

# **Functional Skills Criteria for English**

Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, Level 1 and Level 2



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# The criteria

## Introduction

1. The functional skills qualifications in English assess three components:
  - speaking, listening and communication;
  - reading;
  - writing.
2. Functional skills qualifications in English are available at Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, level 1 and level 2. The criteria for these qualifications specify the requirements in terms of skill standards and coverage and range at each level. At each level of the qualification, these subsume the previous level's skill standards and coverage and range, supporting a progression-based suite of skills qualifications.
3. These criteria should be used in conjunction with the *Functional Skills Qualifications Criteria* publication, which includes the criteria common to all functional skills qualifications, and the controlled assessment regulations for the qualifications: *Controlled Assessment Regulations for Functional Skills: Entry 1, Entry 2 and Entry 3 in English, Mathematics and ICT; English Speaking, Listening and Communication at Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, Level 1 and Level 2*.

## Speaking, listening and communication

4. Speaking, listening and communication within functional skills qualifications are defined as non-written communication, normally conducted face to face.
5. In exceptional circumstances, assessment may take place remotely, provided that the medium through which remote assessment takes place meets the requirements specified in the *General Conditions of Recognition – Reasonable Adjustments*.
6. The term 'speaking, listening and communication' as used by these standards is intended to be interpreted in a broadly inclusive way and is not intended to create any unnecessary barriers to learners with speech or hearing impairment.
7. The needs of individual learners will vary, but as guidance the term should be interpreted as meaning communication, discussion and presentation that:
  - can include the use of sign language (e.g. British Sign Language (BSL), sign-supported English) provided this is made accessible to all participants in the discussion. (It is recognised that BSL is a language in

its own right and not a form of English. BSL is, however, permitted as an alternative to English for the assessment of speaking, listening and communication where BSL is the learner's normal way of communicating in the contexts described by the standards.) No other languages are permitted as alternatives to English;

- can include access to augmentative speech equipment and such software as constitutes the learner's normal way of working;
- does not depend solely on the use of written language or require the individual/s with whom the learner is communicating to be able to read (as these skills are covered by the requirements for reading and writing).

## **Reading**

8. 'Reading' within functional skills qualifications is defined as the independent decoding and understanding of written language and text in a purposeful context.
9. 'Text' is defined as materials that include the use of words that are written, printed, on screen or presented using Braille.
10. As a reasonable adjustment, learners who are classed as disabled under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and use assistive technology as their normal way of reading can demonstrate that they are able to independently meet the requirements of the reading standards through the use of screen reader software.
11. A human reader cannot be used to demonstrate the requirements of the standards as this does not meet the requirement for independence. As a last resort, an exemption from the reading requirements can be requested for learners with disabilities who cannot use assistive technology.

## **Writing**

12. 'Writing' within functional skills qualifications is defined as the independent construction of written text to communicate in a purposeful context.
13. 'Text' is defined as materials that include the use of words that are written, printed, on screen or presented using Braille, and that are presented in a way that is accessible for the intended audience.
14. As a reasonable adjustment, learners who are classed as disabled under the terms of the DDA and use assistive technology as their normal way of

producing written texts can demonstrate that they are able to independently meet the requirements of the writing standards through the use of a computer and appropriate software.

15. A human scribe cannot be used to demonstrate the requirements of the standards, as this does not meet the requirement for independence. As a last resort, an exemption from the writing requirements can be requested for learners with disabilities who cannot use assistive technology.

### Skill standards and assessment weightings

16. Functional skills qualifications in English must require learners to demonstrate their ability in relation to:

#### Entry 1

Skill standard	Coverage and range
<p><b>Speaking, listening and communication</b></p> <p>1. Participate in and understand the main points of simple discussions/exchanges about familiar topics with another person in a familiar situation.</p>	<p>a) Understand the main points of short explanations;</p> <p>b) Understand and follow instructions;</p> <p>c) Respond appropriately to comments and requests;</p> <p>d) Make contributions to be understood;</p> <p>e) Ask simple questions to obtain specific information.</p>
<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p>2. Read and understand short, simple texts that explain or recount information.</p>	<p>a) Read and understand simple, regular words and sentences;</p> <p>b) Understand short texts on familiar topics and experiences.</p>
<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p>3. Write short, simple sentences.</p>	<p>a) Use written words and phrases to present information;</p> <p>b) Construct simple sentences using full stops;</p> <p>c) Spell correctly some personal or very familiar words.</p>

