ARTICLE

How to write a proposal? | C1 Advanced (CAE)

Level: **C1** Exam: **C1 Advanced** Writing

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A proposal may be written for colleagues or club members, or for a boss or a college principal. It should provide **suggestions** for a future project or event in order to **persuade the reader** to take some form of action.

- ✓ **It starts with** the relevant **title** and **purpose** of the proposal.
- ✓ **The main content** should be **divided into sections** with a **headings** and describe a situation (here you can include some imaginary questionnaires or surveys that you have carried out to prove your point.)
- ✓ **It ends** with **recommendations** which are going to persuade the reader and try to prove that you are right.

This may already seem familiar to you because it is **quite similar to** report writing in C1 Advanced CAE however, there's **one major difference:**

Reports – are always written about something that happened in the **past** for example a survey that you've conducted or an excursion that you went on or some kind of panel discussion that you've visited.

Proposals – on the other hand, always deal with something in the **present/future**. The focus of a proposal is always on evaluating a situation as well as making a suggestion or recommendation **for the future.**

Read more about **proposal vs report**

C1 Advanced (CAE) Proposal: **Structure**

1. Title + Introduction The aims of this proposal are to...
2. Main content **Subheading 1** **Paragraph 1:** Describe the current situation **Subheading 2** **Paragraph 2:** Describe the current situation
3. Final Recommendations Make your recommendations /persuade the reader Write at least 2-3 sentences

See structures **based on real examples**

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C1 Advanced (CAE) Proposal: **Writing Guide**

We will use the example **topic below:**

> There are plans to demolish an old and unused building in the town where you are student. You feel that the building should be saved. You decide to write a proposal for the town council explaining why you think the building should be preserved, suggesting what could be done to modernise it and saying how the building could benefit the local people.

Write your **proposal** (around **220 – 260** words)

Step 1: **Find the topic points & topic**

The first question you should ask yourself is **what topic do I have to write about in your proposal?** Knowing the **topic** always gives you a general idea as well as some inspiration for possible vocabulary that you might want to include in your text.

The second question should be **what exactly do I have to include in my text?** Here we try to filter out the specific **topic points** which we need to address in our writing.

> There are plans to demolish an old and unused building in the town where you are student. You feel that the building should be saved. *(topic: old building that the city wants to demolish and you want to save it)* You decide to write a proposal for the town council *(target reader)* explaining why you think the building should be preserved,*(topic point)* suggesting what could be done to modernise*(topic point)* it and saying how the building could benefit the local people. *(topic point)*

Topic: old building that the city wants to demolish and you want to save it

Main key points:

1. why you think the building should be preserved,
2. what could be done to modernise
3. how the building could benefit the local people.

Finally, you should always check **who's going to read your text** knowing the reader helps you choose the most appropriate style and register in our example we are writing to the city council as these people are city officials we should use a **formal style** for our proposal.

Target reader: town council

As soon as we've analyzed the task and extracted all the information that we need we can start building our structure and writing a proposal.

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Step 2: Title + Introduction

The title doesn't have to be anything special but it is important that you include one as this is a typical feature of a proposal and it could be something like:

- **Proposal to .....** and then you write the topic of what you're reporting.
- or you can write the topic and end it with phrase **: a proposal**

in this way, the title will have an appropriately formal connotation. See both examples below:

Example:

> ***Title: Proposal to** modernise the old brewery*
> ***Title:** Old brewery modernisation**: a proposal***

The introduction must contain **three main things** that you should include:

1. **purpose of your proposal** in which you should explain your purpose for writing
   The proposal is intended to…..
2. you should restate the **topic** of the task *(see step 1)*
3. **The three main key points** that you discovered *(see step 1)*

See sample introduction & title:

Example:

> **Title:** Old brewery modernisation: a proposal
>
> **This proposal is intended to** *(appropriate beginning)* outline why the old brewery on ABC Street should not be demolished *(topic)* and is worth protecting, *(point 1)* how it could be turned into a valuable asset *(point 2)* for the town and in what ways it could be of use *(point 3)* for the residents of the town.

