



2012 English

Higher Writing Folio

Finalised Marking Instructions

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2012

The information in this publication may be reproduced to support SQA qualifications only on a non-commercial basis. If it is to be used for any other purposes written permission must be obtained from SQA's NQ Delivery: Exam Operations.

Where the publication includes materials from sources other than SQA (secondary copyright), this material should only be reproduced for the purposes of examination or assessment. If it needs to be reproduced for any other purpose it is the centre's responsibility to obtain the necessary copyright clearance. SQA's NQ Delivery: Exam Operations may be able to direct you to the secondary sources.

These Marking Instructions have been prepared by Examination Teams for use by SQA Appointed Markers when marking External Course Assessments. This publication must not be reproduced for commercial or trade purposes.

Higher Folio Marking Instructions

The following Marking Instructions relate specifically to the marking of Folios of Writing and augment but do not replace the General Marking Instructions which have to be followed by all markers.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

1 Procedure

- At the end of each piece of writing, indicate the category (in Roman numerals) and the mark out of 25.
- Transfer the two marks to the appropriate boxes on the front of the flyleaf.
- Enter the total into the “Total Mark” box. [Please ensure that only the total mark goes in this box.]

2 Comments on scripts

Absolutely no words (or codes/abbreviations such as “Sp”, “Gr”, “Rel?”, “!!!”, “??” etc) should be written on a candidate’s folio submission. This instruction applies to all subjects and all levels. You may, however, use ticks, crosses and lines within an answer to help clarify your marking, and this is essential in order to indicate weaknesses in Technical Accuracy.

3 PA Referrals

For details of how to make a referral to the Principal Assessor, see page 4 of *General Marking Instructions*. If you refer a piece of writing to the PA, for whatever reason, you must have allocated it a provisional mark. You should explain on the PA Referral form the reason for the referral and, if appropriate, the thinking behind the provisional mark awarded.

4 Word Limits

If a piece of writing (other than poetry) is stated on the Flyleaf as being, or clearly is, below the minimum number of words for Higher (650 words), the highest possible mark is 11.

If the number of words entered on the Flyleaf indicates that a piece exceeds the limit for Higher (1300 words), mark the piece in the usual way, without penalty, and then refer the Folio to the Principal Assessor, who will apply an appropriate penalty.

If the number of words entered on the Flyleaf is clearly incorrect and a piece appears to exceed the limit for Higher (1300 words), mark the piece in the usual way, without penalty, and then refer the Folio to the Principal Assessor, who will apply an appropriate penalty.

If the number of words has not been entered on the Flyleaf, but a piece appears to exceed the limit for Higher (1300 words), mark the piece in the usual way, without penalty, and then refer the Folio to the Principal Assessor, who will apply an appropriate penalty.

If the number of words has not been entered on the Flyleaf, but a piece is clearly within the limit for Higher (1300 words), mark the piece in the usual way. There is no need to take any further action.

5 Acknowledgement of sources

If the box on the flyleaf confirming that sources have been consulted has been ticked, but no sources have been identified, mark in the usual way, without penalty, and then refer the Folio to the Principal Assessor.

If the box on the flyleaf confirming that sources have been consulted has been ticked, but the identification of the sources is seriously inadequate and/or inaccurate, mark in the usual way, without penalty, and then refer the Folio to the Principal Assessor.

If neither box on the Flyleaf has been ticked, but sources have been acknowledged in the piece of writing, mark in the usual way, without penalty. There should be no need for any further action.

6 Plagiarism

If you can confirm plagiarism in a piece of writing and can provide appropriate evidence, you should assign a mark in the usual way, without penalty, and then enclose a brief note of explanation on a separate sheet of paper. Complete the remaining Folios from the centre and write “**Special Attention (M)**” clearly on the front of the packet in red ink. (See page 5 of *General Marking Instructions*.) Please do not refer such Folios to the Principal Assessor.

7 Defective submissions

If a Folio contains only one piece of writing but the Flyleaf has details of two, mark the piece as usual and enter the mark as the Total. Complete the remaining Folios from the centre and write “**Special Attention**” clearly on the front of the packet in red ink. (See page 2 of *General Marking Instructions*.) Please do not refer such Folios to the Principal Assessor.

If a Folio contains two pieces which are clearly in the same genre (despite what may be indicated on the Flyleaf), mark both pieces in the usual way, without penalty, and refer the Folio to the Principal Assessor. Before taking this course of action, please make all reasonable allowances for broad definitions of genre.

8 “Automatic” PA Referrals

When you encounter in your marking any of the following types of writing, please mark them in the usual way and then refer the Folio to the Principal Assessor:

- poetry
- drama
- work written in Scots

The purpose of these referrals is to allow the Principal Assessor to determine the number of such types being submitted from year to year, and to access material for possible exemplification.

