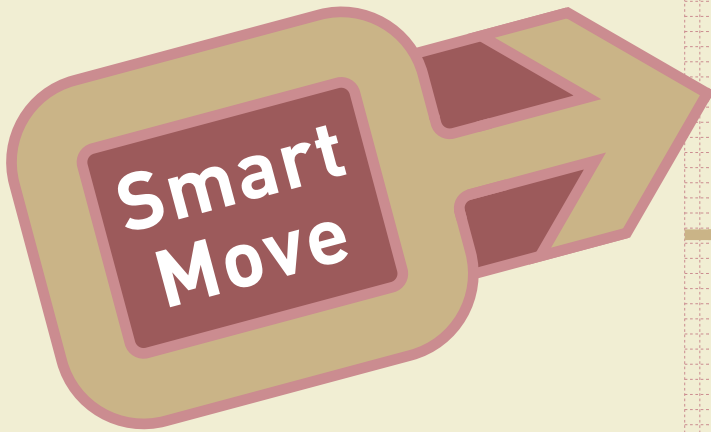


Skills for Life:

The national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills



Version 1

Literacy and Numeracy Part A and B

Skills Check Tool for use in the workplace
Assessor Guide and Answer Booklet

Skills for Life: the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills

Millions of adults in England need help to improve their literacy, language and numeracy skills. *Skills for Life*, launched by the Prime Minister in 2001, sets out the Government's strategy, which aims to help 2.25 million learners gain a national qualification by 2010.

Since 2001 a massive 3.7 million adults across England have taken up 7.8 million courses in literacy, language and numeracy skills. 1,130,000 of these learners have gone on to achieve at least one first qualification.

Since the launch of *Skills for Life*, we have gained an even greater insight into the effect low levels of literacy and numeracy skills have on individuals, their families, on the economy and on society. For example, adults with poor literacy and numeracy skills could earn up to £50,000 less over their lifetime and are more likely to have health problems, to live in a disadvantaged area or to be unemployed. They and their children risk being cut off from the benefits of a world increasingly linked through information technology. Additionally, poor literacy, language and numeracy skills have been estimated to cost the country in excess of £10 billion a year.

Skills for Life is an ambitious strategy that is designed to address literacy, language and numeracy needs of all adults and young people. It covers all post-16 learners on learning programmes at levels from pre-Entry up to and including Level 2. These programmes range from discrete to embedded courses, and from classroom and community provision to voluntary and work-based learning. Achievement and progress in *Skills for Life* are recognised through certification of Key Skills, GCSE Maths and English, and adult literacy and numeracy. It is therefore crucial that the strategy supports and reflects the successful implementation of all other post-16 strategies. These strategies include *Success for All*, the strategy for reforming post-16 further education, and the *Skills Strategy*, which aims to ensure that the skills we develop are valuable to young people and valued by employers. Our goal to improve the skills of young people is also central to the *Opportunity and Excellence 14–19* strategy, the *14–19 Education and Skills White Paper* (published 2005) and the *Schools White Paper: Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* (published 2005).

Each organisation and individual has a contribution to make. We believe that the most important element for successful delivery of *Skills for Life* is partnership, together with the ownership of the strategy by all our key supporting and development partners.

Government departments, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Jobcentre Plus, the Prison and Probation Services, development and learning providers in the post-16 learning sector, businesses, the CBI, the TUC, Sector Skills Councils and many other organisations are working together to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of adults through:

- **Learner and employer engagement**

To engage and increase participation of young people and adults from priority groups in *Skills for Life* learning, through targeted activities within and across Government and its agencies, the workplace and the community.

- **Ensuring capacity**

To improve the planning and funding of *Skills for Life* provision so that literacy, language and numeracy provision is effective and well co-ordinated.

- **Improving quality**

To improve standards and quality in teaching and learning in literacy, language and numeracy, to remodel and professionalise the *Skills for Life* workforce.

- **Improving achievement and progression**

To improve outcomes in literacy, language and numeracy provision and progression onto further learning and assess impact on social inclusion and economic outcomes.

Skills for Life Strategy Unit

This item was produced as part of a suite of tools to assess learners for *Skills for Life* programmes. The tools were developed as part of a project from 2003-2006. The project was jointly led by AlphaPlus Consultancy Ltd and BTL Group Ltd on behalf of the *Skills for Life* Strategy Unit (DfES).

AlphaPlus Consultancy Ltd and BTL Group Ltd would like to thank all those who took part in the trials and contributed to the tools.

Guidance notes for assessors

How to use the Smart Move literacy and numeracy skills check tools

Before reading this section, please note that, for the purpose of clarification:

- the term **user** refers to the person who is working through the skills check tool and answering the questions
- the term **assessor** refers to the person who is supervising the user while they work through the skills check tool
- the term **skills check** was previously referred to as screening.

The following Smart Move skills check tools are available:

- Standard skills check for literacy and numeracy
- Workplace skills check for literacy and numeracy.