TIP: Note that a proposal is written in the **future tense or with reference to the future** in that it differs from **a report.**

Step 3: The body paragraphs (main content)

Group your ideas under **headings** for each **section** of your proposal. Remember to answer all the questions that you were asked *(see step 1)* You're going to use some **formal** or **semi-formal** language and also some passive structures such as *"it is advisable that.." or "it is recommended that…."*

Main key points *(see step 1):*

1. *why you think the building should be preserved,*
2. *what could be done to modernise*
3. *how the building could benefit the local people.*

See the example main content below, with additional annotations you may find useful:

Example:

The brewery as an opportunity. – *add headings/simple, informative, formal*
The old brewery building with its central location at ABC Street and unique architecture is still considered a focal point of the town centre by the vast majority of people. While it has not been in use for some years, It has great sentimental value as indicated in conversations with local residents. Therefore, it would be an unrecoverable loss to demolish the building when there are other possibilities for using the facility.

[describes first point – why the building should be preserved,]

Modernization – *add headings/simple, informative, formal*
According to city conservators, *(rely on sources, stats and experts)* the modernisation of a building this old can be a challenge as everything from the ground up needs renovation. However, some local architects would be willing to work together and develop a design that takes into account the financial constraints of the public budget as well as environmental factors. To illustrate, the initial estimated costs for modernization are $300,000 and 6 months *(add figures)* of construction and design works.

It is strongly recommended *(use passive voice)* to turn the brewery into a co-working space so the rent will offset 15-20% of the costs in order to give the town a modern touch on a historic site.

[describes first point – what could be done to modernise]

Future benefits – *add headings/simple, informative, formal*
Considering all of the above, if the following suggestions were taken, *(use conditionals)* there would be great benefits for everybody involved. *Moreover*, the town would create another

source of income, the space would attract creative professionals and not only would it benefit them, but local residents would also be able to keep their brewery in the town centre.

[describes third point – how the building could benefit the local people.]

– statistics, details, relevant detailed information, sources of information

– persuasive language

– transitional words, expressions and conjunctions, which link the sentences and make the text more fluid

Step 5: Final recommendations

In the last section/paragraph of your proposal, we need to **conclude our proposal** and make our **final suggestions** (after all that's the main reason for writing the proposal). Make sure that you include your final suggestions in this last paragraph as well as some **persuasive language.**

Example:

Conclusion – *add a heading*
All things considered, the benefits and needs of the inhabitants speak for the preservation of the brewery and its modernization into a co-working space. On behalf of the residents, I strongly urge the council to consider this proposal.

– persuasive language

See full proposal...

Full Proposal

Old brewery modernisation: a proposal

This proposal is intended to outline why the old brewery on ABC Street should not be demolished and is worth protecting, how it could be turned into a valuable asset for the town and in what ways it could be of use for the residents of the town.

The brewery as an opportunity.
The old brewery building with its central location at ABC Street and unique architecture is still considered a focal point of the town centre by the vast majority of people. While it has not been in use for some years, It has great sentimental value as indicated in conversations with local residents. Therefore, it would be an unrecoverable loss to demolish the building when there are other possibilities for using the facility.

Modernization
According to city conservators, the modernisation of a building this old can be a challenge as everything from the ground up needs renovation. However, some local architects would be willing to work together and develop a design that takes into account the financial constraints of the public budget as well as environmental factors. To illustrate, the initial estimated costs for modernization are $300,000 and 6 months of construction and design works.

It is strongly recommended to turn the brewery into a co-working space so the rent will offset 15-20% of the costs in order to give the town a modern touch on a historic site.

Future benefits
Considering all of the above, if the following suggestions were taken, there would be great benefits for everybody involved. Moreover, the town would create another source of income, the space would attract creative professionals and not only would it benefit them, but local residents would also be able to keep their brewery in the town centre.

Submit your (CAE) Proposal for review

Within 72 hours your C1 Advanced (CAE) proposal will be reviewed and graded.

See more

C1 Advanced (CAE) Proposal: **Sample Answers**

CAE Proposal Sample 1

Proposal subject:

Language students – let us improve what we do for you! Unfortunately, we can't spend much money, but we'd like to improve what we provide for our language students. Submit proposals to us explaining what is useful about the current facilities we provide, describe any problems you have with them and make recommendations for how we can improve them, giving reasons to support your ideas.

