e-asTTle writing (revised)
MANUAL

Contents

PART A:
e-asTTle writing

1. Introduction to e-asTTle writing (revised)

1.1. Introduction to e-asTTle writing and the manual

e-asTTle writing (revised) is an online assessment tool designed to assess students' progress in writing from Years 1–10. It represents a complete revision of the original e-asTTle writing assessment tool.

e-asTTle writing assesses students' ability to independently write continuous text across a variety of communicative purposes (describe, explain, recount, narrate, persuade). It assesses generic writing competence rather than writing specific to any learning area, and so does not assess content knowledge.

An e-asTTle writing test involves students writing for up to 40 minutes to compose a response to a set prompt (formerly known as a "task"). Teachers then use a rubric, supported by notes and exemplars, to score the writing against seven different elements of writing. The online e-asTTle application is able to convert the rubric scores to scores on an e-asTTle writing scale and subsequently to curriculum levels, and then to produce a range of reporting at the individual and group level.

As well as helping teachers monitor their students' progress, the results from e-asTTle writing will assist teachers to make informed decisions about the kinds of teaching materials, methods and programmes most suitable for their students. It also provides teachers with a means of measuring progress in writing over time and against the national expectations.

This manual does not replace, but extends upon, the user manuals already available for the e-asTTle application. It is an important resource for teachers and school leaders who plan to use e-asTTle writing. It describes the assessment tool and provides information and advice about its use. Particular emphasis is given to the marking process. It is recommended that teachers and school leaders read the manual thoroughly and consult it regularly, at least in the initial stages of using the tool, since there are several significant changes that will not be immediately obvious from the tool itself.

Components of the tool:
- 20 writing assessment prompts
- a marking rubric
- structure and language notes (to assist use of the marking rubric)
- 76 annotated exemplars
- a glossary and a list of definitions.

2. About e-asTTle writing (revised)

2.1. Links to curriculum documents

e-asTTle writing is aligned to *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007), *The Literacy Learning Progressions: Meeting the Reading and Writing Demands of the Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2010) and *The New Zealand Curriculum Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8* (Ministry of Education, 2009). These curriculum documents were consulted throughout the development of the tool to ensure consistency with other Ministry of Education initiatives. The following diagrams show how e-asTTle writing is linked to the New Zealand curriculum, and the part it plays in assessing students' writing.

The role of e-asTTle in assessing students' writing

1. e-asTTle and its relationship with the NZ curriculum

The first diagram shows that e-asTTle will support teachers to assess aspects of writing-to-communicate across the curriculum. The e-asTTle writing tool has been informed by:

- the broad concept of using writing as a tool to support specific learning purposes across the curriculum
- students' writing
- the requirements for a rigorous, standardised assessment tool.
- the understanding that e-asTTle assesses using 'writing to communicate' and general writing competence but does not assess using 'writing to think about and record' across the curriculum.

Think about, record and **communicate** to meet specific learning purposes across the curriculum as described in the NZC, LLP and the writing standards
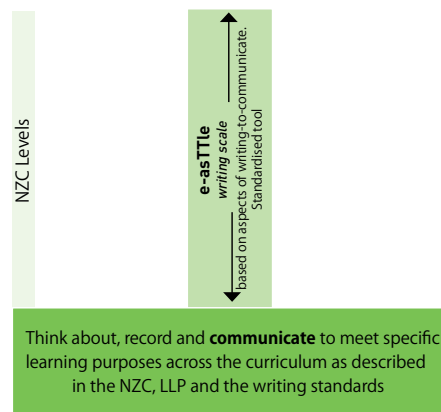
2. The range of information used to inform teacher decision making

Teachers develop a rich picture of students' strengths and next learning steps through analysing information from learning conversations, observations of learning tasks or the products of these tasks, and the use of standardised assessment tools. These methods of assessment can be thought of as a 'healthy triangle', with standardised tools (such as e-asTTle) being only a small part of the picture.

learning conversations

observation of process

formal assessments (including e-asTTle)
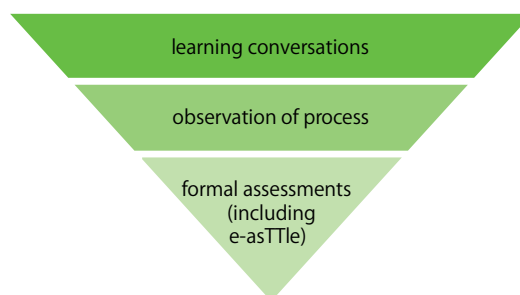
3. An example of a rich picture of achievement for an individual student

Teachers build up a rich description for an individual student. They ensure that the broad concept of writing as an interactive tool to meet the specific learning purposes across the curriculum is taught, practised and assessed. e-asTTle writing is a very reliable and precise part of the description. Other mechanisms, such as student tasks and conversations across a range of learning areas, provide the rest of the description.

student – teacher conversations

samples of student writing

student – student conversations

e-asTTle writing to communicate

observation of process

NZC Levels

Think about, record and **communicate** to meet specific learning purposes across the curriculum as described in the NZC, LLP and the writing standards
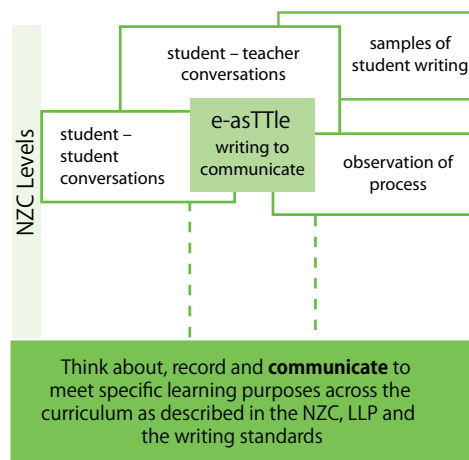
4. An example of using e-asTTle writing

The components of e-asTTle writing and their relationship to each other are shown on the next page. Teachers can select the most appropriate writing prompt for their students to show their knowledge and skills within 'writing as communication'. By using the rubric and exemplars, along with sound moderation processes, teachers will be able to assess students' current skill levels and identify the focus for future teaching and learning. The information from the rubric and the student writing make a useful starting point for a rich discussion between teacher and student about the student's writing. They can then collaboratively set relevant learning goals.
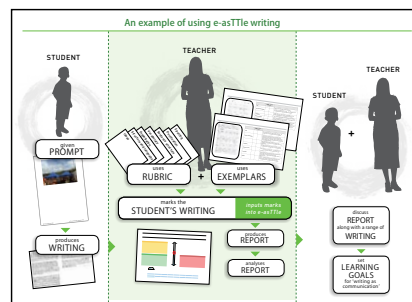
(see larger diagram on next page)

An example of using e-asTTle writing

STUDENT

given PROMPT

Look at the photo. Write to describe the moment in time it shows.

↓

produces WRITING

TEACHER

uses EXEMPLARS

\+
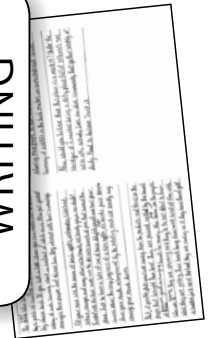
uses RUBRIC

- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Sentence structure
- Vocabulary
- Organisation
- Structure and language
- Ideas
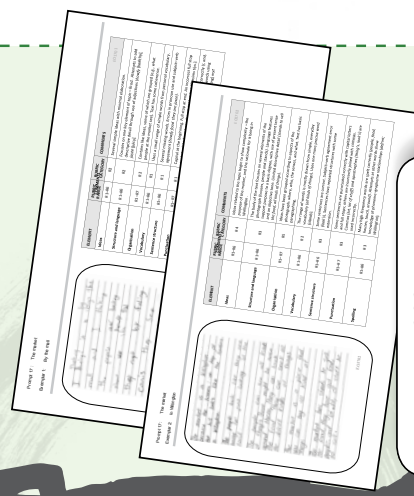
→

marks the STUDENT'S WRITING

→

inputs marks into e-asTTle

→

produces REPORT

→

analyses REPORT

TEACHER + STUDENT

discuss REPORT along with a range of WRITING

→

set LEARNING GOALS for 'writing as communication'

2.2. Changes you may notice

The following features of e-asTTle writing have been revised:

- scope of the tool
- writing assessment prompts
- marking rubric
- annotated exemplars
- measurement scale
- parts of the information provided by the reports and their formats.

2.2.1. Scope of the tool

The new version of the tool can be used from Years 1–10. However, it is only suitable for students who are able to independently communicate at least one or two simple ideas in writing. Students who score in the lowest category for every element assessed by e-asTTle writing are not well targeted by the assessment.

2.2.2. Writing assessment prompts

The term "prompt" emphasises the role of "prompting" rather than "prescribing" writing. This emphasis encourages students to draw on their individual and cultural knowledge to interpret the writing topic. Twenty new prompts have been developed, across five purposes (describe, explain, recount, narrate, persuade). These purposes are important to writing in general, rather than to any particular learning area, and are core to writing across the curriculum.

The new prompts are designed to be as open-ended as possible, so that within the broad context of the given purpose and topic, students can choose their own subject matter and bring their own ideas to the writing. Only two prompts, both asking students to describe life cycles, have set subject matter. Some prompts have been specifically designed to be suitable for younger or older students.

2.2.3. Marking rubric

A new marking rubric has been developed, which can be used to assess writing for any of the five purposes. The rubric focuses on seven elements of writing. Each of these elements makes an important contribution to the production of an effective text. The rubric gives very specific information about each element. The seven elements, their skill focus and the range of possible scoring categories for each element are shown below (see Table 1).

The rubric, while based on and linked to the literacy learning progressions (Ministry of Education, 2010), has been developed through analysis of student work produced in response to the writing prompts. The range of development described in the rubric, and reflected in the category descriptors for each of the elements, has been derived from characteristics observed in examples of students' writing.

2.2.4. The scoring system

The scores are not directly related to New Zealand curriculum levels, but refer to points along the continuum (the "R" before the score indicates that these are "rubric" scores, rather than curriculum levels). The possible scores for each element range from R1 to R6 or R7. They reflect a continuum of development within a particular element of writing, with each score point denoting a described level or category of achievement.

TABLE 1 **The elements**

Element	Skill focus	Score range
Ideas	The relevance, quantity, quality, selection and elaboration of ideas for the topic	R1–6
Structure and language	The presence and development of structural and language features appropriate to the specified purpose	R1–6
Organisation	The organisation of ideas into a coherent text	R1–7
Vocabulary	The range, precision and effectiveness of word choices appropriate to the topic	R1–6
Sentence structure	The quality, effectiveness and correctness of sentences	R1–6
Punctuation	The accurate use of sentence punctuation markers and the range and accuracy of other punctuation to aid understanding of the text and to enhance meaning	R1–7
Spelling	The difficulty of words used and the accuracy of the spelling	R1–6

2.2.5. Annotated exemplars

The annotated exemplars are samples of student writing produced in response to the e-asTTle writing prompts. They have been selected as representative, rather than ideal, examples of writing for each prompt. Each writing sample has been scored using the marking rubric. Annotations explain the thinking behind each scoring decision. Together, the rubric, the exemplars and the annotations enable consistent marking decisions to be made.

