

**3748-111 and 3748-311**

**Functional Skills English Level 1  
Writing**

**Chief Examiner's report – January 2018**

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# 1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide centres with feedback on the performance of candidates for 3748-111 and 3748-311 Functional Skills English Writing Level 1.

## 2 Overall Performance

This report covers the period from February 2017 to January 2018. However, centres are strongly urged to review all previous Chief Examiner's reports as the comments and advice still apply.

The scenarios presented across the bank of exam papers seemed to allow most candidates to engage with the tasks and to present responses that indicated a good understanding of the information required and the types of document in which it was to be presented.

Whilst performance varied across candidates and centres, those who passed were generally able to demonstrate sound understanding and performance across at least two of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

A significant number of candidates did not pass the exam. Some candidates were only one or two marks away from achieving sufficient marks to pass, and may well have done so through more detailed and careful proof reading of responses. Other candidates, however, performed significantly below the levels required for Level 1, and it was apparent that they had been entered into the exam before being ready. Typically, these candidates demonstrated poor skills in at least two of spelling, punctuation and grammar, and often displayed significant weaknesses in their use of language.

### Areas of good performance

For those who passed, a significant improvement could be seen in formatting and structuring of documents. At level 1, candidates were asked to write two of the following: a formal letter; a formal email; an article; the text of a leaflet; a speech.

The inclusion of relevant detail was an area where marks were generally high, indicating good engagement with the tasks and a clear understanding of the points that needed to be covered.

The vast majority of successful candidate were able to write clearly, coherently, in a logical order and with generally suitable language for the audience and task.

### Areas for development

1. For weaker candidates, grammar and the correct use of language were generally problematic, especially those for whom English is a second language.
2. The use of text-speak and vernacular expressions common in spoken language mainly associated with the younger generations should be discouraged. For instance, the use of '*yous lot*' will be penalised for poor use of language and is also likely to be penalised under grammar. With the exception of one or two tasks across the bank of exam papers, candidates are asked to write formal responses, and their language choices should reflect the formality required.
3. Spelling errors were typical of weaker candidates. Some of the words commonly misspelt were: a lot; already; writing; information; sincerely; faithfully; apart / a part; as well; truly.

4. On occasion, some candidates would write entire responses in block capitals, resulting in the loss of significant marks for punctuation. Centres are reminded that the correct use of upper and lowercase letters is a requirement at Entry 2, and that all lower levels of Functional Skills English are subsumed into the levels above.
5. Centres are reminded that the correct use of full stops, capital letters and question marks are also Level 1 requirements, and that correct punctuation is required irrespective of the task being undertaken.
6. Some candidates write very long responses, seemingly ignoring the instruction to write between 200 and 250 words. Except for very able candidates, the likelihood of more errors occurring is increased in longer documents. Although some compensation in the marking is given to longer documents, it is in the interests of candidates to plan and structure their responses so that all the relevant detail is contained within the suggested word count.

### 3 Recommendations/Advice for centres

1. Review Chief Examiner's previous reports.
2. Centres should always make use of practice papers and worked examples available on the City & Guilds website in their preparation of candidates.
3. The Functional Skills English Guidance for Delivery document, available on the City & Guilds website, provides valuable guidance on the requirements of Level 1 Functional Skills English, and also contains useful sample teaching activities.
4. At level 1, candidates will be asked to write two different types of document. Candidates should be familiar with the inherent structural requirements of formal letters, emails, articles, leaflets and speeches.
5. Functional Skills English exams are available in either a paper-based version or an on-line version. If centres select the paper-based route, candidates are still permitted to word process their responses. If candidates handwrite their responses, it is important that the text is legible, and that the formation of upper and lowercase letters is unequivocal.
6. Encourage candidates to proof read their work.
7. Centres are reminded that there is no compensation given for candidates for whom English is a second language.

## **4 Additional Information**

Revised standards are currently being developed, and the expectation is that assessment against the new standards will commence in September 2019. There will be a period of time where assessment against the current standards will run concurrently with assessment against the new standards.



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