



National
Qualifications
2026

2026 ESOL

Writing

National 5

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

These marking instructions have been prepared by examination teams for use by Qualifications Scotland appointed markers when marking external course assessments.

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General marking principles for National 5 ESOL Writing

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidate responses to questions in this paper. These principles must be read in conjunction with the specific marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.

- (a) Marks for each candidate response must **always** be assigned in line with these general marking principles and the specific marking instructions for the relevant question.
- (b) Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding: they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.
- (c) In addition, markers should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding to mark candidate responses.

For each piece of writing, with reference to *content and organisation, vocabulary and spelling, and grammar and punctuation*, assess the overall quality of the response and allocate it a mark within the appropriate range.

Check that all required content has been addressed.

A script can be awarded full marks yet still contain a number of basic slips and errors of grammar, spelling and punctuation, etc.

If answers are written in capitals, use legibility as a criterion.

- If the piece of writing falls within the top range, use your professional judgement in a holistic way to apply a mark between 13 and 15
- The ‘intended reader’ is the reader nominated or intended by the question (for example a friend, a manager, a teacher)

Marking instructions for each question

Content and organisation	Vocabulary and spelling	Grammar and punctuation	Marks
Fully achieves task with well-developed support for each point made. Writing is coherent and cohesive with a very positive impact on the reader. Style and layout are wholly appropriate for intended reader. There is clear evidence of structure/paragraphing.	Uses an optimum range of vocabulary accurately and appropriately within the context of the task. There are no, or few, spelling errors.	Uses an optimum range of grammatical structures appropriately, with a high level of accuracy. Punctuation is accurate.	13–15
Writing is coherent and cohesive with a positive impact on the reader. Fully achieves task with clear support for each point made. Style and layout are wholly appropriate for intended reader. There is evidence of structure/paragraphing.	Uses a wide range of vocabulary accurately and appropriately within the context of the task. There may be minor spelling errors.	Uses a wide range of grammatical structures with a reasonably high level of accuracy. Punctuation is mostly accurate.	11–12

Content and organisation	Vocabulary and spelling	Grammar and punctuation	Marks
Writing is coherent and cohesive, and message is clear. Fully achieves task with support for some points made. Style and layout are appropriate for intended reader. Although there may be no evidence of paragraphing, the structure is clear.	Uses a reasonably wide range of vocabulary mainly accurately and appropriately within the context of the task. There may be minor spelling errors.	Uses a reasonably wide range of grammatical structures with some errors. Punctuation is mostly accurate.	9–10
Writing is generally coherent and cohesive. Mostly achieves task. Style and layout are mainly appropriate for intended reader. Although there may be no evidence of paragraphing, the structure is mostly clear.	Uses an adequate range of vocabulary with a level of accuracy appropriate to the task. There may be spelling errors.	Uses an adequate range of grammatical structures, though errors may be frequent. There may be errors in punctuation.	8

Content and organisation	Vocabulary and spelling	Grammar and punctuation	Marks
Coherence is weak in places and range of cohesive devices is limited and/or inappropriately used. Message may be difficult to follow. Task may be achieved. Style and layout may be inappropriate for intended reader. Structure may be confused.	Uses a limited range of vocabulary with errors in accuracy and appropriacy. There may be spelling errors which impede communication.	Uses only a limited range of grammatical structures, which may contain frequent errors. Punctuation may be inaccurate.	6–7
Lack of coherence and cohesion means message is not conveyed on first reading. Writing is mainly irrelevant to task with inappropriate style and layout for intended reader. There is no coherence or cohesion. Writing does not relate to task. Less than 20% of recommended word count.	Only basic vocabulary attempted, with frequent errors. Use of vocabulary is wholly inadequate.	Grammatical structures contain frequent errors which impede communication. Punctuation may be inaccurate. Errors predominate.	0–5

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]