2.2.6. Measurement scale

A new measurement scale has been constructed for e-asTTle writing, which in turn has been linked to curriculum level bands. This allows e-asTTle writing to convert rubric scores into scale scores and curriculum levels. The new scale takes into account differences between the prompts in terms of their difficulty and allows students' progress to be tracked over time. The new scale is not directly comparable to the original scale.

2.2.7. Reporting formats

e-asTTle writing makes use of the same report formats available in the other learning areas served by the e-asTTle application. Some changes have been made to accommodate the use of the new rubric and to ensure that information is clear and concise.

2.3. The e-asTTle framework for assessing writing

The ability to use writing as an interactive tool and to create effective written texts is critical in enabling students to engage successfully with all areas of the curriculum. As students build their literacy knowledge, skills and attitudes through explicit instruction, they also use them in increasingly diverse contexts in a variety of learning areas.

To build a solid foundation for using writing in different contexts, students need to master the underlying components or elements of effective writing. These include skills as diverse as spelling and the development of ideas. Effective writers are able to use these skills to develop texts for a variety of communicative purposes.

The e-asTTle writing tool enables teachers to assess students' level of achievement in writing to communicate, through analysis of their skill development in a number of important elements of writing. Students produce a piece of writing in response to a teacher-selected e-asTTle writing prompt. The prompts are open-ended writing activities that require students to communicate to a general adult audience. They are based on accessible topics, and cover five main communicative purposes for writing: to describe, explain, persuade, narrate and recount. These purposes are core to many of the writing demands of the learning areas of the New Zealand curriculum.

The student's writing is then scored using an analytic, criterion-referenced marking rubric. The rubric focuses on seven elements of writing that can be assessed through analysis of the written text: ideas, structure and language, organisation, vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation and spelling. Mastery of these distinct but interrelated elements provides students with many of the tools they need to meet the demands of complex writing tasks across the curriculum. Each element is divided into an ordered set of skill categories, representing a continuum of development. The student's writing is scored element by element. Scores for each element are entered into the tool to produce an overall score, which is located on a measurement scale.

The e-asTTle framework allows teachers to identify students' particular strengths and areas for further development, by focusing on knowledge and skill levels within each element of writing. Students' scores are likely to vary across the elements, producing rich, fine-grained diagnostic information to inform decisions about individual and group learning. Information from the tool can also enable teachers to make judgments about their students' progress over time, and to plan next learning goals. In addition, the e-asTTle writing tool can make a significant contribution to the wide range of evidence supporting an overall teacher judgment about each student's performance in relation to national standards.

2.3.1. Developing the prompts, marking rubric, and annotated exemplars

Thirty prompts were drafted and piloted at a small number of diverse schools and year levels to gather information on the suitability of the prompts for the tool. Twenty-five prompts were selected to go on to the next stage of development. The student writing scripts produced from those prompts were then used to develop the rubric and the annotated exemplars.

The process of developing the marking rubric involved researchers first making tentative decisions about possible elements and scoring ranges for the rubric. These decisions were based on knowledge of general writing research, experience in developing similar writing tools, advice from reference group members, and guidance provided by curriculum documents. Scripts were then grouped according to purpose and prompt. Researchers worked systematically, prompt by prompt, to rank the scripts from weakest to strongest and to enter brief descriptions of the writing features they saw in the scripts to the marking rubric. Over time, patterns of features emerged. For example, it was found that the sentences in the lowest ranked scripts consisted of fragments and phrases, and often had missing words, and that the next stage consisted of short simple, compound, and basic complex sentences.

Twenty-one prompts were selected to be trialled, and the draft rubric was used to mark the approximately five thousand scripts produced from the trial. The marking process made significant contributions to the refinement of the rubric and also produced scripts that became important additions to the pool of annotated exemplars.

The process began in mid 2011 and was completed by the end of that year. The 20 prompts finally selected, the rubric, and the annotated exemplars are the result of a detailed and rigorous process that involved fine-tuning the materials throughout.

2.3.2. Extending the usefulness of the rubric

Teachers are encouraged to use the rubric to assess writing other than that generated by the e-asTTle writing prompts. Teachers may wish to write their own prompts that relate explicitly to classroom topics of study. If they do so, consideration of the following will facilitate accurate marking.

1. It is recommended that results from teacher-developed prompts are not entered into the e-asTTle application. The e-asTTle application links results to particular e-asTTle prompts. It then takes into account the difficulty of the prompt when transforming rubric scores to scale scores. The difficulty level of a teacher-developed prompt is unknown.

2. The rubric has been developed from students' writing of continuous text. It is recommended that teacher-developed writing prompts maintain this feature.

3. The rubric was developed from students' writing for five communicative purposes: to describe, explain, persuade, narrate, and recount. The rubric may also be used with other single, or multiple, communicative purposes, although not every element will always be relevant.

3. Administration and marking

e-asTTle allows users to create writing tests, assign them to students, enter scores, and produce reporting. This section provides an overview of these processes.

3.1. Creating an e-asTTle assessment

e-asTTle writing assessments are created as "customised tests" within the e-asTTle application. This involves selecting an appropriate prompt and attitude domain (see below).

1. Click on "Create New Test".
2. Click on "Create Custom Test".
3. Enter a test name and a short description of the test (if needed). Change the subject to "Writing" and click "Continue". Note that all writing tests are specified as having a 40-minute test duration.
4. The writing prompts are grouped under five purposes. Use the sliders to select one purpose. This screen also asks you to choose an attitude domain (see note below). Click "Continue" when ready.

5. Select a prompt. Each prompt is provided with a short description. Click on a prompt name to view a prompt. For some purposes you will need to scroll down to view all the available prompts. When ready, make your selection by clicking the appropriate radio button and press "Continue".
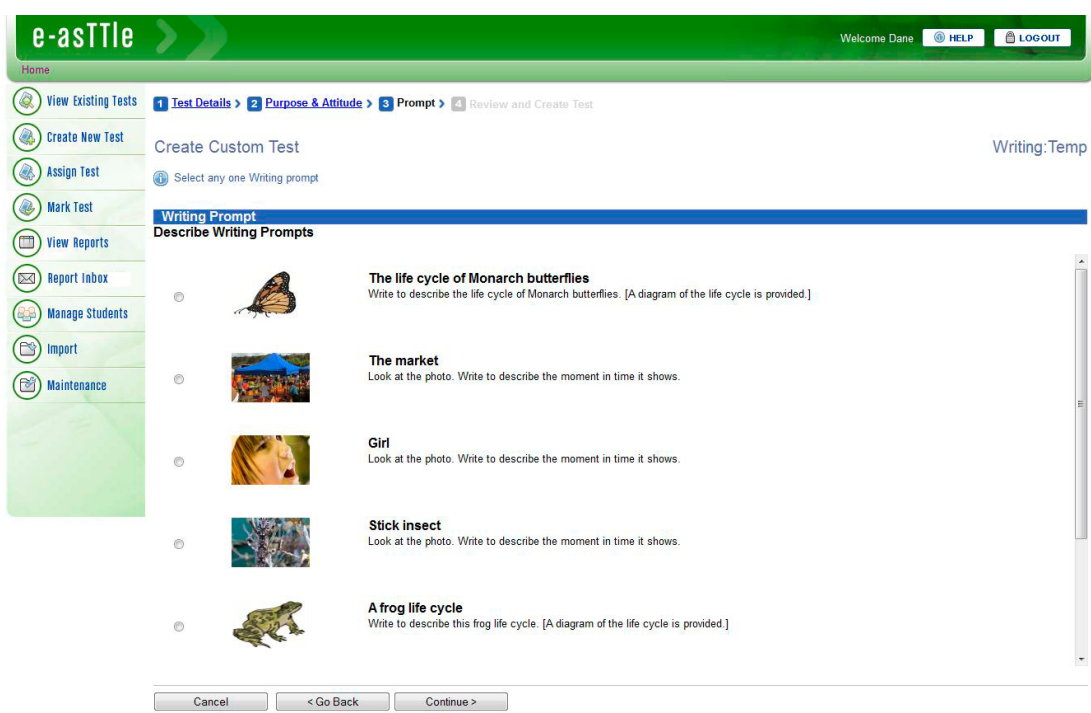
6. Review the test details. If you are happy with the settings, click "Create Test". Otherwise, click "Go Back" to edit your settings.

7. Once you create the test it is given a "Pending" status. A pending test can be viewed, revised, accepted, edited or deleted. Use this page to view the test. Note that a writing test is a combination of components and includes administration instructions, the prompt, a student response booklet, the marking rubric, the structure and language notes and annotated exemplars for the prompt, and the glossary and definitions. At this stage the pages of the test will contain a watermark stating that the test is pending. The watermark will disappear if you "Accept" the test.

8. Accept your test. Once accepted you can no longer edit the test details apart from the test name. You can view the test and print it. If you only want to print some components of the test, use print options to select the components you want.

3.1.1. The attitude domains

Each e-asTTle writing test contains a short section focused on attitudes. When creating a test you can specify which of six possible attitude domains will be included with the test. Only one attitude domain can be included per test. Please note that the attitude domains were originally written for students in Years 4 to 10. Please use your discretion when using an e-asTTle writing test with younger students as to whether you require students to answer these questions. They can be marked as "not answered" when entering results.

TABLE 2 **Attitude domains available in e-asTTle**

Attitude – General	This is the general set that has always appeared in asTTle, but rewritten into statements for students to respond to (six statements).
Engagement – General	This is a set of general statements relating to student engagement with school (six statements).
Motivation – General	This is a set of general statements relating to student motivation for school (eight statements).
Motivation – Writing	This is a set of statements relating to motivation in writing (six statements).
Interest – Writing	This is a set of statements relating to students' interest in writing (six statements).
Self-regulation – General	This is a general set of statements relating to student self-regulation. This set could be used across subjects for senior students (six statements).

3.1.2. Choosing an e-asTTle prompt

Teachers should use their professional judgment when choosing a prompt, to ensure that it is appropriate for their students.

When choosing a prompt, consider possible sources of difficulty such as the level of abstract thought required: for example, "community facility", which is the focus of one prompt, is a highly abstract term. Also consider the complexity of the structure appropriate to the purpose: for example, narrating requires the writer to use a more complex structure than describing or recounting.