The **standard tool** questions on literacy and numeracy are set in everyday contexts with which adults and young people are likely to be familiar.

The **workplace tool** questions on literacy and numeracy focus on work-related situations and experience but are **not** specific to any particular employment sector.

The tools are designed to indicate whether the user may need a further assessment.

How many questions are there in the skills check tools?

Each tool contains **twelve literacy questions** followed by **twelve numeracy questions**.

Each set of questions is divided into **Part A** and **Part B**.

In **Part A**, the questions are set at Entry 2 to Level 1.

In **Part B**, the questions are set at Level 2.

Part B should be attempted only by a user who gains the target mark on Part A or who already possesses a GCSE English or Mathematics qualification at Grade C or above, or an equivalent qualification such as Key Skills Communication/Literacy or Application of Number/Numeracy at Level 2. A user who has such a qualification may bypass Part A altogether and go straight to Part B, if the assessor judges this to be appropriate.

Using the literacy and numeracy skills check tools

The following steps will help the assessor use the **skills check tool** to carry out the skills-checking process. These guidelines apply both to the standard and the workplace tools.

Note: for all users, the literacy questions are presented before the numeracy questions.

Step 1 – Preparing for skills checking

- Read through the assessor guide and answer booklet so that you are thoroughly familiar with the Smart Move skills check tool, especially if you have not used it before.
- Open the pack for Part A or Part B, depending on which tool you wish to use, and photocopy the materials once for every user who will be using the tool. Follow the instructions on page 5 to compile copies of the tool.
- Allow about 15 minutes for the skills checking, including the preliminary interview.
- Find a place where you are unlikely to be interrupted and which is reasonably quiet.
- Have a pen or pencil ready for the user and some paper if they wish to make notes.
- Read through the script for **literacy** question A1 (and/or B1 if the user is attempting Part B) so that you are familiar with the content.

Step 2 – The preliminary interview

- Put the user at ease. Ask a few questions about their background, for example:
 - what hopes they may have for the future
 - what qualifications they may have.
- When you think it is appropriate (after 2–3 minutes), explain that you would like them to do a short skills check. Stress that this is **not** a test, but involves answering a few questions. You could say something like:

“I would like to do a quick check on your literacy and numeracy skills. It’s something that’s being used across the whole country and the results will show how you might improve your literacy and/or your numeracy skills. I can then help you to decide what to do about getting a job or starting a course of study or getting extra training. It shouldn’t take more than 10 minutes.”

- The user should begin at Part A unless they already have an appropriate qualification (such as Key Skills Level 2, Adult Literacy/Numeracy Level 2, a relevant GNVQ or NVQ at Level 2) or a relevant higher qualification in English or Mathematics – in which case, the user should start at Part B.

Step 3 – Starting the skills checking

- Give the user a copy of the user booklet containing the Smart Move skills check tool and make sure they have a pen or pencil and notepaper.
- Say that the literacy questions will come first, followed by the numeracy questions.
- Tell them to start at Part A (or Part B) and answer as many of the questions as possible, but tell them to stop if they find the questions too difficult.
- If a user has a known disability, offer to help her/him with the skills check. For example, offer to fill in their answers for them, enlarge the questions on a photocopier or read out the questions. However, be careful not to provide any clues to the answers! You may also like to consider whether the on-screen version would be more accessible.

- Say that when they have completed literacy Part A (or Part B) they should move straight on to the numeracy Part A (or Part B).
- Say again that it shouldn't take more than 10 minutes and wish them good luck.

Step 4 – Whilst the user is working on the tool

- Keep watching the user to see whether they are making progress, but don't intervene or offer to help.
- If the user is clearly having problems with the questions, ask whether they would like to stop.

Step 5 – When the user has completed the literacy and numeracy questions

- Collect the skills check tool from the user and score the answers, using the scoring scheme given in the assessor guide and answer booklet. Each question is worth **one** mark only, so this will take very little time.
- Tell the user their scores for literacy and numeracy.

Step 6 – Explain the next steps to the user

- If the user has scored less than the target mark in either Part A or Part B for literacy and/or numeracy, suggest that they would benefit from doing an initial assessment in the appropriate skill(s). Say that you will make the necessary arrangements.
- If the user did **Part A** in one or both of the skills, and has gained the target mark, you can suggest, if there is time, that they should go on and try Part B. If there is no time to do this, then you should suggest that they would benefit from doing an initial assessment in the appropriate skill(s). Say that you will make the necessary arrangements.

- If the user has done Part B in literacy and/or numeracy and has gained the target score, you can say that no further action is required (for one or both of the skills, as appropriate). You may then have time to discuss what plans might be best for their future training and/or employment. However, the paper-based version of the Smart Move skills check tool does not screen for speaking and listening skills, so if you feel that the user has poor speaking and listening skills, you should refer them for the ESOL screening tool or an ESOL initial assessment.
- Thank the user for taking part in the skills checking and wish them well for the future.

