

The best mince pies – Functional English tasks

Name _____ Date _____

Adapted from: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/nov/21/supermarket-luxury-mince-pies-ranked>
and <https://www.which.co.uk/news/2019/11/ms-has-the-best-mince-pies-for-christmas-2019/>

Which? reveals its pick of the best supermarket mince pies Panel blind-tests 11 premium mince pies – and picks M&S as the favourites



Pastry, mincemeat and overall 'attractiveness' were all aspects upon which stores' pies were judged.

This year's best mince pies are from Marks & Spencer, according to baking experts at Which?.

The panel blind-tested 11 supermarket premium mince pies to uncover the most delicious, as well as the blandest, wettest and least appetising.

The best buy went to M&S Collection Mince Pies, priced at £2.50 for six and scoring 87% in the taste test. Which? experts said they had a "quintessentially Christmassy aroma", praising the "golden, buttery pastry" and the "boozy, fruity mincemeat" and describing them as attractive-looking pies.

Steer clear of Spar, whose luxury pies were judged by Which? to be bland and under-baked, while the "overly sweet" filling was too wet and lacked spice.

Iceland Luxury Mince Pies (£1.89) and Asda Extra Special All Butter Luxury Mince Pies (£1.50) were the runners up, scoring 73% apiece.

Iceland and Asda were the much cheaper joint runners-up. Iceland, perhaps better-known for its prawn rings and value-for-money frozen burgers, was a surprise runner-up. The tasters liked the star decoration, which partly exposed the "juicy" mincemeat underneath, but some experts said the filling lacked spice.

Iceland Luxury Mince Pies sell for £1.89 for a packet of six – 25% cheaper than the M&S equivalent.

The other budget option that scored well was Asda's Extra Special All Butter Luxury Mince Pies – at £1.50 a box, one of the cheapest in the test – which impressed with its "moist, well flavoured" mincemeat, although the pastry was found to be pale and a little dry.

Waitrose's pies were jointly the most expensive with M&S but were the biggest let down. Which? said its No 1 All-Butter Mince Pies (£2.50 for six) looked appetising but the mincemeat disappointed, with one expert describing it as claggy.

Taste test – winners and losers

1. M&S Collection Mince Pies £2.50
2. Iceland Luxury Mince Pies £1.89
3. Asda Extra Special All Butter Luxury Mince Pies £1.50
4. Waitrose No. 1 All Butter Mince Pies £2.50
5. Aldi Specially Selected Mince Pies £1.35
6. Tesco Finest Mince Pies £1.75
7. Sainsbury's Taste the Difference All Butter Mince Pies £2
8. Lidl Deluxe Luxury Mince Pies £1.79
9. Co-op Irresistible Luxury Mince Pies £2
10. Morrisons The Best All Butter Deep Filled Mince Pies £2
11. Spar Luxury All Butter Mince Pies £2



Tesco's offering came in fifth place.

1. Alphabetical order and dictionaries

a) Put these words from the text into alphabetical order on the lines.

(E3.16W, 2 marks)

bland	juicy	butter
jointly	judged	budget

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

b) Each set of 4 recipe cards must be arranged in alphabetical order. There is one error in each set. Draw arrows to show where the incorrect card in each set should go.

1. chocolate log chestnut stuffing chipolatas & honey cranberry sauce
2. brandy butter bread sauce Brussels sprouts Brazil nut mix

(E3.16W, 2 marks)

c) Find the meaning of the word **aroma** in a dictionary.

Write the meaning here and the page number of the dictionary.

(E3.11R, 1 mark)

d) Find the meaning of the word **quintessential** in a dictionary.

Write the meaning here and the page number of the dictionary.

(E3.11R, 1 mark)

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2. Spelling

a) Change these food words to plurals.

Singular	Plural
loaf	
jelly	
tomato	

(E3.14W, 3 marks)

b) Spelling check

Do **not** look at the text or any other pages of this resource.

Listen to ten words and write them down.

Your teacher will say the word and use the word in a sentence or phrase from the text.

Your teacher will then say the word again before you write it down.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

(E3.17W, 10 marks)

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3. Purpose and main points

a) The main purpose of the text is to:

A	persuade people to read a Which? report about mince pies.	
B	report the findings of a Which? Report about mince pies.	
C	tell you about the cheapest mince pies in the UK.	
D	advise you not to make you own mince pies.	

