

Chapter Eight Testing Writing Skill

Techniques for Testing Composition

a) *Guided Composition*

The pupils are supplied with all the necessary structures, vocabulary, thoughts and ideas to be expressed. An example is the following page.

Guided Composition

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

INVENT THE ANSWERS FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS
AND WRITE A PARAGRAPH ABOUT THIS BOY

- 1- What's his name?
- 2- How old is he?
- 3- Where is he from?
- 4- What hair style has he got?
- 5- What color hair has he got?
- 6- What color eyes has he got?
- 7- Has he got a small or a big family?
- 8- What's his mother's name?
- 9- What's his father's name?
- 10- How many siblings has he got?
- 11- What animals does he keep as pets?
- 12- Has he got a modern or an old house?
- 13- How many rooms are there in his house?
- 14- What objects are there in his room?
- 15- What are his favorite sports?
- 16- What are his favorite colors?
- 17- What's his favorite fruit?
- 18- How many friends has he got?
- 19- What are their names?
- 20- Is he a good friend or a bad friend?



HE IS A SPECIAL BOY!

Handwriting practice area with ten horizontal lines for writing a paragraph.

GOOD LUCK!

a. Parallel Passages

The student is given a short text and then he is required to write a similar text, using the words provided.

b. Completion

The student may be given a passage with blanks to be filled with words from the list provided.

c. Passage Transposition

In passage transposition, students have to change a written passage. For example, change a passage from the present continuous to the past, or from the singular to the plural, or from the passive to active etc.

d. Problem Solving

This type is considered a modern technique of assessing students writing ability through problem solving task.

e. Pictures

Composition writing may be based on picture or a series of pictures. Pictures can provide the testee with the basic material for his composition as well as stimulating his imagination and encouraging him to progress in his writing.

f- Letter Writing

Writing personal letters or postcards is another technique of writing. Much care must be taken with the layout as well as the content:

Write a postcard to your friend. Say what you have seen and what you have done during your stay in Mosul.

Whenever possible, students should be provided with a realistic and meaningful basis for writing. The following example is about making arrangements for a party .

Read Ban's invitation and then write a suitable reply.

Dear Ann,

Would you like to come to my birthday party on Thursday evening about six o'clock? I would be very pleased if you could.

With love

Ban

g- Free Composition

Free composition is used with advanced. The choice of composition topics is important. The testee should have no trouble in handling the task because the testee's efforts during the test should be directed towards how to express themselves rather than what to write about. The following are some examples:

1. An accident you have witnessed.
2. Finding a lost wallet
3. The telephone - a curse or a blessing
4. Explain how to make a special dish.

MARKING THE COMPOSITION

The main objection to composition questions is on grounds of unreliability. Two markers may differ greatly in respect of spread of marks. Nevertheless, composition is still widely used as a means of measuring the writing skill.

The two principal marking schemes are known by the terms 'general impression' and analytic. The first is exactly as it sounds. The marker reads the composition and awards it a mark without picking out any special features for consideration. When following the analytical scheme, the marker uses a pre-determined marking scheme by listing a number of sub-scales, and specifies the weight to be given to each .

The Impression Method

This method implies an overall global judgment of the work as a whole. It is simpler than the analytical marking. The teacher may adopt the following procedure:

Set a scale of five categories: very good, good, moderate, poor, and very poor. These five categories could be assigned grades (A, B, C, D, E).

The teacher then reads all the papers and pass a general judgment on them assigning them to the appropriate piles. Now, every paper within each category will have to be re-read in order to establish the final mark.

The Analytical Method

This method is ideally suited to the classroom situation. It depends on a marking scheme which has been carefully drawn by the marker or body of markers. It consists an attempt to separate the various features of composition for scoring composition for purposes. The following is one example of such an analytical scheme.

Mechanics refers to punctuation and spelling.

Fluency to style and ease of communication.

Relevance to the content in relation to the task demanded of the testee.

A 5-point scale has been used.