on the topic and addresses a wider audience in the final paragraph.

b) Does it seem complete?

Yes. It covers the topic well and has a very clear conclusion. The reader can sense the writer behind the words.

c) Is there some evidence of structure?

Yes. There are three clear paragraphs: introduction (I never had an education), development (this class has benefited me...) and conclusion (Something to look forward to...)

d) Are spelling, grammar and punctuation sufficiently accurate for the meaning to be clear?

There are some mistakes (a lot, there, tuesday) but these do not impede communication.

SCQF LEVEL - Access 3.

4 Restaurants – by our food critic.

a) Is it suitable for purpose and audience?

Yes. It addresses the topic clearly and tells the reader exactly what to expect. The vocabulary is appropriate. There is some sense that the writer has studied this type of writing and is trying with some success to emulate it eg ‘situated in the town’s...’, ‘well-known for its’, ‘ten out of ten.’

b) Does it seem complete?

Yes. There is a strong ending ‘I would go back...ten out of ten.’ The various aspects: location, menu, service, hygiene are covered.

c) Is there some evidence of structure?

The structure is sound: clear introduction, development and ending.

d) Are spelling, grammar and punctuation sufficiently accurate for the meaning to be clear?

There are some errors eg were/where but the meaning is clear.

SCQF LEVEL - Access 3.

5 Learning from experience.

a) Is it suitable for purpose and audience?

Yes. It focuses well on the topic and provides appropriate evidence to support the contention that the writer has learned from experience in further education. It addresses the reader (tutor) and refers to relevant areas such as letter-writing and confidence-building. There are some colloquialisms (I jumped at) and contractions (I don't) but the vocabulary is mainly appropriate.

b) Does it seem complete?

Yes. It has a clear ending with a reference to the future and has sufficient material to satisfy the subject-matter.

c) Is there some evidence of structure?

Yes. There is a clear chronological progression from 'when I started' to 'I am now looking forward...' However, there are no paragraphs and this weakness makes the structure initially hard to discern. It would be fair to say that there is some structure but there is room for improvement!

d) Are spelling, grammar and punctuation sufficiently accurate for the meaning to be clear?

Yes. There are a few mistakes but nothing very serious.

SCQF LEVEL - Access 3.

6 Example 4 Letter

a) Is it suitable for purpose and audience?

Yes. It more or less follows the conventions for letter writing in layout. The salutation is correctly followed by Yours sincerely (though should not have a capital S). The language is appropriate for a business letter. The tone is courteous but firm.

b) Does it seem complete?

It is very brief and lacking in detail – eg repairs are not explained. However reference is made to a previously sent list and to an enclosure. It is complete in that it clearly states its purpose and intention. The reader is left in no doubt as to what action is required.

c) Is there some evidence of structure?

Yes. It follows the 3 part format of letter writing – ie context, request, future action.

d) Are spelling, grammar and punctuation sufficiently accurate for meaning to be clear?

Yes. A couple of spelling mistakes but otherwise quite good.

SCQF LEVEL - Access 3.

7 Letter to Dr Kapasi

a) **Is it suitable for purpose and audience?**

Yes. It is beautifully presented, following the correct conventions for letter writing. The language is formal and the tone is appropriate for a letter of complaint striking a nice balance between courtesy and firmness.

b) **Does it seem to be complete?**

Yes. The rather complicated details are presented clearly and fully. It possibly errs on the side of too much information (eg wealth of detail in paragraph 4) but there is a sustained sense of control in the letter.

c) **Is there some evidence of structure?**

Yes. There is a heading to the letter, a clear opening paragraph and a strong conclusion. The middle paragraphs support the argument relevantly if lengthily.

d) **Are spelling, grammar and punctuation sufficiently accurate for meaning to be clear?**

Yes. These are at a level not normally encountered at Access 3. The writer's ability to control complex sentences and to employ a wide range of vocabulary places him/her at a higher level than Access 3.

COMMENTS

This piece would be placed at Int 2 for the following reasons:

- It is well-structured
- It presents and analyses information in order to develop an argument
- It uses a format, layout and word-choice which are appropriate to the audience (a doctor) and effective in meeting the purpose.
- It uses complex vocabulary (eg abdominal pain, nausea, hypochondriac) and sentence structure (eg I have been your patient for over 15 years...)

It would not be placed at Higher (although in another piece of writing, this student might reach this level) because it is not long enough for the student to demonstrate an ability to analyse and evaluate, to explore at depth or to consider an issue from several perspectives. However if it were part of a portfolio of pieces of a similar topic and standard, then it could be placed at Higher.

SCQF LEVEL - As a stand alone Int 2.

