

Principal Examiners' Report November 2010

FS

Functional Skills English Reading Level 2

E202

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E202 - Functional Skills English, Reading Level 2

General comments

This was the first examination for the Functional Skills specifications. The paper performed successfully with learners from this first cohort accessing marks across the full range. More successful learners were able to make meaningful and relevant comments on how writers conveyed meaning within texts. They were also able to identify the purpose of texts and identify viewpoints and / or bias. Although less successful learners were usually able to gain marks on questions which required them to use texts to obtain and utilise relevant information, they struggled with identifying the ways in which writers conveyed meaning and tended to simply quote or paraphrase points from the text itself. A key message for centres is to focus teaching on these concepts by encouraging learners to engage with texts at a deeper level in order to analyse for intended audience, purpose, and viewpoint and also to seek evidence of bias / implicit meaning.

Question 1

Good responses successfully captured the text's purpose and linked this concisely to the key message in the text, which was about the environment impact of imported food. Incorrect answers tended to fall into two distinct categories. The first being where learners simply identified a generic purpose, such as "to inform", without reference to the key messages within the text. The second category of incorrect response tended to summarise or paraphrase the text's main point, as opposed to expressing the writer's purpose.

Question 2

This multiple choice question was successfully accessed by most learners.

Question 3

This multiple choice question was answered well in most cases. However, a significant proportion of incorrect responses selected option D. Centres should encourage learners to apply careful reading techniques to multiple choice questions in order to distinguish accurately between the correct response and distracters linked closely to the text.

Question 4

Although generally answered well, a significant proportion of learners misread this question and focused on ways the environment can be damaged through the transportation of food, rather than the potentially unsustainable ways food may be grown in some countries.

Question 5

Most learners were able to access at least two of the three marks available for this question. More successful learners were able to correctly categorise all statements as facts or opinions, and in doing so gain the full three marks.

Question 6

A significant number of learners had difficulty with this question, which focused on identifying the ways the writer tried to influence the reader. Many learners simply quoted or paraphrased sections of the text.

Question 7

This question performed in a very similar way to Q1 with many learners citing a generic response such as "to persuade". A significant number of incorrect responses simply repeated the question from the title of Text B.

Question 8

Once again less successful learners found this question challenging with a significant proportion of learners tending to quote or paraphrase extracts of the text. However, many learners were able to access marks by identifying techniques such as: the use of rhetorical questions, use of a conversational tone, use of statistics or the fact readers were reminded that many of our favourite everyday items are always imported.

Question 9

This question was very accessible, even to less successful learners, with virtually all learners receiving the full two marks.

Question 10

Once again this question was answered well with the mark being awarded in almost all cases.

Question 11

This question assessed learners' ability to analyse texts in relation to audience need. Many learners were able to access at least two of the three available marks, with more successful learners able to draw three valid reasons to support importation of food from Text B. Once again some learners lost marks by lifting information directly from the text. In many cases learners made assumptions based on their own knowledge rather than using the information explicitly given in Text B, such as the fact imported food is cheaper.

Question 12

This question was generally answered well by most learners.

Question 13

Again this question was answered well by most learners. However, a significant proportion did not accurately distinguish between local farmers and UK farmers, which caused them to incorrectly select scheme three again.

Question 14

Many learners were able to access at least two marks for this question, with more successful learners able to give three clear reasons, based on Text C, to justify their choice of scheme. A significant number of learners incorrectly focused on the perceived low price of scheme three without any reference to the size of the order. Scheme three is not necessarily the cheapest scheme if an order to feed four people is required. Some learners misinterpreted the question completely and listed one advantage for each of the three schemes in turn.

Pass mark for E202

Maximum mark	25
Pass mark	16
UMS mark	6

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