Functional Skills English Level 2

Mock Test 3

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 — Magazine Article

Fast Fashion: The True Cost of Cheap Clothing

The average British household now buys 60% more clothing than it did fifteen years ago, yet keeps each item for only half as long. The environmental toll is staggering: the fashion industry accounts for 10% of global carbon emissions — more than aviation and shipping combined — and dumps approximately 92 million tonnes of textile waste into landfill each year.

The rise of 'ultra-fast fashion' brands, which release hundreds of new styles weekly and sell items for as little as £3, has accelerated the crisis. Environmental scientist Dr Priya Kapoor explains: "These garments are designed to be worn once or twice and discarded. The polyester they contain takes up to 200 years to decompose, releasing microplastics into soil and waterways throughout that process."

The human cost is equally troubling. Investigations have repeatedly revealed that garment workers in countries like Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Ethiopia earn as little as 35p per hour in conditions that international observers have described as "dangerous and degrading." A 2024 audit found that 73% of major UK fashion retailers could not fully trace their supply chains beyond the first tier of manufacture.

However, the industry argues it provides vital employment in developing economies. Fashion UK, the industry body, claims that "affordable fashion democratises style and allows people on lower incomes to participate in cultural expression." Critics counter that this framing disguises exploitation as opportunity.

Consumer attitudes are shifting. A YouGov poll found that 68% of 18–30-year-olds say they feel guilty about buying fast fashion, though only 23% have actually changed their purchasing habits. The gap between intention and action remains the industry's greatest protection.

Source: The Observer Magazine, January 2025

Text 2 — Council Information Leaflet

Greendale Borough Council — Textile Recycling: What You Need to Know

Why recycle textiles? Every year, Greendale residents send approximately 4,200 tonnes of clothing and textiles to landfill. Much of this could be reused, recycled, or repurposed.

What can be recycled? Accepted items: clothing (any condition, including damaged), shoes (tied together in pairs), bags, belts, curtains, bedding, and towels. Not accepted: wet or heavily soiled items, mattresses, carpets, or items contaminated with paint or chemicals.

How to recycle — Option 1: Textile banks at all 12 recycling centres and 34 supermarket car parks. Option 2: Kerbside collection — place textiles in a clear bag on top of your green bin. Option 3: Charity shops — donate wearable items to any of the 28 charity shops in Greendale.

What happens next? Approximately 60% are resold as second-hand clothing (UK and overseas). 30% are shredded and converted into industrial rags or insulation material. The remaining 10% (unusable items) goes to energy recovery. Nothing we collect goes to landfill.

Our target — By 2027, Greendale aims to divert 95% of household textiles from landfill. In 2024, we achieved 71%. For more information, visit www.greendale.gov.uk/textiles or call 01234 567 890.

Text 3 — Blog Post

I Tried a "No New Clothes" Year — Here's What Actually Happened

By Jess Moreland | 3 January 2025

Twelve months ago, I made a promise to myself: no new clothes for an entire year. No sales browsing, no 'just one top,' no exceptions. After watching a documentary about garment workers, I felt physically sick looking at my overflowing wardrobe and knew something had to change.

The first few weeks were brutal. I'd open Instagram and my thumb would hover over targeted ads like a moth drawn to a flame. I unfollowed every fashion brand, muted every influencer, and deleted three shopping apps. It felt like breaking up with someone you know is toxic but still miss desperately.

By month three, something shifted. I started actually seeing my existing clothes — really seeing them. I rediscovered a coat I'd forgotten I owned. I learned to mend a torn seam. I swapped six dresses with a friend and it felt like Christmas morning.

The numbers are hard to argue with. I saved £2,340 over the year — roughly £195 a month I was previously spending without thinking. My wardrobe is smaller but everything in it gets worn. I feel lighter, less cluttered, less guilty.

Will I buy new clothes again? Yes, probably. But never again without asking three questions: Do I need it? Will I wear it at least thirty times? Do I know where and how it was made?

The fashion industry wants us to believe we need constant newness. We don't. We never did.

Section A — Reading

11 questions • 24 marks

Question 1 (1 mark)

According to Text 1, what percentage of global carbon emissions does the fashion industry account for?

