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# UNIMC LABORATORIO INGLESE I

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WRITING (EMAIL AND STORY)

**1** Read the exam task. What information should you include in the email?

Read this email from your English-speaking friend Sam, and the notes you have made.

From: Sam  
Subject: Sports tickets!

Hi,  
Guess what? Do you remember the sports competition I entered last month? They announced the results yesterday, and I've won two tickets to go and watch an international sports event!  
Would you like to come to the event with me? We can choose to go in July or August.  
We have to book which sport we want to see in advance. There are football and basketball matches. Which sport do you prefer to watch?  
They sell lots of souvenirs at the stadium. What do you think we should buy?  
Bye for now,  
Sam

*Amazing!*

*Yes – tell Sam when you can make it.*

*Tell Sam.*

*Suggest ...*

Write your **email** to Sam, using **all** the **notes**.

## MODEL ANSWER

*Use an informal phrase to start the email.*

*Remember you  
are replying to  
Sam's email.*

Hi Sam,

Thanks for your email. That's amazing news about the competition!  
Well done!

Yes, I love sport, so it would be incredible to go to a big sports event  
with you. I can go with you in July, but I can't go in August because  
I'm on holiday then.

*This answers the  
question about when  
you can or can't make  
it, and gives a reason.*

I'm a big football fan, so I'd love to see an international football match.  
It would be brilliant to see some of my favourite heroes in action.

*This answers the  
question 'Which  
sport do you prefer  
to watch?'*

Why don't we buy football shirts as souvenirs? We can wear them at  
the match!

*This is a suggestion.*

See you soon,

Tom

*Use an informal phrase at the end.*

**Read the exam task. What information should you include in the email?**

Read this email from your English-speaking friend Sam, and the notes you have made.

From: Sam

Subject: Sports tickets!

Reply

Forward

Hi,

Guess what? Do you remember the sports competition I entered last month? They announced the results yesterday, and I've won two tickets to go and watch an international sports event! \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to come to the event with me? We can choose to go in July or August. \_\_\_\_\_

We have to book which sport we want to see in advance. There are football and basketball matches. Which sport do you prefer to watch? \_\_\_\_\_

They sell lots of souvenirs at the stadium. What do you think we should buy? \_\_\_\_\_

Bye for now,

Sam

**MODEL ANSWER**

Use an informal phrase to start the email.

Remember you are replying to Sam's email.

Use an informal phrase at the end.

This answers the question about when you can or can't make it, and gives a reason.

This answers the question 'Which sport do you prefer to watch?'

This is a suggestion.

Hi Sam,

Thanks for your email. That's amazing news about the competition! Well done!

Yes, I love sport, so it would be incredible to go to a big sports event with you. I can go with you in July, but I can't go in August because I'm on holiday then.

I'm a big football fan, so I'd love to see an international football match. It would be brilliant to see some of my favourite heroes in action.

Why don't we buy football shirts as souvenirs? We can wear them at the match!

See you soon,

Tom

Write your **email** to Sam, using **all** the **notes**.

# INFORMAL EMAILS

Informal emails are pieces of writing we send to people we know well.

- ▶ We usually start an informal email with **Dear/Hi** + the person's **first name**.
- ▶ In the first paragraph, we write our **opening remarks** (e.g. **Hi! How are you?**) and the **reason** for writing.
- ▶ We write about the specific topics of our email/letter in separate paragraphs.
- ▶ In the last paragraph, we write our **closing remarks** (e.g. **Have to go now.**) and sign off with an informal ending (e.g. **Yours**) and our first name.
- ▶ We use informal style, that is:
  - **everyday vocabulary** (**I'm having a great time.**)
  - **colloquial expressions/idioms** (**Drop me a line.**)
  - **informal linkers** (**so, and** etc.)
  - **short verb forms** (**I can't, I'll be...**)

Opening remarks

Dear Claire,

**How are you doing?** Sorry for not writing for so long. I'm doing **a lot** these days. I wanted to drop you a quick line to tell you about my new job.

Everyday vocabulary

Short verb forms

**I'm** working in a clothes shop when I'm not at school. I'm a shop assistant there. I put the clothes in the right places in the shop. I work two days a week from 5 pm until 8 pm and on Saturdays from 9 am to 5 pm.

