

# English Language and English for Academic Purposes Unit Standards

## Supporting Document – Draft for consultation – August 2025

### Section Three A

Using English Language Foundation standards to assess secondary and tertiary learners

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## Using English Language Foundation unit standards to assess secondary and tertiary learners

*In this section, an experienced practitioner shows how four Level 1 EL unit standards can be used to assess secondary learners at Foundation Stage ELLP or tertiary learners as part of an NZCEL Foundation qualification, explaining in detail how to 'unpack' EL unit standard 30978, and prepare and use assessment materials.*

*Level 1 EL unit standards are at two CEFR levels – A1 for learners at Foundation Stage ELLP and A2 for learners at Stage 1 ELLP.*

### Who are the learners?

#### *Tertiary context*

The students are adult migrants and former refugees from various countries, who are all reasonably new to New Zealand. They are studying the New Zealand Certificate in English Language in a full-time class, five hours per day. The teacher has identified that the priority for these learners is to navigate life in New Zealand, and particularly to deal with everyday situations like health appointments, shopping, and education.

To meet the needs of the learners and at the same time assist them in achieving their qualification, their teacher decides to focus on a module on health. Teaching and learning focus on topic-specific vocabulary, but also on times and dates, asking questions and making requests, and talking and writing (in simple terms) about health. To make this efficient in the context of NZCEL, she wants to ensure that she can tie the topic to several different unit standards. She expects the health topic will cover about a third of her course, so is aiming to cover 20 credits – 5 credits for each skill.

#### *Secondary context*

The ESOL class has migrant and former refugee students from Years 9 -11 who have an English level that makes it difficult for them to participate in the mainstream curriculum. Some of them are former refugees who have had limited or disrupted access to education and have recently arrived in New Zealand, and some newly arrived Pacific students. The learners are learning to navigate the school

system and need to learn to navigate society in general and often help their families. They have been assessed as Foundation Stage on the ELLP.

To meet the needs of the learners, the ESOL teacher decides to focus on a module on health. This will help meet their settlement needs but also prepare them for mainstream subjects such as PE and Health and Sciences, as well as improving their English skills. The teaching and learning focus on topic vocabulary and concepts, but also on times and dates, asking questions and making requests, and talking and writing (in simple terms) about health.

### An Integrated Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking programme

The teacher integrates several unit standards into this topic, as outlined in the table:

Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking
30993 Read and understand basic English language words and phrases in common everyday written texts	31041 Write a basic text for a practical purpose related to personal need in English language	30978 Listen to and understand basic English language spoken texts in common everyday situations	31012 Participate in basic everyday spoken interactions in English language
Learners read a short recount about a student who is sick.	Learners write a short absence note/email to their teacher to notify her that they are sick.	Learners complete the listening to an interaction by listening to someone making an appointment with a doctor.  <i>Note:</i> One more assessment will be needed to achieve the standard, as this is a 10-credit unit standard. This	Learners participate in a short transaction role-play making an appointment for themselves or a family member.  <i>Note:</i> One more assessment will be needed to achieve the standard, as this is a 10-credit unit standard. This

		should be linked to a different topic.	should be linked to a different topic.
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## Unpacking unit standard 30978

This sub-section shows how to unpack one of the standards used for this integrated unit of work, 30978 (Listen to and understand basic English language spoken texts in common everyday situations) [Unit Standard 30978 - Listen to and understand basic English language spoken texts in common everyday situations](#)

NZQA unit standard

30978 version 2  
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<b>Title</b>	<b>Listen to and understand basic English language spoken texts in common everyday situations</b>		
<b>Level</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>10</b>

<b>Purpose</b>	<p>People credited with this unit standard are able to listen to and understand basic English language spoken texts in common everyday situations at foundation level.</p> <p>This unit standard is for learners for whom English is an additional language.</p> <p>It is intended for learners who have a basic but limited command of English.</p>
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<b>Classification</b>	Languages > English Language
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<b>Available grade</b>	Achieved
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The title of the assessment reflects the Outcome of the assessment, and both indicate what learners will need to be able to do to achieve the standard. This gives an overall idea of what the teacher needs to assess: in short, they need to be assured that their learners are able to listen to and understand basic English language spoken texts in common everyday situations. To understand exactly what this means, the teacher can refer to the **Definitions** under the **Guidance Information (GI)** in the standard:

## 12 Definitions

*Basic spoken texts* refer to very short, spoken texts which use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases. These texts are related to self and family and areas of most immediate personal relevance.

*Enquiries* refer to asking for information.

*Requests* refer to asking for assistance or services.

