

## Guidelines for Marking PACE Tests (VLCS Homeschool)

### Spelling Errors:

- If no helping word given, deduct ½ point (or 1 point when question has higher points value, e.g. 4 points).
- If helping word is given, deduct half the possible points (train the child to copy correctly).
- All proper nouns must be letter-perfect, otherwise it becomes someone/someplace else – deduct full points.
- Only penalise a misspelt word the first time it occurs in the test.
- Do not deduct more than half the possible points for a question, e.g. if a question is worth 2 points, and it has 3 spelling or grammar errors, deduct only 1 point (not 1 ½ points).
- Students should use exact words – synonyms are accepted rarely and only where it indicates mastery.

### Word Building:

- Spelling or capitalisation errors in spelling words – always deduct full points.
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar errors in other than the PACE's spelling words (e.g. wise sayings or memory verse) – deduct ½ point each, up to half the possible points.

**Grammar errors** (excluding English grammar questions) e.g. subject and verb not agreeing in number, capitalisation or punctuation errors – deduct ½ point per error, up to half the possible points.

**English** grammar problems – divide the total possible points by the number of required elements, e.g. if question is worth 3 points, and student must identify 3 words requiring capital letters, deduct 1 point per missed word.

### English

**Letter Writing and Compositions** (including sentence and paragraph writing):

- Deduct 1 point each for any missing capital letter or punctuation mark.
- Deduct points for being “off target” (teach them how to write appropriately for different scenarios).
- Divide the total points between the various requirements, e.g. if copying sentences into paragraph format in cursive, deduct accordingly for missing indent, starting sentence on new line, or cursive errors.

**Friendly Letter** (total 15 points)

Heading 3 points (20%)

Greeting 2 points (13%)

Body 8 points (54%)

Closing / Sig. 2 points (13%)

**Envelope** (total 15 points) 2 ½ points per line

**Business Letter** (total 25 points)

Heading 5 points (20%)

Inside address 5 points (20%)

Greeting 3 points (12%)

Body 10 points (40%)

Closing / Sig. 2 points (8%)

### Maths

- Missing comma as thousands divider, brackets [ ], parentheses ( ), or braces { } error, or incorrect set notation – deduct ½ point (only penalise the first time it occurs in the test).
- Units, if given in problem, must be shown correctly in answer, otherwise deduct ½ - 1 point.
- Number sentence required but not shown – deduct 1 point.
- Checking required but not shown – deduct half the total points (unless points indicated separately).
- Workings not shown when required or wrong method used when specified – only 1 point for correct answer.

**Not Following Instructions Correctly:** E.g. child circles answers instead of underlining – deduct full points for first occurrence (train them to read and follow instructions carefully), but only penalise first time this occurs in the test. However, the single- or double-underlining of words in English “parts of speech” problems must be strictly correct.

In Science, Social Studies and Literature, if the activity is a question followed by space to write a sentence, the answer must be a complete sentence, otherwise deduct ½ point per question. Train child to answer fully.

**General Principle:** Seek to balance a *spirit of excellence* with the *spirit of grace*. If we hold the child to high standards when they are young (including both spelling and handwriting), this good habit will help them to excel when they are older (and maintain a higher GPA at High School level). For example, if a child persists in careless spelling or sloppy handwriting, you may penalise them more heavily (deduct more points) until they take it more seriously. Or if a child has learning challenges, you may dispense more grace. Use your discretion and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.