

# ESOL Skills for Life

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## Level 2 – Reading

### Practice paper 1

**Time allowed:** 60 minutes

- ▶ Please answer **all** questions.
- ▶ Circle your answers in pen, **not** pencil, **on the separate answer sheet**.
- ▶ You may **not** use dictionaries.
- ▶ You may **not** use correction fluid.

**Task 1**

Questions 1-6 test your ability to read a text quickly for the general idea, and to scan it for key words and phrases. You are advised to read the questions **before** you read the text.

**Questions 1-4**

The text on page 3 has six paragraphs. Each paragraph has a purpose. Choose the letter of the paragraph that best matches the purposes below. Circle the letter **on your answer sheet**.

You do not need to use all of the paragraphs.

Example: to explain what exactly 'skyr' is

A

1. to explain the appeal of skyr
2. to highlight the versatility of skyr
3. to provide a general description of skyr
4. to show how skyr has regained popularity

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Questions 5-6**

Choose the letter of the best answer and circle it **on your answer sheet**.

5. According to the text
  - A skyr and porridge is typically eaten for breakfast in Iceland
  - B skyr is eaten in much the same way throughout the world
  - C sweeteners are added to skyr because it is quite sour
6. According to the text, skyr
  - A was first produced in Norway and Iceland
  - B has always been popular in Scandinavia
  - C is now exported to Lithuania and Latvia

## Skyr

### Paragraph A

Twenty years ago many people would have had no idea what 'skyr' was. However, if you were from Iceland or from some parts of Norway, this would be one of the first food words you would learn as a child. So what exactly is it? Well, skyr, pronounced skee-er, is a type of yoghurt, which is high in calcium and protein.

### Paragraph B

It tends to have quite a sour taste in its original, traditional form but nowadays you will find some manufacturers add artificial sweeteners or flavours to it. There are some people who eat it on its own and others who mix it with other ingredients or have it as a side dish.

### Paragraph C

One common Icelandic dish made with skyr is 'hraeringur', which translates as 'stirred' or 'mixture'. It is equal proportions of porridge and skyr mixed together, eaten at any time of the day. In addition to this, skyr can be combined in a variety of other ways. For breakfast it is mixed with cereal, for lunch or dinner it is served with fish, and it can even be mixed with fruit or jam to make a tasty dessert. These combinations are not everyone's cup of tea and in many countries skyr tends to be eaten on its own.

### Paragraph D

Skyr was once a popular dish in all the Scandinavian countries. However, its popularity faded in some places and for a long time it remained a food only served up in Iceland and Norway, where it originated.

### Paragraph E

Skyr has had a recent rejuvenation and it can now be found on shelves of Finnish, Swedish, Danish, Dutch, German, Swiss, American and British supermarkets. Some of the Baltic countries have also taken a shine to it and there are now Latvian and Lithuanian manufacturers of skyr.

### Paragraph F

What are the reasons for its increased popularity? First, its versatility – as mentioned, it can be combined with all sorts of ingredients. Second, it's healthy – in its natural form it is fat free and has all the vitamins you would find in regular milk. And third, it tastes great, so if you haven't tried it, you should give it a go!

Turn over page

**Task 2****Questions 7-10**

Five sentences are missing from the text on page 5. Look at the following sentences and decide which one best fits each gap. Circle the letter of your answer **on your answer sheet**. There is an example (A). There is one sentence you do not need.

- A (Example) ~~Volunteers are involved in a wide range of sectors which focus on different aspects of the community.~~
- B Just because volunteering is unpaid that doesn't mean it lacks financial worth.
- C Of course, volunteering isn't for everyone because you need to have a certain set of skills.
- D There are some barriers to volunteering or reasons why we put it off.
- E Although people of all ages volunteer, their level and frequency of involvement differs.
- F Of course, economic value is not the only benefit of volunteering.

**Questions 11-13**

Choose the letter of the best answer and circle it **on your answer sheet**.

11. In paragraph one, 'this' refers to the number of people who
- A regularly volunteer
  - B volunteered in the previous year
  - C were planning to volunteer in the future
12. Why does the writer put '53% of volunteers' in brackets in paragraph two?
- A because a figure is given
  - B to give some specific information
  - C because it is a quotation from a survey
13. According to paragraph three, volunteers are often
- A unemployed
  - B in salaried employment
  - C from the north of England

**Questions 14-16**

Choose the letter of the answer that best matches the meaning of each word as it is used in the text. Circle the letter **on your answer sheet**.

14. **seek** (paragraph one)
- A agree
  - B need
  - C try
15. **enhance** (paragraph five)
- A improve
  - B change
  - C write
16. **constraints** (paragraph six)
- A factors
  - B restrictions
  - C arrangements

## Why not volunteer today?

### Paragraph one

Have you ever considered the benefits of volunteering? Being a volunteer in your local community is becoming more and more popular as people **seek** to make a difference and 'give something back'. Results from a recent survey showed that 42% of people questioned reported that they have taken part in some form of volunteering at least once in the previous year – **this** amounts to 21.6 million people. Over 11 million people regularly participate in some kind of formal volunteering in their local community.

