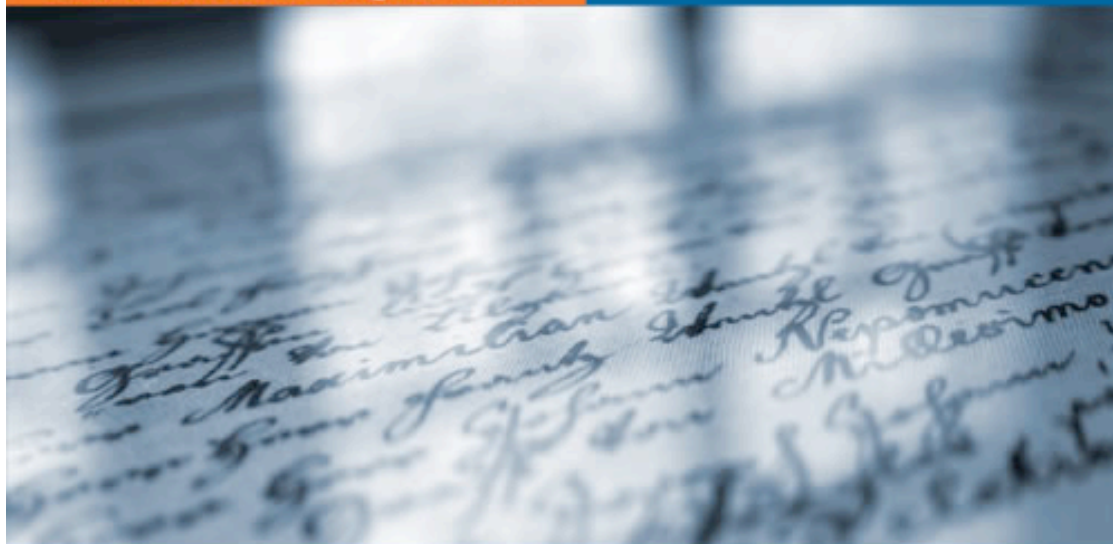


REVISE

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ENGLISH

Junior Certificate - Higher Level

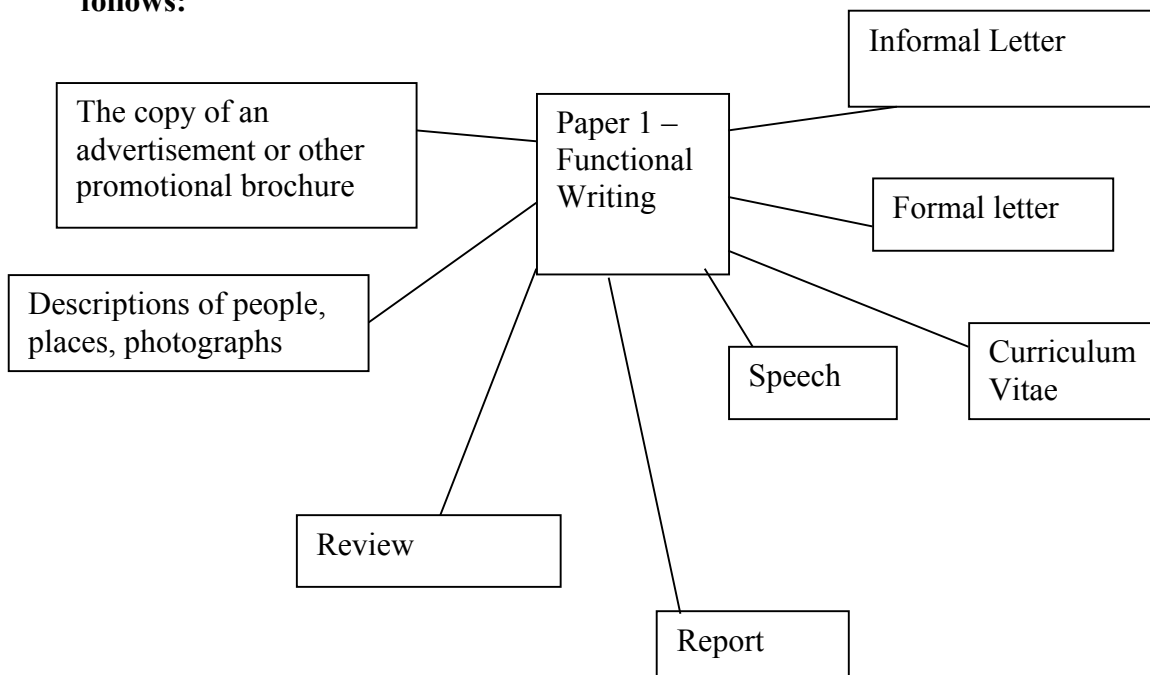


STUDY GUIDELINES: FUNCTIONAL WRITING

The FUNCTIONAL WRITING Section

Study Guidelines

The third section to appear on your Higher Level exam paper is the Functional Writing Section. Some of the options that may appear on the exam paper are as follows:



In this Section, you may be asked to write a letter, a report or a review. Other areas that may appear on the exam paper include a speech, a curriculum vitae, a job application letter, or a set of instructions.

In your first three years of Secondary school, you would have completed many similar tasks in these forms already. In the final few months and weeks before your Junior Certificate exam, you must revise a variety of Functional Writing tasks that may appear on the exam paper, and practise composing in each form.

Questions for Student to Answer

Question:

What are the six key requirements of Functional Writing?

Answer:

The six key requirements of Functional Writing are that you:

1. use language with an appropriate register. This means that you must write in an appropriate tone and use appropriate vocabulary for the specific task and audience.
1. have a clear sense of who you are writing for.
1. write with a strong sense of purpose.
1. give your writing a shape or layout that conforms to accepted standards (e.g. for a letter, the placing of the address in the top right-hand corner).
1. punctuate accurately and observe the rules of grammar.
1. keep your content relevant to the question.

Letters:

Question:

What are the main things to remember when writing letters?

Answer:

Before you begin, be clear as to whether your letter will be formal or informal.

Formal letters include those which:

- make a complaint or request.
- invite someone to a formal event.
- write to a newspaper or other media organisation, such as SKY.
- apply for a job.

Informal letters are those which you:

