

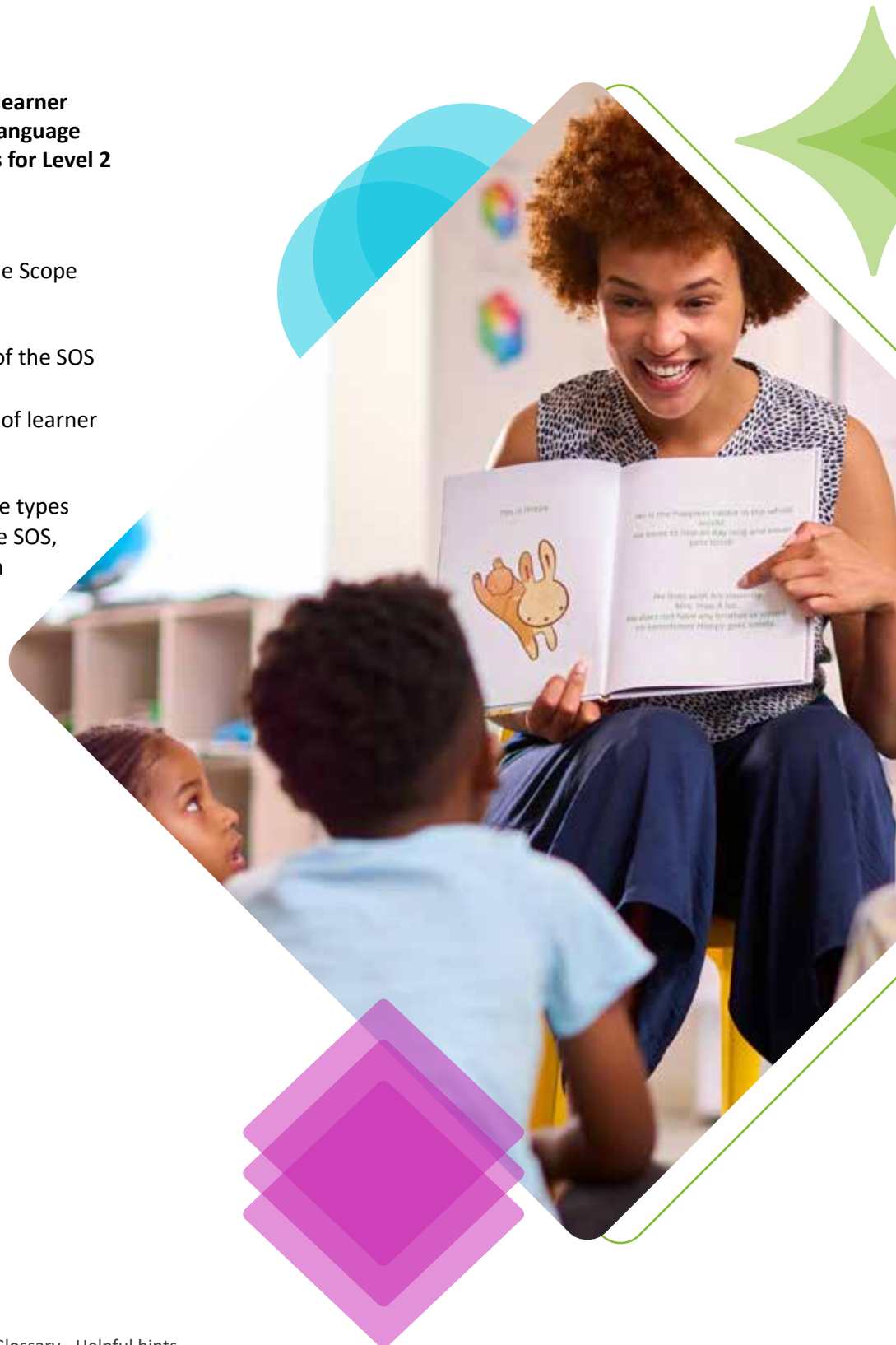


Functional Skills Level 2 Reading

Helpful hints for learners

The following provides focussed learner feedback and comments on the language and terminology of the questions for Level 2 Functional Skills reading.

