UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
ESOL Examinations

Experts in Language Assessment

Skills for Life

Reading Entry 1

Examination Report

2008 – Test 077

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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 2007/8.

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

Test 077

The paper is based on the topic of a party.

There were 40 marks available on the paper, 16 for Part 1, 11 for Part 2 and 13 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	9	5	2	16
Part 2	1	3	7	11
Part 3	3	9	1	13
Total	13	17	10	40

Overall, candidates taking this version were slightly less successful with questions with a Word focus than with questions with Text and Sentence focus. Most candidates answered all the questions, but a few of the weaker candidates did not quite finish the paper. Some questions were left blank. Students should be encouraged to attempt all the questions as marks are not deducted for incorrect answers.

Part 1

Part 1 begins with an email asking a friend where to order takeaway food for a party. This is followed by an advert for a pizza restaurant. Question 1 caused few problems for the stronger candidates but 27% of weaker candidates ticked 'she wants a birthday present' possibly because 'birthday' and 'presents' appear in the first two lines and they did not read the sentences. Question 2 also proved challenging for the weaker candidates, who answered each option in almost equal numbers. Again, they should be encouraged to read the sentences and not rely on word spotting. For question 3A a significant number of candidates ticked 'False', perhaps interpreting 'outside' as being away from home. Question 4 posed few problems. For question 5, 'a shopping list' was a popular wrong answer possibly because candidates are looking at a part of the text as opposed to the text as a whole. Question 6, an open ended question, caused few problems, although it was left blank by 21% of the weaker candidates. Question 7 A-E were all answered well with the main issue being not focusing on '7pm' for 7A and therefore ticking 'True'.
In question 8 some candidates seemed to read the first sentence in the question 'The takeaway delivers food to your house' as being the question and therefore ticked 'Yes'. It is important to train candidates to distinguish between a statement and a question.

Part 2

Part 2 proved the easiest of the 3 parts. It consists of instructions from a pizza box. The questions posed very few problems for candidates. Question 13C, however, being the open question did lead to a number of wrong answers indicating that candidates did not focus on the question words 'How long?'. Answers were for example, 'freeze on day of purchase', 'not cooking, freeze on day of purchase'. Some wrote the timing for frozen and non-frozen, which was marked as incorrect. Some wrote the oven temperature as well. Candidates should be told that it is important not to write extra information as this implies that they have not understood the question. For question 14A, 34% of the weaker candidates ticked 'False' perhaps thinking that the pizza should be in the oven or the freezer and not looking at the whole text.

Part 3

Part 3 consists of 3 replies to a party invitation. This part posed few problems apart from a couple of procedural ones i.e. some left 15B blank, perhaps thinking that they only have to tick the 'Yes' answers. Also for question 16 some ticked A and B as both texts mention music. For question 20, 31% of the weaker candidates ticked B as the word 'jobs' is in text B. They were scanning for the word 'job' but not reading the text for meaning.

Question 22 was done quite well but there was some confusion over 'day' and 'date'. Some wrote '22' as the day and others wrote '22 May' as the day and then 'Friday' for the date. However, the time proved the hardest with such answers as '8-9 pm' and '8-9.30' (getting the two times from Judit's letter and not reading the sentence in the text). '9.30' and '4 o'clock' were also popular answers indicating that candidates were just scanning for a time.

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 can benefit from following the Dos and Don'ts from the Skills for Life Teaching Resource website: http://www.cambridgeesol.org/teach/SfL/levels1_2_reading/About%20the%20paper/dos_donts.htm