

3748-113 and 3748-313

**Functional Skills English Level 2
Reading**

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 3748-113 and 3748-313 Functional Skills English Reading Level 2.

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 reports as the comments and advice still apply.

Pass rates have remained steady and relatively high. For many candidates, adequate preparation and, crucially, familiarisation with the types of questions being asked, have meant sufficient marks are accumulated when answering questions across all five assessment criteria. However, a significant number of candidates fail, and the fundamental reasons remain the same:

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

For candidates achieving high marks, responses show that adequate preparation and learning have taken place prior to being entered for the exam. Responses suggest that the prior learning has included making use of the practice papers and worked examples from the City & Guilds website, ensuring familiarity with the types of questions candidates are likely to be asked.

All papers require candidates to identify language techniques employed by the authors of the source documents in order to enhance the communication or to more fully engage the reader. Whilst the techniques used may differ in the source documents in each exam, stronger candidates are able to successfully identify the techniques and provide suitable examples of the techniques being employed from the text.

Stronger candidates are able to access high marks when comparing and contrasting evidence from different source documents through using explicit discourse markers in their responses. Implicit comparing or contrasting of evidence through merely listing information is not rewarded as highly.

Once again, adequate preparation of candidates enables stronger ones to identify biased statements from the source documents. This skill is tested in every exam.

In general, most candidates performed well against **2.2.1 - Select and use different types of texts to obtain and utilise relevant information** and **2.2.2 - Read and summarise, succinctly, information/ideas from different sources**.

Areas for development

Once again, centres are strongly urged to read all previous Chief examiner reports, as the main areas of concern for weaker candidates remain the same.

1. Assessment criterion **2.2.3 (b) - *Comment on how meaning is conveyed through language and layout***

Some weaker candidates are either not reading the question properly or are unsure of what is being asked, as answers do not address the question at all or the candidates identify layout techniques, such as title, or bold font. At level 2 there is a much greater emphasis on the use of language.

2. Assessment criterion **2.2.4 - *Detect point of view, implicit meaning and/or bias***

This is still a problematic area for some candidates, in particular the identification of biased statements. Practice is crucial, so that candidates gain a firm understanding of what constitutes a biased statement.

3. Assessment criterion **2.2.5 - *Analyse texts in relation to audience needs and consider suitable responses***

This is often tested through asking candidates to either identify information that is repeated in two documents, or to compare and/or contrast information from two sources.

It is the latter of these that weaker candidates really struggle to gain full marks from. Candidates must explicitly compare and/or contrast the information, not merely imply it by listing the relevant information from the two source documents.

4. Many candidates simply fail to read the questions properly. It cannot be stressed enough that candidates should read and then re-read the questions, underlining, where possible, the salient parts of the question as an aide. Typical errors include failing to notice the instruction pinpointing the specific part of the source document to be used to find the responses, eg, *...from the first two paragraphs*, or *...from the final paragraph*.
5. Time management may have been an issue for some candidates, so centres are urged to remind candidates that there is no need to write in complete sentences, and there is no need to repeat the stem of the question in the response. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are not assessed in the exam, although it is important that responses are legible.
6. It was occasionally apparent that candidates were drawing on their own experiences to answer the questions. All responses are contained within the source documents and should not be drawn from own experience.

3 Recommendations/Advice for centres

1. Centres should review all previous Chief Examiner reports, as the advice and guidance still applies.
2. Centres should make use of the Guidance for Centres 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 2 skills and knowledge a candidate should have, and sample teaching activities.
3. Candidates should not be entered into the exam before adequate learning and practice have taken place.
4. Familiarity with the question types is essential.
5. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are not tested in the examination, and there is no requirement for candidates to write in complete sentences, nor to repeat the stem of the question in the response.
6. Exam techniques is a useful learning session for candidates prior to the exam, and should include elements such as how to decipher what is being asked, how to recognise the number of responses required, how to manage time effectively and how to check answers for accuracy and sense.

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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