### Paragraph two

          **A (Example)**          . A lot of volunteers are involved with sport (53% of volunteers). Other fields include health, education and environmental causes. The most common activities for volunteers are organising events, committee leadership, providing transport and befriending/mentoring – but the opportunities are endless really.

### Paragraph three

          **7.**          . There are some variations in terms of geographical location and employment status. People who live in the south of England are more likely to volunteer than those in the north. Furthermore, people in full-time employment volunteer more often than people who are economically inactive.

### Paragraph four

          **8.**          . The Office for National Statistics (ONS) recently estimated the annual value of volunteering at £23.9 billion. Many charities and organisations simply would not survive without the contribution of volunteers.

### Paragraph five

          **9.**          . For some it is an opportunity to make a difference to people around them, particularly to vulnerable members of society. For others it provides an opportunity to develop new skills and gain confidence which can in turn **enhance** their CV. The volunteer's job prospects will improve. The social benefits are also invaluable.

### Paragraph six

          **10.**          . It's mostly because we have time **constraints** and commitments and many people simply feel they haven't got the energy. There are also some concerns about the rights of a volunteer. Although not compulsory, you should get a volunteers' agreement which would outline any supervision or training needed. This also explains whether you are covered by insurance should there be any health and safety issues.

### Paragraph seven

So what are you waiting for? If you feel that you are ready for the challenging yet rewarding experience of volunteering in your community, contact an organisation near you and get the ball rolling – you really won't regret it!

## Turn over page

**Task 3**

*Texts A-E on pages 8-12 are all related to each other. You need to use all five texts to answer the following questions.*

**Questions 17-19**

There are five texts, A-E. Decide which text matches each of the purposes below and circle the letter of the text **on your answer sheet**. One of the texts does not have a purpose listed below.

*Example: to report on recent research **and** to give advice about handling complaints* ..... **A** .....

**17.** to apologise **and** to offer compensation .....  
.....

**18.** to explain a change in work practice **and** to offer continuing support .....  
.....

**19.** to make a complaint **and** to demand a response .....  
.....

**Questions 20-22**

Choose the letter of the best answer and circle it **on your answer sheet**.

**20.** In text B, Mr Hopkinson is upset about

- A staff attitudes and the lack of televisions in stock
- B the quality of the television and the delay in purchasing it
- C the lack of choice in the store and the absence of the television

**21.** In text C, how does Jack construct his version of the story?

- A he explains what happened and claims the problem was all the customer's fault
- B he apologises for the incident and suggests a change to the way stock is monitored
- C he describes the incident and explains the reasons why he could not keep the customer happy

**22.** Texts B to E show that

- A Mr Hopkinson's complaint was completely unreasonable
- B customer service at the department store is terrible
- C Kaia Nicolaides acted quickly to resolve the complaint

**Questions 23-27**

Text A has six paragraphs with missing headings. Choose the best paragraph for each of the following headings and circle the letter **on your answer sheet**. You do not need to use all the paragraphs. There is an example.

Example: *Top Tip*

    A    

**23.** Equip the Team

                    

**24.** Say Sorry

                    

**25.** Pay Close Attention

                    

Choose the letter of the best answer and circle it **on your answer sheet**.

**26.** Samira Shah works for a

- A local newspaper
- B department store
- C business school

**27.** According to text E

- A Kaia will send the sales team a sticker when stock gets low
- B the computer will print a LOW STOCK sticker for the sales team
- C when items are out of stock, the sales team will receive an email

**Questions 28-30**

Choose the letter of the answer that **best** matches the meaning of each word as it is used in the text. Circle the letter **on your answer sheet**.

**28. for good** (text A)

- A forever
- B in the future
- C with good reason

**29. invaluable** (text A)

- A unbiased
- B worthless
- C very useful

**30. appalling** (text B)

- A unsuitable
- B surprising
- C terrible

Turn over page

## Text A

## HOW TO TURN COMPLAINTS INTO COMPLIMENTS

Are you doing everything you can to keep your customers happy? Research from Westshire Business School suggests that most companies could do a lot better when it comes to the tricky issue of customer complaints. Samira Shah, business reporter for the *Westshire Telegraph* newspaper, has some tips for managers.

### A

The number one tip for dealing with unhappy customers is to remember that the customer is your boss. In the end, if you lose your customers you wouldn't have a salary, so it pays to treat them as well as possible.

### B

Always make the customer feel important. The best way to do this is by demonstrating that you are listening properly. If you are interacting face-to-face with the customer, be aware of your body language and tone of voice. On the telephone, resist the temptation to interrupt. Make notes while the customer is speaking and endeavour to cover all the points they have made when you do get your turn in the conversation.

