

Examiner's Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

February 2012

Functional Skills English

Reading Level 1

E102

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General comments

On the whole, this paper has been very successful in testing the reading skills at Level 1.

It is clearly evident that centres are preparing their learners well and the success of this paper supports this. The following points are intended to help centres in their preparations for future series.

The main points arising from this paper are:

- Learners must read the questions more carefully and identify key words.
- Learners should use the evidence in the text, rather than providing an incorrect interpretation or adding from own knowledge or experience.
- Learners need to be explicitly taught what questions are asking them to do.
- Although learners are advised 'You do not need to write in sentences', one (or sometimes two) word answers are not usually sufficient to gain a mark.
- Learners continue to need more practice in identifying both layout and language features of various texts.

On a positive note, it is good to see that most learners are attempting all questions.

Questions 1-3

Most multiple choice questions were correctly answered. Almost all made their choice clear and any deleted responses or changes tended to be clearly made. Centres are encouraged to help learners devise strategies for selecting the correct answer.

Question 4

This question was well answered, with most learners gaining the single mark. Incorrect answers were often so brief that they lacked the required detail: 'weekend breaks' rather than 'weekend laughter breaks' and 'short courses' instead of 'short courses in laughing.' 'Weekend breaks' and 'short courses' per se have nothing to do with laughing.

Question 5

This question was not generally well answered. A number of learners chose not to attempt any kind of response and left the answer space blank. The majority of those who gained a mark identified 'bullet points' but a considerable number, rather than identifying actual observable features in the specified text, referred either to the content or to a point picked from a generic list (for example: 'paragraphs,' ' layout,' etc) and gained no marks at all. Centres are encouraged to explain to learners that they need to identify layout or language features found in the specified text. Generic lists are unlikely to be helpful. To gain both marks, learners simply need to accurately identify two features of the text; in this instance, for example, an 'image' and a 'heading.' 'Images' and 'headings' were not allowed as there was a single image and one heading.

Question 6

This question was very well answered by those who read the question carefully. Learners were asked to identify reasons, other than health, why laughing is good for you. Despite the emboldened key words in the question, a great many learners gave health reasons and gained no marks.

Question 7

This question was generally very well answered. Most learners suggested 'reading a joke book' and 'going to a comedy film.' Only a few failed to read the question carefully and wrote about 'going on a comedy weekend.' Of those who gained just one mark, a small number omitted essential detail: 'read a book,' 'go out with friends, or 'go on a course' rather than 'read a joke book,' 'go out with friends who laugh a lot' or 'go on a course in laughing.' Responses were generally coherent, conveying information rooted in the text.

Question 8

This multiple-choice question was generally answered.

Question 9

Most learners correctly identified 'web address' and 'search box' as features that show that Text B is a web page. A number chose alternatives for their second choice, most often 'subheadings.' Learners need to read the question carefully in order to maximise their marks.

Question 10

Although many gained two marks, some learners gained just one mark, generally because they identified entertainment which was not provided at mealtimes. Many answered 'comedy workshop' which was timetabled for 16.15- 17.30, not a mealtime. Since 'breakfast,' 'lunch' and 'evening meal' were written alongside the events, it should have been relatively straightforward to identify the form of entertainment. Others lost marks through a lack of detail: the 'cards' needed 'jokes' and the 'music' had to be 'live' in some way.

Question 11

Those who understood that the question referred to the hotel itself, rather than to the comedy or the events, generally gained both marks. Only a very few omitted detail which was necessary to gain the mark; for example: 'satellite TV' or 'satellite' rather than 'TV,' 'stacked with DVDs' or 'DVDs guaranteed to make you laugh' rather than 'DVDs.' Poor reading of the question led many learners to concentrate on the events and to give answers such as 'comedy film,' 'the comedian of the day' and 'the funniest joke contest.' Others wrote about the outcome of such a weekend: 'you will go home relaxed and full of happy memories' which was not a reason for liking the Estrick Park Hotel, which was what the question asked. A small number added their own detail not found in the text, for example: 'rooms have their own balcony.'

Question 12

Almost all learners gained a mark for this question by answering 'click on Rooms' or 'click Rooms.' 'Click' would not answer the question as this action would not result in finding out the price of the rooms. Similarly, 'Rooms' would be meaningless on its own.

Question 13

This question was very well answered, with many learners gaining two marks, most often for 'writing jokes' and 'telling jokes.' Occasionally a mark was lost because of repetition of the same point, a misunderstanding of the nature of 'comedy sketches' (a number of learners associated this with drawing) listing activities rather than giving examples of actual skills and, very occasionally, because of the absence of a verb, most frequently, 'comedy sketches.' 'Comedy sketches' on its own does not indicate a skill the friend could learn.

Principal Examiner tips for the Level 1 Reading paper:

- Explicitly teach learners what is meant by '**features**' which help to present information
- Remind learners to read questions very carefully.
They should take note of key words (often emboldened) and notice when certain information is specifically excluded from the answer.
- Remind learners to refer to the text and avoid adding own knowledge or providing interpretation of the information given
- Learners should use the correct text (A or B) in order to answer the question.
- Learners should be given opportunity to seek out specific information found in the text.
- Centres should remind learners that they *can* use a dictionary.

Pass mark for E102 in February 2012

Maximum mark	20
Pass mark	16
UMS mark	6

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