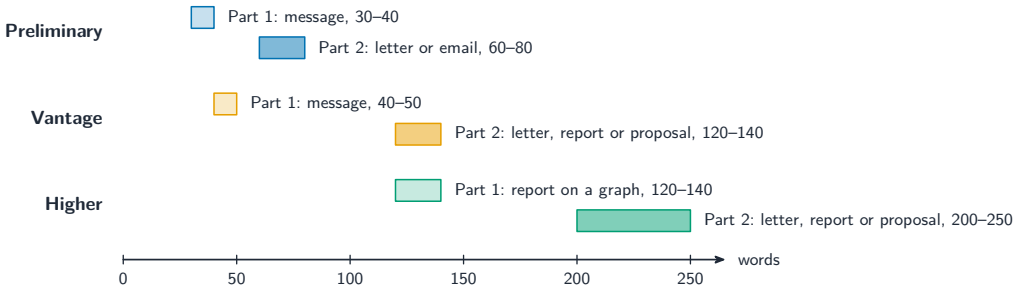
BEC · Writing: messages, letters, reports and proposals

Original teaching notes and model answers; task formats and marking checked in the Cambridge Business Certificates Handbook for teachers. Not a Cambridge product.

Two tasks at every level



Part 2 is longer and counts twice as much as Part 1

Part 1 has three jobs

1. **Which meeting** Hi everyone, Thursday's sales meeting
2. **The new time** is moving from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.,
3. **Why** because the new price list will not be ready until midday. Please bring your monthly figures. Thanks, Lin

Decision

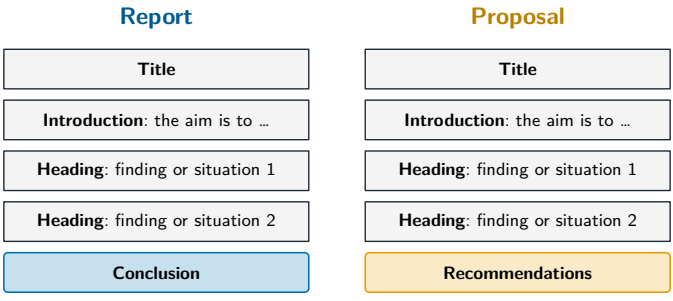
Three content points, 31 words, one clear purpose.

The shape of a business email

Greeting	*Dear Ms Wang,*
Point 1: say sorry	*Thank you for your email. I am very sorry that ...*
Point 2: the reason	*This was because ...*
Point 3: what you will do	*We have now changed to ...*
Point 4: an offer	*To apologise, we would like to offer ...*
Ending	*Yours sincerely, David Chen*

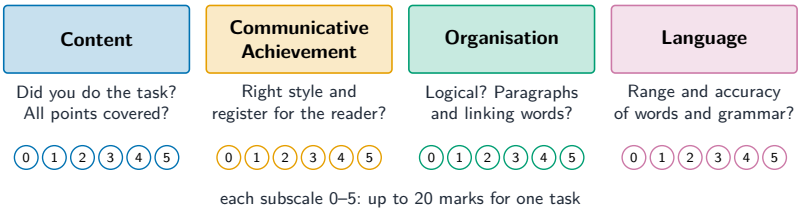
One short paragraph for each **content point**

Report or proposal?



> A proposal ends by recommending what to do

Four ways to win marks



> Perfect grammar can't make up for a missing **content point**

Your turn: which subscale?

Your turn

The task says "offer a discount". A student writes: "Sorry dude, here's 10% off." Which subscale loses most?

A. Content
B. Communicative Achievement
C. Organisation
D. Language

The writing routine

Read the task twice; underline the points and the reader.

↓

Plan for two minutes, one line per paragraph.

↓

Write, ticking each point as you cover it.

↓

Check for two minutes: points, register, **word count**, your usual errors.

Four traps

The trap

Too formal for a colleague, too friendly for a customer.

Missing articles and plurals.

Learned openings that say nothing.

Skipping a point to save words.

The fix

Choose the register for the reader.

Please send the invoice; two orders.

Start with your purpose.

Cover every point, briefly.

Try it: make it formal

1. **Too friendly** Hi! Sorry about the mess. We'll fix it ASAP.
2. **For a customer** Dear Mr Li, I am very sorry for the problem.
3. **The promise** We will correct it as soon as possible.

Decision

Full forms, a polite apology and no slang.

Check yourself

> Every point, the right register, the right length

- Vantage Part 1 is 40 to 50 words; Part 2 counts twice as much.
- Four subscales, each 0 to 5.
- A proposal recommends an action.