

Working with NAPLAN writing test responses

The results of NAPLAN tests provide information for students, parents, teachers and principals about student achievement which can be used to inform teaching and learning programs.

As with all NAPLAN tests, NAPLAN writing responses and results provide only one piece of information, a 'snapshot', amongst a range of the many other important assessment information routinely gathered by teachers. As with all single assessments, NAPLAN test results are **not** intended to be used in isolation from the many other assessment programs used by schools.

When evaluating NAPLAN writing responses, it is important to consider the test conditions under which the students write. Students respond in a limited timeframe to a single topic. While they are given time for planning, drafting and revising, the responses are essentially (and necessarily) first draft writing.

Who assesses the NAPLAN writing task?

NAPLAN writing responses are marked by trained and experienced primary and secondary teachers who receive three days intensive training in the use of the *NAPLAN Persuasive or Narrative Writing Marking Guides* (the Guides).

NAPLAN markers commonly express delight and admiration at the level of ingenuity, resourcefulness and creativity demonstrated by students under NAPLAN test conditions.

In what ways may teachers use NAPLAN writing responses?

Images of NAPLAN writing responses are provided to schools with the understanding that they are not shared outside the school community.

All use of the NAPLAN writing responses is subject to the terms outlined in *Conditions governing the release of images of NAPLAN writing test responses to schools*.

NAPLAN writing responses may be used for diagnostic purposes and to provide additional material for developing students' writing through classroom teaching and learning programs. These activities may take place in a classroom and/or be used at staff professional development sessions.

Diagnostic use

Teachers analyse their students' scripts, in conjunction with the Marking Guides to target specific areas of individual student's work that may require attention. The ten criteria described in the Guides are based on the structures and language features of persuasive or narrative writing. These criteria include genre specific features such as Text Structure and more generic features such as Sentence Structure and Punctuation.

Used in the classroom, the Guides can help identify areas of focus for the whole class or individual students.

By using the Guides in conjunction with the students' writing, teachers can provide comment and further activities as part of their assessment for learning programs.

School and classroom teaching and learning programs

NAPLAN writing responses present teachers and students with opportunities to build on the first draft work of their students. Follow up classroom activities may include:

- Giving students classroom access to their NAPLAN writing responses and inviting them to discuss aspects of their writing. This may include identifying sentences that work well, or areas that require attention.
- Giving students the opportunity to further develop the ideas presented in their first draft, either at a classroom or individual level.
- Having students compare and discuss their NAPLAN writing responses with their finished work.

The opportunity to further refine NAPLAN writing responses allows students to complete their writing in a learning situation and allows teachers to provide feedback to students on a fully developed piece of writing.

At the state level, individual NAPLAN writing responses are scored by VCAA trained markers, using the Guide. For the purpose of transparency, and to give teachers reference to the criteria by which NAPLAN writing is assessed, ACARA also provides access to the Marking Guides on its website.

At the school level, the Guides may be used by teachers to establish a solid framework for understanding the ten criteria descriptors.

Follow up staff activities

In conjunction with the range of information provided in the VCAA's Data Service, NAPLAN writing responses may be analysed in staff professional development settings to provide feedback regarding the school's teaching and learning programs. Aggregating student results data may also be useful in identifying any trends in performance that are present over time.