Step 7 – Arranging the initial assessment

- If you are **not** the person who is going to support the user when they do the initial assessment, particularly if this is going to be undertaken in a different place and/or on a different day, please ensure that you have the necessary arrangements in place for the results of the Smart Move skills check tool to be passed on to the appropriate place/person. It is advisable that the initial assessment should be done as soon after checking as possible.
- If you are the person who is going to support the user when they do the initial assessment, please try to arrange the assessment as soon as possible after the skills checking has been completed.

The Smart Move skills check pack includes two bags, one containing User Booklet Part A and one containing User Booklet Part B. These are the master booklets from which you can make as many copies as you have users.

Step 8 – To make a user booklet

- Select the appropriate bag (A or B) and remove its contents. Be careful to keep the pages in the correct order.
- Place the pages in the photocopier and print one copy for each user (see Fig. 1). Remember to keep the master copy as a spare.

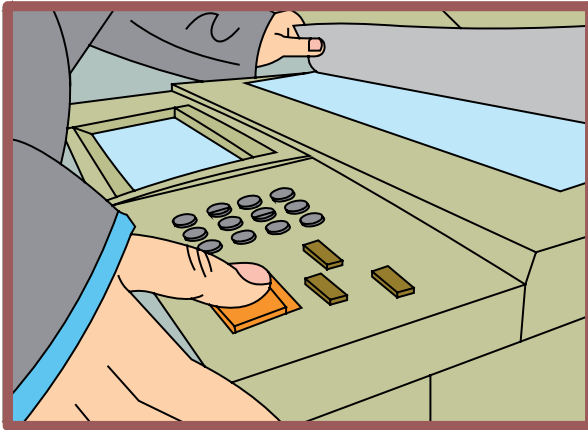


Fig. 1

Print options

- For multiple print options, you may be able to select a 'Sort' button. This will ensure that the pages are printed in the correct order, as opposed to being grouped by page number.
- **Do not** choose the automatic staple option. The booklet is not ready for stapling just yet.
- **Do not** choose to print 'duplex' (both sides).
- Print in colour if you can.

Once you have finished printing, you are ready to start cutting and arranging the pages.

To do this:

- Take one copy of the booklet. You will notice that there is a dotted line in the centre of the pages, with the words 'cut here'. Holding the pages securely, cut carefully along the dotted line (Fig. 2). You can use a paper guillotine if you have one.

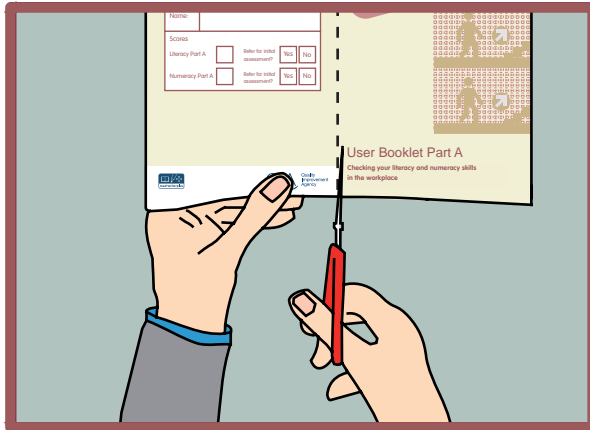


Fig. 2

- You should have two piles of pages. Take the top page from each pile and put it safely to one side.
- Make sure that the text is facing you. Take the pile on the right-hand side and place it underneath the left-hand pile (Fig. 3). You should now have one pile of pages with page one at the top.

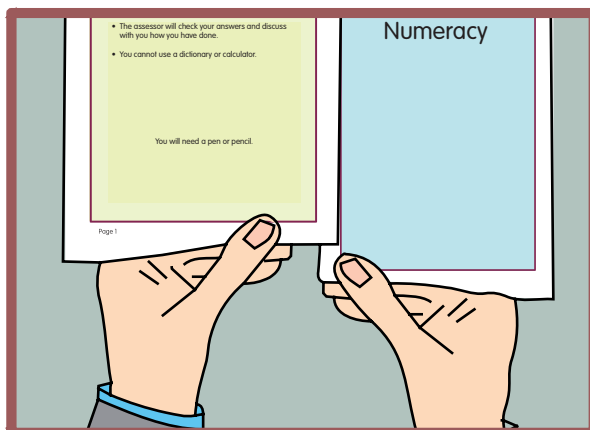


Fig. 3

- You now need to add the front and back pages, which you placed to one side earlier on.
- The front page includes the booklet titles, for example, 'User Booklet Part A'. Place this page face-up on the top of the pile (Fig. 4).

