

Task 4 – Extended writing: Writing about a seasonal celebration

Level: ISE I

Focus: Task 4 – Extended writing

Aims: Writing a planned essay of 100-130 words based on three reading texts (please note that there are no texts to base the extended writing on in task 4 of the ISE I Reading & Writing exam)

Objectives: Finding important information, writing a plan based on given information and writing an essay step-by-step

Skill: Understanding and identifying specific information, writing notes and formulating an essay using notes

Subject area: Festivals – Seasonal celebrations

Language functions: Describing past actions in the indefinite and recent past, and describing the future – informing and expressing intention

Lexis: Seasonal celebrations

Materials needed: One worksheet per student, a picture of a maypole and dancers, a map of Europe

Timing: 1 hour

Preparation

Print or copy one worksheet per student. Search online for a map of Europe and pictures of a maypole and dancers.

In class

1. Tell the class they are going to prepare for and practise the writing part of the ISE I exam. First, they are going to talk about celebrations in summer in Sweden, then they are going to read two paragraphs and write their own paragraphs like they are expected to do in the exam.
2. Tell the class they are going to read about a celebration that happens in Sweden in the summer. Show students the map of Europe and ask them where Sweden is on the map. Point to Sweden on the map. Look at its position in northern Europe. Ask the class what kind of weather they think Sweden has. Tell the class that Sweden has many hours of daylight in summer but in winter there are many hours of darkness because it is so far north. Ask the class what they think Swedish people might do in the middle of summer when there are many daylight hours. (The students could answer: *'Go outside for most of the day and night', 'eat something special', 'do some sport or play some special games'*.) Put their answers on the board.
3. Give out the worksheet. Tell the class to read the text and see if what they suggested about midsummer in Sweden is what happens. Get answers from the class about the paragraphs they have read. (The students could answer: *'Swedes go outside and sail boats', 'they eat special food and drink, they dance'*.) Point to the picture of the maypole and dancers and say, *'they have some special beliefs about girls who are not yet married'*.
4. Now ask the students to read the text again and do the exercises. Give them 8-10 minutes to do this. In pairs, get the students to check their answers. Then in open-class, check the answers and write up the correct answers on the board. Teach some new vocabulary, for example *'bays', 'cottages', 'spicy'*.
5. Now ask the class which celebrations they have in their country and in which seasons. Write two or three on the board. Then put the students into groups of four and get them to talk together about when the celebration is and what they do, eat and drink at each celebration and the reasons why they like the celebrations or not.
6. Get some feedback and write some of their ideas on the board.
7. Tell the class to look at the first paragraph again and find the verbs that show what people do at the celebration. Put the answers (*'drive', 'sail', 'dance', 'eat'*) on the board.
8. Then ask the class if it is true or only possible that the girl will dream of her husband. Ask the students what language they can use to say that something might happen in the future but we are

Preparation activities for ISE I Reading & Writing

not sure. Put on the board, '**The girl will dream of her husband if she puts the flowers under her pillow.**' Make another similar sentence about a celebration in your country, for example, '*I will enjoy Carnival a lot if the weather stays calm.*'

9. Then ask the class to tell you again and underline which phrases in the second paragraph help us express our opinion. They should look at the answers to question 6 on the worksheet.
10. Tell the class they have 15 minutes to write 100-130 words about a celebration in a season in their country. They can use the paragraphs and the language on the worksheet as models. In the first paragraph they should describe what happens at the celebration. In the second paragraph they should give their opinion about the celebration.
11. Give the class 15 minutes to write. Then ask pairs to exchange their work and to read their partner's work and tell them if they have the same opinion or not.
12. Take in the work for correction.

Extension activity

Students who finish early can write about a second celebration and give their opinions.

Further support activity

Students finding the task difficult should use the prompts on the board to write about the celebration that you have discussed as a class. Help them by writing up more full sentences and the phrases to express opinion.

Homework

Students can ask their parents or friends in different classes about seasonal celebrations and what their opinion is about the celebrations. They can report back in class.



Student worksheet: Writing about a seasonal celebration

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Celebrating Midsummer in Sweden

This festival is as close as possible to 21st June, the longest day of the year. It is a very old celebration and modern Swedes drive to summer cottages to stay, or sail to bays on the coast to celebrate. People in traditional dress dance around a maypole – a tall pole decorated with flowers. After the dancing, people eat marinated fish and drink a strong, spicy drink. It is thought that if a girl who isn't married picks different flowers and puts them under her pillow at Midsummer she'll dream about her future husband.

I think that the festival allows people in Sweden to relax and enjoy themselves outside during the long light days of Midsummer. It also means that the traditional dances, food and drink are remembered. In my opinion this festival also helps keep families in touch with one another and it helps Swedes know how their great-grandparents lived. However, I believe that thinking a girl will dream about her future husband if she puts flowers under her pillow is a silly idea.

Exercises

1. Which paragraph describes the festival?
2. Which paragraph gives the writer's opinion?
3. What order does the following information appear in the text?
 - ▶ food that people eat
 - ▶ the date of the festival
 - ▶ a belief that people share
 - ▶ what people do nowadays at Midsummer
4. Why does the writer have the opinion that the Midsummer festival is positive?
.....
5. Does the writer have any negative opinion of the Midsummer festival?
.....
6. What phrases does the writer use to express his or her opinion?
.....
7. How does the writer talk about a possible future event?
.....

Answers: Writing about a seasonal celebration

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. 2, 4, 1, 3
4. Because he or she thinks that families can spend time together, know how their great-grandparents lived and remember what people used to eat and drink many years ago.
5. Yes, because he or she thinks that the belief about putting flowers under your pillow to dream about a future husband is silly.
6. I think that..., In my opinion..., I believe that...
7. The girl will dream if she puts... (Subject + *will* + base verb) *if* + (present simple)