Here are some answers to the questions shown in the simulation. Read them in conjunction with the examiner comments below, to get an understanding of what makes a good exam answer, and what the main problems are in producing a good answer.

Note that these are NOT model answers, just examples of typical student responses so they do contain errors and problems.

**TASK 1 – short email**

Dear Supervisor,

You asked for a quick progress report about the project to design a new database, so I want to give you a brief account of the situation so far. The hardware suppliers gave us a delivery late and one team member is sick. The software is OK and the pilot test was successful. Some data is missing. Do you have back up discs of the data?

Regards
Marco

The writer has used only vocabulary from the question. There is very little evidence of the writer’s vocabulary skills. The grammar is accurate but very simple. The content is relevant but undeveloped. The email format is fine but Dear Mike/Susan/Brad would be more suitable as the employee should know and use the supervisor’s name.

Advice – You will obviously need SOME of the words from the question, but try to use your own words where possible.

Dear Alan,

I am writing to tell you that we are making a quick progress on the new database. We designed a system which we think will be suitable for all the departments, and make easier everyone’s work.

Moreover we hope to finish everything before Friday, so if you like we could make a test of the system on the weekend, so that we don’t disturb too much the work of the office.

Regards
Alex
This answer does not include the information that was required in the question (a delivery arrived late, some data is missing etc). The language is not perfect, but the errors do not cause confusion for the reader.

Advice – read the question carefully. Some questions tell you what you have to/should/must include. Other questions say you ‘can’ include something, or that ‘here are some ideas’.

Dear Mr Smith,

Regarding the new database, I have to report you some notes.
We are in the timetable with the project.
But we had to hurry, because we had to wait for the hardware suppliers.
There is another problem. One team member does not feel well.
Therefore there are only 3 team members that do the work.
But I have also good news.
The pilot test of the software went well, although we found that some data was missing.
Could you please send to us the back up discs?

Regards
Elena

This writer loses marks on ‘organisation’ because there is no attempt to organize the text into logical paragraphs. The grammar is also very simple, and there are basic problems with the use of English e.g. to report you, we are in the timetable, I have also, send to us.

Advice – use paragraphs, with a new paragraph for a new topic.

Hi Jim,

A quick update. We lost two days last week, waiting for the hardware to be deliver, but we now have everything. We are also one person less this week, as Milly has the flu. The others have been doing extra hours, so we are still on schedule.

Yesterday we have tested the software and everything was fine. However, I’ve lost a disc with some data for the test files – have you got the back-ups?

A natural-sounding email that covers all the task, and develops each point (e.g. details about the person who is sick and explaining that the others have been doing extra hours because of this). This makes the email sound realistic. The text is divided into two logical paragraphs, one about the schedule and one about the software. There are problems with the use of English (to be deliver, yesterday we have) but these do not cause problems for the reader.
Hi,

In my opinion a green roof is a beautiful solution especially for the place where is your building, in a city. There are some problems with the green roof but the solution aren’t too complicated.

The first problem is to insulate the structure and to protect it from leaking out of water. The type of waterproof depends also from the material of the structure. For give a good advice about this, I need to know if the structure will be made by concrete, steal or wood.

The weight of the green roof after the irrigation can cause a problem to the structure. So you should choose carefully the plants, because some plant don’t need a lot of water. Some plant also don’t need a lot of soil, that is a big consideration for the weight. Of course, everything must start with a careful evaluation of the structural resistance of the frame to consider the weight.

A green roof is a big advantage for a building since it has the ability to stop going out the heat in the winter and to stop going in a lot of heat in the summer, so I wish good luck for you and for your project.

This would be a useful contribution to a forum discussion, and deals with the topics suggested well. The text is divided into logical paragraphs. But did the writer make a plan before writing? It seems not with the sentence ‘everything must start with’ coming near the end. The linkers are generally simple (and, but, so) but some others well (since, of course).

There are frequent errors in prepositions, word order, use of plural ‘s’, but these errors don’t cause difficulty in understanding the text. There is some use of B2 level lexis (e.g. insulate, heat, weight) and only a few spelling errors.

This report considers the suitability of a similar design of the new building of London University for the new Mesiano’s library.

For an institution is important an innovative design, especially for a university where students study architecture. The design makes the first impression that people have when they come there, so it is better have a strong new kind of design.

The siting of the library that is proposed, next to the white stone building of Mesiano, makes that this design is not suitable at all. Steel and glass are predominant on the London University building, and is better to have continuity in materials and design when two buildings will be very close one another.

The form of the London building is similar a letter L, with the long part on the top. This can be a problem for a library, as the library must hold an extremely lot of weight of books. Therefore it would be necessary have a design with a more supported building.

The natural landscape of Mesiano should not destroy by a new building. The nature of the trees and mountains and the important site on top of the city must all be considered with a design which can have more harmony with the nature, as well as more harmony with the existing building.
The report makes some important points, and clearly rejects the design. The style is suitably impersonal. The text is organised logically, with clear paragraphs, and some good linkers (as, therefore, as well as). There are some errors but these don't make the text difficult to understand, and the level of grammatical complexity is OK. There is evidence of vocabulary at B2 level (e.g. existing, suitability, close, predominant).

For the regenerating of this area the main obstacles are the pollution of the soil. In the soil there are many heavy metal: the concentration of Pb is very high, like the concentration of Cr. The costs to remove this element are very expensive because an inspection into ground shows that the deepth where there are pollutions is five metres so the volumn that must be removed and brought into a special dump is 100'000m³. The price for m³ is 10€.

In this place can work only special companies, because it is very dangerous. This companies are specialized in the remotion of polluted soil, and they provide to the safety of the place of work. They use a special equipments

The text is very short, being only 121 words, and not 170-190. The topic is well developed and there is evidence of good vocabulary. There are several minor grammar errors, but there is use of complex sentences and not only simple grammar.