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Principal Examiners' Report

February 2017

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills
English Reading Level 2 (E202)

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Centre report Functional Skills Reading Level Two

General comments

This paper proved to be a successful test of Level 2 Reading Skills. The topic of people relying on sat-navs or mobile phones to find their way around was clearly accessible to learners. The full range of marks was seen, depending on how carefully learners read the texts and the questions.

Question 1

This was a multiple choice question and most learners were able to answer it correctly by identifying the answer as D: 'sat-navs stop you thinking for yourself'.

Question 2

Most learners performed well on this question and many were able to accurately explain both quotations. Those who only got one correct, were generally able to explain 'tried and tested', by picking up on the fact that this quote showed that the writer believes that map-reading is a proven or reliable method. The most common error was learners copying sections from the text, rather than showing that they understood the quotation by using some of their own words to explain it.

Question 3

To gain a mark for this question learners needed to identify why the text was written and also to link this to the topic of the text, e.g. 'to explain that people are too reliant on technology'. In general this question was answered well but there were also a number of learners who did not give enough detail, e.g. just writing 'to inform'. Other learners were able to describe what the text was about but were not able to give a purpose, e.g. 'It talks about map-reading'.

Question 4

Most learners were able to gain a mark for this question by giving a valid reason as to why Text B was the most suitable text for someone who was thinking of buying a sat-nav, e.g. 'it gives advantages and disadvantages of using a sat-nav'. The most common error seen here was learners answering the question with a quotation, rather than giving a reason. A quotation from the text must be supported by a brief explanation (e.g. 'Because it tells you…) to gain a mark here. Another common error was learners failing to read the text sufficiently carefully and writing answers suggesting that Text B encourages you to buy a sat-nav.

Question 5

This was a multiple choice question and most learners were able to answer it correctly by selecting option C.

Question 6

Most learners were able to gain the mark here by correctly identifying an example of the rule of three. It is clear that these types of features are being taught effectively in centres.

Question 7

This question asked learners to explain two methods that the writer of Text C used to show his enthusiasm for map-reading and then to give an example to support each of these. The recent improvement in performance on this question continued on this paper. A number of learners gained four marks for this question by successfully identifying two methods and two relevant supporting examples. The most common methods identified were the use of a title, the rule of three and the use of positive or emotive language.

There were still some learners who did not provide methods used by the writer, but just copied out two quotations from the text. These responses could not be rewarded as no 'method' was identified. In some other cases learners identified a method, but did not provide an example and so were limited to one mark for each method.

Question 8

Learners responded well to this question and managed to find appropriate points from each text on how to use a sat-nav safely. Most learners achieved at least three marks and many did better than this by selecting several relevant and precise ideas from both texts. The most common mistakes here were learners only selecting information from one text, which limited them to two marks.

Question 9

This question posed few difficulties for most learners, with many gaining the two marks available. Where learners made mistakes with this question it was usually because they failed to read the question carefully and found quotes that related to learning, but not to specific school subjects.

Question 10

Most learners were able to find relevant ideas from each text, but they needed to compare these in order to secure three marks or above. Some learners wrote about the two texts separately and this meant that they could only achieve two marks for this question. Other learners misinterpreted the question and wrote about the dangers of sat-navs, rather than why people use them. More able learners made one or more comparisons between the texts (e.g. 'both texts say that sat-navs give information on traffic') and were able to achieve three marks or above.

Question 11

Most learners correctly identified Text C as being the most suitable for someone preparing a lesson on map-reading skills. Most of these learners were then able to give an appropriate reason for selecting Text C, e.g. 'Because it gives you techniques for teaching map-reading skills'. Some learners failed to gain a mark for a reason as they just quoted from the text here. The majority of learners who gave a valid reason went on to provide an appropriate example from the text.

Question 12

This question asked learners to find one piece of evidence from each text suggesting that sat-navs sometimes direct people to the wrong destination. Most learners were able to do this successfully, with the majority scoring at least two marks.

Question 13

This was a multiple choice question and most learners were able to answer it correctly by selecting option B. This question requires learners to identify ideas from two of the texts.

Recommendations for Centres

1. In order to be well prepared for this test, learners should have access to a wide range of texts that have been written for different audiences and purposes. Learners should also practise comparing ideas from texts that are on similar themes. This will help learners to feel confident when sitting these papers.

2. During exam preparation, learners should practise each type of question to understand clearly what is being asked of them. This should include guidance on crucial words in the exam rubric, e.g. the difference between giving a reason and giving an example. This would be particularly helpful for Q4 and Q11. Learners also need to understand that Q7 requires them to identify a method that the writer uses to convey meaning, rather than just quoting from the text. Practice in identifying the methods used in a range of texts would be very useful.

3.   When centres are preparing learners for this assessment, it is important that there is the opportunity to practise a wide range of reading strategies. Learners should be able to find points that are both explicit and implied and also be able to recognise techniques that writers use to try and convince readers to agree with their point of view. It is also vital that all learners are aware that they are being tested on their reading skills and so all answers must be rooted in the text, rather than based on their own experience.

4.   Finally, centres should advise learners to be aware of time and to ensure that they attempt all questions. On this paper a number of learners missed out on potential marks by not answering Questions 12 and 13.

Pass mark for E202 in February 2017

Maximum mark	30
Pass mark	19
UMS mark	6