

Principal Examiner's Report

March 2011

FS

Functional Skills English Reading Level 2

E202

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E202 - Functional Skills English, Reading Level 2

General comments

This was a successful paper, which gave learners the opportunity to access the full range of marks across the fourteen questions.

The key areas of difficulty for learners were found to lie in the following areas:

- identifying the purpose of texts (questions 1 and 7)
- identifying bias (question 6)
- identifying / describing how features of a text have been used to convey meaning (question 8).

It is recommended that centres focus teaching for future series in these key areas, which tend to differentiate level two learners from those working at level one.

Question 1

It is pleasing to note that many learners are now giving accurate responses to this type of question by using verbs or indicative phrases to indicate the text's purpose, whilst also ensuring their response is clearly linked to the key content of the text. Although this series has seen an overall improvement in the way this type of question has been handled, a significant number of learners are still giving generic responses such as "to inform" or alternatively citing the content of the text without reference to its purpose. Many learners did not gain the mark in this question as they failed to make reference to the notion of the cycle scheme's *success* in their response.

Centres need to encourage learners to use verbs to identify a specific purpose but also ensure their response is closely rooted in the text's content.

Question 2

The vast majority of learners are able to accurately read and extract the information required to answer this multiple choice question correctly.

Question 3

Once again this multiple choice question appeared to pose few problems for learners within this series, with the vast majority of learners accessing the text correctly in order to gain the mark.

Question 4

Although generally answered accurately, a surprising number of learners cited the point that the number of cycle docking stations was due to increase as a plan to reduce traffic congestion in the capital. This answer was not awarded a mark as the expansion of docking stations is part of the London Cycle Hire Scheme, rather than an initiative in its own right.

Question 5

This question was generally answered well in this series, indicating that learners are successfully able to identify the difference between fact and opinion.

Question 6

This question differentiated well. The question asked for *examples* of bias from Text A but a significant proportion of learners simply gave generic responses that were not specifically rooted in the text. Learners who did answer this question correctly generally identified examples of positive language, such as the phrase “hugely popular”. Some learners misinterpreted the question completely and gave reasons why the scheme itself may be biased, rather than focusing on the text.

Centres are advised to focus teaching around the identification of bias through use of emotive language or other persuasive devices. Centres should also ensure learners understand what is expected in response to the wording of particular questions. In this case the phrase “two examples” was emboldened within the question, yet many learners failed to recognise this requirement. Where learners are asked to give specific examples it is not appropriate to cite generic features of persuasive texts.

Question 7

As in question 1, where learners failed to gain the mark it was either because they gave a generic response or summarised text content, rather than identifying purpose. This question was generally answered better than question 1, with most learners recognising the advisory nature of the text. Some learners lost marks by simply not being specific enough. For example, responses such as “to advise on safety” were not awarded a mark as they do not mention cycling.

Question 8

This question also differentiated well. A significant proportion of learners were able to gain one or two marks by identifying features such as use of sub-headings or bold font. Relatively few learners identified language features from the text, such as use of imperative / verb command or use of personal language, such as the pronoun “you”. Many identified the use of an image but failed to gain the mark by not relating this to how it had been used in the text. Responses such as “use of paragraphs” did not gain marks as they were too generic, paragraphs would be expected in most texts. A significant proportion of learners completely misinterpreted the question and gave responses more suited to question 11, often simply repeating the sub-headings.

Centres should ensure learners are familiar with the wording of this type of question and that they understand terms such as “features” and “convey”. Learners are allowed to use a dictionary during the test and should be advised to do so. Centres should encourage learners to be more specific when identifying text features as opposed to citing generic features that may apply to most texts. At this level learners should be taught to recognise both language and layout features within a range of different texts.

Question 9

Although this question was generally answered well, some learners had difficulties comprehending the difference between actions the text states should never be undertaken and actions which it suggests are generally not advisable. For example, responses such as “avoid riding on footpaths or pavements” were not awarded a mark as the text implies this is acceptable in some circumstances. Some learners also lost marks by failing to write the response in the negative, giving answers such as “obey traffic lights”.

Centres are advised to encourage learners to recognise that their answer makes sense within the specific context of the question wording and to encourage closer reading to detect subtleties in meaning.

Question 10

This question posed few difficulties for learners with most able to access the mark. However, a significant proportion of learners gave more than one response to this question.

Centres should remind learners they only need to give the information requested by the specific questions rather than listing a range of unnecessary responses.

Question 11

This question was answered well in most cases. Some learners lost marks by failing to pick up on the word “positive” in the question. Learners were not awarded marks for responses such as “obey traffic lights” as this is legal requirement rather than a positive action a person can take to improve their safety when cycling.

Question 12

This question presented few difficulties for learners with the vast majority able to gain the mark successfully.

Question 13

Most learners found this question straightforward and were therefore able to gain the mark.

Question 14

Although many learners were able to access two or three marks for this question, a significant proportion of learners lost marks by giving answers that were not firmly rooted in the text. Although the question asks the learners to choose any of the three events they must justify their choice by explicit reference to information found in the relevant advert from Text C. A small proportion of learners gave reasons drawn from three different adverts, rather than choosing one event.

Centres should encourage learners to identify the points that are specific to their chosen advert when giving reasons to justify their choice. Centres should also ensure learners understand that the purpose of the question is to pick one advert and utilise information exclusively from that in their response.

Pass mark for E202 in March 2011

Maximum mark	25
Pass mark	19
UMS mark	6

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