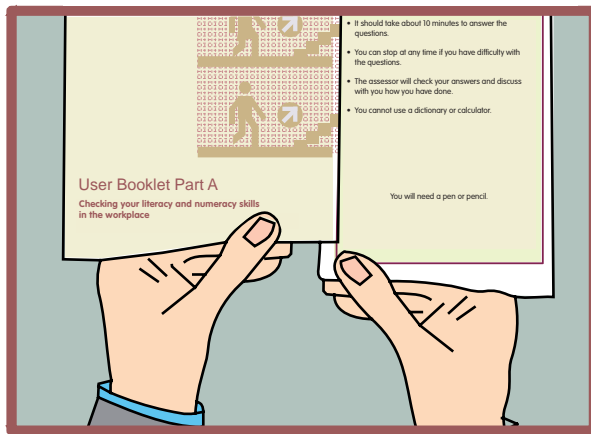


Fig. 4

- The back page contains a table for user names and scores. Place this page face-up at the back of the pile (Fig. 5).

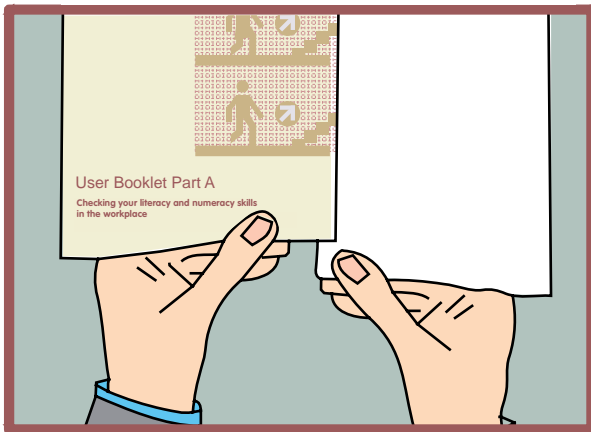


Fig. 5

- Make sure that all the pages are aligned and are in the correct order. Then place one staple in the top left-hand corner of the pile (Fig. 6).

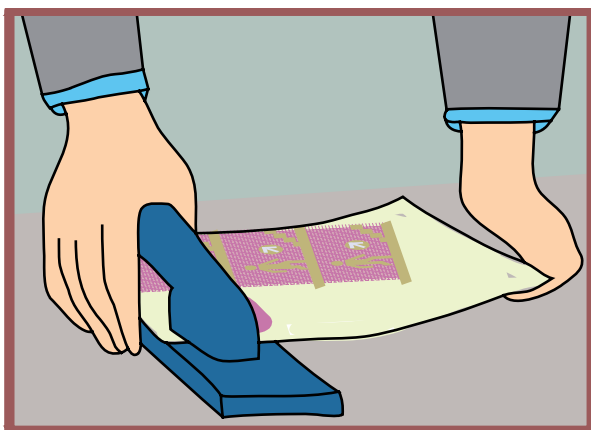


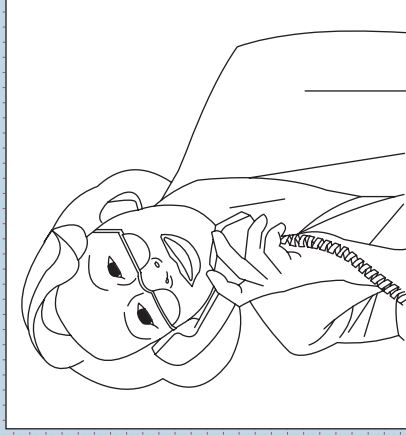
Fig. 6

Repeat this process to make more copies of the booklet.

Literacy Part A

1

Listen to this order being placed and then write your answer to the question in the box below.



Answer:

four

Script to be read (clearly but at normal pace)

I am going to read something to you once only. Please listen carefully and then answer the question.

I would like to place an order for the following, please:

two boxes of A4 paper
three boxes of pens
four boxes of staples
one box of blank CDs.

How many boxes of staples were ordered?

2

You need to buy paper for the office.
Circle the phone number you would call.

**OFFICE
WORLD**

New and second-hand
desks and chairs.

Tel: 01569 776192

**OFFICE
SUPPLIES**

We supply paper,
files, staples,
etc. to your door.

Tel: 01569 756291

**TOTAL
OFFICE**

We clean offices
and equipment.

Tel: 01569 755443

OFFICE NOW

We supply and repair
most office machines.

Tel: 01569 776677

3

Read the memo and circle the date and time when the new trainer can see Martin Smith.

From: Rajiv Gupta, Section Supervisor
To: Martin Smith
Subject: Your appointment
Cc:
Date: 19 June 2006; 10:15am

Your appointment to see the new trainer on 20 June at 11:20am has had to be changed. The trainer can now see you on 30 June at 11:40am. Please let me know before 10:00am on 28 June if you cannot make the new appointment.

4

Circle the correct answer box to complete this sentence.

NOTICE TO ALL STAFF

From Monday 21st March, all workers _____ expected to wear hard hats whilst the roof is being repaired.

Claudia Goulart (Works Safety Officer)

was

were

will be

is

5

Which extinguisher is most suitable for tackling a fire in a faulty electric hair dryer in a hairdressing salon?

Circle the correct answer.



Class A Extinguishers should be used on fires involving combustible materials such as hair and paper.



