

- An email newsletter to friends and family reflecting on trips, school sports, activities, or outside interests.
- An essay that imitates an opinion column from a magazine or newspaper such as *Harper's*, *The Atlantic*, *The Guardian*, *The Economist*, *Al Ahram*, or websites such as www.slate.com or www.aldaily.com.
- Create your own podcast or vodcast to speak your ideas, opinions, reviews, or even experiences to friends, family and others. A podcast or vodcast is a great way to practice for oral commentaries or further oral activities.

Written task 1

What is it?

Written task 1 is an opportunity for students to demonstrate understanding and explore issues in language and literature in an imaginative way. By “imaginative,” we do not necessarily mean creative writing—as with all reading and writing in this course, you are expected to demonstrate an intellectual engagement and understanding of the texts studied. The written task offers a more open opportunity to consider different methods for conveying that engagement and understanding. Writing a traditional essay is a familiar and perfectly fine method for demonstrating your understanding of a text or issue but it is perhaps a misnomer on the part of students, teachers, schools and entire educational systems that this is considered to be the *only* way to have a profound intellectual experience with a work. After all, beyond your formal education, you may never write or read another essay in the style of what you are often asked to produce in school. This is not to suggest that there is no role for the formal, traditional essay (you will be writing these as part of the assessments in this course), but written task 1 does represent an opportunity to experiment with several other options. This may range from a more familiar kind of writing such as an editorial, a blog or a pamphlet to a more creative text such as a pastiche, a poem or a dramatic script.

What are the rules?

- First and foremost, written task 1 is not an essay (there may be some very rare circumstances where an essay is acceptable but, in general, it will not be appropriate). Beyond this, you will be looking to find an appropriate text type to use as a model. Again, this is not meant to imply unlimited creative opportunity. It might not be appropriate to convey an overview of the effects of an Internet usage policy in your school, for example, in the form of an epic poem. It may be appropriate, however, to approach the topic by writing a blog, informational pamphlet or newspaper editorial depending on your critical intention.
- Written task 1 must be between 800 and 1000 words only.
- Written task 1 must include a rationale. The rationale should be between 200 and 300 words which do not count toward the written task word count. The rationale should explain the nature of the chosen written task including purpose, formal conventions,

relationships to aspects of the course and any other pertinent information as to the aims and objectives of the task.

When is it done?

Written task 1 is likely to be part of your ongoing assessment. Formally, you will be completing at least three (standard level) or four (higher level) written tasks, and submitting one (standard level) or two (higher level) for external moderation. You should be completing written tasks for different parts of the course with at least one referring to the language component of the course (parts 1 and 2) and one referring to the literature component of the course (parts 3 and 4). The exact breakdown and numbers of written tasks will vary from school to school and classroom to classroom. Written task 1 should be an integral and useful writing option for a variety of critical approaches to the works you study. Optimally, written task 1 will be a critical approach that can be used as part of both your formative and summative assessment in this course.

How is it marked?

Very simply, there are four criteria used to assess written task 1:

- **Rationale** Does the rationale adequately explain your work for the written task and how it is linked to the course topic?
- **Task and content** Does the written task convey more substantially developed understanding of the work or topic; is the content appropriate to the task chosen and are the conventions of the text type understood?
- **Organization and argument** Is the structure and organization coherent and sustained? Has the word count been met (two marks will be deducted from tasks that exceed the word count)?
- **Language and style** Is the use of language and style effective and appropriate to the task chosen?

As with any assessment task, whether formative or summative, examiners are looking for a strong understanding of the work or topic and a thoughtful critical engagement. Organized and polished writing is an asset but remember that this is most realized with careful thinking and preparation as well as consciously writing within your own abilities (use your own voice; do not try to *sound* sophisticated, but be honest and open in your engagement with the text).

For part 1, on language and cultural context, there are many written task 1 possibilities that explore interesting overlaps between language, purpose, and audience. The following student samples are based on a simple prompt from a class that has been exploring the use of English in different, traditionally non-English, cultural contexts. The first sample chooses to explore the decision to move to English as the medium of instruction in a Korean university and does so through the form of an editorial. The second sample chooses to debate the merits of forcing signs to be written in Marathi rather than English in the multicultural and multilingual Mumbai through a more personal blog.

