

2021 NCEA Assessment Report

Standard Number 32403: Read written texts to understand ideas and information

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 they could achieve each outcome.

Text types included nonfiction 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: requires evidence of the ability to read and make sense of written texts

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

1.1 Process information and identify important ideas.

This includes using different skills and strategies to understand and make sense of what candidates read. For example, some questions involved the use of skimming and scanning skills to locate information, whereas other questions 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 or make connections between parts of a text.

1.2 Make links within texts using text structures and language features.

This includes recognising the different language features and text structures that are 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 an author 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 them 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; some texts 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 meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary.

Outcome 2: requires evidence of the ability to read written texts with critical awareness

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

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 it is 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, e.g., understanding that 'sponsored content' was an advertisement and not just an informational text.

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 contradictory or missing information.

Many candidates were able to evaluate the trustworthiness of author/textual content, although there were some candidates who could not identify elements that related to the writer's credibility and/or had difficulty recognising bias or stereotyping.

Outcome 3: requires evidence of the ability to read 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.

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

This includes the ability to use more than one strategy to select and check that a text matches their purpose for reading and being able to identify a variety of sources for specific information. For example, some texts required that candidates read headings, skimmed texts and scanned for key words.

Although some candidates were able to identify information relevant for a given purpose (for example, identify which movie would be most appropriate and enjoyable for a five year old, or which search result would give them the information required to solve a problem), many candidates did not read the questions or texts closely enough to select the best text/s according to 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.

IN SUMMARY

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

- used skimming and scanning strategies to help them locate the main points or find relevant information
- used strategies to reject misleading or inaccurate information
- recognised and understood why a wide variety of language features and text structures (e.g. punctuation, tables, hypertext, paragraphing) had been used
- had a reading vocabulary that included some general academic and specialised words
- could use knowledge and strategies to identify the meaning of some unfamiliar vocabulary (e.g. word families, figurative language)
- could identify the writer's point of view or purpose, even where it was not explicitly stated or immediately apparent
- linked writer's choices (e.g. vocabulary, text structure) to purpose and audience
- could use strategies to select and check that a text matched their own purpose for reading, (e.g. used headings and scanned for key words)
- used close reading in order to compare, contrast, summarise and link information from a range of sources.

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

- skimming and scanning strategies to locate, check and select relevant information
- understanding a writer's purpose for writing, as distinct from their own purpose for reading
- reading closely to 'pick up clues' and 'read between the lines'.

The marking team recommends that teachers focus on the following:

- Development of skimming and scanning strategies to locate, check and select relevant information.
- Development of 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).
- Development of knowledge of a range of language features and text structures (e.g. sentence types, grammatical constructions, paragraphing) and reasons for their use.
- Development of reading vocabulary from a range of text types, including an understanding that some words/phrases can have multiple meanings (e.g. figurative language).
- Developing strategies to understand unfamiliar language (e.g. word families, word connotations).