Functional Skills English Level 2

Mock Test 4

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 — Newspaper Feature

The Sleep Crisis: Why Britain Is Running on Empty

Britain is in the grip of what health experts are calling a 'sleep epidemic.' According to the Sleep Council's latest report, one in three adults now regularly gets fewer than six hours of sleep per night — well below the seven to nine hours recommended by the NHS. The economic cost is estimated at £40 billion annually in lost productivity, workplace accidents, and increased healthcare demand.

The causes are complex and interconnected. Dr Helen Burgess, a sleep researcher at Oxford, identifies three key factors: "Firstly, the 24-hour digital culture means our brains never truly switch off. Secondly, longer working hours and the blurring of work-life boundaries leave people wired and anxious at bedtime. Thirdly, we have culturally devalued sleep — treating it as a sign of laziness rather than a biological necessity."

The health consequences extend far beyond tiredness. Chronic sleep deprivation is linked to a 48% increase in cardiovascular disease risk, a 36% higher likelihood of developing type 2 diabetes, and significant impairment to immune function. Mental health is also affected, with sleep-deprived individuals three times more likely to experience clinical depression.

Yet solutions remain frustratingly out of reach for many. While private sleep clinics charge upwards of £300 per consultation, NHS waiting times for sleep disorder assessments average 18 months. Campaigners are calling for sleep education in the school curriculum and for employers to be held accountable for work practices that damage employee sleep.

Professor Michael Walker argues: "No aspect of our biology is left unscathed by sleep deprivation. We would never accept a society where one in three people were chronically dehydrated, yet we tolerate exactly that level of sleep starvation."

Source: The Telegraph, March 2025

Text 2 — Workplace Policy

Hartwell Engineering — Employee Wellbeing and Rest Policy

1. Purpose — Hartwell Engineering recognises that employee wellbeing directly impacts safety, performance, and retention. This policy establishes minimum rest standards and support mechanisms for all staff.

2. Working Hours — Standard hours are 37.5 per week. No employee may work more than 48 hours in any seven-day period (Working Time Regulations 1998). Overtime beyond 5 hours per week requires line manager approval and occupational health review if sustained for more than 4 consecutive weeks.

3. Rest Periods — All employees are entitled to: a minimum 11-hour gap between shifts, a 20-minute uninterrupted break per 6-hour shift, and one full day off per week. Night shift workers receive 48 hours off following any block of 4 or more consecutive night shifts.

4. Fatigue Management — Employees must report to their supervisor if they feel too fatigued to work safely. No disciplinary action will be taken for fatigue reporting. Supervisors may send fatigued workers home with full pay and must complete a Fatigue Incident Form (FIF-02).

5. Support Available — Free access to a 24-hour employee assistance helpline, on-site rest facilities (quiet room available 24/7), subsidised gym membership, and referrals to occupational health for persistent sleep difficulties.

6. Manager Responsibilities — Managers must monitor team rosters for compliance, identify signs of fatigue, avoid scheduling back-to-back demanding shifts, and complete fatigue awareness training annually.

7. Review — This policy is reviewed annually by the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee. Employee feedback is welcomed via the anonymous suggestion portal.

Text 3 — Personal Account (Magazine Feature)

"I Was Sleeping Four Hours a Night and Calling It Success"

By Tom Gallagher

For five years, I wore my sleep deprivation like a badge of honour. Four hours a night, up at 4:30am, inbox clear before sunrise. I posted about it on LinkedIn. I told junior staff that 'the hustle doesn't sleep.' I believed, truly believed, that I was winning at life.

I wasn't. I was slowly destroying myself.

The wake-up call — ironic, given the topic — came when I rear-ended a parked car on a Tuesday afternoon. I hadn't been drinking. I'd simply blacked out at the wheel for a few seconds. Microsleep, they called it. The doctor told me my reaction times were equivalent to someone over the legal alcohol limit. I was, in every meaningful sense, driving drunk — every single day.

After that, I started keeping a sleep diary. The patterns were undeniable. On four-hour nights: irritable, forgetful, making poor decisions at work. On seven-hour nights: calmer, sharper, more creative, more patient.

Recovery wasn't easy. Sleep had become the enemy, the thing standing between me and productivity. Retraining my brain to see rest as essential rather than wasteful took months: a strict 10pm screen cut-off, no caffeine after noon, and — hardest of all — accepting that some emails could wait until morning.