Some prompts will suit older students because they cover topics relating to the wider world. Others will be better suited to younger students. The recounting prompts (*Whānau and family time*, *Time with friends*, and *What I did well*) and three of the describing prompts (*Girl*, *Adult and child*, and *Dogs at the beach*) are written in slightly simplified language because of the likelihood that they will be used by teachers of younger students.

Choosing a variety of prompts according to the needs and interests of students will increase student engagement. Doing so should not significantly increase time spent on marking if the prompts have the same purpose. However, introducing each prompt and discussing the topic will make test administration more complicated. Teachers who choose to use more than one prompt might want to consider assessing different prompts at different times.

3.1.3. Assigning an e-asTTle writing test

An e-asTTle writing test must be assigned to a group of students before scores can be entered into the application. Assigning a test involves associating students with a test that has been created and accepted and specifying a start and end date. Students can be assigned to a writing test any time after the test has been created. A writing test can be assigned to a pre-existing group loaded into e-asTTle (for instance, a class), or to a subset of students within a pre-existing group.

The assignment process

1. Select "Assign Test" from the "Home" page.
2. Select the name of the test you want to assign.
3. Use the radio buttons to choose whether you are going to assign the test to a whole group or to a selection of students in a group. Select the group and/or students.

4. Set the date and time the test will be available. Note that e-asTTle writing tests are "paper and pencil" tests and you ultimately control when the students will do the test. Changing the date here will not affect the availability of the test. However, scores for a test can only be entered within the e-asTTle application once the date for availability to students has passed.
5. When you are happy with your selections, press "Save".
6. You can add more students to a writing test at any time.

3.2. Administering an e-asTTle test

3.2.1. Preparation and planning

The e-asTTle writing tool enables teachers to assess student writing of continuous text. In order to make a valid assessment and produce useful diagnostic information, the tool should only be used with students who are able to independently communicate at least one or two simple ideas in writing. If students do not have this level of ability you will need to consider alternative assessment activities.

The assessment requires up to 40 minutes of writing time, plus an additional five to ten minutes to introduce and discuss the prompt. Schedule a session when the students will be uninterrupted for this length of time.

Before administering a writing assessment, you will need to familiarise yourself with the material, especially the range of prompts and their format, the administration guidelines, the marking rubric and the annotated exemplars. You will also need to consider which prompt or prompts will be most suitable for your assessment group, download the appropriate materials, and make enough copies of the prompt booklet for everyone in the group. The prompt booklet includes a cover page, the writing prompt, a planning page and writing pages. You may need to have a supply of extra pages available.

We recommend that students experience photos or illustrations included in prompts in colour, to ensure detail can be clearly seen. Class sets of hard copies could be photocopied and laminated or an electronic copy projected onto a large screen. Photos and illustrations that cannot be seen clearly will disadvantage students.

3.2.2. Teacher administration of the test

Administration instructions, including a teacher script, are provided in each test package (which also includes the prompt, a student response booklet, the marking rubric, the structure and language notes and annotated exemplars for the prompt, and the glossary and definitions). Read the administration instructions and use the script to guide students through the test.

3.2.3. Marking the tests using the rubric and exemplars

The e-asTTle writing assessments are scored offline. Once scored, the data can be entered into e-asTTle to produce a variety of reports.

To score the students' completed writing, you will need:
- the writing prompt
- the marking rubric
- the structure and language notes for the prompt
- the annotated exemplars for the prompt
- the glossary and the definitions.

All these resources can be downloaded from the tool as part of the test package. An additional resource is the set of generic exemplars which can be downloaded from the "Enter Scores" page under "Mark Test". This document contains a larger set of exemplars taken from across the range of prompts.

First, read through the prompt. Make sure you understand what the student was asked to do, especially in terms of the purpose for writing (i.e., to describe, explain, persuade, narrate or recount).

Next, read through the student's whole text to get a feel for what the student is saying. Try not to make any judgments about the overall quality of the writing at this stage. The scoring process involves making an evaluation about each element of writing in turn, and it is important to approach this process openly, without any prior judgments about the student's writing ability. It is also important to remember that scoring is based only on the writing produced in response to the prompt. Your prior knowledge about students and the writing they may produce under different conditions should not influence your scoring decisions.

The marking process involves using the marking rubric, structure and language notes and annotated exemplars to score each of the following elements of the student's writing:
- ideas
- structure and language
- organisation
- vocabulary
- sentence structure
- punctuation
- spelling.

Each element is shown on a separate page of the marking rubric. For each element, the marking rubric describes a range of possible scoring categories. These categories reflect a continuum of skill development in that element of writing, and are coded numerically (R1 to R6/7). Within each category, a "descriptor" (in bold type) provides a broad outline of the skill level denoted by that category score. "Notes" are also provided for some categories; these provide additional information that may help you decide between two adjacent scores (see Figure 1). The marking rubric does not stand alone. Annotated exemplars, showing how category scores have been assigned to examples of student writing, are available to provide further guidance on the interpretation of category descriptors. A small set of exemplars is available for each prompt, and there is also a larger set of generic exemplars. The generic exemplars can be used to check interpretation of individual categories (e.g., category R2 in spelling, or category R4 in ideas).

Once you have read through the whole script, check the student's writing against the category descriptors and notes element by element, to identify the category that is the best fit. Use the exemplars to help clarify and confirm your decisions. Record the score for each element on the front page of the student's writing booklet.

FIGURE 1 Annotated page from rubric

The element of writing being assessed. There are seven elements in all.

Range of category scores for this element (R1–R6). The 'R' signals that these are 'rubric' scores, rather than curriculum levels.

The underlying skills assessed in this element; the main focus of the element.

Definition

Skill focus: the range, precision and effectiveness of word choices appropriate to the topic

- Simple everyday words: words that are related to the personal world of the writer, words that are used frequently
- Precise words: words that are descriptive, expressive, academic, technical or abstract

Vocabulary

Explanation of key terms used in the category descriptors for this element.

Broad statements describing points along the continuum of development, or skill levels, within the element.

Additional, clarifying information that may assist in making scoring decisions.

Samples of students' writing that exemplify the category scores. These exemplars can be downloaded from the 'Enter Scores' page under 'Mark Test'.

Category	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
Descriptor	Uses a small range of simple, everyday words and phrases from personal vocabulary	Uses a range of simple, everyday words and phrases from personal vocabulary	Uses a range of everyday words and phrases, with a small number of precise words to add detail	Uses a variety of precise words and phrases to add information and/or interest	Selects words and phrases to enhance meaning and/or mood	Precise language choices consistently enhance meaning and/or mood
Notes			May use adjectives, adverbs and/or precise verbs to add interest and detail. May use simple idioms or figures of speech	May use idioms, metaphors, similes and other figures of speech. May be some experimentation with vocabulary: some words may be used incorrectly	Use of precise words may be inconsistent (use of everyday or overblown language may cause jarring)	Deliberate and sustained use of precise vocabulary (descriptive, expressive, academic, technical and/or abstract) for effect
Generic exemplars	• S n • I be kin	• The adventerous dog • Stitcit	• The Erfeh • Think about	• Margin for era • Rainbow's end	• Youth gym • Plastic bags	• Don't move • And the All Blacks scored!

3.2.4. Points to consider when marking

Each element of writing should be scored independently. The "skill focus" statement for each element (located at the top of each page on the rubric) provides guidance on the main focus of each element. For example, when scoring the vocabulary element, the focus is on the range, precision and effectiveness of words, rather than on the accuracy of spelling. Spelling is the focus of a separate element.

Scoring each element independently ensures that each feature of the writing is scored only once. If you find a particular feature of the writing problematic, consider which element it should be scored under. For example, if there is a problem with subject–verb agreement, this should be scored under the "sentence structure" element. The annotated exemplars will help you recognise how to differentiate between the elements.

e-asTTle writing assesses generic writing competence rather than content knowledge. When scoring the ideas element, the focus is on the quality, selection, and elaboration of ideas rather than the accuracy of content knowledge. Although it is reasonably common for students to use incorrect factual information, this should not influence the teacher's judgment when scoring the ideas element.

The descriptors within each category score are hierarchical and cumulative. To assign a category score of R4 in a particular element, the conditions for a score of R3 in that element must also have been met. However, within each category it is important to note that a minor error or glitch is allowed.

The prompts have been designed to stimulate continuous text on topics that are accessible to students, and which provide opportunities for individual interpretation. The topic outlined on the prompt (for example, "being a good friend") is therefore intended as a springboard for writing, rather than as a tightly defined focus. This should be taken into account when making scoring decisions for the "ideas" element: ideas can be loosely related to the topic and still be considered "relevant" (in the example above, writing that describes an outing with friends would be considered "on topic" for the "ideas" element).

The communicative purpose for the writing (to explain, persuade, narrate, describe or recount, as specified on the prompt) is the focus of the element "structure and language". If the student has been asked to describe a photograph of two dogs playing on the beach, but narrates a story about a dog, this will be reflected in the category score for structure and language. For all other elements, the writing will be scored at face value, without reference to the specified purpose. This approach enables the tool to provide rich diagnostic information about skill levels in seven clearly defined elements of writing, including the ability to achieve a communicative purpose through appropriate selection of structural and language features.

To score the element "structure and language", you will also need to refer to the structure and language notes. These provide guidance on structural and language features appropriate to the communicative purpose outlined on the prompt, and will help when making scoring decisions for this element. The appropriate structural and language features vary according to communicative purpose (for example, the features that you might expect to see when the purpose is to persuade will differ from the features you might expect when the purpose is to recount). It is therefore important to check that you have the correct notes for the prompt you are scoring.

Although each prompt specifies a purpose, the marking rubric accommodates the use of multiple purposes. For example, if the specified purpose is to describe and the student also explains, only the descriptive features are scored within the structure and language element but the explanatory features can contribute to the student's score for the ideas element. This is appropriate since explanation is a form of elaboration and elaboration is a focus of the ideas element. When multiple purposes are used, the teacher first identifies which purpose/s other than the specified are used, and then which element/s might be engaged to recognise their use.

3.2.5. Moderation

Ongoing moderation of scoring decisions is necessary to ensure that scoring is consistent and accurate over time.

It is important to remember that the marking rubric does not stand alone. Together, the marking rubric, the structure and language notes and the annotated exemplars provide the means by which consistent scoring judgments can be made.

Take time to become familiar with the scores and characteristics of the exemplars. Referring back to the exemplars on a regular basis will help ensure that marking does not "drift" over time.

If several teachers within the school are using e-asTTle writing, group marking and moderation of students' work can be a useful means of developing a shared understanding and a consistent approach.

