

How to prepare for ESOL Skills for Life

Reading Award – Level 1



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Charity number England & Wales: 1014792 | Charity number Scotland: SC049143

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Online edition, September 2026



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Trinity College London

ESOL Skills for Life

ESOL Skills for Life courses and assessments play an important role in supporting adults as they settle into life in the UK because they reflect the real communication demands learners face every day. Trinity College London's ESOL Skills for Life qualifications are designed for a diverse test taker population, including migrants, refugees, international workers and parents returning to education, many of whom need English not only for employment but also for accessing services, building social connections and participating confidently in their communities.

Preparing for these exams encourages teachers and learners to develop practical reading, writing, speaking and listening skills that are not only assessed in the qualification but also essential for everyday life in the UK, including healthcare, housing, education and workplace communication. In this way, ESOL Skills for Life supports learners' progression from basic survival English towards fuller participation in UK society, helping them develop the independence, confidence and language skills needed not only to live in the UK but to thrive there. Level 1 emphasises participation, evaluation, workplace/college communication and critical reading.

This guide has been produced to support teachers preparing learners for the Level 1 Reading award. It outlines the key reading skills and subskills assessed at this level and explains how they connect to real-life reading demands. The guide supports teachers in selecting and adapting classroom materials to practise these subskills effectively. It also provides structured activities linked to each of the three tasks in the Trinity ESOL Skills for Life test, helping teachers build learners' confidence, develop exam awareness and strengthen transferable reading skills.

Framework for ESOL Skills for Life teaching and learning

The ESOL Skills for Life examination suite has five levels mapped to the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum (AECC): Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, Level 1 and Level 2. These levels provide a developmental framework for teaching and learning progression from beginner to advanced levels of competency in English.

Reading subskills (from the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum)

- ▶ Text focus – Understanding the overall meaning of a text (gist), identifying key information (scanning) and understanding the main features of a range of text types
- ▶ Sentence focus – Detailed reading – factual (reading for detail), attitudinal (evaluation) and implicit information (inference) – as well as understanding syntax, sequencers, register and non-linguistic features (literacy)
- ▶ Word focus – Deducing meaning from context (language)

Literacy contexts (from the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum)

- ▶ Educational and training, in which a person is engaged in organised learning either in or outside an educational institution. This context can include all learning activities from academic studies to hobby courses.
- ▶ Domestic and everyday life, including a range of contexts a person can encounter in daily living, such as shopping or going to the dentist.

- ▶ Leisure, including socialising with friends, going to leisure facilities or attending organised events.
- ▶ Citizen and community, including participating in activities that are of interest to local communities, such as charity fundraising or expressing concern over council plans to reduce/remove services.
- ▶ Using ICT in social roles.
- ▶ Economic activity, including paid and unpaid work.

How reading strategies develop across levels

Across the ESOL Skills for Life Reading exams, learners are not simply expected to read more difficult texts. They are expected to read in different ways, using different strategies for different purposes, and to combine strategies as texts become longer, denser and more evaluative.

At Entry 1 and Entry 2, reading focuses on recognition and basic understanding:

- ▶ recognising what a text is for
- ▶ finding simple information
- ▶ understanding very common words and symbols

By Entry 3, learners must begin to control their reading:

- ▶ choosing between gist, scanning and careful reading
- ▶ justifying answers with evidence
- ▶ starting to interpret implied meaning and attitude

At Level 1, reading becomes analytical and selective:

- ▶ learners must recognise text type, viewpoint and evaluation
- ▶ distinguish fact from opinion
- ▶ explain why an answer is correct, not just where it is

At Level 2, reading is integrated and critical:

- ▶ strategies are combined within a single task
- ▶ inference and evaluation are closely linked
- ▶ learners must interpret bias, assumptions and purpose across complex texts and visuals

This progression means that teaching needs to move from explicit, guided strategies to independent, flexible strategy use, while remaining grounded in real-world UK reading demands.

Progression of reading strategies: Entry 1 to Level 2

Subskill	Entry 1	Entry 2	Entry 3	Level 1	Level 2
Gist	Who is it for? What is it about?	Purpose and main idea	Purpose, audience, paragraph function	Text type, viewpoint, stance	Purpose, viewpoint, development of ideas
Scanning	Find one name/place	Find prices, times, names	Scan paragraphs/short texts	Selective scanning in long texts	Strategic scanning in dense texts
Reading for detail	Times, routines, actions	Reasons, order, specific information	Reasons, steps, comparisons	Precise detail versus distractors	Complex detail in arguments
Inference	–	–	Simple implied reasons/feelings	Multiple clues across text(s)	Assumptions and implications
Evaluation	–	–	Simple opinions/feelings	Strength, balance, stance	Bias, effectiveness, viewpoint
Language	Very common words	Familiar words from context	Synonyms, common phrases	Evaluative/abstract vocab	Nuanced/technical language
Literacy	Capital letters, layout	Order and organisation	Linkers and cohesion	Reference and organisation	Register and structure
Visual literacy	Symbols and pictures	Simple maps and labels	Graphs and charts	Visuals and evaluation	Complex diagrams/maps
Numerical literacy	Numbers for meaning	–	–	–	–

Classroom resources – Level 1 Reading

Authentic resources for classroom activities

- ▶ Online reviews (films, events, services)
- ▶ GOV.UK guidance with explanations
- ▶ Workplace emails with reasoning
- ▶ News or feature articles (short sections)
- ▶ Community consultation pages
- ▶ Statista (graphs, charts)

Classroom-ready resources

(levels indicate the relevant section of the website for Level 1)

- ▶ BBC Bitesize (Level 1)
- ▶ Skillsworkshop ESOL (Level 1)
- ▶ Lingua (Level B2)
- ▶ ESOL Courses (Intermediate)
- ▶ Linguapress (Intermediate, Advanced)
- ▶ Fabulang stories (B2)
- ▶ ESL Lounge (Upper Intermediate)
- ▶ ISL Collective (teacher generated worksheets with visuals)
- ▶ English with Colin (graded reading texts from Beginner to Advanced)

How to adapt authentic resources at Level 1

Texts should:

- ▶ include opinion and evaluation
- ▶ require learners to distinguish fact from attitude
- ▶ allow comparison across texts.

Useful question stems

Gist	What is the writer's overall viewpoint?
Scanning	Where in the text can you find...?
Reading for detail	Why does the writer mention...?
Evaluation	How positive is the writer's view of...?
Inference	According to the text, what is implied by...?
Language	Which option best matches the meaning of...?
Literacy	What does X refer to?
Visual literacy	Why are these images included in the text?

Tip for teachers

Ask learners why one answer is better than the others.

Glossary of reading subskills

Gist

Gist is understanding the overall meaning, topic, purpose and viewpoint of a text (or section of text). This often includes recognising text type, overall stance and how ideas are developed, not just what the text is about.

It answers questions like:

- ▶ What is this text mainly about?
- ▶ Why was it written?
- ▶ What kind of text is it (for example, a review, an article, an information text, a promotional text)?
- ▶ What is the writer's overall viewpoint?

What it looks like in Level 1 Reading:

Common question types include identifying:

- ▶ the overall purpose of a longer text (for example, to review, to explain, to argue, to report)
- ▶ the main idea or focus of a paragraph or section
- ▶ the function of a paragraph within a text (for example, introducing a topic, giving background, evaluating, concluding)
- ▶ the purpose of short functional texts within a set of multiple texts.

Level 1 gist questions often require reading more text, recognising genre and distinguishing between description, opinion and evaluation.

Examples from the Level 1 Reading sample test:

1. (Task 1) 'What is the writer's opinion of Barcelona Blues?' (overall understanding of the text).
2. (Task 2) 'Choose the best first sentence for each paragraph.' (identify what each paragraph is about and how it fits into the overall text).
3. (Task 3) 'Match each text to its text purpose.' (recognition of genre and communicative purpose across a set of texts).

Classroom/practice suggestions:

1. Give learners a longer text (for example, a review or an opinion article) and ask them to choose the best overall summary sentence from three options, explaining why the others are too narrow or too detailed.
2. Cut a Level 1 text into sections and ask learners to label the function of each section (for example, to give background information, to give examples, to evaluate, to conclude).
3. Give learners two texts on the same topic (for example, a review and an information article), and ask how the purpose is different and how the language shows this.

Common learner difficulties:

- ▶ focusing on individual details and missing the overall argument or message
- ▶ confusing description of events with evaluation or opinion
- ▶ misidentifying text type (for example, treating a review as neutral information)
- ▶ being distracted by unfamiliar vocabulary and losing the main point

UK life examples (authentic contexts):

- ▶ reading online reviews before booking accommodation or events
- ▶ understanding whether a council or college page is informing, advising or persuading
- ▶ recognising the difference between news reporting and opinion pieces
- ▶ interpreting the purpose of multi-text information (for example, to list events, to give guidance, to relate a personal experience)

Why it matters for adult life in the UK:

Gist reading supports adults in deciding how much attention a text needs, recognising whether a text contains reliable information, opinion or promotion, navigating longer texts in work, study and public life, and responding appropriately to reviews, guidance and mixed-information sources.

