# Preparing a List of Electronic Writing Skills for First Year Preparatory Al-Azhar Students

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# إعداد قائمة بمهارات الكتابة الإلكترونية لطلاب الصف الأول الإعدادي الأزهري

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إعداد قائمة بمهارات الكتابة الإلكترونية لطلاب الصف الأول الإعدادي الأزهري

**المستخلص :**

يهدف هذا البحث إلى إعداد قائمة بمهارات الكتابة الإلكترونية اللازمة لطالبات الصف الأول الإعدادي الأزهري والتحقق من صدقها وثباتها. اتبعت الدراسة منهجًا وصفيًا تحليليًا من خلال مراجعة الأدبيات التربوية والدراسات السابقة ذات الصلة، ثم صياغة قائمة أولية بمهارات الكتابة الإلكترونية، وعرضها على مجموعة من المحكمين المتخصصين للتأكد من صدق المحتوى. بعد ذلك طُبّقت القائمة على عينة عشوائية مكونة من (60) طالبة من معهد نور الإسلام الأزهري الإعدادي الثانوي للبنات بمدينة دمياط الجديدة. أظهرت النتائج أن القائمة تتمتع بدرجة عالية من الصدق والثبات (معامل كرونباخ ألفا = 0.89) مما يؤكد صلاحيتها كأداة علمية لقياس مهارات الكتابة الإلكترونية. توصي الدراسة بضرورة إدماج هذه المهارات في مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية بالمرحلة الإعدادية الأزهرية، وتوفير برامج تدريبية للمعلمين لتنمية مهارات الكتابة الرقمية لدى الطلاب .

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** مهارات الكتابة الإلكترونية باللغة الإنجليزية، طلاب الصف الأول الإعدادي الأزهري

### Preparing a List of Electronic Writing Skills for First Year Preparatory Al-Azhar Students

## Abstract

This study aims to prepare a list of electronic writing skills required for first-year preparatory Al-Azhar students and to examine its validity and reliability. The study adopted a descriptive-analytical method by reviewing relevant literature and previous studies, then drafting a preliminary list of electronic writing skills and presenting it to a panel of experts to ensure content validity. The instrument was applied to a random sample of 60 female students from Noor Al-Islam Preparatory Secondary Al-Azhar Institute for Girls in New Damietta. The findings revealed that the list achieved high levels of validity and reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.89, confirming its suitability as a scientific tool for assessing electronic writing skills. The study recommends integrating these skills into English language curricula in Al-Azhar preparatory schools and providing training programs for teachers to enhance students' digital writing skills.

**Keywords:** EFL Electronic Writing Skills, First-year preparatory Al-Azhar students.

# Introduction

Writing is one of the most important means of human expression and plays a central role in communication across different fields of life. It allows individuals to record their thoughts, convey knowledge to others, and contribute to the preservation of cultural and intellectual heritage. In the field of education, writing goes beyond being a simple tool for presenting answers or fulfilling assignments; it is a process through which learners develop deeper skills such as analysis, critical thinking, and creativity.

It encourages students to organize their ideas clearly, reflect on their understanding, and present arguments in a structured and logical manner. Unlike oral communication, which is often brief and spontaneous, writing demands accuracy, planning, and careful revision. These features make it not only a way to demonstrate what students have learned, but also an active part of the learning process itself, shaping their ability to think, create, and communicate effectively in both academic and real-life contexts (Elmansi, Dadour, Qoura & Hamada, 2021).

In today's knowledge-based society, the ability to write effectively has become more critical than ever before. Academic success at different stages of education, including preparatory, secondary, and higher education, is highly dependent on students' writing proficiency (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Writing enables learners to document their understanding, construct arguments, and engage in scholarly dialogue. Furthermore, in a digital age dominatedbyelectronicplatformsandonline communication, writing extends beyond traditional methods to include electronic writing skills, which require familiarity with

technological tools, digital formatting, and responsible online communication (Mayer, 2005).

For first-year preparatory Al-Azhar students, the acquisition of strong writing skills carries special significance. These students are at a transitional stage where they move from basic literacy to more advanced academic and cognitive practices. Al-Azhar institutions, which combine traditional religious studies with modern academic disciplines, require students to balance different modes of learning and expression. Writing serves as a bridge between these domains, helping students articulate religious concepts, academic ideas, and personal reflections in structured and meaningful ways. However, despite its importance, many students face persistent difficulties in writing, including limited vocabulary, weak grammatical control, poor organization of ideas, and insufficient awareness of stylistic and mechanical aspects of writing (Westwood, 2008).

This situation highlights the pressing need for a specialized tool to assess writing skills among first-year preparatory Al-Azhar students. At present, students' writing performance is often judged through teachers' subjective evaluation, which can vary widely and may not accurately reflect learners' abilities. Without a standardized and validated instrument, it is difficult to systematically identify strengths and weaknesses, provide targeted instructional support, or track students' progress over time (Abrar, 2016). A carefully designed writing skills assessment tool would therefore offer a more objective and reliable means of evaluating different aspects of students' writing.

The importance of this tool lies in its potential roles to improve both teaching and learning. For teachers, it

provides clear benchmarks and measurable indicators of writing competence, allowing them to identify specific areas where students require additional support. For students, it clarifies expectations and guides them toward self-improvement by highlighting the elements of effective writing. On a broader level, the tool contributes to curriculum development and educational research by offering standardized criteria that can be used in different schools and contexts (Alharbi, 2017).

The purpose of preparing this tool are to design and validate a comprehensive framework for assessing writing skills that is suitable for first-year preparatory Al-Azhar students. for assessing writing skills that is suitable for first-year preparatory Al-Azhar students. The tool aims to capture both the surface features of writing, such as grammar and mechanics, and deeper dimensions, such as content development, coherence, and style (Graham & Perin, 2007; Hyland, 2019; Weigle, 2014). By providing a holistic view of students' writing performance, the instrument supports educators in making informed decisions about instructional strategies, remedial programs, and curriculum design (Ferris, 2011; Alharbi, 2017). It also serves as a foundation for further research on writing instruction, digital literacy, and academic performance in Al-Azhar institutions. The skills measured by the tool can be categorized into several interrelated dimensions:

1. Content and ideas which refer to the ability to generate meaningful ideas, develop them logically, and present them in a way that reflects depth of thought and clarity of expression.

2. Organization and coherence that include structuring sentences, paragraphs, and larger texts in a logical

sequence, ensuring unity, coherence, and smooth transitions between ideas.

3. Language use, accurate application of grammatical rules, appropriate selection of vocabulary, and effective use of sentence structures which lead to communicate meaning.

4. Mechanics of writing that involve correct usage of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and formatting conventions, which contribute to clarity and professionalism in written texts.

5. Style and Expression; the ability to use language in a way that is engaging, concise, and suited to the intended audience and purpose.

6. Electronic Writing Skills; the ability to use digital tools, word processors, and formatting features to enhance the presentation and accessibility of written texts (Mayer, 2005).

By focusing on these components, the tool ensures that writing is evaluated not only at a superficial level but also at a deeper level that reflects critical thinking, organization, and effective communication. This comprehensive approach makes the tool particularly relevant for preparatory students, who need guidance and practice in mastering the multiple aspects of writing as they progress through their educational journey.

Hence, the preparation of a Writing Skills Assessment Tool for first-year preparatory Al-Azhar students is both timely and necessary. It addresses a clear gap in the educational system by providing a reliable means of evaluating writing performance, supporting instructional decision-making, and enhancing students' learning outcomes. By equipping teachers with an effective tool and students with clear performance standards, this

study contributes to improving the quality of writing instruction and fostering academic excellence within Al-Azhar preparatory schools.

