

# ESOL Skills for Life

## Level 1 – Reading

### Sample 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 describe what made the writer interested in learning more about memory*

..... A .....

1. to state that most people remember different information from different sources  
.....
2. to reassure the reader that memory might change, but humans are not becoming less intelligent  
.....
3. to describe what the writer discovered about which information he remembered  
.....
4. to explain that the way we use our memories has changed  
.....

**Questions 5-6**

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

5. The writer is
  - A worried about how people will use their memory in the future
  - B disappointed by the results of his research into memory
  - C interested in memory and has found out more about it
6. The **main purpose** of the opening story in paragraphs A and B is to
  - A show how different information is remembered
  - B question whether modern-day memory is getting worse
  - C illustrate how phone numbers are becoming easier to remember

## Today's Memories

### Paragraph A

Last week when I was at my classmate's house, I asked her for our college's phone number. I know she does not like using her mobile phone so I was expecting her to fetch her address book and read out the number for me but she didn't. My 62-year-old classmate was able to tell me the number without looking it up.

### Paragraph B

Now what really surprises me is that I call her every day and I have no idea what her number is. However, my classmate, who probably calls the college once every month or two, knows the number by heart. This made me ask the question – are the younger generation's memories getting worse?

### Paragraph C

I decided to do some research into this and I discovered a lot about how our memories work. I borrowed books from the library and I read articles online. Interestingly, during my research I learnt a lot about my own memory – I remembered more from the books than from the online articles.

### Paragraph D

I wondered if that was just me or if this was a common phenomenon. I was pleased to discover that this is very normal. When we look for information online we tend not to remember what we have read. Instead, we remember where we found it. This is different from when we read books.

### Paragraph E

So in these times, when we rely so much on technology, are our memories getting worse? Well, you will be relieved to hear the answer is no. Nowadays, we are just using our memories differently.

### Paragraph F

Will our memories change much more? This is a difficult question to answer. However, there is one thing you can be sure of. No matter what changes happen to our memory, our levels of intelligence are highly unlikely to fall.

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) ~~One of these theories comes from the 16th century.~~
- B We are not sure about the colour of the chef's hat before the 19th century.
- C Things are very different today.
- D At the beginning of the 20th century, fashion started to play a part.
- E However, this doesn't explain the reason for the shape of the hat.
- F Chefs' hats were not always thought of this way.

**Questions 11-13**

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

11. According to paragraph two, after the king found something in his dish he
- A thought it was his own fault
  - B wanted the chef to take it out
  - C asked the next chef to wear a hat
12. According to paragraph five, one chef's hat had 100 folds because he
- A made his breakfasts varied
  - B was new to the kitchen
  - C worked for the king
13. The inverted commas ( ' ' ) in paragraph six are used because
- A he was not a real king
  - B this was an official title
  - C he thought he was important

**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. In paragraph two, **severely** means
- A sadly
  - B cruelly
  - C carefully
15. In paragraph four, **demonstrated** means
- A told
  - B showed
  - C brought
16. In paragraph seven, **versions** means
- A brands
  - B shades
  - C types

## The History of the Chef's Hat

### Paragraph one

Everyone in the modern world is familiar with the tall, white chef's hat that looks a bit like an over-sized muffin. But have you ever stopped to think why it looks so unusual? Do the shape and size have any purpose? It's certainly nothing like any other hats – for example, the peak of baseball caps is obviously useful to protect the players' eyes against the glare of the sun. There are many theories about where and how the design originated, but nobody is really sure about which is true.

### Paragraph two

          A (Example)          . King Henry VIII, who was very bad-tempered, once found a hair in his soup. He blamed the chef for the hair and punished him very **severely** by firing him. He ordered his next chef to wear a hat to try to prevent this happening again, and he decided on a tall hat.

### Paragraph three

          7.          . One idea comes from the belief that chefs in ancient times often poisoned kings. For this reason, kings chose their chefs very carefully and treated them very well. The hat was meant to have the same shape as the king's crown, although it was made of linen, not gold and jewels!

### Paragraph four

          8.          . Around that time, restaurant owners chose white as the colour of kitchen uniforms to represent an idea of cleanliness. At the same time, the height of a kitchen worker's hat **demonstrated** the importance of the work done. As the boss of the kitchen, the chef had the tallest hat, which could be as tall as 40 centimetres.

### Paragraph five

Another story is about the series of folds around the hat. The idea was that the number of these represented the experience of the chef. For example, one king's chef had 100 folds in his hat to show that he could cook eggs in 100 different ways, keeping the king's breakfast interesting!

### Paragraph six

          9.          . The 'King of Chefs' M Escoffier decided that he needed to make his restaurants look more professional. One way to do this would be to make his chefs dress better, with smarter chefs' hats made of good-quality linen. He provided well-made uniforms and insisted that his chefs dress well outside of work too.

### Paragraph seven

          10.          . Most chefs no longer wear the traditional hat. They have replaced it with lighter paper **versions**, baseball caps or they simply do not wear a hat at all.

Turn over page

**Task 3**

Texts A-E on pages 8-10 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 a council decision* .....A.....

17. to invite people to an event .....
18. to explain the reasons for a decision .....
19. to try to persuade someone to change their mind .....

**Questions 20-21**

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

20. Which text is the most informal?
- A text A
- B text C
- C text E
21. In text D, what is the purpose of the short headings 'When?', 'Where?', etc?
- A to ask the council some questions
- B to help readers find information quickly
- C to show that the writer is unsure of the arrangements

**Questions 22-27**

Look through all of the texts to find the answer to the questions below. Choose the letter of the best answer and circle it **on your answer sheet**.