Informal linkers

On my first day, I learned where everything in the shop is. It was a bit tiring **but** it's great to have a job.

Colloquial expressions

I wanted a new mobile phone and now I've bought one! I'd also like to buy some clothes from the shop!

**Drop me a line soon!**

Yours,  
Rebecca



## Informal emails

### Beginnings:

Hi + name (or Dear + name if you want to be a bit more formal).

*(I'm really) sorry for not writing earlier, but...*

*Thank you / Thanks (so much) for (your letter, having me to stay, etc.)...*

*It was great to hear from you.*

### Endings:

*That's all for now.*

*Hope to hear from you soon. / Looking forward to hearing from you soon.*

*(Give my) regards / love to...*

*Best wishes / Love (from)*

*PS (when you want to add a short message at the end)*

## Writing – Part 1

Read this email from your American friend Heather and the notes you have made. Then write your email to Heather using all the notes.

### NEW MESSAGE



Hello!

How are things in Italy? What are you doing?

We're having some crazy weather here! First it rained for ten days, then it froze and the ground turned to ice, and finally last Saturday it started snowing! What was the weather like in your town last weekend?

I was actually in Philadelphia when it started snowing. My father was born there and we still have relatives in the city. By the way, where are your parents from?

Where did they meet?

Philly in the snow was lovely. We spent a lot of time at the art museum, though: they have some lovely paintings by Van Gogh. Are there any cool museums in your area? What can you see there?

Let me know – I hope to come and visit you one day!

Write to me soon,  
Heather

***I'm fine. I'm...***

***The weather over the weekend was...***

***Answer***

***They met in...***

***Yes, there's a museum of...***

***Me too!***

To: devrim.teke@mail.com

From: Enrico Idoni

► Subject: First day in Thailand

► Hello from Bangkok! I'm having a great time here with my family. I didn't enjoy the flight. It was long and boring, but the coach journey was quick and we checked into the hotel easily.

► Yesterday we went sightseeing around the city. We saw some fantastic sights. This morning we bought some souvenirs. I think Bangkok is amazing. The people are really friendly and polite. They speak English perfectly, too. The food is really tasty – you have to try it! I'd like to come here again.

How are you? Did you go to Luke's party yesterday?

See you soon,

Enrico

- Use present continuous to say what is happening now.
- Use past simple affirmative and negative to talk about what happened during the journey, yesterday and this morning.
- Use present simple to describe things in general and give your opinion.
- Use past simple for questions to ask your friend something about the past.

## USEFUL LANGUAGE

### Starting an informal email/letter

- Dear/Hi/Hey Mum/Dad/Aunt Claire/Tom/Lucy...

### Opening remarks

- Hope you're OK. / How are you doing?
- Hi! How are you?
- Hi from Moscow/Rome/Kraków...
- Thanks for your email. / It was good to hear from you.
- Sorry I didn't write earlier, but I...
- Sorry for not writing for so long.
- I haven't heard from you for a while.

### Reason for writing

- I wanted to drop you a line to tell you my news.
- I wanted to tell you about...
- I just wanted to ask/remind/thank you...
- Just a quick email to tell you...
- I wondered if you'd like to...
- This is just to let you know...
- I'm sorry to hear about...
- I was a bit worried and wanted to see if you're OK.

### Making reference to future contact

- Drop me a line sometime. / Email me soon.
- I hope to hear from you soon. / Give me a call later.
- Let me know if you can make it or not.
- I was glad to hear about...
- Let me know as soon as possible.

### Closing remarks

- I'd better get going. / Bye for now.
- I must go now. / Got to go now.

### Ending an informal email/letter

- Yours / Best wishes / Love / Take care... + *signature*

## KEY LANGUAGE AND IDEAS FOR EMAILS

### Opening an email:

Hi Hi, Tom Hi, there Hello

### Closing an email:

Love, See you soon, Take care, Bye

### Responding to an email:

Thanks for your email. It's good to hear from you.

### Responding to good news:

That's amazing news! I'm so happy for you! Wow! How exciting! Well done!

### Responding to bad news:

I'm sorry to hear about ...

### Making a suggestion:

Why don't you/we ... ? You/We could ... If I were you, I'd ... Make sure you ...

