



Skills for Life

Reading Entry 2 Examination Report

2008 – Test 077

Skills for Life Reading Examination Report: Entry 2

This report is based on candidate performance on one version of the Skills for Life Reading Entry 2 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 leisure activities.

There were 40 marks available on the paper, 7 for Part 1, 13 for Part 2 and 20 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	1	4	2	7
Part 2	9		4	13
Part 3	7	9	4	20
Total	17	13	10	40

All three parts of this paper were of a very similar level of difficulty, although Part 1 was slightly more difficult. Overall the paper was well done with candidates scoring best on Text focus questions and least well on Word focus questions. This is mainly because approximately 20% of weaker candidates left blank the open-ended Word focus questions i.e. spelling, A-Z and vocabulary deduction questions. They should be encouraged to write something as they will not lose marks for wrong answers.

Part 1

Part 1 begins with a letter asking for advice about leisure activities for children in the summer holidays.

Candidates found question 1 fairly easy but about a third of weaker candidates chose 'advice about a place to move to' possibly because the words 'moved' and 'places' are fairly prominent at the beginning of the second paragraph and they are not reading the sentences. Question 2 was slightly more difficult with almost half of the weaker candidates ticking 'False' for 2B, probably as they did not understand 'drawing'. Nearly two thirds of weaker candidates and a quarter of the stronger ones ticked 'True' for question 2C indicating that they did not read beyond the first line of the text to check their answers.

Questions 3 and 4 are both open-ended Word focus questions and were left blank by 17% and 20% of weaker candidates respectively. For question 3 some candidates wrote words that are not on line 9 such as 'stories' and 'driving'. Some try to correct the spelling incorrectly but they get the mark if the word chosen is clear e.g. 'runnig'. Students should be informed that they only need to identify the word, not necessarily correct it. For question 4 some candidates wrote words that are not even in the text e.g. 'Dear'.

Part 2

Part 2 consists of 3 adverts for holiday activities for children. None of the questions posed major problems. Question 5 was the hardest with the most popular distracter for both stronger and weaker candidates being 'invitations'. 'Instructions' also attracted almost a quarter of the weaker candidates.

Almost half of the weaker candidates ticked the wrong answer for question 6B. They may have scanned all three texts for the word 'painting' but failed to check if this is offered every day or not.

Question 7, although open ended, was attempted by nearly all candidates. Some wrote more than 2 reasons. Only the first two reasons given are marked, irrespective of whether they are correct or incorrect.

Some gave the same reason twice, using different words e.g. 'all activities are free' and 'if she takes them to B and C she have to pay for Adam'. In such cases they only get marks for one reason.

Question 8. The A-Z question was well done on the whole but 24-38% of each item was left blank by the weaker candidates. Some candidates clearly had problems with second letter ordering and there were some procedural issues such as writing two words on the same line or ordering all the activities on the right hand side of the page. No marks were given for these infringements.

Part 3

Part 3 consists of a newspaper article about the closure of a community centre followed by 4 letters from local people about the same issue. Question 9,10 and 11 were done well but question 12 was more problematic with 22% of weaker candidates leaving it blank. Wrong answers included 'angry', 'community centre', 'local residents' and 'close'. Students should be taught to keep to the number of words stipulated and to look for the same part of speech given in the definition, in this case a verb in the simple past.

Questions 13-17 were well done as were the two reference questions 18 and 19.

Questions 20-22 were left blank by increasingly large numbers of weaker candidates due to a combination of them being open ended questions and the candidates running out of time. Question 20 posed similar problems to question 12 with candidates writing the wrong part of speech e.g. 'enough', 'space', 'religion', 'lot', 'Eid' or 'problem'. Some of these indicate that the candidates may have misunderstood the question. The main problems with questions 21 and 22 were, as with question 3, writing words from the wrong line and in some cases from the right line but from the wrong text. Again, there were incorrect corrections e.g. 'fucher' or 'futer' and these would get a mark if they were identifiable.

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