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Principal Examiners' Report

March 2018

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills
English Reading Level 2 (E202)

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E202: Level 2 Reading March 2018 Principal Examiner Report

This paper included three texts dealing with the topic of Urban Planning and proved to be a relevant vehicle to assess the reading skills of learners at level two. The paper differentiated effectively, and the full range of marks were awarded. Many learners wrote extremely long and detailed responses. However, there was not always a direct correlation between the amount written and the marks scored as often the more concise responses were more accurate in terms of fulfilling the specific question requirements.

Question 1:

This multiple-choice question was answered accurately by most learners. The correct option was B (roads used shared spaces a long time ago). However, it was not uncommon to encounter responses which selected options A or D. This question assesses the skill standard L2.2.4 (Detect point of view, implicit meaning and / or bias).

Question 2:

This question differentiated very effectively. Relatively few learners gained both available marks. However, most learners were able to gain at least one mark. The first phrase 'cutting edge technology' was occasionally completed misinterpreted as referring to 'sharp' or 'divided' road spaces. More typically where learners failed to gain the mark it was because their answers were too general to accurately capture the sense of the implied meaning, for example many learners interpreted the phrases as meaning 'a good idea'. The second phrase 'boost community spirit' also posed difficulties for some learners, with many referring to the idea of safer roads or communities rather than a sense of stronger community relationships. Centres should provide learners with a wide range of appropriate activities to practise the skills required for this question by providing examples of different texts. The question assesses the standard L2.2.4 (Detect point of view, implicit meaning and / or bias.

Question 3:

This question performed well with the vast majority of responses gaining the mark. Occasional examples of content only answers were encountered. These responses lacked a purpose or reason as to why the text was written, for example 'It's about shared spaces'. Some responses failed to gain the mark because they were not specific enough, for example 'Inform about traffic'. Some responses failed to gain the mark because they incorrectly identified the text purpose as persuasive. There were a very small number of responses encountered with generic purposes cited, such as 'to inform'. Centres should teach learners to provide a purpose, which is securely rooted in the content of the text in order to gain the mark. This question assesses the skill standard L2.2.3 (Identify the purposes of texts and comment on how meaning is conveyed).

Question 4:

This question proved very accessible with almost all learners gaining the mark. The most common correct answer was 'find jobs in factories'. However, most of the answers in the mark scheme were encountered. Very occasionally incorrect responses that referred to poor sanitation in the countryside were seen but these were rare. This question assesses the skill standard L2.2.5 (Analyse texts in relation to audience needs and consider suitable responses).

Question 5:

This multi-choice proved to be straightforward for most learners who were able to successfully gain the mark by correctly identifying option C (housing conditions were improved so people could work more). This question assesses the skill standard L2.2.4 (Detect point of view, implicit meaning and / or bias).

Question 6:

This multi-choice question was answered correctly in most cases with the majority of learners able to identify that 'blood, sweat and tears' was an example of a metaphor (option D). A common incorrect response was option A (command). This question assesses standard L2.2.3 (Identify the purpose of texts and comment how meaning is conveyed).

Question 7:

This question saw the full range of marks awarded and therefore it differentiated effectively. A relatively small proportion of learners simply gave quotes or paraphrased sections of the text without reference to language features. However, many scored at least two marks for identifying one relevant language feature and providing an appropriate supporting example. Rhetorical question was the most popular correct answer. Many learners were able to score the maximum available four marks by identifying two relevant language features both supported by examples from the text.

However, some learners dropped marks by correctly identifying one or two language features without providing relevant supporting examples. Some learners lost marks by identifying 'facts', which is not accepted as a valid language feature as it is too generic. Some learners appeared to confuse the terms direct speech and direct address within this question. Direct address was a valid response but occasionally learners referred to 'Direct speech' whilst giving examples of direct address. To gain full marks learners needed to correctly identify language features and provide a supporting example from Text C for each feature. This question assesses the skill standard L2.2.3 (Identify the purpose of texts and comment how meaning is conveyed).

Question 8:

This question performed fairly well and a full range of marks were awarded across the cohort for this paper. Most learners were able to access at least three of the available marks. Examples of maximum marks being awarded were not common but occasionally seen. However, there were also a number of often very lengthy responses that scored only one or two marks because they only utilised material from one text. Some responses did not gain marks because they failed to focus on the link between technology and urban planning. Centres should note that learners are not expected to produce responses in any particular format but it should be clear that both texts have been used. This question assesses L2.2.5 (Analyse texts in relation to audience needs and consider suitable responses).

Question 9:

This question was accessible for the vast majority of learners, with most gaining at least one of the available two marks and most learners gaining full marks. Where marks were dropped it tended to be in relation to Text B, where a very small proportion of learners dropped marks by inaccurately referring to water pollution. This question assesses the skills standard L2.2.4 (Detect point of view, implicit meaning and / or bias). In this question learners are expected to quote directly from the text.

Question 10:

This question differentiated very effectively. There were some examples of the maximum marks being awarded but these were very rare and restricted to learners able to precisely identify and exemplify multiple similar ideas. The most commonly cited linked idea was about how shared spaces can reduce pollution. However, it was very common for learners to score in the lowest marking band because they failed to show how the ideas were linked within the two texts. These responses typically scored one or two marks as they simply gave a statement or statements from the texts. It was also quite common to see multiple examples of ideas taken from the texts without these being clearly supported by relevant examples. Centres should encourage learners to practise this style of question and reinforce the point that ideas should always be supported by appropriate examples from the texts. This question assesses the standard L2.2.2 (Select and use different types of text to obtain and utilise relevant information).

Question 11:

In general this question proved quite accessible. A small proportion of learners failed to score any marks for this question as they selected the incorrect text. However, the vast majority were able to correctly select Text B. When learners did identify Text B some then lost marks by failing to identify a relevant reason, typical examples of reasons that were not awarded a mark included generic responses such as 'gives relevant information' or insufficiently developed reasons such as 'tells you about the past'. In some cases, no real reason was provided and two examples given instead. Where a valid reason was not provided, this limited responses to one mark.

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 a supporting example.

Question 12:

This question performed well with the vast majority of learners gaining at least two marks and many gaining the maximum three marks. Where candidates dropped a mark it tended to be for Text B where it was not uncommon to see a blank space. Where learners lost marks it tended to be because they gave responses that did not make reference to children or young people. Instead these responses simply referred to safety concerns about shared spaces more generally. This question assesses the standard L2.2.1 (Select and use different types of text to obtain and utilise relevant information). In this question learners are where required to quote or paraphrase directly from the relevant text.

Question 13:

This question did not pose too many difficulties for learners, with the majority successfully gaining the mark by correctly selecting option A. However, common incorrect response was option D. This question assesses the skill standard L2.2.2 (Read and summarise succinctly information / ideas from different sources). Learners are required to utilise information from two texts in order to select the correct response.

Pass mark for E202 in March 2018

Maximum mark	30
Pass mark	19
UMS mark	6

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