This matters for navigating services (health, housing, education), work communications and everyday digital messages that are longer, denser and often include opinion or evaluation rather than simple information.

Scanning

Scanning is reading quickly and selectively to locate a specific piece of information in a text, without reading everything in detail.

At Level 1, scanning is only assessed in Task 1 and is focused on locating clearly defined information within a longer, denser text. It answers questions like:

- ▶ Where in the text is this information?
- ▶ Which sentence contains the fact I need?
- ▶ Which part of the text should I ignore?

What it looks like in Level 1 Reading:

Scanning typically involves:

- ▶ locating a specific fact or reference in a longer continuous text
- ▶ finding information that is explicitly stated (not implied)
- ▶ identifying relevant information efficiently, without analysing meaning in depth.

Examples from the Level 1 Reading sample test:

1. (Task 1) 'When will the film be available to watch at home?' (scan the text to find a specific piece of factual information mentioned in the text, without needing to interpret opinion or attitude).
2. (Task 1) 'How long does the film last?' (scan a paragraph that contains several pieces of information and identify the one that directly answers the question).

Classroom/practice suggestions:

1. Give learners a longer review or article and ask time-limited 'find it' questions that require locating explicitly stated facts (not reasons or opinions).
2. Ask learners to underline the key words in the question, then scan the text to find the sentence containing the matching information.
3. Use one longer text and ask learners to match questions to paragraph numbers, then underline the evidence.

Common learner difficulties:

- ▶ slipping into slow, careful reading instead of scanning for location
- ▶ overthinking questions that only require finding stated information
- ▶ being distracted by interesting but irrelevant detail in longer texts
- ▶ confusing scanning with inference or evaluation tasks

UK life examples (authentic contexts):

- ▶ finding a specific condition or requirement on a GOV.UK guidance page
- ▶ locating a named service, location or contact detail in a long webpage
- ▶ scanning reviews or articles to find one explicitly stated practical detail
- ▶ checking details quickly before making a decision (for example, before making travel arrangements)

Why it matters for adult life in the UK:

Scanning supports adults in quickly locating essential information in longer texts, helping them save time, avoid errors and manage real-world reading demands where not all information is equally important.

Reading for detail

Reading for detail means careful, accurate reading to understand specific information and how ideas connect, such as reasons, consequences, comparisons and conditions. This often involves paraphrase, distractors, and linking information across sentences, rather than simply locating one fact.

What it looks like in Level 1 Reading:

Common question types include:

- ▶ identifying reasons or explanations (why something happened)
- ▶ understanding cause and effect
- ▶ selecting precise information when several similar details are present
- ▶ following events or developments across a paragraph

Examples from the Level 1 Reading sample test:

1. (Task 1) 'According to paragraph 1, why was the writer looking forward to this film?' (read the specified paragraph carefully to identify the exact reason given, distinguishing it from general enthusiasm or later opinions).
2. (Task 2) 'According to paragraph 3, why did the king build a wall around the grounds?' (locate and understand the explicitly stated reason, often paraphrased in the options, rather than relying on general historical knowledge or inference).
3. (Task 3) 'In Text 3, what does Joe like most about Freddy Simpson's writing?' (identify a specific detail of preference expressed in the text, distinguishing it from other positive comments or descriptive information).

Classroom/practice suggestions:

1. Give learners a paragraph with several related details and ask one 'why' or 'how' question, requiring them to underline the full sentence that contains the answer.
2. Ask learners to answer a reading for detail question, then explain why one incorrect option is wrong, using words from the text.
3. Use True/False/Not given statements where the differences depend on small but important words (for example, only, mainly, no longer, instead of).

Common learner difficulties:

- ▶ treating reading for detail questions as scanning questions and answering too quickly
- ▶ choosing an answer that is generally true but not what the text actually says
- ▶ missing key qualifiers (for example, some, most, no longer, at first)
- ▶ confusing opinion or evaluation with factual detail

UK life examples (authentic contexts):

- ▶ understanding reasons given in workplace or service communications
- ▶ reading explanatory sections on GOV.UK or council websites
- ▶ following changes or updates explained in emails or letters
- ▶ interpreting consequences stated in policies or guidance

Why it matters for adult life in the UK:

Reading for detail helps adults understand rules, reasons and consequences, avoid misunderstandings and respond correctly to written information in work, services and everyday life.

Reading for detail and Inference: How they are related

Reading for detail and inference are closely related because both require careful reading, not just locating information quickly. In both cases, learners must pay attention to exact wording, relationships between ideas and how information is presented across sentences.

The key difference is where the answer comes from:

- ▶ Reading for detail focuses on information that is explicitly stated in the text. The answer can be found by careful reading, even if it is paraphrased or embedded among other details.
- ▶ Inference focuses on information that is implied rather than stated directly. Learners must combine clues from the text (and basic real-world logic) to work out meaning the writer assumes rather than says.

At Level 1, both skills involve:

- ▶ denser texts
- ▶ paraphrase and distractors
- ▶ the need to justify answers with evidence.

However, inference adds an extra layer of interpretation which becomes more frequent and more complex at Level 2.

Evaluation

Evaluation is recognising and interpreting the writer's opinions, attitudes and judgements, including how positive or negative they are and how strongly they are expressed. Evaluation often involves judging overall stance, comparing viewpoints and recognising mixed or balanced opinions rather than simple likes or dislikes.

It answers questions like:

- ▶ What does the writer think about this?
- ▶ How positive or negative is their view?
- ▶ Is the evaluation strong, weak or mixed?

What it looks like in Level 1 Reading:

Common evaluation questions at Level 1 may ask learners to:

- ▶ identify the writer's overall opinion or attitude
- ▶ recognise mixed or balanced evaluations
- ▶ compare viewpoints within a text
- ▶ judge how positively or negatively something is presented.

At this level, evaluation frequently requires learners to:

- ▶ infer attitude first, then evaluate its strength or direction
- ▶ distinguish between fact, description and opinion
- ▶ pay attention to evaluative language (for example, adjectives, adverbs, comparisons, hedging).

Examples from the Level 1 Reading sample test:

1. (Task 1) 'In paragraph 4, what is the writer's criticism of the plot?' (identify the writer's negative judgement, distinguishing criticism from description and recognise how evaluative language expresses dissatisfaction with one aspect of the film).
2. (Task 2) 'In paragraph 6, how does the writer feel about the park's future?' (evaluate the writer's attitude and outlook, using tone and evaluative wording to judge whether the feeling is optimistic, pessimistic or mixed).
3. (Task 3) 'In Text 2, what can attendees expect to hear in Freddy Simpson's talk?' (evaluate how the talk is presented and framed, recognising the implied emphasis or focus rather than simply extracting a factual topic list).

Classroom/practice suggestions:

1. Give learners a short review and ask them to rate the writer's opinion on a scale (very positive → mixed → very negative), underlining phrases that justify their choice.
2. Ask learners to separate facts and opinions in a paragraph and explain how the opinions influence the reader.
3. Give two short texts on the same topic and ask: 'Which writer sounds more convinced and how do you know?' (underline evaluative language).

Common learner difficulties:

- ▶ treating evaluation questions as inference questions without judging strength
- ▶ focusing on one strong adjective and ignoring the overall balance
- ▶ confusing description of experience with opinion about quality
- ▶ missing hedging and moderation (for example, quite, rather, not entirely)

UK life examples (authentic contexts):

- ▶ interpreting online reviews before making decisions
- ▶ understanding tone in workplace feedback or appraisals
- ▶ recognising persuasion in adverts and promotional texts
- ▶ judging how serious or enthusiastic a recommendation is

Why it matters for adult life in the UK:

Evaluation helps adults make informed decisions, recognise persuasion and bias, and interpret opinions accurately in reviews, workplace communication, public information and digital media.

Inference

Inference is working out meaning that is not stated directly by using clues from the text and applying reasonable real-world logic. Inference often involves understanding reasons, causes, consequences or attitudes that the writer assumes the reader will understand without explaining explicitly.

It answers questions like:

- ▶ What does this suggest, even though it isn't said?
- ▶ Why did something happen, based on the clues?
- ▶ What can we understand about a person or situation from how it is described?

What it looks like in Level 1 Reading:

Common inference questions may ask learners to:

- ▶ infer a reason or cause that is implied
- ▶ infer feelings or reactions from descriptive language
- ▶ combine information from different parts of a text to reach a conclusion
- ▶ integrate information across multiple short texts.

At this level, inference often requires more than one clue and learners must avoid relying on imagination rather than textual evidence.

Examples from the Level 1 Reading sample test:

1. (Task 1) 'According to paragraph 4, why is Vivas's performance surprising?' (infer the reason for the surprise by linking descriptive details in the paragraph (for example, expectations versus reality), rather than finding a directly stated explanation).
2. (Task 2) 'In paragraph 4, what is implied by Charles II decreeing Richmond Park a royal park?' (infer the significance or consequence of this decision, using historical and contextual clues rather than a stated outcome).
3. (Task 3) 'In Text 5, how will Joe probably spend next weekend?' (infer a likely future action based on information given about Joe's interests or plans, even though this is not explicitly stated).

