

Principal Examiners' Report

July 2016

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills
English Reading Level 2 (E202)

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The subject matter of this paper provided an engaging and familiar subject context, which enabled level two learners to demonstrate their reading skills. The paper comprised of three texts linked by the common theme of sugar consumption in the UK.

Question 1:

This multiple choice question generally proved to be quite straightforward for learners, with the majority able to secure the mark. Learners were required to read and summarise information from the text by selecting the correct multiple choice response, in this case option B.

Question 2:

This question required learners to identify what two phrases from Text A suggested about eating sugar. Most learners were able to correctly interpret the first phrase spiralling obesity. Correct answers showed that learners understood that the term suggested levels of obesity were increasing. The second phrase nutritionally empty proved more problematic for many learners. Learners often misinterpreted this phrase to mean that a person was literally empty or lacking in food rather than referring to the nutritional value of the food itself. However, more able learners were able to correctly identify the meaning of the phrase and gain the mark.

Advice to centres:

Centres should ensure learners have regular opportunities to practise this type question within a range of different types of text.

Question 3:

The vast majority of learners were able to accurately identify the purpose of Text A and gain the available mark. Answers in most cases showed a sound understanding of the text and why it had been written. However, some learners lost the mark by giving generic answers such as, To Inform. Other incorrect responses failed to give a reason why the text had been written, focusing purely on the content, for example It's about sugar consumption. Some learners also lost the mark because they gave answers that were insufficiently developed, such as To tell you about sugar.

Advice to centres:

Learners must include a clear reason as to why the text has been written, which is most commonly expressed by use of a verb phrase, such as To inform about... or To show that...However, in addition to this they must also demonstrate an accurate understanding of the key theme within the text. Both aspects are required to gain the mark.

Question 4:

This question requires learners to analyse texts in relation to audience needs. The majority of learners answered this question successfully on this paper and were able to gain the mark by giving a valid reason as to why Text B was the most useful for someone wanting to know how restaurants can help reduce sugar consumption. Some learners lost the mark because they failed to make the connection between sugar consumption and the actions of restaurants as the question required. Other incorrect responses failed to make the link to audience needs, these responses tended to simply quote or paraphrase from the text without identifying why the text would be useful to the intended audience.

Advice to centres:

It is important for learners to demonstrate that they understand why the text may be useful for the purpose outlined in the question.

Question 5:

This multiple choice question also asks learners to identify points of view, implied meaning and potential bias in texts. In this paper the vast majority of learners were able to correctly identify Option C and gain the mark.

Question 6:

This multiple choice question asks learners to comment on how meaning is conveyed by writers by correctly identifying a language feature from the text. In this particular example learners were asked to identify use of alliteration within the phrase long-lasting legacy. Many learners were able to do this accurately by choosing option B. However, a significant proportion of learners incorrectly opted for C (metaphor).

Advice to centres:

The guidance document for Reading Level Two on the Functional Skills section of the Pearson website gives a useful glossary of language terms, which it would benefit learners to become familiar with.

Question 7:

This open response style question also asks learners to comment on how meaning is conveyed by writers. Typically, this question proves challenging for learners. In this paper, whilst relatively few learners scored the maximum four marks, many learners were able to identify at least one way that the writer presented his ideas and also gave a relevant example. These learners were able to gain two of the available marks. The question asked learners to identify language and / or layout features within Text C. Learners seemed to be more comfortable identifying layout features, such as bold sub-headings rather than language features. However, some learners lost marks by correctly identifying a language and / or layout feature but not providing a relevant example.

Advice to centres:

Learners need lots of opportunities to practise the skill by analysing a range of texts in order to identify how meaning is conveyed. Many learners are able to give good examples that suggest they recognise how meaning is conveyed but they need to develop responses a little further so they can describe the technique being used by the writer in the phrases they have selected.

Question 8:

This question produced some very strong and detailed response, often scoring the maximum five marks. These responses used the two texts effectively to produce some detailed responses outlining ways to improve diet other than reducing sugar consumption. However, a significant proportion of learners misinterpreted the question and gave responses that talked about ways of reducing sugar intake. These responses, although often very detailed, usually included little rewardable material. Some responses only drew on material from one of the two texts. These responses were limited to the lower band of the mark scheme gaining 1 or 2 marks.

Question 9:

The majority of learners found this question fairly accessible and consequently scored the maximum two marks.

Question 10:

This question enabled learners to produce some detailed responses, which typically scored 3-4 marks. Top band responses scoring five marks were less common but maximum marks were occasionally awarded. The most able learners used relevant examples skilfully and were able to demonstrate similar ideas about sugar intake from both Text B and C. Less well developed responses, scoring 1-2 marks, tended to rely mainly on one text or gave quite general points unsupported by examples from the texts. Some responses lost marks by failing to link the ideas from both texts. These responses, though often quite detailed and lengthy, simply gave ideas taken from each text without any attempt to show how the ideas were similar.

Advice to centres:

Centres should encourage learners to use the two texts carefully and to give specific examples from each text. To gain marks in the higher band it is important to demonstrate how the ideas presented in both texts are similar. Use of linking words and phrases can be helpful, for example: similarly Text B also talks about... or Both texts show that....

Question 11:

This question asked learners to select and use different types of text to obtain and to utilise relevant information. In this paper most learners were able to successfully select the correct text (Text C). Many of these learners were then able to gain the maximum three marks by also providing a relevant reason and example. However, a significant proportion of learners lost marks by not providing a valid reason as to why the text was selected. Often these responses focused on the layout features of the text, for example identifying the use of sub-headings.

Advice to centres:

Centres should encourage learners look for a valid reason, which meets the purpose as outlined in the question and shows why the selected text is the most suitable. Learners also need to understand the difference between giving a reason and providing an example.

Question 12:

This question proved very accessible for learners with the majority able to gain at least two of the three available marks, with many scoring the full three marks. This question also requires learners to select and use different types of text to obtain and utilise relevant information. Most learners at Level Two find this a relatively straightforward skill but learners should be encouraged to read closely and ensure they have fully understood precisely what the question is asking them to select.

Question 13:

This multiple choice question proved unproblematic for the vast majority of learners, who correctly selected option C and gained the mark.

Pass mark for E202 in July 2016

Maximum mark	30
Pass mark	19
UMS mark	6

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