Class B Extinguishers should be used on fires involving flammable liquids such as grease, hair spray, oils, paints and sprays.



Class C Extinguishers should be used on fires involving electrical faults.



Class D Extinguishers should be used on fires involving metal fires such as titanium and sodium.

Class A

Class B

Class C

Class D

6

A word in this email is incorrectly spelt.

Find the word and then write it correctly in the box provided.

From: Fire Officer

Date: 13 September 2006 10:15am

To: All floor staff

cc: Section Head

Subject: Fire drill

I am concerned that during the fire drill last night it took ten minutes for everyone to vacate the building. I was surprised to find that some people failed to leave their work areas quickly when the emergency bell sounded. I shall hold a similar exercise soon and expect a faster response.

Answer:

surprised

7

Circle A, B, C or D to complete the sentence correctly.

The manager considers that a variety of new products

A

are essential in the success of the firm.

B

is essential to the success of the firm.

C

are essential to the success of the firm.

D

is essential in the success of the firm.

Note for assessor

Please add up the marks for Part A. Each question is worth ONE mark.

Write the total in the literacy box provided on the last page of the answer booklet:

- if the person scored **five marks or fewer** refer them for initial assessment.
- if the person scored **six or seven marks** you should invite them to continue with Part B of the skills checking.

Numeracy Part A

1 It costs £1.50 to get to work and £1.50 to get home.

If you travel to and from work once a day, how much change will you get from £5.00?

Circle the correct answer.

£1.50

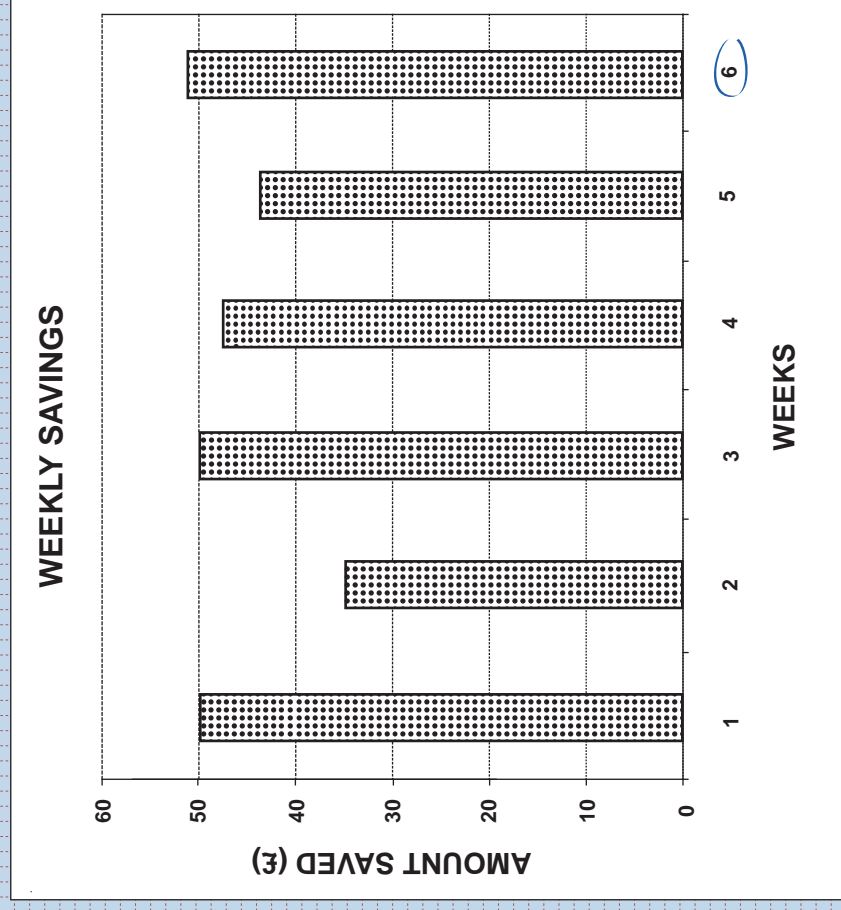
£2.00

£2.50

£3.00

2 The chart below shows how much a hairdresser saved each week.

On the chart, circle the week in which the hairdresser saved the most money.



3

A nurse makes 18 appointments each day.

How many appointments does she make in 5 days?

Write the answer in the answer box.

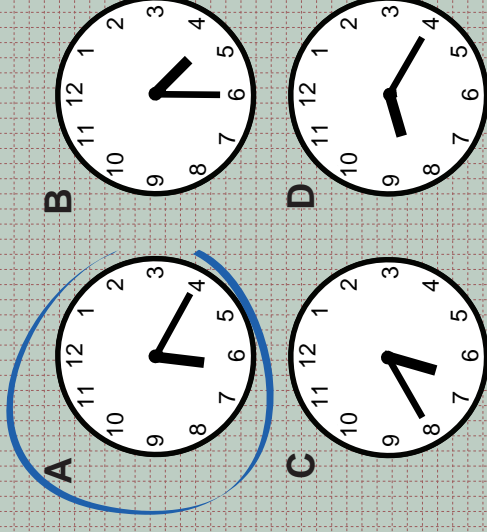
Answer:

90 or ninety

4

The printing shop is open until 6:20 on Fridays.