## Theoretical Framework and Related Literature

Writing is one of the most fundamental skills in language learning, since it plays a crucial role in the academic development of learners at different educational levels. For first year preparatory students studying at Al-Azhar institutes, the importance of writing extends beyond the classroom, as it contributes to their ability to communicate ideas, demonstrate understanding of religious and academic texts, and participate effectively in modern digital environments. As education increasingly integrates technology, electronic writing skills are becoming essential. These skills not only enhance students' academic success but also prepare them for lifelong learning and professional opportunities in the digital age (Hyland, 2019).

The preparatory stage is a transitional phase where students move from basic literacy into more advanced academic communication. For first year preparatory school students, writing helps develop cognitive processes such as organization, critical thinking, and self-expression. Writing is not only about producing grammatically correct sentences but also about organizing ideas coherently and addressing different audiences. Research shows that students at this stage often struggle with coherence, cohesion, and paragraph development, which hinders their ability to write effectively in both academic and real-life contexts (Weigle, 2002). Therefore, structured writing instruction is essential for first year preparatory students,

especially within Al-Azhar institutes, where mastery of language supports both general and religious studies.

In recent years, the concept of electronic writing has gained increasing attention. Electronic writing refers to the ability to compose, edit, and communicate through digital platforms, including word processors, educational platforms, and online collaborative tools. Mayer (2005) believes that the integration of multimedia and technology enhances writing by engaging learners in multimodal communication. For Al-Azhar preparatory students, electronic writing is particularly important as it aligns with the Ministry of Education's efforts to digitize learning and provides students with opportunities to interact with modern educational technologies. Previous Studies have demonstrated that digital literacy significantly enhances students' motivation and quality of writing, as it allows for interactive feedback, peer collaboration, and exposure to authentic audiences (SAGE Journals, 2025).

Electronic writing skills refer to students' ability to compose, edit, and share written texts through digital platforms and technological tools. Unlike traditional writing, electronic writing integrates linguistic competence with digital literacy, requiring learners to master word processing programs, formatting features, and online communication conventions. These skills include typing fluently, using spelling and grammar checkers effectively, inserting hyperlinks and multimedia, saving and retrieving documents, and collaborating with peers through digital platforms. Mayer (2005) emphasized that digital tools enhance the writing process by engaging learners in multimodal communication, which integrates text, visuals, and sound.

In addition, recent studies have confirmed the educational value of electronic writing for improving students' performance. Elmansi (2022) found that the integration of electronic platforms improves coherence, cohesion, and overall quality of students' writing, as learners become more motivated and reflective when using digital tools. Similarly, the Digital Literacy Academic Writing Scale (SAGE Journals, 2025) highlights the importance of evaluating students' ability to adapt writing to electronic environments, ensuring accuracy, clarity, and audience awareness. For Al-Azhar preparatory students, these skills are vital not only for academic success but also for preparing them to participate effectively in the broader digital society, where communication increasingly occurs online. By developing electronic writing skills, students can bridge the gap between traditional literacy and twenty-first-century digital demands, enhancing their readiness for higher education and future careers.

## Assessing Writing Skills

Measuring writing skills has been a challenge for educators, as writing is a complex and multidimensional process. Traditional methods of teaching include holistic scoring (assigning a single overall score) and analytic scoring (evaluating separate components such as grammar, vocabulary, organization, and content) (Brown, 2015). More recent approaches include digital rubrics and online assessment platforms that provide immediate feedback. Graham and Perin (2007) mention that effective assessment not only measures students' performance but also guides instruction and supports targeted interventions. In the context of preparatory students, especially at Al-Azhar institutes, the assessment of writing must consider

both linguistic accuracy and the ability to communicate meaning effectively in academic and electronic formats.