- ✔ Column 1 – The number of the Scope of Study (SOS)
- ✔ Column 2 – The description of the SOS
- ✔ Column 3 – A brief overview of learner responses to the SOS
- ✔ Column 4 – Comments on the types of questions asked to test the SOS, together with suggestions on how responses might be improved
- ✔ Column 5 – A glossary of terms used in the questions, together with examples and where relevant, tips



SOS no.	SOS description	Learner responses	Comments on the questions	Glossary/examples
11	Identify the different situations when the main points are sufficient and when it is important to have specific details.	Learners tended to respond well to these questions, although there were a few exceptions where learners gave generic answers rather than referring to the text.	<p>This area can involve a variety of questions, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why does the author use statistics? Texts X and Y contain more information about XXX than Text Z. Why is this the case? Explain why it is important for the reader to have these specific details. Answers must always come from the text. No marks are awarded for generic answers. 	<p>Specific details – precise facts, details of description of something mentioned in the text. One example of specific details is statistics. Another is a detailed list.</p> <p>Main points – a broad, more general, description of an event, activity or concept.</p> <p>Specific details are often needed when instructions are being given or when rules are listed.</p> <p>An advert, for example, often does not need to contain much specific detail, whereas a list of instructions does.</p>
12	Compare information, ideas and opinions in different texts, including how they are conveyed.	Learners tend to compare views very briefly, but rarely explain how they are conveyed.	<p>Comparison questions are generally worded in a very similar way, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare the views expressed in Text X and Text Y about XXX and how these views are conveyed. <p>In all these questions, the learner must do two things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare the views expressed in the two documents (for example, both the writer of Text X and the writer of Text Y talk XXX. Both texts point to advantages of XXX, but they disagree about the usefulness of XXX). Explain how these views are conveyed (for example, Text X uses statistic and facts, whereas Text Y is more conversational and uses some exaggeration). <p>In both sections, examples from the text are always appreciated.</p>	<p>Comparison involves examining two texts, identifying similarities and differences in their information, opinions or ideas.</p> <p>Examples of the ways in which ideas etc. can be conveyed are through positive language, short sentences, commands and orders, exaggeration, repetition, enthusiastic language, disapproving language, impartial language.</p>
13	Identify implicit and inferred meaning in texts.	The majority of learners tended to perform well in these questions.	<p>This area is often covered in the tests by more than one question.</p> <p>Examples of such questions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give two reasons why XXX. What does the author mean when he says XXX? What does the writer of Text X imply when she writes XXX? What is the purpose of Text X? Explain how you know this. <p>Answers must always be specific to the text. If the purpose of a text is asked, it is not sufficient to say “to advertise”. The full purpose must be given. For example, “to advertise the new bowling alley”.</p>	<p>Purpose – examples of words learners could use to describe purpose are: advertise complain, request, explain, thank.</p> <p>The purpose must always be specific to the text.</p> <p>It is not enough to say “to persuade”. The full purpose must be given, for example “to persuade the reader to buy a handbag.”</p> <p>Implicit or inferred meaning – this is meaning that is not explicitly written in the text. For example, “it took a dozen phone calls to get a clear response” would suggest that it was very difficult to get a reply.</p>
14	Understand the relationship between textual features and devices, and how they can be used to shape meaning for different audiences and purposes	<p>These questions were often well answered by learners.</p> <p>Where learners lost marks, this was generally because the answers given were generic rather than specific.</p>	<p>This area is tested through a variety of questions, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why does the author include a diagram? The author uses rhetorical questions in the Text X. Explain two effects these questions have on the reader. The writer of Text X uses an exclamation mark. Explain why you think the writer does this. Why does the author use bold for the word X? <p>Most of these questions are asking why a particular device is being used. The response must explain how the device is used to shape meaning.</p> <p>Responses should always refer to the text itself. They should not be generic.</p>	<p>Examples of textual features and devices are rhetorical questions, exclamation marks, bold, alliteration, repetition (this list is not exhaustive).</p> <p>These features shape meaning by persuading, convincing, advising, reminding, etc. the reader of something.</p> <p>For example, the repetition or highlighting of the name of a company might serve to make the reader remember the name. Rhetorical questions may serve to make the reader consider more carefully his own view of the subject of the text.</p>

