Functional Skills English Level 2

Mock Test 1

Total marks: 64

Pass mark: 38 out of 64

Time allowed: 2 hours

Reading 24 marks | Writing 40 marks | Total 64 marks | Time: 2 hours

You will need: pen, pencil, ruler, rubber. Dictionary allowed for Reading section.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Text 1 — Online Article

Remote Working: The Revolution That's Here to Stay

Five years after the pandemic forced millions to work from home, remote working has become a permanent fixture of British employment. A recent survey by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) found that 78% of employers now offer some form of hybrid working, compared with just 13% in 2019.

The benefits are well documented. Employees report better work-life balance, reduced commuting stress, and increased productivity. A Manchester University study found that remote workers completed tasks 13% faster than their office-based counterparts, largely due to fewer interruptions and the elimination of commuting fatigue.

However, concerns remain. Dr Sarah Chen, an occupational psychologist, warns that 'prolonged isolation can erode team cohesion and make it harder for junior staff to develop through informal mentoring.' She notes that companies which have successfully implemented hybrid models typically require two to three days of in-person collaboration per week.

The economic implications are equally significant. Commercial property values in city centres have fallen by an average of 22% since 2020, while suburban co-working spaces have seen membership grow by 340%. High street businesses near traditional commuter hubs report turnover declines of up to 35%, whereas local shops in residential areas are thriving.

Critics argue that remote working deepens existing inequalities. Not everyone has a suitable home workspace, and those in lower-paid roles — retail, hospitality, manufacturing — simply cannot work remotely. The 'laptop class,' as some commentators have labelled remote workers, risks becoming disconnected from the realities faced by the majority of the workforce.

Source: The Guardian online, March 2025

Text 2 — Company Policy Document

Meridian Solutions Ltd — Flexible Working Policy

1. Purpose — This policy sets out the framework for flexible working arrangements at Meridian Solutions. It applies to all permanent employees who have completed their probationary period.

2. Eligibility — All employees with at least 26 weeks' continuous service may apply for flexible working. Applications must be submitted using Form FW-01, available on the HR portal.

3. Available Arrangements — The company supports: hybrid working (minimum 2 office days per week), compressed hours (full-time hours over fewer days), flexitime (core hours 10:00–15:00, flexible start/end), and job-sharing where operationally viable.

4. Application Process — Requests are considered within 28 calendar days. Managers must assess operational impact, team coverage, and client-facing requirements. Decisions will be communicated in writing with reasons given for any refusal.

5. Equipment & Environment — Home workers must complete a workstation self-assessment (Form DSE-03). The company will provide: a laptop, monitor, keyboard, and ergonomic chair. Employees are responsible for adequate broadband (minimum 30Mbps recommended) and a quiet, secure working space.

6. Performance & Availability — Flexible workers are expected to maintain the same output standards as office-based colleagues. Availability during core hours (10:00–15:00) is mandatory.

7. Data Security — All company data must remain on encrypted devices. Home Wi-Fi networks must be password-protected. Confidential documents must not be printed at home without prior authorisation from the Data Protection Officer.

8. Review — Arrangements are reviewed every 6 months. Either party may request a variation or return to standard office-based working with 4 weeks' notice.

Text 3 — Letter to a Local Newspaper

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my frustration at the growing number of 'remote workers' who seem to treat our local cafés as their personal offices. As a retired teacher who has lived in this village for 30 years, I have watched our once-welcoming community spaces be colonised by people hunched over laptops, occupying tables for hours while nursing a single coffee.

Last Tuesday, I visited The Oak Room — a café where I have met friends weekly for over a decade — only to find every table taken by individuals with headphones in, staring at screens. When I politely asked if I might share a table, I received nothing more than a dismissive wave.

I understand that these people need somewhere to work, but surely that is their employer's problem, not ours? Our cafés were built for conversation, for connection, for community — not as budget alternatives to proper office space.