Student's CAE Proposal Answer:

How to improve the quality of language classes: a proposal

The principal objectives of this proposal are to describe the current state of language teaching at the Pennsylvania State University, identify areas for improvement, and offer recommendations on exactly what improvements can be achieved.

Current situation

At the present moment, Penn State offers courses of several languages on three different levels. One can study modern languages such as French, German, Italian Russian as a beginner, intermediate or upper-intermediate student.

Issues

Following a final year survey among students taking language courses, the following areas for improvement can be highlighted:

1. the number of languages in offer: undoubtedly narrow and restricted to European languages;
2. the structure of the courses is flat: no advanced level
3. little innovation in the language methods utilized: simple, old-fashioned grammar-translation method still reigns supreme.

Recommendations

It is vital to address the issues raised in the student survey. Therefore, the following actions ought to be performed with a view to improving the quality of the courses and their reception:

A. The offer should be increased to include other widely-spoken languages, especially non-European ones, such as Chinese, Arabic and Hindi. These languages are real challenges for the speakers of European languages.

B. It is advisable to expand the course options by offering lessons for advanced students. Only comprehensive offer can motivate students to immerse themselves in language learning.

C. Last but not least, some variety needs to be introduced into the array of teaching methods available to students, e.g. online multimedia lessons. The best method of language learning is using many various methods.

All of these measures, if promptly implemented, are surely going to increase student satisfaction in the area of language courses.

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CAE Proposal Sample 2

Proposal subject:

You go to a university that has a high amount of international students and you have realised that the website is not up to scratch. Write a proposal for the University Dean about how it could be improved.

Student's CAE Proposal Answer:

This proposal is aimed at outlining the way in which the university website could be improved so that it is more user friendly for international students. It will suggest what improvements can be made and also set out how this would benefit the students themselves.

Problems with using the site

A recent study into how easy it is to get around the site has revealed that 70% of students whose second language is English find it difficult to find specific information about their courses. Because of the language barrier, they find it hard to make their search terms clear and this has become a cause for concern. Translating the site is not an option and this can be a big problem, especially at the beginning of the academic year.

Ways the site could address these issues

It has been well documented that the university website has neither a site map nor an introduction video to help novice students to find their way around it. It would make a huge difference if there were some simple instructions to indicate where to find information. It is a delicate balance as we, of course, want international students to learn English, but also want them to navigate the site with ease.

Recommendations

I would like to make the following recommendations:

- Invite students who are starting out at the university to a quick and informative seminar to demonstrate how to use the site.
- Provide language help and some useful resources for language learning and assistance.
- Provide a survival pack for students to take with them and know how to combat technological issues.

If these recommendations are in place, young people are bound to feel more prepared for their experience and take full advantage of this unique experience.

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C1 Advanced (CAE) Proposal: **Writing Questions**

Proposal Question 1

There are plans to demolish an old and unused building in the town where you are a student. You feel that the building should be saved. You decide to write a proposal for the town council explaining why you think the building should be preserved, suggesting what could be done to modernise it and saying how the building could benefit the local people.

Proposal Question 2

Your college currently doesn't provide enough support for students planning to spend time studying in another country. You see this notice in the library.

> The college is planning to introduce a special course for students planning to spend time studying in-country. The college principal invites students to send a proposal outlining any problems students may face when studying abroad and suggesting ways in which the course could address these problems. A decision can then be made about what to include on the course.

Proposal Question 3

Students at your college have to give a spoken presentation as part of their final assessment and need some help. The school director has invited you to send a proposal outlining any problems students have with presentations and suggesting how these problems could be overcome.

Proposal Question 4

The company you work for is considering the idea of a flexible working day, where staff are able to vary their starting and finishing time. The manager of your department has asked you to write a proposal explaining why introducing a flexible working day could benefit both the company and its employees. You should also suggest how a flexible working day could operate in your own department.

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C1 Advanced (CAE) Proposal: **Proposal vs Report**

Difference between proposal and report

Proposals are often structured in a **similar way to** reports. But it's very important that we make the distinction between the two as you can see from the pictures below.

