

Principal Examiner Report

June 2011

FS English Reading Level 2

E202

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General comments

This paper worked well in testing Level 2 Reading Skills. The subject matter of the texts seemed accessible to learners and the large majority produced some good quality responses.

Question 1

Learners were asked to give the main purpose of Text A.

Some learners were able to answer this question fully, giving an accurate verb or qualifier and appropriate comments about what the content of the text.

A high number of learners were unable to gain the mark due to responses that were either too brief, ie only a one word answer, or because they focussed only the content of the text eg 'it's about broadband in the countryside'. Additionally, a significant number of learners failed to fully grasp what the text was about in terms of the comparison made between town and countryside's broadband coverage and simply wrote that it was about the internet or broadband generally.

Question 2

Most answers were accurate for this question and learners were able to pinpoint the information needed to give the correct response.

Question 3

Learners did well with this question on the whole, but there was less accuracy than in question 2. Some answers varied for this question with some learners being distracted by answers A and D and had failed to read in detail to gain the accurate response of C.

Question 4

Responses to this question were predominantly accurate with learners able to give at least one correct answer, referring to the distance from telephone exchanges as a common choice.

A common error was where learners said that there were more potential customers in towns but failed to develop their response to include the important information in terms of 'investment by companies' in support of this answer to gain a mark.

Question 5

Most learners were able to locate some of the facts and opinions accurately to gain up to 2 marks. Very few were able to be totally accurate on this question to score the full 3 marks.

Question 6

The question asks the learner to consider bias in Text A.

Many learners gave responses that focussed on examples of bias from the text but with no explanation as to how or why these were evidence of bias. Similarly, some learners gave their opinions and general speculation about why a text might be biased but this was not rooted in the text so they were unable to link their answer to this specific text.

Those learners who did gain a mark were able to note that the text was 'one sided', 'from one point of view only' or similarly 'focussed on the negatives'.

Question 7

As with Question 1, the learner was asked to give the purpose of Text B.

Again, the learner should give an accurate verb or qualifier and provide appropriate comments about what the text is about.

Unlike Question 1, learners were much more confident to give full answers which included an appropriate verb or qualifier and some ideas about what the text was about, i.e. to inform people about broadband speeds.

A smaller number did fail to recognise that the text was about the speed of broadband and gave answers more generally about 'the internet' or 'speed', but this was not the norm.

Question 8

The majority of learners understood what this question required in terms of locating features of how information is conveyed by the writer. However, many learners failed to gain full marks as their answers were too general e.g. 'paragraphs' or 'short sentences' which are not sufficiently specific when addressing a particular text. The response of 'use of bold headings/subheadings' was common and gained a mark for the majority of learners. Another commonly mentioned feature was the use of question and answer format.

Very few learners misunderstood the question in giving main/key points of the text.

Question 9

This was generally answered confidently and most learners gained full marks, with responses from all possible appropriate points made in the text.

A common error with the few learners who gained no marks, was due to the fact that they had focussed on the wrong section of the text for their answers and had therefore given responses more appropriate in responding to question 11.

Question 10

The majority of learners were able to give a relevant response to gain the mark for this question. Even those learners who deviated from the common response by rephrasing their choice showed that they understood the terms and vocabulary used in the text.

Question 11

Many learners answered this question well, gaining at least 2 marks in most cases with responses given across all potential options available.

As with question 9, there was a minority who focussed their attention on the wrong section of the text to give answers that would have been more relevant when answering question 9. This was not a common error, however.

Questions 12 and 13

This was mainly answered correctly. Learners were asked in the question to give the name of the contributor but many chose to give the name of the package. They were still awarded the mark.

Question 14

Most learners were able to choose a package and give at least two appropriate reasons for their choices and gained at least two marks.

Very few learners lost marks on this question. In a few cases, learners used their own knowledge and gave answers that were not rooted in the text.

Very few learners failed to complete the question which shows an improvement on previous series in terms of exam time management skills.

Recommendations for Centres

Learners should be encouraged to use a wide range of reading strategies and navigational features to locate information that is both explicit and implied. This is important for multiple choice questions such as Q2 and Q3 and also those questions that ask for specific detailed reading, ie Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13.

It is vital that learners understand what is being asked of them in each question. This can be explored through exposure to past question papers that are available. Exam preparation should include the consideration of how to give solid responses to gain full marks, again on questions like 9 and 11. Although the questions say 'you do not need to write in sentences', learners should be discouraged from writing one word answers on the majority of questions.

Learners should be given plenty of opportunities to practise reading for purpose and to be familiar with associated features of language and layout. This is particularly important for Q1, Q7 and Q8, and to a certain extent, Q6.

With regards to Q6, learners should have a confident understanding of what bias is but also how to determine the ways in which writers produce biased texts. Learners should be discouraged from simply highlighting 'biased chunks' from the text and encouraged instead to develop their responses to include details of how the text has a biased slant. This is a challenging question on the exam and learners can improve their confidence by thoroughly practising the skill of finding features of bias in their exam preparation.

Question 5 can be addressed through the explicit teaching and learning of the differences between fact and opinion and by discussing and exploring past question papers and other examples.

Learners should be encouraged to practise how to consider the ways in which language and layout features convey information for Q8. Certain responses such as 'short sentences' and 'paragraphs' should be avoided, as these are too generic. Learners should be looking for specifics in the particular text on the assessment rather than revising a 'set list' of features. Learners must also be supported in developing their responses to show understanding of the feature by writing more than one word answers such as 'image'.

Question 14 is potentially challenging for learners who lack confidence in making choices or who have little experience in doing so, but this can be supported in preparation for the exam through practice and by focusing on highlighting certain parts of the text. The key to this question is ensuring that learners are being functional and thinking about their own scenario to consider appropriate reasons for making real-life choices. It is also vital that learners use the information that is given in the text, without making too many assumptions as to why a certain product or service might be chosen.

Pass mark for E202 in June 2011

Maximum mark	25
Pass mark	17
UMS mark	6

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