

Principal Examiners' Report

October 2015

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills
English Reading Level 2 (E202)

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E202 Functional Skills Reading Level 2 – October 2015

General comments

This was the first new-style Level 2 paper and proved to be an effective test of Level 2 Reading Skills. Learners responded well to the requirement to compare texts and to write in more detail on some of the questions. The topic of food waste proved engaging for learners and the full range of marks was seen.

Question 1

This was a multiple choice question requiring learners to work out which of the statements was an accurate reflection of the writer of Text A's beliefs. The correct answer was C – 'people are more worried about the cost of food than food waste'. This was clearly signalled in the text which stated that, 'Consumers are seriously worried about the cost of food...' Learners who did not read the text carefully often went for A – 'food waste is on the increase,' as they missed the statistic which told them household food waste was actually decreasing.

Question 2

This is a new style of question where learners are given two phrases from the text and need to explain what they show about the writer's point of view. Most learners performed well on this question. The most common error was learners rearranging the words in the original phrase, rather than showing that they understood it by using some of their own words. On the first phrase ('the scale of the ongoing challenge') an example of this would be a learner writing 'it shows that it's a big challenge.' Had the learner used the word 'problem' rather than 'challenge.' then this would have shown understanding of the phrase and the mark would have been awarded.

Question 3

To gain a mark for this question learners needed to identify why the text was written and also to link this to the topic of the text, eg 'to inform about the food waste problem'. In general this question was answered well but there were also a number of learners who did not give enough detail, eg just writing 'to inform'. Other learners were able to describe what the text was about but were not able to give a purpose, eg writing 'It's about food waste'.

Question 4

This question required learners to give a reason as to why Text B was the most suitable for someone who had just bought a new fridge/freezer and wanted to use it to reduce food waste. Most learners were able to gain a mark for this question, eg by identifying that Text B gives tips/advice on how to use your fridge/freezer to reduce food waste. The most common

error seen here was learners answering the question with a quote, rather than giving a reason. A quote from the text must be supported by a brief explanation to gain a mark here.

Question 5

This question required learners to read the text carefully so as to pick up on implied meaning. Many learners were able to do this and gain the mark for this question. Where learners did not gain the mark, it was, perhaps, because they relied on their own knowledge rather than what is in the text.

Question 6

Most learners were able to gain the mark here by correctly identifying a rhetorical question. Please see the *Guidance to Centres on the Level 2 Reading Test* document, which lists the terms that can feature in this question. This can be found on the Edexcel website.

Question 7

This question asked learners to identify a way that the writer of Text C used to convince the reader that food waste is not a problem and then to give an example to support this. On this paper the ways used included use of italics, a rhetorical question and direct address to the reader.

This question caused difficulty for many learners as they did not give a way that the writer tries to persuade the reader, but merely gave two quotes (e.g. 'we are wasting less now.')

This response could not be rewarded as no 'way' was identified. If the learner had preceded the example with, 'The writer tells the reader that things are getting better' then the response would have received two marks.

Question 8

This was a new-style five mark question and required a more detailed response from the learner, than formerly seen on these papers. Most learners responded well to this question and managed to find appropriate points from each text. Common failings here were learners only selecting information from one text and in some cases misreading the question and then providing advice to a friend on what he should do to reduce food waste, rather than advising him on the seriousness of the situation.

Question 9

This question posed few difficulties for most learners, with many gaining the two marks available. Where learners made mistakes with this question it was usually because they failed to find quotes that referred specifically to how reducing food waste can save you money.

Question 10

This is the second five mark question on the paper and again requires a detailed response from learners, with supporting examples from each text.

The key point here was that learners needed to compare the two texts in order to explain how their ideas were different. Many learners wrote about the two texts separately and this limited the mark that they could obtain for this question. Successful learners employed phrases like 'On the other hand,' or 'In contrast to this' to show that they were comparing the texts.

Question 11

This question asks learners to make a judgment as to which text is most relevant for a particular purpose. The large majority of learners correctly identified Text C in this instance. In order to gain a mark for the reason, learners needed to give a specific point, eg 'the writer states that food waste is more of a problem in the developing world'. Learners could not get a mark by giving a quote here as per Question 4. When giving a reason they also need to do more than paraphrase the question, eg 'The writer tells you that the food waste situation is less serious than some people think.' This response would not gain a mark.

Question 12

This question asked learners to find 3 examples/quotes from the texts which showed the importance to the environment of reducing food waste. Most learners were able to do this successfully, with the majority scoring at least two marks. The most common error seen here was learners finding examples/quotes that referred to non-environmental issues with food waste, eg cost.

Question 13

This was a straightforward question and most learners gained the mark. The question requires learners to make a judgement about ideas from the different texts.

Recommendations for Centres

1. Centres are recommended to make use of the Guidance to Centres document, which provides detailed information on the revised Level 2 Reading tests. This is available on the Edexcel website and provides extensive information on the different types of question and gives example answers and commentary.
2. In order to be ready for this test learners should have access to a wide range of texts from a variety of contexts that have been written for different audiences and purposes. Learners should also be given the idea to compare ideas in texts that are on similar themes. This will help learners to feel confident when sitting these papers.
3. During exam preparation, learners should practice each type of question to understand clearly what is being asked of them. This would be particularly helpful for Question 7, where a number of learners did not understand the demands of the questions.

4. When centres are preparing learners for this assessment, it is important that there is the opportunity to practise a wide range of reading strategies. Learners should be able to find points that are both explicit and implied 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 learners 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.

5. Centres are advised that the guidance 'You do **not** need to write in sentences' has been removed from this paper. This is a reading test but it is important that learners write in sufficient detail in order to be able to access the marks for each question. This is especially true of Questions 8 and 10, which offer five marks each.

Finally centres should advise learners to be aware of time and to ensure that they attempt all questions. The time for this test has been increased to one hour but learners will still need to manage their time carefully.

Pass mark for E202 in October 2015

Maximum mark	30
Pass mark	19
UMS mark	6

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