

# Principal Examiners' Report January 2011

FS

## Functional Skills English Reading Level 2

### E202

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January 2011

Publications Code FC026286

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## E202 - Functional Skills English, Reading Level 2

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### General comments

This was the second examination for component E202. The paper performed successfully with learners from this second cohort accessing marks across the full range.

More successful learners were able to identify the purpose of texts and identify viewpoints and / or bias. Less successful learners struggled with identifying the ways in which writers conveyed information and tended to simply quote or paraphrase information 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.

Section C was well answered by most learners though centres should focus teaching of learners on finding specific information based on each text to support their choices, rather than basing choices on speculation.

A common feature appearing in the two series is the frequency of very short responses which lack some other form of qualification. The learners must ensure that a short response captures the essence of the question being asked, eg in identifying 'main purposes' learners often simply identify only the content. When identifying 'actions', they fail to use a qualifying 'action' phrase and simply offer 'a torch', rather than the fuller action of 'take a torch'.

Some learners fail to fully read the question, missing key points, even when emboldened, eg Question 2 relates specifically to British business travel. Question 8 specifies 'when camping at', not before going to camp'. More careful reading and the highlighting of key parts of each task or question is highly recommended to centres.

### Question 1

Incorrect answers tended to fall into two distinct categories. Some learners simply identified a generic purpose, such as 'to inform', or 'to advise us', 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. ('Less people going on holiday', 'people who aren't travelling abroad because of the economy', 'where British people go for abroad holidays') Good responses successfully captured the text's purpose and linked this concisely to the key message in the text. (eg. The main purpose of Text A is to inform the reader of the decline in British people holidaying abroad because of the grim economic conditions')

### Question 2

Some learners incorrectly selected option A. The key words within the question statement were 'British Business'. They disregarded the reference to 'British' business travel and selected an option which regarded family holiday figures (option A). Centres should encourage learners to apply careful reading techniques to multiple choice questions.

### Question 3

This multiple choice question was answered well in most cases. Only a small proportion selected an incorrect option; usually option A.

### Question 4

Although generally answered well, a number of learners offered 'economic conditions' and 'the recession' as separate reasons, which were not accepted as two marks. Many learners referred the line, 'worried about the economy' and 'get less for their money'. In doing so, they successfully offered two distinct reasons.

### 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 and in doing so gained the full three marks. However, the most frequently misunderstood aspect of fact and opinion were the second and third statements and, less frequently, the fifth. These were all example of opinion. Some learners simply inserted ticks into all the left hand (fact) column, offering no distinction. Centres should give practice in identifying fact from opinion, particularly concentrating on statements of opinion which sound convincing, but not supported by fact or evidence.

### Question 6

A significant number of learners had difficulty with this question, which focused on identifying examples to show how the text 'might be biased'. Good responses were able to include examples of persuasive or emotive language, most commonly 'abandoning', 'striking', 'grim economic conditions' 'well placed to benefit from', Other good responses gave examples of limited data and points of view. Less successful responses were too generic; 'because it's an article', 'uses lots of persuasive techniques', 'different opinions', or 'makes it seem interesting'. Many learners simply quoted or paraphrased sections of the text which included no element of bias. Where examples are requested, Centres should encourage learners to identify extracts which contain elements of opinion which are biased in the way they are expressed or identify aspects of data which are limited in their scope. Learners should try to avoid speculation; 'it's trying to sell more British Holidays', 'it's saying 'staycations' are best'. Such responses offer no specific examples of 'bias' being used.

### Question 7

This question performed in a very similar way to question one with many learners citing a generic response such as 'to persuade' or 'to advise'. A significant number of incorrect responses simply repeated the title of Text B; 'Things to bring and what not to bring'. Centres should encourage learners to clearly identify the main purpose with 'to inform' or to 'advise' etc. Thus, responding with; 'to advise (inform/tell you) about.....camping (at festivals)'.

### **Question 8**

Once again less successful learners found this question challenging with a significant proportion of learners unable to understand the terms 'features'...'that help convey information'.

Typical responses for less successful learners were related to pieces of information 'conveyed' in Text B. Where features were identified, less successful learners often used single words or short phrases which were far too generic; 'short sentences', 'simple language' and 'paragraphs'. However, many learners were able to gain marks by identifying techniques, such as 'use of rhetorical questions' or 'bold sub headings' or 'use of you to make it sound more helpful' (identifying the use of informal language). More successful learners were able to identify the use of the 'imperative'/'assertive' voice and some learners were able to successfully identify the use of humour/asides ('boring but practical'). Centres should encourage learners to clearly identify 'features of a text which help to convey information', as opposed to 'information conveyed'.

### **Question 9**

This question created problems for many learners who simply read the question as 'list two actions to avoid', rather than 'actions to avoid becoming a victim of theft'. Also, many learners did not apply the 'when you are camping at a festival' to their reading of the question, thus giving advice for preparations or things to do before going camping. 'Don't take valuables/credit cards' etc, as opposed to 'use on-site lock ups/avoid padlocking your tent'. Careful reading of the full wording of questions is recommended. The reading of 'when' was critical to a successful understanding of this question. Similarly, critical to a successful answer to this question was to identify 'actions', thus, offering an appropriate verb to indicate an action ('use lockups' as opposed to 'lockups')

### **Question 10**

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. Most learners were able to access all three available marks, with so many pieces of information and advice available from which to select responses. Here again, centres should encourage learners to qualify their selected answers to indicate 'advice'; ie 'bring', 'take', 'put', 'you should', 'use', as opposed to 'sun cream' or 'a torch'.

### **Question 12**

This question was generally answered well by virtually all learners.

### **Question 13**

This question was answered well by virtually all learners.

#### 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 the chosen advert. A few learners based their reasons for choices on speculation rather than specific information given within each text; 'it might be entertaining', 'it would be good' and 'a good place to stay'. Others gave reasons such as 'I like the outdoors' and 'it's in the countryside' which, of course, could be applied to all sites in the Lake District. A very few learners interpreted the National Park as being a 'park' to play in and 'Lakeland location' was interpreted as 'near to a lake'. Overall, this was a well answered question despite the number of reasons based upon speculation. Centres should encourage learners to avoid such speculation and identify specific reasons which are taken directly from the chosen advert.

## Pass mark for E202

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Maximum mark	25
Pass mark	17
UMS mark	6

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Order Code FC026286 January 2011

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