Report (present/past)

If we follow the sequence here, a **report** is about something **that has already happened** and the function of the report is to communicate the information **from the past, via you** to a **superior boss** teacher member of the local council.

Proposal (future)

A proposal takes a slightly different sequence, in the sense that, **you are going** to **your superio**r directly to **suggest something** that could have **in the future.**

Looks quite simple in theory but we have to **bear in mind** that the use of **language** for this **will be completely different:**

- If you're writing a **report** quite often you're going to be using **past tenses** or **present tenses** as well as many **passive forms**
- for a **proposal**, you're going to be looking at **future tenses** and **conditionals**, as well as a lot of **modal verbs** (could, would) and some **passive forms**

Although the difference is not huge the use of language will have to be completely different with respect to the tenses.

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C1 Advanced (CAE) Proposal: **Structure** / **Real Examples**

Below are presented examples of **proposal structure** based on real exam tasks.

Example task 1:

As always we start by **analyzing the task** and finding the things we have to do in this case **there are two:**

Example:

> Write a proposal for your college principal in which you ask for support to travel *(support needed)* to another country for an internship. Explain what you would like from the college, and why would it be of benefit.*(your expectations – > personal growth)*

based on these two points, we can create this type of structure:

Example:

> **Introduction**
> *The aim of this proposal is to request assistance regarding an internship programme I am interested in.*
>
> **Support needed**
> *Comment on the first element…*
>
> **Personal growth**
> *Comment on the second element…*
>
> **Conclusion**
> *Having outlined needs and reasons, I am sure that…*

Example task 2:

Again we start by **analyzing the task** and finding the things we have to do in this case **suggest several places** and **provide recommendations:**

Example:

You study at an international college in your country. Your history teacher is planning a one-day study trip *(a trip)* for your class and has asked the students for suggestions. Write a proposal considering two or three different places *(provide places)* for history students to visit in the area and recommend which one of these *(add recommendation)* places would be preferable for a one-day study visit.

based on this short analysis, we can create this type of structure:

Example:

Introduction
The aim of this proposal is to …

Place 1
Comment on the first element…

Place 2
Comment on the second element…

Place 3
Comment on the third element…

Recommendation
Having outlined the example locations…

Example task 3:

You read the following announcement in your local newspaper.

Example:

There is a 200 m X 200 m piece of land in the centre of our town that can be redeveloped. What do you think this piece of land should be used for? *(give development ideas)* How will it benefit the people of our town and what other advantages will it bring? *(provide benefits and advantages)* Send in your proposals to us and we will present the best ones to the town council for consideration.

based on this short analysis, we can create this type of structure:

Example:

Introduction
The aim of this proposal is to ...

Redevelopment ideas
Comment on the first idea...

Comment on the second idea...

Benefits and Advantages
Comment on benefits...

Conclusion
Having provided the above...

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C1 Advanced (CAE) Proposal: **Writing Checklist**

After writing your text, you can check it yourself using the **writing checklist** below.

How to do that? Simply check your text/email by **answering** the **questions one by one:**

Content

- ☑ Have I covered all the key information required by the task?

- [x] Have I written only information which is relevant to the task?
- [x] Have I developed the basic points in the task with my own ideas?

Communicative Achievement

- [x] Have I achieved the main purpose(s) of the text (for example, explaining, persuading, suggesting, apologising, comparing, etc.)?
- [x] Have I used a suitable mix of fact and opinion?
- [x] Have I used a suitable style and register (formal or informal) for the task?

Organisation

- [x] Have I used paragraphs appropriately to organise my ideas?
- [x] Have I used other organisational features appropriately for the genre of the text (for example, titles, headings, openings, closings, etc.)?
- [x] Is the connection between my ideas clear and easy for the reader to follow? (For example, have I used appropriate linking words, pronouns, etc. to refer to different things within the text?)
- [x] Are the ideas balanced appropriately, with suitable attention and space given to each one?

