

Examiner's Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

March 2013

Functional Skills English

Writing Level 1

E103

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the world's leading learning company. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk for our BTEC qualifications. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

If you have any subject specific tasks about this specification that require the help of a subject specialist, you can speak directly to the subject team at Pearson.

Their contact details can be found on this link: www.edexcel.com/teachingservices.

You can also use our online Ask the Expert service at www.edexcel.com/ask. You will need an Edexcel username and password to access this service.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your learners at: www.pearson.com/uk

March 2013

Publications Code FC035012

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2013

E103 - Functional Skills English, Writing Level 1

General Comments

This paper worked well in testing Level 1 Writing Skills. The two tasks set were:

1. Writing a letter to the Environment Department to advise about leaves on the pavement
2. Contributing to an internet discussion giving views about fast food and takeaways.

Both tasks were successfully interpreted; there were lots of prompts to draw on which enabled the candidates to understand the questions/contexts.

Task 1 FCP

The task was clear and accessible and most learners wrote in sufficient detail to gain good marks for FCP. Learners were able to use the stimulus material effectively, showing good sequencing of ideas. Many learners were able to talk about the dangers of the leaves and about the vulnerable people affected, however on many occasions, no mention was given of which road/pavement was being discussed which affected functionality. The better answers clearly located the pavement, e.g. 'the pavement on the busy road into town where there is a nearby school and care home'. Weaker responses merely stated that there were some leaves on a pavement they had walked down leaving the audience unsure of where the problem was. They also failed to identify that there was a care home and school near the pavement. Many learners seemed unsure about the sort of tone they needed to adopt, and were over-friendly or familiar

NB. Those learners who didn't clearly locate the pavement but did develop the other points in detail could still achieve top band marks because the question didn't specifically require them to state where the pavement was.

Although there is improvement there are still many learners who are only using one address and forgetting the date. Letter closure is also still an issue; some learners closed their letter very abruptly: it was more like abandonment than a closure.

Strong Responses

FCP

The stronger responses followed the bullet point framework given in the rubric which gave structure to the letters. They included the sender's address (on the right), the recipient's address (on the left) and a date. They used the correct opening salutation of Dear Ms Lakhani (not Dear Ria or Dear Ria Lakhani). They moved swiftly to the point with a clear opening which described the situation and said where the pavement was. They included the information supplied about the neighbourhood school and care home, describing in general terms the possible hazards to school children and the elderly. They then suggested a practical simple remedy. Closure was appropriate, for example thanking Ms Lakhani for

her time reading the letter and mentioning that they hoped to see the site resolved soon.

Weaker Responses

The weaker responses left out one or both of the addresses and date. They wrote 'To' instead of 'Dear' and used the whole name, eg. 'Dear Ria Lakhani'. The opening was vague, and the rest of the letter disorganised. These responses failed to clearly sequence ideas about the potential hazards to school children and the elderly. They also conjured up in detail a whole host of improbable accidents and injuries. What they suggested needed to be done was sometimes rather over the top; a zebra crossing or set of traffic lights to help pedestrians avoid slippery leaves is rather an oblique way of tackling the problem. Closure was abrupt and occasionally distinctly threatening, eg. 'get it sorted'. It needs to be stressed that this is fine in conversation/spoken language between friends, but not in an official complaint where it will almost certainly be inappropriate and counter-productive.

Task 2

Learners could reply separately to the named two in the question, or respond independently, though the former perhaps gave candidates more of a structure on which to base their response. Use of style was better, with some chatty/confident media type writing. Learners made good use of the information in the Question Paper, but it was not always easy to decipher which were candidate's own ideas, and which candidates were merely paraphrasing. Quite a few learners limited their mark for FCP by simply copying out large chunks of the prompt material.

A very small number of candidates demonstrated confusion about the format and wrote a letter.

Strong Responses

FCP

Developed responses were those that used their own experiences, i.e. 'when I get home from work late....' and used the format confidently, i.e. 'Colin, you have to face facts....'. Some good responses raised hygiene issues, the recent horse meat scare and the rise of obesity. Exercise was generally seen as the antidote to fast food.

Weaker Responses

Responses were very short and added nothing more than to agree or disagree. They merely repeated the points in the question and added no detail of their own.

SPG (both tasks)

There were some serious spelling errors, eg. 'hurt/heart', 'are/our', 'there/they are'. The spelling of 'leaves' caused major problems. 'Sincerely' was also frequently incorrect. Homophones continue to cause a problem – 'their/there/they're'. It was noted many pupils wrote 'sidewalk' instead of 'path/pavement' and in Q2 there was some use of text speak. A significant

number of letters included very few full stops; punctuation (or lack of it) seems to be the main weakness. Conjunctions are still being used to start sentences.

Recommendations for Centres

This is a Functional Skills test, so learners will only be rewarded for writing responses that are fit for purpose. In preparation for this test learners need to understand the purpose of different types of functional task. When they come to the test they must read the question and stimulus text with great care to understand the purpose, before they start to write their response. Responses that are well written but of limited relevance to the task set will not receive a high mark for form, communication and purpose.

In preparation for this test, learners need to understand the purpose of different types of functional task (e.g. formal letter, informal internet blog) and should be given opportunities to practice writing in various formats, for different audiences and purposes. This experience will be of great help to them in tackling a future L1 Writing paper.

Centres should also reinforce the fact that 40% of the marks are for spelling, punctuation and grammar. It is important to remind learners that **they are allowed to use a dictionary** and also that they should spend a few minutes checking through their work, after they have finished.

Finally it is also recommended that centres tell candidates that they can plan their work on the exam paper. They will just need to rule through this if they don't want it to be marked.

Pass mark for E103 in March 2013

Maximum mark	25
Pass mark	16
UMS mark	6

Further copies of this publication are available from
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467

Fax 01623 450481

Email publication.orders@edexcel.com

Order Code FC035012 March 2013

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit
www.edexcel.com/quals

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE

Ofqual



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Rewarding Learning