3.2.6. Entering scores in e-asTTle

Once students' responses have been scored, the rubric scores for each element can be entered into the e-asTTle application. "Mark Test" in the e-asTTle application refers to the score entry process for e-asTTle writing. Once the raw rubric scores are entered into e-asTTle it becomes possible to produce reporting.
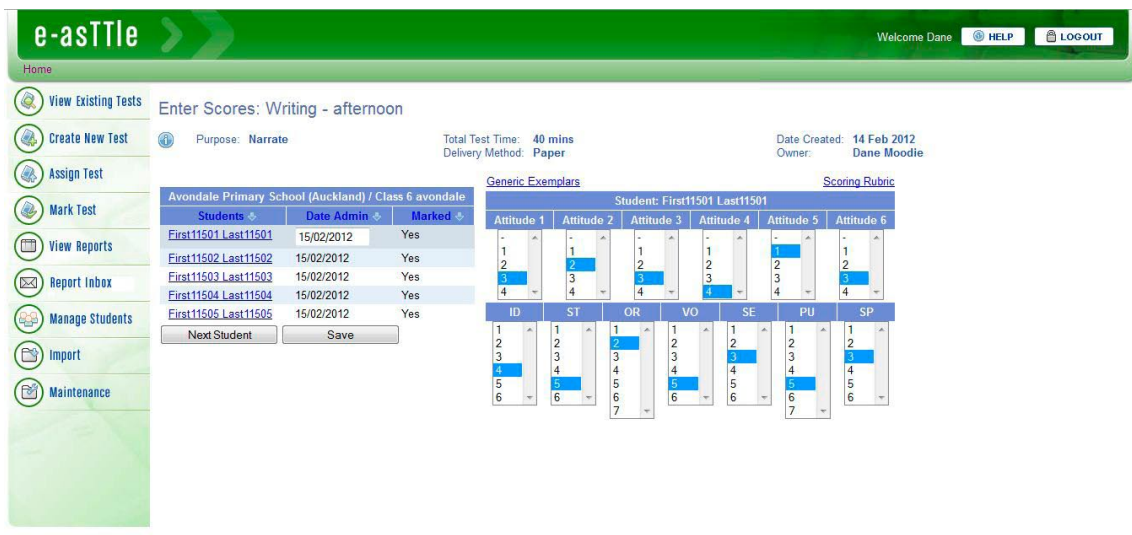
The "Mark Test" process

1. From the home page click on "Mark Test".
2. Click on the name of the test you want to mark. The filters at the top of the page can be used to help you find the test.
3. Select the group whose tests you want to mark. This takes you to the "Enter Scores" page.
4. The "Enter Scores" page allows you to enter the date the test was administered, the responses provided by the students to each of the attitude questions, and the rubric scores for each student on each element.
5. It is important to click on "Save" after the scores are entered for each student. This can be found at the bottom of the list of students.
6. All rubric scores for a student must be entered before reporting becomes available for that student. It is not necessary to enter scores for all students in one sitting.

The marking rubric, structure and language notes and the exemplars for the prompt can be downloaded from the "Enter Scores" page. This page also allows you to download a set of generic exemplars. The generic exemplars are referred to in the rubric and exemplify how the scoring rubric is applied to writing across a wider range of prompts.

4. Interpreting test scores

e-asTTle transforms the scores awarded against the rubric (rubric scores) into scale scores and curriculum levels. This section provides guidance on interpreting these scores.

4.1. Understanding scale scores

Student responses to an e-asTTle writing prompt are scored using the e-asTTle writing rubric. The rubric allows a marker to score a response against seven different elements of writing. These scores are referred to as "rubric scores", and each one names the level of the rubric that best describes the writing when assessed against a particular element.

By themselves, rubric scores have some uses. For instance, it is possible to refer back to the rubric to read a description of what is needed to achieve an "R3" in spelling and how this is an improvement on an "R2". However, rubric scores also have limits.

The first of these is that the rubric scores for an element are not necessarily equally spaced. That is, the improvement demonstrated in moving between adjacent scores (for example, from an "R1" to an "R2") is not always the same for each element. This is true within an element and across elements. For instance, an "R3" in spelling might be easier to achieve than a "R3" in structure and language.

Another shortcoming is that rubric scores do not take into account that some prompts are harder to respond to than others. Just as some tests in mathematics are more difficult than others because of the questions included, some writing prompts are more difficult to score highly on than others. Using raw rubric scores from responses to different prompts to directly compare writing performance can be problematic when this has not been taken into account.

The limitations that come with raw rubric scores make it difficult to create a meaningful measure by simply adding them up and reporting them. To overcome these limitations, the e-asTTle application transforms rubric scores to locations (scores) on the e-asTTle writing scale (the aWs scale). These scale scores take into consideration the differences between the levels of the rubric within and across elements. A movement of one unit on this scale indicates the same amount of change in competency anywhere on the scale. The transformation process also adjusts for the difficulty of the prompt, so that students who do a more difficult prompt are not disadvantaged. Most students will achieve scale scores in the range 1000 to 2000 aWs units.

4.1.1. Measurement error

No measurement can ever be completely precise. Each scale score corresponds to the most probable location on the scale, given the rubric scores awarded, and is estimated within a margin of error. This is referred to as "measurement error" and provides a range within which we can be reasonably confident (70 percent confident) a student's true achievement lies.

e-asTTle writing reports the measurement error as a plus or minus (±) range. For example, 1500 ± 42 aWs units signifies that we can be reasonably confident the student's true achievement level lies somewhere in the range 1458 to 1542 aWs units.

The measurement error provided with e-asTTle scale scores incorporates two components of error: an estimate of the error that can be associated with inconsistencies in the way students respond to the writing test, and an estimate of the error that can be attributed to the variance in the way different markers apply the rubric.

It is important to consider the measurement error when comparing scale scores. As a rule of thumb, when the ranges indicated by the measurement error overlap it is unwise to consider any difference in the scores as signifying a real difference in achievement levels.

The measurement error is greatest for students with either very high or low rubric scores. Most students' scale scores will be reported in a range of plus or minus 40 aWs units.

4.2. Understanding the reporting of curriculum levels

e-asTTle also allows performance to be interpreted in terms of curriculum levels. To do this each curriculum level has been divided into three performance bands (basic, proficient, and advanced) and each of these bands has been associated with a region on the aWs scale. This means, for instance, that scores in the range 1423 to 1459 aWs units are associated with the level of performance necessary for a performance to be reported as "3-basic" (3B). e-asTTle writing can report curriculum levels from 1B to 6P.

A series of standard-setting exercises was used to set the curriculum level bands for e-asTTle writing. These drew on the descriptions of writing competency provided in the literacy learning progressions (Ministry of Education, 2010). The literacy learning progressions focus on writing across the curriculum and describe a general curriculum competence in writing, rather than a curriculum level specific to the English learning area. The curriculum levels reported by e-asTTle should therefore be interpreted as generic curriculum levels.

FIGURE 2 **The relationship between the aWs scale and curriculum levels**
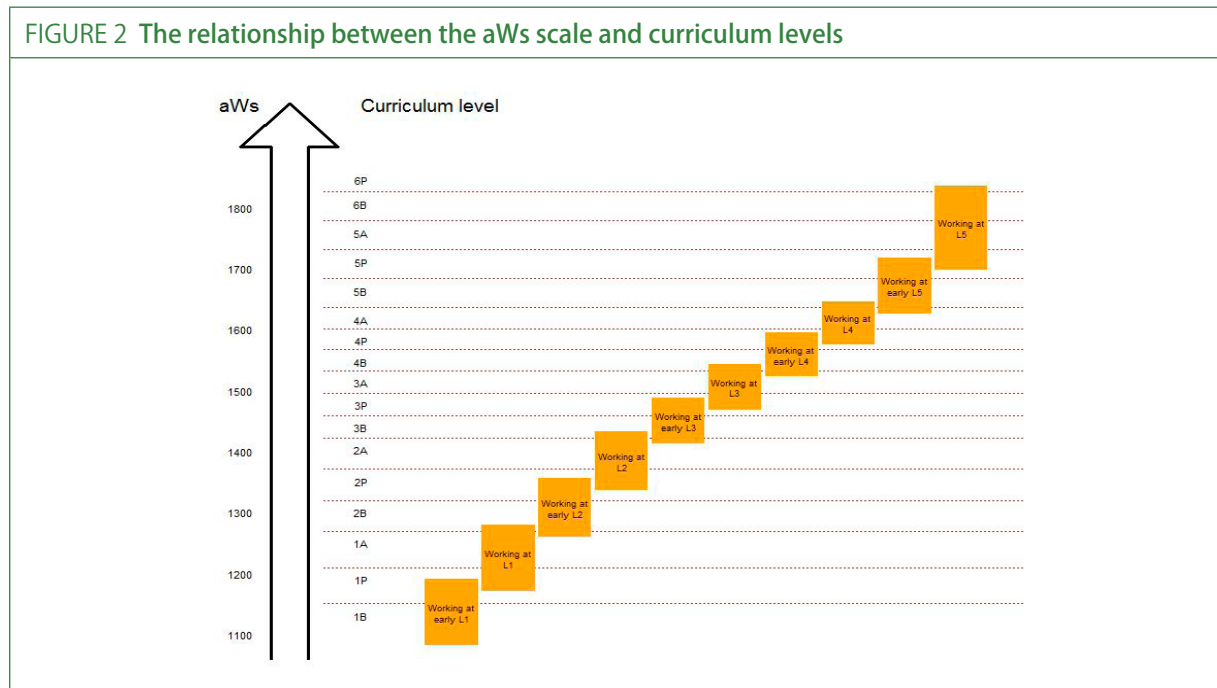
Figure 2 shows the e-asTTle writing scale and how the curriculum levels reported by e-asTTle are related to it. The overlapping bands to the right of the curriculum levels show the association between the curriculum levels reported by e-asTTle and the levels of writing competency described by the literacy learning progressions. Please note that by itself, an e-asTTle result is not sufficient to determine an overall teacher judgment. As well as the imprecision involved in a single test result, e-asTTle writing tests do not cover all the aspects of writing competence described by the literacy learning progressions and national standards.

4.3. The reports

e-asTTle writing provides access to the same range of reporting available in other learning areas assessed by e-asTTle. These reports allow the user to analyse the performance of groups and individuals on the assessment as a whole and on each of the elements assessed by the rubric. In keeping with the terminology used in other learning areas, the e-asTTle application refers to the elements of the rubric (ideas, structure and language, and so on) as "curriculum functions". There are some differences in the way the reports are used to present e-asTTle writing results compared to how they are used in other learning areas. These differences are described below. Readers should refer to the general e-asTTle Educator Manual for a more comprehensive discussion of the reports available in e-asTTle.