- A) 10%
- B) 60%
- C) 73%
- D) 92%

Question 2 (2 marks)

Text 1 states there is a gap between "intention and action." What evidence is given?

- A) 68% feel guilty about fast fashion but only 23% have changed their habits
- B) Brands release hundreds of styles weekly
- C) People buy 60% more clothing than before
- D) 73% of retailers cannot trace their supply chains

Question 3 (2 marks)

How does Fashion UK justify fast fashion? What do critics say in response?

- A) Fashion UK says it democratises style for lower incomes; critics say this disguises exploitation as opportunity
- B) Fashion UK says it creates British jobs; critics say the jobs are low quality
- C) Fashion UK says it is reducing prices; critics say prices should be higher
- D) Fashion UK says it uses sustainable materials; critics say this is greenwashing

Question 4 (2 marks)

According to Text 2, what percentage of collected textiles are resold as second-hand clothing?

- A) 60%
- B) 30%
- C) 71%
- D) 95%

Question 5 (2 marks)

Text 2 states "nothing we collect goes to landfill." What happens to the 10% that are unusable?

- A) They go to energy recovery
- B) They are sent overseas
- C) They are composted
- D) They are incinerated without energy capture

Question 6 (2 marks)

In Text 3, Jess writes her thumb "would hover over targeted ads like a moth drawn to a flame." What does this simile suggest?

- A) She was instinctively attracted to shopping despite knowing it was harmful, like a moth fatally drawn to fire
- B) She found the adverts beautiful and artistic
- C) She was confused about what to buy
- D) She preferred shopping at night

Question 7 (2 marks)

What is the effect of the two short sentences at the end of Text 3: "We don't. We never did."?

- A) They create a direct, emphatic conclusion that challenges the reader's assumptions with simple certainty
- B) They show that Jess is angry at the fashion industry
- C) They summarise the statistics from her experiment
- D) They invite the reader to disagree with her view

Question 8 (3 marks)

Compare the purposes and audiences of Text 2 and Text 3.

- A) Text 2 uses practical information to make recycling easy for local residents; Text 3 uses personal narrative to inspire readers to change consumption habits
- B) Both texts use statistics as their main persuasive tool
- C) Text 2 is aimed at businesses while Text 3 targets teenagers
- D) Both are written in formal language for government audiences

Question 9 (2 marks)

Text 1 uses the phrase "dangerous and degrading" in quotation marks. Why?

- A) It is a direct quote from international observers, used to give the description authority and credibility
- B) The author disagrees with the description
- C) It is a legal term that must be quoted exactly
- D) The author wants to distance themselves from the claim

Question 10 (3 marks)

How do Texts 1 and 3 differ in their approach to the problem of fast fashion?

- A) Text 1 examines the issue objectively with statistics and expert quotes; Text 3 offers a subjective, first-person account of individual action
- B) Both present balanced arguments with equal weight on both sides
- C) Text 1 is persuasive while Text 3 is purely informative
- D) Both texts rely on emotional language rather than facts

Question 11 (3 marks)

Using all three texts, evaluate whether individual actions can solve fashion's environmental problems, or whether systemic changes are needed.

- A) Individual actions help (Text 2: recycling diverts waste; Text 3: personal change is possible) but Text 1 reveals the scale requires systemic change — regulation, supply chain transparency, corporate accountability

■ B) All three texts agree that individual action alone is sufficient
■ C) None of the texts suggest individuals can make any difference
■ D) Only government regulation can solve the problem

Section B — Writing

Complete both writing tasks.

Writing Task 1 — Formal (24 marks)

A national newspaper has invited readers to submit articles on fast fashion and sustainability.

Write an article for the newspaper explaining why fast fashion is an environmental problem, considering the responsibility of consumers, businesses, and governments, and suggesting practical changes.

Write approximately 300–400 words. Include a headline.

Writing Task 2 — Informal (16 marks)

Your friend is thinking of organising a second-hand clothing swap event at your local community centre.

Write an email to your friend giving your opinion on the idea, suggesting how to organise it successfully, and using an informal but helpful tone.

Write approximately 200–250 words.