

Sample Specification

The TOEIC Writing Work Sample

The following is a sample specification from Educational Testing Service (2014) which is used as part of an application for internship positions within the company. Applicants are expected to build test items based on the specifications given.

I. Respond to a Written Request (E-mail)

Write an e-mail using language appropriate in a business context. A test taker successfully responding to the e-mail will be able to write at least three sentences and will address three separate tasks in doing so.

Items must meet the specifications below

- be between 25 and 50 words long (not including the To, From, Subject, and Date lines);
 - present a situation that would require the test taker to respond to an e-mail;
 - be accessible to an international audience in a business or commercial context;
 - use vocabulary and a context accessible to beginning-level language learners;
 - elicit a response from the test taker that is at least three sentences long and between 75 and 100 words;
- and
- include THREE tasks that the test taker must do from the list below.
 - Ask a question
 - Describe a problem
 - Describe a situation
 - Give an explanation
 - Give directions or instructions
 - Give information
 - Report a problem
 - Make a request
 - Make a suggestion

Sample:

Directions: Read the e-mail.
FROM: Dale City Welcome Committee TO: New Dale City Residents SUBJECT: Welcome to your new home! SENT: July 23, 4:32 P.M.
Welcome! We would like to be the first to welcome you to Dale City. We know that there are many things to do when you move, from finding your way around town to setting up your utilities. Please contact us if you need any help at all.
Response Directions: Respond to the e-mail as if you have recently moved to a new city. In your e-mail, ask THREE questions.

Word Count: 47 (Educational Testing Service, 2014)

Group Task

In your groups, review the following test specification. You will have 15 minutes to make modifications to the test specification. After revising the specification, you will exchange your specification with another group. Groups will have 10 minutes to provide comments and suggestions for improvement on each others' specifications. With the remaining time, groups will share their comments and suggestions with the authors.

Guiding Language

General Description:

This test is intended for Korean High school students learning English. The following item is part of an English grammar test focusing on past tense.

Prompt Attributes:

The item should be a 5-sentence paragraph which tells a story using past tense.

Response Attributes:

Candidates must judge whether a verb tense is correct or incorrect by crossing out incorrect verb tenses and writing the correct one.

Sample Item

Directions:

Read the story. Cross out and correct any incorrect verb tenses.

[1] Yesterday, I bought a dozen eggs before I came home from work. [2] As I walked out of the grocery store, a man crashed into me with his motorbike. [3] He has broken all of my eggs and didn't even say "sorry!" [4] I feeled too tired to go shopping again that day. [5] Today, I explain to my mother why I haven't bake the cake for my brother's birthday yet.

Key:

[1] Yesterday, I had bought a dozen eggs before I came home from work. [2] As I was walking out of the grocery store, a man crashed into me with his motorbike. [3] He broke all of my eggs and didn't even say "sorry!" [4] I felt too tired to go shopping again that day. [5] Today, I explained to my mother why I haven't baked the cake for my brother's birthday yet.