Classroom/practice suggestions:

1. Give learners a paragraph with descriptive language and ask: 'What does this suggest about how the person felt?' (underline two clue phrases).
2. Ask learners to complete sentences using because/so to explain an inferred reason (for example, Because the text says..., we can infer...).
3. Use short real-world messages (for example, emails, notices) and ask learners to infer what might happen next if the reader does not respond.

Common learner difficulties:

- ▶ making inferences that are too imaginative and not supported by the text
- ▶ relying on personal experience instead of textual clues
- ▶ missing inference cues in adverbs and adjectives (for example, fortunately, disappointing, surprisingly)
- ▶ confusing inference with opinion-based evaluation

UK life examples (authentic contexts):

- ▶ understanding implied consequences in service messages ('Please respond by...')
- ▶ interpreting indirect workplace requests or feedback
- ▶ recognising implied dissatisfaction or urgency in emails
- ▶ working out reasons for changes in schedules or arrangements

Why it matters for adult life in the UK:

Inference helps adults interpret real communication accurately, especially when messages are indirect, polite or assume shared understanding, which is common in UK workplaces, services and institutions.

Inference and Evaluation: How they are related

Inference and evaluation are closely connected because both go beyond what is directly stated in the text. In both cases, learners must interpret meaning by paying attention to word choice, tone and context rather than relying on surface information.

The key difference is what the learner interprets:

- ▶ Inference focuses on working out implied information, such as reasons, causes, consequences or feelings that are not stated directly.
- ▶ Evaluation focuses on recognising and interpreting the writer's or speaker's attitude, opinion or stance, including how strongly they feel and how they want the reader to respond.

Learners often need to infer before they can evaluate (for example, inferring disappointment before judging whether a review is positive or negative). At Level 2, these skills will be more fully integrated, requiring learners to evaluate bias, assumptions and effectiveness of arguments.

Language

Language focuses on understanding vocabulary and phrases in context, especially when meaning is not obvious from individual words alone. This includes recognising synonyms, understanding paraphrase and interpreting words or phrases used in more abstract or evaluative ways.

It answers questions like:

- ▶ What does this word or phrase mean here?
- ▶ Which option best matches the meaning in context?
- ▶ How does the writer's word choice affect meaning?

What it looks like in Level 1 Reading:

At Level 1, language questions typically involve:

- ▶ choosing a synonym or paraphrase for a word or phrase used in context
- ▶ understanding vocabulary linked to evaluation or opinion
- ▶ recognising meaning that depends on context, not dictionary definition alone.

Compared with Entry 3, the language is often:

- ▶ less concrete
- ▶ more evaluative or descriptive
- ▶ embedded in longer sentences.

Examples from the Level 1 Reading sample test:

1. (Task 2) 'Choose the word or phrase with the same meaning as the word in **bold: picturesque.**' (use context to identify the closest synonym, recognising that the word expresses strong positive evaluation).
2. (Task 3) 'Choose the word or phrase with the same meaning as the word in **bold: takes charge.**' (select a paraphrase that matches the emotional and evaluative meaning of the phrase as it is used in the text, rather than a literal or weak alternative).

Classroom/practice suggestions:

1. Give learners a sentence from a review and ask them to replace one evaluative word with a near-synonym, then discuss how the meaning changes slightly.
2. Provide three possible paraphrases for a sentence and ask learners which one is closest in meaning and why.
3. Ask learners to group words from a text into positive, negative and neutral language, explaining their choices.

Common learner difficulties:

- ▶ choosing a synonym that is too weak or too strong
- ▶ relying on familiar words rather than meaning in context
- ▶ missing connotation (positive/negative/neutral)
- ▶ confusing literal meaning with evaluative meaning

UK life examples (authentic contexts):

- ▶ interpreting descriptive language in reviews and feedback
- ▶ understanding evaluative language in workplace communication
- ▶ recognising promotional language in adverts
- ▶ coping with more abstract vocabulary in public information texts

Why it matters for adult life in the UK:

Inference helps adults interpret real communication accurately, especially when messages are indirect, polite or assume shared understanding, which is common in UK workplaces, services and institutions.

Literacy (text features)

Literacy focuses on understanding how text features and structural choices create meaning, guide the reader and shape interpretation. This includes recognising how writers use organisation, referencing and linking to develop ideas and manage information.

It answers questions like:

- ▶ Why has the writer organised the text in this way?
- ▶ How do sentences and paragraphs connect?
- ▶ What does a linking word or reference refer to here?

What it looks like in Level 1 Reading:

Literacy questions may ask learners to:

- ▶ interpret the function of a linking word or phrase
- ▶ track reference words (for example, this, they, which) across sentences
- ▶ understand how information is sequenced or developed
- ▶ recognise how text organisation supports meaning in longer texts.

Examples from the Level 1 Reading sample test:

1. 'Which word is most similar to the meaning of 'if' in paragraph 4?' (identify the function of the linker (conditional) and understand how it changes the meaning when used in a complex sentence).

Classroom/practice suggestions:

1. Give learners a paragraph and ask them to underline all reference words (for example, this, they, which) and draw arrows to what each one refers to.
2. Remove linking words from a short text and ask learners to choose the most appropriate linker (for example, however, therefore, although) and explain why.
3. Ask learners to reorder a jumbled paragraph using discourse markers and logical flow as clues.

Common learner difficulties:

- ▶ assuming reference words always refer to the nearest noun
- ▶ ignoring linkers and misinterpreting relationships between ideas
- ▶ focusing on sentence-level grammar rather than text-level meaning
- ▶ losing track of meaning across longer paragraphs

UK life examples (authentic contexts):

- ▶ following instructions or explanations in official letters
- ▶ understanding contrast and emphasis in workplace communication
- ▶ interpreting guidance documents where ideas build across paragraphs
- ▶ reading longer online texts with dense information

Why it matters for adult life in the UK:

Understanding text organisation and cohesion helps adults follow explanations, interpret arguments accurately and avoid misunderstanding important written information in work, services and everyday communication.

Visual literacy

Visual literacy is understanding meaning from visual information (for example, images, posters, listings or layout features) and how it supports or extends the written text. This often involves interpreting visuals alongside written information, rather than treating them separately.

It answers questions like:

- ▶ Why has the writer included this image?
- ▶ What does the visual add to the text?
- ▶ How does the visual influence the reader?

What it looks like in Level 1 Reading:

Visual literacy questions may ask learners to:

- ▶ interpret the purpose of images used alongside a text
- ▶ understand how visuals support evaluation or persuasion
- ▶ link images to the overall purpose and tone of the text.

Examples from the Level 1 Reading sample test:

1. (Task 1) 'What is the purpose of the images included with this review?' (interpret why the images are included and link the visuals to the overall evaluative purpose of the review).

Classroom/practice suggestions:

1. Give learners a review with images and ask: 'Why do you think these images were chosen?' 'What do they encourage the reader to think or feel?'
2. Show two versions of the same text (with and without images) and ask learners how the images change their impression of the text.
3. Give learners several images and a short text and ask which image best supports the writer's purpose, explaining why the others are less suitable.

Common learner difficulties:

- ▶ describing what is in the image instead of explaining its purpose
- ▶ treating images as decoration rather than communicating meaning
- ▶ choosing answers based on personal opinion rather than textual/visual evidence
- ▶ missing the connection between visuals and evaluation

UK life examples (authentic contexts):

- ▶ online reviews with photos
- ▶ news articles with selected images
- ▶ adverts using images to persuade
- ▶ service webpages that use images to guide interpretation

Why it matters for adult life in the UK:

Visual literacy helps adults interpret persuasive and evaluative content, understand how images influence meaning and make informed decisions in digital and public communication where visuals are used intentionally, not neutrally.

General teaching strategies for Level 1 Reading**Train learners to match the question type to a reading strategy:**

Learners need to select and combine strategies, not apply them mechanically.

- ▶ Gist → read for text type, overall purpose and viewpoint; notice how the writer introduces and concludes ideas
- ▶ Scanning (Task 1 only) → locate explicitly stated information efficiently in a longer text; avoid analysing opinion
- ▶ Reading for detail → read carefully across sentences; track reasons, comparisons and consequences; check small but important words
- ▶ Inference → identify multiple clues; explain how they lead to a conclusion (because/so)
- ▶ Evaluation → infer attitude first, then judge strength, balance or stance
- ▶ Language → use context to judge meaning, strength and connotation (not just familiarity)
- ▶ Literacy/Visual literacy → ask why a feature (for example, a linker, a reference, an image) is used and how it supports meaning or purpose

Always ask for evidence – and reasoning:

At Level 1, move beyond 'Where is the answer?' to:

- ▶ 'Which words or phrases support your answer?'
- ▶ 'Why is this option better than the others?'

Encourage learners to:

- ▶ underline evidence
- ▶ paraphrase it in their own words
- ▶ explain why alternative answers are less accurate.

