

3 The writing process in C1 Advanced

As mentioned in the previous chapter, writing in C1 Advanced is easier as it might seem (at least in my humble opinion). The cool thing is that we can apply the exact same process for every single task, no matter if we're trying to write an essay, email or proposal.

The following structure should give you the foundation to master any task so internalise it before you start looking at individual tasks.

Analyse the task

The very first step to a successful text is to **find out what the specific task at hand requires you to do**. In general, there is a set of three questions that you should ask when looking at a task:

1. *What is the topic of the task?*

Knowing the topic helps you in two ways. Firstly, you get a general idea as the range of possible topics is very wide in C1 Advanced. You might have to write about something fairly abstract, but you could also be tasked with an account of a personal experience. Secondly, you can get an idea of the vocabulary you can use in that specific text. Using a wide range of expressions is key if you want to score high marks for your writing.

2. *What exactly do I have to include in my text?*

In every writing task in C1 Advanced, you will find two or three main topic points which can come in the form of questions or sometimes notes that you must address in your text. Scan the task for those specific items as you lose marks if you don't cover each single one of them in detail.

3. *Who is going to read my text?*

It is easy to confuse the physical reader (the examiner) with the reader defined in the task. You always need to pay careful attention to this and check 'who is going to read your text'. Is it a friend, your classmates or perhaps the director of your school

or your boss? This becomes important as you have to choose the appropriate register and tone (formal, neutral or informal) for the reader in your specific task.

You can check out a video on the differences between the different registers [here](#).

Now that we've looked at the three steps in theory, let's go through a practical example.

You see the following announcement on a website, *Great Lives*:

Reviews wanted

Send us a review of a book or film that focuses on somebody who has made an important contribution to society.

Did you learn anything new about the person's life from the book or film? Did the book or film help you understand why this person made their important contribution?

Write your **review**.

Above you can see an example review writing task from the official C1 Advanced Teacher's Handbook. Taking the three questions from before, we can now analyse this task:

1. *What is the topic of the task?*

This one is very much straightforward. The review needs to be about a book or movie in which one of the characters contributed to society in a meaningful way.

2. *What exactly do I have to include in my text?*

Here, we look at any signs of bullet points or questions, but the main topic points might also be hidden so you have to read the task very carefully in order not to miss any of them.

In our example, we have to describe if learned anything about the character's life and if we were able to understand the person's behaviour.

3. *Who is going to read my text?*

Last but not least, the review is for a website called Great Lives. As we don't really know what kind of website it is or who its visitors are and because the language in

the announcement is rather neutral, we should probably not swing the informal language hammer but keep it between informal and neutral.

With a little bit of practice and experience, you will find yourself breezing through your task analyses in under a minute. I still urge you to take it seriously as you might very easily miss certain important aspects of the task. Don't waste this opportunity to set yourself up for success from the beginning.

Make a plan

What I'm going to say next might be the most important part of this whole book, but many candidates and even teachers don't emphasise it or pay attention to it at all.

In my teaching career, I have seen so many bad texts (probably a lot more than good ones) and in many cases the problem isn't a lack of grammar or vocabulary range, but rather a little bit of negligence that could be avoided so easily.

Of course, what I mean is a plan. Time and again, I remind my students of planning their texts properly just to see texts (luckily just practice tasks) where half of it is crossed out and rewritten. In most cases, the problem is the absence of a plan. Contrary to popular belief, a plan doesn't cost you time but will save you time if you know what to do. Instead of drafting, writing and rewriting whole paragraphs, a plan gives you an easy-to-follow road map and you will have a much easier time crafting your texts fluidly and effortlessly.

Apart from adding valuable minutes to your time bank, making a plan has another great advantage. You can apply the idea to all the different types of text in C1 Advanced and benefit from it no matter the task. Remember that you only have 90 minutes for two texts so you don't want to leave anything to chance. Be prepared and reap the fruit of your labour.

Just as before, let's have a look at our example task: