

# Principal Examiners' Report

March 2016

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills  
English Reading Level 2 (E202)

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## **Centre report Functional Skills Reading Level Two**

The subject matter of the paper provided a challenging but engaging stimulus to enable level two learners to demonstrate their reading skills. Several questions proved to be effective differentiators. All questions provided appropriate opportunities for learners to gain marks.

### **Question 1**

This multiple choice question proved to be quite straightforward, with the vast majority of learners correctly identifying Option C.

### **Question 2**

This question required learners to explain two quotations from Text A. The majority of learners were able to gain at least one of the available two marks for this question. However, the phrase "*The housing crisis isn't about houses - it's about people*", did cause some difficulties with only the most able learners able to accurately capture the explanation of the phrase. Although, the second phrase "*stretched them to their financial limit*" proved more straightforward for learners to understand, there was a tendency for some learners to simply paraphrase the original phrase rather than explaining it.

### **Question 3**

The vast majority of learners were able to accurately identify the purpose of Text A and gain the available mark. Answers in most cases showed a sound understanding of the text and why it had been written, although some learners lost the mark by giving generic answers such as "to inform".

### **Question 4**

The majority of learners answered this question well and were able to secure the mark by giving a valid reason as to why Text B was the most relevant for someone looking for a solution to the housing crisis in their area. However, a significant number of learners failed to gain the mark because they did not analyse the text in relation to audience need by stating why the text would be useful. These incorrect responses tended to simply identify what the text was about rather than why it would be useful to the reader.

### **Question 5**

This question proved to be an effective differentiator, with only the most able of learners able to gain the mark. Options B and D were both commonly selected incorrect answers. In order to gain the mark for this question learners were required to read very closely in order to detect the implied meaning in the Text B.

### Question 6

Many learners were able to gain a mark for this question by correctly identifying direct speech as a language device used in the phrase "*We have all eaten, slept and dreamt this project*". However, many learners incorrectly opted for either option C or D. Centres are advised to devote some teaching time to a range of language approaches and to develop learners' skills in identifying these within a range of texts. Guidance on the range of language features that would be useful to teach is available on the Functional Skills section of the website in the Reading Level Two document.

### Question 7

This question proved challenging for all but the most able learners. Very few learners scored the maximum four marks and a significant proportion of learners failed to gain any marks on this question. However, many learners were able to identify at least one way that the writer presented his ideas and also give a relevant example. These learners were able to gain two of the available marks. The most common correct response tended to be "use of statistics". Where learners failed to gain any marks it tended to be because they gave statements from the text that would have been accepted as suitable reasons for the example part of the question. However, without first identifying a **way** marks cannot be awarded for the example.

### Question 8

This question produced some very strong and detailed responses. Many learners used the two texts effectively to produce some detailed responses outlining the serious nature of the housing crisis. Many learners were able to score four, or the maximum five marks, by giving a good level of relevant detail and including key points taken from both Text A and Text B. In some cases, responses for this question were very long and provided more information than was necessary to gain the maximum five marks. Given it was clear that some learners clearly struggled to finish the entire paper, learners should be given some guidance on how long to spend on the different questions and how to use the time effectively across the paper.

### Question 9

The majority of learners found this question fairly accessible and consequently scored the maximum two marks. Where learners did lose marks on this question it tended to be because they gave insufficiently developed responses.

### **Question 10**

Although this question did not prove as accessible for learners as a question 8, it still enabled learners to produce some detailed responses which scored 3-4 marks. Responses scoring five marks were very rare but maximum marks were occasionally awarded. The most able learners used relevant examples skilfully and were able to demonstrate similar ideas in Text A and C. Less well developed responses, scoring 1-2 marks, tended to rely mainly on one text or gave quite general points unsupported by examples from the texts. Some responses lost marks by failing to link the ideas from both texts. These responses, though often quite detailed and lengthy, simply gave ideas taken from each text without any attempt to show how the ideas were similar.

Centres should encourage learners to use the two texts carefully and to give specific examples from each text, which demonstrate similar ideas. To gain marks in the higher band it is important to demonstrate how the ideas presented in both texts are similar.

### **Question 11**

Whilst many learners were able to successfully tackle this question a significant proportion incorrectly opted for Text B or C, which meant they were unable to gain any of the available three marks. Many learners who correctly opted for Text A were able to go on and provide a relevant reason and supporting example, which enabled them to gain the maximum available marks for the question. However, a significant number were not able to provide a valid reason for part two of the question, which also meant they could not gain the mark for the third part of the response. These responses failed to identify why the text would be useful for someone preparing a talk on renting and instead they tended to focus on the housing crisis generally or the cost of buying a house.

Centres should encourage learners look for a valid reason, which meets the purpose as outlined in the question and shows why the selected text is the most suitable. Learners also need to understand the difference between giving a reason and providing an example.

### **Question 12:**

This question proved very accessible for learners with the majority able to gain at least two of the three available marks, with many scoring the full three marks. There was a significant proportion of blank responses encountered for this question, which is likely to be a consequence of its location towards the end of the paper rather than the accessibility of the question itself. Reminding learners to be mindful of using their time sensibly throughout the full range of questions may be useful as where learners tackled these later questions they tended to pick up marks quite easily.

**Question 13:**

This multiple choice question proved unproblematic for the vast majority of learners, who correctly selected option A and gained the mark.

Pass mark for E202 in March 2016

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Maximum mark	<b>30</b>
Pass mark	<b>18</b>
UMS mark	<b>6</b>

**Ofqual**  
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