



Supporting students' participation in the NAPLAN assessment process

It is through a well planned, focused, daily program that all students will have the best opportunity to develop the skills and strategies they need to become effective readers and writers and achieve well in the NAPLAN testing program.

The NAPLAN Planner is designed to support the literacy planning process by providing an overview of specific skills and knowledge that students need to learn in preparation for the NAPLAN test. It is intended that teachers select focus teaching areas based on their students' needs.

The following instructional approaches/practices are just a sample of the different ways teachers are currently supporting students to ensure that the NAPLAN assessment experience provides a fair opportunity to demonstrate what they can do as developing readers and writers.

General

Success with the NAPLAN test requires particular skills and strategies that may be different to those employed in the literacy activities students engage with on a daily basis.

The integration of these 'test taking' skills and strategies into the normal literacy program will ensure that students are well prepared to engage positively and confidently with the tests.

It is recommended that teachers use the 'gradual release of responsibility' model that moves through a process of explicit modelling by the teacher, to guided teaching and learning, to independent student work to explicitly teach:

- the different answer sheet and test formats
- test question vocabulary and language
- what is required in a question type
- tips for managing multiple choice questions
- explicit teaching of specific comprehension strategies
- structures and features of different text types
- difference between main idea and supporting detail
- importance of information provided in the first and last paragraph
- importance of signal words.

A process for managing multiple choice in reading:

- Read the title
- Look at the structure and features of the text. Is it a story or poem or procedure or chart?
- Read any sub-headings
- Read the text
- Underline any key words or phrases
- Read through the question answer options

- Return to the text to confirm the correct answer
- Select the correct answer

Spelling - Years 3, 5 and 7

Support for students' spelling focuses on systematically building up students' bank of words they know how to spell and developing the range of strategies needed to spell correctly. These include phonetic and graphophonetic knowledge, recognising highly predictable patterns or letter sequences of English, visual memory, meaning and morphological knowledge (see [Principles and strategies to support the effective teaching of spelling](#)).

The NAPLAN spelling assessment requires that students do the following:

- Identify a misspelled word
- Identify a correctly spelled word – multiple choice
- Identify the missing digraph

Instructional practices that support students spelling development include:

- Teaching spelling is an ongoing activity and will be most successful when time is allocated on a regular basis for students to study and learn words.
- Involve the students in analysis and explicit discussion of new words by looking at the patterns, structure, syllabification, derivation and meanings.
- Support students to systematically build up a spelling vocabulary of high frequency, commonly used sight-words.
- Teaching students that words must not only sound right, but they must also look right.
- Encourage them to use trial and error. When they feel a word does not look right, they can test and experiment with possible alternatives, until they think it looks right. Model this process on the board.
- Teach students to identify the **critical features** of words, ie the most significant features and patterns. Encourage them to write these words from memory, rather than to copy them.
- Mnemonics can be used to help students remember different words:
 - Place names all have **here** in them – here, there, where and everywhere.
 - Questions begin with **wh** – who, where, what, when, why.
 - My **pal** is the principal.
- Word sorting and categorising activities are useful. Ensure that explicit discussion about these patterns takes place as students are sorting words into categories.
- Encourage students to focus on common sequential letter patterns. That is, encourage them to talk about which particular letters in the English language are likely to follow other letters or sets of letters.
- Help students look for the common patterns in words. Mark them as you write them, eg need, feed, seed. Relate the spelling of new words to known word patterns and ask students to predict the pattern that might be used.
- Encourage students to group words containing common patterns, eg other brother, mother, bother.
- Editing of the sentence of the day. Students identify the error and generate an alternative spelling. The teacher corrects the misspelling and then students check their work by ticking the letters they have correct and circling any letters they may have wrong.
- Checking their writing of a dictated passage with the teacher's copy to identify any errors.
- Underlining any words in their own writing they are unsure about, generating an alternative spelling and then checking with a dictionary.
- Quizzes designed to focus on letters and patterns in words. Students are asked questions about a bank of words, eg Find the word ending with 'le'. Find the word that begins with 'sc'. Find the word with 'sat' in it.

