

Principal Examiners' Report November 2010

FS

Functional Skills English Writing Level 1

E103

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E103 - Functional Skills English, Writing Level 1

General comments

On the whole, it was evident that centres prepared their learners well, although some marks were lost due to points including:

1. failure to read the question thoroughly
2. writing in the wrong format
3. lack of proof reading
4. weak spelling (dictionaries can be used)

Centres should remind learners to check spellings of words that are provided in the materials.

Task 1

The Activity Day leaflet task produced some good responses. The most successful answers seen were those where learners had taken the stimulus material and developed the points in their writing, such as those including detail about the location: "*The centre is clearly signposted from the village green and is next to the library.*" Other successful responses appropriately included persuasive techniques for the potential audience, purpose and context, and some even included a slogan: "*Your Centre - Your Day*".

Less successful responses may have simply taken the bulleted activities in the email and had re-listed them without any development or other information. Some learners had not dealt with all of the bullet points in the prompt, which limited the response.

A few posters were produced which, although visually effective, did not include any continuous prose, hence this type of response could only gain 'limited' or 'some success' - as the mark scheme demands for development of ideas in both the middle and higher bands. Centres should remind learners that they must write in complete sentences and provide detail for all tasks.

As there was a lot of information in the task scenario, there was a tendency to use it almost verbatim with little attempt to express it in their own words.

A number of articulate, well-developed and well-sequenced responses suffered with a lack of formatting - thus restricting the potential to gain the highest marks. Features such as the heading or title and sub-headings would have benefited such responses.

Other points include:

- a minority of learners demonstrated an awareness of 'ies' plurals
- titles and sub-headings were frequently omitted
- some responses omitted to say *why* the event was being held
- Often verb agreement was problematical: 'we is'

Task 2

The email regarding a complaint about a faulty bag produced some very good responses from the learners. Some learners were able to demonstrate their understanding of consumer rights and could respond with some convincing, well-structured complaints that supplied sufficient, relevant detail and polite assertions of what they wanted to happen.

Most responses dealt with all of the prompts, but some learners struggled to maintain a formal voice.

The most common problem with this response was that learners wrote formal letters, including addresses, opening and closure - without any indication that the content was an email. Had the content been more explicit in its reference to an email or having an attachment, such as a copy of the receipt, then higher marks would have been achievable.

Centres need to ensure that learners can write both formal and informal emails in order to be prepared for future tasks. Some responses adopted a threatening tone and a small minority included some inappropriate language. Views need to be expressed appropriately.

Examiner Tips for both tasks

Practice both writing informal and formal versions of each format

Encourage learners to proof read their work

Check spellings that are provided in the stimulus materials

Practice (using past papers and SAMs) to develop own ideas

Encourage the use of dictionaries

Pass mark for E103

Maximum mark	25
Pass mark	16
UMS mark	6

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