# Principal Examiners' Report

# February 2018

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills
English Reading Level 2 (E202)

**Centre report Functional Skills Reading Level 2 February 2018**

**General comments**

This paper proved to be a successful test of Level 2 Reading Skills. Candidates were clearly familiar with the themes of emojis and music and the texts proved to be accessible to candidates. The full range of marks was seen, depending on how carefully candidates read the texts and the questions.

**Question 1**

This was a multiple choice question and most candidates were able to answer it correctly by identifying the answer as C: 'emojis make communication more efficient'.

**Question 2**

Most candidates performed well on this question and the large majority were able to explain at least one quotation. Those who only explained one phrase correctly usually got the mark for 'universally understood', by picking up on the fact that this phrase showed that everyone could understand. Some candidates did not get a mark for 'fast-paced world' as they showed understanding of 'fast-paced' in relation to emojis, but not in relation to 'world'. Other candidates just copied sections from the text, rather than explaining the quotations and so did not receive any marks.

**Question 3**

To gain a mark for this question candidates needed to identify why the text was written and also to link this to the topic of the text, e.g. 'to tell you about emojis'. In general this question was answered well but there were some candidates who did not give enough detail, e.g. just writing 'to inform'. Other candidates were able to describe what the text was about but were not able to give a purpose, e.g. 'It is that emojis are popular'.

**Question 4**

A number of candidates 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 interested in ways of storing and organising music, e.g. 'it tells you about playlists'. The most common error was candidates not reading the question sufficiently carefully and focusing their answer on music generally, e.g. 'It tells you that music is a universal language'. Another issue was candidates answering the question with a quotation, rather than giving a reason. A quotation from the text must be supported by a reason (e.g. 'it tells you'/'because it mentions') to gain a mark here.

**Question 5**

This was a multiple choice question and most candidates were able to answer it correctly by selecting option B: 'emotion is important in music around the world' A number of candidates went for option C: 'music is similar in every culture around the world'. The paragraph does refer to different cultures, but makes it clear that their music is not the same. Detecting implied meaning is difficult for many candidates and centres are advised to prepare students carefully for this question.

**Question 6**

The large majority of candidates were able to gain the mark here by correctly identifying the use of the rule of three. It is clear that these types of features are being taught effectively in centres.

**Question 7**

This question asked candidates to identify two language features that the writer of Text C used to present views and then to give an example to support each of these. This question was answered well in general, with many candidates scoring two marks and above. The most common features identified were the use of a rhetorical question, the rule of three, direct address and the first person.

There were still some candidates who did not provide features used by the writer, but just copied out two quotations from the text. These responses could not be rewarded as no 'feature' was identified. In some other cases candidates identified a feature, but did not provide an example and so were limited to one mark for each response. Other candidates put down paragraphs or the use of facts/opinions, but these are not rewarded as a feature as they can be found in almost every text.

**Question 8**

Candidates responded reasonably well to this question and most managed to identify different types of emojis and music from Texts A and B. Most candidates achieved at least three marks and many did better than this by selecting several relevant and precise ideas from each text. Some candidates wrote generally about the relationship between emojis, music and emotion, rather than identifying specific types. These candidates lost marks and often scored one or zero. It is important the candidates read questions carefully to ensure that they select the correct information. In this case it was very important that candidates noted the word 'types' and this was in each sentence of the question. Another common mistake was candidates only selecting information from one text, which limited them to two marks. Other candidates gave examples of emojis and/or music from their own experience, rather than the texts.

**Question 9**

This question posed few difficulties for most candidates, with many gaining the two marks available. Where candidates made mistakes with this question it was usually because they failed to read the question carefully and found quotes that related to different countries, but not to enjoyment of music.

**Question 10**

Most candidates were able to find relevant ideas about music from Texts B and C, but they needed to show that these ideas are similar in order to secure three marks or above. The use of linking words/ phrases was helpful here, e.g. 'Text C also says' /'Text C agrees with this'. Some candidates wrote about the two texts separately and this meant that they could only achieve two marks for this question. Other candidates just provided quotes and were also limited to two marks as there was no explanation. More able candidates made one or more comparisons between the texts (e.g. 'both texts say that music is a type of communication') and were able to achieve three marks or above. Answers to this question do not need to be long to be effective, but must identify one or more relevant similar idea and then support this with examples from each text.

**Question 11**

Most candidates correctly identified Text A as being the most suitable for someone writing a blog post on how communication has changed in the modern age. Most of these candidates were then able to give an appropriate reason for selecting this text, e.g. 'Because it tells you about emojis'. Some candidates failed to gain a mark for a reason as they just quoted from the text. The vast majority of candidates who gave a valid reason went on to provide an appropriate example from the text.

**Question 12**

This question asked candidates to find one piece of evidence from each text about negative reactions to different types of communication. Most candidates were able to do this successfully, with the majority scoring at least two marks.

**Question 13**

This was a multiple choice question and most candidates were able to answer it correctly by selecting option B: 'Texts A and B both suggest that you can communicate without words.' This question requires candidates to identify ideas that are in two of the texts. Where mistakes are made it is often because an idea is in one text, but not the other.

## Recommendations for Centres

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

2. During exam preparation, candidates 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. Candidates also need to understand that Q7 requires them to identify a feature that the writer uses to convey meaning, rather than just quoting from the text.

3. When centres are preparing candidates for this assessment, it is important that there is the opportunity to practise a wide range of reading strategies. Candidates should be able to find points that are both explicit and implicit 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 candidates 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. Candidates should be encouraged to avoid using over-long quotations from the text. It should not be necessary to quote more than one sentence and often just a few words are sufficient.

5. For Q6 and Q7 candidates must be able to identify language (and sometimes layout) features that are used in texts. Centres should dedicate appropriate time to teaching these before entering learners for tests.

6. For Q10 candidates should be reminded that they need to both explain similar ideas from each text and support these with examples. This is made clear in the question, but there are still a number of candidates who provide explanation, but no examples or vice versa.

7. Finally, centres should advise candidates to be aware of time and to ensure that they attempt all questions. Some candidates missed out on potential marks on this paper by not answering Q12 and 13.

| Maximum mark | **30** |
|---|---|
| Pass mark | **19** |
| UMS mark | **6** |