SOS no.	SOS description	Learner responses	Comments on the questions	Glossary/examples
15	Use a range of reference materials and appropriate resources (e.g. glossaries, legends/keys) for different purposes, including to find the meanings of words in straightforward and complex sources.	These questions were often well answered by learners.	<p>This area is tested through a variety of questions, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does XXX mean? • What is a XXX? • What does the writer of Text X imply when she writes XXX? • Why does the author want people to XXX? • Give a definition of XXX? <p>All these questions are asking learners to use either a dictionary or another part of the document (for example a footnote or key) to explain the meaning of a word or phrase or idea.</p>	<p>Appropriate resources are, for example, legends, keys, glossaries and footnotes.</p> <p>Reference material is generally a dictionary. In questions where the learner is expected to use a dictionary, the word they are asked to look up will generally have more than one dictionary definition and the learner will have to decide from the context which is the appropriate meaning.</p> <p>For example, if the question asks for the definition of the word “company” in the sentence “he was in the company of complete strangers”, the definition taken from the dictionary should be “group”, “party” or “gathering”, not “business”.</p>
16	Understand organisational features and use them to locate relevant information in a range of straightforward and complex sources.	<p>Very few learners score high marks on this question.</p> <p>Many, though by no means all, are able to identify one or two organisational features, but few identify the sort of information that the feature helps them find.</p>	<p>This is almost always a single four-mark question worded along the following lines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify two organisational features used by the author of Text X. Give an example of information which each of these features helps you to find. <p>The learner needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name two organisational features used in the text and give an example of information each of these features points to. <p>For the first task, a simple identification is required (for example, bullet points).</p> <p>For the second, the learner needs to state what specific information the bullets are providing. For example, “the bullet points explain the different genres of music that exist”.</p>	<p>Organisational features are features that are intended to help the reader by breaking up/separating/highlighting the text to make information easier to find.</p> <p>Examples are headings, sub-headings, bullet points, numbered lists, captions, bold font, italics, text boxes and charts.</p> <p>Paragraphs, columns and images are not organisational features.</p>
17	Analyse texts of different levels of complexity, recognising their use of vocabulary and identifying levels of formality and bias.	Most learners seem to have a basic understanding of what bias is, and can identify which document is most biased, and some can explain why they think this is the case. Very few, however, refer to all three texts.	<p>This is almost always a single four-mark question, most frequently on bias. It is worded along the following lines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which text do you think has the most bias? Explain your choice, referring to all three texts? <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which text do you think has the least bias? Explain your choice, referring to all three texts? <p>Some papers also ask in addition the question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is it important to be aware of bias when deciding whether to XXX? <p>The learner needs to do four things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the text they believe is the most (or least) biased; • Explain why it is most (or least) biased (for example, text X is the most biased because it only puts forwards positive points for XXX/uses strong language to express the point of view/is an advertisement and therefore necessarily biased) • Explain why the other two texts are less biased (for example, text X puts forwards a lot of facts and figures to support his argument/looks at both sides equally/are a series of reviews showing different points of view, so overall is less biased) <p>If asked, learners also need to answer the question about why it is important to be aware of bias. (for example, a biased person might try to persuade you that XXX is either a good idea or a bad idea – you need to understand both sides before you decide). The response cannot be generic, but must be related to the specific text.</p>	<p>Bias is a prejudice for or against an idea, action or person, often in a way that only shows one side of the argument. The most biased document will be one that only provides one perspective. The least biased will be impartial and will set out a variety of viewpoints.</p> <p>The sort of vocabulary used in texts to show bias could be emotive (tragic, betrayed, terror), exaggeration (light as a feather, catastrophic, disastrous), or derogatory (it will never work, what an eyesore).</p>

SOS no.	SOS description	Learner responses	Comments on the questions	Glossary/examples
18	Follow an argument, identifying different points of view and distinguishing fact from opinion.	<p>Two separate questions cover this area – one on points of view and another on distinguishing fact from opinion.</p> <p>Most learners were able to identify different points of view, but some struggled with distinguishing fact from opinion.</p>	<p>18a – Point of view</p> <p>In this area, learners are often asked to identify what the author of a text is thinking or feeling or their reason for writing, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the author of Text X feel? How do you know this? • Give main reason why XXX. Explain how you know this. • Identify the main reason the author of Text X thinks XXX. Explain how you know this. <p>There may be several reasons, but the learner is being asked to identify the main reason. learners generally identify the reason well, but may struggle with explaining how they know.</p> <p>18b – Distinguish fact from opinion</p> <p>These questions are generally worded along the lines of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The author of Text X thinks that XXX. Give one fact and one opinion she uses to support her point of view. <p>Learners need to identify one relevant fact and one relevant opinion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Text X, the writer says that XXX is wonderful. Is this a fact or an opinion? Explain your answer. <p>Here, learners need to identify whether the phrase is a fact or an opinion and explain how they know.</p> <p>There will always be several clear facts and clear opinions in the text, as well as statements which are neither fact nor opinion. Many learners seem to be unsure what are the distinguishing factors of both. They should look for the clearest statement of fact and opinion that they can find.</p> <p>Learners should also be reminded to state which phrase they are identifying as a fact and which they are considering an opinion. In a number of papers, the learner has lost marks because it not clear to the examiner what the learner considers a fact and what he believes is opinion.</p>	<p>Identify points of view means identify the stance taken by the author (“she is against building any more houses”, “he wants to increase recycling”, “she is annoyed about the rubbish on the streets”)</p> <p>In order to explain how they know this, the learner will explain that this is the main reason because the reason is “repeated twice”, “highlighted”, “boxed”, “made right at the end, where it has most impact”, “put in the title”.</p> <p>Alternatively, they may explain how they understand the author’s feelings by describing their use of language. “She shows she is upset by repeating the word ‘hate’, using imperatives, making strong statements etc.”</p> <p>Facts can be verified. For example, “the sun is 93 million miles from Earth”, or “the tree is three metres high”.</p> <p>Opinions express a feeling, judgement or a belief, for example, “I prefer the red car”, “Maths is the hardest subject”.</p> <p>Distinguishing fact from opinion – Even when an opinion is stated as a fact, it is still an opinion. For example, “Chelsea will win the FA cup next year” is an opinion because it is in the future and cannot be guaranteed.</p> <p>In order to determine whether a statement is fact or opinion, the learner should ask themselves whether everyone would agree with the statement.</p> <p>If not everyone would agree, then the statement is likely to be an opinion. For example the statement “Everybody loves holidays in hot countries” is an opinion despite the use of the word ‘everybody’ because there are a number of people who prefer skiing holidays or holidays in colder climates.</p> <p>In explaining how they know something is a fact or an opinion, case, the learner must give a valid explanation, for example that “there are statistics to back up the fact”, or that “other people might feel differently about that opinion”.</p>
19	Identify different styles of writing and writer’s voice.	<p>Most learners are able to identify the style of writing of one of the documents, but many do not identify both. Very few successfully give examples of each style.</p> <p>A number of learners try to identify styles of writing for all three documents not just the two mentioned, or sometimes for the wrong documents and therefore waste time and marks.</p>	<p>This is almost always a single four-mark question. It is generally worded along the following lines:</p> <p>Identify the styles of writing used in Texts X and Y. Give one example from each Text which suggests that style of writing.</p> <p>This question requires four responses, each of them awarded 1 mark.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners must identify the style of writing of the two documents mentioned in the question (one mark per style). • They must then give an example of that style. This is easiest done by a quotation from the text which exemplifies that particular style (one mark per example). 	<p>Possible styles of writing are formal, informative, technical, instructional, descriptive, persuasive, expository, informal. This list is not exhaustive.</p> <p>Examples of the style of writing need to show that particular style of writing clearly, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal “No alternatives have yet been identified” • Informative “there are 190 breeds of dog and only fifteen breeds of cat” • Descriptive “the park was large, well fenced and had a children’s play area” • Informal “You won’t see me there!”