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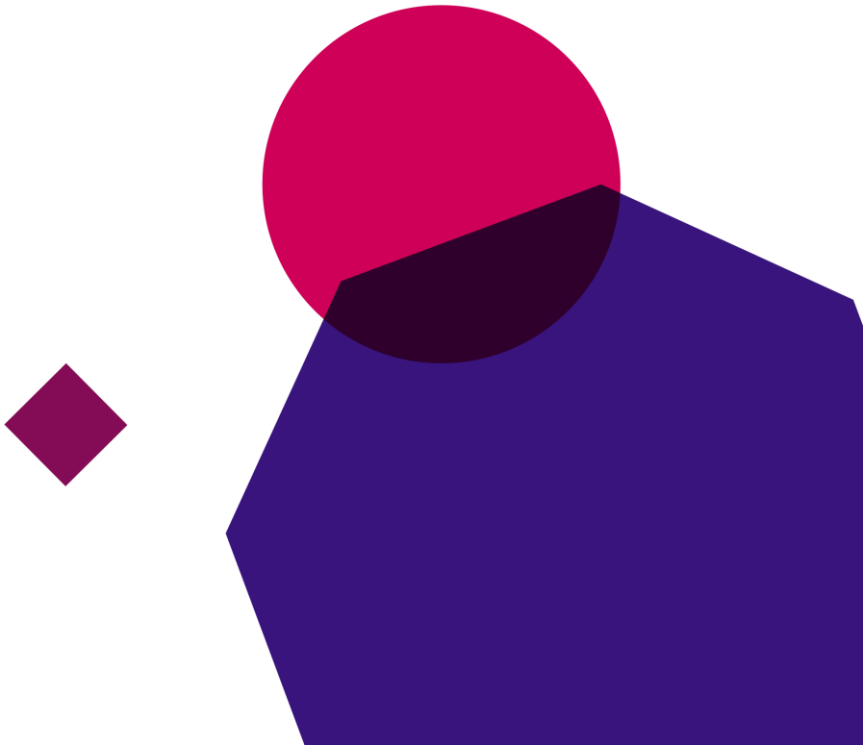
Chief Examiner's Report

Functional Skills English Reading Level 2 (4748)

4748-113 (e-volve)
4748-213 (paper-based)

May 2021



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1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide centres with feedback on the performance of candidates for 4748-113 and 4748-213 Functional Skills English Reading Level 2. This report covers the period from April 2020 to April 2021.

Please note: the report does not cover the period during which Centre Assessed Grades (CAG) were certificated.

2. Overall Performance

This report covers the period from April 2020 to April 2021.

Pass rates were high, and the majority of candidates who passed were able to demonstrate a good level of achievement across all the Subject Content Statements.

The Subject Content Statements that addressed skills not previously addressed in the legacy qualification (3748-113 and 3748-213) did not seem to pose too many problems for the majority of candidates, although it was evident that a significant proportion of candidates were entered prior to being adequately prepared.

The source documents and topics seemed to be accessible and engaging for most candidates. However, poor exam technique was evident on occasion. It appeared some candidates did not read the questions carefully enough or did not submit sufficient responses. Multiple-choice questions sometimes indicated that two or more answers were required; weaker candidates often selected only one option. Some questions directed candidates to look at specific paragraphs or sections of a source document, yet this instruction was sometimes ignored, with answers being taken from elsewhere in the sources.

Areas where weaker candidates dropped marks included questions which asked them to identify language techniques used in the source documents to effectively communicate their messages to the intended audiences. Differentiating between fact and opinion also proved problematic for some candidates, as did comparing information contained in the two source documents.

The vast majority of candidates were able to provide answers to all questions, suggesting that time management was strong. A small minority appeared to have insufficient time, leaving questions towards the end of the exam unanswered.

3. Areas for development

1. It is important to read the questions carefully.

   Some questions will direct candidates to look at specific parts of the source documents. For example, a question might read: *Identify two biased phrases in paragraph two of Document 1*. In order to achieve any marks, responses must come from the relevant part of the document(s).

2. Questions will indicate how many responses are required.

   On many occasions, candidates entered too few responses. Careful reading of the questions should ensure candidates know how many responses are required.

3. Subject Content Statement 12: *Compare information, ideas and opinions in different texts, including how they are conveyed.*

   Many stronger candidates failed to achieve full marks when answering questions addressing this subject content statement. The critical aspect is that candidates are asked to compare information, ideas or opinions. Merely listing two opinions does not go far enough. Examiners are looking for explicit comparisons or contrasts. Typically, this is best achieved through the use of simple discourse markers, linking phrases or comparative statements.

4. Subject Content Statement 14: *Understand the relationship between textual features and devices, and how they can be used to shape meaning for different audiences and purposes.*

   This subject content statement will often be tested through asking candidates to identify how language has been adapted to better achieve the purpose and be relevant to the intended audience. Typically, a promotional source document, for example, will use techniques such as persuasive language or direct address to the reader, amongst many other possible techniques. Candidates should be exposed to many documents with different purposes and understand how language has been selected and adapted to meet the purpose. This area was problematic for many candidates, and responses were often left blank, or plausible techniques were listed but with incorrect examples provided from the source documents.

   On occasion, candidates were asked to identify language techniques but listed layout techniques, such as subheadings or bullet points. Candidates should understand the difference.

5. Subject Content Statement 17: *Analyse texts, of different levels of complexity, recognising their use of vocabulary and identifying levels of formality and bias.*

   Testing this subject content statement is done in various ways. Commonly, candidates will be asked to identify biased statements from a particular part of the source document. Weaker candidates were often unable to correctly identify biased statements.

6. Subject Content Statement 18: *Follow and argument, identifying different points of view and distinguishing fact from opinion.*

The area that proved problematic for some candidates was distinguishing between fact and opinion. Questions can be either multiple-choice questions or more open questions. It was apparent that some candidates found this skill to be hard.

Occasionally, when asked to identify an opinion from the text, candidates would respond with their own opinions about the topic in the source document. Had the question been read carefully, it would be apparent that the direction was to identify an opinion in the text. This will always be the case.

4. Advice for centres

1. Candidates should only be entered into the exam once sufficient learning has taken place. In order to maximise the chances of success, candidates should have previously made use of sample papers and model answers, as these will not only give an indication of their progress but will also ensure they are familiar with the types of question that may be asked.

2. A Guidance for Delivery document is available on the City & Guilds website. This is essential reading for all tutors or other support staff involved in the delivery of Functional Skills English, as it provides further detail about the Subject Content Statements, examples of the types of questions that may be asked and sample teaching activities.

3. 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.

4. Centres are strongly urged to refer to the previous Chief Examiner's Report dated March 2020, as the information and advice contained within the report are still applicable.

Oliver Jobes
Chief Examiner

Date: May 2021