

3748-110 and 3748-310

Functional Skills English Level 1 Reading

Chief Examiner's report – February 2017

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide centres with feedback on the performance of candidates for 3748-110 and 3748-310 Functional Skills English Reading Level 1.

2 Overall Performance

This report covers the period from August 2016 to February 2017. However, centres are strongly urged to review the previous Chief Examiner's reports, dated May 2016 and August 2016, as the comments and advice still apply.

Many candidates are successful, although a significant number are failing. The principal reasons for failing remain the same as outlined in previous Chief Examiner's reports, and can be summed up by the following:

1. Being entered for the exam before adequate and sufficient learning has taken place.
2. Unfamiliarity with the type of questions being asked.
3. Careless reading of the questions.
4. Entering insufficient responses.

Areas of good performance

Successful candidates tended to gain marks across all four assessment criteria, with no criterion standing out as being more problematic than any other.

A common thread to stronger candidates' responses was a recognition of the number of responses needed for each question. The vast majority of questions now make this explicit, but where this is not the case, stronger candidates were still able to include sufficient responses through taking note of the number of marks available for that question.

Areas for development

1. It is essential that candidates are adequately prepared for assessment. However, it was evident from some of the responses made by weaker candidates that they were not clear about what was being asked of them and/or were unfamiliar with the question types. Exposure to the sample question papers and the worked examples on the City & Guilds website should ensure familiarity with the question types.
2. A significant number of marks are lost by candidates through not reading the questions carefully enough. Candidates should be encouraged to take their time when reading the questions to ensure a complete understanding. This careful reading should also include taking note of the number of responses required, either through an explicit command in the question or through looking at the number of marks available for that question; the number of marks available is indicative of the number of responses required.
3. Weaker candidates tend to struggle when answering questions covering the assessment criterion **Identify the main points and ideas and how they are presented in a variety of texts** (1.2.1). There are certain signposts used to identify main points in texts, such as subheadings, numbers or bullet points, the use of bold lettering, for example. It appeared that some candidates simply failed to understand what was being asked of them.

3 Recommendations/Advice for centres

1. Centres are strongly advised to read all the previous Chief Examiner's reports, available on the City & Guilds website.
2. Centres should make use of the Guidance for Delivery document, available on the City & Guilds website. The document provides further detail about types of questions, what examiners are looking for in responses, typical Level 1 skills and knowledge a candidate should have, and sample teaching activities.
3. Candidates should not be entered for the exam before adequate learning and practice has taken place.
4. Most questions explicitly tell the candidate how many responses are required. Where this is not the case, candidates should always take note of the number of marks available for the question and assume that is the number of responses required.
5. Candidates should be reminded that all the responses are contained in the source documents, and should not be drawn from their own experiences.
6. As part of the learning process, centres should expose candidates to all types of source documents, including web-sites, articles, formal letters, emails, leaflets, promotional material and advertising. These should be studied in combination with the Functional Skills English Reading Level 1 criteria, with a view to candidates being able to:
 - understand layout features and their effects
 - identify the main points and ideas in a text by looking at headings, subheadings, final summaries or bold lettering, for example
 - read texts in detail
 - utilise information contained in texts
 - identify suitable responses to texts.

4 Additional Information

From September 2016, an additional 10 minutes has been allocated to the Functional Skills English Level 1 Reading examination. The total time allowed for a candidate will be 70 minutes.

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