

# Principal Examiner's Report

July 2017

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills  
English Writing Level 1 (E103)

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## **Principal Examiner Report: L1 Writing July 2017**

### **Introduction**

This paper worked well in testing Level 1 Writing Skills. The two tasks set were:

1. Write an article about a sponsored bike ride
2. Write a contribution to an internet forum about a person you admire

This paper engaged candidates and the majority responded very successfully. Both tasks were accessible, with the source material offering support to weaker candidates, allowing them to work their way into a response. There were very few responses where no attempt had been made to respond to the tasks.

### **Task 1**

Overall, there were some good responses with learners developing their own ideas successfully. Lots of learners were creative in their article and came up with some good ideas for the types of tasks volunteers could help with. Many candidates used the right tone and language for the intended audience and produced very good articles using the right style and format. There was some very good use of persuasive language in many of the responses.

There was, however, a number of learners who did not know how to write an article. Some emailed the person back and others wrote an email or letter to the editor. Some better responses were written as letters, limiting the mark given. There was no persuasive language used.

### **Strong Answers**

There was a heading and then a clear introduction giving all of the details of the sponsored bike ride. Candidates then explained that they didn't just need people to take part in the ride, but other volunteers would be needed on the day as well.

There was detailed information about what the volunteers would be needed for, eg. marshalling, handing out water etc. The article closed with a final plea for people to either take part or volunteer to help, again mentioning the charities that would be helped by the proceeds of the event.

## **Weak Answers**

Learners copied the text from the question verbatim and did not demonstrate the development of their own ideas. They missed important details out about the location, date, time of the event and they didn't take the opportunity to develop ideas about how volunteers could help on the day.

They also failed to close the article by explaining why it would be good to take part. Those learners who didn't address all the bullets in full, but gave a response that was fit for purpose and used appropriate tone and language, were still able to gain minimal competency.

## **Task 2**

This task provided a lot of scope and the more able learners scored highly on FCP. Stronger learners explained in depth who they admired and why; they went into great detail and produced some good answers which were moving and thoughtful. Most candidates understood they were contributing to an internet forum and used appropriate language and tone.

The weaker answers neglected to include enough detail about why they admired the person they had chosen which kept them in the middle band for FCP. They simply gave the name of the person and said that they were really nice, friendly helpful people. Those learners who didn't address all the bullets in full, but gave a response that was fit for purpose and used appropriate tone and language, were still able to gain minimal competency.

## **SPG**

The correct use of articles proved difficult particularly for learners who have English as an additional language. Many candidates did not use capital letters correctly.

## **Recommendations for Centres**

This is a Functional Skills test, so learners will only be rewarded for writing responses that are fit for purpose. When they come to the test they must read the task and stimulus text with great care to understand the purpose, before they start to write their response. Responses that are well written but of limited relevance to the task set will not receive a high mark for form, communication and purpose.

In preparation for this test, learners need to understand the purpose of different types of functional task (e.g. article and internet forum) and should be given opportunities to practice writing in various formats, for different audiences and purposes. This experience will be of great help to them in tackling a future L1 Writing paper.

Centres should also reinforce the fact that 40% of the marks are for spelling, punctuation and grammar. It is important to remind learners that they are

allowed to use a dictionary and also that they should spend a few minutes checking through their work, after they have finished.

Finally, it is also recommended that centres tell candidates that they can plan their work on the exam paper. They will just need to rule through this if they don't want it to be marked.

### **Tips to Centres for Improving Learner Performance**

Although it was reassuring to see some very good responses and that centres have obviously been practising writing letters and emails, centres/learners may benefit from addressing the following points:

#### **DURING THE TEST**

1. Use a dictionary
2. Plan responses by using the bullets as sub headings; jot down ideas underneath each of these to avoid repetition of rubric and help structure the final response
3. When repeating words that are in the question, re-read the question to check spelling
4. Proof read afterwards to check spelling (especially the key words that are in the question paper) and that all bullets have been addressed

#### **IN CENTRE**

1. Ensure candidates improve time management by sitting mock tests using past papers
2. Ensure learners read letters and emails to familiarise themselves with the different formats
3. Practise writing articles and internet contributions, focusing on audience and tone
4. Dedicate more time to assessing a candidate's control of English before entering them for the test

1. Identifying the purpose and audience
2. Writing a good introduction that sets the scene
3. Making a statement: learners need to be encouraged to make a statement then develop and support the reasons for making the statement
4. Sequencing: how to use bullets in the question to aid development and sequencing of ideas
5. Organisation – an introduction, body text and conclusion for all letters

### **SPG**

1. Homophones: focus needed on the spelling of common homophones such as “their” and there”
2. Capitals: correct use of capitalisation, especially names of people and ‘I’ not ‘i’
3. Capitals: do not use in the middle of words or sentences
4. Punctuation: using full stops instead of commas to break up sentences and avoid ‘run on’ sentences
5. Punctuation: absolutely no comma splicing
6. Connectives: suggest alternatives to ‘and’
7. Subject verb agreement: ‘we were’ not ‘we was’
8. Are/our, as well/aswell, a lot/alot

Pass mark for E103 in July 2017

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Maximum mark	<b>25</b>
Pass mark	<b>16</b>
UMS mark	<b>6</b>



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