

Functional Skills English reading sticks

Name _____ Date _____

These sticks were inspired by an idea on Twitter from Mr Lilley (June 10, 2022):

https://twitter.com/Lilley_Sam22/status/1535330831874641921?s=20&t=rSGB-GRkAm7uBdtjmiEkUg

Since seeing them on Twitter, I've seen related ideas across the web. For example:

<https://msjordanreads.com/5-ways-to-use-popsicle-sticks-in-small-reading-groups/>

Two sizes are provided. The first in a small font (single line of text) for gluing onto lolly sticks (I bought mine at Poundland, size 11cm x 1cm). The larger second set can be used as is (as a to-do or check list for small groups) or laminated and cut into cards.

My pack of sticks included five colours (red, orange, blue, yellow, green) conveniently allowing me to sort the questions/instructions into five levels (E1, E2, E3, L1, L2). The colours could be also used to sort by skill or topic. For example: punctuation, sentence structure, purpose/audience/source of text, vocabulary/dictionary skills, textual features, etc.

Remember that each level of Functional Skills subsumes lower-level content. So, for example, E3 learners could use E1, E2 and E3 sticks.

Most questions/instructions generic but not all sticks will suit all texts. The sticks can be handed out (or picked out by learners) at random, or give a small selection to pairs/small groups (empty spice jar make good containers). Groups could be given the same set of sticks or different ones, and could optionally share their findings with the rest of the class. Each group could work on the same text, or a different text.



Sticks are based on Subject content functional skills (SCFS): English (DfE, February 2018) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/functional-skills-subject-content-english> and are probably best used with realia such as: posters, local leaflets, booklets, instructions, recipes, newspaper/magazine cuttings, business cards, etc.

The sticks also work well with many skillsworkshop texts. For example:

E1-E2

70 Years as Queen
Mother's Day E1 Reading (Text B)
At the Library E1 Reading (Texts B & C)
Rainfall shut down in lock down

E3-L1

How to grow potatoes
Cat Cafes
Thundersnow
Geronimo
Captain Tom reading, writing, discussion
Open your eyes to pavement plant

L2

What is Carbon really?
Insect numbers plummeting
Capture that springtime optimism!
Legend of the Loch Ness Monster
Should university students get a refund?
Windrush Scandal

To find these texts type the title into the skillsworkshop site search box:

<https://www.skillsworkshop.org/search>

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Entry Level 1 and above		SCFS
How many sentences in the text?		E1.9
Who wrote the text?		E1.10
Where did the text come from?		E1.10
Explain why there are capital letters in the text.		E1.11,12
Entry Level 2 and above		
Are there any proper nouns in the text?		E2.13
What is the main point of the text?		E2.8
Find a conjunction in the text.		E2.11,19
Find a compound sentence in the text.		E2.11,19
Find a 6-letter word. Look it up in a dictionary.		E2.10,15
Find an image. Does it improve the text? How?		E2.12
Find a caption. What does it tell you?		E2.12
Are there any questions in the text?		E2.13
Find two adjectives in the text.		E2.20
Find a word that helps to link sentences.		E2.20
Are there any exclamations in the text?		E2.13
Are there any plurals in the text?		E2.14
Entry Level 3 and above		
Find a common noun with 6+ letters. Look it up.		E3.11,16
What is the purpose of the text?		E3.10
Name 2 organisational features used in the text.		E3.12
How many paragraphs in the text?		E3.21
Find a comma in the text. Explain its purpose.		E3.13
Find two compound or complex sentences.		E3.21
Explain the reason for a new paragraph in the text.		E3.21
Find 4 words starting with the same letter. Put them in alphabetical order.		E3.11,16
Find a tricky word. Write a dictionary definition for it.		E3.11
Are there any contractions in the text?		E2.16/L1.18

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Level 1 and above		SCFS
Is the text formal or informal?		L1.16
Name two language features used in the text.		L1.12
In one sentence, describe the main idea of the text.		L1.9
Find an example of specialist vocabulary in the text.		L1.17
Does the text explain, persuade, instruct or describe?		L1.16
Are there any apostrophes? What for?		L1.18, 19
Name 2 organisational features and their purposes.		L1.14
Find two facts in the text.		L1.11
Find two opinions in the text.		L1.11
Find an adjective and replace it with a similar word.		L1.13
Level 2 and above		
What is the tone of the text?		L2.19
Name two language features. Why are they used?		L2.14
Describe the style of the text.		L2.19
Find 2 examples of specialist vocabulary in the text.		L2.15
Is there a possessive apostrophe in the text?		L2.20
Is the text biased? How do you know?		L2.17
Does the writer of the text have a point of view?		L2.18
Find a paragraph with a strong topic sentence.		L2.25
How does the writer link paragraphs?		L2.23, 25
Are quotation marks used in the text?		L2.20
Are there any colons or semicolons in the text?		L2.20
Find 2 adjectives. Use a thesaurus to find synonyms.		L2.15

Entry Level 1 and above

How many sentences in the text?

Who wrote the text?

Where did the text come from?

Explain why there are capital letters in the text.

Entry Level 2 and above

Are there any proper nouns in the text?

What is the main point of the text?

Find a conjunction in the text.

Find a compound sentence in the text.

Find a 6-letter word. Look it up in a dictionary.

Find an image. Does it improve the text? How?

Find a caption. What does it tell you?

Are there any questions in the text?

Find two adjectives in the text.

Find a word that helps to link sentences.

Are there any exclamations in the text?

Are there any plurals in the text?

Entry Level 3 and above

Find a common noun with 6+ letters. Look it up.

What is the purpose of the text?

Name 2 organisational features used in the text.

How many paragraphs in the text?

Find a comma in the text. Explain its purpose.

Find two compound or complex sentences.

Explain the reason for a new paragraph in the text.

Find a tricky word. Write a dictionary definition for it.

Are there any contractions in the text?

Find 4 words starting with the same letter. Put them in alphabetical order.

Level 1 and above

Is the text formal or informal?

Name two language features used in the text.

In one sentence, describe the main idea of the text.

Find an example of specialist vocabulary in the text.

Does the text explain, persuade, instruct or describe?

Are there any apostrophes? What for?

Name 2 organisational features and their purposes.

Find two facts in the text.

Find two opinions in the text.

Find an adjective and replace it with a similar word.

Level 2 and above

What is the tone of the text?

Name two language features. Why are they used?

Describe the style of the text.

Find 2 examples of specialist vocabulary in the text.

Is there a possessive apostrophe in the text?

Is the text biased? How do you know?

Does the writer of the text have a point of view?

Find a paragraph with a strong topic sentence.

How does the writer link paragraphs?

Are quotation marks used in the text?

Are there any colons or semicolons in the text?

Find 2 adjectives. Use a thesaurus to find synonyms.