8 Learning from experience

a) Is the writing suitable for the purpose and audience?

Yes. It is very focused on the topic. The language is formal and free of colloquialisms and contractions. The reader is given sufficient information so that he/she feels the question has been answered.

b) Does it seem to be complete?

Yes. The writer is helped by the headings but each question is covered adequately, evidence is provided and there is a conclusion.

c) Is there some evidence of structure?

Yes. Again the headings help the writer but each paragraph has a sense of unity.

d) Are spelling grammar and punctuation sufficiently accurate for the meaning to be clear?

The spelling is good ('potential', 'received', 'assertive' all correctly spelt!)
There are a few infelicities of grammar and punctuation (eg paragraph 4) but meaning is clear.

SCQF LEVEL - Access 3.

9 My German Mother

a) Is the writing suitable for purpose and audience?

Yes. It deals adequately with the topic. It uses formal language and communicates a clear picture to the reader. Paragraph 5 (They say the bonus...) engages the reader's interest neatly by drawing on different experiences of having a foreign parent. The tone is affectionate and thoughtful which is appropriate for a personal piece of writing.

b) Does it seem to be complete?

Yes. There is sufficient information and opinion for the reader to feel that the topic has been adequately covered.

c) Is there some evidence of structure?

Yes. There is a clear opening statement and a strong conclusion which relates well to the preceding argument. Paragraphing could be improved (two one sentence paragraphs) but the reader is aware of an argument being constructed and developed.

d) Are spelling, grammar and punctuation sufficiently accurate to make meaning clear?

Yes. Spelling is almost error free. Punctuation is fair – there is confusion of comma and full stop in paragraph 5 (They say...) but this is offset by the brave attempt to use the semi-colon three times. This is very unusual at Access 3 level!

COMMENTS

The strengths of this piece of work outweigh the weaknesses. With some revision (see above) this could be placed at Int 1. Its logical structure, formal language and presentation of a clearly stated personal opinion are features of Int 1 but its shaky punctuation and one-sentence paragraphs bring it down.

SCQF LEVEL - Access 3.

10 Ever since being a carer

a) Is it suitable for purpose and audience?

Yes. It addresses the question (presumably: 'What have you got out of this course?'). It uses formal language and provides the reader with some examples that are relevant to the topic.

b) Does it seem to be complete?

Yes. It explains what the writer hopes to achieve as a result of following the course.

c) Is there some evidence of structure?

There is some evidence of structure in that the writer moves from the initial statement through the passage to a conclusion. However there is no paragraphing at all and the line of argument is random. He/she jumps from point to point (experience with caring for mother, report writing, interview techniques, voluntary work) without development or explanation. The effect is disorganised.

d) Are spelling, grammar and punctuation sufficiently accurate for the meaning to be clear?

Not entirely. There are some basic mistakes of spelling (right for write, apaling, these) and grammar (this has gave me... give myself). The punctuation is fair although some parts have to be read twice to make sense (eg first sentence and last two sentences)

COMMENTS

It would be fair to say that the weaknesses of this piece outweigh the strengths and some improvements would have to be made to bring it up to Access 3 level. The most serious weakness is the rambling structure.

This piece as it stands would be placed at Access 2 rather than 3 for the following reasons:

- It has no paragraphs and little structure. However, it does match the requirement of Access 2 to 'present a simple piece of information in concrete personal terms'.
- It has numerous mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar which place it below Access 3. However it can be understood after further reading which is a requirement of Access 2.

SCQF LEVEL - Access 2.

11 Letter to Prudential

a) Is it suitable for the purpose and audience?

Yes. It basically follows the conventions of lay-out for a letter although there is no heading and the subscription should be Yours faithfully. The language and tone are appropriate for a business letter of complaint.

b) Does it seem to be complete?

Yes. The opening sentence sets out the subject which is then expanded in the second paragraph. The reader is able to form a clear idea of the nature of the complaint.

c) Is there some evidence of structure?

Yes. The three paragraphs follow logically on from each other. The opening statement puts the matter into context, the second paragraph summarises the situation to date with some succinctness and the closing paragraph indicates what action will be taken.

d) Are spelling, grammar and punctuation sufficiently accurate for the meaning to be clear?

Yes. This is almost error free. The vocabulary and sentence structures are fairly basic but this is not inappropriate for a letter of this type.

SCQF LEVEL - Access 3.

12 The Jaded Palace (sic)

a) Is it suitable for purpose and audience?

Yes. As a report on a restaurant, it addresses the reader directly 'I am writing to tell you...' The tone is relaxed – 'You just go round', 'anyone out there,' 'check it out', which is acceptable in this context and it addresses the points that a reader would want to know such as location, menu, hygiene etc.

b) Does it seem to be complete?