Entry 2

Skill standard	Coverage and range
<p><b>Speaking, listening and communication</b></p> <p>1. Participate in discussions/exchanges about familiar topics, making active contributions, with one or more people in familiar situations.</p>	<p>a) Identify the main points of short explanations and instructions;</p> <p>b) Make appropriate contributions that are clearly understood;</p> <p>c) Express simply feelings or opinions and understand those expressed by others;</p> <p>d) Communicate information so that the meaning is clear;</p> <p>e) Ask and respond to straightforward questions;</p> <p>f) Follow the gist of discussions.</p>
<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p>2. Read and understand straightforward texts that explain, inform or recount information.</p>	<p>a) Understand the main events in chronological texts;</p> <p>b) Read and understand simple instructions and directions;</p> <p>c) Read and understand high frequency words and words with common spelling patterns;</p> <p>d) Use knowledge of alphabetical order to locate information.</p>
<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p>3. Write short texts with some awareness of the intended audience.</p>	<p>a) Use written words and phrases to record and present information;</p> <p>b) Construct compound sentences using common conjunctions;</p> <p>c) Punctuate correctly, using upper and lower case, full stops and question marks;</p> <p>d) Spell correctly all high frequency words and words with common spelling patterns.</p>

**Entry 3**

<b>Skill standard</b>	<b>Coverage and range</b>
<p><b>Speaking, listening and communication</b></p> <p>1. Respond appropriately to others and make some extended contributions in familiar formal and informal discussions and exchanges.</p>	<p>a) Follow the main points of discussions;</p> <p>b) Use techniques to clarify and confirm understanding;</p> <p>c) Give own point of view and respond appropriately to others' point of view;</p> <p>d) Use appropriate language in formal discussions/exchanges;</p> <p>e) Make relevant contributions, allowing for and responding to others' input.</p>
<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p>2. Read and understand the purpose and content of straightforward texts that explain, inform and recount information.</p>	<p>a) Understand the main points of texts.</p> <p>b) Obtain specific information through detailed reading;</p> <p>c) Use organisational features to locate information;</p> <p>d) Read and understand texts in different formats using strategies/techniques appropriate to the task.</p>
<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p>3. Write texts with some adaptation to the intended audience.</p>	<p>a) Plan, draft and organise writing;</p> <p>b) Sequence writing logically and clearly;</p> <p>c) Use basic grammar including appropriate verb tense and subject-verb agreement;</p> <p>d) Check work for accuracy, including spelling.</p>

**Level 1**

Skill standard	Coverage and range	Assessment weighting
<p><b>Speaking, listening and communication</b></p> <p>1. Take full part in formal and informal discussions and exchanges that include unfamiliar subjects.</p>	<p>a) Make relevant and extended contributions to discussions, allowing for and responding to others' input;</p> <p>b) Prepare for and contribute to the formal discussion of ideas and opinions;</p> <p>c) Make different kinds of contributions to discussions;</p> <p>d) Present information/points of view clearly and in appropriate language.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p>2. Read and understand a range of straightforward texts.</p>	<p>a) Identify the main points and ideas and how they are presented in a variety of texts;</p> <p>b) Read and understand texts in detail;</p> <p>c) Utilise information contained in texts;</p> <p>d) Identify suitable responses to texts;</p> <p>e) In more than one type of text.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p>3. Write a range of texts to communicate information, ideas and opinions, using formats and styles suitable for their purpose and audience.</p>	<p>a) Write clearly and coherently, including an appropriate level of detail;</p> <p>b) Present information in a logical sequence;</p> <p>c) Use language, format and structure suitable for purpose and audience;</p>	<p>55–60%</p>



	<p>d) Use correct grammar, including correct and consistent use of tense;</p> <p>e) Ensure written work includes generally accurate punctuation and spelling and that meaning is clear;</p> <p>f) In more than one type of text.</p>	40–45%
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**Level 2**

