Top tips for Functional Skills English Level 2

Taking a test may cause you to feel anxious. Following some simple tips prior to and during a test can reduce your anxiety and make you feel more comfortable.

Prior to the test

✔ Familiarise yourself with the sample assessments from www.ediplc.com for a clear idea of what the test will look like.

✔ Should you be doing an on-screen test, undertake some of the on-screen sample assessments prior to the actual test. This will make sure you can use the buttons, review screen and navigate from text to text, question to question.

✔ Should you be doing a paper-based test, ensure you complete some of the practice papers, in test conditions. This will make sure you are clear about the test structure and are able to answer questions in a limited time.

✔ You may also like to work through the practice activities and skills checkers that are available for Functional Skills from www.ediplc.com.

✔ Look after yourself ensuring that you eat and drink properly before any test and ensure you have had plenty of sleep. It is difficult to remember things if you are tired, and difficult to concentrate if you are hungry or thirsty.

✔ Be sure you know the day, date and time of the test. Furthermore, where the test venue is and how to get there. Arrive with plenty of time to spare.

✔ Be clear about what materials you are able to take into the exam room. Disqualifications and mobile phones go hand in hand, so leave yours outside the test room.

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During the test

✓ At Level 2 you are expected to read four documents in the reading task. Make sure you have allocated enough time for each task.

✓ At Level 1 you are expected to select information from a document. At Level 2 you are expected to choose which document to use and then find the relevant information. Typically you will be asked to choose between four documents. Be ready to justify your choice of document e.g. relevant information, reliable information, appropriate source etc.

✓ As mentioned above, there will be four reading documents at Level 2. Typically these will be newspaper articles, discussion forums, leaflets, guides, advertisements, posters. Make sure you have read a selection of these in preparation for the test and ask yourself basic questions such as what is the topic, who is the writer, what is the main purpose of the document? Is it to encourage, persuade, criticise?

✓ While looking at these documents think about the point of view of the writer, how does the writer express this? Through emotive language? Use of facts? Use of opinions?

✓ You will also be asked about the layout of the document and how that helps convey the meaning of that document. So look at headings, bullet points, use of italics, layout of information, bold fonts...how do those everyday documents achieve their purpose?

✓ As said before, each level of Functional Skills will build upon the lower levels. The writing tasks will give you less help than at Level 1. Typically you won’t be told exactly which points to cover. However, you will be expected to use your common sense e.g. say why you are writing, choose the appropriate content to convey the purpose of your writing, choose the appropriate close etc.

✓ At this level we would expect you to go beyond simple sentences. You are expected to use more clauses and to use connectives e.g. however, nevertheless, despite etc.

✓ We also expect a high level of accuracy with your spelling and punctuation so do check your work. Use a dictionary to spell check your work, you are allowed to bring one in to the examination. Spelling, punctuation and grammar account for 40%-45% of the marks for the writing assessment.

✓ When the questions indicate how many marks it is worth, then do make sure you have covered these points e.g. List three reasons why....? Make sure you have three reasons in your answers.

✓ For those of you doing written (rather than on-screen) assessments, please take care with your handwriting. There are no extra marks for good handwriting, but we do need to be able to read what you have written and check that your spelling and punctuation are accurate.

✓ The answers to questions on the reading paper can be found in the text themselves. You are not expected to use your own knowledge of a subject, but simply to answer the questions based on the information you are given.