



Skills for Life

Reading Entry 1 Examination Report

2007 – Test 067

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 2006/7.

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

Test 067

The paper is based on the topic of libraries.

There were 34 marks available on the paper, 12 for Part 1, 8 for Part 2 and 14 for Part 3. The number of marks for each individual question is provided 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	10	0	2	12
Part 2	1	4	3	8
Part 3	6	5	3	14
Total	17	9	8	34

Overall, candidates taking this version were more successful with questions with a word focus than with questions with text and sentence focus. While stronger candidates attempted all questions on the paper, a significant number of weaker candidates gave no answer to some of the questions, particularly the open ended ones. Students should be encouraged to at least attempt all the questions as marks are not deducted for incorrect answers.

Part 1

Part 1, which proved to be the easiest part of the paper, begins with a note asking a friend about where to find a local library. This is followed by information about two libraries. Questions 1 and 2 caused few problems but the most frequent wrong answer to question 1 was 'to tell her friend about a library'. Practise in matching function words with extracts of text might be useful here. In question 3 about 20% of candidates ticked only one box. Also many of the weaker candidates chose 'what books you can get in the libraries', which suggests that they were using world knowledge and not relating the statement to the question and/or the text. Question 4 (the easiest question in this part of the paper) and question 5 caused few problems. For question 6, most candidates made the right choice of library but some gave more than one reason or did not relate their answer to the library opening hours. 21% of the weaker candidates did not attempt this part of the question.

Part 2

Part 2, the hardest of the three parts, consists of a notice giving information about courses offered at a library. Question 7 was mainly satisfactory but 35% of the weaker candidates chose 'a story', possibly because the word appears in one of the headings in the text. Candidates should be taught that for questions testing text type, the word is unlikely to appear in the text and that they should look at the whole text, including the layout. In question 8, the stronger candidates had no problem choosing the correct answer, but almost half of the weaker candidates chose 'a camera'. Again, candidates should beware of simply matching words – they should read the text for overall meaning. For question 9 some candidates did not distinguish between 'date' and 'day' and wrote the day of the week

instead. Candidates should be trained to look at the key question words, and useful classroom activities could involve checking understanding of questions/instructions. This might involve highlighting key words in the question, and predicting what sort of information they might be looking for in the text. Questions 10 and 11 (the easiest question in this part) posed few problems. For question 12, the weaker candidates favoured 'Keeping healthy', probably because they failed to equate 'trips' with 'visit'. Question 13 was the hardest question in this part, with approximately a quarter of the weaker candidates leaving it blank (13% of the overall candidature). Common wrong answers were responses such as 'she goes to the library' or 'she goes to Computing for Beginners', suggesting that they were not looking at the text and had not read the final section.

Part 3

Part 3 begins with five signs; candidates had to identify either their meaning, or where they would see them. Most of question 14 was well done except for 14C where almost half of the candidates chose 'on a bus ticket', maybe because of the word 'return'.

The final text is a timetable for courses at a library. Question 15 was generally well done, but about 20% of candidates overall chose 'information about library opening times', maybe because the text includes a timetable. Question 16 was harder, and about a half of the overall candidature chose 'only in the afternoons', perhaps because they did not recognise IT classes as being computing. Question 17, another open question, was generally well done but was left blank by 35% of weaker candidates. Some seemed not to focus on 'Who' and wrote 'New library courses teaches Keeping Healthy'. Again, work on identifying question words would be helpful here. There were few difficulties with question 18. For question 19 some candidates ticked only one box. Most candidates identified the two correct options but the most common wrong answer was 'help with accommodation', perhaps because candidates did not notice 'don't' in the text.

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

- practise reading as many different types of text as possible.
- practise different reading skills, i.e. skimming, scanning, deducing meaning, etc.
- bring world knowledge to your reading, but this should not replace reading the actual texts as candidates' experiences may be different.
- read all the instructions and introductions to texts and try to imagine the situation or scenario in each part of the paper.
- read the questions very carefully so that you know what you have to write. Think about the kind of information you need to look for in the text.
- always look at all the options in multiple choice questions before making a choice.
- tick the boxes for the correct answers. Do not use other symbols. Make sure you know how many boxes to tick.
- cross out your wrong answers very clearly.

- use words from the texts, where possible, to answer the questions. You do not need to use different words.

Don't

- leave any questions blank. Answer all the questions. You will not lose marks for writing a wrong answer.
- always choose the option that contains a word that is also in the text (word spotting). Look at the meaning of the question and look for synonyms in the text.
- write long answers to questions. They can usually be answered in a few words but make sure you give enough information to answer the question.
- write any extra information. Give only the answer to the question. If it is not clear to the examiner that you have understood the question and identified the correct answer, you may not get a mark.
- use your dictionary too much. This will take too much time and you do not need to know the meaning of all the words in a text to answer the questions.