Circle the clock that shows this time.



5 A factory aims to improve its output by 20%.

What is this percentage written as a fraction?

Circle the correct answer.

$\frac{1}{20}$

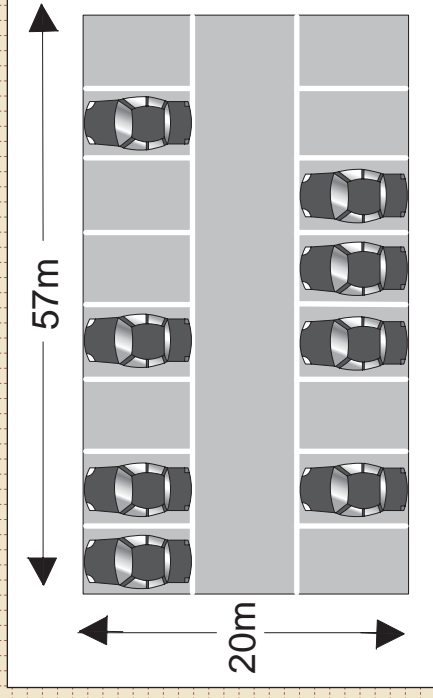
$\frac{1}{5}$

$\frac{1}{4}$

$\frac{2}{5}$

6 What is the perimeter of this car park?

Circle the correct answer.



37m

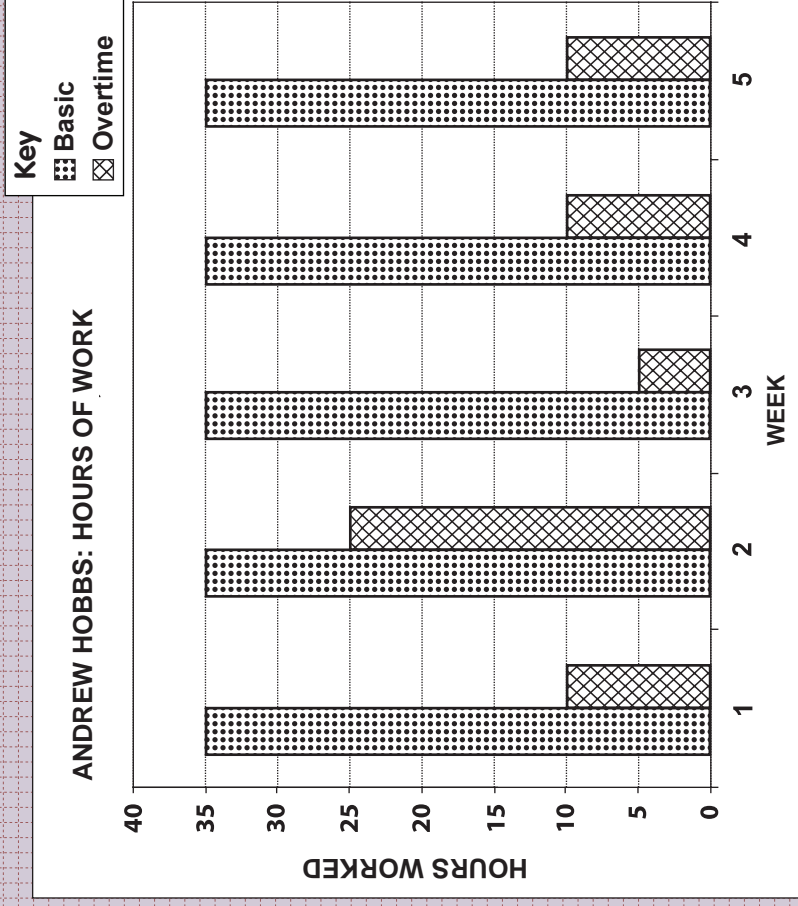
77m

154m

1140m

The chart shows the number of hours Andrew Hobbs worked over a period of five weeks.

Circle the range in the hours of overtime.



0 hours

10 hours

20 hours

60 hours

Note for assessor

Please add up the marks for Part A. Each question is worth ONE mark.

Write the total in the numeracy box provided on the last page of the answer booklet:

- if the person scored **five marks or fewer** refer them for initial assessment.
- if the person scored **six or seven marks** you should invite them to continue with Part B of the skills checking.

Literacy Part B

1 Listen to this answerphone message and circle A, B, C or D to select the correct message to leave on the pad.

A Sanjeet is away from his desk between 2:00pm and 3:30pm on Tuesday.

B Sanjeet is away from his desk from 9:20am until 3:30pm on Tuesday.

C Sanjeet is away from his desk from 9:20am until 2:00pm on Tuesday.