### Making an offer or promise:

I could ... if you like. Would you like me to ... ? I can ... if you want.

### Making a request:

Could you ... ? Can you ... ? Would you mind ... -ing?

### Giving good or bad news:

You'll be pleased to hear that ... I'm afraid ... Guess what ... ? I'm sorry, but ...

### Linking words and phrases:

and but so because also as well

### Informal language:

- contractions: I'm you're he's
- informal words and phrases: awesome great keep in touch take care I guess ...
- exclamation marks to show emotion: That's great news! Wow!



## Informal emails

### Beginnings:

Hi + name (or Dear + name if you want to be a bit more formal).

(I'm really) sorry for not writing earlier, but...

Thank you / Thanks (so much) for (your letter, having me to stay, etc.)...

It was great to hear from you.

### Endings:

That's all for now.

Hope to hear from you soon. / Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

(Give my) regards / love to...

Best wishes / Love (from)

PS (when you want to add a short message at the end)

Here is some useful language:

### Greeting

Hi (name)!  
Dear (name),

### Starting a message

It was lovely to hear from you.  
Thank you for ...  
I hope you are well.  
How are you?

### Giving the purpose of your message

I just wanted to ...  
I'm writing because/to ...  
What do you think about ... ?  
I'm really sorry, but ...

### Keeping the right tone

You know ...  
Well, ...  
And ...  
Anyway, ...

### Closing remark

Hope to hear from you soon!  
See you soon.  
Write soon.

### Salutation

Cheers,  
Lots of love,  
Bye for now,

# HOW TO WRITE A STORY

# HOW TO ORGANISE YOUR STORY

YOU CAN ORGANISE IT FOLLOWING THESE SIMPLE TIPS:

- A GOOD STORY USALLY HAS A BEGINNING, A MAIN PART AND AN ENDING.
- THE MAIN PART IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE SO YOU CAN MAKE IT LONGER THAN THE OTHER ONES.
- MOST OF THE TIME WE GET TO A STRUCTURE THAT LOOKS LIKE THIS:

1. FIRST SENTENCE/BEGINNING
2. MAIN PART PARAGRAPH 1
3. MAIN PART PARAGRAPH 2
4. ENDING

YOU MAY HAVE THREE OR MORE MAIN PART PARAGRAPHS, BUT IN MOST TASKS THE STRUCTURE WITH ONLY TWO OF THEM WORKS VERY WELL!

- In terms of good language, in the example you can notice
  - the **past continuous** (*was shining*), which we use to say what was happening in the background or at the same time as our main events;
  - an **adverb** (*brightly*) and an **adjective** (*golden*), which makes an action more interesting;
  - some **direct speech** (*"I'm so excited about my holidays!"*). This brings the reader closer to the characters compared to indirect or reported speech.
- Always try to make sure to set the scene. Give some background information (past continuous) to introduce the main character(s). Add some adjectives and adverbs as well as direct speech because this makes the reader feel more interested in your story and they want to keep reading.

## First sentence / Beginning

- Once we set the scene, we can move on to the main part of the story. Here, we try **to develop the plot and all the main events happen in these paragraphs**. You can decide how many paragraphs you want to make, but in general you should be fine with two or three of them.
- Example task with two paragraphs:
  - *As soon as Lou got off the plane he left the airport and took a taxi to the city centre because he really wanted to swim in the clear water and sunbathe on the beautiful beach he had seen earlier.*
  - *However, when he arrived at the beach he saw that the weather was changing and five minutes later it was raining heavily. Lou ran into a bar and was surprised because someone shouted, "Hi, it's you again!"*
- The plot grows a little in the first main paragraph and, at the same time, creates some excitement for the reader.
- But the word 'however' at the beginning of the second paragraph makes it clear that something must be wrong.
- Finally, the main paragraph ends with a mysterious voice calling for Lou in the bar. The reader wants to know how the story ends.

## Main paragraphs

- For useful language, you can find
  - some **time expressions** (as soon as, when, five minutes later)
  - as well as **past perfect** and **past continuous** (had seen, was changing, was raining). These verb forms help us to give extra information around the main events of the story;
  - some interesting **adjectives** (clear, beautiful, surprised) and **adverbs** (really, heavily). Once again, these words help us make our story more interesting for the reader.

