

Examiner's Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

March 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 Functional Skills Level 1 Reading.

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:

1. Learners must read the questions more carefully and identify key words.
2. Learners must use the evidence in the text, rather than providing an incorrect interpretation or adding from own knowledge or experience.
3. Learners need to be explicitly taught what questions are asking them to do.
4. Although learners are advised 'You do not need to write in sentences', one-word answers are not usually sufficient to gain a mark.
5. Learners continue to need more practice in identifying features of a web-page.

On a positive note, it is good to see that most learners are attempting all questions and that single-word answers are less common.

Questions 1-3

Most multiple choice questions were correctly answered, with any deleted responses or changes clearly made. Centres are encouraged to help learners devise strategies for answering this kind of question.

Question 4

This question was generally well answered, with most learners gaining the single mark. Incorrect answers often appeared to come from learners' own experience or imagination, eg 'they could have been treated badly in their previous home.' Learners are reminded that answers need to be rooted in the text.

Question 5

Most learners gained one rather than two marks for this question which asked for the identification of two features of a web page. Many answers were not specific enough or did not identify features that are exclusive to a web page. Learners were not penalised for some incorrect use of ICT-based terminology, such as 'hyperlinks', which was awarded for 'links'. However, some features that were identified, such as 'scroll bar', 'minimise', 'maximise' and other icons, can be found on other documents and therefore did not gain a mark. Centres are encouraged to spend time teaching the features of a web page so that learners are familiar with the terminology.

Question 6

This question was well answered by those who read it carefully. Many gained marks for mentioning the 'cost of owning an animal' and 'having the time to look after it.' Those who referred to 'lifestyle', whether the animal would 'suit the family' and whether the 'family would be able to look after the pet properly', gained no marks. These were points the rescue centre would look at when deciding about a suitable animal rather than the learner deciding whether to adopt an animal at all.

Question 7

Most learners appeared to understand what the question asked them to do, but some failed to answer in sufficient detail to gain both marks. Many wrote: 'it will help an animal', which is not specific enough whereas: 'it will help an animal which may have had a bad experience' explains an advantage of adopting an animal from a rescue centre. Simple references to 'the cost' were not rewarded as the learner needed to draw a comparison between the cost of adopting from a rescue centre and the cost of buying from a shop. Some learners were awarded only one mark as they gave several examples of the support which the rescue centre would provide: low cost vet care, training and free grooming, which come under the common heading of 'rescue centre support'. Many incorrect answers tended to be generalisations from what must be assumed to be own experience, or else were references to the interview at the rescue centre: 'they will see that you get a suitable pet.'

Question 8

Almost all learners correctly identified the main purpose of Text B in this multiple-choice question.

Question 9

Most learners gained either one or both marks for correctly identifying A: 'image of big cat' and C: 'heading in bold' as features of Text B that help present information. A great number identified either A or C along with F, 'numbered bullet points' even though the bullet points had no numbers. A few indicated only one box. Learners not only need to read the question carefully but also read the options carefully, in order to maximise their marks.

Question 10

Most learners gained one mark rather than two for this question often because of a lack of precision in answering. Rather than specifying that 'a zookeeper will be with you at all times', many wrote that 'a highly trained team' or 'a member of staff' would 'be with you'. Careful reading of the text makes it clear that the safety of participants would be ensured by the presence of the zookeeper. Others wrote 'zookeeper,' which on its own could mean nothing. The fact that those under the age of 18 needed to be accompanied and that appropriate clothing should be worn do not in themselves ensure the safety of participants; neither would 'no flash photography' and the fact that cameras were not to be used. The text identifies three ways that the zoo ensures that the Big Cat Experience is safe for participants: the safety briefing, the health and safety regulations and the fact that a zookeeper will be with you at all times.

Question 11

Many learners gained one rather than two marks for this question. Asked to give two reasons to show that Broughton Zoo takes the welfare of animal seriously, many missed the specific animal welfare focus of the question and gave details of health and safety as well as guideline on age limits for entrance. Many responses mentioned cameras, but failed to make clear that taking photographs was not allowed. Many said that there would be a zookeeper present but failed to link this with the welfare of the big cats. A significant number made the same point twice: 'putting the cats' needs first' and the fact that they 'wouldn't force an animal to take part'. Learners tended to lose marks because they did not focus on the key words of the question; they gave incomplete answers which omitted significant detail necessary to address the welfare issue and they failed to follow through and make the point clear.

Question 12

Almost all learners gained the mark for 'phone 01253 89130,' 'phone them' or 'phone the zoo.' 'Phone' on its own was not rewarded as it is unclear who was being phoned.

Question 13

This question was generally well answered, with many learners gaining two marks, most often for 'you can feed the big cats' and 'you can clean out their houses'. A number of learners thought that an explanation of the way the cats were well looked after and well fed would convince their friends to come along. Others concentrated on aspects of visitor safety to persuade their friends. A number of learners, having correctly identified the part of the text, failed to gain the mark because of writing single-word or incomplete answers. 'As close as a whisker' did not convey the idea that an individual could get 'as close as a whisker to a big cat' or 'get up close to the big cats.'

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 March 2012

Maximum mark	20
Pass mark	14
UMS mark	6

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