

## Promoting Language Learning through Two Approaches to Assessing Writing (Secondary 3)

Here is an answer script taken from the S3 English Evaluation Test run by the School-based Curriculum (Secondary) Section. Two common ways of marking the same piece of writing are shown below. Let us find out the features of the two ways of marking and their possible impact on the learner.

### Some tips for marking:

- There is no single legitimate way of marking. It is always the purpose of the marking which determines how a piece of work should be marked.
- Teachers can employ a variety of ways or even a combination of methods to mark students' work.
- Post-marking activities like discussing with students, giving recognition and sharing of good work among students enable more effective learning.

### The Writing Task:

Students are given a letter written by David to a friend, Mary. David has 3 problems (noisy home, nothing to do, getting fat) and wants Mary to give him some advice.

### The answer script marked by Method A

Dear David,

I received your letter yesterday. I'm sorry to hear about your problems. Well, let me give you some advice. If you <sup>find it (inf)</sup> difficult do your homework at home, you can <sup>(Art.)</sup> go to library. This is a place <sup>where people have to keep silent</sup> ~~that no noisy~~. You can do your homework quietly. If you <sup>(T.)</sup> ~~didn't~~ want to go to the library, you can <sup>(Vb. f.)</sup> ~~to~~ told your parents that you want <sup>(pron.)</sup> ~~they~~ to keep quiet.

I also <sup>(T.)</sup> ~~watched~~ TV every day, but ~~I~~ on Sundays, ~~sometimes~~ I go out to play. And also you can do another. You can go shopping with your friends. You can do some outdoor <sup>(No.)</sup> ~~exercises~~, e.g. you can join some clubs ~~to do somethings~~. It is quite interesting.

If you <sup>(T.)</sup> ~~get~~ fatter and fatter, you must do more <sup>(No.)</sup> ~~exercises~~. Eat less snack. ~~You~~ <sup>(T.)</sup> ~~didn't~~ eat so <sup>(No.)</sup> ~~many~~ ice-cream. Then you will <sup>??</sup> ~~eat~~ some diet meal. Drink more water. You can get <sup>(Sp.)</sup> ~~thinner~~ and <sup>(Sp.)</sup> ~~thinner~~. And you can <sup>(Sp.)</sup> ~~keep it!~~

Good effort!

Language	28/50	
Content	35/50	
	<u>63/100</u>	

Yours,  
Mary

### The answer script marked by Method B

Dear David,

I received your letter yesterday. I'm sorry to hear about your problems. Well, let me give you some advice. If you difficult do your homework at home, you can go to library. This is a place that no noisy. You can do your homework quietly. *good elaboration!*

If you didn't want to go to the library, you can told to your parents that you want *sounds like an order!* they to keep quiet.  $\Rightarrow$  *you need a quiet environment to study*

I also watched TV every day, but I on Sundays, sometimes I go out to play. *gd to show David that you also watch TV!* And *Do you mean 'other activities'?* also you can do another. You can go shopping with your friends. You can do some outdoor exercises, e.g. you can join some clubs to do somethings. It is quite interesting. *Be more specific! which clubs? what to do?*

If you get fatter and fatter, you must do more exercises. Eat less snack. You didn't eat so many ice-cream. Then you will eat some diet meat. Drink more water. You can get thinner and thinner. And you can keep it! *gd! lots of suggestions*

*A nice attempt!  
You have given lots of useful advice to David.  
You have also attempted to elaborate on your ideas.  
I'm sure you can give more creative ideas!* Yours,  
Mary

### Features of the two ways of marking:

Method A	Method B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- focus on accuracy</li> <li>- detailed marking</li> <li>- use of scores/marks</li> <li>- a mixture of direct marking and use of marking codes</li> <li>- frequently used in tests and exams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- focus on content (the richness, development and organisation of ideas), style, etc.</li> <li>- impression marking</li> <li>- use of comments</li> <li>- use of direct marking</li> <li>- used during term work</li> </ul>

### Possible impact on the learner:

Method A	Method B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- focus on accuracy</li> <li>- little development of other important writing skills (generation and organisation of ideas, creativity, style, etc.)</li> <li>- cautious about the word limit (thinking that the more they write, the more mistakes they will make)</li> <li>- concern about scores</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- focus on thinking (generation, development and organisation of ideas, creativity, style, etc.)</li> <li>- less aware of accuracy</li> <li>- pay little attention to the word limit</li> <li>- concern about comments (including praise, areas for improvement, teacher's feelings, etc.)</li> </ul>