2024 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	Literacy
Unit standard(s):	32403, 32405

Report on individual unit standard(s)

Unit standard 32403: Demonstrate understanding of ideas and information in written texts

Assessment

In the Common Assessment Activity (CAA), all three outcomes were assessed by requiring candidates to answer questions based on a range of different text types and contexts. The questions provided candidates with multiple opportunities to produce evidence against each outcome.

Text types included non-fiction and fiction, and continuous and non-continuous text structures. Some texts included, or were combined with, aspects of visual texts, such as diagrams / graphs and illustrations.

Outcome 1: Demonstrate understanding of written texts

This outcome requires candidates to show they can understand the content and ideas in texts that they are likely to encounter in their learning, work, everyday lives, and communities.

There are three performance criteria for Outcome 1.

1.1   Process information and identify important ideas

This includes candidates using different skills and strategies to understand and make sense of what they read. For example, some questions involved locating information; others required close reading to develop a deeper and more precise understanding of the text. As well as identifying the main ideas in a text, candidates were also expected to make connections between parts of a text.

Some candidates did not read the text closely enough to correctly answer the questions, or were not able to correctly identify the main ideas.

1.2   Make links within texts using text structures and language features

This includes recognising the different language features and text structures used by writers. For example, some questions required knowledge of layout features, such as headings, illustrations, and bullet points; other questions required knowledge of language features, such as grammar, tense, vocabulary, and sentence structures. Candidates needed to understand why a writer might have used these features and structures in the text for that particular purpose and audience.

Some candidates did not demonstrate sufficient knowledge of text structures and language features and / or how a writer could use these to suit their purpose and audience.

1.3   Identify the meaning of vocabulary essential to understanding the text

This includes understanding the meanings of words that are essential to making sense of the text, and being able to use strategies to work out the meanings of less familiar words. For example, some

texts required candidates to use the clues in the text to help them work out the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary; others required an understanding of word families, common metaphorical phrases, and words with multiple meanings.

A few candidates did not appear to have a range of word solving strategies to help them work out the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary.

Outcome 2: Evaluate written texts with critical awareness

This outcome requires candidates to show that they can read a text closely to develop a deep and precise understanding of both its explicit and implicit meanings. This includes the ability to identify who wrote a text, for whom, why, and whether it may have purposes that are not immediately apparent.

Results indicated that most candidates had more difficulty in answering questions that tested this outcome than either outcomes one or three.

There are two performance criteria for Outcome 2.

2.1   Identify and make links between audience, purpose, and writer point-of-view

This includes understanding a writer's point of view or opinions, even when they are not explicitly stated. For example, some texts required candidates to understand why a particular title was chosen, or why a particular illustration was included by the writer.

Although many candidates could, for example, identify a writer's point of view and / or link various text features and structures to the writer's purpose, a number of candidates had difficulty in identifying the purpose of a text when it wasn't immediately apparent.

2.2   Evaluate the reliability and credibility of the text and / or the writer

This includes having strategies to identify a text's reliability and whether the writer / source is credible. For example, some texts required recognition of bias, and missing or contradictory information.

Although most candidates were able to evaluate the trustworthiness of author / textual content, there were many candidates who could not identify elements that related to the writer's perspective or bias.

Outcome 3: Process written texts for different purposes

This includes being able to select and evaluate texts for a specific purpose and being able to locate and use relevant information within and across a range of texts.

There are two performance criteria for Outcome 3.

3.1   Select and evaluate the relevance of texts according to the reader's purpose

This includes the candidate's ability to use more than one strategy to select and check that a text matches the candidate's purpose for reading, and being able to identify a variety of sources for specific information. For example, most texts required careful close reading, while some texts also required that candidates read headings and diagrams and / or looked for key words or phrases.

Although some candidates were able to identify information relevant for a given purpose (for example, identify who would be the best source to use for a particular purpose, or who would be the best person to help you with a particular problem), many candidates had difficulty with these questions. These candidates did not look carefully enough through the texts for key words, then read closely enough to evaluate whether the information best met the stated purpose.

