

Functional Skills English | Level 1

Punctuation For The Reading Assessment

As well as being able to use punctuation effectively in your written work, you will also be assessed on your knowledge of punctuation and how it helps you understand texts in the reading assessment. In this assessment you could be assessed on the following:

- commas - to separate parts of a sentence or items in a list
- apostrophes – to indicate omission (a missing letter) or possession
- brackets – to give additional information
- capital letters – for proper nouns, for emphasis (whole words capitalised) or for abbreviations

Example Questions

Let's have a look at some example questions.

'If supermarkets wrote the cost per kilo or per litre beside EVERY item.'

Why is 'EVERY' in capitals?

- A** to show it is an abbreviation
- B** to show emphasis
- C** to show it is additional information
- D** to show it is a name

This question is assessing your knowledge of capital letters. As all the letters in the word 'EVERY' are capitalised, this means it is either for emphasis or because it is an abbreviation. Abbreviations in this case are things such as acronyms (e.g. NASA) or initialisms (e.g. FBI). EVERY is not an example of an abbreviation, so the answer would be to show emphasis (B).

'This is the perfect time to listen to employees' opinions about working for the company.'

What does the apostrophe show in this quotation?

- A** You will be given more information about the Open Day.
- B** You will hear the opinions of more than one employee.
- C** You will receive information about starting a new job.
- D** You will hear the opinions of one company employee.

This question is assessing your knowledge of apostrophes. In this case, the apostrophe is not one of omission (showing a letter is missing, e.g. don't). So, it must be one of possession. The key to answering this question is how many people possess (or own) the opinion. As the apostrophe comes after the 's' in employees, it must be more than one employee (B).

'We provide outdoor activities, the chance to meet new people and the opportunity to create lasting memories.'

Why is the comma used in this quotation?

- A** to show the two parts of a sentence
- B** to explain the meaning of a word
- C** to indicate the end of a sentence
- D** to separate the contents of a list

This question is assessing your knowledge of commas. In this case, the comma is not providing any extra information, it is separating the three things the company offers, i.e., separating the contents of a list.

'Other popular rides include the Great River Splash (don't forget your waterproof coat)'

Why is '(don't forget your waterproof coat)' in brackets?

- A** to show that it is an exclamation
- B** to join different parts of the sentence
- C** to show it is additional information
- D** to mark the beginning and end of speech

This question is assessing your knowledge of brackets. In this case it is adding additional information about bring a raincoat for the ride.

Practice Questions

1. Popcorn sales have risen by more than a third in the past year to a record £87 million (and it's not just down to cinema-goers).

Why are the brackets used in this quotation?

2. All staff will receive additional training so that we can respond more quickly to large unexpected orders, like the craze for loom bands last May.

Why does the word May have a capital letter in this quotation?

3. The foods most often thrown away are vegetables (especially potatoes), fruit (especially apples), bread and cakes.

Why are commas used in this quotation?

4. We think the food is out of date when it isn't.

Why is an apostrophe used in this quotation?

5. The high street looks better and ALL the shops get more customers.

Why is the word ALL in capital letters?

6. All staff will receive additional training so that we can respond more quickly to large unexpected orders, like the craze for loom bands last May.

Why is a comma used in this quotation?

7. A story that's enjoyable to write will probably be enjoyable to read.

Why is an apostrophe used in this quotation?

8. The course is three miles long and is open to entrants from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Why are commas used in this quotation?

9. The foods most often thrown away are vegetables (especially potatoes), fruit (especially apples), bread and cakes.

Why are the brackets used in this quotation?

10. After the visit, the Noise Team will decide if further investigation is needed.

Why do the words Noise Team have capital letters in this quotation?

11. David Walliams' books sell in large numbers to under-sixteens.

Why is an apostrophe used in this quotation?

12. Our waiter (Roberto) was friendly and efficient.

Why are brackets used in this quotation?

13. At home, we can use carpets, rugs and cushions to help absorb sound.

Why are commas used in this quotation?

14. Alia's DVD collection is huge.

Why is an apostrophe used in this quotation?

15. An increasing number of readers now don't read printed books at all.

Why is an apostrophe used in this quotation?

16. A vegetarian does not eat any meat, poultry, fish or shellfish.

Why are commas used in this quotation?

17. The course is three miles long and is open to entrants from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Why does the word England have a capital letter in this quotation?

18. My dog Nelly (who is currently sitting next to me) is 17 months old.

Why are brackets used in this quotation?

19. Alia's DVD collection is huge.

Why is DVD in capital letters in this quotation?

20. I like playing football, however I am not very good at it.

Why is a comma used in this quotation?

Answers

1. To add additional information.
2. It is a proper noun.
3. To separate items in a list.
4. To show omission.
5. To add emphasis.
6. To separate parts of a sentence.
7. To show omission.
8. To separate items in a list.
9. To add additional information.
10. It is a proper noun (the name of the team).
11. To show possession.
12. To add additional information.
13. To separate items in a list.
14. To show possession.
15. To show omission.
16. To separate items in a list.
17. It is a proper noun.
18. To add additional information.
19. It is an abbreviation.
20. To separate parts of a sentence.