The definitions help explain the outcome, and what is meant by *basic spoken texts*.

The **Level** specifies that this is a Level 1 unit standard, and the

**Purpose** statement clarifies that this is for *Foundation* learners.

In the **Outcomes and performance criteria** section, there is further information on what the learner needs to achieve.

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### Outcomes and performance criteria

#### Outcome 1

Listen to and understand basic English language spoken texts in common everyday situations.

**Range** two spoken texts: one informational text and one interactional text, each on a different topic and in a different context, assessed on separate occasions; informational text may include everyday announcements, warnings, simple advertisements; interactional text may include common everyday enquiries and/or requests.

The **Range** statement shows that the learner will need to be assessed on two spoken texts, one informational, and one interactional. It also shows that these must be undertaken on different topics, and on different occasions, so they will not both be linked to the health topic, only the interactional text will. Hence, the teacher will need to develop another topic and assessment task in the programme to complete **Outcome 1**.

### Performance criteria

1.1 Basic information is identified to demonstrate understanding of spoken text.

Range at least three items of information for each text.

The **Performance criteria** *specify* what the learner will need to do, in this case to identify three items of basic information.

### Guidance Information

- 1 This unit standard may contribute to the New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Foundation) (Level 1) [Ref: 1879].
- 2 It is recommended that:
  - i the outcomes are assessed as part of an integrated unit of work, relevant to the learning context of the learner;
  - ii assessment be conducted in conjunction with assessment against other English Language unit standards at this level.
- 3 This unit standard is at a level informed by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). A structured overview of all CEFR related scales can be found at <http://www.coe.int/en/web/portfolio/overview-of-cefr-related-scales>.
- 4 The requirements of this standard are consistent with the *supporting documents*. They include guidelines relating to appropriate texts, task specifications and assessment conditions and can be found at <https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-and-standards/english-language/>.

Before writing the assessment, the teacher also refers to the **Guidance Information (GI)** in the unit standard. This gives additional information on the level of the text and the task (NZCEL Foundation, see **GI 1**) and that it is informed by the CEFR (**GI 2**). The level of CEFR, and other well-known frameworks, is stated here [\[insert link to NZCEL level descriptors\]](#). For secondary schools, guidance on how unit standards and the CEFR relate to the ELLP is available here [\[insert link to the EL/EAP level descriptors\]](#). This unit standard, as a Level 1 Foundation unit standard, is informed by the CEFR A1 level, and is suitable for learners who are at the Foundation Stage of the ELLP.

The **Guidance Information** also suggests an integrated approach (**GI 2**) and refers to this supporting document (**GI 4**). It also provides important information on the assessment situation (**GI 5-8**), and how much support learners may have.

- 5 All assessment activities must be conducted in English, which must not be the learner's first language. Task instructions may be given in the learner's preferred language.
- 6 Assessment must be conducted in a highly supportive and familiar environment, in which the assessor speaks slowly and clearly, and affective barriers are minimised.
- 7 Learners need to be given time to read any written instructions and questions before the listening task. Clarification of task instructions may be requested by the learner, so long as this does not lead the learner to the correct answer.
- 8 Learners may use a bilingual and/or an English dictionary.
- 9 Learner's response may be oral or written or by non-verbal demonstration. If responses are oral or demonstrated, they must not be heard or observed by other learners. Responses may contain significant phonological or linguistic inaccuracies but must be recognisable. This standard assesses listening skills, not spoken, reading, or written skills.

**GI 5** clarifies that while the assessment must be undertaken in English, instructions can be given in the learner's own language.

**GI 6** explains that the assessment must be conducted in a highly supportive and familiar environment, in which the assessor speaks slowly and clearly, and affective barriers are minimised. If the assessor reads a script, this must be read slowly and clearly, and any recording of the script should also be read slowly and clearly. To minimise affective barriers, the assessment is best undertaken in the normal classroom, as part of a scheduled lesson, rather than in an unfamiliar space set up specifically for an exam.

**GI 7** highlights that learners need to be given time to read and understand the task and questions prior to listening to the spoken text, and that they may use a dictionary.



**GI 9** provides important information on what is required for learner responses. It makes it clear that learners do not need to spell words correctly, write grammatically correct sentences or have correct punctuation, as long as their responses can be understood. It also provides a range of assessment options, that can be particularly useful for learners with learning needs.

