

# Writing

The *Writing* portion of the *WorkKeys Listening and Writing* test measures the skill individuals use when they write messages that relay workplace information between people. The test is administered via an audiotape containing all directions and messages. Examinees listen to the messages and then write messages or summaries. Examinees play the role of employees who receive information from customers, co-workers, or suppliers and must communicate it in writing.

The taped messages reflect various workplace settings, but no prior knowledge of the occupation is necessary. The messages are delivered by both male and female speakers of differing ages with various accents. Each message is given twice, and examinees are encouraged to take notes. After a message is given the second time, examinees have a specified amount of time to write before the next message is given. Examinees are given 40 minutes to complete six responses; they may return to work on previous responses at any time during the test.

Initially, the messages contain about six pieces of information given by one speaker; by the end of the assessment, messages are given by two speakers and contain approximately seventeen pieces of information. As the assessment progresses and the messages grow longer and complex, the time allotted to write the messages increase from two to six minutes.

Scoring is based on writing mechanics (sentence structure and grammar) and writing style. It is NOT based on the accuracy and completeness of the information, although the responses must relate to the stimuli and convey information clearly. Two raters read and score each message.

Skill levels range from 1 to 5. At each new level, individuals need to demonstrate more competency than at the previous levels. With the increased skill required at each level, the writing that individuals produce communicates message more clearly as they move to Level 5.

## Sample Message

**[Narrator] You work at a factory and are to write a summary of new company procedures.**

[Female voice] We will be discontinuing the Royal china pattern at the end of this year. That means we need to put a notice in our next catalog. We also need to send out letters to customers who have ordered the Royal pattern within the last five years.

[Male voice] That way they can order extra pieces if they wish. I remember my grandmother was heartbroken when a piece of her china was missing. We want our dishes to be used, not put away in a cupboard somewhere.

[Female voice] We will be putting the Royal pattern on sale, too, starting next month. Everything will be marked down to 50% off the catalog price.

[Male voice] Maybe we should also tell customers that we are going to be switching to completely recyclable packing boxes. We plan to begin just as soon as we have the old boxes used up. I think that should be within the next two weeks. Check with Philip Zemouk on that.

**Level 2 Writing Sample**

“will be discontinuing the royal China pattern. Customers can that bought the pattern in the last five years can still buy extra pieces. The royal pattern will be on sale for 50% off. They also going to be in new resicable boxes.”

**Description of Writing Level 3 problems**

Individuals with Level 3 skills can write clear messages. The writing may include incorrect structure and some errors in grammar and punctuation. When individuals have Level 3 Writing skills, they produce writing:

- With most of the sentences complete.
- With few mechanical, grammatical, and word usage errors so that the message is adequately conveyed.
- That may be more casual than standard business English but never uses slang or is rude.
- That exhibits some organization but may have inappropriate transitions and/or some information out of logical order.

**Level 3 Writing Sample**

“We will be discontinuing the Royal China Pattern at the end of the year. We will have to tell customers who bought them in the past five years. So if they want to order more they can. We should also tell them that in next months the cataloge prices will be up to 50% of retail. We might want to tell them that as soon as we get rid of our old boxes, we will be using completely recycled packing boxes starting in about two weeks.”

**Why this is a Level 3 response:**

- The writing conveys the message clearly. The response is written clearly enough so that the meaning can be understood.
- Most of the sentences are complete.
- The writing has few mechanical errors. For example, although an apostrophe is needed in “months” and the words “cataloge” and “completly” are misspelled, the message is conveyed without further clarification needed.

**Level 4 Writing Sample**

“The Royal China pattern will be discontinued by the end of this year. A notice will be in the catalog. Letters will be sent to customers that have ordered the china within the last 5 years so that they can buy more. The pattern will be on sale next month at 50% off the catalog price. Note: Recycled packaging boxes will be used as soon as the old ones are all used up.”

**Level 5 Writing Sample**

“We are going to be discounting the Royal china pattern, so we will put a notice in the next catalog. Send out letters to old customers to see if they want to buy any extra pieces. We are pricing the Royal pattern at 50% off the catalog price. We are also going to start using recyclable boxes as soon as we run out of our old boxes. Ask Philip Zomack how soon this will be.”