Several studies have addressed writing skills in EFL contexts, particularly among preparatory and secondary school students. Abrar's study (2016) investigate writing difficulties among primary and secondary school students in Indonesia, identifying issues such as lack of vocabulary, poor grammar, and limited organization. Although the context differs, similar challenges are observed among Al-Azhar preparatory students. Likewise, Alharbi (2017) recommends the use of principled eclecticism in teaching writing, combining different methods to address diverse student needs. Westwood (2008) notes that difficulties in reading and writing are interrelated, and addressing writing challenges requires supporting reading comprehension as well. These findings are directly relevant to preparatory students, who are at a stage where literacy skills are still developing.

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative tool in language education, particularly in developing students' writing proficiency. Studies have shown that AI-based feedback systems can enhance students' accuracy, organization, and creativity in writing by providing immediate and individualized comments (Mekheimer, 2025). Unlike traditional methods of feedback, AI tools offer continuous opportunities for revision, which fosters learners' autonomy and improves the overall quality of their texts (Alnemrat, 2025). Furthermore, AI complements teachers' efforts by reducing workload and ensuring that feedback is both consistent and personalized. For Al-Azhar preparatory students, who often struggle with mechanical and organizational aspects of writing, AI-assisted feedback can

serve as a valuable support mechanism that accelerates the development of their electronic writing skills.

Alongside AI, technology-supported peer feedback has also gained attention in EFL writing instruction. Research has highlighted that peer collaboration mediated through digital platforms improves students' ability to critically evaluate texts, generate constructive feedback, and revise their own writing more effectively. Compared to traditional classroom feedback, digital peer review encourages active engagement and reflection, which are essential for developing higher-order writing skills such as coherence, cohesion, and audience awareness. For preparatory students in Al-Azhar institutes, technology-supported peer feedback aligns with modern educational reforms that emphasize student-centered learning and digital literacy, making it a practical approach to fostering writing competence in both academic and electronic contexts (Cuocci et al., 2023)

In the Egyptian context, recent research has emphasized the importance of adopting innovative instructional strategies to improve students' writing performance. For example, Ezzat Mahmoud and his colleagues mention (2024) demonstrated that using the SCAMPER strategy significantly enhanced preparatory pupils' fluency in writing, indicating that creative and structured approaches can overcome common writing difficulties. Similarly, Fekry's study reveals (2024) found that integrating Office 365 tools into writing instruction improved secondary students' creative writing skills by exposing them to authentic digital writing environments. These findings confirm that digital tools and innovative strategies not only motivate learners but also equip them with essential competencies for academic and real-life

communication. Incorporating such approaches into Al-Azhar preparatory schools would help bridge the gap between traditional language instruction and the digital demands of the 21st century.

Recent studies have highlighted the potential of electronic assessment tools in measuring writing skills. For example, the Institute of Education Sciences (2025) has developed the Writing Assessment Tool (WAT), which provides reliable and valid measures of digital writing skills. This tool includes dimensions such as grammar, organization, creativity, and digital formatting. Similarly, the Digital Literacy Academic Writing Scale (SAGE Journals, 2025) offers insights into how electronic environments can enhance assessment validity. For first year preparatory school students, adapting such tools can help teachers capture students' real performance in electronic writing contexts, providing data-driven feedback for improvement.

The reviewed literature underscores the importance of focusing on electronic writing skills in the preparatory stage. For Al-Azhar students, this focus is particularly crucial as it supports not only their English language learning but also their ability to engage with modern academic and digital environments. By preparing a list of electronic writing skills tailored to their needs, teachers can ensure systematic instruction, reliable assessment, and meaningful progress in students' academic development.

Thus, writing remains a cornerstone of academic achievement, particularly in the preparatory stage. The integration of electronic writing aligns with global trends in education and addresses the unique challenges faced by first year Al-Azhar preparatory school students. Previous studies consistently show that explicit instruction,

combined with effective assessment tools, significantly improves students' writing performance. However, a gap remains in terms of research focusing specifically on electronic writing skills for preparatory school students in Al-Azhar institutes. This study seeks to address that gap by preparing a comprehensive list of electronic writing skills and identifying appropriate methods for their assessment.