I now sleep seven to eight hours a night. My output at work hasn't decreased. If anything, the quality has improved. But more importantly, I'm alive in the ways that matter — present for my family, safe on the road, and no longer grinding myself into an early grave while calling it ambition.

Section A — Reading

11 questions • 24 marks

Question 1 (1 mark)

According to Text 1, what proportion of adults regularly gets fewer than six hours of sleep?

- A) One in three
- B) One in five
- C) One in two
- D) One in four

Question 2 (2 marks)

Dr Burgess identifies three key causes of the sleep crisis. What are they?

- A) 24-hour digital culture, longer working hours with blurred boundaries, and cultural devaluation of sleep
- B) Noisy neighbourhoods, uncomfortable beds, and late-night eating
- C) Stress, alcohol consumption, and lack of exercise
- D) Shift work, caffeine, and medical conditions

Question 3 (2 marks)

Professor Walker compares sleep deprivation to dehydration. Why is this comparison effective?

- A) It reframes sleep loss as a serious health crisis that society would never tolerate if it were more visible
- B) It shows that drinking water helps people sleep better
- C) It proves that sleep is more important than water
- D) It suggests hospitals should treat sleep problems immediately

Question 4 (2 marks)

According to Text 2, what happens if an employee reports feeling too fatigued to work safely?

- A) They can be sent home with full pay and no disciplinary action is taken
- B) They must take unpaid leave
- C) They are moved to lighter duties
- D) They receive a verbal warning

Question 5 (2 marks)

Text 2 limits overtime to 5 hours per week without approval. What additional safeguard exists if overtime is sustained for more than 4 consecutive weeks?

- A) An occupational health review is required
- B) The employee must take a week off
- C) The manager receives a formal warning
- D) The employee's contract is reviewed

Question 6 (2 marks)

In Text 3, Tom writes: "I wore my sleep deprivation like a badge of honour." What does this metaphor reveal?

- A) He was proud of sleeping less and displayed it as an achievement, treating self-harm as dedication
- B) He had won an award for his work ethic
- C) He was embarrassed about his sleep habits
- D) He was in the military

Question 7 (2 marks)

What structural technique does Tom use in "I wasn't. I was slowly destroying myself."?

- A) A short sentence followed by a longer one creates dramatic contrast — blunt denial then shocking revelation
- B) Repetition of 'I' shows he is self-centred
- C) It is a rhetorical question
- D) The full stop represents a pause for breath

Question 8 (3 marks)

Compare how Text 1 and Text 3 present the consequences of sleep deprivation.

- A) Text 1 uses statistics (48% cardiovascular risk, £40bn cost); Text 3 uses personal narrative and a near-miss incident. Both effective but appeal to logic versus empathy
- B) Both texts use the same approach
- C) Text 1 is more emotional while Text 3 is more factual
- D) Neither provides convincing evidence

Question 9 (2 marks)

In Text 3, Tom describes his microsleep as "driving drunk — every single day." Why is this comparison powerful?

- A) It connects sleep deprivation to something universally understood as dangerous and irresponsible
- B) It suggests Tom had a drinking problem
- C) It is a legal argument
- D) It exaggerates for comic effect

Question 10 (3 marks)

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

- A) Text 1 informs the general public using journalistic features; Text 2 instructs employees using formal procedural language
- B) Both target the same audience
- C) Text 1 is informal while Text 2 is persuasive
- D) Both use statistics as their primary technique

Question 11 (3 marks)

Using all three texts, evaluate who bears the greatest responsibility for solving the sleep crisis.

- A) All three share responsibility: individuals must change habits (Text 3), employers can

create supportive structures (Text 2), and government action is needed for systemic causes (Text 1)

- B) Only individuals can solve their own sleep problems
- C) The government is solely responsible
- D) Employers have no role to play

Section B — Writing

Complete both writing tasks.

Writing Task 1 — Formal (24 marks)

Your employer has asked staff for suggestions on improving workplace wellbeing, particularly around rest and work-life balance.

Write a formal report for your employer identifying key wellbeing challenges, explaining how poor wellbeing affects individuals and the organisation, and recommending at least three practical measures.

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

Writing Task 2 — Informal (16 marks)

A friend has told you they are struggling with sleep and feel exhausted all the time.

Write a message to your friend showing empathy, suggesting practical steps to improve their sleep, and encouraging them to seek professional help if needed.

Write approximately 200–250 words. Use an informal but caring tone.