English Language and English for Academic Purposes Unit Standards

Supporting Document – Draft for consultation – August 2025

Section Three B

Using English Language Level 1 and Level 2 unit standards to assess diverse learners

Connecting Reading, Speaking, and Writing assessment

Unpacking a unit standard (31005)

Analysing vocabulary levels of texts

Using English Language Level 1 and Level 2 unit standards to assess diverse learners

In this section, an experienced practitioner explores how to use unit standards to assess differentiated learning in a Year 11 English Language (EL) class and explains how text analysers can be used to measure vocabulary levels of texts at each of the different levels.

Whakawhanaungatanga (building relationships) provides a unifying theme for the teaching and learning activities at two levels. EL unit standard 31005 is unpacked in detail.

Who are the learners?

Secondary context

Year 11 class at a large urban school in Term 1, with 21 learners who are mostly from Tonga, Sāmoa and other Pacific Island nations. The class meets for five periods a week, one hour daily. Some learners are working mainly at English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP) Stage 1 and others at ELLP Stage 2. Many of them take Lea Faka Tonga, Gagana Sāmoa, and Te Reo Māori Kuki 'Airani as NCEA subjects. Some will be ready for the literacy and numeracy Common Assessment Activities (CAAs) or University Entrance by the end of their high school journey. Others, particularly those who have more language or learning needs, will work with family, the ESOL and Career Pathways departments, and their dean to decide on their next steps after leaving school in the next year or two. Some learners are at risk of disengagement from schooling, so teaching must focus on creating a sense of belonging, as well as developing language and literacy skills. They may not be entered for every standard, but all will participate in the teaching and learning.

Tertiary context

This is part of the [New Zealand Certificate in English Language](#) (NZCEL) programme at a smaller language school. Due to funding constraints, as well as student numbers, classes are often combined. Therefore, NZCEL 1 and NZCEL 2 are taught in the same class, by the same teacher. Many of the learners are women who are new to New Zealand. The language classroom is important to them, not only for learning English, but also for connecting socially and building relationships. To facilitate relationship building, while also working towards achieving the unit standards that contribute to the qualification, the teacher chooses the theme *Whakawhanaungatanga.*

Connecting Reading, Speaking, and Writing assessment

The *Whakawhanaungatanga* unit will involve three-unit standards at each level and focus on building relationships in the class. Te Aka Māori Dictionary defines whakawhanaungatanga as the 'process of establishing relationships, relating well to others'.

	Reading	Speaking	Writing
Level 1 Standards	31005 Read and understand a range of simple English language written texts independently (5 credits) (This unit contributes two of the four tasks for this unit standard.)	31013 Participate in simple everyday spoken interactions in English language (10 credits) (This unit contributes to one of the three tasks for this unit standard.)	27996 Write a simple text on an everyday topic in English language (5 credits)
Level 2 Standards	31006 Read and understand a range of straightforward English language written texts independently (5 credits) (This unit contributes two of the five tasks for this unit standard.)	31020 Participate in an interview on a familiar topic in English language (5 credits)	27999 Write a simple connected text on a familiar topic in English language (5 credits)
Teaching and learning activities, with more ELLP Stage 1 ideas here and Stage 2 here.	Students read extracts from profiles, interviews and biographies, discussing language features of profiles and personal responses to reading. The MOE'sTāhūrangi literacy and instructional series (including School Journals) are a source of rich, authentic, Aotearoa New Zealand texts which can be ordered free for schools.	Level 1 students interview each other about their backgrounds and interests (e.g. where they are from, what languages they speak, hobbies, favourite foods, music, subjects.) Level 2 students include questions about life in their home countries and future plans (to generate answers in present, past and future tense).	Writing profiles of community figures or school staff. • Teacher-created model texts for annotation and discussion • Shared/guided writing • Group, pair and individual writing • Peer and self-marking using checklists developed from model texts
Assessment tasks	Two personal responses to independently read profiles, interviews or biographies.	Level 1 students pair up to record interviews. Context: finding out information to write a short profile. Teacher records Level 2 students' interviews. Context: course interview.	Using the information from their interviews, learners write profiles of their classmates.