Student sample 1

Rational This editorial talks about the English Bilingual Policy that has been embraced by Pohang University of Science and Technology (POSTECH). The policy is about adopting English as an official language at POSTECH. I welcome the policy since it is the monumental first step for Korean colleges to be internationally competitive. However, in this editorial I stand like an antagonist and point out some weaknesses embedded in the policy to let POSTECH know there is a need of change in its plan.

Why is this?

Some facts suggest POSTECH rushed into the decision. POSTECH gives Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)'s success model as an example. However, it is an immature decision that did not consider the difference between Korea and Hong Kong. Also POSTECH did not review how many universities struggle with providing a quality level of English. In addition, this decision is toadyism in the point that it will never use Korean anymore just to gain fame internationally; it did not take account of losing identity as Koreans.

Is this really the issue? Are there broader cultural concerns for this editorial?

After I point out all the potential problems, I give some suggestions and conclude with prospect for the future of POSTECH.

A bit more on track here. The language is a bit awkward in this section.

An editorial

POSTECH's English Bilingual Campus Policy

Pohang University of Science and Technology (POSTECH), considered as the best science and technology institute of Korea, announced its English Bilingual Campus Policy which took effect right from this school year. This new policy applies to not only lectures but also conferences, seminars, papers, administration documents and regulations; students should use only English in the campus. "An English Bilingual Campus Policy is inevitable to become a global university," said Baek Seong Gi, the president of POSTECH. He continued, "The background of the rapid advancement of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), which was modeled from POSTECH, was the inspiration behind its bilingual policy."

Why does he have this position? Also ... you will need to reread this, perhaps out loud, for fluency.

Unlike other aspiring global universities that provide only English lectures, POSTECH's decision is a breakthrough in the point that it uses only English in the whole campus. Actually such a breakthrough was anticipated for a long time, but no one expected POSTECH, the best Science institute of Korea, would be the one brave enough to announce an "English dominated" university first.

Why brave, and why a breakthrough? How is this good or bad? You need to explain.

POSTECH is faced with many problems these days: conflicts with students, falling in the college rankings and a big leap of Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology. There is some indication that POSTECH rushed the decision as a reaction to these issues and just to save its skin from these inconvenient conditions; questions remains as to whether these changes have been made for real developmental reasons or rather only as a reaction to these other issues.

Still vague on the issues. How would English help? What are the other concerns?

Furthermore POSTECH did not make it clear why it wants to be global. Why would one of the best universities in Korea move toward globalization in exchange for the risk of losing its cultural identity? Please do not say because it is a trend. Although Mr. Baek gives the improvement of HKUST after adapting a bilingual policy as an example, what he has to be aware of is that Hong Kong has English as its official language while Korea is a country where people spend more than 8 billion dollars every year for English education but do not use English as a primary language of exchange of any kind.

Yes, I think more on this cultural shift here would be important to your editorial.

Mr. Baek may want to justify POSTECH's "globalization" by suggesting that a country like Korea, which has small natural resources, has to focus on raising students to be global leaders by competing them with international students. However, Makoto Kobayashi, 2008 Nobel Prize recipient in physics, cannot speak English at all and did not even have a passport until he had won the prize. It implies what is needed for scientists who have reached a certain level is a good environment for their research, not the ability of speaking English. If a student with an extraordinary potential in science cannot speak English so that he/she even could not give a try for the best science university in Korea (POSTECH), what else in the world can be a bigger loss than that?

A good point.

In addition POSTECH should examine the case of universities that have already started providing English lectures. So far, it is hard to say it is the only path to success. Not all professors have an experience with overseas study and are able to provide quality education in English. In spite of six months of time for preparation that Mr. Baek kindly provided for those who need it, it remains doubtful whether they can overcome the language problem in that short period.

It is not only professors; students also struggle with this change. At the current level of command of English, only a small number of the students would be able to understand lectures that even feel difficult with Korean talking profoundly about subjects. Views that students should have no problem in speaking English to be successful at POSTECH would only give passionate Korean moms an opportunity to increase the expense on private English educations that is already a threat to family budgets.

This is getting a bit particular, and is at the expense of some of the more interesting cultural points you hinted at above.

English is clearly the global language now. So without discussing whether it is toadyism or not, something should be done for universities about English education. The critique above does not mean POSTECH's policy is wholly bad. There are distinct advantages: students' accessibility to up-to-date papers, mostly written in English, would increase, and if the policy adapts successfully, Korea would possess an internationally well-reputed college for the first time. The only obstacle is the impatience of POSTECH officers. The quick change will result incompetent students taught by murmuring professors which will eventually discourage foreign students to come and study at POSTECH. Therefore the gradual increase in the rate of English usage, for example, using English text books first and then starting English lectures later when students get used to it, is preferable along with

But ... to whom are they "toadying"? Is English making inroads in other Korean schools?

