

2026 NCEA Interim Assessment Report

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

General commentary

The purpose of this report is to provide a high-level snapshot of areas of strength and weakness following the first assessment event of the NCEA Literacy and Numeracy standards, which took place during the weeks 18–29 May 2026. A more detailed Assessment Report will be released following the second assessment event results release. The assessments involved online Common Assessment Activities, each of which learners completed in a single sitting with no time limit.

Careful consideration must be given to simply re-entering students for the second assessment because they didn't Achieve in the first one. Ensure students have undergone sufficient additional teaching to address areas of weakness, and that they are well prepared before they attempt the assessment again. The following guidance has been provided by the markers of the assessments – an experienced group of teachers with insights from marking numerous student responses.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

Achievement standard 32403: Reading

Summary

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

- using comprehension skills to fully understand a text
- being able to unpack each question, evaluate options, and select the best answer
- identifying why each text was written (the writer's purpose)
- identifying who each text was written for (the writer's audience)
- recognising and identifying the various strategies that writers use to achieve their purpose
- understanding how to use the information in a text for a specific purpose
- understanding how to determine the relevance or reliability of the information in a text.

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

- knowing how to read and understand an unfamiliar text
- knowing how to select the option that best answered each question
- understanding why each text had been written
- understanding who each text had been written for

- understanding the purposes and strategies for the writers' language choices
- understanding how to determine the relevance or reliability of a text
- understanding how to select and locate relevant information across more than one text.

Commentary

Marker reflections across the assessment that may support next steps:

- focusing on what close reading requires from a reader (e.g. 'why' and 'how' a text has been written, as well as 'what' the text is about)
- developing strategies for tackling unfamiliar words (e.g. decoding, prefixes, suffixes)
- understanding and recognising the range of writing purposes (e.g. explain, persuade, inform, instruct, narrate, entertain)
- utilising the information in a text to help select and locate the appropriate answer to a question
- learning what helps readers to gauge the credibility or trustworthiness of presented information in texts.

Understanding that context is critical; all questions are asked about a specific text (or texts).

Achievement standard 32405: **Writing**

Summary

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

- carefully reading and following the instructions for each task
- showing an understanding of 'purpose and audience'
- providing relevant and believable supporting evidence to develop their ideas
- framing and structuring their writing clearly to achieve overall unity
- using precise vocabulary, appropriate tone and register, and varied sentence types
- showing knowledge and control of writing conventions.

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

- meeting the task requirements (e.g. text length, text purpose and / or audience)
- providing and developing relevant ideas
- organising their writing logically or sequentially
- choosing an appropriate register and / or tone for the purpose and audience
- selecting appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures for written communication
- using language conventions correctly (e.g. grammar, punctuation and spelling)
- editing and proofreading their writing.

Commentary

Marker reflections across the assessment that may support next steps:

- understanding that different text types and text forms have different language requirements (e.g. public websites, emails to local community group, emails to individuals)
- understanding that there is a difference between written and spoken texts with regards to language choices, sentence composition, and structures.

- understanding the benefits of planning and organising ideas prior to writing
 - developing and strengthening ideas with appropriate details and evidence
 - developing knowledge of written language conventions so that ideas are clearly communicated
 - learning to effectively edit and proofread writing.
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