- write to your close friends.
- write to your family.

For any letter you write:

- always keep in mind the purpose and the audience of your letter.
- write in a clear, concise style and avoid long, rambling sentences.
- aim to write four to five paragraphs. Include your reason for writing (paragraph 1), the main points or comments you wish to make (paragraphs 2, 3 and 4), and a conclusion (paragraph 5).
- remember to use the appropriate structure for your letter.

Example of a Letter

10, South Avenue,
Ballyhill Rd.,
Dunmore,
Co. Offaly.

21 March 2007

Hi Sharon,

How are things? I haven't heard from you in two days now! I've just got in from school and I've loads of homework to do. Wish me luck! But that can wait 'til later.

I have to tell you about what happened today in French. Mademoiselle Murphy, or the Grinder, as we call her, went crazy in class this morning. Only three students brought in homework and she went ballistic. She marched the rest of the class up to the office and demanded that the Principal contact all their parents!

I think we'll all have our homework in tomorrow! Anyway, I was wondering if you are interested in going to the cinema next Saturday? I'm not sure what's on, but who cares, it would be just a break from all the 'studying' we're supposed to be doing!

Looking forward to hearing all your news. Write back soon!

Deirdre.

Reports:

Question:

What are the main features of a report?

Answer:

When you are writing a report, make sure you:

- give the report a **title**.
- introduce the **subject** of the report. Also mention who requested the report and briefly outline the aims of the report.
- present your **facts and findings** in the body of the report. You may **use headings** to highlight and flag the content of each paragraph.
- conclude with your own **opinions** on the event/situation/incident, based on the findings.
- suggest some response to the findings in your **Recommendations**.
- include your 'signature' and the date on which the report was written at the end of the report.