THE MARKING PROCESS

1 Judging against the Performance Criteria

Each piece of writing should first be read to establish whether it achieves success in all the Performance Criteria below, including the standards for technical accuracy (see 2 below).

Content

Content is relevant and appropriate for purpose and audience, reveals depth and complexity of thought and sustained development.

Structure

Structure is effective and appropriate for purpose, audience and genre; content is sequenced and organised in ways which assist impact.

Expression

Capable use of techniques relevant to the genre and effective choice of words and sentence structures sustain a style and tone which clearly communicate a point of view/stance consistent with purpose and audience.

2 Confirming Technical Accuracy

A piece of writing which does not satisfy the requirement for “consistent” technical accuracy cannot pass. If, however, technical accuracy is deemed “consistent”, then there are no penalties or deductions for any errors.

Consistently accurate

Few errors will be present. Paragraphs, sentences and punctuation are accurate and organised so that the writing can be clearly and readily understood. Spelling errors (particularly of high frequency words) are infrequent.

3 Assigning a Category and Mark

Each piece of writing should then be assigned to the appropriate category as outlined in the Broad Descriptors, supported by reference to the Detailed Descriptors.

(a) Broad Descriptors

Pieces of writing which **pass** (ie meet the minimum requirements of the Performance Criteria) should be assigned to one of four categories as follows:

Category	Mark(s)	Broad descriptor
I	25	Outstanding
II	21 or 23	Very sound
III	17 or 19	Comfortably achieves the Performance Criteria
IV	13 or 15	Just succeeds in achieving the Performance Criteria

Pieces of writing which **fail** to meet the minimum requirements of one or more than one Performance Criterion should be assigned to one of two categories as follows:

Category	Mark(s)	Broad descriptor
V	11 or 9	Fails to achieve one or more than one Performance Criterion and/or to achieve consistent technical accuracy
VI*	7 or 5**	Serious shortcomings

In Categories II – VI, the choice of which mark to award should be determined by the level of certainty with which the piece of writing has been assigned to the category.

* Pieces of writing in this category will be extremely rare. It should be used only in cases of extreme thinness or serious weaknesses in expression and/or technical accuracy.

** Marks below 5 can, in exceptional circumstances be awarded, for example to a piece of writing which is of extreme brevity, perhaps just a few lines.

(b) Detailed descriptors

In order to avoid excessive length in these descriptors, Argumentative, Persuasive and Report have been treated generically as “Discursive”. To assist Markers, some key statements about the three types are given on page 10.

Category I (25 marks):

A sophisticated and stylish piece of writing in which the content is particularly well selected and shows qualities of insight/imagination/sophisticated thought. The structure is highly appropriate and there is skilful organisation which significantly enhances the overall impact of the writing. Expression is concise and effective. Word choice is consistently apposite, and sentence structures are skilfully varied to achieve effects. Techniques associated with the genre are used very effectively.

Imaginative writing in this category will be characterised by a strong sense that the writer has command of and insight into the genre and is skilfully introducing and developing thematic concerns; the writing has flair and individuality which permeate the ideas and use of language.

Personal/Reflective writing in this category will be characterised by a strong sense of mature reflection; the writer’s personality and individuality permeate the ideas and use of language.

Discursive writing in this category will, as appropriate to the specific genre and purpose, be characterised by a strong sense of engagement with the ideas/issues and a sophisticated understanding of them; the line of thought is subtle and sustained; as appropriate, the writer’s stance permeates the ideas and use of language.

Category II (21 or 23 marks):

A very sound piece of writing in which the content is well selected and shows evidence of insight/imagination/sophisticated thought. The structure is appropriate and the organisation of content enhances the overall impact of the writing. Expression is skilful and confident. Word choice is apposite, and sentence structures are varied to achieve effects. Techniques associated with the genre are used effectively.

Imaginative writing in this category will be characterised by a clear sense that the writer has command of and some insight into the genre and is able to introduce and develop thematic concerns; the writing is skilful and language is deployed to create a strong impact.

Personal/Reflective writing in this category will be characterised by a clear sense of mature reflection; the writer’s personality and individuality come across strongly; the writing is confident and language is deployed to create a strong impact.

Discursive writing in this category will, as appropriate to the specific genre and purpose, be characterised by a clear sense of engagement with the ideas/issues and a strong understanding of them; the line of thought is clear and sustained; the writing is skilful and language is used confidently.

Category III (17 or 19 marks):

A clearly competent piece of writing in which the content shows some evidence of insight/imagination/sophisticated thought. The structure is appropriate and contributes to the overall impact of the writing. Expression is controlled. Word choice is mostly apposite, and there is suitable variation in sentence structures. Techniques associated with the genre are in evidence.

Imaginative writing in this category will be characterised by a sense that the writer has some insight into the genre and is attempting to introduce and develop thematic concerns; the writing is controlled and language is deployed to create some impact.

