

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2012

Functional Skills English

Reading Level 1

E102

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General comments

This paper has been very successful in testing Level 1 reading skills.

It is clearly evident that centres are preparing their learners well and the success of this paper supports this.

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-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.

It is good to see that most learners are attempting all questions and there were very few blank responses.

Questions 1-3

The multiple choice questions were correctly answered by a vast majority of learners. Almost all made their choice clear and any deleted responses or changes tended to be clearly made.

Question 4

This question was very well answered, with almost all learners gaining the mark. Most wrote 'Saturday 3rd March,' although '3rd March' would have been sufficient. 'Saturday' on its own would not have gained a mark as it would not have indicated the specific day for the 'clean-up.'

Question 5

This question proved challenging and differentiated well. Asked to identify two features that help to present information, a number of learners continue to write answers outlining content points rather than identifying actual features. Some still do not understand what is meant by 'features'. Most learners gained one mark, generally for a 'heading' or an 'image.'

Incorrect answers included 'paragraphs,' 'rhetorical questions,' 'bullet points' and 'bold writing.' Centres are reminded that 'paragraphs' are not generally rewarded and that 'rhetorical questions' and 'bullet points' were not a feature of this particular text and that the only emboldened writing referred to the heading.

A number of learners almost appeared to have a check-list to copy out to save them having to look carefully at the text to see what the features might be. Additionally, centres should advise learners to write accurately. Some answers referred to 'images' and 'headings' even though there was only one image and one heading.

Question 6

This question was generally well answered, the most frequent responses being to 'contact Estrick Council' and 'contact your MP.' A verb or qualifier was necessary, since 'MP' or 'Estrick Council' on its own would have been meaningless.

A number did not read the text carefully and suggested contacting 'Satbir Ranu', 'Eileen Roberts' or 'Estrick Wood Country Park.' A few generalised: 'email them/phone them' while a sizeable minority suggested 'organising your own clean-up day' or 'introduce new and better litter bins.'

Centres are advised to encourage learners to extract specific information accurately and to discourage the addition of information not rooted in the text.

Question 7

This proved to be one of the more challenging and, therefore, differentiating questions which saw many gain one rather than two marks, despite the fact that the information was readily available within the text and did not need to be interpreted or re-phrased.

As elsewhere, some learners added their own ideas, most frequently 'to help the environment,' and 'to help the community' even though neither was in the text. Some generalised: 'we should not allow this to happen' and 'it shows you care.'

Centres should remind learners that to maximise their mark they should read the text carefully in order to extract the relevant information.

Question 8

This multiple-choice question was generally answered correctly and gained a mark for most learners.

Question 9

In this series, almost all learners were able to correctly identify two features of a letter.

Question 10

This question was very well answered with almost all learners successfully selecting two out of a possible four responses. Only a few failed to indicate that the shoes needed to be 'sturdy,' the gloves needed to be 'gardening gloves' or in some way 'tough' and that the overcoat had to be 'waterproof.'

Most learners concentrated on the suitability of the shoes, gloves and overcoat, with few mentioning the equally valid point that they could bring 'sandwiches.'

Question 11

This proved to be another differentiating question. The most frequently correct responses identified the presence of 'qualified first aiders' followed by some indication of 'health and safety procedures' being followed, often expressed in a variety of ways.

Relatively few learners mentioned 'the letter' or the 'guidelines' which were sent out. Weaker learners wrote: 'wear sturdy shoes' rather than explaining that Satbir had 'advised people on what to wear' or 'told people what to wear.' This would have answered the question whereas the first response would not.

Similarly 'important health and safety rules' on its own could not be rewarded, whereas 'Satbir has written guidance about health and safety' would gain a mark. Some learners omitted to write that the first aiders were 'qualified.' A correct response not often seen was 'refreshments are provided.'

Question 12

Almost all learners gained a mark for this question by answering 'sandals.'

Question 13

This question was very well answered, with many learners gaining two marks, most often for writing about the 'BBQ' and 'meeting new people.' Most of those who gained only one mark did so because they wrote about 'refreshments being provided.' 'Meeting new friends' was not allowed as this presumes an outcome not rooted in the text. A number wrote about 'helping the environment' which is not in the text; others mentioned 'the natural beauty of the park' without explaining that this was 'restored' or 'could be seen again.'

Examiner tips for the Level 1 Reading paper:

- Explicitly teach learners what is meant by 'features' which help to present information
- 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 not generalise or provide personal anecdotes or opinions: all the answers are in the text
- Learners should be given practice looking at the key words in the question and should be given opportunity to seek out specific information found in the text
- Centres should remind learners that they *can* use a dictionary
- Learners should pay close attention to emboldened words in the question

Pass mark for E102 in January 2012

Maximum mark	20
Pass mark	16
UMS mark	6

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