Example of a Report

Report on school tuck shop, September 2005–June 2006

To: Board of Management, St Mary's Secondary School

Terms of reference: This report was commissioned by the chairperson of the Board of Management to examine the performance of the school tuck shop.

Introduction

The tuck shop was open every day from 11 a.m. to 11.15 a.m. and again from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. in the school cafeteria.

Findings

1. Costs for the year were €750. Sales were €1,000. Profit for year: €250. The profit was donated to the school library for the purchase of new books. It is clear that the tuck shop has been a financial success.
2. Class surveys indicate that the tuck shop was popular with students, as the facilities previously available were not adequate.
3. The following problems arose during the year:
 - (a) There was an increase in litter near the cafeteria.
 - (b) Some parents expressed concern at the sale of so-called 'junk food'.
 - (c) It was difficult to manage the long queues that frequently formed.

Recommendations

We would like to make the following recommendations:

- (a) More litter bins should be provided at the entrance to the cafeteria.
- (b) Members of the School Council should be assigned to help manage the queue

Conclusion

In general, the tuck shop performed well throughout the year. In our view, the above recommendations should improve the situation further.

Signed:
Anne Daly
John Murphy

Transition Year
9 June 2006

Speeches:

Question:

What are the guidelines for writing speeches?

Answer:

- There are many reasons why people write speeches. A speech can be made to praise, to condemn, to warn, to advise and so on. Speeches may also be informative or entertaining, sometimes both.
- When the purpose of the speech is clear, it is very important that a plan is made of what is going to be said.
- **Brainstorm** the subject of the speech. Select the stronger points and organise them into paragraphs – an introduction, the main body of the speech (perhaps two paragraphs), and a conclusion.
- Indicate your stand on an issue early on. Do you agree or disagree with the statement or motion?
- Write clearly to support your main points with **evidence**.
- If a speech is to sound convincing and persuasive, it should include a combination of personal observations, anecdotes to appeal to your **audience's emotion**, and factual information to appeal to your **audience's reason**.

Example of a speech

Fellow students, I would like to tell you a rather upsetting story. Last Sunday was, as you know, a very hot day. I was walking with some of my friends towards the next estate when we came across two horses lying down at the side of the road. They just lay there, without the energy even to get up when we came near. We could see froth gathering at their mouths. When we rang the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, they told us that this was not the first time that day that horses had become dehydrated because no one had remembered to give them water.

Now I know that some of you listening to me today may say that there are people suffering in the world and they need our help. That is certainly true. But people have one big advantage over animals: they can at least ask for our help. Animals rely on us to protect them. The Society has told us that they need almost twenty thousand euros to provide special equipment for storing water in their vans so that they can travel around caring for horses and other animals too, particularly during the summer months. Twenty thousand euros! What a small amount when you think of all the money wasted in this country. We in Class 3B think that this is a very worthwhile cause. We are here today to ask for your help in raising money. We propose to hold a school quiz next Tuesday afternoon, with all proceeds to go to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The principal has already agreed to allow each class to take part. We hope you all enjoy the quiz and we hope you will all agree that it is good to support the work of this Society. After all, think of the happiness that animals have given to humans. Don't they deserve our protection when they need it?

Reviews

Question:

What should you bear in mind when writing a review?

Answer:

When writing a review, keep in mind the audience. Write in the style appropriate for your readers. Include both information and opinions. Make sure to give reasons for your opinions. Write one page (or at least three paragraphs).

Example of a review:

***Romeo and Juliet*, RSC, The Pit**

Michael Attenborough directs this blazing youthful classic with a cunning and unsentimental blend of passion and compassion. The setting is pre-war Italy, and the two families seem to be prosperous working class. Juliet helps with the washing and the cooking, and young blades roam the streets in dirty vests and braces and fight with sticks and sickles. Some of the horseplay is way over the top. All this sits a little oddly with the text, both the learned, witty puns and the language of poetic feeling and almost knightly courtesy. On the other hand, it gives the action a sense of raw, earthy vigour. These are young people with huge passions which they can barely understand, let alone control. The older generation seems helpless against the hostilities it has unleashed. At the heart of the whirlpool, Ray Fearon (Romeo) and Zoe Waites (Juliet) play a thrilling duet. Both are young but have the sophisticated intensity and technical refinement of mature actors – though Waites's voice, with its rich adult timbre, needs more variety. In theory, this should get in the way of portraying headstrong and inexperienced adolescents, but it does not: the two players put across a sense of reckless eagerness and desire. I have seen this play many, many times but the ending still gave me a sense of pity and waste.

