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# SENshine Tutoring

## English Functional Skills Level 1

### Parent & Learner Information Guide

2026 – 2027

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This guide provides everything you need to know about the English Functional Skills Level 1 course offered by SENshine Tutoring. The course is designed to be flexible, low-pressure, and confidence-building, with pre-recorded lessons, structured progress tracking, and personalised feedback. Whether your learner is working towards greater independence, preparing for further study, or building practical English skills for everyday life, this course offers a supportive and accessible pathway.

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# What Are Functional Skills?

Functional Skills qualifications are nationally recognised qualifications that focus on the practical skills needed for everyday life, further education and employment.

Unlike traditional GCSE courses, Functional Skills are designed to develop real-world skills such as communication, problem-solving, reading, writing and applying knowledge in practical situations

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## Why Choose Functional Skills English Level 1?

Functional Skills English Level 1 is an ideal choice for learners who:

- Want to build confidence in reading, writing, and communication
- Need a recognised qualification at their own pace
- Are preparing for further study, employment, or apprenticeships
- Benefit from a flexible, low-pressure learning environment
- Want to develop practical English skills for everyday life

Functional Skills level 1 can be used as a stepping stone towards GCSE study, Functional Skills level 2 or, in many cases, as an alternative qualification for progressing into further education, training, such as apprenticeships or employment.

One of the key benefits of Functional Skills qualifications is their flexibility.

Assessments can be taken throughout the year when a learner is ready, rather than waiting for a fixed examination season.

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# How the Course Works

The course follows a simple, structured process designed to support independent learning with ongoing tutor guidance:

1

## **Access Your Learning Block**

Each term is divided into learning blocks. You will be given access to weekly blocks at a time, allowing you to focus without feeling overwhelmed.

2

## **Watch the Lessons**

Each block contains pre-recorded video lessons that you can watch at your own pace, pause, rewind, and revisit as many times as you need.

3

## **Complete the Activities**

After each lesson, there are activities to complete. These help reinforce what you have learned and build your skills step by step.

4

## **Submit Your Work**

Once you have completed the activities, quizzes are set every three weeks for learners. This is then submitted online for feedback.

5

## **Receive Feedback**

I will mark your work and provide personalised written feedback within 7 days. This feedback will highlight strengths and areas for development.

6

## **Continue Learning**

Once feedback is received, move on to the next block. If additional support is needed, I will provide guidance on next steps.

Throughout the course, I am available to answer questions and provide additional support. The flexible structure means learners can work at a pace that suits them, building confidence and skills over time.

# Course Overview

The course is divided into three terms, each focusing on a core area of English.

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## Autumn Term – Reading

**14th September 2026 – 23rd October 2026**

*Half Term Break*

**2nd November 2026 – 11th December 2026**

*During this section learners will develop skills in:*

- Read and understand a range of texts
- Identify the main points and ideas in a text
- Understand how texts are organised
- Recognise and interpret language features
- Compare information from different sources

Learners who demonstrate readiness may be entered for their Reading exam at the end of this section.

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## Spring Term – Writing

**11th January 2027 – 12th February 2027**

*Half Term Break*

**22nd February 2027 – 25th March 2027**

*Learners will develop the ability to:*

- Plan and organise writing for different purposes
- Write clearly and coherently
- Use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- Adapt tone and style for different audiences
- Proofread and edit their own work

Learners who demonstrate readiness may be entered for their Writing exam at the end of this section.

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## Summer Term – Speaking, Listening & Communicating

**12th April 2027 – 28th May 2027**

*May Half Term Break*

**7th June 2027 – 9th July 2027**

This term focuses on building confidence in spoken communication. Learners will develop the ability to:

- Take part in discussions and express opinions
  - Listen and respond appropriately
  - Present information clearly
  - Use appropriate language for different situations
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# Speaking, Listening and Communicating Assessment

The Speaking, Listening and Communicating (SLC) component is a separate assessment that forms part of the overall qualification. Many learners feel nervous about this, so I want to reassure you that it is designed to be supportive and manageable.

The assessment is a structured discussion with the assessor and a small group of learners. This can be on a topic of the learner's choice and can be prepared in advance. PowerPoint slides can be used to assist. Learners will have plenty of time to practise and build confidence before the assessment takes place. Assessments are conducted by an experienced and understanding assessor who works sensitively with nervous learners. The focus is always on creating a calm, positive and supportive environment where learners can demonstrate their abilities with confidence.

