Introduction

The Functional Skills English In Context: Childcare E3–L2 Workbook is designed to support teaching and learning. It provides a range of activities, based on sources that will be relevant and interesting to your learners.

There are two types of material in the workbook:

- Sources, which focus on a text that is used as a springboard for learning activities
- 'Focus on' worksheets, that address a specific skill such as using apostrophes or writing an email.

The workbook is suitable for learners from Entry 3 to Level 2.

Each Source is based on some stimulus material. In many cases these come from a published article or report; others have been specifically written for the workbook. Sources have been selected to interest and engage learners studying childcare, not to deliver part of the vocational qualification. Each Source is followed by a range of teaching and learning activities that involve all three components of functional English – reading, writing and speaking, listening and communication. The aim is to provide a framework for a varied lesson that includes a range of activities.

Some of the sources cover generic areas and will therefore lend themselves to be used with groups from mixed vocational areas. They will also help learners practise for their functional English assessment, which will be set in a generic context. The generic themes are:

- Memory
- Time on your hands
- Teamwork
- Communicating with colleagues
- A good impression
- Employment rights of young workers
The Sources do not have to be delivered in the sequence in which they appear in the workbook: feel free to use them in any order you choose, taking account of your specific learners.

The Sources and Focus on worksheets can be used in conjunction with each other. If you notice that learners have a problem with a functional English skill you may like to address this with the appropriate Focus on worksheet.

**Adapting to different levels**

Your learners may be at different levels in functional English. You can adapt the activities in the workbook in a number of ways.

*For learners closer to Entry 3:*

- You could read the text to them yourself, or you could ask learners to read it aloud, each taking turns to read one paragraph. You could also provide an overview of the Source or summarise the main points.
- Many Sources have specific vocabulary activities; however, you can always ask the group if there were any words they didn’t understand and deal with those verbally.
- Questions can also be tackled orally, with learners writing the answers down afterwards. This will also allow you to focus on spelling.

*For learners closer to level 2:*

- You could ask learners at this level to write more in response to activities, or to answer comprehension questions in full sentences, using accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- You may well wish to choose sources with level 2-type activities, such as distinguishing fact from opinion (e.g. ‘Toys and gender’, ‘A man’s place?’ or “Pushy” parents’), persuasive writing (e.g. ‘The cost of childcare’), those that ask for summarising (e.g. ‘Helping girls enjoy sport’) or those that call for more extensive writing (e.g. ‘Passing milestones’, ‘Child poverty’, ‘Making a splash!’ or ‘Foster care’).

The speaking and listening activities can be used flexibly. Some could be adapted as writing activities. Or you can use whole group, small group and pair discussion depending on the size and composition of your class.

**Extending the material**

You can create additional questions to reinforce learning or give more practice. You could also encourage learners to find more information about the source, using the internet or from newspapers or magazines.
Texts from these sources will also provide greater opportunity to look at how layout, format and illustrations are used to add impact.

**Developing and securing skills**

The workbook should form part of your overall functional English provision. It is based on an approach through which the skills are first developed in relevant and familiar contexts. Once learners have practised and mastered their skills, they can then move on to apply them in unfamiliar contexts, as they will need to for the assessment.

**An example source: The cost of childcare**

*Here are more detailed suggestions on how you can support one of the sources in this workbook: The cost of childcare (p9).*

This Source was chosen because it is likely to be relevant to most learners in childcare. It is based on an article in a national newspaper that has been reduced in length and slightly simplified. You could encourage your learners to look in the papers for other articles about related topics.

After reading the Source, you may want to ask learners if there are any words that they didn’t understand. Many of the Sources have activities based on the more complex vocabulary in the text. Learners could be asked to write a sentence or to come up with an oral statement using any words they didn’t understand.

You could also discuss the column layout, highlighted introduction and the photograph, and how these add to the text.

**Activity A**

All Sources include comprehension activities with a range of formats. Activity A asks six full comprehension questions about the text. You could use question 1 to focus on audience. Learners do not have to answer the questions in complete sentences but, if you have a mixed-ability group, you may decide to ask those closer to level 2 to write their answers in complete sentences using accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. You could provide an example of a full answer, either verbally, or on the whiteboard or flipchart.

**Activity B**

Activity B consists of three multiple-choice questions that require learners to read the text closely in order to select the correct answer. The multiple-choice questions and answers also contain a number of proper nouns and it maybe worth drawing learners’ attention to these. If
they seem to unclear about these you could use the Focus on proper nouns with them.

Other forms of comprehension questions, which you will see in some sources, are true/false statements.

**Activity C**

All Sources have speaking and listening activities, and Activity C asks learners to discuss in pairs some of the issues raised in the article. This could be extended to a whole group discussion in which learners express their opinions. The activities do not have to be tackled in the order they appear in the workbook. With some groups you may like to tackle this activity earlier.