Unpacking a unit standard 31005

Guidance Information (GI) 1 – 6

31005 Read and understand a range of simple English language written texts independently (Level 1)	Notes
1 This unit standard may contribute to the New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Level 1) [Ref: 1880].	**GI 2** See previous pages for the ways **GI 2** recommendations have been taken into account for this specific context – each context is unique.
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.	**GI 3** Please see Section 2, for the relationship between ELLP, CEFR & EL & EAP unit standards.
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/	**GI 6** This is not a writing standard, so performance criteria for Level 1 writing tasks do not need to be met. Teachers could also collect evidence in other ways, for example, recorded interviews. A very simple interview about
5 All assessment activities must be conducted in English, which must not be the learner's first language.	the title, author, text type, date read and what the student enjoyed or learned from the
6 Learner responses may be written, oral, or visual. Responses may contain textual, phonological, or linguistic errors and inaccuracies, but these must not impede meaning.	text could contribute to one of the interview tasks for 31013.

Guidance Information (GI) 7 – 10

31005 Read and understand a range of simple English language written texts independently (Level 1)	Notes

7   Learners may use a bilingual and/or an English dictionary.
 	
 8   For this unit standard:
    i   learners may be supported in their choice of texts;
    ii   written texts may be abridged versions, designed for English language learners;
    iii   copies of articles, sample pages from texts, graded reader levels, and webpage links should be supplied for moderation purposes;
    iv   texts must be guided by the first 1000 words of the *New General Service List*. https://www.newgeneralservicelist.com/.
 	
 9   Guidelines for preparing submissions for moderation can be found at: https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/tertiary/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/external-moderation-application/.
 	
 10   Definitions
 Independently refers to learners reading a range of texts on their own, without teacher input beyond support with text selection to meet vocabulary and text type requirements.
 	
 Personal response refers to engagement with each text. This involves evidence that the learner has made connections between how they feel about what they read, how it may relate to their own life or things they know, and what they think about the ideas in the text. Engagement may involve expressing viewpoints or critiquing the writer's views.
 	
 Simple English language written text refers to a text that includes a number of ideas presented in simple and compound sentences and may include single words and phrases.
	8. Teachers may supply a dictionary and a selection of texts that meet **GI 8 iv** or, if allowing learners to select their own texts, check they meet the requirements. See also the definition of 'independently', below, and the information about using **GI** to assess texts on the following pages.
	 Please note that **8 iv** shows one element of two which are different for the English Language <u>Level 2</u> standard (31006) *Read and understand a range of straightforward English language written texts independently*. The other element is the number of texts learners are required to respond to (see **Range**).
	
	 10. Teaching should emphasise personal response rather than summarisation of the text. This definition of *simple English language written text* provides more guidance about appropriate text types.

Using Guidance Information to assess vocabulary levels of texts

Here's **GI 8** again, and a possible text, an interview with Alan Wendt the NZSL (New Zealand Sign Language) interpreter who became well-known for his work in COVID press conferences. He also speaks Samoan and German.

Tāhūrangi literacy and the Instructional Series.

Getting the Message Across
by Iona McNaughton
 	
Alan Wendt is a sign-language interpreter. He uses New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) to help Deaf and hearing people talk to each other.
 	
There are about 11,000 people in Aotearoa New Zealand who are Deaf. NZSL is the first language they learn. Many of their friends and families learn it, too.
 	
I asked Alan some questions about his job.
 	
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	8. For this unit standard:
	  i learners may be supported in their choice of texts;
	  ii written texts may be abridged versions, designed for English language learners;
	  iii copies of articles, sample pages from texts, graded reader levels, and webpage links should be supplied for moderation purposes;
	  iv texts must be guided by the first 1000 words of the *New General Service List*.
	    https://www.newgeneralservicelist.com/.

The subsection below **Analysing vocabulary levels of texts** includes tools and guidance to support correct selection of texts. It shows three tools to check if this text is at a suitable level. As you will see, it contains many words that learners working at this level could not be expected to know unless they had been taught during the unit. However, since the text may appeal to these learners, the teacher includes it as a teaching text, using group discussion to highlight language features of profiles and interviews and the difference between summarisation and personal response.

Check the level of a text if you have used an AI tool to modify it, even if you have used a detailed prompt like this: *You are an ESOL teacher, teaching students whose first language is not English. Rewrite and simplify the following text, use the New General Service List, and use the first ____ words of the NGSL, [keeping it in paragraphs and keeping the subheadings].*

Outcomes and performance criteria
This table shows the differences between the English Language Level 1 Unit Standard and the English Language Level 2 Unit Standard.

