

Principal Examiners' Report

October 2016

Functional Skills English
Writing Level 2 (E203)

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the world's leading learning company. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information, please call our GCE line on 0844 576 0025, our GCSE team on 0844 576 0027, or visit our qualifications website at www.edexcel.com. For information about our BTEC qualifications, please call 0844 576 0026, or visit our website at www.btec.co.uk.

If you have any subject specific questions about this specification that require the help of a subject specialist, you may find our Ask The Expert email service helpful.

Ask The Expert can be accessed online at the following link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/Aboutus/contact-us/>

Alternatively, you can speak directly to a subject specialist at Pearson about Edexcel qualifications on our dedicated English telephone line: 0844 372 2188.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

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 raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your learners at: www.pearson.com/uk

October 2016

Publications Code E203_01_1610_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2015

E203 - Functional Skills English, Writing Level 2

General Comments

This paper proved to be an effective test of Level 2 writing skills. The first task required learners to write an email to the council, requesting permission for the local arts group to hold a carnival. The second task required learners to write an article giving their views about how charities collect money. Both tasks were accessible and there were very few examples of misinterpretation seen. The full range of marks was awarded on both tasks, based on how successfully candidates expressed and developed their ideas.

Task 1

Learners responded well to this task, with most able to adopt an appropriately persuasive tone in explaining the benefits of the festival to the town. It was clear that learners were familiar with this type of event and there were some very well developed responses.

The best responses were those which built on the information in the task, with learners adding ideas of their own. These responses also used vocabulary that was appropriate for a formal email and included an appropriate opening and close.

Less functional responses often lacked clear structure and organisation. These responses often lacked logical sequencing of ideas and sometimes became repetitious and unclear. There was also often over-reliance on the information given, with some learners showing insufficient evidence of developing ideas. Learners needed to demonstrate accurate use of sentence structure and paragraphing in order to develop their ideas clearly. Less successful responses were those where candidates only had limited sentence control and also did not make accurate use of paragraphs, with some written as a continuous block of text and others written in one sentence paragraphs.

The full range of marks was awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar. Some responses demonstrated an impressive level of accuracy and most used spelling, grammar and punctuation with some accuracy. There were also responses that contained so many errors that meaning became unclear. Common grammatical errors included use of the wrong verb tense or the omission of articles. There were also responses that included several basic punctuation errors such as missing full stops and capital letters. A number of learners misspelt the name of the person they were writing to, which is a very bad start to a persuasive email.

Common spelling errors on this task included 'writting', 'alot' and 'benifit' as well as confusion with words such as 'to' and 'too'.

Task 2

Most learners were clearly familiar with the concept of charity and responded positively to this task, building successfully on the prompt material. There were some strong views expressed on the theme of collecting money, with most learners able to draw on personal experience as well as the prompt material. Stronger learners were able to develop their ideas logically and produce a clearly structured piece of writing. These learners also developed their opinion in some detail, often looking at both sides of the argument before coming to a conclusion. Another feature of a successful response was a clear opening stating what the article was about and a closing comment summing up the learner's opinions.

Weaker responses were those where learners struggled to express or develop their opinions clearly. These responses sometimes became repetitious and contradictory and on a few occasions learners did not appear to have read the information section with sufficient care. Other learners just repeated ideas from the source material and added very little material of their own. Weaker responses also generally demonstrated limited control of sentence structure and made haphazard use of organisational features such as paragraphs.

The full range of marks was awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar. There were similar patterns of errors seen as in Task 1, with large numbers of grammatical errors in some responses. Some learners made mistakes with words that were in the prompt material, including 'charaty'.

Recommendations for Centres

In order to demonstrate functionality learners need to present appropriate information and develop relevant ideas clearly. Centres are recommended to reinforce the importance of reading the task and stimulus material very carefully and also to encourage candidates to plan their responses.

Prior to the test all candidates should be given opportunities to practice writing in various formats and for different audiences and purposes. Practice on use of formal and informal tone and effective ways of opening and closing different types of writing would also be of benefit to learners. A strong opening and close are important components of an effective response.

Candidates should be reminded that any bullet points in the task prompt can be used to help them structure their response. If the supporting bullets are prefaced with 'you may,' candidates can use some or all as they wish, although it is recommended that candidates use any bullets as scaffolding for their writing. Where the bullets are prefaced with 'you should,' candidates must address all the bullets to a greater or lesser extent, depending on how they want to respond.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar contribute 40% of the marks for this paper. It was clear that many candidates were well below Level 2 in these areas, as there were errors in skills such as the use of the capital letter, verb tenses and also in the spelling of common words. Centres are recommended to allocate appropriate teaching time to developing candidates' skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar and to consider entering candidates at lower levels if they are not ready for Level 2.

To aid proof-reading it is important that candidates are familiar with using a dictionary and they also need to be made aware that they should spend a few minutes checking through their work, after they have finished writing. This can have a significant impact on the mark awarded for SPG.

Pass mark for E203 in October 2016

Maximum mark	30
Pass mark	18
UMS mark	6

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE

Ofqual
.....



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