D Sanjeet is seeing the bank after 3:30pm on Tuesday.

(Please read moderately slowly but do not pause for any requests from the user to slow down.)

Hi Julian, Sanjeet here from Slades. It's 9:20am on Tuesday. I'm away from my desk until 2 o'clock this afternoon and then at a meeting from 3:30 onwards. Would you call me on my mobile or catch me this afternoon. The new contract proposals are going really well by the way, and I'm off to confirm details with the bank at 11:30. Talk to you later. Bye.

2 There is a spelling mistake in this draft information leaflet. Find the word and write it correctly in the box below.

The importance of health and safety to your business

Every business has legal responsibilities to ensure the health and safety of employees and to protect the environment. However, to get maximum benefits, a business should go beyond the minimum requirements of the law when introducing health and safety practices.

Answer:

environment

3

Read the information and then answer the question.
Circle A, B, C or D to complete the sentence below.

Health and safety and your business

Every business has legal responsibilities to ensure the health and safety of employees and other people. However, to get maximum benefits, a business should go beyond the minimum requirements of the law when introducing health and safety practices. Poor health and safety leads to illness and accidents and significant costs for your business. Effective health and safety practices pay for themselves.

Ensuring good health and safety practice

A can reduce the cost of running a business.

B is not a legal requirement at present.

C is solely the responsibility of employees.

D requires only minimal changes in working habits.

4

According to the information below, is it correct that the offer of an interview depends on how good your references are?

Circle the Yes, No or Can't tell box to answer the question.

After your interview

Once you have submitted your application, you may have to wait whilst we review it. For some posts, you will be invited to an interview. This is an opportunity for us to find out about your potential and also for you to find out more about the job. If we are happy with your performance in the interview, we will usually request references from your nominated referees. Subject to the references being acceptable, you will normally be offered employment for a trial period.

Yes

No

Can't tell

5

Circle the best word to join together these two sentences taken from a booklet on safety at work.

Lifting and carrying

The lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling of loads can cause a range of injuries to staff, such as back problems and muscular disorders. Failing to protect against the risks of these manual handling activities could result in legal action being taken against the employer.

nevertheless

because

and

although

Note for assessor

Please add up the marks for Part B. Each question is worth ONE mark.

Write the total in the literacy box provided on the last page of the answer booklet:

- if the person scored **three marks or fewer** refer them for initial assessment.
- if the person scored **four or five marks**, advise appropriate next steps. If you are not sure what this advice might be, please refer to Step 6 on Page 4.

Numeracy Part B

1

You have to dilute chemical cleaner in the ratio:

1 part chemical cleaner : 10 parts water

How much chemical cleaner should you add to 5 litres of water?

Write your answer in the box below.

Answer:

0.5 litres

2

Your firm purchases a carpet from Belgium.

The carpet costs €4,500.00.

If €1.50 = £1.00, how much will the carpet cost in pounds (£)?

Circle the correct answer.

£300.00

£675.00

£3,000.00

£6,750.00

3

A machine in the factory workshop produces bolts with the following lengths:

65.1mm
64.9mm
65.2mm
65.0mm
64.7mm

What is the median length of bolt produced?
Circle the correct answer.

64.7mm

65.0mm

65.1mm

65.2mm

64.9mm

4

Your total overtime for a week amounts to 4 hours and 15 minutes.

What is this time written as a decimal?

Circle the correct answer.

0.25 hours

4.15 hours

4.25 hours

$4\frac{1}{4}$ hours

5

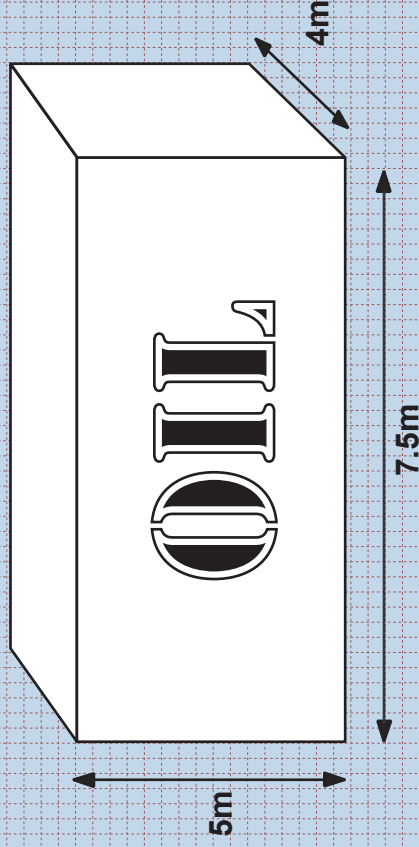
The oil tank at work is shown below.

The formula for the volume of this tank is:

$$\text{VOLUME} = \text{Length} \times \text{Width} \times \text{Height}$$

What is the volume of the oil tank?

Circle the correct answer below.



