

Principal Examiner's Report

March 2011

FS

Functional Skills English Reading Level 1

E102

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Publications Code FC026879

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E102 - Functional Skills English, Reading Level 1

General comments

On the whole, it is evident that centres are preparing their learners well. However, there are a few areas which still need to be further clarified to ensure the success of future learners. The following points are intended to help centres in their preparation.

The main points arising from this paper are:

- learners must read the questions more carefully and identify key words
- learners need to be explicitly taught what different questions are asking them to do
- although learners are advised “you do not need to write in sentences”, one-word answers are not always sufficient to gain a mark
- learners need more practice in identifying layout features of a text

On a positive note, most learners attempted all questions and there were very few blank responses.

Questions 1-3

The multiple choice questions were well answered.

Learners should be reminded to make their chosen answer clear. A few marked more than one box resulting in no mark being awarded.

Question 4

This question was very well answered. Most learners identified “per calendar month” as the correct answer. A small number invented alternatives to the initials PCM, or copied from the text hoping to chance upon the answer.

Question 5

This question caused problems for a number of learners, with many struggling to list two features of Text A that showed it was a webpage. Many repeated that it was a webpage and described what they saw, without making specific reference to the features. This question differentiated between those who saw the need to use the correct technical terms and those who claimed “it is laid out like a website” and wrote about “buttons” and “clicking”.

Learners expressed the correct answers in various ways - such as “search facility”, “navigation bar”, “URL” or simply copied out “www.luckinsandmiller.com” - all these were correct answers and were awarded marks accordingly.

Centres should remind learners to make reference to actual features when instructed and to use the correct technical terms as appropriate. Centres are advised to use the Sample Assessment Materials and past papers to illustrate the correct responses to this type of question.

Question 6

This question was very well answered. Common errors included the answer "it is close to the town" rather than "it is close to the town centre" which would indicate a good location. A number repeated the question "it's in an ideal location".

Although learners are told that they do not need to write in sentences, very brief or one-word answers are not generally sufficient and learners should always consider whether they need a verb or qualifier. For example, in the context of this question "walking distance" is not specific enough and would not receive a mark, whereas "walking distance of schools" would.

Question 7

This question was reasonably well answered. A number of learners covered aspects of the flat. Learners are advised to cover a range of reasons from the text – such as the fact of having a garden, having a parking space, being a good size, having a laundry room and being a reasonable price to rent, rather than simply listing equipment of one of the rooms. Some learners, for example, listed the "fitted bathroom" and "overhead shower" which is not a response worth two marks. Even though "**other than the location**" was in bold, some learners gave location as the answer.

Question 8

This multiple-choice question was generally well answered.

Question 9

This question differentiated well. Asked to identify two features of a business letter, many learners struggled to select a second correct feature after correctly choosing B, the "use of Dear Client".

Centres need to ensure that the features of a business letter are explicitly taught. Learners should be reminded to select the appropriate number of options and to make their choices clear.

Question 10

This was a well-answered question.

Only a few learners made reference to "cameras" and "gates" rather than "security cameras" and "security gates" and did not gain marks for generic answers.

Question 11

This question was generally well answered. As in the case of Question 7, it is useful to advise learners that additional marks are not gained by further development of the point. For example, a mark was achievable by mentioning that "it has a garden" but continuing to write about "the paved barbeque area beyond the lawn" and "the shaded area where you can sit and relax" added no further marks as they were all included in the outside garden area.

Question 12

Majority of learners answered correctly, incorrect alternatives including “washing up powder/liquid” and “soap powder”. These were incorrect as they were not named in Text B.

Centres should remind learners to follow instructions in the questions and not to give two answers when they are only asked to give one.

Question 13

Although generally well-answered, there were a number of opinions aired as to what constituted being a good neighbour. Some learners generalised, either embellishing upon misunderstood detail from the text, or suggested what they thought a good neighbour would do: “You should share your washing powder” “you should invite them round for a BBQ”, “be nice to them” and “be considerate and kind”.

Learners needed to use detail from the text to demonstrate how they could be considerate. For example: “you should not park in other peoples’ parking spaces”, “you should leave the garden clean and tidy” or “you should not make noise late at night”.

In demonstrating how consideration could be shown to the other tenants, it was necessary to use a verb or qualifier, as “garden” or “laundry” would not have explained how consideration could be shown.

Principal Examiner tips:

- practice identifying specific features of a text
- revise purpose and audience of a text
- remind learners not to use information not found in the text and not to generalise or give their own opinion unless instructed so
- practice looking for key words in a question
- read carefully any emboldened words in the question
- practice ‘unpicking’ questions so that learners know what is being asked of them
- remind learners that they are allowed to use a dictionary during the test

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Pass mark for E102 in March 2011

Maximum mark	20
Pass mark	16
UMS mark	6

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