(E3.10R, L1.12R, 1 mark)

b) The main point of paragraph 3 is to tell you that:

A	M&S mince pies look attractive.	
B	M&S mince pies were the best buy.	
C	mince pies must have golden buttery pastry.	
D	mincemeat contains alcohol.	

(L1.9R, 1 mark)

4. Detailed reading

a) Which statement is **not** true about the pies that were tested?

A	Eleven different pies were tested.	
B	The cheapest pies were £1.50.	
C	Judges considered the pastry, the mincemeat and the appearance.	
D	Morrisons pies were part of the test.	

(L1.9R, 1 mark)

b) Find three details about Asda mince pies.

_____ (L2.11R, 3 marks)

c) How many brands of mince pie have the word 'luxury' in their name?

_____ (L1.9R, 1 mark)

d) Which brand of mince pie has a star decoration?

_____ (L1.9R, 1 mark)

5. Working out word meanings

If you wish, you may use a dictionary, thesaurus or other reference materials for these questions.

- a) As used in the text, '**blind-tested**' means to try a product:

while wearing a blind fold.	<input type="checkbox"/>	from behind a window blind.	<input type="checkbox"/>
without knowing its name.	<input type="checkbox"/>	that is hidden in a plain paper bag.	<input type="checkbox"/>

(E3.11R, L1.13R, 1 mark)

- b) 'Iceland Luxury Mince Pies (£1.89) and Asda Extra Special All Butter Luxury Mince Pies (£1.50) were the runners up, scoring 73% **apiece**.'

Suggest a word to replace the word **apiece** in the text. _____
(L1.13R, 1 mark)

- c) Which word would best replace the word **claggy** in the text?

muddy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rocky	<input type="checkbox"/>
sticky	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dirty	<input type="checkbox"/>

(L1.13R, 1 mark)

- d) 'Steer clear of Spar, whose luxury pies were judged by Which? to be **bland** and under-baked, while the "overly sweet" filling was too wet and lacked spice.'

Suggest a word to replace the word **bland** in the text. _____
(L1.13R, 1 mark)

- e) 'The tasters liked the star decoration, which partly **exposed** the "juicy" mincemeat underneath, but some experts said the filling **lacked** spice.'

Rewrite this sentence using your own words. Your sentence(s) must:

- have at least two clauses (i.e. be compound or complex)
- use at least one conjunction
- replace the words in bold with different words or phrases.

_____ (E3.21R, L1.13R, L1.25W, L2.28W – 4 marks)

6. Using images

a) Name one brand of mince pie that does not have exposed mincemeat.

_____ (L1.15R – 1 mark)

b) The caption of this image does not tell the reader which brand of mince pie is pictured.

Suggest one possible brand that *could* be in the image.

_____ (L1.15R, 1 mark)



7. Style and tone

a) Which two quotations from the text are examples of informal language?

A	steer clear of Spar	
B	pastry found to be pale and a little dry	
C	25% cheaper than the M&S equivalent	
D	but were the biggest let down	

(L1.16R, 2 marks)

b) Which **two** words best describe the style of the text?

A	conversational	
B	technical	
C	informative	
D	instructive	

(L2.19R, 2 marks)

c) Which word best describes the writer's tone?

A	angry	
B	informal	
C	sarcastic	
D	humorous	

(L2.19R, 1 mark)

8. Organisational and structural features

a) Explain the purpose of the pictures and captions in the text.

L1.14R(2), L2.16R(2), 4 marks in total)

b) Name two more features used to organise the text. Explain the **effect each one has** and **which information** they help the reader find.

(E3.12R(2), L1.14R(2), L2.16R(2), 6 marks in total)

9. Language and textual features

a) In the text, find four **adjectives**: two used in a positive way and two in a negative way.

positive		
negative		

(E2.20W, L1.12W, 4 marks)

b) The panel blind-tested 11 supermarket premium mince pies to uncover the most delicious, as well as the **blandest, wettest and least appetising**.

The text in bold is an example of what language feature?

(L1.12R, 1 mark)

c) Name one other language feature used in text, **give an example** from the text and **explain its effect** on the reader.

(L1.12R (1), L2.14R (2), 3 marks in total)

10. Facts and opinions

a) Write an F (fact) or an O (opinion) next to each sentence or phrase from the text.

