Principal Examiners' Report

June 2016

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills
English Reading Level 2 (E202)

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Centre report Functional Skills Reading Level Two

General comments

This paper proved to be an effective test of Level 2 Reading Skills. Learners were clearly familiar with the topic of job interviews and all three texts proved accessible. The full range of marks was seen, depending on how carefully learners read the texts and the questions.

Question 1

This was a multiple choice question and most learners were able to answer it correctly by identifying the fact that the writer of Text A believes that 'job interviews can be surprising'.

Question 2

Most learners performed well on this question and many were able to accurately explain both quotations. Those who only got one correct, were generally able to explain 'baffled job seeker'. The most common error was learners copying sections from the text, rather than showing that they understood the quotation by using some of their own words to explain it.

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, e.g. 'to inform the reader about job interviews'. In general this question was answered well but there were also a number of learners who did not give enough detail, e.g. just writing 'to inform'. Other learners were able to describe what the text was about but were not able to give a purpose, e.g. writing, 'It talks about job interviews'.

Question 4

Most learners 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 wanting advice on writing a CV. The most common error seen here was learners answering the question with a quotation, rather than giving a reason. A quotation from the text must be supported by a brief explanation (e.g. Because it tells you to…) to gain a mark here. Learners also need to do more than paraphrase the question, e.g. by answering, 'Because it gives you advice on writing a CV'.

Question 5

This was a multiple choice question and most learners were able to answer it correctly by selecting option C.

Question 6

Most learners were able to gain the mark here by correctly identifying an example of direct address. Learners who got this question wrong did not understand what is meant by direct address to the reader.

Question 7

This question asked learners to explain two methods that the writer of Text C used to show that they don't believe in dream jobs and then to give an example to support each of these. There was a definite improvement on performance on this question, compared to previous series. A number of learners gained four marks for this question by successfully identifying two methods and two relevant supporting examples. The most common methods identified were the title, the use of bold font and a rhetorical question.

Where learners struggled with this question it was generally because they did not provide methods used by the writer, but just copied out two quotations from the text. These responses could not be rewarded as no 'method' was identified. It is essential that centres teach learners how to accurately identify the methods by which writers convey meaning in a range of texts.

Question 8

Learners responded well to this question and managed to find appropriate points from each text on how to prepare for a job interview. Most learners achieved at least three marks and many did better than this by selecting relevant and precise ideas from both texts. The most common mistakes here were learners only selecting information from one text, or giving answers that were based on their own experience rather than the texts.

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 read the question carefully and found quotes that were not about the difficulty of choosing a career.

Question 10

Most learners were able to find relevant ideas from each text, but they needed to compare these in order to secure three marks or above. Many learners wrote about the two texts separately and this limited the mark that they could obtain for this question. More able learners made one or more comparison between the texts (e.g. 'both texts show that experience is good for your CV') and were able to achieve three marks or above.

Question 11

This question asked learners to make a judgment as to which text is most useful for a particular purpose. The large majority of learners correctly identified Text A in this instance. Most learners were also able to give an appropriate reason for selecting Text A, e.g. 'Because it gives you examples of strange questions that might be asked'. Some learners failed to gain a mark for a reason as they just quoted from the text here. The majority of learners who gave a valid reason went on to provide an appropriate example from the text.

Question 12

This question asked learners to find one piece of evidence from each text on mistakes that people make in interviews. Most learners were able to do this successfully, with the majority scoring at least two marks. One mistake that many learners made was giving advice on how to avoid mistakes in an interview, rather than identifying mistakes that people make.

Question 13

This was a multiple choice question and most learners were able to answer it correctly by selecting option A. This question requires learners to identify themes from two of the texts.

Recommendations for Centres

1. In order to be well prepared 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 practise comparing ideas from texts that are on similar themes. This will help learners to feel confident when sitting these papers.

2. 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 learners need to understand that they must identify methods, rather than just copy quotations from the text. Similarly, for Question 10, learners need to understand that they should compare similar ideas in each text.

3. 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.

4. 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 June 2016

Maximum mark	**30**
Pass mark	**19**
UMS mark	**6**

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