

Exploring Skills for English Tests

Reading Part 3: B2 Level

Format of the task

There are three parts to the B2 Reading test. In **Part 3** candidates will read one longer text (600-750 words). The text will explore a particular topic in some depth and can be factual or narrative in nature. These will be appropriate to B2 candidates.

There will be 10 questions in total in Part 3. The types of questions that can be found in this part are multiple choice questions (MCQs), matching (such as topic to paragraph), note taking and sentence completion but only 1 or 2 of these item types will be used. The focus of these questions will be on detailed understanding, gist, inference, global meaning, opinions, attitudes and purpose.

The language of the texts and questions is accessible and appropriate to candidates at B2 level. Candidates should spend approximately 20-25 minutes on Part 3.

Skills/functions being assessed

- Following a line of argument in a discursive text or events in a narrative
- Comprehension of inferred or implied meaning
- Comprehension of writer's views and opinions
- Reading to locate information including for note-taking purposes

Tips for teachers

Provide candidates with:

- Opportunities to analyse more detailed, topic specific texts
- Skimming and scanning techniques to identify key words and phrases
- Opportunities to explore inferred and implied meaning in a variety of texts
- An awareness of the test format and layout through such as practicing filling in gaps or blanks where specific information is missing
- Skills in time management by setting timed activities

Tips for learners

- Read the questions carefully and think about what is being assessed. Identify the parts of the text the question is aimed at.
- Practice identifying, specific pieces of information that could be implicit in various types of texts.
- Don't expect to understand every word or phrase – use the context of the text to help with comprehension.
- Keep your eye on the timer and try to leave some time to check your answers
- Prepare by using the online Skills for English (SfE) practice tests

Sample B2 Reading Part 3 Task

This is a short example extract from the type of text and questions a candidate may encounter in Part 3.

Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

The Manipulation of Shoppers

It has become clear that supermarkets know what we want and know how to make us buy more of their **products**. They even know how to make us buy things we don't want or need as well. For them, it's all about maximizing **profits**. The layout and position of every supermarket shelf has been designed specifically to make us dip into our pockets as much as possible. Remember the last time you went shopping for those one or two essential items, but left with a full trolley of goods? Well, here is why...

The first section of the supermarket is known as at the 'decompression zone.' Located at the store entrance, this area is designed to make the shoppers feel relaxed. It is an open space compared to the aisles and is usually used to promote **items** on sale. The idea is to make shoppers feel that there are **bargains** to be found in the rest of the store. This section also includes the sale of **newspapers, magazines and books** which further promotes a relaxed feeling. Shoppers can take their time, read something for a few minutes and feel at home in the supermarket. From a marketing point of view, the shoppers are already spending more time in the store than they had planned and are browsing items that were not even on their shopping list. So far so good for the supermarket designers.

This is a typical Part 3 text as it explores a topic in some depth.

Q1

Q2

The words highlighted in yellow show how incorrect answers are mentioned within the text – candidates therefore need to consider each

Write ONE or TWO words from the text to complete the answers.

- 1) The focus of supermarket designers is mainly to increase _____ for the organisation.
- 2) Supermarkets convince the customer that _____ will be available if they continue inside.

Spelling must be accurate, and answers should be written exactly as they appear in the text.

Answers:

1. profits
2. bargains

Note: this sample task is for guidance purposes only. For examples of level-specific reading tasks, please refer to the Skills for English Practice Tests available through the Skills for English website: <https://skillsforenglish.com/language-learning/>