<b>Skill standard</b>	<b>Coverage and range</b>	<b>Assessment weighting</b>
<p><b>Speaking, listening and communication</b></p> <p>1. Make a range of contributions to discussions in a range of contexts, including those that are unfamiliar, and make effective presentations.</p>	<p>a) Consider complex information and give a relevant, cogent response in appropriate language;</p> <p>b) Present information and ideas clearly and persuasively to others;</p> <p>c) Adapt contributions to suit audience, purpose and situation;</p> <p>d) Make significant contributions to discussions, taking a range of roles and helping to move discussion forward;</p>	Not applicable
<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p>2. Select, read, understand and compare texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions.</p>	<p>a) Select and use different types of texts to obtain and utilise relevant information;</p> <p>b) Read and summarise, succinctly, information/ideas from different sources;</p> <p>c) Identify the purposes of texts and comment on how meaning is conveyed;</p> <p>d) Detect point of view, implicit</p>	Not applicable

	<p>meaning and/or bias;</p> <p>e) Analyse texts in relation to audience needs and consider suitable responses;</p> <p>f) In three or more texts.</p>	
<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p>3. Write a range of texts, including extended written documents, communicating information, ideas and opinions effectively and persuasively.</p>	<p>a) Present information/ideas concisely, logically and persuasively;</p> <p>b) Present information on complex subjects clearly and concisely;</p> <p>c) Use a range of writing styles for different purposes;</p> <p>d) Use a range of sentence structures, including complex sentences, and paragraphs to organise written communication effectively.</p>	55–60%
	<p>e) Punctuate written text using commas, apostrophes and inverted commas accurately;</p> <p>f) Ensure written work is fit for purpose and audience, with accurate spelling and grammar that support clear meaning in a range of text types.</p>	40–45%

## **Scheme of assessment**

17. Specifications for functional skills qualifications in English must allocate a weighting of 100 per cent to external assessment for the components for reading and writing at levels 1 and 2. Internal assessment is required at all levels for speaking, listening and communication and at Entry levels 1, 2 and 3 for reading and writing. All internal assessment must comply with the controlled assessment regulations.
18. Assessment must focus on functionality and the effective application of speaking, listening and communication, reading and writing skills in purposeful contexts and scenarios that reflect real-life situations. The assessment of each component is equally weighted.
19. Assessment must assess all the skill standards and each of the coverage and range statements that comprise the skill standard at the specified level. Assessment can sample the range of contexts in which these skills should be applied.
20. Assessment must enable the separate reporting of achievement across the three components within the qualification. A formal statement of results indicating the levels achieved for the separate components must be issued. Compensation across assessment components is not permitted.
21. Where no exemption has been granted, learners must pass the assessment of functional skills – reading; writing; and speaking, listening and communication – to be awarded the qualification. Learners achieving a pass in each of the required components will be awarded the qualification at the level of the lowest component achieved.
22. Awarding organisations offering functional skills qualifications must recognise, in exceptional cases, achievement of any functional skills English component (i.e. reading; writing; and speaking, listening and communication) issued by another awarding organisation offering the qualifications. Component achievement remains valid for the duration of the qualification accreditation period.
23. Learners are not limited in the number of times that they may re-sit individual assessment components. Individual assessment component achievement must be recognised in subsequent re-sit opportunities.
24. The duration of the assessment leading to a functional skills qualification in English at Entry levels 1, 2 and 3 should be a minimum of one hour and must not exceed two hours. At levels 1 and 2, the duration of the assessment should

be a minimum of two hours and a maximum of three hours, including all three components.

25. Assessments must include realistic texts that are suitable for the level.
26. Speaking, listening and communication:
  - 26.1 The assessment of speaking, listening and communication must be 100 per cent open response.
  - 26.2 Awarding organisations must provide clear guidance for centres regarding arrangements for assessment that consistently measure performance of the skill standards at the level specified, in line with the controlled assessment regulations.
27. Reading:
  - 27.1 Fixed response assessment is permissible to support the direct assessment of reading skills and to minimise the writing demands that assessments place upon learners, but must not exceed 50 per cent of the assessment component at levels 1 and 2.
  - 27.2 Skill standards that require active engagement with reading materials and utilisation of information contained in texts must all be assessed by open-response assessment.
28. Writing:
  - 28.1 The assessment of writing must be 100 per cent open response.
  - 28.2 Assessments must measure the quality of outcomes in relation to particular tasks' purposes and audiences, and recognise the importance of accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar in formal contexts.
  - 28.3 Between 40 and 45 per cent of marks for writing must be allocated specifically for spelling, punctuation and grammar at levels 1 and 2.

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