I urge café owners to consider time limits on laptop use during peak hours, or to designate laptop-free zones. Our community deserves better.

Margaret Thornton, Ashford

Section A — Reading

11 questions • 24 marks

Question 1 (1 mark)

According to Text 1, what percentage of employers offered hybrid working BEFORE the pandemic?

- A) 78%
- B) 13%
- C) 22%
- D) 35%

Question 2 (2 marks)

Text 1 says remote workers completed tasks '13% faster.' What two reasons are given?

- A) Fewer interruptions and elimination of commuting fatigue
- B) Better technology and flexible hours
- C) Reduced stress and better management
- D) Quiet workspace and no dress code

Question 3 (2 marks)

What does Dr Sarah Chen suggest is the ideal hybrid model?

- A) Two to three days in the office per week
- B) Full-time remote with monthly meetings
- C) One day a week in the office
- D) Completely flexible with no requirements

Question 4 (2 marks)

In Text 2, what is the minimum service requirement before an employee can apply for flexible working?

- A) 26 weeks
- B) 6 months
- C) 1 year
- D) After probation only

Question 5 (2 marks)

According to Text 2, which is the EMPLOYEE'S responsibility when working from home?

- A) Adequate broadband and a quiet, secure working space
- B) Providing their own laptop and chair
- C) Paying for encrypted devices
- D) Arranging their own IT support

Question 6 (2 marks)

In Text 3, Margaret uses 'colonised by people hunched over laptops.' What effect does 'colonised' have?

- A) It suggests an unwelcome invasion or takeover of community space
- B) It implies the workers have improved the café

■ C) It shows Margaret is interested in history
■ D) It means the workers are from another country

Question 7 (2 marks)

What rhetorical technique does Margaret use in 'for conversation, for connection, for community'?

■ A) Rule of three with alliteration
■ B) Metaphor
■ C) Hyperbole
■ D) Rhetorical question

Question 8 (3 marks)

Compare how Text 1 and Text 3 present the impact of remote working on communities.

■ A) Both acknowledge negative community impact, but Text 1 is balanced while Text 3 is entirely critical
■ B) Both are positive about remote working
■ C) Text 1 ignores community impact while Text 3 focuses on it
■ D) Both use statistics to prove their points

Question 9 (2 marks)

Text 1 mentions the 'laptop class.' Why is this phrase in quotation marks?

■ A) It is a term coined by other people (commentators), not the author's own phrase
■ B) It is a direct quote from Dr Sarah Chen
■ C) It is the title of a book
■ D) The author disagrees with laptop use

Question 10 (3 marks)

How do Texts 1 and 2 differ in purpose and audience?

■ A) Text 1 informs a general audience using journalistic language; Text 2 instructs employees using formal, procedural language
■ B) Both aim to persuade the reader
■ C) Text 1 is formal and Text 2 is informal
■ D) Both target managers only

Question 11 (3 marks)

Evaluate how effectively Text 3 uses language to persuade. Give two examples of persuasive techniques.

■ A) Uses emotive language ('colonised,' 'dismissive wave') and rhetorical questions to build sympathy
■ B) Uses statistics and expert opinions to build a logical case
■ C) Uses humour throughout to entertain the reader
■ D) Relies entirely on personal anecdotes without any persuasive techniques

Section B — Writing

Complete both writing tasks.

Writing Task 1 — Formal Report (24 marks)

Your local council is consulting on whether to invest in creating more co-working spaces in your area.

Write a formal report for the council in which you: explain the benefits and drawbacks of co-working spaces; consider the impact on existing businesses; make a clear recommendation with supporting reasons.

Write approximately 300–400 words. Use an appropriate format for a formal report.

Writing Task 2 — Informal Email (16 marks)

Your friend has been offered the option to work from home three days a week but is unsure whether to accept.

Write an email to your friend giving your advice. Discuss advantages and disadvantages, give a clear recommendation, and use an informal but thoughtful tone.

Write approximately 200–250 words.