If you wanted to extend the discussion, you could focus on the statement, ‘The childcare sector is poorly funded and poorly paid.’ This could lead to discussion about wage levels and you could link to the source ‘Employment rights for young workers’.

**Activity D**

Several sources have gap-filling exercises. In Activity D learners have to choose the correct word from a given list.

In other topics they may need to come up with their own word to fill each gap. If you think this might be too difficult for your learners, you could always provide a list of words. Alternatively, you can point out that appropriate words can often be found in the source. Ask them to make sure they copy the spelling correctly if they need to.

Point out that, when they do their functional English assessment, they will often find the words they need for the writing questions in the reading text. This can help them to use accurate spelling.

**Activity E**

Some Sources include an activity based on a specific spelling, grammar or punctuation skill, as in this activity. You could link this activity to the Focus on apostrophes, either by introducing it in advance to prepare learners or by using it to follow the activity and give extra practice.

You could extend Activity E in two ways:

- by asking the group to identify other apostrophes in the text
- by asking them to write a sentence of their own, using an apostrophe.

**Activity F**

All Sources have writing activities - normally activities requiring more extended writing appear towards the end. Activity F is intended to
provide practice in persuasive writing. Stress the importance of backing up opinions with facts wherever possible.

For learners closer to Entry 3, you could simplify the task by asking them to just write a list of advantages and disadvantages. You can then provide an opportunity for them to practise their writing skills by completing two sentences. One beginning 'An advantage of government loans for childcare would be …' and the other starting ‘A disadvantage of government loans for childcare would be …’.

For learners closer to Level 2, you could ask for a longer piece of writing, or adapt the task by asking them to write a more formal piece.

This exercise could easily be developed into a discussion activity.

**Activity G**

This activity asks learners have come up with examples of ‘red top’ and broadsheet newspapers, and to look for examples in the main text (‘Nurseries in crisis’) that show it comes from a broadsheet paper.

To reinforce the differences between the two types of newspaper you could give the group an article on the same news item from a red top and broadsheet and ask them to compare them.

You could extend the activity by discussing different types of text, audiences and formats, for example by:

- asking learners what kind of people they think read the different types of newspapers, and for what purpose
- asking learners to find examples of newspaper writing
- asking learners to write articles in the style of one newspaper.

**Feedback**

Feedback to activities can be given in a number of ways:

- by sharing answers orally after each activity
- by providing answers so learners can self-mark
- by peer marking.

**An example ‘Focus on’ worksheet:**

**Focus on commas**

*Here are suggestions on supporting the worksheet Focus on commas (p43).*
The 'Focus on' worksheets provide more detailed guidance on specific skills called for in Source activities. In this case, some of the Sources have activities for which learners are asked to add commas to sentences. Similarly, other activities ask learners to use other punctuation, write paragraphs, draft emails, etc.

If you find that they struggle with one of the activities using commas, it may be an appropriate time to turn to this Focus on.

Accurate punctuation is required for functional English at Levels 1 and 2 and learners at Entry 3 level should be learning how to use commas.

You can use this focus on worksheet in several ways:

- As a framework for a taught lesson on commas. Below is an example of how you might do this.
- As the basis for work with an individual student who has difficulties using commas correctly.
- As an extension to an activity in a topic where you feel the group would benefit from further teaching and practice with the skill.

All teaching of skills should be constantly reinforced when giving feedback on a learner's work. Helping them to recognise and correct any errors is the best way for them to improve their use of punctuation.

When you see a piece of writing with missing or inappropriately used commas, remind them of the uses of commas in this Focus on.

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**Example lesson based on the worksheet Focus on commas**

1. Start by asking learners how confident they feel about using commas accurately.
2. Explain that the purpose of commas is to make sentences easier to understand by creating pauses between elements that need to be separated. Then move on to explain the three ways in which commas are used.
3. You might like to give learners a piece of text that contains commas. This could be from their vocational area, or something like a newspaper article. Ask them to spot the commas and say whether its purpose is to separate items in a list, to separate two parts of a sentence or to replace brackets. This can be done at this stage, or at the end of the session on commas.
4. The first form of usage, commas in a list, is probably the easiest for learners to grasp. You could ask them to follow up the activity by writing a sentence of their own that uses commas in this way.
5. The next place where commas should be used is in compound sentences where two independent clauses are joined by a conjunction. If learners know what a conjunction is, point out that the comma will always come before the conjunction. However, care should be taken not to confuse them with too many grammatical terms.
6. The final example of how commas are used is perhaps the most complex for...
learners to understand. It essentially concerns ‘nonessential elements’ in a sentence. These are words, phrases or clauses that add detail to a sentence but could be removed without making the sentence incomplete. Learners need to understand this use of commas for reading, as well as for writing. However, they are only rarely likely to construct this type of sentence in their own writing.

7 Emphasise the importance of ‘hearing’ where a comma is needed. Reading aloud something they have written can help learners to recognise where there is a pause, and where a comma should be used.