31005 Read and understand a range of simple English language written texts independently (Level 1)	31006 Read and understand a range of straightforward English language written texts independently (Level 2)	Notes
Outcome 1 Read and understand a range of *simple* English language written texts independently. **Range** text types may include but are not limited to graded readers, short stories, articles, websites. *four* written texts of at least three different text types.	**Outcome 1** Read and understand a range of *straightforward* English language written texts independently. **Range** written text types may include but are not limited to graded readers, short stories, articles, biographies, websites; *at least five* written texts of at least three different text types.	The **outcomes** and **performance criteria** are similar, allowing for a lot of overlap in teaching and learning. *Simple vs straightforward texts.* Check the definitions in the unit standards to understand the differences. *Four (Level 1 learners) vs five texts (Level 2 learners)* Learners who respond to two profiles or two interviews for this unit will need to read two other text types (such as a short story and an article) to meet these range requirements.
Performance criteria **1.1** Date of reading, title, text type, author or source of each text are recorded in the reading log. **1.2** A personal response to each text is given.	**Performance criteria** **1.1** The date of reading, title, text type, and author or source of each text are recorded in the reading log. **1.2** A personal response to each text is given.	**Performance criteria** **1.1** The template on the next page shows how to help learners meet this criterion. **1.2** This relates to **GI 10** on the previous page: evidence must emphasise

		personal response rather than summarisation of the text.

Assessment schedule and template (learner friendly) for use with unit standard 31005

Student friendly checklist/assessment schedule and template

The reading log and response template below is sufficient for either the Level 1 or Level 2 English Language unit standard – the differences will be in the complexity and number of texts read. The Level 1 text referred to comes from this collection: British Council Reading Zone . Keep information like this for moderation purposes, as outlined in **GI 8 iii** (on page 4, above).

31005 version 2 Read and understand a range of simple English language written texts independently (Level 1)

We are learning to read and respond to different texts <u>by ourselves</u> – using a dictionary if we need it.

I can read *four Level 1* texts (at least <u>three</u> different types) and…

- ✓ identify the title, author, text type and date
- ✓ identify the topic of the text
- ✓ write what I felt, thought or learned from my reading

Date read	25 October 2024
Title	Life as a YouTuber
Text type	Profile
Author or source	Nicola Prentis
Personal response	This profile is about Jessii Veei, a YouTuber who has 150 million followers. I learned this job is hard, and Jessii works six days a week. The article teaches us about staying safe on social media. For example, you can turn off comments, so you don't have to worry about mean people.

Sentence starters could also be supplied to support the learner, for example:

This _____ was about…   I learned…   I thought…   I enjoyed…   I didn't agree with… I felt…

The italicised words above (*'four Level 1*' texts) are the only elements that need to be changed to adapt this for learners being assessed by the English Language Level 2 Unit Standard.

Analysing vocabulary levels of texts

It is important to ensure that the vocabulary is at the correct level for the reading text and unit standard. This sub-section shares three tools to support this: *New General Service Levels Text Profiler, Lextutor,* and *Text Inspector.*

New General Service List Text Profiler

This tool analyses vocabulary at a range of *New General Service List* (NGSL) levels. The teacher selected the appropriate word level list (801-1200) words to align with the requirement that the text be 'guided by the first 1000 words of the NGSL'. The extract below shows the output. 89% of the words were within the 801 – 1200-word range, inclusive of proper nouns.

Lextutor

This tool analyses texts to show how many words are within the first 1,000 and 2,000 high-frequency words, the *Academic Word List* (AWL) and words outside these lists including proper nouns.

Although this tool refers to earlier lists (*General Service List* and *Academic Word List*), rather than the NGSL and *New Academic Word List* (NAWL), it is informative and uses an accessible visual format. Below is the output which supports the teacher's text selection in terms of vocabulary.

Text Inspector

Text Inspector is for the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This tool analysed the text at A2+, just within the Level 1 English Language Unit Standard range. Although some complexity data are available free through *Text Inspector* for short texts, a subscription is required to analyse longer texts and to elicit a CEFR level through the Scorecard function.

Other useful analysis tools: Text Analyzer
                                              Cathoven Language Hub