← continuative investment on Korean culture lectures and campaigns. Only in this way can POSTECH raise trained students who will grow its reputation as well as go for a global university without losing its identity.

This policy, announced after another shocking announcement—using the admission officer system firstly for everyone who applies to POSTECH, will be a chance for POSTECH to re-establish its stable position. However, it must make sure that the drive toward globalization is not through absolute English usage, but through a review of the old (Korean) with enhancements from the new (English).

A bit confusing here.

Examiner comments

Rationale The rationale starts with a relatively straightforward sense of purpose and direction and the topic, of the switch to English at POSTECH, seems an interesting and appropriate focus for a Written Task 1 assessment. Unfortunately, after this the rationale is quite short on detail. Though the candidate apparently welcomes the decision, it is not clear why. The candidate suggests that they will assume a critical position and does try and offer a kind of organization with the rebuttal but again the points lack detail. Cultural differences, challenges to a wholesale switch to an English medium and cultural autonomy all seem valid but are only offered in the vaguest terms here. The final point is weak and vague, reading as an addendum rather than an integral part of the task. Given the length of the rationale, there is room to offer a little more clarity and speak to issues such as the decision to write an editorial and to make more specific connections between this language issue and cultural context.

The decision to write an editorial, however, does seem a reasonable approach to the issue. Though there is a lack of detail and much work is required on the part of the reader, it remains clear that this is an appropriate approach to the task.

The language is clear. Though there is a lack of true sophistication with the language, it is clear and straight forward. The student is writing within their abilities and attempting to use an authentic voice.

Written task The candidate does introduce the topic in the introduction but the larger thrust of the editorial remains uncertain. Even the second paragraph fails to fully identify the primary argument of the writer but only seems to offer a summative overview: that this university is adopting/has adopted an English usage policy. More direct attention toward the larger purpose and the larger ramifications of the primary issue would be helpful here. The language is accurate but as with topic, there is a lack of precision.

The body begins more promisingly than the introduction with a list of some issues relevant to language and cultural context. In particular, this candidate focuses on some questionable assertions by the university and begins to note some ideas more editorial-like. Though this still would have been stronger if it had followed a clearer and more precise introduction, the main body begins with more promise.

A potentially strong point regarding cultural identity as created through language is badly missed here. Though it is mentioned, it is not at all developed or explained. This could well have provided the primary material of the written task—and does seem a significant issue—but is treated too briefly here. This begins a larger trend toward touching on ideas but not expanding or developing them fully. Again, cultural differences and distinctions of both Hong Kong and Korea are cited but not explored as are examples of contributions outside of the English-speaking academe. Other issues, from family budgets to “mumbling” professors to “toadyism” are suggested but not adequately developed.

There is an attempt to offer knowledge of the opposing viewpoint and to respond to it with a more softened compromise position. Unfortunately, this compromise seems to have arisen out of nowhere rather than a rational editorial-like argument. The position adopted in the final paragraph or so again seems slightly underdeveloped and surprising for it. As with much of the piece, there is a lack of detail and detailed development.

The piece does attempt a degree of organization though the points do need further development. The language used is appropriate but can lack precision. The text type adopted—the editorial—is well-chosen but not wholly successfully implemented in this written task. This work suggests a sound foundation but would greatly benefit from further revision with attention to much more development, detail and explanation.

Student sample 2

Rationale In 1995 in Maharashtra state, the Hindu nationalist Shiv Sena party came to power and abruptly called for abandoning foreign names and reverting back to Marathi-language names. Though this affected street names, restaurant signage and billboards, nothing was bigger than changing Bombay to Mumbai. In the last 15 years, Mumbai is accepted the world over though many Mumbaikers still call it Bombay. A common joke is that Bombay is only Mumbai in Delhi.

You may still need a bit more background information here.

Since 1981, the American School of Bombay has been operating as one of the easily recognized international schools in the city. It made a conscious decision not to change its name in the 1990s, arguing that its own independent and international brand identity were more important than local political issues. Though the Shiv Sena is currently not in power in Maharashtra, the school is said to still receive “visits” from members of the party “suggesting” that the school support these changes. The school continues to politely refuse.