Yes. It includes relevant material in sufficient detail for the reader to know what to expect from this restaurant.

c) Is there some evidence of structure?

Yes. Apart from the unfortunate error in the title it has a clear and logical structure. It guides the reader through location, menu, staff, and hygiene and having built up a clear picture of the restaurant ends predictably with a recommendation for the reader to visit it. The paragraphing is fairly sound though there is some repetition.

d) Are spelling, grammar and punctuation sufficiently accurate for the meaning to be clear?

Yes. A few errors, heavy dependence on 'and' but the piece communicates satisfactorily.

SCQF LEVEL - Access 3

13 Letter to Library

a) Is it suitable for purpose and audience?

It follows the conventions of layout for a letter although it has no heading and the date is above the address. The language is appropriate for a business letter.

b) Does it seem to be complete?

It is complete as a letter requesting an application form but as it only has about 40 words it does not fulfil the requirements of Access 3.

c) Is there some evidence of structure?

There is only one full paragraph but the writer does state clearly the purpose of the letter and the action that is required.

d) Are spelling, grammar and punctuation sufficiently accurate for the meaning to be clear?

Yes. The writer even makes correct use of the apostrophe.

COMMENTS

As it stands, this piece simply does not have enough material to satisfy Access 3 level. However the writer demonstrates a standard of English that is of this level.

This letter would satisfy Access 3 if it were substantially increased in length. It satisfies requirements for structure, conventions, layout and English. However a further requirement of Access 3 is 'produce a brief written communication which contains **several** items of information and/or a **discernible personal opinion**'. It is this lack that places this student at Access 2.

If this piece were part of a portfolio of writing which provided evidence of the candidate's ability to present several items of information and present a discernible personal opinion, then this would be acceptable at Access 3.

SCQF LEVEL - As a stand alone – Access 2.

14 Letter to Mr R Walker

a) Is it suitable for purpose and audience?

It follows the conventions of layout for a business letter although it has no heading and the subscription is not present. The language is suitable for this type of letter.

b) Does it seem to be complete?

It is short of the 100 word requirement. There are omissions eg no date in reference to Greenock Herald, no actual statement that the writer wishes to apply for the job. However it does cover the essential points and would be understood by the recipient.

c) Is there some evidence of structure?

There are three clear paragraphs giving a good visual structure. However the content of the paragraphs could be improved. For example, paragraph one does not actually state that the writer wishes to apply for the job – merely that he/she has seen the advertisement. There is little sense of organisation.

d) Are spelling, punctuation and grammar sufficiently accurate for the meaning to be clear?

Apart from the unfortunate ‘punctionable’, meaning is not seriously impeded.

This piece hovers on the borderline of Access 3: its content is thin and its structure although discernible, could be improved.

COMMENTS

This is a good example of a piece of work that could be brought up to Access 3 with some revision. The following improvements would be needed:

- Improve the layout by including a heading, a subscription, enc. and a closing sentence (I look forward to...)
- Rewrite the opening paragraph to make it clear that this is a letter of application.
- Rewrite the second paragraph, removing mistakes and the word ‘quite’.
- Increase the length by eg including availability for interview

SCQF LEVEL - Access 2

15 Walking

a) Is it suitable for purpose and audience?

Yes. It gives examples of walking. The reader receives information on the set topic.

b) Does it seem to be complete?

No. It contains 6 sentences and about 60 words so it falls short of the 100 word requirement for Access 3. It gives examples of walking in summer and winter. If spring and autumn had been included there would have been more sense of completion.

c) Is there some evidence of structure?

There are two clearly separate paragraphs but there is no introduction, little development and no conclusion.

d) Are spelling, punctuation and grammar sufficiently accurate for the meaning to be clear?

Yes. However the piece is so slight that there is little scope for mistakes to occur.

COMMENTS

This piece is too short and too undeveloped to reach Access 3 level.

For this piece to reach Access 3 level the writer would have to make the following changes:

- Improve the structure by adding a clear introduction and conclusion
- Increase the length by adding paragraphs about Spring and Autumn.
- Use slightly more complex vocabulary and sentence structure. Access 2 requires 'very simple vocabulary and sentence structure', Access 3 'simple vocabulary and sentence structure.' As it stands this piece fall squarely into the 'very simple' category.

If this piece were part of a portfolio of similar length on the same topic the candidate would only reach Access 3 if the vocabulary and sentence structure met the requirements indicated above.

SCQF LEVEL - As a stand alone – Access 2.