

Principal Examiners' Report

June 2017

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills
English Reading Level 2 (E202)

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Centre report Functional Skills Reading Level Two

General comments

This paper worked well as a test of Level 2 Reading Skills. The topic of chocolate was a popular one and all of 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: 'sugar will increasingly replace cocoa in chocolate'.

Question 2

Most candidates performed well on this question and the large majority were able to explain at least one quotation. Those who only got one correct, were generally able to explain 'eye-catching packaging', by picking up on the fact that this phrase showed that attractive packaging would be used for chocolate in future. Some candidates did not get a mark for 'pale imitation' as they focused on the literal meaning (that chocolate would be paler in colour), rather than the implied meaning (that chocolate will be worse in the future). 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 inform you/the reader about chocolate'. 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's about chocolate'.

Question 4

Most 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 wants a career in chocolate, e.g. 'it gives you advice about becoming a chocolatier'. The most common error seen here 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'/'it gives advice') 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 A: 'a career in chocolate should be taken seriously'. Candidates who went for other options had not read the paragraph sufficiently carefully.

Question 6

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

Question 7

This question asked candidates to explain two language and/or layout features that the writer of Text C used to present his 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 feature identified were the use of a rhetorical question.

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, but the use of paragraphs is not rewarded as a feature.

Question 8

Candidates responded well to this question and managed to find appropriate points on the skills and qualities needed to be a chocolatier. 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 focused on what you needed to do to become a chocolatier, rather than skills and qualities and so lost marks. It is important the candidates read questions carefully to ensure that they select the correct information. Another common mistake was candidates only selecting information from one text, which limited them to two marks.

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 did not directly relate to people enjoying eating chocolate.

Question 10

Most candidates were able to find relevant ideas from each text, but they needed to explain these similar ideas in order to secure three marks or above. 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 work experience is important') 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 preparing a lesson on the chocolate bars of the future. Most of these candidates were then able to give an appropriate reason for selecting this text, e.g. 'Because it tells you how ingredients will change'. Some candidates failed to gain a mark for a reason as they just quoted from the text here. The 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 the future cost of chocolate and its ingredients. 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 C: 'Texts B and C both suggest that chocolate making is an art.' This question requires candidates to identify ideas that are in two of the texts. Where candidates make mistakes 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 candidates 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/method that the writer uses to convey meaning, rather than just quoting from the text. Practice in identifying the features/methods used in a range of texts would be very useful.
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 is never necessary to quote more than one sentence and often just a few words are sufficient.
5. 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 Questions 12 and 13.

Pass mark for E202 in June 2017

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

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