### C

You should always apologise. However, do not offer a free gift or a refund too quickly. First make sure that you have resolved the issue that led to the complaint in the first place. If you don't, things are liable to go wrong again and you will most likely lose that customer **for good**.

### D

It's not just customers who are important for your organisation: your employees are too. Happy staff contribute to a good atmosphere that customers will notice. Stressed and unhappy staff may end up taking out their frustrations on the customers.

### E

The Westshire researchers reported that a majority of the employees they interviewed felt insufficiently prepared to deal with dissatisfied customers. You can get ahead of your competitors by ensuring that your staff are properly trained in how to handle complaints. Make the training interactive and listen to what your staff tell you. Their observations can be **invaluable**.

### F

Finally, remember that a complaint is an opportunity! Make sure you learn from every complaint you receive, and put measures in place to ensure that the situation does not occur again.



**Text B**

*65 West Street, Mayfield MY10 3AB*

The Manager  
Mayfield Department Store  
6 High Street  
Mayfield  
MY1 2BC

21 October

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to complain about the **appalling** service I received when I visited your store on Saturday. I was hoping to purchase a flat screen television but I left without buying anything because your staff were so unhelpful.

According to his name badge, the man who served me was called Jack Williams. First of all, when I wanted his attention he did not respond immediately but carried on chatting to his colleague. Eventually, I managed to get him to serve me and he spent some time showing me different televisions.

When I had made up my mind, Mr Williams congratulated me on my choice. However, when I went to place a firm order, he told me the model was out of stock. Why couldn't he have given me this information immediately? It would have saved me a great deal of disappointment.

I told Mr Williams that I was prepared to return in a week to purchase my favoured model, but he said it would be at least two weeks before that particular television was back in stock. I think you will agree with me that this is an outrageous delay.

I look forward to receiving your comments.

Yours faithfully,

Alan Hopkinson

**Turn over page**

## Text C

**From:** Jack Williams  
**To:** Kaia Nicolaides  
**Subject:** Re:Customer complaint

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Dear Ms Nicolaides

I remember Mr Hopkinson quite well. He was rather difficult. It's not true that I ignored him at first – Anna was trying to close a sale on a digital radio and needed my advice about a technical issue. I did tell Mr Hopkinson that I'd be with him as soon as possible.

He took an extraordinarily long time to decide which television he wanted and I gave him my full attention during this period, even though I could see that Anna was really struggling to cope alone.

As you probably know, it's impossible to tell in advance which of the display televisions we have in stock. I probably should have warned Mr Hopkinson that I'd have to check availability on the computer and I'm sorry that I didn't. As for the delay in obtaining it, there's nothing we can do about that. We're entirely dependent on the manufacturer's supply schedule.

Kind regards

Jack

*Jack Williams, Electronics Manager*

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**From:** Kaia Nicolaides  
**To:** Jack Williams  
**Subject:** Customer complaint

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 Letter

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Dear Jack

Please find attached a letter I received this morning. Obviously I wasn't present during this exchange so I don't know what happened. Could you let me have your side of the story by the end of today please?

Kaia

*Kaia Nicolaides, General Manager*

**Text D**

*Mayfield Department Store, 6 High Street, Mayfield MY1 2BC*

Mr A Hopkinson  
65 West Street  
Mayfield  
MY10 3AB

23 October

Dear Mr Hopkinson,

Thank you for your letter of 21 October. I am very sorry that your experience with us was so unsatisfactory.

I understand that it must have been very disappointing to find that your chosen goods were not available. I am in the process of altering our systems so that customers have immediate access to information about stock levels. I would like to thank you for bringing this issue to our attention.

In the meantime, I am enclosing a £25 voucher to be spent anywhere in our store. I look forward to welcoming you back in the very near future.

Yours sincerely,

*Kaia Nicolaides*

General Manager

**Turn over page**

**Text E****STAFF MEMO****FAO: SALES TEAM****Instructions for stock monitoring**

Following a recent customer complaint, there will be some changes to the way we display large electrical goods.

- As soon as we have fewer than five items of a model in stock, the sales team will receive an automatically generated email instructing a member of the team to place a sticker saying 'LOW STOCK' on the item.
- If we completely sell out of anything, the sales team will get a second email and a member of the team will need to attach an OUT OF STOCK sticker.

Please contact Kaia Nicolaides (General Manager) if you have any questions about this new policy or you need any further guidance.

**End of exam**

## **Skills for Life Level 2 Reading – Practice paper 1**

### **Answers**

1. F
2. C
3. B
4. E
5. C
6. A
7. E
8. B
9. F
10. D
11. B
12. B
13. B
14. C
15. A
16. B
17. D
18. E
19. B
20. A
21. C
22. C
23. E
24. C
25. B
26. A
27. C
28. A
29. C
30. C