

## Module 2: Writing (Essay Analytic Rating Scale [EARS]) – YEAR III

### NOTE:

- In view of the imposed time limits, essays written by students must be viewed in the process of assessment as **best possible pre-final drafts**, rather than final versions.
- The descriptors contained in the scale must be interpreted at the **CEFR C1+** level (slightly above Cambridge ESOL *CAE* exam).

	Feature	A: Very good	B: Good to Average	C: Acceptable	D: Poor to Unacceptable
<b>Organisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>basic organisation &amp; layout</i></li> <li><i>thesis</i></li> </ul>	all parts of essay easily identifiable, incl. graphical organisation on page	More features of A than of C More features of C than of A	at least two parts of the essay are easily identifiable; some faults in graphical organisation on page (individual paragraphs not clearly demarcated)	The essay does not meet <u>most of the standards</u> specified in C
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>'thesis Essay' congruence</i></li> </ul>	clearly stated, unambiguous; presents main thought (and signals essay type)		stated although may be considered problematic because it is ambiguous, difficult to identify, fails to address the topic, etc.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>metaorganisation of essay</i></li> </ul>	'opinion' – essay offers a comprehensive discussion on the topic & provides one counterargument which is refuted; 'speculating about the causes' – essay presents a problem & outlines possible causes, discussing each in some depth		some incongruence between thesis and essay; thesis / introduction suggests one type of essay, yet <u>some</u> parts of the body of the essay appear to offer a response to a different essay type	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>microorganisation of essay</i></li> </ul>	clear; the parts are well balanced in terms of length; logical connection of ideas across major paragraphs (parts of the essay); the essay reads smoothly (clear line of argumentation); planning visible		problematic at times; some major sections may be illogically connected AND/OR the line of argumentation may be unclear at times AND/OR the essay does not seem to have been well thought out, lacks coherence	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>conclusion</i></li> </ul>	organization of ideas within paragraphs is clear & logical		some paragraphs (although no more than 50%) are illogically organised AND/OR lack coherence	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>length</i></li> </ul>	a clear link between the conclusion and the thesis & arguments used to support / refute it; conclusion is not merely a repetition of the opening; it may use the same ideas yet expresses them differently		conclusion only barely relevant to the overall discussion AND/OR merely repeats what the opening has signalled using the same words	
	<b>POINTS:</b>	<b>7 – 6</b>		270 – 284 OR 365 – 380 words	
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>relevance</i></li> </ul>	essay is on topic; it addresses <u>all</u> relevant points from the topic (both as a whole and in individual paragraphs)	More features of A than of C More features of C than of A	essay talks very generally about the topic but lacks substance OR it is somewhat off the topic OR it fails to address the topic in some parts	The essay does not meet <u>most of the standards</u> specified in C
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>idea development</i></li> </ul>	essay introduces and develops 2 – 3 ideas in support of the topic, congruent with essay type. Each idea is developed with <u>due</u> precision, depth, consistency, comprehensibility and persuasiveness (whereby 'due' is understood 'to the degree it should be, given the time and length restrictions', not necessarily 'to the degree of excellence')		essay introduces at least 2 ideas in support of the topic but fails to develop them sufficiently AND/OR they are not wholly congruent with essay type. Ideas may be developed somewhat superficially, they may lack depth, clarity or be slightly unconvincing, yet this characteristic does not concern all ideas included in the essay.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>'idea I support' congruence</i></li> </ul>	congruence between the gravity / weight of an idea provided and evidence given to support it (or refute it, if necessary) both within individual paragraphs and across the whole essay		ideas are not always balanced with support (e.g., a 'big' idea is supported using highly simplified argumentation, or – on the contrary – a relatively 'small' idea may be supported using out-of-proportion argumentation)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>repetition and redundancy</i></li> </ul>	repetition of the same ideas does not occur; there are no redundancies		the same idea is repeated (often using the same words) in two different parts of the essay; some parts are redundant	
	<b>POINTS:</b>	<b>8 – 7</b>		<b>6</b>	