From *The Sunday Times*, 9 November 1997

Advertisement or Brochure

Question:

What are the guidelines for writing an advertisement?

Answer:

The key guidelines to remember when writing the text of an advertisement or brochure are as follows:

- Write in a friendly, intimate style.
- Talk directly to your readers.
- Give some information, but not too many facts.
- Be positive – try to ‘sell’ your product.
- As in all functional writing, think of your audience/readers.

Example of an Advertisement/Brochure

Spread your wings this year to the sunniest and most easy-going of the costas! The Costa de Almeria at the south-east tip of Spain extends to either side of the city of Almeria, incorporating three major resorts. Costa de Almeria is completely different to the other costas in that it is more relaxed and boasts one of the highest annual hours of sunshine in the world – over 3,000 hours of sun. Still unspoiled and preserving its traditional atmosphere, this corner of Andalucia has been called ‘Spain’s best-kept secret’. White hilltop villages, with the blue sky above them and the blue sea at their feet, reflect the Moorish influence with their strong North African flavour. Narrow winding streets and fascinating shops will even tempt you away from the splendid uncrowded beaches of the coast. To all this sun-drenched charm, add good restaurants, deserted beaches and unforgettable sightseeing opportunities, and you’ll know why Costa de Almeria is a secret Falcon is proud to share with you!

From Falcon holiday brochure,
Falcon Summer Sun 2005.

Describing Photographs/Pictures

Question:

Define the following terms: Frame, Background and Foreground

Answer:

The terms can be defined as follows:

- **Frame:** The borders in which the picture is enclosed.
- **Background:** The space behind the main part of a photograph.
- **Foreground:** The space to the front of a photograph.

Question:

What should you bear in mind when describing a photograph or picture?

Answer:

- Divide the picture into sections and describe each section in turn.
- Use precise words, such as **background**, **centre**, etc.
- Use a logical sequence. Begin first with an overall description of what is in the frame, e.g. 'This is a photograph of a winter scene', 'This is a picture of a crowded beach', etc.
- Then be specific about the details of what you see in each section.
- Move from left to right, as we do when we read.
- Comment on any special features you may observe, such as **lighting effects** (bright or subdued lighting), **camera angles** (aerial shots, close-up, long distance), etc.

Question:

What are blurbs?

Answer:

Blurbs are the short, descriptive texts that you will find on the back cover of a book such as a novel or short story book. Publishers include numerous blurbs on their websites and you can also read blurbs in book catalogues. You might also see a blurb on the back of a DVD case, or even on the back of a Music CD. Blurbs are written to inform but also to persuade. Companies want you to buy the book or DVD, so the language in a blurb is written in a persuasive style.

Question:

What are the guidelines for writing successful blurbs?

Answer:

Here are some guidelines for writing successful blurbs!

- Write a brief description of the contents of the book.
- Include a few points about the author. If the author has previously written popular books, note this.
- Recommend the product. Remember that blurbs are informative *and* persuasive. While your blurb should include some factual information about the film/book, etc. it should also include some adjectives and superlatives to suggest that this book is the 'best', the 'most interesting', the 'funniest', or even the 'scariest' one the year.
- Another technique is to include snippets, brief excerpts or even quotations from positive reviews of the product that appeared in newspapers and magazines. These can be used to praise the qualities of the product and/or the author – 'gripping' plot, 'fascinating' characters, 'powerfully' written, and so on. If a trendy magazine said it was the 'coolest book this year for teens', then you want to include this in your blurb!