Personal/Reflective writing in this category will be characterised by a clear sense of reflection; there is a clear sense of the writer's personality; the writing is controlled and language is deployed to create some impact.

Discursive writing in this category will, as appropriate to the specific genre and purpose, be characterised by a sense of engagement with the ideas/issues and a clear understanding of them; the line of thought is clear; the writing is controlled and language is used appropriately throughout.

Category IV (13 or 15 marks):

A sufficiently competent piece of writing in which the content shows some signs of depth of thought and there is sufficient development. The structure is appropriate for the genre. Expression is adequate. There is evidence that choice of words and sentence structures has been made to achieve some effect, and there is use of some of the techniques associated with the genre.

Imaginative writing in this category will be characterised by some sense that the writer has an understanding of the genre; the writing is mostly controlled and there is some evidence the writer is trying to deploy language to create impact.

Personal/Reflective writing in this category will be characterised by a limited sense of reflection; there is some sense of the writer's personality; the writing is mostly controlled and there is some evidence the writer is trying to deploy language to create impact.

Discursive writing in this category will, as appropriate to the specific genre and purpose, be characterised by a sense that the ideas/issues are clearly understood; the line of thought is recognisable; for the most part, the writing is controlled and language is used appropriately.

Category V (11 or 9 marks):

A piece of writing will fall into this category for a variety of reasons: it fails to achieve consistent technical accuracy; the structure is not sufficiently organised to carry the writer's ideas clearly; the language is mundane and unvaried, the content is simply too thin.

Imaginative writing in this category will be characterised by one or more of the following: clumsy and/or naïve use of the genre, dull or inappropriate language, serious inconsistency of style or tone, overall thinness of content.

Personal/Reflective writing in this category will be characterised by one or more of the following: little or no sense of the writer's personality, dull or inappropriate language, absence of any sense of style or tone, overall thinness of content.

Discursive writing in this category will be characterised by one or more of the following: evidence that ideas/issue are not understood, weaknesses in structure, inappropriate language or tone, failure to follow the stated remit, overall thinness of content.

Some general guidelines

- Assessment must be holistic. It is not possible to see a piece of writing in “subsets” such as Content, Structure, Expression, etc. In every piece of writing there will be strengths and weaknesses; assessment should focus as far as possible on the strengths, taking account of weaknesses only when they significantly detract from the overall achievement.
- Categories are not grades. Assumptions about final grades or association of final grades with particular categories should not be allowed to influence the assessment.
- Quality of expression should not be confused with “Technical Accuracy”, which is limited to matters of spelling, punctuation and grammar. A piece of writing characterised by clumsy expression is likely to be self-penalising, but should not automatically fail for this alone.
- In the Descriptors, terms such as “sound”, “adequate”, “effective”, “sophisticated” and even “some”, can never be defined with precision, and their application can be made only after reference to exemplification. Detailed exemplification is given each year to those appointed to mark the Folio, and is disseminated to the profession by such means as the Understanding Standards website, Professional Development Workshops, Development Visits.

“Discursive” writing: key statements from the Arrangements document for Higher:

Argumentative Writing:

Argumentative writing will treat a topic or issue in a way which presents a line of argument, dealing with two or more varying viewpoints.

The main requirements of the **argumentative** essay are that it will:

- communicate a clear and balanced line of argument
- present two sides of an argument (or more, if applicable)
- distinguish between facts and opinions
- convey an argumentative tone which is measured, reasonable and yet carries personal conviction
- communicate to the reader a clear sense that the writer has weighed up different aspects of the argument before reaching conclusions
- make effective use of a number of argumentative techniques such as comparison, contrast, confirmation, refutation, counter-argument, proof, disproof.

Persuasive Writing:

Persuasive writing will persuade to a purpose or point of view (for example, to sell a product, or influence opinion/belief), usually concerning itself with a single topic or issue.

The main requirements of the **persuasive** essay are that it will:

- carry a clear sense of conviction or inducement; tone may range from encouragement, through cajoling to pressurising
- make effective use of a number of persuasive techniques, such as manipulating information, claiming necessity/exclusivity, flattering, employing technical jargon/rhetoric.

Report:

The report must contain relevant complex information selected from at least two sources. In order to meet the requirements of the performance criteria, material drawn from sources must be recast or paraphrased appropriately for purpose. The report must fulfil a clearly expressed remit and be prefaced by a concise statement outlining purpose and describing procedures used to gather information. The writer’s point of view and the tone will depend on the nature of the remit.

The writing should have a logical structure. It is important that the structure used matches the one described in the concise statement. At this level, it is reasonable to expect that the chosen structure should clearly identify the constituent aspects of the report and how they are linked.

Diagrams, tables, charts and graphs may be included, if appropriate to the chosen form. Headings, appendices, bibliographies and a lettering or numbering system to separate the constituent sections may also be used.

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]