

Principal Examiner's Report

May 2018

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills
English Writing Level 1 (E103)

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

May 2018

Publications Code E103_01_1805_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2018

E103: Level 1 Writing May 2018 Principal Examiner Report

Introduction

This paper worked well in testing Level 1 Writing Skills. The two tasks set were:

- Write an article for a magazine to win tickets to see your favourite band/performer
- Write an email to friends/family asking for their support with a charity car boot sale

This paper engaged learners and the majority responded very successfully. Both tasks were accessible, with the source material offering support to weaker learners, allowing them to work their way into a response. There were very few responses where no attempt had been made to answer the tasks.

Task 1

Overall, the learners found this task engaging and most were able to produce a response that scored over all three bands. However, most were in the two lower bands and there were not as many in the top bands. The better responses were able to add in a lot of good detail about which band or performer they like as well as offering good reasons about why they wanted to see them. The weaker responses were able to respond to a certain extent, but many did not mention the name of the performer. Some wrote a review of a concert they had been to see rather than applying to win free tickets. There were also some who wrote just a history of the band they liked. A minority wrote as if they worked for the magazine and were advertising the competition. Lots of learners, even the stronger ones, used a letter like format and style.

Strong responses: There were some good examples of better answers with some detail where detail was developed well and good vocabulary was used such as:

- Heavy metal, grime, rap, K-Pop, Bollywood, hip hop, soft rock, punk rock and indie.
- Grammy awards
- Upbeat and catchy songs
- Drive the crowd wild
- Touch your soul
- Melt your heart
- Moshpits
- Charisma
- Heartfelt and meaningful

Weaker responses: Learners often misunderstood why they were writing and assumed they had already won or that they were advertising a prize for others to win.

SPG Performance:

SPG was weak for many with second language interference causing an impact on clarity of meaning at times. Punctuation was not used well with full stops missing, incorrect use of commas and apostrophes, capital letters used incorrectly and weak spelling.

Task 2

Most learners engaged with this task and were able to produce responses. It allowed a reasonable level of discrimination although most responses were in the low or middle bands. There weren't as many who were able to produce enough detail to achieve marks in the top band. There were some who did not develop enough detail and did not address all three subtasks. In particular they didn't say where and when the car boot sale was or what they could buy or sell there. Some only mentioned the charity very briefly whereas others went into developed detail about it. Some lifted too much from the text and did not evidence their own ideas. There were examples of some learners not crossing out drafts so centres should be mindful of this so that the correct response is clear. One issue was that some didn't understand what a car boot sale was and this confusion showed in the response where they thought they were buying and selling cars for £5 and they produced poorly developed responses.

Stronger responses: There were some examples of a fairly developed response with some good use of vocabulary. In particular learners used some nice vocabulary to say what activities or items would be at the car boot sale such as: face painting, bouncy castle, snacks, slushies, unwanted clothes, antiques, kid's toys, baby clothes, household items and pots and pans in good condition.

Weaker responses: Weaker learners often just repeated the time/location aspect found in the task and didn't expand. Lots of them had no idea what a car boot sale was. Again, because it was a more informal email to friends/family there was lots of 'gonna' etc.

SPG Performance:

In general SPG was very weak in most of the responses. Spelling was particularly weak for many and punctuation was often used incorrectly even in reasonable responses with lots of detail. Some responses had no punctuation in them at all and overall there was a lack of full stops and incorrect use of apostrophes. In particular, dont was used instead of don't. Spelling was often weak with many errors throughout the responses. This impacted on clarity of meaning at times and brought the marks into the lower band. There was confusion for many with you/your/you're. Charity was misspelled frequently, capital letters were not used and capital I was not used.

Recommendations for Centres:

This is a Functional Skills test, so learners will only be rewarded for writing responses that are fit for purpose. When they come to the test they must read the question and stimulus text with great care to understand the purpose, before they start to write their response. Responses that are well written but of limited relevance to the task set will not receive a high mark for form, communication and purpose.

In preparation for this test, learners need to understand the purpose of different types of functional task (e.g. article and email) and should be given opportunities to practice writing in various formats, for different audiences and purposes. This experience will be of great help to them in tackling a future L1 Writing paper.

Centres should also reinforce the fact that 40% of the marks are for spelling, punctuation and grammar. It is important to remind learners that they are allowed to use a dictionary and also that they should spend a few minutes checking through their work, after they have finished.

Finally, it is also recommended that centres tell learners that they can plan their work on the exam paper. They will just need to rule through this if they don't want it to be marked.

Tips to Centres for Improving Learner Performance:

Although it was reassuring to see some very good responses and that centres have obviously been practicing writing letters and emails, centres/learners may benefit from addressing the following points:

DURING THE TEST

1. Use a dictionary
2. Plan responses by using the bullets as sub headings; jot down ideas underneath each of these to avoid repetition of rubric and help structure the final response
3. When repeating words that are in the question, re-read the question to check spelling
4. Proof read afterwards to check spelling (especially the key words that are in the question paper) and that all bullets have been addressed

IN CENTRE

1. Get learners to improve time management by sitting mock tests using past papers
2. Get learners to read letters and emails to familiarise themselves with the different formats
3. Practice writing articles and internet contributions, focusing on audience and tone
4. Dedicate more time to assessing a learner's control of English before entering them for the test

FCP

1. Identifying the purpose and audience
2. Writing a good introduction that sets the scene
3. Making a statement: learners need to be encouraged to make a statement then develop and support the reasons for making the statement
4. Sequencing: how to use bullets in the question to aid development and sequencing of ideas
5. Organisation of an article: Heading, introduction, sub-headings, closing, underlining to highlight important points

SPG

1. Homophones: focus needed on the spelling of common homophones such as "their" and there"
2. Capitals: correct use of capitalisation, especially names of people and 'I' not 'i'
3. Capitals: do not use in the middle of words or sentences
4. Punctuation: using full stops instead of commas to break up sentences and avoid 'run on' sentences
5. Punctuation: absolutely no comma splicing
6. Connectives: suggest alternatives to 'and'
7. Subject verb agreement: 'we were' not 'we was'
8. Practice needed with you/your/you're and they/there/they're and their

Pass mark for E103 in May 2018

Maximum mark	25
Pass mark	16
UMS mark	6