**GI 10** is particularly useful for assessment writers, as it sets out some of the main considerations.

- 10 Each spoken text for this standard:
- i must include at least three points by the speaker(s);
  - ii must contain information relevant to the learner;
  - iii must be appropriate to the spoken mode or a text designed for oral delivery;
  - iv must be repeated once only;
  - v may be supported by visual and non-verbal cues;
  - vi must be delivered in clear speech;
  - vii can be listened to face-to-face, or in pre-recorded audio or audio-visual format. If audio-visual materials are used, these must not include large amounts of written text.
  - viii must be guided by the first 500 words of the New General Service List <https://www.newgeneralservicelist.com/>.

A text for this standard must include at least three points by the speaker (**10 i**).

The **Performance criteria** also specify that the learner must identify three items of information. To allow for a margin of error, it would therefore be a good idea to have at least four points in the spoken text, that the learner can identify. It must be relevant (**10 ii**), which is why the health topic was chosen. It must be appropriate for the spoken mode (**10 iii**) and cannot simply be a reading text read out. It must be repeated once only (**10 iv**) so can be read or played twice during the assessment occasion, and these should be the only times the learner hears this particular text.

Learners can therefore not do a resubmission [[link to NZQA resubmission guidance](#)] involving listening to the same script again. It can be supported by visual and non-verbal clues (**10 v**), so can be a video recording, as long as it doesn't use a large amount of text, particularly text relevant to the questions (**10 vii**). It should be delivered in clear speech and guided by the first 500 words on the New General Service List (NGSL) (**10 vi** and **viii**).

## Sample transcript (Unit standard 30978)

[sound of a phone ringing through the receiver]

Receptionist: Good morning. This is Good Health Medical Centre. How can I help you?

Maria: Good morning. Can I make an appointment please?

Receptionist: Who do you need to see?

Maria: I need to see a doctor.

Receptionist: What is your name?

Maria: My name is Sara Ali.

Receptionist: Sara Ali. What is your date of birth?

Maria: My date of birth is tenth of June 1997.

Receptionist: We have an appointment on Thursday.

Maria: Thursday is good. What time?

Receptionist: 1 o'clock.

Maria: 1 o'clock on Thursday is good. Thank you.

Receptionist: Thank you.

### How does this spoken text meet the requirements?

- The spoken text has sufficient length. It includes more than three points stated by the speakers (**GI 10 i**).
- The spoken text is an appropriate text. It is an interaction which includes everyday requests and enquiries (Outcomes range statement). It is also designed for oral delivery (**GI 10 iii**).
- The vocabulary is appropriate. Most of the words are within the first 500 words on the [NGSL](#) (**GI 10 viii**). The words that fall outside are either very commonly used words that learners will have acquired (e.g. *Thursday*) or topic words taught specifically as part of the unit (e.g. *appointment*).
- The information is relevant to learners, as it includes phrases and words of immediate relevance, e.g. to do with personal details (name, date of birth), times and dates.

### Sample task (Unit standard 30978)

Read the questions. Make sure you understand the questions.

Listen and answer the questions.

1. What is her name? (write the answer)

\_\_\_\_\_ Ali

2. Who does she need to see?

nurse

teacher

doctor

3. What **day** is her appointment?

Monday

Thursday

Friday

4. What **time** is her appointment?

1 o'clock

11 o'clock

12.30

***How does this task meet the requirements?***

- The task allows the learner to identify three pieces of information. The task includes four items, which gives the learner a small margin of error.
- The answers rely on learners knowing the time, the days of the week, topic vocabulary (nurse/teacher/doctor) and being able to write down a (likely familiar) name with a straightforward spelling. Note that the learner will not be marked on spelling, and

any spelling of Sara (e.g. Zahra, Zara, Zarah, Sarah) will be acceptable. If it is unclear to the assessor what the student has written down, they can check for verbal clarification.

### Sample assessment schedule (Unit standard 30978)

To achieve this unit standard, learners must achieve two tasks: one must be a spoken information text, and one must be a spoken interactional text. These should be on different topics and assessed on different occasions.

Task 1: Doctor's appointment (interaction)				
Performance criteria	Evidence	Correct answers	✓	Judgement
1.1. Basic information is identified to demonstrate understanding of spoken text. Range at least three items of information for each text.	Questions 1-4	Sara (or any alternative spelling)		Basic information is identified by correctly answering at least 3 of Questions 1-4
		Doctor		
		Thursday		
		1 o'clock		
Task 2: School trip (information)				
Performance criteria	Evidence	Correct answers	✓	Judgement
1.1. Basic information is identified to demonstrate understanding of spoken text. Range at least three items of information for each text.	Questions 1-4			Basic information is identified by correctly answering at least 3 of Questions 1-4