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**FUNCTIONAL SKILLS**

English Level 1



**Area: reading**

Criterion 11: Identify meanings in texts and distinguish between fact and opinion

**Meaning in texts**

Sometimes words will have slightly different meanings depending on the context they are used in.

For example,

The sun was **scorching** hot.

The word scorching is used to show that the sun is extremely hot.

He delivered a **scorching** review of the policy.

In this context, scorching is used to show the man’s review was harsh or very critical.

**Text A**

**Enjoying Your garden**

Gardening is something lots of people like doing. It's about planting, watering and looking after plants so they can grow. When you spend time in your garden, you see all the wonderful things nature can do, like grow pretty flowers and healthy veggies.

Here at Highfield Gardens, we believe gardening is the most fun activity you can indulge in; it can make people feel calm and relaxed. Everyone enjoys gardening; it's like taking a break from busy life and finding peace among the plants. Some people say that spending a bit of time in the garden can make you feel happy and refreshed.

A person planting a tree

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However, this hobby isn’t fun just because it makes people feel good. Growing your own fruits and veggies can be exciting. They taste yummy and fresh, much better than what you get from the shop, and it feels amazing to pick your own food that you've taken care of. All you need are some seeds, gloves and basic gardening tools.

Whether you're new to gardening or you've been doing it for a while, it's always entertaining to watch things grow. Each seed you plant is like a little adventure, teaching you about nature and making you feel closer to it. So, put on your gloves and get ready to have some fun in your garden! It really is the most relaxing thing in the world!

**Using the information provided above, work out the answers to the following questions.**

**Question 1**

Look at paragraph two in Text A. What does the writer mean when they say ‘Here at Highfield Gardens, we believe gardening is the most fun activity you can indulge in’?

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**Question 2**

Look at the final paragraph of Text A. What does the sentence ‘Whether you're new to gardening or you've been doing it for a while, it's always entertaining to watch things grow’ suggest about gardening?

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**Fact and opinion**

Facts are things that can be proven true or false. They are based on evidence or can be checked.

For example, "The sky is blue" is a fact because it can be seen and proven.

Opinions are what someone thinks or feels. They can vary from person to person and cannot be proven true or false. Phrases like ‘I think’, ‘I believe’ and ‘in my opinion’ are often used.

For example, "Chocolate ice cream is the best flavour" is an opinion because it depends on personal preference.

**Using the information provided above, work out the answers to the following questions.**

**Question 3**

In Text A, which of the following is a **fact**?

Tick one.

1. All you need are some seeds, gloves and basic gardening tools.
2. We believe gardening is the most fun activity you can indulge in.
3. It really is the most relaxing thing in the world!
4. Everyone enjoys gardening.

**Question 4**

In Text A, which of the following is an **opinion**?

Tick one.

1. It’s about planting, watering and looking after plants.
2. Everyone enjoys gardening.
3. All you need are some seeds, gloves and basic gardening tools.
4. When you spend time in your garden, you see all the wonderful things nature can do.

**Answers**

**Meaning in context**

**Question 1**

Gardening is extremely enjoyable and something everyone can take part in. The word indulgent suggests that it is not only a hobby, but also a source of relaxation and fulfilment for individuals.

**Question 2**

Gardening is an activity that can be enjoyed by individuals regardless of their level of experience. Whether someone is a new or experienced gardener, watching plants grow is always fun. The joy of gardening comes not just from the end result, but also from the journey of growing plants.

**Fact and opinion**

**Question 3**

A) All you need are some seeds, gloves and basic gardening tools.

**Question 4**

B) Everyone enjoys gardening.

**Your functional skills exam**

Your functional skills exams will consist of 2 papers.  
These papers will take place over the following time periods:

* Reading – 60 minutes
* Writing – 60 minutes

Further information on the format that your test will take can be obtained from your training provider.

**Hints and tips**

* Find out what format your exam will be in. It may be paper-based   
  or on-screen.
* Plan what you are going to revise in advance. Don’t leave it until the last minute.
* Do as many past papers as you can so you are prepared for the day. If possible, try to complete the past papers following the same format as the actual exam.
* Find a quiet place to study and revise. It helps to sit at a table or a desk, don’t revise in bed.
* Don’t stay up all night revising the night before your exam. It’s important to have a good rest so you feel refreshed and ready to go.
* Read the question 3 times. The first time to ensure you understand what is being asked, the second time to get an understanding of what you need to do, and a third time to figure out exactly what maths techniques you should be applying.
* If you are struggling with a question, skip it and come back to it later. Try not to sit getting worked up about a difficult question, it will only waste exam time. Move on and come back to it after you have answered the other questions.
* Take note of the number of marks available. This will give you an indication of how much working out you must show. For example, 1 mark will need an answer only and more marks will need you to show your working out.
* When you’ve finished the exam, go back and check your answers. If you still have time remaining, use it to check your answers and when you have checked your answers check them again.