



Guidelines for BULATS Writing Test – Section One

The Bulats Writing Test is a classroom assessment completed individually under test conditions. The assessment is graded by two independent assessors and lasts 45 minutes.

The assessment is broken up into the following two sections:

Section 1 – Short memo or letter (approx 50 words)

Section 2 – Long report or memo (approx 200 words)

Writing is evaluated on the following criteria:

- Accuracy and appropriateness of language use;
- Organization of ideas; and
- How effectively the piece of writing achieves its purpose.

For further samples, please visit www.bulats.org

This posting covers some helpful tips and examples of section one of the test.

Sample One

You receive this e-mail from a customer.

Dear Bill	29 th March
I am writing to complain about the late delivery of our furniture order.	
When we placed the order, you gave us a delivery date of 28 th March. However, the order has still not arrived. Please confirm that it will arrive before 5 th April, as our new offices open on the 6 th .	
I look forward to hearing from you without delay.	

Write a reply e-mail including the following:

- Apologise for the delay;
- Give the reason for the delay;
- Confirm the new date of delivery.

- Write about 50-60 words.

Sample Two

You receive this note from a colleague.

I have just heard from Mr Lin at Head Office – he’s visiting us on Tuesday 3rd. He’ll be with us the whole day, so I’d like to take him to lunch. Can you suggest a suitable restaurant to take him to? Also, can you join us at 12.30?

Write a note to your colleague:

- Suggest a suitable restaurant;
- Offer to book a table;
- Confirm that you are free at that time.

Write about 50-60 words.

Points to note

It is important that you include all points that are bullet pointed in your reply for task realization. Therefore in sample one, you must include an apology, a reason and a new date. Omission of one of these will affect your mark.

Think carefully about your paragraphing – do not write everything in one paragraph. Your answer should contain at least three paragraphs with clear opening and closing statements that reflect the nature of your message. For example, do not write ‘Thank you for your attention.’ When you expect them to reply or confirm something to you. Use ‘I look forward to your confirmation’ instead.

Also, consider the reader, who you are writing to. The register, e.g. the style and tone of your

message should suit the reader. So for example, if you are writing to your boss requesting approval, do not write ‘Please approve’ as this is too direct. You should write something like ‘It would be appreciated if you could approve’, which better suits the relationship between the writer and the reader.



Finally, allow time to proofread your answer. Check for grammatical errors as well as that you have covered all the points asked for. Do not write more words than are necessary.

Possible Answers

Sample One

Dear Mr Wong

We refer to your e-mail regarding your furniture order. Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention.

Having checked with our customer sales team, it seems that your details were incorrectly inputted when your order was made. The due date of delivery was 3rd April.

We really must apologise for the trouble caused. Your order is in fact ready, so I will arrange for your order to be delivered tomorrow.

We hope you find this arrangement acceptable and we look forward to serving you in the future.

Sample Two

Dear Sandra

Thank you for your e-mail regarding Mr Lin's visit.

For lunch, may I suggest Red Pepper Restaurant in causeway Bay. They have a wonderful selection of Sichuan food at a reasonable price.

I would be available to attend, although I may be 15 minutes late as I have another appointment.

Please let me know if you would like me to book the table?

Regards