

# Examiner's Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

May 2012

Functional Skills English

Reading Level 2

E202

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## **E202 - Functional Skills English, Reading Level 2**

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### **General comments**

This paper worked well in testing Level 2 Reading Skills. The subject matter of the texts appeared to be accessible to learners as many good quality responses were seen.

### **Question 1**

Some learners were able to answer this question fully, expressing the main purpose by giving an accurate reason as to why the text was written and appropriate detail about what the text was about.

Many learners did not gain the mark due to the brevity of their response and this often meant that their, usually, one-word answer only gave a reason why the text had been written but with no reference to the content of the text, eg 'to inform'. Similarly, some learners omitted giving a reason why the text was written entirely and focussed only on the content of the text, eg 'it's about social networking'. Additionally, a significant number of learners failed to recognise that the text was about the *negative impact* of social networking sites, rather than social networking in general.

### **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, with many correct answers.

### **Question 4**

Most learners were able to give at least one correct answer, with responses giving all possibilities within the text. However, a common error was that learners gave unspecific answers, eg 'it reduces interaction' rather than 'it reduces *face-to-face* interaction' or 'it undermines the ability' as opposed to 'it undermines the ability to read body language/learn social skills'.

### **Question 5**

Most learners were able to locate some of the facts and opinions accurately to gain at least 2 marks. A high number were totally accurate on this question to score the full 3 marks.

## Question 6

The question asks the learner to consider how Text A might be biased.

Many learners gave responses that were quotes from the text but that gave no explanation as to how these might be biased.

This was overall a challenging question. Those learners who did gain a mark were able to highlight that the text included the opinions of only one doctor. The other common response was that the text only focussed on negatives and did not give any positives.

## Question 7

Similar to Q1, learners were asked to give the main purpose of Text B.

Some learners did not recognise that this text was about the *safety* of using social networking sites and gave responses that simply stated that the text was about social networking sites in general. Additionally, many learners said that the text was about safety online, which was also too vague.

There were also significant numbers of responses that gave no reason at all as to why the text was written or omitted the inclusion of what the text was about.

## Question 8

The commonly mentioned feature was the use of bullet points.

A majority of learners understood what this question required in terms of locating features of how information is conveyed by the writer but did not gain marks as their answers were too general, eg 'paragraphs' or 'short sentences' which are not sufficiently specific when addressing a particular text. The response of 'use of bold headings' gained a mark for some learners. 'Bold subheadings' was also prevalent, although this did not gain a mark as the text did not contain subheadings; bold was used to highlight key points of information.

A high number of learners misunderstood the question in giving main/key points of the text.

## Question 9

This was generally answered confidently with most learners gaining the mark for 'bullying' and 'teasing'. Some learners gave all three possible answers even though only two marks were available.

Some learners had focussed on things that you probably should not do on a social networking site rather than about the specific 'behaviour you should avoid'. This shows that some learners had not taken their time to read the question carefully.

### **Question 10**

The majority of learners gave a relevant response to gain the mark for this question and many correct answers were seen.

### **Question 11**

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

A common error with the question was that learners gave responses that were about the same things, eg 'date of birth' and 'address' being given separately, even though these would both be classed as personal information or 'don't give details about where you work, go to school and favourite café' which would also be repeating the same point.

### **Questions 12 and 13**

These were mainly answered correctly.

### **Question 14**

Most learners were able to choose a contributor's viewpoint and give at least two appropriate reasons for their choice and therefore gained two marks.

In a few cases, learners used their own experience which was not rooted in the text and could not be awarded a mark.

Very few learners failed to answer the question, suggesting good exam time management skills.

## Recommendations for Centres

When supporting learners in their preparation for the assessment, a wide range of strategies for reading should be employed. Learners should also practise navigating their way through texts to locate information that is both explicit and implied.

These skills are vital when answering multiple choice questions such as Q2 and Q3 and also those questions that ask for specific detailed reading, ie Q4, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12 and Q13.

During exam preparation, learners should explore questions to understand clearly what is being asked of them. It is important also that learners be discouraged from writing very brief, one-word answers despite the inclusion of the phrase 'you do not need to write in sentences'. While it is the case that learners are not marked on their writing skills, responses should be as full as possible in order to ensure that enough detail is included to be awarded marks, particularly on Q1, Q7, Q9 and Q11.

Learners should have access to a wide range of texts so that they can be familiar with identifying the main purpose fully, ie identify the reason why the text was written and link this with the topic of the text. They should also have practised thoroughly recognising how text is written to convey information, ie through associated features of language and layout. This is particularly important for Q1, Q7 and Q8.

With regards to Q6, learners need a confident understanding of bias and know that they can determine the ways in which texts reveal bias. Learners can practise locating methods of conveying bias and must also be discouraged from repeating large 'chunks' from the text. Learners should also be aware that the question may not mention 'bias' per se and that other expressions might be used such as 'the writer's viewpoint' or 'how the writer influences the reader'.

Question 5 can be addressed through the explicit teaching and learning of the differences between fact and opinion and, again, by discussing and exploring practice assessments and other examples of appropriate texts.

Learners should practise looking at how 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 at specific features in the given text, rather than revising a 'set list' of features.

Question 14 gives learners the opportunity to use 'their own scenario' to make appropriate real-life choices and to give valid reasons for their choice based on the text. Learners must focus their answers so that information from the assessment is used, rather than responses that make assumptions in general. This is an area that should be well-practised during preparations.

## Pass mark for E202 in May 2011

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Maximum mark	<b>25</b>
Pass mark	<b>17</b>
UMS mark	<b>6</b>

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