4.3.1. The Individual Learning Pathways Report

The Individual Learning Pathways Report is designed to provide an overview of an individual student's performance on a writing test. This report is available to both teachers and students. The Individual Learning Pathways Report used in the new version of e-asTTle writing differs in several ways from the way it is presented in other learning areas and how it was used in the original e-asTTle writing. These differences include the following.

1. The rubric scores for each element (curriculum function) are reported. This allows the reader to see exactly which rubric category was awarded for each element. The number in brackets beside each of the rubric scores shows the maximum score available for the element.
2. The margin of error associated with the student's scale score is shown as a plus or minus (±) range. For example, 1500 ± 42 aWs units signifies that we can be reasonably confident the student's true achievement level lies somewhere in the range 1458 to 1542 scale units. The size of the error is also represented by the width of the circle in the graphic.
3. Scale scores for the individual elements and their corresponding "dials" are not shown. At the individual student level these element scores have limited precision and are difficult to interpret. A curriculum level is still provided for each element to provide a broadly comparable indication of the level of performance.
4. Scores for shallow and deep features are not provided. This reflects a belief that it is impossible to categorise any of the elements assessed by e-asTTle as representing only shallow or deep features of writing.

Gaps and strengths

The Individual Learning Pathways Report divides the curriculum functions (elements) into three categories. These are labelled "achieved", "gaps" and "strengths". The purpose of this part of the report is to show when a score on any one of the functions is higher or lower than might be expected, given the student's overall pattern of scores. When a function is listed as a "strength", the score the student received on that particular function can be considered to be higher than expected, given the scores on the other functions. Similarly, when a function is listed as a "gap", the score on that function is lower than might have been anticipated. Any curriculum functions listed as "achieved" have received scores that are "on par" with the overall level of performance shown by the student. Examining the pattern of gaps and strengths is a first step in looking at the student's results and what learning might come next.

Figure 3 shows an example of the Individual Learning Pathways Report. This hypothetical student has been located at 1600 ± 44 units on the aWs scale, which corresponds to a curriculum level of 4P (4-proficient). The student's scores on each of the elements vary a great deal and the elements have been distributed evenly between the lists of strengths, achieved and gaps. Spelling is one of the elements listed as a gap. It is lower (3A) than the overall curriculum level (4P).

FIGURE 3 **The Individual Learning Pathways Report**

FIGURE 3 **The Individual Learning Pathways Report**
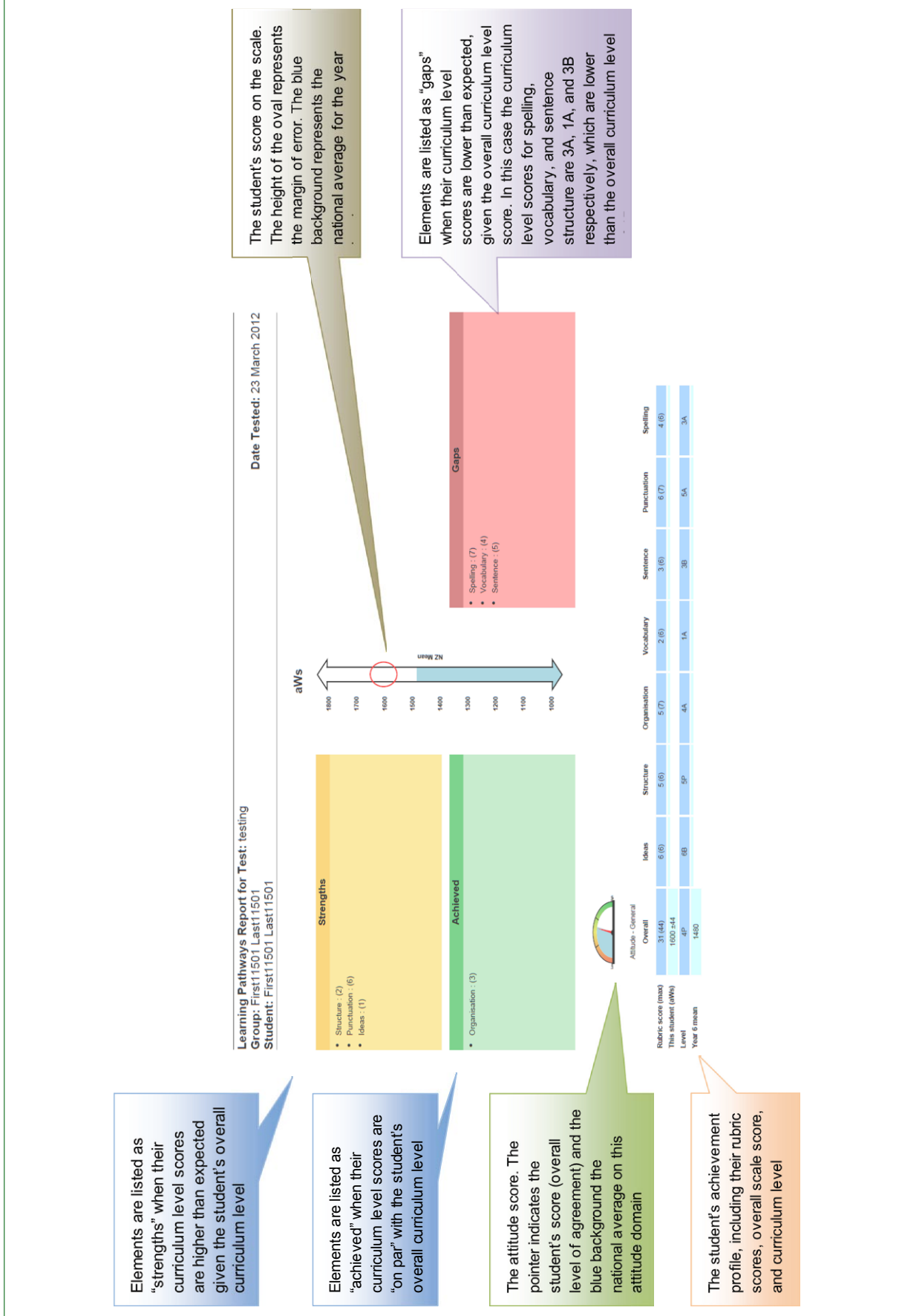
4.3.2. The Curriculum Levels Report

This report has been updated to show rubric scores as well as curriculum levels. Two sets of bar charts are now presented, one by curriculum level and one by rubric score.

4.3.3. Normative information

The new version of e-asTTle writing provides a range of normative or reference information that can be accessed through reports such as the Console Comparison and Progress Comparison Reports. Most of these norms have been constructed from data collected during the development trials for the new e-asTTle writing. Where the sample used in the trial was not deemed to be big enough to support subgroup norms, patterns in data from the existing norms have been used to provide estimated values. This was not possible at Years 1 to 3, where there was no existing data. When reference information is not available, the report will still be produced, but will not show any reference information.

The reference information is provided in quarter-year intervals. The e-asTTle application automatically adjusts the norming information to reflect the quarter the test was administered.

The normative information sourced from data collected as part of the development process for the new e-asTTle writing is for year level, year level by gender and year level by ethnicity. Reference information reported for "English at Home", "Region" and "Schools Like Us" is based on achievement data from the original e-asTTle writing.

4.3.4. Working with students to identify strengths and opportunities for learning

e-asTTle writing is at its best when used to help students identify their strengths and opportunities for learning. An e-asTTle writing test can provide an excellent opportunity for the teacher to provide feedback, and for students to reflect on their writing performance.

Students will gain the best insights into the assessment when they become aware of the different elements used to assess the writing and what different levels of performance look like. This involves using the language of the rubric in class and discussing writing samples that exemplify performance at different levels. These exemplars do not have to be the ones provided in the tool, but could be authentic responses from students within the school.

Older students can also be taught to interpret the Individual Learning Pathways Report and Progress Report. These reports are available for completed writing tests when students log into e-asTTle using their own accounts. They are the same as the one available to teachers. It is important to explain how to read these reports, including the concept of measurement error and the meaning of strengths and gaps.

4.3.5. Measuring progress over time

The aWs scale is useful for measuring progress over time. As students progress, their score on the scale should increase. Scores can be tracked from test to test and trends noticed. When considering progress for an individual student it is important to take the measurement error into account. As a "rule of thumb", progress between two time points can be considered to represent real change when the margins of error for the two scores do not overlap. For instance, if a student's score is 1500 ± 40 (1460 to 1540) and increases to 1520 ± 40 (1480 to 1560), it is unwise to conclude that the observed change is definitely real progress. The overlap in the score ranges suggests that the variation could reasonably be explained as a random event. Real progress can take time to become apparent. If students have not had time to practise and consolidate their skills, scale scores will not necessarily improve.

4.3.6. Communicating assessment results to students and parents or caregivers

When reporting scores to parents or caregivers, include an explanation of the elements of writing that have been assessed, what the scores mean and the margin of error for the measurements. It can also be useful to explain how the score compares to an appropriate reference group, for instance other students at their year level. This is particularly important for younger students who have just begun their journey up the aWs scale and will generally be at lower levels. Both students and parents or caregivers need to feel that the testing process is about students' welfare and development. It is also important to recognise that an e-asTTle writing test is only one way of assessing a student's achievement in writing. Other indicators of progress are needed to give a full and accurate picture.

PART B:
Technical information

5. Measuring proficiency in writing

5.1. Overview

e-asTTle writing represents an analytical approach to the assessment of writing, where responses to prompts are scored against seven different elements of writing using a detailed rubric. Once a prompt has been scored, the e-asTTle application can be used to transform the rubric scores to a location on the e-asTTle writing measurement scale. The scale provides a measure of writing proficiency and is linked to curriculum performance levels, allowing students' scores to be reported within curriculum bands. Scale scores can also be compared with the achievement distributions of a range of representative reference groups.

This section of the manual describes the development of the e-asTTle writing measurement scale and the compilation of the reference data.

5.2. Constructing the e-asTTle writing scale

The e-asTTle writing scale is based on an extension of the Rasch Measurement Model (RMM). Used widely in educational measurement, the RMM is a mathematical model that can be used to transform ordinal observations (such as rubric scores) into linear measures. The RMM predicts the probability of a test taker at a given proficiency level achieving success on a test item of known difficulty. Test-taker proficiency and item difficulty are assumed to be located on the same measurement scale and the probability of success on the item is a function of the difference between them.

The Multifacet Rasch Model (MFRM) extends the RMM by taking into account additional "facets" besides student proficiency and item difficulty that might be associated with the measurement context. In the context of a writing assessment, these include marker severity and the difficulty of the prompt.

To develop the e-asTTle writing scale, an MFRM was constructed that included:
- student writing proficiency
- the difficulty of the prompts to which the students were writing
- the difficulty of the elements against which the students' written responses were being judged
- the thresholds or barriers to being observed in a scoring category for an element relative to the scoring category below
- the harshness of the markers judging the students' written responses.