30m³

140m³

150m³

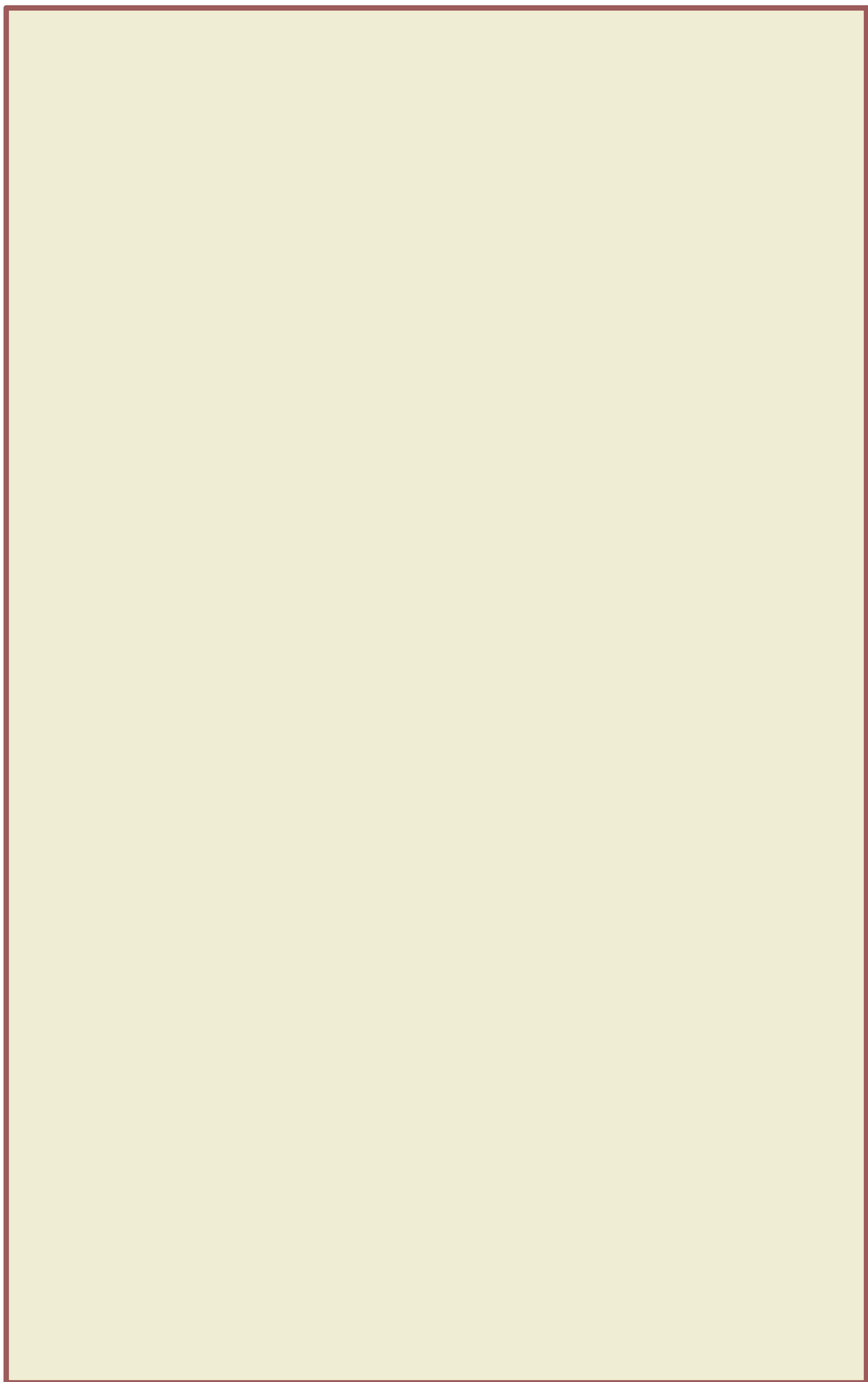
155m³

Note for assessor

Please add up the marks for Part B. Each question is worth ONE mark.

Write the total in the numeracy box provided on the last page of the answer booklet:

- if the person scored **three marks or fewer** refer them for initial assessment.
- if the person scored **four or five marks**, advise on appropriate next steps. If you are not sure what this advice might be, please refer to Step 6 on Page 4.



This item was produced as part of a suite of tools to assess learners for Skills for Life programmes. The tools were developed as part of a project which ran from 2003-2006. The project was jointly led by AlphaPlus Consultancy Ltd and BTL Group Ltd on behalf of the Skills for Life Strategy Unit (DfES).

These tools are part of an ongoing development process.

Feedback on the tools is therefore being encouraged and can be sent by email to:
assessment.feedback@qia.gsi.gov.uk

AlphaPlus Consultancy Ltd and BTL Group Ltd would like to thank all those who took part in the trials and contributed to the tools.

Support is available at:

Website: www.toolslibrary.co.uk

Technical Support: 01274 203 270

General Support: 01274 203 276

E-mail: toolslibrary@btl.com

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