Iceland Luxury Mince Pies sell for £1.89 for a packet of six – 25% cheaper than the M&S equivalent.	
Iceland, perhaps better-known for its prawn rings and value-for-money frozen burgers, was a surprise runner-up.	
Waitrose's pies were jointly the most expensive with M&S	

(L1.11R, 3 marks)

b) Find one more fact in the text.

_____ (L1.11R, 1 mark)

c) Overall, is the text is mostly factual or mostly opinions?

_____ (L1.11R, 1 mark)

11. Using punctuation to help understanding

a) Explain why **Which?** is spelt with a capital letter and a question mark.

 _____ (L1.18R, 1 mark)

b) **Pastry, mincemeat and overall attractiveness were all aspects upon which stores' pies were judged.**

What does the apostrophe show in this quotation?

A	The pies all came from one store	
B	The pies came from more than one store	
C	The word stores has some letters missing	
D	The judging took place inside more than one store	

Tick one answer. (L1.18R, 1 mark)

11. Using punctuation to help understanding (continued)

Use this sentence from the text to help answer questions c) d) and e).

The other budget option that scored well was Asda's Extra Special All Butter Luxury Mince Pies – at £1.50 a box, one of the cheapest in the test – which impressed with its “moist, well flavoured” mincemeat, although the pastry was found to be pale and a little dry.

- c) – at £1.50 a box, one of the cheapest in the test – is placed between two dashes because:

A	it is important information	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	it is additional information	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	it is quoted from the Which? Report	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	it connects two different parts of the sentence	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tick one answer. (L1.18R, 1 mark)

- d) The dashes in – at £1.50 a box, one of the cheapest in the test – could be replaced by:

brackets	<input type="checkbox"/>	quotation marks	<input type="checkbox"/>
apostrophes	<input type="checkbox"/>	full stops	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tick one answer. (L1.18R, 1 mark)

- e) Explain why quotation marks are used in “moist, well flavoured”

 _____ (L1.18R, 1 mark)

Use this sentence from the text to help answer questions f) and g).

Iceland, perhaps better-known for its prawn rings and value-for-money frozen burgers, was a surprise runner-up.

- f) Explain why a pair of commas is used in this sentence.

 _____ (L1.18R, 1 mark)

- g) The sentence includes four hyphens. Discuss their purpose with your teacher.

 _____ (L1.18R, 1 mark)

The best mince pies – Functional English

Teaching notes



Background

Sparked after reading an article in The Guardian newspaper, and made in haste, this resource is aimed at Entry Level 3 (E3) and Level 1 (L1) learners but includes some E2 and L2 questions. There is no answer sheet – one *might* appear later for skillsworkshop contributors – but see below for general marking guidance. If you are stuck you can ask for help using my Twitter tag @skillsworkshop <https://twitter.com/skillsworkshop>

I referred to SAMs (sample assessment materials) and practice tests from the City & Guilds, OCR, Open Awards, NCFE and Pearson for inspiration and to familiarise myself with a variety of question styles. All such materials are available freely from the Awarding Organisations' web sites.

Purpose

This resource is not intended to emulate formal summative assessment papers. A few questions are deliberately challenging and open ended: I hope they prompt discussion, and a questioning or curious attitude to popular seasonal media reports.

Level

There is also no detailed mapping page – except for spelling. However, most questions include relevant content descriptors in a grey font, along with suggested marks. E.g. 11c L1.18R = *Level 1 Reading descriptor 18: Use knowledge of punctuation to aid understanding of straightforward texts*. For full details of the Reformed Functional Skills English content, please refer to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/functional-skills-subject-content-english>

Unlike formal assessment papers, questions are arranged by topic. Teachers can pick and choose the topics they want to focus on; the headings help the learners understand which part of the curriculum they are looking at. Learners **do not** necessarily need to work through every page. However, I do recommend that all learners attempt the spelling questions. I also recommend that the teacher thoroughly introduces the task, checking that learners are familiar with Which? magazine (including its strange punctuation mark!).

Marking guidance

Marks (in grey) are suggestions only but do give learners an idea of the detail required in answers. Some questions are mapped to more than level – in these cases the number of marks you award may depend on the detail in the answer and the level of the learner. **Maximum possible marks = 72.**

Spelling check

Teacher to say the word, say the word in the sentence or phrase, and then say the word again.