The model assumes that all these facets can be measured on a single continuum (measurement scale) and that their locations on this continuum are used to determine the probability that a student will score in the higher of two adjacent scoring categories. Statistical and graphical fit indicators are used to study the extent to which prompts, markers, students and marking rubrics fit the MFRM.

To construct the measurement scale, student responses to 21 writing prompts were collected in a national trial involving approximately 5000 students from Years 1 to 10. The students involved were selected using a random sampling methodology, which is described in section 6.2. Care was taken so that all markers and prompts could be linked across the students involved. This meant that many of the students completed two prompts and that many of the responses were double-marked.

The markers involved in the trial were trained teachers, or held relevant post-graduate degrees. Each marker attended a two-day training course at the start of the marking exercise. Marking was done in teams and moderation meetings were carried out on a daily basis. Data was entered and carefully validated before analysis of data was carried out using the computer program Facets (Linacre, 2010).

Figure 4 provides a graphical representation of the measurement scale constructed by the analysis process. The scale itself is presented on the left of the figure in e-asTTle writing scale units (aWs). The scale locations of students, prompts, markers, the elements of the rubric and the scale thresholds are displayed from left to right. As can be seen, these locations vary. Prompt 20, for instance, is located slightly higher on the scale than Prompt 27, indicating it was the more difficult of the two prompts. Similarly, some markers (indicated by asterisks) are higher on the scale than others, indicating they applied the rubric more harshly.

The final model for e-asTTle takes into account the scale locations of the prompts, elements and thresholds shown in Figure 4 to transform students' rubric scores to scale locations. Values for marker harshness are not included directly as there is no way to know how harshly a user may have marked. However, the variance in marker harshness exposed through the modelling process provides some idea of the imprecision markers introduce, and marker variance is included in the estimates of measurement error reported by the e-asTTle application for each scale score.

```
| aWs | Student   | Prompt                          | Marker    | Element | | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
|1904 + .          +                                +           +         + (6) + (7) + (6) + (6) + (7) + (6) + (6) |
|     |   .        |                                |           |         |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|1843 + .          +                                +           +         +     + --- +     +     +     + --- +     |
|     |   .        |                                |           |         |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|1782 + .          +                                +           +         + --- +     +     + --- + --- +     +     |
|     |   *.       |                                |           |         |     |  6  | --- + --- +     |  5  | --- |
|1721 + *.         +                                +           +         +  5  +     +     +     +  6  +     +     |
|     |   **.      |                                |           |         |     |     |  5  +  5  + --- + --- +  5  |
|1660 + ***.       +                                +           +         + --- + --- +     +     +     +     +     |
|     |   *****.   |                                |           |         |     |     | --- + --- |  5  |  4  + --- |
|1599 + ******.    +                                +           +         +  4  +  5  +     +     +     |     |     |
|     |   ********. +                                |           |         |     |     |  4  +  4  + --- + --- +  4  |
|1538 + ********.  +                                + ***       +         +     + --- +     |     |     |     |     |
|     |   ********. | 20 21 23 26 29 31              | *****     | 7 2 4 5 | --- +     | --- + --- |     |     | --- |
|*1477 * *********. * 11 12 13 14 19 22 24 28 30 * ********* * 3  *     *  4  *     *     *  4  +  3  *     *     *
|     |   *******. | 15 16 17 18 25 27              | ********* | 1       |     | --- +  3  +  3  |     |     |  3  |
|1416 + *******.   +                                + *         +         +  3  +     +     + --- +     +     +     |
|     |   ******.  |                                |           |         |     |  3  |     |     | --- |     |     |
|1355 + *****.     +                                +           + 6       +     + --- + --- +  3  +     + --- +     |
|     |   *****.   |                                |           |         | --- |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|1294 + ***.       +                                +           +         +     + --- +     |  2  + --- |     |     |
|     |   ***.      |                                |           |         |     |     |  2  +     |     |     |  2  |
|1233 + ***.       +                                +           +         +     +     +     +     |  2  |     |     |
|     |   **.       |                                |           |         |  2  |  2  +     +     +     |     |     |
|1172 + **.        +                                +           +         +     +     + --- + --- + --- |  2  +     |
|     |   *.        |                                |           |         |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|1111 + *.         +                                +           +         + --- +     +     +     +     +     + --- |
|     |   *.        |                                |           |         |     | --- |     |     |     |     |     |
|1050 + .          +                                +           +         +     +     +     +     +     +     +     |
|     |   .        |                                |           |         |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 989 + .          +                                +           +         +     +     +     +     +     +     +     |
|     |   .        |                                |           |         |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 928 + .          +                                +           +         +     +     +     +     +     + --- +     |
|     |   *.        |                                |           |         |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 867 + .          +                                +           +         +     +     +     +     +     +     +     |
|     |   .        |                                |           |         |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 806 + .          +                                +           +         +     +     +     +     +     +     +     |
|     |   .        |                                |           |         |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 745 + .          +                                +           +         +     +     +     +     +     +     +     |
|     |   .        |                                |           |         |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 684 + *.         +                                +           +         + (1) + (1) + (1) + (1) + (1) + (1) + (1) |
| aWs | * = 39     |                                | * = 1     |         | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   |
```

Element
1= Ideas
2= Organisation
3= Vocabulary
4= Sentence structure
5= Punctuation
6= Spelling
7= Structure and language

5.2.1. Model fit

The Facets computer program provides several fit indices for different aspects of the model. In addition, a range of graphical displays are available to study the fit of the data to the measurement model.

Overall model fit was very good. The Infit mean-square indices (see Linacre, 2010) of the prompts ranged from 0.78 to 1.23 and those of the criteria ranged from 0.82 to 1.20. Values between 0.5 to 1.5 are generally considered "good enough" for measurement (Linacre, 2010). Infit mean-square indices for markers varied a little more, ranging from 0.75 to 1.46.

5.2.2. Numbering the e-asTTle writing scale

The e-asTTle writing scores produced by the MFRM were measured in "logits". To convert these scores to the units used on the asTTle writing scale (the aWs scale), a linear transformation was applied to the logit scores, which would ensure that the mean of the transformed scores for Year 6 students in Quarter 3 was 1500 units and the standard deviation was 100 units. The reason for this choice was to maintain as much consistency as possible with the previous version of e-asTTle writing.

5.2.3. Reliability and precision

Reliability can be thought of as the degree to which consistency is maintained over repeated measurements. A highly reliable assessment administered on two separate but similar occasions will produce two results which are almost the same.

The Facets software produces reliability indices for each of the facets included in the model. These normally range from 0 to 1, with 0 indicating extremely poor reliability and 1, perfect reliability. The student reliability index was 0.96. The prompt and marker reliabilities were both 0.99 and the element reliability was 1.00. These indices all fall well within a widely accepted range.

The e-asTTle application provides an estimate of the precision associated with each scale score in the Individual Learning Pathways Report. An error of 40 aWs units on the scale, for instance, indicates that a given scale score is likely to be within plus or minus 40 units of the student's "true score" in about 70 percent of cases. The measurement errors for e-asTTle writing are generally in the range of plus or minus 40 to 50 scale units.

5.2.4. Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which an assessment measures that which it was intended to measure. In the current situation, this manifests as "does the e-asTTle writing tool measure the writing ability of New Zealand's Year 1 to 10 students?"

Statistical processes cannot, by themselves, prove validity. By far the best approach is for a teacher to examine the prompts and marking rubric to evaluate their suitability to provide useful and dependable information. The e-asTTle writing scale has been planned and constructed so that it assesses writing skills and abilities accepted as being important by teachers and experts in the area of school-age student writing. The prompts, marking rubrics and supporting processes were scrutinised by writing experts and researchers with expertise in test construction. The assessment itself is based on authentic writing that students have produced in a 40-minute period.

Evidence for validity is provided by the regular increases in achievement from one year-level to the next and the appropriately ordered locations of elements and thresholds on the scale.

All marking was completed "blind", that is, without knowledge of the year level or gender of the students. Markers were well qualified and carefully trained and moderation processes were applied throughout the marking exercise.

Finally, and from a statistical perspective, the writing proficiency norms (as described in section 6.3.1) are broadly similar to those documented by earlier versions of e-asTTle writing and also by other assessments in related proficiencies such as reading.

6. Constructing the reference data set

6.1. Overview

To develop the e-asTTle writing tool and construct nationally representative achievement distributions, a representative random sample of students was drawn from New Zealand's Year 1 to Year 10 student population. To produce the reference information needed by e-asTTle, these distributions were summarised using a statistical model. The model, in turn, was used to produce the normative reference information used in the e-asTTle application. For instances where the e-asTTle application has traditionally produced reference information, but where the current data was sparse or nonexistent, patterns in existing normative information from the original e-asTTle writing were used to produce the required reference values.

This section describes the sampling methodology and statistical methods used to produce the nationally representative reference information.

6.2. The sample

The e-asTTle writing sample was designed to:
- be broadly representative of New Zealand's Year 1 to Year 10 student population
- minimise school burden by selecting 30 students from, at most, two year-levels per school.

The sample was drawn as a stratified two-stage random sample of students within schools. Given the target audience of the e-asTTle writing tool, only English-medium schools were selected. In addition, special schools and very small schools were removed from the sample frame. The two stage nature of the sample minimised both cost and school burden across New Zealand.

The sampling of students within schools was the responsibility of the schools themselves. Schools were asked to randomly select students at the prescribed year-level from their rolls. NZCER provided a methodology for schools to follow and offered to carry out the sampling for schools if it was required.

The sampling frame of schools was stratified by year-level group, school decile group and school size groups (i.e. number of attending students). The six year-level groups consisted of year-levels 1 and 2, year-levels 2 and 3, year-levels 4 and 5, year-levels 5 and 6, year-levels 7 and 8 and finally year-levels 9 and 10. The three decile groups consisted of deciles 1, 2 and 3, deciles 4, 5, 6 and 7 and deciles 8, 9 and 10. The school-size groups were determined by an estimation of the number of classes of students at the relevant year-level and were nominated as small, medium or large.

This resulted in a stratified sampling frame with a collection of cells indexed by decile-group and school-size group for each year-level group. Within these cells, schools were selected randomly to form the sample.

Table 3 describes the participation of schools and students in the sample broken down by school decile. Schools that declined to participate were replaced by schools with similar demographics.

TABLE 3 Decile and participation

Decile	Participating schools	Participating students
1	10	277
2	16	469
3	19	556
4	9	260
5	15	450
6	15	466
7	23	687
8	10	306
9	19	568
10	24	716
Total	160	4758

6.2.1. The characteristics of the achieved sample

Table 4, Table 5 and Table 6 show the student-level demographics of the e-asTTle writing sample. Table 4 shows the sample broken down by the year-level and gender of the students. There are slightly more boys than girls overall, although this is not true at all year levels.