Build familiarity with real UK reading demands:

Use longer, denser and more evaluative texts that reflect everyday adult life in the UK such as:

- ▶ online reviews and comparison articles
- ▶ GOV.UK guidance pages with explanations and conditions
- ▶ workplace emails that include reasoning or justification
- ▶ community information with mixed text types (for example, notices, listings, descriptions)
- ▶ digital content where images and layout influence interpretation

Level 1 Reading – Practice Set

Task 1: Visual text (review and images)

Materials (Sample Task 1 and Appendices)

- ▶ Text: Film review – Barcelona Blues (5 paragraphs)
- ▶ Images: photos included with the review
- ▶ Sample questions 1-10
- ▶ Appendices A-E

Time guide: 45-60 minutes (activities) + 15-20 minutes (task)

Assessment categories in Task 1: gist • scanning • reading for detail • evaluation • inference • literacy • visual literacy

Activity 1.1: Overall viewpoint (gist and evaluation)

Aim: Build confidence identifying overall viewpoint and recognising a balanced evaluation

Time: 12-15 minutes

Interaction: pairs → whole class

Step 1: First read (skim for overall meaning)

Tell learners: 'Read quickly, don't stop at unknown words. You are reading to understand what kind of text it is and what the writer thinks overall'.

Step 2: Choose the best overall viewpoint

Using *Appendix A: Writer viewpoint (gist)*, learners choose the best statement:

- a. The writer strongly recommends the film.
- b. The writer thinks the film is disappointing overall.
- c. The writer has mixed feelings: some aspects are excellent, but the story has weaknesses.
- d. The writer is mainly describing the film without giving an opinion.

Step 3: Evidence check

Learners underline two phrases that support their choice.

Step 4: Whole-class review

Ask learners:

- ▶ Which words show praise?
- ▶ Which words show criticism?
- ▶ Does the writer sound strongly positive, strongly negative or mixed?

Step 5: Extension

Ask learners to write a one-sentence summary of the review: 'Overall, the writer thinks _____ because _____.'

Activity 1.2: Find it fast (scanning)

Aim: Practise locating explicitly stated facts quickly in a longer Level 1 text

Time: 10-12 minutes

Interaction: timed pairs

Step 1: Scanning reminder

Tell learners that scanning is not reading every sentence. It is finding names, numbers, time references, etc, locating specific information quickly.

Step 2: Find the paragraph mini task

Using *Appendix B: Scanning practice*, learners scan and write the paragraph number where the information appears.

Question	Paragraph
1. Where is the film set?	5
2. When will the film be available to watch at home?	Header
3. What is Pepe's job?	3
4. What is the name of the main actor?	2

Step 3: Underline the evidence

Learners underline the exact line where the answer is found.

Step 4: Whole-class check

Confirm answers and highlight:

- ▶ how quickly scanning works
- ▶ why reading the whole text carefully is not necessary for these types of questions.

Step 5: Extension

- ▶ Ask learners to create one more scanning question and swap with another pair.

Activity 1.3: Reading for detail (reasons and precise meaning)

Aim: Practise careful reading to identify the exact reason for an action and eliminate plausible distractors

Time: 12-15 minutes

Interaction: pairs

Step 1: Slow reading (reason hunt)

Now let's move from scanning to detail reading. Detail questions require:

- ▶ slow reading
- ▶ identifying cause and effect
- ▶ checking small but important words.

Ask learners to:

- ▶ read paragraph 1 carefully
- ▶ underline any words or phrases that show reason (for example, 'because', 'after', 'known for', 'rumours suggest', 'not one to miss').

This primes them to notice causal meaning before looking at the options.

Step 2: Answer a reading for detail question

Using *Appendix C: Reading for detail – reasons*, learners answer: 'According to paragraph 1, why was the writer looking forward to this film?'

Learners must:

- ▶ choose the correct option
- ▶ underline the sentence that contains the answer.

Question and answer

According to paragraph 1, why was the writer looking forward to this film?

- a. The writer heard that the director has improved. (correct)
- b. It includes the writer's favourite actors.
- c. The writer wanted to see a film set in Barcelona.

Step 3: Eliminate distractors

Learners label each option:

- ▶ correct
- ▶ mentioned but not the reason
- ▶ not stated
- ▶ opposite meaning

Then they choose one wrong option and complete the sentence:

This option is wrong because the text says _____.

Step 4: Whole-class check (precision words)

Highlight:

- ▶ why one option is correct
- ▶ why others are attractive but wrong
- ▶ how paraphrasing changes meaning
- ▶ how small words change logic (for example, although, however, after, known for)

Ask students which word in the paragraph really signals the reason.

Step 5: Extension (paraphrase)

Learners rewrite the correct answer in 8-12 words, without copying directly. Encourage students to use their own words but with the same meaning and no unnecessary detail.

Activity 1.4: Evaluation (criticism and writer judgement)

Aim: Strengthen ability to recognise criticism and evaluate the writer's judgement accurately

Time: 10-12 minutes

Interaction: pairs

Step 1: What is 'criticism'?

Explain that criticism is not simply describing, it means the writer highlights something negative or weak.

Step 2: Evaluation question (exam-style)

Using *Appendix D: Evaluation practice*, learners answer: 'In paragraph 4, what is the writer's criticism of the plot?'

Learners must underline the key phrase(s) showing criticism.

Step 3: Strength check

Ask learners if the criticism is strong or mild?

Learners choose one then underline two words that show the strength of the criticism (for example, 'not perfect', 'absurd', 'silly', 'superb').

Step 4: Extension

Learners rewrite the criticism as a sentence beginning: 'The writer suggests the plot is weak because _____.'

Activity 1.5: Inference (implied meaning, beyond what is stated)

Aim: Practise inference by using clues from the text to explain implied meaning

Time: 10-12 minutes

Interaction: pairs → whole class

Step 1: Explain inference at Level 1

Tell learners that inference means the answer is not said directly. You must combine clues and decide what the writer is suggesting.

Step 2: Inference question (exam-style)

Using *Appendix E: Inference practice*, learners answer: 'According to paragraph 4, why is Vivas's performance surprising?'

Learners must underline two clues in the paragraph that support the inference.

Step 3: Explain your reasoning

Learners complete the sentence:

It is surprising because _____, so _____.

(Example answer – 'It is surprising because he normally plays serious action characters, so his comic performance is unexpected.')

Step 4: Compare answers

Pairs compare their reasoning with another pair.

Step 5: Extension

Learners write their own inference question (with three multiple-choice options) about paragraph 4 using the stem: 'What does the writer suggest about...?'

Activity 1.6: Literacy and Visual literacy (reference words and image purpose)

Aim: Practise interpreting cohesion (reference words) and linking visuals to text purpose

Time: 12-15 minutes

Interaction: small groups

Step 1: Literacy (reference words)

Write on the board: 'In paragraph 4, what does 'this' refer to?' Using the text, learners locate the word 'this' and draw an arrow to the idea it refers to.

Teacher reminder: Reference words often refer to an idea, not a single noun.

Step 2: Visual literacy (purpose of images)

Show the images from the review. Ask learners: 'What is the purpose of the images included with this review?'

Learners choose:

- a. to show scenes from the film
- b. to help readers recognise the cast
- c. to show the good things about the film

Step 3: Justify using evidence

Learners answer in one sentence: The images are included to _____ because _____.

Encourage learners to refer to:

- ▶ the types of images
- ▶ the purpose of reviews (influencing the reader).

Step 4: Whole-class discussion (real-life connection)

Ask learners where they see reviews with images in real life? (for example, Netflix, Amazon Prime, YouTube trailers, TripAdvisor, cinema listings)

Step 5: Extension

Learners compare two review formats:

- ▶ review with images
- ▶ review without images

Discuss which one is more persuasive and why.

Activity 1.7: Bring it together – Sample Task 1 (Questions 1-10)

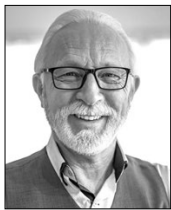
Now learners complete the official task under light exam conditions.

Instructions

- ▶ Time: 15-18 minutes
- ▶ No dictionaries
- ▶ Learners circle answers

Level 1 Reading Task 1

Read the text about Barcelona Blues and answer questions 1-10.



Allen Woodsley
Director



Caroline Sorkin
'Susan'



Guillermo Vivas
'Pepe'



Pamela Fruns
'Aricelli'

Barcelona Blues

Genre: **Comedy/Crime**

Release date (cinemas): **15 Sept**

Release date (TV release): **15 Nov**

Runtime: **2 hrs 10 mins**

Age classification: **12+**

Star rating: ★★★★★

Paragraph 1

Barcelona Blues is the latest film from award-winning director Allen Woodsley, known for his complicated plots and witty dialogue. After a few years of mediocre work, Allen has had a run of more successful films, and rumours in the film industry suggest that this film was set to continue this run. For a Woodsley fan like me, it was not one to miss. The film starts out as a romantic comedy. As with so many Woodsley films, however, just when the viewer is starting to get comfortable, the plot takes a wild turn, in this case from romance to crime (and then back again).

