FUNCTIONAL SKILLS ENGLISH

Assessment Pack 1

Reading, SPaG and Writing

Level 1 and Level 2

Pompeii and Herculaneum

Learner Name: _____

Date: _____

Tutor: _____

Instructions:

- Read all questions carefully.
- Write clearly in black or blue ink.
- Check your spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Answer all questions.

Total Reading Marks: 37

Total writing Marks:

Level 1 marks: 20

Level 2 marks: 40

Time allowed: 1 hour

Total marks awarded - reading:	
Pass	Fail
Total marks awarded - writing:	
Pass	Fail

Pompeii and Herculaneum

Introduction

This pack has been designed to assess a range of reading and writing skills at Levels 1 and 2. The assessment is based on the theme of **Pompeii and Herculaneum**, combining historical information with promotional material.

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2-3	Introduction and overview
4-5	Reading Text 1 – Pompeii and Herculaneum
6	Reading Text 2 – Discover Pompeii & Herculaneum
7-9	Reading questions for Text 1
10	Level 2 Writing Task A
11	Level 2 Writing Task B – Based on Text 1
12	Level 1 Writing Task
13	Level 1 Writing Task – Based on Text 2
14	Spare writing sheet (for any of the writing tasks)
15-21	Tutor Section (a separate document, available to those who contribute resources to skillsworkshop.org) with answers and marking guides.

Pompeii and Herculaneum

Reading Assessment

The reading section contains two texts:

- **Text 1:** An informative article about Pompeii, the eruption of Mount Vesuvius and archaeological discoveries.
- **Text 2:** A promotional travel poster encouraging visitors to explore Pompeii and Herculaneum.

The questions assess a variety of reading skills, including:

- Retrieving information
- Making inferences
- Understanding vocabulary and language
- Identifying facts and opinions
- Recognising purpose and audience
- Analysing presentational features
- Comparing texts
- Evaluating effectiveness

Writing Assessment

The writing section contains separate Level 1 and Level 2 tasks based on the reading texts.

Learners will be expected to:

- Write for purpose and audience
- Organise information effectively
- Use appropriate language and tone
- Demonstrate accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar

Assessment Guidance

- Read all texts carefully before answering the questions.
- Answer all questions.
- Support extended responses with evidence from the texts where appropriate.
- Check your spelling, punctuation and grammar before submitting your work.

Pompeii and Herculaneum

Text 1

Introduction

Pompeii was an ancient Roman city located near the Bay of Naples in southern Italy. It is one of the most important archaeological sites in the world because it provides a unique insight into everyday life in the Roman Empire. The city was destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79, but the volcanic ash that buried Pompeii also preserved many buildings, objects and human remains. Today, archaeologists continue to make new discoveries, helping us to understand Roman society in greater detail.

Mount Vesuvius

Mount Vesuvius is still an active volcano located near Naples. Vesuvius is best known for its catastrophic eruption in AD 79, which destroyed Pompeii and nearby settlements including Herculaneum, which like Pompeii, was preserved and later rediscovered. The eruption event remains one of the most studied volcanic disasters in history.

Pompeii was a prosperous and busy city with houses, shops, temples, baths and entertainment venues, including an amphitheatre. Many people living in the area were unaware of the danger Vesuvius posed, although there were warning signs such as earth tremors. Evidence from rebuilding efforts shows that previous tremors caused significant damage to the city.

The Eruption of AD 79

The eruption began with a massive explosion that sent ash, gas, thick smoke and rock high into the atmosphere. Pumice and ash fell on Pompeii for many hours, burying the city and causing roofs to collapse, followed by extremely hot clouds of gas and volcanic material, known as pyroclastic flows, which swept across the area killing hundreds of people instantly.

Pompeii vanished from sight and remained forgotten for centuries. Astonishingly, the volcanic deposits preserved buildings, wall paintings, household items, food, and human remains and consequently offer an exceptional record of everyday Roman life.

Systematic excavations of Pompeii have taken place for over 250 years. Archaeologists have uncovered whole streets, homes, bakeries, shops, temples and public baths. Mosaics and frescoes found on walls provide evidence of Roman art and culture.

Many residents fled, but others remained in the city. The eruption also created the unusual archaeological conditions, and excavations have revealed the remains of over 1000 of the city's residents.

Pompeii and Herculaneum

Archaeological Discoveries

Poignant discoveries include skeletal remains lying where residents fell at the moment of death. Those buried in Pompeian homes and streets, and in Herculaneum (once thought of as a safe refuge) can now be seen in the form of plaster casts.

Plaster cast of a victim. Pompeii

Archaeologists found empty spaces in the hardened ash where human bodies had decomposed. By filling these spaces with plaster, they were able to create detailed casts showing the final positions of victims during the eruption.

Casts may contain skeletal remains, jewellery, and other reminders of real people in the moment of their death; powerful evidence of the human impact of the disaster.

Recent excavations continue to reveal additional information. In 2025, archaeologists reported the discovery of an elaborate private spa complex within a wealthy residence. The complex included bathing facilities decorated with beautiful, intricate mosaics and frescoes; other lavish villas are still being unearthed. In Herculaneum, a number of scrolls were discovered. Too fragile to open, 3D X-ray scans and AI have been used to reveal their content and Greek writing, revealing further intimate details of daily life.

