



# Skills for Life

## Reading Entry 3 Examination Report

2007 – Test 067

## Skills for Life Reading Examination Report: Entry 3

This report is based on candidate performance on one version of the Skills for Life Reading Entry 3 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 topic of this paper is saving energy and recycling.

There were 39 marks available on the paper, 10 for Part 1, 14 for Part 2 and 15 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	6	1	3	10
Part 2	7	4	3	14
Part 3	3	9	3	15
Total	16	14	9	39

Overall, candidates who took this test performed well, and the text, sentence and word focus questions were of a roughly equal level of difficulty.

### Part 1

Candidates found Part 1 of the paper slightly easier than Parts 2 and 3. It consists of an article about an agency to promote energy saving. Candidates coped well with question 1; the first option 'to persuade you about something' being the most common wrong answer (for about 20% of the overall candidature). Question 2 also posed no problems with 2B being the easiest (92% of all candidates got it correct). Question 3 was also straightforward.

At this level almost all candidates attempted the open-ended vocabulary deduction questions 4A, B and C. Over 90% of stronger candidates got these correct but under 50% of the weaker. The most common wrong answer for 4C was 'less'. Candidates should be taught to look for a word in the text that is the same part of speech as the definition in the question.

### Part 2

Part 2 consists of 3 texts written by people who have visited the agency. The multiple matching task in question 5 posed some problems for the weaker candidates although the majority attempted the task and seemed to understand what they had to do, as they had written letters in the spaces provided as opposed to drawing lines between the texts and titles or writing the answers on the text itself. A suggestion might be that when devising multiple matching tasks for class use, this format should be used. The stronger candidates did this task well.

Questions 6 and 7 were straightforward, with the exception of 7C, which the weaker candidates found very difficult. This may have been because the actual words 'save energy' appear in Texts B and D, but not in Text C, or because candidates did not understand the verb tenses and that Ruby, in Text D, is talking about the future rather than the past.

Questions 8, 9 and 10 all test the ability to recognise misspelt words: these were answered well by the stronger candidates, with question 10 being the easiest of the three and 9 the most difficult. Between 12 and 18% of the weaker candidates did not answer each of these questions. Candidates may need reminding that for questions testing spelling, the task is just to identify the misspelt word in the text; how the candidate spells the word in their answer is not important. Question 11 was the easiest question in this part of the paper and didn't pose any problems: 88% overall got it correct.

### **Part 3**

Part 3 begins with an offer from an electricity company followed by some information about recycling. Question 12 was straightforward. In question 13 the first option ('make all of your home energy friendly') was selected by a quarter of the candidates, possibly because these words appear in the boxed section of the text. Candidates should look at the text as a whole, read for meaning, and not merely spot words. Question 14, an alphabetical ordering task, was fairly straightforward: 86% of candidates chose the correct answer for 14A. 14C was the hardest of the three, as about a third of the weaker candidates chose 'Eastern Electricity': it is before 'Scottish Power' in the list, but not alphabetically in the phone book. This implies that the weaker candidates had not read the instructions carefully and therefore failed to understand the question.

Question 15 was straightforward, although about a quarter of the weaker candidates chose the second option ('to advertise recycled mobile phones'), perhaps because they did not read for gist but guessed from the title and artwork. Question 16B was the hardest question in this part of the paper, posing some problems for both strong and weak candidates. This question involves careful reading as the word 'where' does appear in the text. Question 17 did not pose any problems, and in the final question 18D proved to be one of the easiest in this part of the paper.

### **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, identifying references, 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 text.
- 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.