Paragraph 2

The story centres on a young American woman, Susan, apparently enjoying life as a university lecturer in a foreign city. Susan, played by Caroline Sorkin, impresses students and colleagues alike with her elegance and education. In truth, however, she is bored by the successful but predictable life she has built for herself.

Paragraph 3

Her attempts to find adventure land her in trouble, through which she becomes acquainted with the streetwise detective, Pepe, played by Guillermo Vivas. At first their relationship is bad-tempered. But later it blooms into something like romance as they work together to solve a complex crime – but not without a few quarrels and embarrassments along the way.

Paragraph 4

Woodsley's film is not perfect: the plot, though well drawn, is somewhat absurd, and the characters, for all their wit, are fairly stereotypical. The film sometimes feels a bit silly. But, **if** not serious, it is at least seriously entertaining. And the actors are superb. Both lead actors put in high energy performances. Sorkin's fans will agree that this is one of her best films. And Vivas, more commonly known for action roles, is hilarious in his comedy debut.

Paragraph 5

The final star of the film is the city of Barcelona itself, with its handsome buildings and streets, and the medieval villages and rolling hills of its surrounding countryside. The cinematographers deserve praise for their work in filming this landscape so beautifully. If you're looking for an entertaining, intelligent film, with a bit of beautiful scenery thrown in, then Barcelona Blues is a safe bet. It would not be surprising at all if it helped its director add another set of awards to his shelves.

Questions 1-10

Choose the correct answer.

1. What is the writer's opinion of Barcelona Blues?
 - a. People will enjoy this film.
 - b. The actors perform poorly.
 - c. This is a disappointing film.
2. When will the film be available to watch at home?
 - a. August
 - b. September
 - c. November
3. How long does the film last?
 - a. around one and a half hours
 - b. around two hours
 - c. around three hours
4. According to paragraph 1, why was the writer looking forward to this film?
 - a. The writer heard that the director has improved.
 - b. It includes the writer's favourite actors.
 - c. The writer wanted to see a film set in Barcelona.
5. According to paragraph 1, what is unusual about this film?
 - a. It changes genres in the middle.
 - b. It is set in the wilderness.
 - c. It includes scenes in different languages.
6. According to paragraph 3, how do the two main characters meet?
 - a. through work at a university
 - b. in a police investigation
 - c. by committing a crime together
7. In paragraph 4, what is the writer's criticism of the plot?
 - a. It is unbelievable.
 - b. It is gloomy.
 - c. It is complicated.
8. According to paragraph 4, why is Vivas's performance surprising?
 - a. He plays a character with little energy.
 - b. He does a lot of action in this film.
 - c. He usually acts in a different kind of film.

9. Which word is most similar to the meaning of 'if' in paragraph 4?
- a. although
 - b. when
 - c. unless
10. What is the purpose of the images included with this review?
- a. to show scenes from the film
 - b. to help readers recognise the cast
 - c. to show the good things about the film

Teacher answer key (Q1-10):

- 1. a
- 2. c
- 3. b
- 4. a
- 5. a
- 6. b
- 7. a
- 8. c
- 9. a
- 10. b

Final reflection

Ask learners:

- 1. Which question type was easiest: gist, scanning, detail, inference, evaluation, reference words, images?
- 2. Which strategy helped you most: underline evidence, locate paragraph quickly, eliminate distractors, use clue phrases, something else?
- 3. Which skill is most useful for your real life in the UK?

Task 2: Single text

Materials (Sample Task 2 and Appendices)

- ▶ Text: Richmond Park (6 paragraphs)
- ▶ Sample questions 11-20
- ▶ Appendices F-I

Time guide: 40-55 minutes (activities) + 15-20 minutes (task)

Assessment categories in Task 2: gist • reading for detail • evaluation • inference • language

Activity 2.1: Paragraph openings (gist)

Aim: Develop awareness of paragraph purpose and logical flow

Time: 12-15 minutes

Interaction: pairs → whole class

Step 1: First sentence

Ask learners what the first sentence of a paragraph usually does:

- ▶ introduce a time shift?
- ▶ introduce a new person?
- ▶ show contrast?
- ▶ summarise?

Highlight that the missing-sentence questions test paragraph purpose and logical linking, not vocabulary.

Step 2: Remove the options

Give learners *Appendix F: Paragraph openings and missing sentences*. Ask learners to first read paragraph 3, paragraph 4 and paragraph 6, and in pairs, write a one-sentence summary of what each paragraph is mainly about.

Example prompts:

- ▶ What is paragraph 3 mainly about?
- ▶ What changes in paragraph 4?
- ▶ What is paragraph 6 focusing on?

Step 3: Add the options (exam-style)

Ask learners to match the correct first sentences to the paragraphs.

First sentence

a. Today the park is a site of both national and international importance for wildlife conservation.	Paragraph 6
b. It is no surprise then that Richmond Park is the most visited park outside central London.	Not used
c. In 1625, Charles I took up residence in Richmond Palace and decided he did not want to share the land with the common people.	Paragraph 3
d. For about a decade after the king died, Richmond Park was given back to the public.	Paragraph 4

For one paragraph, learners underline the clues in the text:

- ▶ reference clues (for example, 'he', 'it', 'however')
- ▶ time markers (for example, 'in 1625', 'after the king died')
- ▶ linking logic

Step 4: Whole-class logic check

Highlight some features in the text:

- ▶ pronoun reference (He → Charles I)
- ▶ time sequencing
- ▶ contrast markers (However)
- ▶ topic continuity (wildlife → scientific interest)

Step 5: Extension

Ask learners to look at the unused sentence and answer these questions:

Which paragraph might it seem to fit at first glance?

Why is it not the best choice? Use one phrase from the paragraph to explain.

Activity 2.2: Reading for detail – precision and reasons

Aim: Practise careful paragraph reading and eliminate near-miss options

Time: 12-15 minutes

Interaction: pairs

Step 1: Precision reading

Learners read the text and using *Appendix G: Precision reading – detail accuracy*, select the best answer for questions 14, 15 and 16.

When answering, ask learners to underline:

- ▶ the paragraph number
- ▶ key words in the question
- ▶ small precision words (for example, 'in the 1200s', 'why', 'cut').

Questions and answers

According to paragraph 2, what was the land now known as Richmond Park used for in the 1200s?

- a. It was a large city park.
- b. It was an area for farming. (correct)
- c. It was a private royal park.

According to paragraph 3, why did the king build a wall around the grounds?

- a. to keep the park's wildlife safe
- b. to stop people using the land (correct)
- c. to establish a new public park

According to paragraph 5, why are the tree branches in Richmond Park cut?

- a. to protect the trees from deer (correct)
- b. to reduce the size of the trees
- c. to create a beautiful shape

Step 2: True/False/Not given (accuracy check)

Learners label the answer options as True, False or Not given and underline the evidence in the text (or write not given).

Step 3: Precision word focus

With the class, highlight:

- ▶ time references
- ▶ cause/effect language
- ▶ contrast markers
- ▶ small but crucial wording differences

This reinforces the difference between scanning and detail.

Step 4: Extension

Learners rewrite one incorrect option so it becomes correct (by changing only 2–3 words).

Activity 2.3: Evaluation – writer's attitude

Aim: Recognise tone and evaluate strength of judgement

Time: 8–10 minutes

Interaction: pairs

Step 1: Locate the attitude

Learners read paragraph 6 and using *Appendix H: Evaluation and inference*, answer the question: 'How does the writer feel about the park's future?'

Learners should underline evaluative phrases and circle modal or certainty language in the text.

Questions and answers

In paragraph 6, how does the writer feel about the park's future?

- a. optimistic (correct)
- b. uncertain
- c. concerned

Step 2: Strength scale

On the board, write: concerned → uncertain → optimistic

Learners justify their choice using two phrases from the text.

Step 3: Why are the others wrong?

For the incorrect options, learners answer: 'This option is less accurate because _____. ' This prevents superficial guessing.

Activity 2.4: Inference – implied meaning

Aim: Distinguish explicit detail from implied meaning

Time: 8-10 minutes

Interaction: pairs

Step 1: Identify the implied meaning

Learners read paragraph 4 and using *Appendix H: Evaluation and inference*, answer the question: 'What is implied by Charles II decreeing Richmond Park a royal park?'

Which two clues in the paragraph helped you choose your answer? Learners underline:

- ▶ one clue that shows what the public wanted
- ▶ one clue that shows what Charles II did.

Questions and answers

In paragraph 4, what is implied by Charles II decreeing Richmond Park a royal park?

- a. Most of the land had already been used to create a public park.
- b. The public were no longer interested in visiting Richmond Park.
- c. He failed to listen to his citizens' wishes to access the park. (correct)

Step 2: Because/therefore explanation

Ask students to complete the sentence:

Because the text says _____, we can infer that _____.

Step 3: Contrast with detail

Ask learners to explain why this is not a reading for detail question.