Grammar and punctuation - Years 3, 5 and 7

Support for the development of students' grammar and punctuation focuses on systematically teaching students how grammar works and about correct usage.

The teaching of grammar needs to focus on:

- how texts work as cohesive wholes through language features such as paragraphs, connectives, nouns and associated pronouns
- how punctuation works to perform different functions in a text.
- sentence level and clause level grammar
- word level grammar
- applying and recognising meta-language.

As grammar and punctuation in NAPLAN are assessed through multiple-choice items it is important to familiarise students with the different question types.

Support strategies include:

Teacher modelling of how to think through a question type, eg

- Which sentence is punctuated correctly?
 - Which words complete this sentence correctly?
 - Choose the correct word or words to complete each sentence?
 - Which clause completes this sentence correctly?
 - Which option completes this sentence correctly?
 - Which sentence is **not** punctuated correctly?
 - Which option uses brackets correctly?
 - In which sentence is round used as an adjective?
 - Which of these words is a noun?
 - Which event happens first?
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- Develop class charts of words and phrases used in test instructions and questions.
 - After teaching a particular convention have students develop their own multiple choice questions as a way of developing familiarity with a question type and consolidating the learning.

Support resources

Grammar and Punctuation online resources [Years 2/3](#), [Years 4/5](#) and [Years 6/7](#)

The section on developing grammar ([pages 183 -196](#)) in the *First Steps Writing Resource book* provides a range of ideas for supporting students' development in this aspect of writing.

Western Australian Curriculum: English Scope and Sequence

[Language Strand](#): Sub-strands;

- Text structure and organisation
- Expressing and developing ideas

Reading - Years 3, 5 and 7

Activities that involve students in recognising different text forms, and identifying their language features, conventions and organisation will assist students with comprehension.

They need to be supported with understanding how information is presented in different ways through text layout and features. This may be achieved through:

- talking about purpose
- drawing attention to text organisation, eg headings, subheadings, tables, photos
- highlighting the type of language used, eg signal words, adjectives, tense
- comparing features of different kinds of texts.

Support advice - for interpreting imaginative texts

1. Shared big book reading

Shared reading provides the opportunity for teachers to model through 'thinking

aloud' how readers make meaning as they think their way through the text. They may model strategies such as:

- self-monitoring 'Is this making sense?'
- cross-checking information
- using multiple sources of information e.g. structure, visual cues, prior knowledge, graphophonic cues
- searching for detail and connections
- building meaning across the text i.e. predicting verifying
- identifying a sequence of events
- locating directly stated information from the written text and illustrations
- making connections between ideas stated directly and close together in different parts of the text 'How does this information connect with what was said before?'
- working out the meaning of some unfamiliar words and phrases.
- selecting a correct answer from four possible responses.

Other text related activities to assist comprehension may include:

- discussing characters, setting
- discussing orientation, problem and conclusion
- finding main idea
- focus on syntax or specialised language
- use of 'post it' notes for cloze activities
- replacing a word in the text with another similar word and then reading surrounding text to check and confirm meaning
- labelling using 'post it' notes e.g. students label setting, problem, characters in a text they are reading
- text innovation
- using a 'story grammar' to write about each element of a text that has been read
- collaborative writing of multiple choice items for a well known text.

2. Guided reading in small groups.

As teachers guide students through reading a text they work through a process of predicting, verifying, confirming and self correcting. Students are involved in:

- making inferences
- returning to the text to substantiate a response or check meaning
- accountable talk (students find and read aloud parts of the text that provide the answers to teacher questions)
- noticing patterns in structure, language, eg use of illustrations or headings.

Support advice - for interpreting information and argument texts

Teacher modelling through 'think alouds' of the following:

- locating information
- making inferences
- using headings, captions, labels
- using illustrations, photographs, diagrams, tables.

Other text related activities to assist comprehension may include:

- developing charts with students that list differences between fiction and non-fiction texts
- charting ways to locate information
- matching content to headings
- writing content to go with headings
- writing headings to go with content
- innovating on text.