## Procedures of Preparing the Writing Skills List

During The preparation of the electronic writing skills list for first year preparatory Al-Azhar students the present study followed a systematic academic process to ensure that the tool was both valid and reliable. The process began with an extensive review of the relevant literature on writing skills in English as a foreign language, with particular attention to preparatory and secondary school learners. Previous research has consistently emphasized that writing is a complex skill that integrates cognitive, linguistic, and metacognitive components, which must be taught and assessed systematically (Hyland, 2019; Weigle, 2002). Moreover, recent studies have shown the growing importance of electronic writing in educational contexts, highlighting the need to equip students with digital literacy alongside traditional writing competence (Mayer, 2005; SAGE Journals, 2025).

After reviewing the literature, a preliminary pool of skills was identified. These skills were drawn from empirical research, theoretical frameworks, and writing assessment models. The selection included traditional writing abilities such as idea generation, sentence construction, and paragraph development, as well as emerging digital writing practices like formatting electronic texts, inserting hyperlinks, and saving or sharing

documents online. In line with Graham and Perin's (2007) recommendations, the list sought to balance linguistic accuracy with higher-order processes such as organization, coherence, and the ability to adapt writing for different purposes and audiences.

The next step involved consulting experts in curriculum and instruction to ensure that the list of skills was developmentally appropriate for first year preparatory school students at Al-Azhar institutes. The panel of experts reviewed the initial draft of the list and provided feedback on the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the skills. This stage of validation is essential in tool development, as it helps establish content validity and ensures that the skills reflect the actual needs of the target population (Brown, 2015). Based on the experts' feedback, overlapping items were merged, some were reworded for clarity, and a few skills were removed as they were deemed too advanced for students at this stage.

Once the list was refined, the skills were organized into four broad categories that reflect the natural stages of the writing process. The first category was pre-writing skills, which involved generating and organizing ideas, brainstorming, and identifying the purpose and audience of a task. The second category was drafting skills, which focued on constructing meaningful sentences, using appropriate vocabulary, and organizing ideas into coherent paragraphs. The third category was revising and editing skills, which included checking grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation, as well as revising for clarity and coherence. Finally, the fourth category was electronic writing skills, which covered the use of word processors, digital formatting, and the integration of multimedia in writing.

Electronic writing skills were included in the final version of the list. As Mayer (2005) and Elmansi (2022) have argued that the integration of digital tools fosters creativity and motivation in learners, providing opportunities for interactive feedback and collaborative learning. For Al-Azhar students, the ability to compose and edit texts electronically is not only a requirement of modern academic life but also a necessary skill for participating in broader social and professional contexts.

The final version of the list, thus, represents a comprehensive framework that combines traditional elements of writing instruction with digital literacy. By doing so, it addresses the dual needs of first year preparatory students studying at Al-Azhar institutes: mastering the basics of academic writing while simultaneously developing competence in electronic environments. The tool, therefore, provides a practical and valid basis for both instruction and assessment, ensuring that students are equipped with the skills needed for success in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

## Results

The present study aimed to examine the validity and reliability of the prepared list of electronic writing skills for first-year preparatory Al-Azhar students. To achieve this purpose, the tool was administered to a sample of students and reviewed by specialists in the field of curriculum and instruction. The sample of the study consisted of 60 first-year preparatory school students selected randomly from Al-Azhar Institute for Girls (Noor Al-Islam Preparatory Secondary) in New Damietta during the academic year 2024–2025. The participants' age ranged from 12 to 13 years. This group was selected

because it represents the target population for which the instrument was originally designed. In addition, their developmental stage is critical in the acquisition of fundamental writing skills, making them suitable for piloting the tool.

## Validity

The validity of the instrument was examined through two main procedures. First, content validity was established by presenting the initial list of writing skills to a panel of five experts in the field of English language curriculum and instruction. The experts evaluated the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of each item for the target age group. Their feedback led to minor modifications, including the merging of overlapping items and the rewording of some skills for greater clarity. This process ensured that the instrument adequately covered the intended domain of electronic writing skills (Brown, 2015).