It is also a good idea to use some **contrast** (however) and **surprising elements** (someone shouted) in your story because, again, **you want to make the story as interesting as possible.**

## Main paragraphs

- Every good story has an ending. In PET, you want to finish your story in a surprising and/or funny way so the reader is happy.
- **Make sure that the ending is connected to the topic.** Don't introduce new characters or let the story move in a completely different direction. Just write one or two last sentences and that's it.

Example story:

**There was the woman from the plane! They started to talk and became very good friends.**

- It's a short ending with a little surprising element (the woman from the plane). It is nothing special or crazy, but it brings the whole story together in a nice way.
- That's all you have to do to make the examiner happy and get great marks.

## Ending

# USEFUL LANGUAGE FOR STORY WRITING

## TO BEGIN

these are  
only some  
simple  
examples  
which you  
can use

*It all began...*

*When I first...*

*At the beginning...*

*It was a hot/cold summer/winter day.*

# Useful language for your Cambridge B1 story:

## Time expressions

Time expressions put the events of your story in a sequence. When you use them in the right way, the reader understands what happened first and the sequence of events.

Some examples of time expressions that you can use in almost every story (one or two of these in every paragraph to get higher marks) are:

- WHEN
- AS SOON AS
- IMMEDIATELY
- BEFORE
- EARLIER
- UNTIL
- WHILE
- AFTER THAT
- NEXT (DAY/MORNING ETC.)
- X MINUTES/DAYS/YEARS LATER
- THEN
- NOT LONG AFTWARDS
- MEANWHILE
- AS
- SOME TIME LATER
- A LITTLE LATER
- A MOMENT LATER
- LATER (THAT MORNING/AFTERNOON/DAY/NIGHT...)
- JUST THEN

## Useful language for your Cambridge B1 story

### SUSPENSE

Some expressions are useful to create SUSPENSE:

- |                       |                              |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| • SUDDENLY            | 1 IMPROVVISAMENTE            |
| • ALL OF A SUDDEN     | 2 ALL'IMPROVVISO             |
| • WITHOUT WARNING     | 3 SENZA PREAVVISO            |
| • JUST AT THAT MOMENT | 4 PROPRIO IN QUEL MOMENTO    |
| • UNEXPECTEDLY        | 5 INASPETTATAMENTE           |
| • OUT OF THE BLUE     | 6 DEL TUTTO INASPETTATAMENTE |
| • OUT OF NOWHERE      | 7 DAL NULLA                  |
| • RIGHT AWAY          | 8 -9 IMMEDIATAMENTE          |
| • STRAIGHT AWAY       |                              |

# Direct speech

In every story there are characters and they usually interact with each other, so it is always good if you know how to use direct speech, that is, reproduce the words the characters actually say or think. The tricky bit about this is the punctuation and the verbs to choose, because it's good to use some verbs other than «say». Let's take a look at some examples:

«I'm coming with you,» she said. /She said, «I'm coming with you.»

«Do you like it?» he asked.

«Don't do it!» he screamed.

We always use quotation marks (“”) to show that we are using direct speech. Used in a story it gives the reader the feeling of being closer to the action and the characters feel more alive. Always try to have a couple of sentences in direct speech in your stories.

Sample story:

*...he said to the woman next to him, “I’m so excited about my holidays!”*

*...someone shouted, “Hi, it’s you again!”*

# Finishing your story

---

*In the end*

---

*Finally*

---

*When it was all over*

---

*Eventually*

---

*After everything that happened*

---

*Luckily*

---

**Experiment at home, be conservative in the exam.**

- Homework is the best chance to be creative and experiment with stories.
- So make sure you try your hardest to keep improving when you write at home.
- On the other hand, when you're doing an exam, don't risk trying out new words or expressions, as you may be making a terrible mistake. So be safe in your exam and **stick to what you already know works.**

- Your English teacher has asked you to write a story.
- Your story must begin with this sentence:

### THE SCHOOL TRIP TO THE MOUNTAINS BEGAN WITH A LONG COACH JOURNEY.

Write your story in about 100 words.