Throughout the summer term, learners will gradually develop their skills through:

- Watching model examples of discussions
- Practising expressing opinions on familiar topics
- Building a set of presentation slides on a chosen topic
- Rehearsing with tutor support

Learners who are ready may complete their Speaking, Listening and Communicating assessment towards the end of the summer term.

# NCFE Functional Skills Exams From Home

What learners need for remotely invigilated examinations.

To take exams from home, you will need:

 Windows Laptop or Desktop

Webcam required  
Microphone required

 Internet Connection

Min 10 Mbps download  
Min 1 Mbps upload

 Smartphone or Tablet

Used to record learner  
and examination area

 Suitable Environment

Quiet room, clear desk  
No interruptions

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 Please note:

-  Exams cannot be taken on a smartphone
-  Exams cannot be taken on a tablet
-  Exams cannot currently be taken on a Chromebook
-  Exams cannot currently be taken on a MacBook
-  iPhone 15 / Pro / Pro Max are not compatible with proctoring software

## How It Works

- 1 Book assessment
- 2 Receive exam instructions
- 3 Join online at scheduled time
- 4 Complete assessment under exam conditions
- 5 Recording is reviewed by NCFE
- 6 Results issued after marking

 Many learners successfully complete Functional Skills exams from home every year. The process is straightforward and support is available before the assessment if you are unsure about any technical requirements.

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# Frequently Asked Questions

## **How much time should my learner spend on the course each week?**

Most learners should expect to spend approximately 2-3 hours per week engaging with lesson materials and completing activities. Some learners may work more quickly, while others may prefer to spread the work across several shorter sessions. The course is designed to be flexible, allowing learners to work at a pace that suits their individual needs.

## **Are the lessons live or pre-recorded?**

All teaching is delivered through pre-recorded lessons. This allows learners to access lessons at times that suit them, pause when needed, and revisit content as often as necessary. Many learners find this approach reduces anxiety and helps them build confidence.

## **Will my child still receive support ?**

Absolutely!

Although lessons are pre-recorded, learners submit work regularly and receive personalised feedback throughout the course. This ensures progress is monitored and learners continue to receive guidance and encouragement as they work through the programme.

## **What happens if my child falls behind?**

Please don't worry.

The course has been designed to be flexible and supportive. If a learner falls behind, they can continue working through previous learning blocks and catch up at a pace that feels manageable. If additional support is needed, this can be discussed on an individual basis.

## **When do exams take place?**

Exams are booked when your child is ready. There are no fixed exam dates. I will help advise when your child is prepared and will help arrange the assessment at a suitable time.

# Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

## **Does my child have to complete all three assessments at the same time?**

No.

Functional Skills English consists of three separate assessment components:

Reading

Writing

Speaking, Listening and Communicating

Learners may be entered for assessments when they are ready rather than all at once

## **What if my child feels anxious about exams?**

Many learners feel nervous about assessments, and this is completely understandable. Throughout the course we focus on building confidence alongside skills. Learners will have opportunities to practise assessment-style questions and become familiar with the assessment process before being entered for any examination. The aim is for learners to feel prepared and supported every step of the way.

## **What happens if my child does not pass an exam?**

If a learner is unsuccessful in an assessment, one free resit is included as part of the course. Additional support and guidance will be provided to help identify areas for improvement before the learner attempts the assessment again. The aim is always to ensure learners feel confident, prepared and supported throughout the assessment process.

## **Are access arrangements available (e.g., extra time)?**

In many cases, yes.

For remotely invigilated Functional Skills examinations, the most commonly approved access arrangement is extra time. Other arrangements may be available depending on the learner's individual needs and the awarding organisation's requirements. If you believe your child may require access arrangements, please get in touch as early as possible to discuss their needs. Please note that evidence will be required before any access arrangement can be requested. This may include professional reports, assessment documentation, an EHCP, or other relevant evidence demonstrating the learner's normal way of working.

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# Qualification and Progression

Upon successful completion of all components, your learner will be awarded:

## **NCFE Functional Skills Qualification in English at Level 1**

This is a nationally recognised qualification, regulated by Ofqual, and accepted by employers, colleges, universities, and apprenticeship providers across the UK.

The qualification demonstrates competence in reading, writing, and speaking and listening at Level 1 — equivalent to a GCSE grade 3 (D).

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## Progression

After completing Level 1, learners may wish to progress to:

### **Functional Skills English Level 2**

This will be available through SENshine Tutoring from September 2027. Level 2 is equivalent to a GCSE grade 4 (C) and is the minimum English requirement for many university courses, teaching qualifications, and professional roles.

Your tutor will discuss progression options with you towards the end of the course.

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