Activity 2.5: Language in context

Aim: Deduce meaning from context and eliminate weak synonyms

Time: 8-10 minutes

Interaction: pairs

Step 1: Context before options

Using *Appendix I: Language in context*, ask learners to read the sentence with 'picturesque' and write a short definition in their own words.

Repeat for 'wandering'.

Step 2: Add options

Now learners choose the correct answers. Discuss:

- ▶ Which option is too weak?
- ▶ Which one doesn't fit context?
- ▶ Which one fits connotation?

Questions and answers

picturesque (paragraph 1)

- a. beautiful (correct)
- b. influential
- c. modern

wandering (paragraph 5)

- a. eating
- b. walking (correct)
- c. growing

Step 3: Extension

Learners rewrite the sentence containing the bold word using a simpler synonym. They must keep the meaning the same.

Activity 2.6: Bring it together – Sample Task 2 (Questions 11-20)

Now learners complete the official task under light exam conditions.

Instructions

- ▶ Time: 15-18 minutes
- ▶ No dictionaries
- ▶ Learners circle answers

Level 1 Reading Task 2

Read the text about Richmond Park and answer questions 11-20.

Paragraph 1

Is it possible to be in a huge city, whilst simultaneously walking for miles in seemingly open countryside? Well, it is if you make a trip to Richmond Park, in South West London. The largest city park in Europe, Richmond Park is a national nature reserve, a site of scientific interest and a special area of conservation. In addition, the **picturesque** grounds have inspired famous artists and, in more recent times, have been the location for several films.

Paragraph 2

However, Richmond Park was not always a city park. In the 1200s, the area, called the 'Manor of Sheen', was a collection of farms and grassy fields used by the public to graze sheep and cattle. Two hundred years later, Henry VII, formerly the Earl of Richmond, built a palace there. The palace was named Richmond Palace and the King used to hunt on the public land surrounding the new palace.

Paragraph 3

___11___ He, therefore, had a huge wall constructed, eight miles long around the land to keep people out. He called the land Richmond Royal Park and introduced 2,000 deer to the park for his own amusement. Charles I could not long ignore the resulting public outcry. In an attempt to pacify enraged citizens, he installed ladders on the walls so that people could access the park.

Paragraph 4

___12___ However, when Charles II was crowned, all the grounds were once again decreed a royal park. Despite numerous protests, it remained a royal park for several centuries. Though some parts were made accessible to the public, it was only relatively recently, at the beginning of the 20th century, that Edward VII made the last private areas public. Since then, it has been a public park.

Paragraph 5

Over the last few centuries, the landscape of the park was developed, with the installation of the famous Pen Ponds Lake and the landscaped gardens known as The Isabella Plantation. However, one thing that has remained the same is the deer population. There are now over 630 red and fallow deer **wandering** freely within the park grounds. Their presence in the park has changed its landscape over time. The deer feed on young trees called saplings, preventing the park from becoming a forest. The branches of the grown trees are often cut three metres from the ground, out of reach of the hungry deer.

Paragraph 6

___13___ It has attracted global scientific interest for its ancient trees – some were planted back in Charles I's reign – as well as its birds and other small animals. It is particularly notable for its wide variety of insects, including some rare beetles. No doubt Richmond Park will be an oasis of calm within the bustling capital city for years to come.

Questions 11-13

Choose the best first sentence (a-d) for each paragraph. There is one first sentence you don't need.

11. Paragraph 3 _____

12. Paragraph 4 _____

13. Paragraph 6 _____

- a. Today the park is a site of both national and international importance for wildlife conservation.
- b. It is no surprise then that Richmond Park is the most visited park outside central London.
- c. In 1625, Charles I took up residence in Richmond Palace and decided he did not want to share the land with the common people.
- d. For about a decade after the king died, Richmond Park was given back to the public.

Questions 14-18

Choose the correct answer.

14. According to paragraph 2, what was the land now known as Richmond Park used for in the 1200s?

- a. It was a large city park.
- b. It was an area for farming.
- c. It was a private royal park.

15. According to paragraph 3, why did the king build a wall around the grounds?

- a. to keep the park's wildlife safe
- b. to stop people using the land
- c. to establish a new public park

16. According to paragraph 5, why are the tree branches in Richmond Park cut?

- a. to protect the trees from deer
- b. to reduce the size of the trees
- c. to create a beautiful shape

17. In paragraph 6, how does the writer feel about the park's future?

- a. optimistic
- b. uncertain
- c. concerned

18. In paragraph 4, what is implied by Charles II decreeing Richmond Park a royal park?

- a. Most of the land had already been used to create a public park.
- b. The public were no longer interested in visiting Richmond Park.
- c. He failed to listen to his citizens' wishes to access the park.

Questions 19–20

Choose the word or phrase with the same meaning as the word or phrase in **bold**.

19. picturesque (paragraph 1)

- a. beautiful
- b. influential
- c. modern

20. wandering (paragraph 5)

- a. eating
- b. walking
- c. growing

Teacher answer key (Q11–20):

- 11. c
- 12. d
- 13. a
- 14. b
- 15. b
- 16. a
- 17. a
- 18. c
- 19. a
- 20. b

Final reflection

Ask learners:

1. Which question type slowed you down the most today: missing sentences, detail, inference, evaluation, vocabulary? Why?
2. Which strategy helped you most: underline evidence, eliminate distractors, paraphrase, compare tone, combine clues?
3. Which question did you feel most confident about? What made it easier?
4. Where might you need to use these skills outside the classroom (for example, when reading workplace information, emails, council information, NHS guidance, reviews, instructions)?

Task 3: Multi-text

Materials (Sample Task 3 and Appendices)

- ▶ Five texts (Harrogate Crime Writing Festival)
- ▶ Sample questions 21-30
- ▶ Appendices J-N

Time guide: 45-60 minutes (activities) + 15-20 minutes (task)

Assessment categories in Task 3: gist • reading for detail • evaluation • inference • language • literacy

Activity 3.1: Text purpose and tone (gist)

Aim: Strengthen ability to identify text purpose across different registers and formats

Time: 12-15 minutes

Interaction: pairs → whole class

Step 1: Quick skim – what kind of text is this?

Learners skim Texts 1, 3 and 4 (no dictionaries). In pairs, they complete the table:

Text	What type of text is it?	Who is it for?
1	Festival website homepage/ promotional event overview	People interested in attending the Harrogate Crime Writing Festival (potential visitors)
2	Online forum discussion/chat thread	Festival attendees or fans discussing the event
3	Competition notice/promotional announcement	People attending the festival who want to enter the competition

Step 2: Match to purpose

Using *Appendix J: Text purpose*, learners match each text to its purpose.

Text purposes

a. to discuss a recent shared experience	Text 3
b. to explain how to do something	Text 4
c. to provide biographical information	Not used
d. to persuade people to attend an event	Text 1

Learners must underline one phrase in each text that proves their choice.

Step 3: Purpose vs tone

Ask learners:

- ▶ Which text is trying to sell something?
- ▶ Which is simply sharing?
- ▶ Which gives practical instructions?

Highlight how purpose is shown through:

- ▶ imperatives (for example 'Click on')
- ▶ informal language (for example 'Hey everyone!')
- ▶ promotional adjectives (for example, 'thrilling mix')

Step 4: Extension

Ask learners if any of the texts could have more than one purpose. Which one?

Activity 3.2: Detail across texts and distractors (read for detail)

Aim: Practise careful reading when multiple similar names or details appear

Time: 12-15 minutes

Interaction: pairs

Step 1: Answer two reading for detail questions

Learners read the text and using *Appendix K: Detail across texts*, select the best answer for questions 25 and 26.

They must underline the key phrase in the text that proves their choice.

Questions and answers

In Text 1, which crime writer is best known for their previous career?

- a. Jude Warbeck
- b. Freya Cooper
- c. Ozzy Richardson (correct)

In Text 3, what does Joe like most about Freddy Simpson's writing?

- a. His novels are well-planned. (correct)
- b. His principal character is unique.
- c. His style of writing is entertaining.

Step 2: Distractor check

For one question, learners label options as True, False or Not given.

Complete the sentence:

This is false because the text says _____.

Step 3: Precision check (why wrong answers feel tempting)

Explain that in Level 1 multiple-choice questions, wrong answers are often true details from the text, but they do not answer the exact focus of the question.

Ask learners to underline the key words in the question.

Then highlight how distractors work:

- ▶ Q25: Phrases like ‘international bestselling novelist’ and ‘award-winning novels’ sound impressive, but the question asks about a previous career, so learners must look for evidence such as ‘turned crime fiction writer’ or ‘background in journalism’.
- ▶ Q26: Phrases like ‘iconic fictional detectives’ and ‘witty and charismatic’ are positive, but Joe focuses on the research behind the character (‘did shedloads in Glasgow’) which supports the idea that the novels are well-planned, not simply entertaining.

Finish with a simple reminder: At Level 1, the correct answer depends on the exact focus of the question, not the most striking vocabulary in the text.

Activity 3.3: Register and strength of evaluation (evaluation and literacy)

Aim: Recognise evaluation and strength of opinion in forum-style writing

Time: 10-12 minutes

Interaction: pairs

Step 1: Most informal text

Using *Appendix L: Register and evaluation*, learners answer the question: ‘Which text is the most informal?’

