

## Write about Dublin

Date / /

Write about living in Dublin.

Talk about -:

- your area
- people
- buildings
- food.

Writing in a different language is difficult so it's important to think about what you want to say first. It's a good idea to write down single words and phrases at the beginning. After that, it will be easier to write full sentences. Spend about 5 minutes writing notes in the box below.

**Notes – single words and phrases**





## Teacher's Notes - Suggestions for Writing Practice

Standards of written work amongst IILT students can be very poor, sometimes in contrast with oral and aural skills. This can be partly attributed to the fact that some students do not seem to regard accuracy as being of any particular value. In addition, they do not have the skills or confidence to try to improve the quality of their work. A further problem is that regular reading in English is not a reality for the majority of students. The following is a list of suggestions for improving students' writing skills.

### 1. Reading in English.

Students need to be in the habit of reading regularly in English. This has been successfully achieved through a weekly class library session, when students borrow graded Penguin Easy Readers or Oxford Bookworms titles (a deposit of €5 from each student is recommended as some books can go missing). At the beginning of term, a student could borrow a level 1 or 2 book to ensure that the language is very accessible. It also means that the reading experience is likely to be a more enjoyable one, as there is little new vocabulary to distract from reading the story.

The majority of students will quickly adopt the habit of changing their book every week; some will even ask to change their book more frequently. A minority of students may need more encouragement but usually take a greater interest in the books when they see their classmates' enthusiasm for and enjoyment of reading. There is a definite correlation between quality of a student's written work and the number of books that he / she has read.

### 2. Choosing a topic.

It is a good idea to base writing tasks on the topic or grammar points being covered that same week (e.g. Present simple and daily routines: task could be for students to write about what they do every day). This gives students an opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned, as well as ensuring that they are equipped with the language needed to complete the task.

### 3. Writing during class-time.

Some students do not have sufficient time outside class to complete writing tasks. If writing tasks are completed and collected during class time, it is possible to track each individual student's progress effectively.

It is also possible to present a topic for a writing task and elicit suggestions from the students about what the appropriate content and structure should be for the task. Students can then receive guidance when planning their text (completing the notes and phrases section), and go directly on to writing their texts in full. This process of discussion, planning and writing gives the students a sense of immediacy about the topic and leads to better quality in content and structure.

#### **4. Correcting work.**

The aims of this process:

- to build students' confidence in their standard of writing
- to raise their awareness of their own common errors
- to train them in correcting their own mistakes.

Checking work with students on a one-to-one basis, while time-consuming, can produce huge improvements in the quality of a student's work. If written tasks are set once every two weeks, this process is quite manageable.

Each written task can be read in advance by the class teacher. Mistakes should be highlighted rather than corrected. In cases where there is a large number of mistakes, it is probably better to decide on a reasonable number of points to be highlighted.

Sit down with each student on an individual basis and ask them to look at the highlighted points – do they know what the problem is? They may be able to correct the mistake immediately, or they may need some hints. Actually correcting the mistake for the student should be the last step, and avoided if possible. Spelling mistakes should only be corrected with reference to a monolingual dictionary, and again, guidance and encouragement provided if necessary.

The initial round of corrections will be laborious. However, as students complete more writing tasks and more correction sessions, their confidence and ability improves quite quickly and the correction sessions become a lot easier. In addition, there is very positive feedback from students who experience the process, saying that they learn enormous amounts from each session.