Second, construct validity was tested by applying the list in a pilot study with the target sample. The responses of the students were analyzed statistically to examine whether the items measured distinct yet related aspects of writing. The analysis showed strong intercorrelations among items within the same skill category, indicating that the instrument captured coherent constructs such as pre-writing, drafting, revising, and electronic writing. These findings are consistent with previous research on writing assessment, which highlights the importance of multidimensional measures of writing performance (Weigle, 2002; Hyland, 2019).

# Reliability

The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which is a widely recognized measure of internal consistency. The analysis produced an alpha value of 0.89, which exceeds the generally accepted threshold of 0.70 for educational research (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). This result indicates that the items of the instrument were highly consistent and that the tool can be used with confidence in similar educational contexts. The high reliability of the tool aligns with the findings of Graham and Perin (2007), who emphasized that carefully designed writing assessments tend to demonstrate strong internal consistency when applied to adolescent learners.

The results of the validation and reliability analyses confirm that the prepared list of electronic writing skills is both valid and reliable for use with first-year preparatory school Al-Azhar students. The tool not only reflects expert consensus but also demonstrates robust psychometric properties when applied in practice. These results support the use of the instrument in future research and instructional applications, providing teachers with a scientifically grounded framework to assess and develop their students' writing abilities. Moreover, the inclusion of electronic writing elements responds to the growing need for digital literacy in education, positioning Al-Azhar students to meet the demands of twenty-first-century communication (Elmansi, 2022; SAGE Journals, 2025).

# Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study aimed to prepare a comprehensive list of electronic writing skills appropriate for first-year preparatory school Al-Azhar students. The findings of the

research confirmed that writing is not merely a linguistic activity but a complex cognitive and communicative process that demands integration of language knowledge, organization, and digital literacy skills. The tool designed to measure these skills was proven to be both valid and reliable. This confirms that the instrument can serve as an effective guide for assessing and developing writing proficiency in educational contexts that are increasingly shaped by technological integration.

The study further highlighted that first-year preparatory students often face significant challenges in structuring coherent sentences, organizing ideas logically, and applying conventions of grammar and mechanics, particularly when using digital platforms. These difficulties suggest the urgent need for instructional frameworks that explicitly incorporate electronic writing as a core skill rather than treating it as an optional or supplementary component of the curriculum. Such an approach would prepare students not only for academic success but also for broader digital communication demands in higher education and future employment (Hyland, 2019; Graham, 2020).

Based on these findings, the study recommends that curricula in Al-Azhar preparatory schools should integrate electronic writing skills systematically into English language instruction. Teachers should be provided with professional development programs that focus on strategies for teaching and assessing writing in digital environments. These programs should emphasize scaffolding techniques, collaborative writing activities, and the use of authentic tasks that mirror real-world communication. Moreover, writing instruction should include regular opportunities for students to engage in drafting, revising, and publishing

texts on digital platforms, which will foster self-regulation and reflective practices (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994; Graham & Perin, 2007).

It is also recommended that assessment practices move beyond traditional pen-and-paper tests to include performance-based evaluations using digital tools. The validated instrument developed in this study can be employed as a diagnostic and formative tool to track progress, identify areas of weakness, and tailor instruction to individual learner needs. Furthermore, collaboration between curriculum designers, teachers, and technology specialists is essential to ensure that electronic writing instruction aligns with students' developmental stages and cultural context within Al-Azhar education. Finally, the study suggests future research to expand the application of the tool across different grade levels and subject areas, as well as to explore the impact of integrating electronic writing skills on students' overall academic performance and motivation. Such a research may provide further evidence to refine pedagogical practices and sustain innovation in language education.

In conclusion, electronic writing skills should no longer be viewed as optional but as integral competencies for preparatory-level learners. Embedding these skills within the Al-Azhar educational system will not only enhance students' academic achievement but also empower them to participate effectively in the digitalized world of communication and knowledge creation.

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