All words taken from the Entry 3 'Expectations for both spelling and reading':

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/functional-skills-subject-content-english> (pp29-31) and also listed on page 11 of this resource. Remember that each level subsumes lower levels so L1/L2 learners should be getting close to 100% in this check.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. decoration | The tasters liked the star decoration . |
| 2. describing | ... describing them as attractive-looking pies. |
| 3. delicious | They tested 11 supermarket premium mince pies to uncover the most delicious. |
| 4. favourites | ... and picks M&S as the favourites . |
| 5. difference | Sainsbury's Taste the Difference mince pies |
| 6. flavoured | moist, well- flavoured mincemeat |
| 7. irresistible | Co-op Irresistible mince pies |
| 8. collection | M&S Collection mince pies |
| 9. specially | Aldi Specially Selected mince pies |
| 10. quintessentially | Experts said they had a quintessentially Christmassy aroma. |

'Quintessentially' is not on the E3 list! However, 'essential' is so encourage learners to write the root word first and then think about the prefix and suffix. Use a similar tactic with 'irresistible'.

An accompanying Functional Maths resource, using the same text, is also available.

Happy Christmas!
Maggie Harnew, Nov 25th 2019

The best mince pies – Functional Maths

Teaching notes (continued)

Functional Skills Entry Level 3 – Expectations for both reading and spelling

The words have been chosen because they build on Entry Level 2 by including more of the common words that are often misspelt.

Letters	Sound	Letters	Sound(s)	<p>In addition, Entry Level 3 students are expected to spell the words described below. Words in brackets are examples. Words and letters in bold are not examples; they are specific words or spellings that students are expected to both read and spell.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> common words with the following suffixes or endings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ion (e.g., competition, discussion) -ian (e.g., electrician, politician) -cious, -tious (e.g., suspicious, cautious) <i>[delicious]</i> -cial, -tial (e.g., artificial, <i>essential</i>) <i>[specially]</i> -ation, -ant, -ance (e.g., observation, observant, observance) <i>[decoration, collection]</i> -ent, -ency (e.g., frequent, frequency) -able, -ably (e.g., comfortable, comfortably) -able, -ably, after 'ge' and 'ce', where 'e' is not dropped before adding the suffix (e.g., changeable, noticeably) -ible, -ibly (e.g., possible, possibly) <i>[irresistible]</i> common words with hyphens to join a prefix to a root word, if the prefix ends in a vowel letter and the root word also begins with one (e.g., re-enter, co-operate) common words with letters representing sounds that are often not pronounced (e.g., desperate, separate, history, category, natural, business, <i>favourite</i>, government, environment) <i>[flavoured, difference]</i> the following words that are homophones or near-homophones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •who's, whose •accept, except •berry, bury •brake, break •fair, fare •groan, grown •heel, he'll •knot, not •mail, male •meat, meet •missed, mist •peace, piece •plain, plane •scene, seen •weather, whether •farther, father •guessed, guest •led, lead •past, passed •aloud, allowed •desert, dessert •steal, steel
appear , opposite , apply	/p/	committee , achieve	/i:/	
doubt , debt , attach , minute	/t/	average , equip , bargain	/ɪ/	
scheme , occasion , according ,	/k/	curiosity , qualify , qualification	/b/	
picture , actual	/tʃ/	island	/aɪ/	
rough , tough , cough , enough	/f/	though , although ,	/eʊ/	
listen , fasten , whistle , criticise , receive , purpose , increase , recent , centre , exercise , medicine , experience	/s/	bought , brought , ought , therefore	/ɔ:/	
especially , appreciate ,	/f/	sugar , popular , particular , regular , centre	/ə/ or /ɜ:r/	
guarantee	/g/	competition , correspond , determined , develop , frequently , explanation , dictionary , definite , thorough , borough , describe , experiment , purpose , opposite , suppose , famous , various , certain	/ə/	
knowledge , college	/dʒ/	experience	/ɪe/	
ease , criticise , position , cause	/z/	excellent	/ks/	
measure , treasure , pleasure	/ʒ/	communicate , community , education	/ju:/	
committee , bomb , thumb , crumb , climb , condemn , column , autumn	/m/	available	/el/	
knot , knee , knife , knowledge	/n/			

Source: Subject content functional skills: English. DfE (Feb 2018) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/functional-skills-subject-content-english>

Words highlighted in yellow are used in spelling check (p3). Those in *[italic]* added by skillworkshop.org as further examples found in Mince Pie text and used in spelling check.