3.2   Locate and use information across a range of texts according to the reader's purpose

This includes the ability to compare, contrast, summarise, or link information across a number of texts.

Although some candidates could locate information across texts and were able, consequently, to piece together events across a number of short texts, many candidates did not answer these questions accurately.

Summary

Areas of strength demonstrated by candidates who were clearly at, or above, the required standard:

- Using strategies to help them locate the main points or ideas in a text (e.g., using headings and key words).
- Identifying the writer's point of view or purpose, even where it was not explicitly stated or immediately apparent.
- Linking a writer's choices (e.g., vocabulary, text structure) to the text's purpose and audience.
- Having a reading vocabulary that included some general academic and specialised words.
- Using strategies to identify the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary (e.g., using knowledge of word families, prefixes, and suffixes).
- Recognising and understanding why specific language features and text structures (e.g., punctuation, tables, illustrations, hypertext, paragraphing) had been used.
- Rejecting misleading or inaccurate information.
- Comparing, contrasting, summarising, and linking information from a range of sources.

Areas requiring improvement demonstrated by candidates who were not at, or were borderline in meeting, the required standard:

- Developing close reading strategies to locate, check, and select relevant information.
- Developing critical thinking and awareness, including an understanding of a writer's purpose and the implications for the reader (e.g., explicit / implicit, inference, opinion / fact, stereotype, point of view).
- Developing strategies to work out meanings of words that may be less familiar (e.g., topic specific, specialised, and academic words).
- Developing knowledge of a range of language features and text structures (e.g., sentence types, grammatical constructions, paragraphing) and reasons for their use.
- Developing a wide reading vocabulary.

Unit standard 32405: Write texts to communicate ideas and information

Assessment

In the Common Assessment Activity (CAA), the two outcomes were assessed by requiring candidates to produce two pieces of writing, and to answer a range of selected-response questions

Candidates needed to produce sufficient evidence (across the three tasks) to meet all the requirements of the standard.

Outcome 1: Write meaningful texts for different purposes and audiences

This outcome requires candidates to show they can produce two pieces of writing of different text types for different purposes and audiences. At least one text must be a continuous text of at least 250 words.

In the Common Assessment Activity (CAA), each of the two questions contained specific instructions, some content suggestions, a stated length recommendation, a planning space, and a reminder that candidates' writing would be assessed on appropriateness, accuracy, and organisation of ideas.

1.1   Select and use content that is appropriate to purpose and audience

This includes addressing the topic / option by establishing a main idea / argument / point and providing details to support that focus.

Most candidates provided relevant and appropriate content for the selected purpose, audience, and text type.

Some candidates did not meet this requirement because, for example, they went off topic, did not consider the purpose and / or audience, or did not provide sufficient development of ideas.

1.2   Use text structures in ways that are appropriate to purpose and audience

This includes organising ideas so that the text is meaningful to the reader.

Most candidates used an appropriate structure / format for the stated purpose and audience (e.g., showing they understand how to structure an email to someone they have never met); sequencing content appropriately (e.g., introduction, conclusion, grouping similar ideas together), and linking ideas and details appropriately (e.g., firstly …, another way … because).

Some candidates did not select an appropriate text structure for the given purpose, audience, or text type (e.g., the text moved randomly from point to point) or did not use devices to aid reader understanding (e.g., appropriate beginnings and endings, topic sentences, paragraphs).

1.3   Make language choices that are appropriate to purpose and audience

This includes the appropriate use of register, tone, and language features. (e.g., vocabulary and sentence types).

Most candidates used appropriate register and tone (e.g., appropriately polite and respectful), although some candidates used language that was too informal for the audience and purpose (e.g., "kinda", "wanna / gonna").

Many candidates also used appropriate sentence structures (length, variety, complexity) and vocabulary (precise, relevant, specific). Some candidates did not show evidence of thinking about word choice, and / or that different words may work better in different contexts and for different audiences and / or purposes. (e.g., used imprecise and / or repetitive vocabulary, such as "stuff", "things").