Why? Are we getting a sense of the issues here?

In 2008, a small group of terrorists arrived in the city unleashing enough carnage to garner international notice. The school, in concert with the US Consulate in Mumbai, has decided to alter all signage to a simple “ASB” thus avoiding potential violent encounters as a result of the word American.

Another tricky point. We now have a couple of very different reasons for changing or not changing a name. Do you want to focus only on the Marathi issue in this paper?

The issue of the name of the school remains complex. Should the school hold on to its own identity in the face of criticism, or support more autonomous local identity? Should we “hide” our identity in the face of danger, or boldly state who and what we are? I have decided to explore the issue in the form of a blog. On the one hand, a blog is an intensely personal medium and allows me to share feelings about an intensely personal issue: identity. But the issue is also controversial enough that it often isn’t covered in more mainstream media like news and newspapers (for fear of violent reprisal by the Shiv Sena) and a blog offers the kind of forum free from the constraints other media may face. The combination of controversial subject and personal and opinionated perspective makes the blog an idea format for thinking about what is in a name.

Some good reasons here for choosing the blog format.

A blog

What’s in a name? I know you can never totally trust the rumors that spread through the halls, but at school today the buzz was about the Shiv Sena. Personally the party bugs me. The city can’t build a new airport because the SS thinks the new space is on sacred Hindu ground. Every time I go through the airport, it is clear the city needs something new to be the truly global and cosmopolitan place it claims to be. I want to be sensitive to Hinduism (I am Hindu) but can a statue of Ram really not be moved to accommodate the growth and the times?!

Nice tone in first lines here.

Anyway, the SS supposedly “visited” the school to “ask” us to change the name to American School of Mumbai instead of American School of Bombay. Whenever I say I go to American School of Bombay, people ask me why we are called that instead of American School of Mumbai. It just is. It has always been American School of Bombay. I admit when I first came here in ninth grade, I thought it was strange. Maybe even insensitive. But now I feel like I am a part of this school and it is American School of Bombay. Plus the threats of Shiv sometimes make you want to react against them. Their argument that the city needed to throw of the shackles of its colonial past seems good. But when they make the push so hard to incorporate threats and actual violence—like they do so often—the logic is compromised.

Also, the city and the school are more heterogeneous than that. This city and this school are emblems of internationalism. Even if renaming the place is a good idea, the extremism of the Shiv Sena feels like just the other end of a repressive, colonial mindset. This seems like reverting backwards to a less international, less inclusive and more repressive place. I think if the Shiv Sena weren’t so extreme, changing the name would be good but ironically, refusing to change to American School of Mumbai feels like the best action toward a more inclusive, international and modern identity. This affirms both the “Indian-ness” of the city and the place as part of a larger global society. I’m proud that the school resists the party’s calls to change the name. We probably don’t face the same pressures that local merchants and restaurants do to switch to Marathi but I think our resistance is good for everyone. BTW: the school does acknowledge the place of Marathi in the city and the state even if we don’t change the name. We have our mission printed in English, Hindi and Marathi all over the school.

But as soon as I developed this pride in American School of Bombay, I found an email notifying the school about new safety measures taken after the November terrorist attack. The school has decided not to use any signs that say the full name any more but just announce itself as ASB. They are worried that the word “American” might attract the wrong kind of attention in a world where attacks are becoming more common and often directed against anything associated with America. Once again the name of the school, the name we use to refer to ourselves, seems to carry much more complicated aspects of identity and a place in the world. Against the Shiv Sena, American School of Bombay seems freeing and expansive but against potential terrorist threats, the same name is limiting and imprisoning. The “American” has come to represent something far more than we are: a political, military, religious and cultural identity that transcends either Bombay or Mumbai.

The truth is that I feel like American School of Bombay represents a notion of Bombay more than of America. We are an international

Keep in mind that a blog doesn't have to be just personal reflection ... how about responding to other blogs or articles about the same issue?

Can you unpack this a bit? Explain exactly why it would be insensitive?

This is an interesting issue that potentially needs more focus and explanation.

How significant is this? Is it the same as recognizing a broader culture?