Private spa complex in a wealthy Pompeian residence (2025 discovery)

Fresco from the House of Thiasos depicting a Dionysian procession

Another significant discovery was a large fresco depicting a procession connected to Dionysus in the House of Thiasos. It has been described as one of the most important large-scale paintings discovered at Pompeii in recent decades.

New discoveries and restoration projects continue to improve our understanding of the ancient world, showing that Pompeii is not only a site of historical importance but also an active centre of archaeological research and a reminder of the power of nature.

Pompeii and its sister city Herculaneum remain amongst the most valuable ancient sites in the world, providing a near perfectly preserved window into the real lives of ancient Romans.

Pompeii and Herculaneum

Text 2

Pompeii and Herculaneum

Reading Questions

Section 1
The questions in this section refer to **Text 1**.
This section has a possible **11** marks available.
Answer **all** questions in the spaces provided.

1. Which **best** describes the overall style of **Text 1**? (1 mark)

a. Informative
b. Persuasive
c. Emotive
d. Descriptive

2. Identify two ways the information is organised in **Text 1**. (2 marks)

.....

.....

3. How does the writer imply the residents were unprepared for the eruption? Give one quote to support your response. (2 marks)

.....

4. What does the following metaphor used in **Text 1** mean? (2 marks)
"A near perfectly preserved window into the real lives of ancient Romans."

.....

.....

5. Give one example of each of the following: (2 marks)
a) Fact

.....

b) Opinion

.....

6. The writer implies some residents may have escaped. Give a quotation to support this. (2 marks)

.....

Section 2
The questions in this section refer to **Text 2**.
Answer **all** questions in the spaces provided.
There are **11** marks available.

7. What is the **main** purpose of **Text 2**? (2 marks)

a) Explain
b) Instruct
c) Advise
d) Persuade

Provide one example to support your choice.

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8. Identify two presentational features used in **Text 2**. (2 marks)

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9. What does the phrase "Walk Through History" at the bottom of **Text 2** mean? Explain. (2 marks)

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10. How does the poster encourage people to visit Pompeii and Herculaneum? Explain, and give two examples. (3 marks)

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11. How does the layout help the reader find information quickly? Give two examples. (2 marks)

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.....
.....

Section 3
This section refers to **Text 1**and **Text 2**.
Answer **all** questions.
There are **15** marks available.

12. **For each statement, identify whether it refers to Text 1 or Text 2.** (3 marks)
    a) Contains facts and statistics
    b) Contains opinions and statistics
    c) Contains no statistics

13. Although different in style, explain how both texts use similar techniques. Use at least 2 examples. (4 marks)

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    .....
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14. The following, taken from **Text 1**, contains two spelling errors. Identify and correct them. (2 marks)

The eruption began with a massive explosion that sent ash, gas, thick smoke and rock high into the atmosphere. Pumise stones and ash fell on Pompeii for many hours, burying the city and causing rooves to collapse; followed by extremely hot clouds of gas and volcanic material, known as pyroclastic flows, which swept across the area killing hundreds of its people instantly.

Error 1: ..... Correction: .....

Error 2: ..... Correction: .....

15. Identify and correct the spelling errors in the following from **Text 2.** (3 marks)
    a) Two anceint cities .....
    b) Quieter experiense .....
    c) Mount Versuvies .....

16. Which text best presents information suitable for a tourist interested in visiting the cities? Explain your answer, giving two reasons. (3 marks)

    .....
    .....
    .....

Pompeii and Herculaneum

Level 2 Writing Task A Maximum of 20 marks (12 for content, 8 for SPaG)

The local tourism board wants to attract more visitors to Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Write a **persuasive leaflet article** promoting both sites.

Your article should:

- persuade people to visit
- describe the historical importance of the sites
- highlight the visitor experience
- encourage readers to plan a visit

You may use ideas from **Text 2** and your own knowledge or opinions.

Write approximately 250–350 words.

Extra writing sheet on page 14.

Pompeii and Herculaneum

Level 2 Writing Task B – Based on Text 1

Pompeii attracts millions of visitors and continues to be an active archaeological site.

Write an **educational** article for a website entitled:

"Why Pompeii Still Matters Today"

In your article:

- explain why Pompeii is important to historians and archaeologists
- discuss what modern discoveries have revealed about Roman life
- explain why people remain fascinated by Pompeii

Use information from Text 1 to **support** your points.

Write approximately 250–350 words.

Extra writing sheet on page 14.

Pompeii and Herculaneum

Level 1 Writing Task

You have read Text 1 about Pompeii and the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

Write an information article for a school history magazine.

Your article should:

- explain what happened during the eruption of AD 79
- describe what archaeologists have discovered at Pompeii
- explain why Pompeii is important today

Write approximately 150–200 words.

Extra writing sheet on page 14.

Pompeii and Herculaneum

Level 1 Writing Task – Based on Text 2

Writing Task

You have seen the promotional poster for Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Write a short piece for a travel noticeboard encouraging people to visit the sites.

You should:

- describe the attractions
- explain what visitors can see
- give reasons to visit

Write approximately 150–200 words.

Extra writing sheet on page 14.

Pompeii and Herculaneum

Spare writing sheet