TABLE 4 Students in the sample by year-level and gender

Year-level	Girls	Boys	Missing	Total
1	219	229	2	450
2	259	213	1	473
3	230	246	1	477
4	217	258	1	476
5	249	233	0	482
6	216	214	0	430
7	251	235	0	486
8	230	254	0	484
9	239	260	1	500
10	229	263	0	492
Missing year-level	0	2	3	5
Total	2339	2407	9	4755

Table 5 shows the sample broken down by the year-level and ethnicity of the students. Note that the students could identify with more than one ethnic group and therefore there were more identifications than there were students. As might be expected, the phenomenon of identifying with more than one ethnic group is more prevalent in higher year-levels.

TABLE 5 Students in the sample by year-level and ethnicity

| Year level	NZ European	Māori	Pasifika	Asian	Other	Total identifications	Total students
1	251	115	32	24	28	450	450
2	257	130	47	20	29	483	473
3	280	115	39	8	34	476	477
4	277	91	61	21	64	514	476
5	287	82	61	23	55	508	482
6	292	55	38	15	51	451	430
7	306	101	43	27	46	523	486
8	321	84	43	21	51	520	484
9	342	103	37	41	48	571	500
10	295	126	52	37	52	562	492
Total	4694	1468	693	398	734	5058	4750

Table 6 shows the sample broken down by the year-level of the students and the decile-group of the schools they attend. There are relatively fewer students from lower decile schools overall and at each year-level. However, the absolute numbers of students in each year-level at lower decile schools in the sample are sufficiently large so that summary statistics of writing ability of reasonable quality are still able to be produced.

TABLE 6 Students in the sample by year-level and decile

Year-level	Deciles 1– 3	Deciles 4 - 7	Deciles 8 - 10
1	153	158	139
2	177	155	141
3	182	160	135
4	137	159	180
5	146	155	181
6	107	139	184
7	105	201	180
8	107	197	180
9	87	278	135
10	98	260	134
Missing	3	1	1
Total	1302	1863	1590

6.2.2. Writing scores in the sample

Figure 5 shows a box plot of the distribution of writing scale scores for each year-level in the sample. The box plot displays – in ascending order – the fifth percentile, the lower quartile, the median, the upper quartile and the ninety-fifth percentile of the writing scores. The medians exhibit a typical curved growth pattern. The variation in writing scores (as indicated by the interquartile range) is somewhat larger for year-levels 1, 2 and 3 than for the remaining year-levels.

FIGURE 5 **e-asTTle writing sample score distributions by year-level**
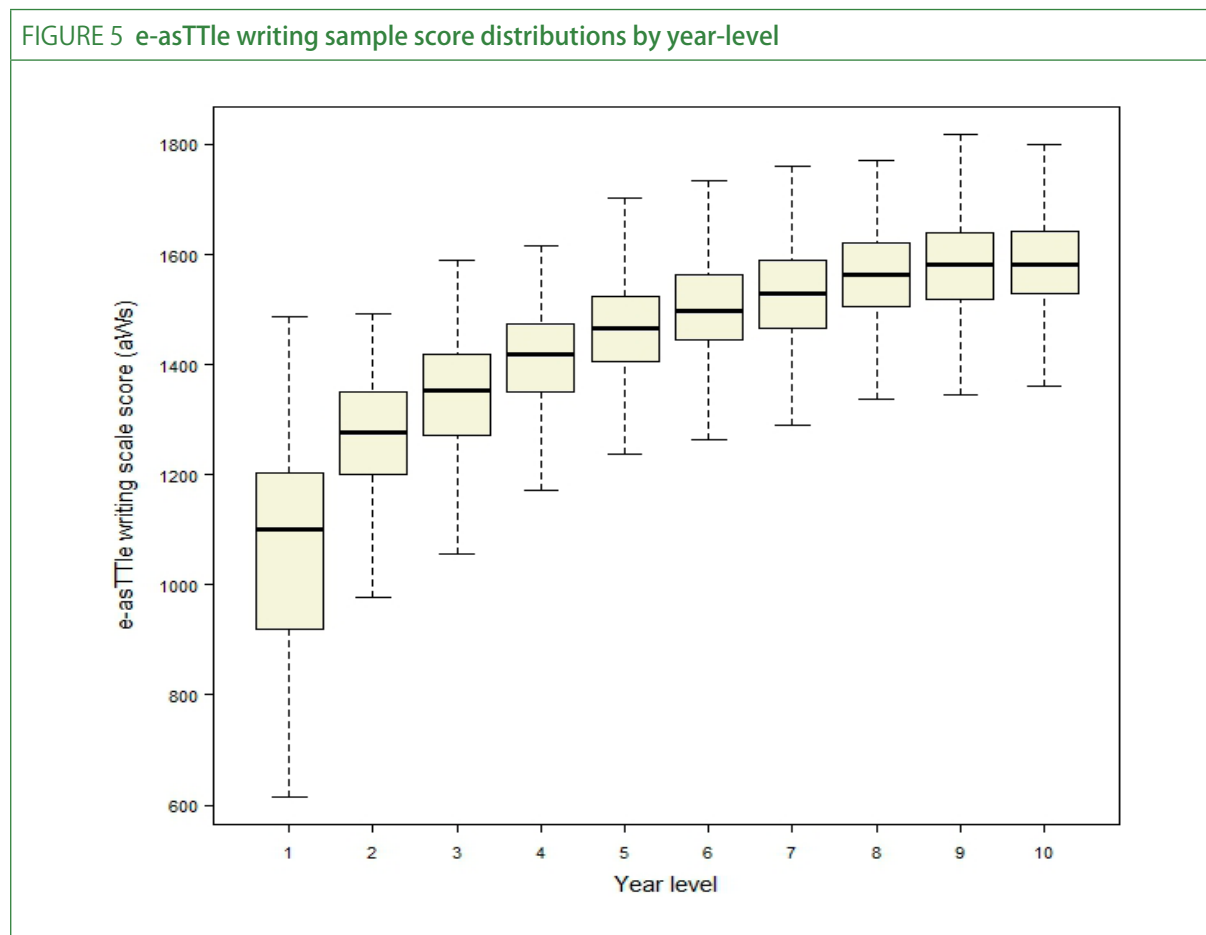
6.3. Constructing the e-asTTle reference data

The e-asTTle application is designed to provide a substantial amount of reference information. For example, it requires summary statistics for the distribution of writing scores (simultaneously) broken down by year-level, gender and ethnicity. The scope of the current work meant that some of the year-level-by-gender-by-ethnicity cells were too small to produce summary statistics that were suitably robust. Similarly, the e-asTTle tool requires all normative information for each quarter of the school year. This was also outside the scope of the current e-asTTle work.

To compile the normative data required by the application a linear regression model of the e-asTTle sample data model was used to:
1. summarise the information contained in the e-asTTle sample in an efficient, yet accurate way
2. provide a robust method for estimating the means and standard deviations needed to produce the normative information that is required by the e-asTTle tool.

It was not possible to use the data collected to model all of the norms required by the e-asTTle application. For instance, normative information by region was not able to be produced by the model. When this occurred and where relevant normative information existed from the previous version of e-asTTle writing, effect size calculations were used to estimate the distributions required. This was not possible at Years 1 to 3 where no data existed from the previous version.

6.3.1. Modelled norm reference data

Table 7 provides some of the normative statistics produced by the modelling process.

TABLE 7 **Modelled e-asTTle writing statistics for Quarter 3, by year-level and gender**

Year level	Boys		Girls		All students	
	Mean (aWs)	Sd (aWs)	Mean (aWs)	Sd (aWs)	Mean (aWs)	Sd (aWs)
1	1055	184	1127	184	1091	184
2	1216	138	1279	138	1249	138
3	1309	124	1367	124	1341	124
4	1376	100	1429	100	1407	100
5	1427	100	1478	100	1459	100
6	1470	100	1518	100	1500	100
7	1505	100	1551	100	1535	100
8	1536	100	1580	100	1566	100
9	1563	100	1606	100	1593	100
10	1588	100	1629	100	1616	100

References

Linacre, J. M. (2010) Facets Rasch Measurement computer program (Version 3.67.1) [Computer Software]. Chicago: Winsteps.com

Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2009). *The New Zealand curriculum reading and writing standards for years 1–8*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2010). *The literacy learning progressions: Meeting the reading and writing demands of the curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.

APPENDIX 1: e-asTTle writing glossary and definitions

Definitions

Category: a device for describing and scoring a particular skill level within an element of the marking rubric. The categories provide an overview of skill development within an element of writing.

Descriptors: statements found in the marking rubric that describe a particular point on the continuum of development in an element of writing. The descriptors for each element enable scoring decisions to be made.

Elements: the seven components of writing that are assessed by e-asTTle writing: ideas, structure and language, organisation, vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling

Exemplars: samples of student writing produced in response to each e-asTTle writing prompt. The exemplars have been selected as representative, rather than ideal, examples of writing. Each writing sample has been scored, using the marking rubric. Annotations explain how scoring decisions have been made.

Notes: additional information provided on the marking rubric to assist in making judgments on the most appropriate scores. The notes are not an exhaustive list, but provide guidance on features that may be present in students' writing.

Prompts: open-ended writing topics designed to "prompt" rather than "prescribe" writing. This emphasis encourages students to draw on their individual and cultural knowledge to interpret the writing topic.

Purpose/specified purpose: the goal to be achieved by the writing; the reason for writing. For example, for the prompt "It is wrong to fight", the purpose is to *persuade* a reader to a point of view in relation to the statement "It is wrong to fight".

Topic: the broad context and subject matter specified by the prompt instructions. For the prompt "It is wrong to fight", the topic is fighting/violence.

Glossary

Abstract vocabulary: words or phrases used to describe ideas or concepts that do not have a physical existence, e.g., *loyalty*, *respect*, *kindness*. *See also* concrete vocabulary.

Academic vocabulary: words and phrases that are commonly used in the classroom and in learning contexts but not often in everyday contexts (or with a different meaning in everyday contexts). Academic vocabulary includes the vocabulary required for classroom discussion and curriculum work, e.g., *define*, *method*.

Active voice: a verb form in which the subject of the sentence performs the action of the verb, e.g., *We* [subject] *mixed* [verb] *the baking soda and vinegar. See also* passive voice.