Interesting. What might be some arguments both for and against retaining the name, even in this instance? Does it suggest that we change in the face of violence?

school that represents a global world of exchange and compromise and I have been proud that the name suggested that. But now the name has been taken to represent something else and I am again stuck with a name that acts more as a limiting label than a true identity. The fact is that the neither is totally accurate but reminds me of the power of names, labels and language. How do I refer to my school and myself in a way that truly reflects what I believe and what to express? Since language and names are both public and unfixed, there is no way to guarantee meaning or identity. I suppose the Shiv Sena has as much right to interpret the name as I do though it makes it impossible for me to ever claim a name myself. Maybe I was naive to think that the name American School of Bombay could represent a resistant or idealistic ideal. But clearly names have enough power to provoke intense response from many sides. I guess I see that pride or anger are both equally probably responses to either Bombay or Mumbai, American or other. I guess I see that because all sides are equal responses, what's in a name can be both everything and nothing.

It's not likely that we will give up having a formal name for our school regardless of what it actually is. But whatever the name is or will be, it's probably sure to cause pride and outrage, stability and change. Maybe that's what always really in a name.

I wonder what value the name has to the school in the first place? I still wonder about the connection to Bombay as a name ...

Examiner comments

Rationale This rationale is well written, using precise terminology and varied vocabulary to clearly lay out the basis for the task to follow. The choice of a blog as a text type is somewhat problematic. Many students will choose to write a blog because it may seem like a relatively easy type to imitate. The justification here, though, is reasonable, in that the issue chosen is both appropriate to the section of the course while being of personal and local interest. A blog seems like it would be a logical medium for offering an opinion on these language issues.

Written task One of the most interesting aspects of this task in terms of the writing is that it differs in tone and register so completely from the rationale. The student has clearly attempted to imitate the more casual language of blogs and the use of texting or internet slang such as "BTW," because we have already seen the language use in the rationale, is obviously purposeful and successful. Another strong point of this piece in general is that despite the casual language the

student manages to clearly express opinions on a sensitive and complex issue.

The strengths and weaknesses of this task are tied to the language topics that it addresses. The student is clearly engaged with an important issue of language and culture that happens to be tied to her home and school. The blog post is informed and makes references to clearly identified linguistic issues. In attempting to remain an informal blog post, however, a few of these issues are touched on rather lightly. A couple of better explained examples about the influence of nationalists and language policy may have been helpful. In addition, the focus splits part way through the essay when the student begins to discuss the issue of "American" in the school name. In a similar way, the "post" is also complicated by external factors that are briefly discussed such as the terrorist attacks in the city.

Overall, this is an informed, fresh, engaged response that shows knowledge and personal response.

Suggestions for topics

Topics to explore in written task 1 for part 1 of the course (Language in cultural context) are almost unlimited and will be largely focused through the particular topics and issues chosen by your school. You may be exploring issues of gender, for instance, and comparing writings and speeches both about and by women over time in a particular culture. If such a topic were to be of particular interest to you, it could be appropriate to write your own speech in the style of some of the works you have studied or a series of diary entries exploring different challenges and perspectives you have encountered in the texts you have studied. What is important to remember is that you are not asked to write a critical, persuasive essay but to be open to further exploration of a topic while conveying some understanding through your competent manipulation of different text types.

Deciding on a particular text type may be a challenge. You will want to select a text type that is of interest to you but that also matches the topic selected. You will need to articulate why you have selected a particular text type and then demonstrate your mastery of the type in performance. It might not be appropriate, for example, to choose to adopt a humorous tone in a personal diary or work on a multimedia project that employs extensive, wordy and lengthy paragraphs of text. Regardless of the text type you choose, remember that although the topics may involve any number of cultural and social issues the focus of the assessment and of the course is on how language is used to critically reflect on and inform these issues. Following is a brief list of potential written task 1 text types:

- **Editorial** An opinion piece that conveys a critical, personal point of view using a generally formal (persuasive) tone.
- **Advertisement** A clearly promotional piece focusing less on argument and more on positive reinforcement. This will likely include a mix of language and other design features.
- **Mixed media** A collage or mix of formats and media that express a number of possibilities through the juxtaposition of different styles and material elements.
- **Pamphlet** An informational text that seeks to instruct or inform the reader. Can possibly be used to persuade but is more intentionally informative.
- **Blog** An electronic format that is often highly personal, and critical. Can have similar intentions to an essay but is generally less formal with less requirement to substantiate arguments in reference to external sources.
- **Website** A nonlinear format of information presentation with multiple strands branching off from a common point. Generally shorter or more succinct than a more formal text but also with an emphasis on inter-connectedness with a variety of other subject matter, media or text types.