Writing a report on a study holiday

This is an example of the kind of task you might be asked to write in Part 1 of the Writing paper in CAE. (taken from New English File Advanced)

Your language school has just started four-week study trips to the UK. You have been asked by the principal of the school to get feedback from all the students who participated and write a report detailing what students were positive about, what problems they had, and making suggestions for improving future study trips.

You have made notes covering the views of the majority of the participants:

People with families much happier than the ones who stayed in the halls of residence because they were able to speak to the families a bit.

School OK and classes good but almost everyone complained about the lunch (just a sandwich). Some thought six hours a day too much.

People not very keen on some weekend cultural programmes. Trips to London and Oxford great, Bath and Stratford boring.

On all trips too much sightseeing and not enough time for shopping!

Write your report in 180-220 words

Planning your report

Before you begin to write, you need to make a plan of the structure of your report. For example:

− introduction (aim)
− the accommodation
− the school
− the cultural programme
− conclusion (summary and recommendations)

You also need to think about the style of your report. One important skill which is being tested here is register transfer, that is the ability to transfer from, for example, informal to formal language. The notes are written in an informal way and you need to think of more suitable alternatives which you can use for a formal report. You also need to think of alternatives for the expressions used in the text, which will reveal the extent of your vocabulary.

For example:

much happier – were more satisfied
were able to speak to the families a bit - had the opportunity to practice the language in real-life situations
school OK – the school was generally considered to be satisfactory
almost everyone – the overwhelming majority
complained about – expressed disappointment with
the lunch – the midday meal
some thought – several people were of the opinion that
too much – excessive
not very keen on – did not express great enthusiasm for
great – exceptionally enjoyable
boring – not especially stimulating
not enough time for shopping – there was a general view that more time should have been allowed
for buying souvenirs

Here is an example answer

Report on the recent Study Trip to the UK

Introduction

The aim of this report is to summarise the views of participants of the recent month-long trip to the
UK, and to offer some suggestions for increasing student satisfaction in the future.

Accommodation

It was apparent that those students who stayed with host families were more satisfied with this
aspect of the trip than those who stayed in university halls of residence. The reason for this is that
the former had the opportunity to practice the language in real-life situations, and thus gained an
extra benefit from the trip.

The school

Participants were generally satisfied with the school, especially the teaching aspect. However, the
overwhelming majority expressed disappointment with the midday meal, in which only a sandwich
was provided. Several people were of the opinion that six hours of lessons was somewhat
excessive and would have preferred a less demanding schedule.

The cultural programme

Participants did not express great enthusiasm for some of the destinations in the weekend cultural
programmes. The excursions to London and Oxford were generally deemed to be exceptionally
enjoyable, while Bath and Stratford were considered to be not especially stimulating. It was also
felt that more time should have been allowed for buying souvenirs and less for visiting the various
cultural sites.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that the majority of the participants were generally satisfied with the
study holiday, although improvements could certainly be made. In particular, students should be
encouraged to stay with host families and the school should be requested to improve its catering
arrangements and review its educational and cultural programme.