Language

- [x] Have I used a wide range of vocabulary?
- [x] Have I avoided repeating the same words and phrases?
- [x] Have I used a range of simple and more complex grammatical structures?
- [x] Have I correctly used any common phrases which are relevant to the specific task or topic?
- [x] Is my use of grammar accurate?
- [x] Is my spelling accurate?

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C1 Advanced (CAE) Proposal: **Things to Focus On**

Language

But be careful with your spelling. Don't misspell words like *'Recommendation'* – it probably appears in the rubric anyway.

Learn some set phrases that can be used to preface your invented statistics – *"According to the majority of the students in my class"* etc.

Passive constructions are a more polite way to make recommendations than active sentences. *"You should do this"* is too strong – *"These ideas should be taken under consideration"* is much more appropriate.

Communication

The proposal should be fairly **formal** because the context is fairly formal – the writer is submitting a proposal to people who are in charge.

Don't limit yourself to simple ideas. Always have at least one complex idea to talk about.

Use **modals** and **conditionals** to speculate about the effectiveness of your ideas, instead of using simple tenses.

Organization

The proposal should be appropriately organized in **paragraphs** or **sections**, which may each be given a **heading**.

Use **linking words** to show how your ideas fit together.

In formal language, remember that your **sentences should tend to be quite long**. But make them readable!

Content

By covering all of the content points in the rubric, and adding as much detail as possible, there's no reason why you wouldn't be able to get full marks here.

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C1 Advanced (CAE) Proposal: **Useful Phrases & Expressions**

We will finish it with some useful vocabulary mostly used to organize information. Although it is **taking a shortcut,** if you learn several phrases for each paragraph in each type of text that could be on your exam, you will certainly be able to create a very consistent and well-organized proposal.

Stating the purpose of the proposal

The principal objectives of this proposal are to
The objective of this proposal is to…
The purpose of this proposal is to examine / evaluate / explain / describe / analyse / present…
This proposal aims to…

Rhetorical phrases:

Have you ever ……..?
What do you think about ……..?
Are you one of those people who thinks that ……?
Are you one of those people who ……..?
What would life be like if ……?
Will the future bring us ….. ?

Background information

At the present moment,…
Comments made at the end of the questionnaires suggest…
Following a survey among…
Concerned members of the local community were invited to attend…
A number of concerns with regard to XYZ were expressed by…
The following areas for improvement can be highlighted

Introducing your first point:

Firstly
In the first place
First of all
The first thing to consider is
One thing to consider is
To begin with

Introducing more points:

Secondly
Another consideration
Yet another consideration
Another thing to consider is
Added to that
Apart from that
In addition to this

Making recommendations and suggestions

A working group should be set up by...
There should be an enquiry into...
It would be advantageous to...
It is recommended that...
I recommend that a larger survey should be conducted before a final decision is reached...

Final recommendations

Implementation of the above ideas would result in...
A working group should be set up by...
There should be an enquiry into...
I recommend that a larger survey should be conducted before a final decision is reached...
The following actions ought to be performed with a view to (improving the quality of...)

C1 Advanced (CAE) Proposal: **People also ask**

What is a CAE proposal?

This is one of the elective exam questions appearing in the second part of the **C1 Advanced (CAE) Cambridge English Language** writing section of the exam.

It is usually a text written for club members, or for a **boss** or a **college principal**, which takes the form of a document whose purpose is to **convince the target reader** of the rightness of some action in the future. It could be a particular project or event.

Scroll to the top of the article to read more...

How do I write a proposal for CAE?

1. Begin by stating the purpose of your proposal.
2. Use an impersonal, semi-formal style.
3. Use a clear layout with headings.

4. Express opinions and make recommendations in the last section of your proposal.
5. Include a final sentence summarising your opinion.

Scroll to the top of the article to read more...

What is the difference between a CAE proposal and report?

Reports – are always written about something that happened in the past for example a survey that you've conducted or an excursion that you went on or some kind of panel discussion that you've visited.

Proposals – on the other hand, always deal with something in the present/future. The focus of a proposal is always on evaluating a situation as well as making a suggestion or recommendation for the future.

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What is a proposal Cambridge?

It is one of the exam questions appearing in the second part of the **Cambridge English Language** writing section of the exam.

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