#### Our school trip

The school trip to the mountains began with a long coach journey. Three of my classmates felt ill, so we had to stop a few times.

That morning the weather was beautiful. When we finally arrived, we all happily started on our walk. But after a while it started to rain, and things began to go wrong. First, my friend slipped and fell and hurt herself. Then the restaurant where we were supposed to eat was closed, so we had to go back without any lunch!

Luckily there was food on the bus, and we had a picnic on the long journey back. Getting home was the best part of the trip!

The language is more formal in a story so don't use colloquial expressions.

The first paragraph should involve the readers in some way. Describe the situation to help the reader to imagine it.

Remember to give some kind of conclusion to your story.

Add a title if one is not given

Use adverbs to add interest.

Use time expressions and linking words to make the story clear and linear (e.g. *first*, *suddenly*, *then*, *after that*, *finally*, *after a while*, *by the time*, *when*).

Use different tenses and vary the length of your sentences.

## MODEL ANSWER

*The first paragraph gives background to the story.*

I opened the letter from my cousins in Brazil. They said they were coming to visit me, and they were arriving on the 15th – today!

I was really excited. First, I cleaned everything in the flat. Then I went to the supermarket to buy food. After that, I made a cake to make them feel welcome. By evening, I was completely exhausted.

I picked up the letter again to check the time of their flight, and that's when I noticed the date. They were arriving on 15th July, but today was 15th June!

We had a wonderful time together in July, and all laughed about the mistake I had made!

*The second paragraph gives the main events of the story.*

*Time expressions make the order of events clear.*

*Adjectives and adverbs make the story more interesting.*

*The last paragraph ends the story.*

### KEY LANGUAGE AND IDEAS FOR STORIES

**Use past simple verbs for the main events:**

*I went to a restaurant. I found a letter.*

**Use past continuous verbs for longer actions in the past:**

*I was waiting for the bus. The sun was shining.*

**Use past perfect verbs for background events:**

*Unfortunately, I had forgotten my purse.*

**Time expressions:**

*First then later the next day finally ...*

**Adjectives to describe people:**

*friendly kind tall*

**Adjectives to describe places:**

*busy quiet modern*

**Adjectives to describe feelings:**

*excited angry delighted*

**Adverbs to describe how someone does something:**

*quickly slowly carefully*

**Adverbs to comment on what happened:**

*luckily fortunately unfortunately*

# How to write a story with time expressions

Tell your story in this order:

- 1 Say when and where it happened.
- 2 Say what happened first.
- 3 Say what happened next.
- 4 Say how the story ended.

Every story has a title.  
Think of one for yours.

Use time expressions  
(e.g. *at first*, *then*, *after*,  
*later*) to say when things  
happened.

**Remember!** Say how  
you felt when your story  
was happening. Include  
*something exciting, scary,*  
*interesting or strange.*  
This can help keep the  
reader interested.

## SURPRISE VISITORS!

Last summer we went camping in the countryside. We walked up a mountain and we put our tent in the middle of a forest next to a stream. At first, everything was great. We looked at the colourful flowers, had a picnic and sang songs. Then we went to bed. During the night, while everyone was sleeping, I heard a strange sound. Something was moving outside our tent. I thought it was a bear. I was terrified! I woke my dad up, and told him what was happening. He opened the tent and we found two beautiful foxes!

The past simple  
is for completed  
events, e.g.  
*I went camping.*

The past  
continuous is  
for interrupted  
events, e.g. *While  
everyone was  
sleeping, I heard  
a strange noise.*

Read this email from your English-speaking friend Alex and the notes you have made.

From: Alex      Reply   Forward  

Subject: Music Festival

Hi!

*Me too!* I'm really looking forward to going to the music festival next weekend!

The festival's on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Do you want to go for two days or three days? I'll let you choose. *Tell Alex*

How do you think we should travel to the festival? I don't think that there'll be many parking spaces there. *I think ...*

*No, because ...* It's going to be fun camping at the festival. Should I bring my tent? It's quite small, but it's OK.

See you soon!

Write your email to Alex using all the notes.

Write about 100 words.

LET'S PRACTICE NOW!

Write a story in about 100 words.  
Before you begin, write a plan of your story. Your story must begin with this sentence:

*The journey had started well.*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION!