

**English Level 2 Reading practice paper: guidance for centres**

**NCFE Level 2 Functional Skills Qualification in English**

**QN: 603/5054/4**

This short guide has been created to support centres preparing learners for assessment in NCFE Level 2 Functional Skills Qualification in English

(603/5054/4). The information below relates to the English Level 2 Reading practice paper and mark scheme, which can be found on the NCFE website [here](https://www.ncfe.org.uk/qualification-search/qualification-detail/ncfe-level-2-functional-skills-qualification-in-english-187). The guide should be used in conjunction with the question paper and mark scheme.

Questions from the practice paper are presented in chronological order; where relevant, subject content statements (SCS) are explained.

**Section 1**

**Q1** This questionis multiple-choice and assesses the writer’s knowledge of tone of voice (SCS 2.19: identify different styles of writing and writer’s voice). The learner must decide which word best describes the tone of Document 1. The correct answer is B.

**Writer’s voice or tone** (SCS 2.19) include the following:

* angry
* argumentative
* conversational
* disapproving
* enthusiastic
* objective
* opinionated / biased
* optimistic
* polite
* sarcastic
* serious
* stubborn
* supportive.

**Q2** This questionis a two-mark question for SCS 2.11: identify the different situations when the main points are sufficient and when it is important to have specific details. Here, learners must retrieve key information from the text (identify **two** things the writer has done to have a more sustainable lifestyle). The four possible answers are listed in the mark scheme.

**Q3** This question tests the ability to interpret **inference** (SCS 2.13). The learner must find one quotation in the document that implies that Kendrick is self-important.

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| **Q3 Sample response**  | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| She pontificated. | 1 | This is in the mark scheme. |
| Preachy | 1 | This is shorter than the sample answer in the mark scheme, but still implies self-importance |
| Spritzed away at the kitchen surfaces with a cheesy grin. | 0 | The quotation does not imply self-importance. |

**Q4** This questionrequires learners to interpret language features (SCS 2.14). At level 2, learners may be asked about any of the following **language features**:

* alliteration
* humour
* hyperbole / exaggeration
* imperative
* metaphor
* personal experience / anecdote
* repetition
* short sentences
* simile
* slang / colloquialism
* statistics.

In this question, learners are asked to explain the meaning of two metaphors:

(a) squirreled away

(b) minefield

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| **Q4 (a) Sample response**  | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| Hidden / out of sight. | 1 | This is in the mark scheme. |
| Placed | 0 | The answer needs to show an understanding that the metaphor means out of sight. |

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| **Q4 (b) Sample response**  | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| Surprisingly complicated. | 1 | It is not the exact answer from the mark scheme, but the learner has given a valid interpretation. |
| A field filled with mines. | 0 | This is a literal definition and not awardable. |

**Q5** SCS 2.18 requires learners to distinguish between **fact and opinion**.Here, the learner is required to find a quotation from Document 1 that is a fact and another that presents an opinion.

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| **Q5 (a) Sample response – facts** | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| I wanted to find out more about what being sustainable means. | 1 | This is a valid fact. |
| Kendrick was filmed for television talking about being sustainable. | 0 | This is a fact, but it is not a quotation. If the learner had said: ‘...the local television news channel filmed Kendrick’, that would be counted as a fact.  |
| She spritzed away at the kitchen surfaces with a cheesy grin. | 0 | It is a fact that Kendal spritzed at the kitchen surfaces, but ‘cheesy grin’ is an opinion. This is a mix of fact and opinion, which is not awardable. |

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| **Q5 (b) Sample response – opinions** | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| ... some of her tips are pretty useful. | 1 | This is in the mark scheme. |
| Devon doesn’t know what to do about being sustainable anymore. | 0 | This is not a quotation. |
| I’m not sure I can trust what they say. | 0 | This is a fact, not an opinion |

**General advice**

The learner should ensure that their answers are quotations from the document. They should check that the answer given is precise and not a mix of fact and opinion. Take care with ‘I’ statements: the learner often incorrectly assumes these are opinions.

**Q6** This question asks the learner to find one quotation in the document that implies that some eco-products are not sustainable. As with Q3, the learner is required to interpret **inference** (SCS 2.13).

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| **Q6 Sample response**  | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| Multiple van deliveries. | 1 | This is in the mark scheme. |
| Her cousin also told me that most of her posts are paid for by eco-friendly companies trying to push their products onto her unsuspecting audience. | 0 | This quotation contains the answer, but the response needs to be more specific / discriminatory to get the mark. Examiners cannot be certain the learner really understands the inference with such a lengthy response, some of which is not inferential. |
| Social media is full of people going on about the need for ‘sustainability’. | 0 | The quotation is not about products, nor does it answer the question. |

**Section 2**

**Q7** This is a one-mark question for SCS 2.11. Here, the learner must state the percentage of people that make home-made cleaning products. The only possible answer is 20% / 20 per cent.

**Q8** This question is about the use of organisational features (SCS 2.16). At level 2, the learner may be asked about the following **organisational features**:

* bullet-points
* captions
* diagrams / charts
* footnotes
* navigation bar
* sections
* subheadings
* text presented in special display boxes / text boxes
* tables.

The learner may be asked to identify an organisational feature and / or to locate information using an organisational feature.

In this particular question, the learner has to identify the section of the document that tells readers how to make a spray for most surfaces. The only awardable answer is ‘All-purpose spray’.

**Q9** Here, the learner is expected to explain the meaning of the word ‘buff’, as used in the ‘Glass cleaner’ section. Dictionaries are allowed.

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| **Q9 Sample response**  | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| Rub | 1 | Not in the mark scheme but would be awardable.  |
| An expert. | 0 | This is a valid dictionary definition but is incorrect in the context of how the word is used in the document. |

**Q10** This questionassesses the learner’s ability to detect the **point of view** of the writer (SCS 2.18).Here, the learner is expected to give two reasons why the writer thinks that home-made cleaning products are a good idea.

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| **Q10 Sample response**  | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| Easy to make, a natural alternative to shop-bought spray. | 2 | See bullets one and three from the mark scheme. |
| Less expensive than shop-bought ones. | 1 | This would get 1 mark (similar answer to a bullet point from the mark scheme). |
| Not using chemicals and easy. | 1 | This would get 1 mark for the ‘not using chemicals’ comment but ‘easy’ is not sufficiently specific (‘easy to make’). |
| Avoid use of harmful chemicals, not as easy, cheaper than ones you can buy. | 1 | Here, the learner has given three reasons. The first and third are correct, but examiners will only mark the first two, as the question asked for **two** reasons. Learners should be specific in their answers. |

**Q11** Thisis an objective test question assessing SCS 2.19: identify different styles of writing and writer’s voice.

**Styles of writing** may include:

* advisory
* convincing
* descriptive
* factual
* formal
* humorous
* informative
* instructional
* official
* persuasive
* technical.

The learner must state whether each of the two statements is an example of a descriptive or an informative style. There is only one correct answer:

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| **Quotation** | **Descriptive or** **Informative** |
| Research has found that more than 50% of off-the-shelf, household cleaning products contain ingredients harmful to health. | Informative |
| Now you’re ready to enjoy beautifully cleaned and great-smelling wooden furniture and floors! | Descriptive |

**Section 3**

**Q12** This questionassessesSCS 2.15 and requires the learner to locate the meaning of words using a dictionary or another resource (for example, a glossary or footnote). Here, the learner must refer to a footnote to state what customers need to do to receive a full refund. The answer is either, ‘return the products within 30 days’ or ‘pay the return postage’.

**Q13** Thisis a question about **inference** / **implicit meanings** (SCS 2.13). The question presents two statements from the source document and asks the learner to say what is implied about the cleaning products in each statement.

(a) ‘…harness the power of nature…’

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| **Q13 (a) Sample response**  | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| The products are surprisingly strong. | 1 | This is synonymous with powerful, so award a mark. |
| You don’t need to use chemicals to have effective products. | 1 | This fits with the mark scheme. |
| The products are beautiful. | 0 | The meaning is not quite right here. |
| That the products are natural. | 0 | Not enough for the mark, as ‘natural’ needs to be qualified by the use of something such as ‘completely’. |

(b) ‘This is a game changer.’

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| **Q13 (b) Sample response**  | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| Using these products will change your life. | 1 | This is a valid inference (if a little exaggerated). |
| This is a game changer. | 0 | Restating the quotation is not awardable. |
| An athlete who suddenly changes the outcome of a game or contest. | 0 | This is a literal definition and not an inference. |

**Q14** This question is about the purpose of **organisational features** (SCS 2.16) used in Document 3. In this particular question, the learner has to state the purpose of:

(a) Numbered list

| **Q14 (a) Sample response**  | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| To give you the steps needed to use the products. | 1 | Similar to mark scheme. |
| To make it clear how to add the water. | 1 | Not quite what is expected, but not incorrect, so would be awarded a mark. |
| To list the instructions in order. | 0 | This could be an explanation of any numerical list. It is not contextualised to the documents so cannot get a mark. |
| To make it clear how the products make a real difference. | 0 | This is describing the use of the bullet points in the document, not the numbered list. |

(b) Special display box

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| **Q14 (b) Sample response**  | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| To show people the benefits of using these products. | 1 | This is close enough to the answer in the mark scheme. |
| To highlight important information. | 0 | This is a generic answer, it could be about a text box in any document. |
| To show how you can have it all. | 0 | Not quite enough information: the learner needed to explain what ‘having it all’ meant and give a response more akin to the mark scheme. |

See a full list of **organisational features** assessed for SCS 2.14 under Q8.

**Q15** Thisis an open question about **language features** used in the document to present the different products on offer. Here, the learner is asked to provide quotations that exemplify (a) exaggeration and (b) the imperative.

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| **15 (a) Sample response**  | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| As easy as pie. | 1 | This is a valid example of exaggeration. |
| They do a mind-blowing job. | 1 | This learner has identified the exaggeration and would get a mark. |
| Our formulas are super-concentrated. | 0 | This is factual, not exaggeration. |
| We’ve made being ocean and plant friendly as easy as pie, with our beautiful, reusable aluminium bottles. | 0 | The learner needs to be more precise with their answer – examiners cannot tell which part of this sentence is intended to be exaggeration, so it does not get a mark. |

| **15 (b) Sample response**  | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Recycle the pouch. | 1 | This is not in the mark scheme, but a valid example. |
| It’s so simple! | 0 | This is not an imperative. |
| They say you just have to add water. | 0 | This learner has paraphrased the answer, and this is no longer an example of the imperative. |

See full list of **language features** assessed for SCS 2.14 under Q4.

**Section 4**

**Q16** This questionassesses SCS 2.12: compare information, ideas and opinions in different texts, including how they are conveyed. This is the penultimate question in each Level 2 Reading paper.

This question is worth 3 marks.

The learner must compare information or views from two of the documents, giving examples from **each**; they also need to comment on **how** language has been used in both documents or on writers’ methods. The learner **must** refer to the correct documents to access all of the marks. Here, the learner must compare the views of Jenny, the customer in Document 3, with the views expressed in Document 1.

| **Q16 Sample response**  | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Document 1 discusses how the writer is struggling with being sustainable. He explains how a social media green influencer isn’t really very green after all and that now means he can’t trust what is said about going green. He sums this up with the rhetorical question at the end ‘Who knew sustainability could be such a minefield?’ In Document 3, Jenny is being used as an example of a delighted customer of green products to sell them to others. She is obviously keen on being sustainable and believes in the products she uses and has only positive things to say (‘I just love everything’). She also uses a rhetorical question – ‘what’s not to love?’ | 3 | Here the learner has used information from both documents to make a clear and explicit comparison of the views and has addressed how language is used. They have been awarded full marks. |
| In Document 3, Jenny is clearly enthusiastic about using the sustainable products advertised and says they are excellent. But in Document 1 the writer isn’t sure whether or not he can trust what green companies say about their products.  | 2 | This is a clear 2 marks as the learner has made an explicit comparison. |
| Document 1 explains why Devon is skeptical about sustainable products, Document 3 is like an advert for a sustainable product where Jenny says that they give her an easy way to be green. | 1 | This learner has simply recounted the content of each document; they have made a simple implicit comparison. Had they not done so, this would have been awarded 0 marks. |
| Document 1 uses a formal tone and some loaded language (‘pontificated’, ‘green crusaders’) to convey the writer’s uncertain feelings about sustainability. Jenny uses exaggeration to show her feelings ‘mind-blowing’. | 1 | Here, the learner has focused on the use of language with no real mention of views. Examiners can award 1 mark if learners accurately discuss language use in both documents. |
| Document 3 is more persuasive than Document 1. Document 1 is like a magazine article and Document 3 is a webpage.  | 0 | There is no comparison in this response and no mention of language use, so no marks can be awarded.  |

**Note on SCS 2.12**

Question 16uses the term ‘textual features’ in a bullet point to encourage the learner to identify writers’ methods. Textual features are any feature (language or organisational) that have been used by the writer intentionally.However, the wording for this question has been further simplified, and future releases will ask for ‘examples’:

Compare the information about X in Documents 1 and 3, giving examples from **each** text.

**Q17** The final question in each Level 2 Reading paper will require learners to **analyse** all three documents, identifying levels of **formality** or **bias** (SCS 2.17). Here, the learner draws on their analysis to explain which document is the least biased. This question is worth 4 marks.

| **Q17 Sample response**  | **Mark awarded** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The least biased is Document 2. It gives both negatives and positives and also uses facts to back up points, making it the least biased. Document 2 is instructions, and these aren’t usually biased. They use lots of imperatives and objective language (‘combine the ingredients’). However, it is in favour of more natural products (‘off the shelf products have been shown to contain ingredients harmful to earth’). Document 1 is from the point of view of someone who wanted to be sustainable. It goes on about how difficult it can be to know what information is right and if ‘influencers’ can really be trusted. It has rhetorical questions and language to show the writer has doubts (‘I’m not sure I can trust what they say’). He’s not very biased about being green, he just wants to know more. Document 3 is very biased. It only gives the opinions of Ocean Kleen and a happy customer, and it is trying to persuade the reader to use them. It is full of words and phrases trying to persuade you how good it is, like ‘easy as pie' and ‘this is a game-changer’.   | 4 | This response is full, correct and gets all 4 marks. |
| Document 2 is really just instructions on how to make cleaning products. It does say how easy it is, and that’s a bit biased, but overall, it’s the least biased. Document 1 starts with a rhetorical question in the title – ‘Sustainable influencers: genuine or hypocritical?’ The writer is confused about being green as he heard things that made him doubt an influencer, so decided to do research. It’s not really biased but it has lots of opinions and is questioning what the truth is.Document 3 is persuasive and biased. It is one-sided saying why the reader should use their products.  | 3 | Refers to all three documents but needed more detail to get full marks. |
| The least biased is Document 2.  The writer in Document 2 has no bias and gives instructions to follow. It’s mostly objective, but it is also enthusiastic about home-made products.  Document 3 is the most biased. Document 1 is not balanced because the writer is self-interested and wants to persuade readers to use Ocean Kleen. The image is used to make the reader see that people can easily be green by using them and that their products are good. | 2 | Only two documents are analysed, but the information is correct. |
| Document 2 is the least biased as it uses plain facts to show what’s involved in making your own products. It’s basically just instructions. The first document is partly factual but is clearly trying to say what he thinks. | 1 | This is a minimal response for 1 mark |
| The third document is the most biased as they just want you to buy their products. | 0 | The learner has done little analysis, nor have they answered the question. |
| Document 3 is least biased as it is an advert of green cleaning products and it tells the reader about their qualities, what they offer, and how they help you do the cleaning, with no strong or opinionated views. Document 2 is like a leaflet saying how to make your own cleaning products, with lots of opinions for the idea as being cheap and full of facts too.Document 1 is opinions of Devon who is not sure about being sustainable or not.  Documents 1 and 3 are more biased as they have many strong opinions and views. | 0 | This learner is not showing a clear of understanding of bias; ‘opinionated’ does not necessarily mean biased , and facts / statistics do not necessarily make something less biased. |