



Skills for Life

Reading Entry 1 Examination Report

2011 – Test 102

Skills for Life Reading Examination Report: Entry 1

This report is based on candidate performance on one version of the Skills for Life Reading Entry 1 tests in 2010/11.

The report is intended as an aid to teachers and colleges in preparing candidates for future Cambridge ESOL Skills for Life Reading tests.

Test 102

The paper is loosely based around the topic of community activities for different people.

There are 40 marks available on the paper: 10 for Part 1, 12 for Part 2 and 18 for Part 3. The number of marks for each individual question is available on the question paper. The breakdown of marks available for each assessment focus (Text, Sentence and Word) is shown below.

	Text	Sentence	Word	Total
Part 1	7	0	3	10
Part 2	6	4	2	12
Part 3	6	7	5	18
Total	19	11	10	40

In this paper, candidates performed well across the three assessment foci, performing a little better on word-focus questions, and slightly less well on text-focus questions. The majority of candidates answered all the questions. However, some of the weaker candidates did not finish all of Part 3. Candidates should be encouraged to answer all of the questions in the paper, guessing if necessary, as marks are not deducted for incorrect answers.

Part 1

Part 1 begins with an email from Ali to his friend, Nick. This is followed by advertisements for a leisure centre and a community centre. Candidates generally handled Question 1 quite well, with nearly all the stronger candidates correctly identifying what Ali wants. However, around half of the weaker candidates chose 'He wants to find a new place to live,' possibly being distracted by the text mentioning 'a new place'. Again with Question 2, the majority of stronger candidates identified 'realy' as the misspelt word, while approximately a third of the weaker candidates went for each option. Learners should be reminded that they can check incorrect spellings using their monolingual dictionaries.

The majority of candidates answered Question 3 correctly, identifying the texts as adverts. Most candidates identified the correct website address for Question 4A, although it was more challenging for the weaker candidates. It would be useful for teachers to focus on the format of email and website addresses when preparing candidates. Question 4B was again handled very well by the stronger candidates and over half of the weaker candidates identified 'Monday' as the day the community centre is not open.

Candidates coped particularly well with the first part of Question 5, with 99% of the stronger candidates and 64% of the weaker candidates choosing the correct option, making this the easiest question in Part 1. However, weaker candidates found Questions 5A and 5B more challenging. This is a common question type for the end of Part 1 and candidates should be shown that the email and the two advertisements both provide the reasons needed. Practice focusing on this question type using a range of past papers would be useful here.

Part 2

Part 2 consists of six small texts testing knowledge of text type and provenance. These are followed by a short newspaper article about a competition at a dance club, with questions targeting specific information in the text. Candidates generally coped well with Questions 6A, B and F, and particularly well with 6C and D, with 99% of the stronger candidates identifying the correct answer to both questions. Question 6D was in fact the easiest question on the paper. However, Question 6E was the most challenging question in the set, where candidates may have been distracted by the word 'cashier', relating this to 'department store', not reading the text carefully, noting the job is in a local supermarket.

Question 7 was generally handled well by all candidates, although 43% of the weaker candidates chose 'playing football' as the correct answer, perhaps seeing the word 'football' in the article but not reading the sentences around the word, in order to relate it to the question about the prizes. Question 8 was answered well by most candidates. Question 9A was particularly well-answered, with 99% of the stronger candidates, and 75% of the weaker candidates identifying that the statement is true. Questions 9B and D were also handled well by most candidates. However, while Question 9C was answered correctly by 85% of the stronger candidates, the weaker candidates were less successful, perhaps not reading the text all the way to the end, missing that there are adult classes on Wednesdays.

Part 3

In Part 3, there is a text about a school breakfast club. Question 10, focusing on the function of the text, was answered very well by all candidates. The following four multiple-choice questions were also generally answered well.

The majority of the stronger candidates identified the correct answers in Question 15. However, the weaker candidates found these questions more challenging, and in particular, Question 15E. When preparing candidates for this kind of question, it would be useful to focus on the meaning of the question words, e.g. 'when' and 'how many'. Again the answer to this question is at the end of the text and might have been missed by some. Reminding candidates to read to the end would be useful here.

The stronger candidates coped very well with the open Questions 16 to 18, while the weaker candidates were less successful with Questions 17 and 18. Again, focusing on the question word 'where', meaning 'what place,' would be useful when preparing candidates. Questions 19 and 20 were also answered well by the stronger candidates. However, a significant number of the weaker candidates left the questions towards the end of Part 3 unanswered. This suggests a problem with time management, and it would be useful to train candidates to allocate time to the different parts of the paper, focusing on the recommended time as stated at the beginning of each part.

Recommendations for candidate preparation

All Cambridge ESOL Skills for Life tests are based on the *Adult ESOL Core Curriculum* and cover all the Basic Skills Standards in each mode at each level. Therefore, by following the *Adult ESOL Core Curriculum*, teachers will be preparing their students for the tests. Candidates will benefit from being reminded of the following Dos and Don'ts:

Do

- Do look through the whole paper at the beginning of the test to see how much you have to do and to focus on the scenario.
- Do answer all the questions, even if you are not always sure of the answer.
- Do leave yourself time to check your answers at the end.
- Do read all the introductions to a text. This will help you to understand the situation.
- Do read all the instructions. They may not always be the same.
- Do cross out wrong answers clearly.

Don't

- Don't worry about language you don't know. You may be able to answer the questions without that part of the text.
- Don't use your dictionary too much. You will not have time.
- Don't write full sentences for the answers or copy large chunks from the texts.
- Don't give more than one answer for each question.
- Don't always read the whole text. Look at the questions first and decide whether you need to read or re-read the whole text.