22. Henry Stephenson thinks volunteers
- A could never take the place of professional librarians
- B might be able to run Barker Street Library part time
- C should do exams before they volunteer in the library
23. You want to read more about cuts to council services. Which page of the Maytown Echo do you need?
- A page 3
- B page 9
- C page 13
24. Samira's next-door neighbour
- A travels to the library by bus
- B uses the computers at the library
- C likes meeting her family at the library

- 25.** Janet Carey thinks the library should close because
- A people prefer using the internet in their own homes
  - B it is easier to buy books than borrow them from a library
  - C the council needs the money for more important services
- 26.** The purpose of the picture in text D is to
- A show that the event is a protest
  - B inform Maytown Council about the event
  - C instruct people to bring a sign to the town hall
- 27.** Samira Hussein
- A stopped the council from closing Barker Street Library
  - B organised a successful protest against the closure
  - C invited 100 people to Maytown Town Hall

**Questions 28-30**

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

**28. unavoidable** (text A) means

- A expensive
- B necessary
- C important

**29. access** (text B) means

- A understand
- B provide
- C get

**30. lightly** (text C) means

- A easily
- B hopefully
- C understandably

**Turn over page**

## Text A

# Maytown Echo

## Residents shocked at plans to close library

By our council reporter

Maytown residents expressed shock and outrage this week at the announcement that Maytown Council plans to close the public library in Barker Street.

Council Leader Janet Carey said the decision to close the library had been extremely difficult but it was **unavoidable**. ‘Last year our budget was cut by more than 25 per cent,’ she said. ‘If we don’t reduce the cost of running our libraries, we’ll have to make cuts somewhere else. At the moment our priority is to protect vital services, such as children’s centres and care of the elderly.’

Local resident Samira Hussein, who lives in Barker Street, said she

was ‘devastated’ by the decision. ‘I go there every week with my children,’ she said. ‘They love it. It has helped them become really good readers. And the library staff are always so kind and helpful.’

One solution might be for volunteers to take charge of the library. Local residents have been running the library in nearby Stockdale for the past two years. Councillor Carey said: ‘We might be able to keep the library open for

a couple of days a week if a group of volunteers would staff it.’

But retired librarian Henry Stephenson said it was ridiculous to think volunteers could do the work. ‘Being a librarian is a professional occupation,’ he said. ‘You have to pass a lot of exams, and be very good at dealing with the public. People often come to us looking for extremely specialised information and you need to be very skilful to answer all their questions.’

### On other pages

Latest news on the council’s cash crisis	3
Letter from the headteacher of Barker Street Primary School	9
New computer course at Maytown Central Library	10
Lessons from Stockdale: the grannies who run a public library	12–13

## Text B

**To:** janet.carey@maytown.gov.uk  
**From:** s.hussein@husseinfamily.com  
**Subject:** Barker Street Library

Dear Councillor Carey

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Maytown Council’s decision to close Barker Street Library.

As you know, public libraries are very important for our community. I have been a member of the Barker Street Library for more than 10 years now and I can assure you that it is very well used. When my children were small, they used to love going to the storytelling sessions. My oldest daughter is doing her GCSEs this year and she often uses the library as a quiet place to study.

It’s not just young people who use the library, either. My next-door neighbour is 82 and she relies on the Barker Street Library staff to help her research her family history on the internet. If this library closed, she would hardly go out at all. She would need to catch two buses to get to the next nearest library in Pond Lane.

Mayfield’s public libraries belong to the people of Mayfield. They were built many years ago by people who wanted everybody, rich and poor, to be able to **access** books and Information. I do not think today’s council has the right to deprive us of this important service.

I urge you to reverse this decision and keep the Barker Street Library open.

Kind regards

Samira Hussein (Mrs)



**Text C**

Mrs S. Hussein  
12 Barker Street  
Maytown MT5 3FD

Maytown Council,  
38 High Street,  
Maytown MT1 6CB

26 June

Dear Mrs Hussein

Thank you for your email.

The decision to close Barker Street Library was not taken **lightly**. In common with councils up and down the country, Maytown Council is facing large cuts to its budget. We simply cannot afford to run as many libraries as we did in the past.

In addition, our research shows that public library use is decreasing. More and more people are using the internet to access information. It is also easy to get hold of second-hand books very cheaply from online bookstores. We cannot justify keeping the Barker Street Library open when we are so short of money for other things.

Yours sincerely

*Janet Carey*

Janet Carey  
Leader, Maytown Council

**Text D**

**CALLING ALL RESIDENTS!  
BARKER STREET NEEDS YOU!**



**WHEN?**  
Saturday, 10am

**WHERE?**  
Outside Maytown Town Hall

**WHY?**  
Maytown Council wants to close Barker Street Library. Let's show them how we feel!

**WHO?**  
Anyone who loves libraries and cares about the future of our town!

For more information, contact Samira Hussein on 07123 456789

**Text E**

**To:** s.hussein@email.com  
**From:** m.kar@email.com  
**Subject:** Library demo

Hey Samira

Just wanted to say huge congratulations for the protest event! So proud of you, sister. Aftab said he counted 100 people plus! We've really shown the council how much we care.

Love you

Mariam xxx

**End of exam**





## **Skills for Life Level 1 Reading – Sample paper 1 Answers**

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