1.4   Write text that demonstrates sufficient technical accuracy to communicate meaning, without intrusive errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar

This includes having control of most writing conventions. Although some errors are acceptable, they should only occur when a student is attempting more complex structures.

The candidates who met this requirement generally demonstrated control of writing conventions, such as sentence construction, subject-verb agreement, and the appropriate use of tenses, punctuation, pronouns, and spelling. They also tended to answer most of the selected-response questions correctly.

Many candidates had difficulty in meeting this requirement. The majority of the errors involved awkward and / or run on sentences, punctuation, grammar, and spelling errors.

Outcome 2: Use written language conventions to support communication

This outcome requires evidence of control of specific language conventions to support communication.

2.1   Construct a variety of complete sentences

This includes being able to correctly use a range of sentence types.

2.2 Punctuate correctly to support meaning

This includes understanding the purposes and conventions of basic punctuation: what punctuation is required, where, and when.

2.3 Use grammatical conventions within sentences and paragraphs with sufficient technical accuracy to communicate meaning

This includes observing the conventions associated with, for example, subject-verb agreement, pronoun reference, appropriate use of word forms, and consistent tense use.

2.4 Use and spell everyday high frequency vocabulary with technical accuracy

This includes being able to use high-frequency words accurately (e.g., words found in the Essential Spelling List 1–7, and / or the first 2,000 words of the New General Service List).

2.5 Make simple changes to improve text coherence and the organisation of the content

This includes presenting ideas in a clear and logical order so that the connection between the ideas is clear.

In the CAA, this outcome was tested using a range of multi-choice questions.

On the whole, most candidates completed this section reasonably well, showing that they could recognise the correct spelling of everyday words and could identify when a sentence was grammatically correct and complete. The questions that candidates found the most challenging were those which required understanding of how to correctly structure and punctuate a sentence so that it clearly communicated the intended message.

Summary

Areas of strength demonstrated by candidates who were clearly at, or above, the required standard:

- Reading and following the instructions for each question carefully.
- Using the suggestions provided for each question as a guideline.
- Using the planning spaces to plan and organise their ideas.
- Focussing on the questions consistently and not going "off topic".
- Providing relevant, credible, and appropriate supporting details to develop their ideas.
- Grouping and linking their ideas so they met the writing purpose and audience.
- Structuring their response to achieve overall cohesiveness.
- Conveying a sense of engagement / authenticity / personal voice with the topic / question.
- Selecting appropriate language that had some impact (sentences, phrasing, vocabulary).
- Using a variety of sentences (e.g., variation of sentence lengths, beginnings, types).
- Using a wide variety of vocabulary, including specific, precise vocabulary as appropriate.
- Selecting precise and varied vocabulary that added interest for the reader.
- Demonstrating knowledge and control of writing conventions (e.g., full stops, capital letters).
- Reviewing, editing, and proofreading their answers (particularly for technical accuracy).
- Meeting the text length recommendations, ensuring they provided sufficient evidence to meet the requirements of the standard).

Areas requiring improvement demonstrated by candidates who were not at, or were borderline in meeting, the required standard:

- Following the assessment instructions (e.g., complete all three sections: two pieces of writing and the selected response questions).

- Following the instructions and guidelines for each task (e.g., select only one topic, following the recommended text length to ensure they provided sufficient evidence to meet the requirements of the standard.
- Responding specifically and directly to the assessment tasks.
- Planning their answers to avoid going "off topic" (e.g., brainstorming, mind maps, listing ideas).
- Organising and grouping their ideas to avoid "jumping around" or repetition.
- Linking and connecting their ideas to each other and to the specified purpose.
- Providing relevant examples and sufficient detail when developing ideas.
- Using language appropriate for the audience and purpose as specified in the task (e.g., appropriateness of register and tone).
- Using a variety of sentence types (short / long, variation in beginnings and sentence type).
- Using appropriate vocabulary for the purpose and audience (e.g., avoidance of slang, using specific and precise words to clarify meaning and for interest).
- Editing and proofreading their work for technical accuracy (e.g., run-on / incomplete sentences, spelling, punctuation, capital letters).