	Feature	A: Very good	B: Good to Average	C: Acceptable	D: Poor to Unacceptable	
Language control	• <i>range of language</i>	impressive considering the level & time restrictions; a <b>considerable</b> variety of grammatical and lexical structures attempted; grammatical structures and vocabulary are well-chosen to express the ideas and to carry out the intentions	More features of A than of C	even though the writer manages to express his/her ideas successfully most of the time, readers are aware of a limited choice of language forms; little attempt is evident on writer's part to avoid direct repetition of lexical items and / or attempt reformulation of ideas (use of reasonably varied grammatical structures)	The essay does not meet most of the standards specified in <b>C</b>	
	• <i>appropriacy of register</i>	(regardless of the correctness of the structures used) grammar and lexis characteristic of fairly formal style: avoidance of colloquial / slang expressions; avoidance of overemotional language		more features of C than of A		(regardless of the correctness of the structures used) although some attempts are made at using grammar and lexis typical of fairly formal style, the essay also exhibits features of language characteristic rather of informal written (or even spoken) discourse; there are instances when overly personal and/or emotional language is used
	• <i>grammatical accuracy</i>	no more than 3 grammatical inaccuracies occurring in more complex structures; no more than 2 mistakes in basic structures		limited but still acceptable considering the level which is to be expected of a 3 <sup>rd</sup> year student; no more than 5 mistakes in basic structures (basic tenses, conditionals, passive voice, noun phrases, etc.)		
	• <i>lexical accuracy</i>	occasional lexical inaccuracies (unnatural collocations, linguistic calques, more complex/advanced lexis used awkwardly)		limited but still acceptable considering the level which is to be expected of a 3 <sup>rd</sup> year student; writer may use awkward collocations; more ambitious vocabulary used sometimes imprecisely / incorrectly		
	• <i>orthographic accuracy</i>	no more than 3 minor spelling mistakes; no spelling mistakes affecting word meaning		more than 6 spelling mistakes, including some that affect word meaning		
	• <i>punctuation</i>	very few inaccuracies in punctuation		frequent inaccuracies in punctuation		
	• <i>effect on reader</i>	there is no strain for the reader; essay reads smoothly. Reader never troubled to search for meaning due to language errors.		there is occasional strain for the reader, it's difficult to read the essay at times due to problems with language. There are 3-4 'spots' in the essay where the reader needs to strive for meaning due to language errors.		
	<b>POINTS:</b>	<b>10 – 9</b>	<b>8 7</b>	<b>6 – 5</b>	<b>4-3-2-1-0</b>	

## Instructions for Raters:

- Raters assign scores based on the *Essay Analytic Rating Scale* (EARS). Be sure to familiarise yourself with the descriptors prior to reading students' essays.
- Make sure you treat students' exam essays as best possible pre-final drafts and not as final versions. Furthermore, while assessing the essays do not interpret the descriptors in an absolute manner (with reference to a 'native speaker' standard) but with reference to the *CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference; [http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Linguistic/CADRE\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Linguistic/CADRE_EN.asp))* level indicated in the note at the top of the rating scale.
- Each essay is rated on three criteria: (1) Organisation, (2) Content, and (3) Language control. The first criterion is marked on a scale of 0 – 7, the second on a scale of 0 – 8, and the third on a scale of 0 – 10. The maximum score a student may obtain from one rater is thus 25 points.
- The marks you assign must be complete integers; half-points are not allowed.
- Having read an essay, decide on your assessment for each of the three criteria. For each criterion, decide first which of the four major bands (marked A, B, C, and D in the first shaded row) the essay falls into. It is best done by first evaluating the essay *vis-à-vis* the descriptors for the 'Acceptable' band C, and then moving either upwards or downwards.
- Having chosen the major band, decide upon the number of points you want to assign within this band. Thus, for instance, if you decide that on the criterion of 'Organisation' a student's essay falls into band B (Good to Average), you must decide whether to award the essay 5 or 4 points. Once you have decided upon the marking for each criterion, (a) write the number of points in the appropriate spaces in the grid on the first page of the answer sheet, (2) sum up the total, (3) provide any comments you consider relevant and sign the essay.
- Do note that the highest band, A, describes essays which are considered 'very good', which does not mean (although it unquestionably includes) 'excellent' essays. *It is thus perfectly possible for an essay containing minor mistakes and inaccuracies to be classified in the highest band on either of the criteria.*
- You are welcome to provide any additional comments on the quality of essays you are marking.
- You must provide additional comments whenever you decide to classify an essay (in one criterion or more) to the major band D (Poor to Unacceptable).
- Essays which are extremely overlong but are otherwise very well organised and written in mature English, should be classified into band C (not D). However, if there are problems with organisation and/or language, they should be classified into band D, as stated in the ERS.

- Every essay is marked by two raters independently. The final mark is arrived at by averaging the two independent assessments.