

Principal Examiners' Report

March 2017

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills
English Reading Level 2 (E202)

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March 2017

Publications Code E202_01_1703_ER

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Centre report Functional Skills Reading Level Two

The paper included three texts dealing with the theme of business starts ups and social enterprise. The material provided a good basis for learners to test their reading skills at level two. Whilst several questions were effective in differentiating learners' performance, the paper as a whole was accessible and provided relevant opportunities for learners to demonstrate their grasp of the skills range contained within the level two specification.

Question 1:

This multiple choice question proved to be quite straightforward, with the vast majority of learners correctly identifying Option B, (*a tough audience to convince*).

Question 2:

This question required learners to show what the two chosen phrases from Text A suggest about the writer's views on facing the Dragons as a contestant on the business start-up TV series. The question assesses the standard L2.2.4 (Detect point of view, implicit meaning and / or bias). The majority of learners were able to gain at least one of the available two marks for this question. However, only more able learners tended to gain both available marks. The second phrase '*nerves of steel*' proved more challenging than the first phrase. Many learners did not gain the mark for this phrase because they referred to the actions or attitudes of the Dragons rather than the characteristics displayed by the contestants on the show. The first phrase '*expect a grilling*' seemed to present fewer problems for learners with the majority recognising the phrase suggested difficult or prolonged exposure to questioning.

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 its persuasive / advisory nature. However, some learners lost the mark by failing to identify a reason why the text was written. A small proportion of incorrect responses did not gain the mark because they gave a generic purpose such as '*to inform*'. Some learners incorrectly focused on the purpose of the television show rather than the purpose of the article.

Question 4:

Most learners answered this question well with the vast majority correctly recognising the idea that Text B was providing examples about how charity shops make their money. Some learners failed to gain the mark because they simply repeated a statement from Text B. Other learners failed to gain the mark because their responses were insufficiently detailed, for example by referring to the person being interviewed without demonstrating the relevance of her role in a charity shop. This question assesses the skill standard LP2.2.5 (Analyse texts in relation to audience needs and consider

suitable responses) and as such it is important that learners show an understanding of audience needs in their response.

Question 5:

This question proved to be unproblematic for the majority of the cohort who were able to gain the mark by correctly identifying option A (*raise a lot of money*).

Question 6:

This question proved to be relatively accessible for the majority of learners; with most able to correctly identify Option C as an example of a command. This question assesses standard L2.2.3 (Identify the purpose of texts and comment how meaning is conveyed). To give learners the best chance of success in this question it is useful for centres to teach learners a wide range of language devices and ensure they have opportunities to practise identifying these in a range of different texts. Centres can make use of a glossary of key language devices within the Level Two Functional Skills guidance material, which is a useful teaching resource to support this question.

Question 7:

This question proved to be an effective differentiator, with only the most able learners gaining the maximum four marks. A significant proportion of learners were able to gain two marks by correctly identifying one language or layout feature used by the writer of Text C and also providing an appropriate supporting example from the text. Some learners did drop marks by failing to provide the relevant example. A sizeable proportion of the cohort did not score any marks for this question because they simply lifted statements from the text without any attempt to identify the language or layout features used by the writer. This question assesses LP2.2.3 (Identify the purpose of texts and comment how meaning is conveyed) in an open response format. To gain the full four marks learners need to correctly identify two language and / or layout features used by the writer and also select a supporting example from the text in each case.

Question 8:

This question produced some competent responses, which typically scored three marks. More developed responses with more than one idea from each text scored four marks. However, maximum five mark responses were rare but still occasionally encountered. Weaker responses tended to be imprecise in terms of providing examples of successful businesses. Often these responses were quite lengthy but did not address the question with the level of precision required to gain marks in the middle or upper band of the mark scheme. Some responses tended to draw on only one of the two texts, these responses were limited to the lower band, gaining one or two marks.

Question 9:

The majority of learners found this question very 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 that did not demonstrate businesses or charities can make a lot of money. A common error was that learners quoted the level of investment secured by successfully appearing on Dragon's Den, rather than quotes relating to the profits made by the new businesses. Some learners confused the figures from the two texts leading to inaccurate quotations.

Question 10:

Learners tended to perform less well on question 10 than on question 8. The main reason responses did not secure marks in middle or upper band was because they did not link similar ideas appropriately or they failed to provide supporting examples from the texts. Where learners were able to link one similar idea and provide an example from each text by way of a quote they were able to score three marks. Responses scoring the full five marks were very rare indeed but were occasionally awarded. Responses in the upper band identified more than one linked idea with precision and provided relevant supporting examples. Typically weaker responses tended to simply repeat two pieces of information from the texts without demonstrating 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 the similar linked ideas. To gain marks in the higher band it is important to demonstrate how the ideas presented in the texts are similar by using linking phrases and supporting with relevant examples in the form of quotes. This question assesses the standard LP2.2.2 (Select and use different types of text to obtain and utilise relevant information).

Question 11:

Whilst many learners were able to successfully tackle this question by correctly selecting Text C, a significant proportion incorrectly opted for Text A or B, which meant they were unable to gain any of the available three marks. Most learners who correctly opted for Text C were then 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, relatively small number was not able to provide a valid reason for part two of the question. Typical reasons which were not awarded a mark included generic responses such as 'the text provides facts about businesses' without reference to young people. Another common error occurred when learners simply repeated the question rather than providing a valid reason for choosing Text C.

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 to be quite accessible with most learners able to gain at least two of the available three marks. Where learners did drop it tended to be either in relation to evidence from Text A and / or Text B. For Text A many learners incorrectly referred to the five Dragons as evidence of the number of people employed. For Text B a large proportion of learners incorrectly referred to the number of members in the Charity Retail Association rather than employees or volunteers actually working in the industry. This question assesses the standard LP2.2.1 (Select and use different types of text to obtain and utilise relevant information). In this question learners are expected to quote or paraphrase directly from the relevant text.

Question 13:

This multiple choice question proved unproblematic for the vast majority of learners, who correctly selected option C.

Pass mark for E202 in March 2017

Maximum mark	30
Pass mark	19
UMS mark	6

Ofqual
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