

Both Reach Assessments™ Writing and ICAS Assessments™ Writing assess students' ability to write an extended response to a given task. Two forms of writing, narrative and persuasive, will be assessed over time. Writing is marked on a common scale, that is, all scripts, regardless of year level, are marked using the same criteria. The strength of the common scale is increased with the use of common tasks across year levels. This makes the scores that students achieve comparable with each other. This ability to make such direct comparisons can inform whole-school teaching strategies and programs. In reports, however, each student's result is only compared to the results of his/her peers in the same year level.

All students are given age-appropriate tasks in the same genre. The stimulus provided to the students is adapted to the interest levels of students of different ages.

PERSUASIVE WRITING

For persuasive writing, the task requires students to write a text that persuades. These are examples of persuasive writing tasks:

- a review
- an advertisement
- a letter to a council
- a formal argument
- an opinion piece for a newspaper
- a campaign manifesto.

NARRATIVE

For narrative writing, the task requires students to write one or more of the following aspects or stages of a narrative. These are examples of narrative writing tasks:

- the beginning of a narrative
- the complication or event in a narrative
- a description of a setting
- a description of a character
- the conclusion of a narrative.

MARKING SCHEME

Reach Writing and ICAS Writing are criterion-referenced assessments that use a common scale. This means that the assessment is marked against criteria which are specific to the task and that every student's work is assessed against the same marking scheme. Up to twelve marking criteria may be used. These may be divided into domains or sections:

- Genre
- Textual Grammar
- Syntax/Punctuation
- Spelling (Reach Writing only)

Each marking criterion has a range of scores. Each score point describes the achievement of a skill level in that criterion. For example, at a score of 3, a student will have satisfied the standards described by scores 1, 2 and 3 but will not have demonstrated the standard described by score 4. In this sense the scoring can be seen as cumulative. That each score in each criterion describes a specific skill level enables students to assess their achievement and assists teachers with diagnostic information to plan their teaching programs.

SECTIONS

Genre

Marking criteria in the skill area of Genre assess the ways in which the text has been structured and specific stylistic and vocabulary choices that have been made to achieve the writer's purpose and the engagement of the reader. The best texts will demonstrate a creative and skilful integration of structure and language choices in order to do this.

Textual Grammar

The features of Textual Grammar which may be assessed include the correct use of tense and the ways in which tense can be manipulated to strengthen the writing; the correct use of pronouns, conjunctions and connectives to assist the reader in following the text; and the ability to correctly structure a variety of different types of sentences, including complex sentences, for effect.

Syntax/Punctuation

The skill area of Syntax/Punctuation includes marking criteria which assess correct use of sentence grammar including subject-verb agreement and the correct use of prepositions, articles and plurals, and punctuation.

Spelling (Reach Writing only)

Spelling assesses a student's demonstrated ability to correctly spell words of increasing levels of complexity which are appropriate to the task.