They should underline evidence of the register:

- ▶ contractions
- ▶ colloquial phrases
- ▶ emojis or expressive phrases

Question and answer

Which text is the most informal?

- a. Text 2
- b. Text 3 (correct)
- c. Text 4

Step 2: Strength of enthusiasm

In Text 3, underline three words that show strong positive evaluation (for example, ‘stand-out’, ‘highlight’, ‘iconic’, ‘shedloads’).

Ask learners if this is mild or strong enthusiasm.

Step 3: Extension

Learners rewrite one enthusiastic sentence in a more neutral tone.

Activity 3.4: Inference from informal communication (inference)

Aim: Practise predicting behaviour and implied meaning

Time: 10-12 minutes

Interaction: pairs

Step 1: Inference question

Learners read Text 5 and using *Appendix M: Inference*, answer the question: 'In Text 5, how will Joe probably spend next weekend?'

Learners should underline two clues in the text.

Questions and answers

In Text 5, how will Joe probably spend next weekend?

- a. enjoying another festival
- b. reading at home (correct)
- c. eating at a restaurant

Step 2: Evidence reasoning

Learners complete the sentence:

Joe will probably _____ because the text says _____, which suggests _____.

Step 3: Real-life link

Ask learners to share a couple of examples of when they needed to infer/predict what someone would do from a short message (for example, a work email, an invitation, an online forum).

Activity 3.5: Vocabulary in context and nuance (language)

Aim: Develop vocabulary deduction at Level 1

Time: 10-12 minutes

Interaction: pairs

Step 1: Vocabulary questions

Learners read the sentences in Text 1 and Text 2 with 'takes charge' and 'determined'. Using *Appendix N: Language in context*, select the answers and underline the context clues in each text.

Questions and answers

Choose the word or phrase with the same meaning as 'takes charge'.

- a. is in control (correct)
- b. gives a talk
- c. teaches writing

Choose the word or phrase with the same meaning as 'determined'.

- a. popular
- b. keen (correct)
- c. realistic

Step 2: Paraphrase

Learners rewrite each phrase in a full sentence, for example, Jude Warbeck takes charge → Jude Warbeck is in control of the festival.

Step 3: Nuance check (connotation and tone)

Ask learners to decide if the word is positive, negative or neutral in the context of the text.

Then ask:

- ▶ Does the word suggest admiration, criticism or emotional distance?
- ▶ Is the writer using the word to make the character/person seem strong, cold or calm?
- ▶ If you replaced the word with a simpler synonym, would the meaning change?

Example prompt:

'Determined' could mean keen and not giving up (positive) or hard-working (neutral/negative). Which meaning fits best in this text? Why?

Learners choose one meaning and justify it with a short phrase from the text:

In this text, determined suggests _____ because the writer says _____.

Activity 3.6: Bring it together – Sample Task 3 (Questions 21-30)

Now learners complete the official task under light exam conditions.

Instructions

Time: 15-18 minutes

No dictionaries

Learners circle answers

Level 1 Reading Task 3

Read the five texts and answer questions 21-30.

Text 1

Harrogate Crime Writing Festival				
What's On	News	Travel Packages	Contact Us	Festival Forum
<p>The hugely successful Harrogate Crime Writing Festival returns this summer. It's a friendly, fun-filled festival located in and around Agatha Christie's old haunt: the luxurious Old Swan Hotel.</p> <p>Held between 18 and 21 July, this year's festival offers a thrilling mix of comedy, heated debate and stimulating conversation. International bestselling novelist Jude Warbeck takes charge as Festival Programming Chair joined by a host of giants of the genre, including Freddy Simpson, Sajita Khan and Freya Cooper. Keep an eye out for gameshow host turned crime fiction writer Ozzy Richardson!</p> <p>Click on What's On to download the festival brochure.</p>				

Text 2

Friday 19 July

8:30pm – Cygnet Meeting Room, Old Swan Hotel

Special Guest: Freddy Simpson

Fan favourite crime fiction author Freddy Simpson celebrates an important milestone this summer as the 20th book in his bestselling, much-loved Tony Green series will be published.

The long-awaited novel, *Playing with Fire*, is the latest in a long line of award-winning novels following sleuth Green's **determined** hunt for the truth in gritty inner-city Glasgow.

With a fascinating background in journalism, taking him all over the world, Simpson has a vast repertoire of amusing tales to tell and the talent to tell them. Learn more about Simpson, his life and his works at this entertaining presentation.

Text 3

The inspirational Freddy Simpson

Joe	Hey everyone! Loving the festival. Did anyone else check out Freddy Simpson's slot last night? For me, it was a stand-out highlight of the festival.
Suzy	Yeah, I was there with my hubby. He's such an interesting guy, isn't he? And so witty and charismatic!
Nahal	Great to get some insight into the Tony Green character. There are so many iconic fictional detectives that it must be tough to create a crimefighter that really stands out, but Freddy Simpson's done this with Tony Green.
Joe	As a budding writer myself, it's tempting to just follow a set of clichés. All good writing requires research. It sounds like Freddy Simpson did shedloads in Glasgow prior to putting pen to paper.
Suzy	I couldn't agree with you more, Joe. On another note, there's a competition to win the latest book. They're gonna open the link later today. Can't wait to get my nose stuck in it whether I win or not.
Joe	Hey, thanks for the reminder, Suzy. I'll look out for the link and enter too.
Nahal	Yeah, me too. Thanks Suzy.

Text 4**Fancy a copy of *Playing with Fire* personally signed by Freddy Simpson?**

If so, enter our competition by answering the following question:

What is the name of PI Tony Green's long-suffering personal assistant?

Competition ends midnight Saturday 20 July, and winners will be posted online by 10am the following day.

Freddy Simpson will present copies to winning applicants in the closing session.

To enter, click on the Competition Entry link below. Good luck!

[Competition Entry](#)

Text 5

Hey Suzy, Thanks for the heads up about the competition! You'll never guess – I won. And to be presented a copy by the legend himself – well, that's just the cherry on the cake. By all accounts *Playing with Fire* sounds like a real page-turner, so I guess that's my evenings and weekends sorted for the next couple of weeks! See ya at the closing session if not before. Take care, Joe

Questions 21-23

Match each text to its text purpose (a-d). There is one text purpose you don't need.

21. Text 1 _____

22. Text 3 _____

23. Text 4 _____

- a. to discuss a recent shared experience
- b. to explain how to do something
- c. to provide biographical information
- d. to persuade people to attend an event

Questions 24-28

Choose the correct answer.

24. Which text is the most informal?

- a. Text 2
- b. Text 3
- c. Text 4

25. In Text 1, which crime writer is best known for their previous career?

- a. Jude Warbeck
- b. Freya Cooper
- c. Ozzy Richardson

26. In Text 3, what does Joe like most about Freddy Simpson's writing?

- a. His novels are well-planned.
- b. His principal character is unique.
- c. His style of writing is entertaining.

- 27.** In Text 2, what can attendees expect to hear in Freddy Simpson's talk?
- a. some stories from his travels
 - b. some advice about writing novels
 - c. some details about his awards for writing
- 28.** In Text 5, how will Joe probably spend next weekend?
- a. enjoying another festival
 - b. reading at home
 - c. eating at a restaurant

Questions 29-30

Choose the word or phrase with the same meaning as the word or phrase in **bold**.

29. takes charge (Text 1)

- a. is in control
- b. gives a talk
- c. teaches writing

30. determined (Text 2)

- a. popular
- b. keen
- c. realistic

Teacher answer key (Q21-30):

- 21.** d
- 22.** a
- 23.** b
- 24.** b
- 25.** c
- 26.** a
- 27.** a
- 28.** b
- 29.** a
- 30.** b

Final reflection

Ask learners:

1. Which strategy helped you most when switching between texts?
2. When reading online (for example, forums, adverts, event pages), which skill do you use most?
3. Which question type required you to slow down the most?

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Appendix A: Writer viewpoint | Activity 1.1

Choose the best statement about the writer's overall viewpoint.

- a. The writer strongly recommends the film.
- b. The writer thinks the film is disappointing overall.
- c. The writer has mixed feelings: some aspects are excellent, but the story has weaknesses.
- d. The writer is mainly describing the film without giving an opinion.

Answer: ____

Underline two phrases in the text that support your answer.

Evidence 1: _____

Evidence 2: _____

Extension: Write a one-sentence summary of the review.

Overall, the writer thinks _____ because _____.

Appendix B: Scanning practice | Activity 1.2

Scan the text quickly. Write the paragraph number where the information is found.

Question	Paragraph
Where is the film set?	
When will the film be available to watch at home?	
How long does the film last?	
What is the name of the main actor?	

Underline the evidence in the text for each answer.

Extension: Create one more scanning question and swap with another pair.

_____?

Appendix C: Reading for detail – reasons | Activity 1.3

Read paragraph 1 carefully. Underline any words or phrases that help you understand why something happened (for example, 'because', 'after', 'however', 'rumours suggest').

