Preliminary (PET): Writing

Initially students need a model or scaffolding in order to be able to write a letter or an essay. In many instances they may be weak writers in their own language and so both concepts and language have to be taught.

It is essential when students begin the writing tasks to encourage them to refer to writing models, which can be found in most exam coursebooks. The model is not there to be copied, as the topic will be different, but it will provide the necessary skeleton so that the final piece of writing they produce is close to what they should be aiming for.

Make students aware of register by reading a sentence or sentences from a model and asking students to identify whether the tone is formal or informal.

**Task:** Get students to look at a model for a few minutes, and then close their books. Dictate the model to them. Students should write down the text, getting their spelling and punctuation correct and presenting the layout (title, headings, paragraphs, etc.) appropriately. This could also be done as a running dictation, especially for Part 2 Writing. This is a good end-of-week activity.

**Task:** As the students progress, begin to give them timed writing tasks. In terms of the exam, it is useless being able to write a perfect, error-free letter if it has taken an hour to write. Always remind them to leave a little time at the end to check their work.

For the Part 1 Transformations section, students should be aware of the different types of sentences they may be asked to change e.g. (a) There is/There are; (b) direct – reported speech; (c) active – passive; (d) comparatives; (e) modals; (f) too – enough; (g) simple past – present perfect; (h) if – unless

**Task:** Five minute exercises on one type of transformation everyday will enable students to soon discover that this is a quick and easy part of the exam where they can usually gain full marks.