Question 4:

According to paragraph 1, why was the writer looking forward to this film?

- a. The writer heard that the director has improved.
- b. It includes the writer's favourite actors.
- c. The writer wanted to see a film set in Barcelona.

Answer: _____

Underline the exact words in the paragraph that prove your answer.

Evidence: _____

Choose one incorrect option. Tick the reason it is not correct:

- It is not mentioned in the text.
- The text says the opposite.
- It is mentioned, but it is not the reason.

This option is wrong because the text says _____
_____.

Extension: Rewrite the correct answer in your own words (8-12 words).

_____.

Appendix D: Evaluation practice | Activity 1.4

Read paragraph 4 carefully and answer the question.

Question 7

In paragraph 4, what is the writer's criticism of the plot?

Underline the key phrases that show criticism.

Which is more accurate?

- mild criticism
- strong criticism

Underline two words that show how strong the criticism is.

Choose the best answer.

In paragraph 4, what is the writer's criticism of the plot?

- a. It is unbelievable.
- b. It is gloomy.
- c. It is complicated.

Answer: ____

Extension: Write one sentence beginning:

The writer suggests the plot is weak because _____.

Reminder: In Level 1 Task 1, learners must move beyond 'finding information' and show they can interpret attitude, criticism and implied meaning. Encourage evidence-based answers and challenge learners to justify why distractors are wrong.

Appendix E: Inference practice | Activity 1.5

Read paragraph 4 carefully.

Question 8

According to paragraph 4, why is Vivas's performance surprising?

Answer: _____

Underline two clue phrases that support your answer.

Clue phrase 1: _____

Clue phrase 2: _____

Complete the sentence:

It is surprising because _____, so _____.

Extension: Write another inference question (with three multiple-choice answer options) about paragraph 4 and swap with another pair.

What does the writer suggest about _____?

A _____

B _____

C _____

Appendix F: Paragraph openings and missing sentences | Activity 2.1

Read the text about Richmond Park. In pairs, write one short sentence (8-12 words) to explain what each of these paragraphs is mainly about.

Paragraph 3 main idea: _____

Paragraph 4 main idea: _____

Paragraph 6 main idea: _____

Choose the best first sentence (a-d) for each paragraph. There is one sentence you do not need.

_____	11. Paragraph 3
_____	12. Paragraph 4
_____	13. Paragraph 6
_____	Unused sentence

Options:

- Today the park is a site of both national and international importance for wildlife conservation.
- It is no surprise then that Richmond Park is the most visited park outside central London.
- In 1625, Charles I took up residence in Richmond Palace and decided he did not want to share the land with the common people.
- For about a decade after the king died, Richmond Park was given back to the public.

Choose ONE paragraph and underline two words or phrases in the paragraph that helped you choose the correct first sentence.

Paragraph: _____

Clue 1: _____

Clue 2: _____

Extension:

Look at the unused sentence and answer these questions:

- ▶ Which paragraph might it seem to fit at first glance? _____
- ▶ Why is it not the best choice? Use one phrase from the paragraph to explain.

Appendix G: Precision reading – detail accuracy | Activity 2.2

Read the questions carefully. Label each answer option as True, False or Not Given. For the True and False answers, underline the evidence in the text.

Question 14

According to paragraph 2, what was the land now known as Richmond Park used for in the 1200s?

- a. It was a large city park.
- b. It was an area for farming.
- c. It was a private royal park.

Correct answer: _____

This is true because the text says _____.

Choose one False answer and complete:

This is false because the text says _____.

Question 15

According to paragraph 3, why did the king build a wall around the grounds?

- a. to keep the park's wildlife safe
- b. to stop people using the land
- c. to establish a new public park

Correct answer: _____

This is true because the text says _____.

Choose one False answer and complete:

This is false because the text says _____.

Question 16

According to paragraph 5, why are the tree branches in Richmond Park cut?

- a. to protect the trees from deer
- b. to reduce the size of the trees
- c. to create a beautiful shape

Correct answer: _____

This is true because the text says _____.

Choose one False answer and complete:

This is false because the text says _____.

Extension: Choose one question and rewrite one incorrect answer so that it becomes correct (change only 2-3 words).

Original option: _____?

Rewritten option: _____?

Appendix H: Evaluation and inference | Activities 2.3 & 2.4

Part A: Question 17

In paragraph 6, how does the writer feel about the park's future?

- a. optimistic
- b. uncertain
- c. concerned

Answer: _____

Underline two words or phrases that show the writer's attitude.

Is the writer:

- strongly positive
- mildly positive
- neutral
- negative

Explain your choice in one sentence:

_____.

Part B: Question 18

In paragraph 4, what is implied by Charles II decreeing Richmond Park a royal park?

- a. Most of the land had already been used to create a public park.
- b. The public were no longer interested in visiting Richmond Park.
- c. He failed to listen to his citizens' wishes to access the park.

Answer: _____

Complete the sentence:

Because the text says _____

we can infer that _____.

Why is this an inference question and not a detail question?

Appendix I: Language in context | Activity 2.5

Read the sentences carefully before choosing an answer.

Question 19

picturesque (paragraph 1)

Before looking at the options, write your own definition:

Picturesque means: _____

Now choose:

- a. beautiful
- b. influential
- c. modern

Answer: _____

Why are the other two options incorrect?

Question 20

wandering (paragraph 5)

Before looking at the options, write your own definition:

Wandering means: _____

Now choose:

- a. eating
- b. walking
- c. growing

Answer: _____

Underline the part of the sentence that helped you decide.

Evidence: _____

Extension: Select one of the sentences and rewrite it using a simpler synonym. You must keep the meaning the same.

_____.

Appendix J: Text purpose | Activity 3.1

Read the texts quickly. Do not use a dictionary.

Text	What type of text is it?	Who is it for?
1		
2		
3		

Match each text to its text purpose (a-d). There is one purpose you don't need.

21. Text 1

22. Text 3

23. Text 4

Options:

- a. to discuss a recent shared experience
- b. to explain how to do something
- c. to provide biographical information
- d. to persuade people to attend an event

Underline one phrase in each text that proves your choice.

Text 1 evidence: _____

Text 3 evidence: _____

Text 4 evidence: _____

Which text is...

How do you know?

trying to sell something?

simply sharing?

giving practical instructions?

Extension: Could any text have more than one purpose? Explain both purposes.

Appendix K: Detail across texts | Activity 3.2

Read Texts 1 and 3 carefully.

Question 25

In Text 1, which crime writer is best known for their previous career?

- a. Jude Warbeck
- b. Freya Cooper
- c. Ozzy Richardson

Answer: _____

Underline the exact words in the paragraph that prove your answer.

Evidence: _____

Question 26

In Text 3, what does Joe like most about Freddy Simpson's writing?

- a. His novels are well-planned.
- b. His principal character is unique.
- c. His style of writing is entertaining.

Answer: _____

Underline the exact words in the paragraph that prove your answer.

Evidence: _____

Choose one question and label each option as True, False or Not given. Underline the key words in the question and the answer options.

Why do the other options not answer the exact focus? _____

For one False option, complete this sentence:

This is false because _____.

Appendix L: Register and evaluation | Activity 3.3

Read Texts 2, 3 and 4 and answer the question.

Question 24

Which text is the most informal?

- a. Text 2
- b. Text 3
- c. Text 4

Answer: _____

Underline two features that show informality.

Feature 1: _____

Feature 2: _____

In Text 3, underline three words or phrases that show enthusiasm.

Clue 1: _____

Clue 2: _____

Clue 3: _____

Is the enthusiasm:

- mild
- strong

Explain your answer using evidence from the text:

Extension: Rewrite one enthusiastic sentence in a more neutral tone.

Original: _____.

Neutral version: _____.

Appendix M: Inference | Activity 3.4

Read Text 5 and answer the question.

Question 28

In Text 5, how will Joe probably spend next weekend?

- a. enjoying another festival
- b. reading at home
- c. eating at a restaurant

Answer: _____

Underline two clues that helped you decide.

Clue 1: _____

Clue 2: _____

Explain your reasoning by completing this sentence:

Joe will probably _____

because the text says _____ ,

which suggests _____.

Extension: With a partner, share a couple of examples of when you have needed to infer/predict what someone would do from a short message (for example, a work email, an invitation, an online forum).

Appendix N: Language in context | Activity 3.5

Read the sentences carefully before choosing an answer.

Question 29

Choose the word or phrase with the same meaning as **takes charge**.

- a. is in control
- b. gives a talk
- c. teaches writing

Answer: _____

Underline the words in the text that helped you decide.

Rewrite the correct phrase in a complete sentence.

_____.

Question 30

Choose the word or phrase with the same meaning as **determined**.

- a. popular
- b. keen
- c. realistic

Answer: _____

Underline the words in the text that helped you decide.

Rewrite the correct phrase in a complete sentence.

_____.

Choose one question. Is the word or phrase positive, negative or neutral in this context?

In the text, the word suggests _____,

because the writer says _____.