Adjective: a word that modifies (provides more information about) a noun, e.g., **red** *bus*, **tall** *building*, **beautiful** *flower*

Adverb: a word whose main function is to modify (provide more information about) a verb, e.g., *He spoke* **angrily**; *She walked* **slowly**

Apostrophe: a punctuation mark (') that signals the omission of letters as in a contraction (e.g., *can't*, *didn't*) or that indicates possession (e.g., *the dog's tail, the girl's hat, the women's dresses*)

Article: a word (*a*, *an* or *the*) that introduces a noun. The article may be indefinite (***a*** *bus,* ***an*** *umbrella*) or definite (***the*** *shops*).

Blends: two or three consonants that work together, e.g., **str**ing, **bl**ue, **gr**owing. Each consonant sound can be heard in the blend.

Chunk: a sound or a group of letters, within a spoken or written word, that includes more than one phoneme or grapheme. Identifying known or familiar chunks may help students spell or decode unfamiliar words.

Clause: a grammatical structure that contains a subject and a verb, e.g., *The butterfly emerges from the cocoon.* Clauses may be independent (able to stand alone, expressing a complete thought, as in *I play with my friends*) or dependent (unable to stand alone or express a complete thought, as in *When I am on holiday*).

Coherence: the quality of being logical and consistent, so that meaning is clear

Cohesive devices/linking words/text connectives: words or phrases used to make links between items or ideas in a text so that the reader is able to track how meaning is being developed

Colon: a punctuation mark (:) used at the end of a statement (usually a sentence) to introduce an explanation, an example, a list or a quotation, e.g., *There are many different kinds of music: classical, pop, rock, rap and folk*

Comma: a punctuation mark (,) whose functions include the separation of ideas or elements within a sentence. Commas can be used to separate phrases (e.g., *On Wednesday evening**,** we went to the movies*), clauses (e.g., *Because it was Dad's birthday**,** we went to the movies*) or items in a list (e.g., *We ate ice-cream**,** popcorn and lollies*).

Complex ideas: ideas that move beyond the immediate, everyday world of the writer, to draw on wider themes and issues that affect a broad range of people

Complex punctuation: punctuation that may be considered as higher-order, including commas to mark phrases and clauses, punctuation of direct speech, apostrophes for possession, colons, semicolons and parentheses

Complex sentence: a sentence that has a main, independent clause and at least one dependent (subordinate) clause beginning with a subordinating conjunction such as *when*, *how*, *because*, *although*, e.g., *She could paint amazing pictures* [independent clause], *although she was only six* [dependent clause]; *When we went to class* [dependent clause], *I put the certificate in my book bag* [independent clause]. The subordinate clause is dependent on the main clause and cannot stand alone.

Compound sentence: a sentence consisting of at least two independent, main clauses. The clauses are independent of each other (each one could stand alone) and are linked by a coordinating conjunction such as *and*, *but*, or *or*, e.g., *I mowed the lawn, but you trimmed the edges.*

Compound–complex sentence: a sentence consisting of a compound sentence plus as least one dependent clause, e.g., *I mowed the lawn, but you trimmed the edges **after I had finished***

Concrete vocabulary: words and phrases used to describe objects or events that exist in a physical form, e.g., *house, table, flower. See also* abstract vocabulary.

Conjunction: a word used to link two clauses within a sentence. Conjunctions can be coordinating (joining two independent clauses, e.g., *I have two friends **and** they are both girls*) or subordinating (joining an independent and a dependent clause, e.g., *I came **because** I needed to see you*).

Continuous texts: texts in which sentences are organised into paragraphs. *See also* non-continuous text.

Contraction: a shortened version of a word or words, formed by removing one or more letters and replacing them with an apostrophe, e.g., *it's, hadn't, couldn't*

Dash: a punctuation mark (–) that typically signals added information, an interruption or a change of thought, or that adds emphasis, e.g., *I have two friends – both girls – and I play with them every day*

Dependent clause: a clause that is unable to stand alone or express a complete thought, as in *When I am on holiday.* Dependent clauses (also known as subordinate clauses) add more detail to an independent (or main) clause.

Difficult words: words that are not considered to be high frequency and that do not follow common letter patterns and spelling rules. Difficult words may include:

- words that contain unusual consonant blends, digraphs and trigraphs (e.g., *guide, guess, guard, scholar, schedule, scheme*)
- compound words (e.g., *worthwhile, nevertheless*)
- homophones (e.g., *course/coarse, practicing/practising, whether/weather*)
- silent letters (e.g., *gnome, honest, wrestling, pseudonym*)
- difficult or unusual letter patterns (e.g., *hideous, amateur, behaviour, fashion, cautious, comfortable*)
- commonly confused words (e.g., *bought/brought, dependent/dependant*)
- irregular words (e.g., *height, through, yacht*).

Digraph: two letters representing one sound: *-th, -ng, -ee, -ou*. See also vowel digraph.

Direct speech: the words that are actually said by someone. Direct speech is indicated by inverted commas when included in written text, e.g., *"This is the first hike I've ever been on," said Bob.* See also reported speech.

Elaborate: to add more detail. Elaboration of ideas in writing may involve description, explanation, analysis, evaluation or additional information.

Ellipsis/ellipses: a punctuation mark (. . .) consisting of three equally spaced dots. It is used to indicate the omission of words or sentences, for example in a quotation. It can also be used, especially at the end of a sentence, to indicate an unfinished thought, e.g., *She wondered where the hair straighteners could have got to …*).

Expressive language/vocabulary: vivid, lively, and/or emotive words and terms

Extending phrases and/or clauses: words or groups of words added to a simple sentence to add detail, e.g., *The **three** men walked into the **dense, overgrown** bush, **carrying large packs**.* Extending phrases or clauses may be at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of a sentence.

Figurative language: language that uses images to build meaning without literal description and often without direct comparison, e.g., by using metaphor, as in *Night is a Blanket.* Other forms of figurative language include similes (*the ice cream tasted like a fluffy cloud)* and onomatopoeia (*the waves **crashed** on the shore*). Also referred to as "figures of speech".

Figure of speech: *see* figurative language

Flow: the rhythm, pace and logical consistency of a piece of writing. Writing that has "flow" moves in an easy, natural way so the reader can follow it without difficulty or interruption.

Fragments: *see* sentence fragments

Generalisation: moving beyond concrete facts to make links to more abstract or universal principles or themes

Grapheme: a written unit that represents one phoneme, e.g., *f, th, o, ee*

High-frequency words: words that occur most commonly in writing, such as those listed in essential lists 1–7 (Croft, 1998)

Hyphen: a punctuation mark (-) used to join compound words, most commonly compound adjectives that come before a noun, e.g., *a well-known fact.* (Note that a compound adjective formed with an adverb ending in *–ly* is not usually hyphenated, e.g., *a beautifully presented portfolio.*)

Idiom: a sequence of words with a fixed expression in common usage, and whose meaning is not literal, e.g., *raining cats and dogs*; *kick the bucket*; *put a sock in it!*

Incomplete sentence: *see* sentence fragmen

Independent clause: a clause capable of standing on its own and that conveys a message. The following sentence has two independent clauses: ***The sky grew dark*** *and* ***the clouds rolled in***. The following sentence has an independent clause followed by a dependent clause: ***They smiled*** *as if they meant it. See also* clause; dependent clause.

Language features: the language patterns typically associated with a text written for a particular purpose, including choice of tense, tone, connectives and vocabulary. For example, when narrating, typical language features include past tense, connectives denoting time, expressive and/or descriptive vocabulary, and dialogue.

Linking words/cohesive devices/text connectives: words or phrases that help the reader follow the relationships between the parts of a text, e.g., *first, finally, because, therefore*)

Metaphor: a figure of speech that makes an imaginative link between two objects or ideas to create a clear or surprising image, for example using the idea of a blanket to create an image of the night sky in *Night is a Blanket*

Modal verbs: verbs that convey judgments about the likelihood of events. The nine modal verbs are *can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would.*

Mood: the atmosphere created by the writing and conveyed to the reader, for example mysterious, humorous or ominous

Morphemes: the smallest parts of words that have meaning. *Snowing* has two morphemes, *snow* and *-ing. See also* morphology.

Morphology: the study of the forms of words and how they are constructed in terms of parts that have meaning

Nominalisation: forming a noun from a verb or adjective, e.g., the noun *breakage* formed from the verb *break*. Nominalisation makes a written text more compact and concise, e.g., *When your body reaches an abnormally low temperature, you will need to be taken to hospital* might be rewritten with nominalisations as ***Hypothermia*** *requires* ***hospitalisation.***

Non-continuous texts: texts that do not contain sentences organised into paragraphs, for example, charts and graphs, tables and matrices, diagrams, maps, forms, information sheets, advertisements, vouchers and certificates

Noun: a word class with a naming function: *the* ***cat***, *a* ***dream***

Noun–pronoun referencing: the match between a pronoun and the noun that it refers to. An example of incorrect noun–pronoun referencing is ***The dogs*** *are splashing in the water.* ***It*** *has a shaggy coat.*

Objective language/tone: language that does not focus on thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Third person pronouns (e.g., *it*, *they*) are reasonably common but first and second (e.g., *I, you*) are not. *See also* subjective language.

Onomatopoeia: the use of words that evoke the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to, e.g., *splash*, *honk*

Orientation: an opening statement/s that provides the reader with a clear idea of what the text will be about, and/or that engages the reader's interest

Overblown language: language that is exaggerated or pretentious

Overgeneralise (spelling rules): apply spelling or morphological patterns more widely than is appropriate, such as to a word that is irregular. An overgeneralisation of the spelling rule "add –*ed* to a verb to form the past tense" is *I **standed** up*.

Parentheses: punctuation marks (()) consisting of upright curved lines, most commonly used to mark off qualifying phrases, as in *The girl (the one in the red dress) is called Alysha*. Also called brackets.

Passive voice: a verb form in which the subject of the verb receives the verb's action, i.e., the subject is the target of the action, as in *Baking soda and vinegar* [subject] *were mixed* [verb]. *See also* active voice.

Personal words/vocabulary: words and phrases that have personal meaning for the writer, such as familiar names and words for places, activities, actions, and feelings that are important to that person

Phoneme: the smallest segment of sound in spoken language

Phoneme–grapheme relationships: the relationships between spoken sound units and the written symbols that represent them

Phrase: A cluster of words smaller than a clause, forming a grammatical unit, e.g., *the tall trees; in a box*

Precise words: words that are exact and accurate in expressing the writer's intention. Precise words may be descriptive, expressive, academic, technical or abstract.

Prepositions: words that describe a relationship between other words in the sentence, most typically location in space (**under** *the bed*, **in** *the box*, **on** *the television*) or time (**after** *the flood*, **during** *the race*, **since** *my birthday*)

Pronoun: a word that can substitute for a noun or a noun phrase, e.g., *I've got a red hat and Jane's got a green* ***one***; *My Uncle Fred's just arrived.* ***He's*** *quite tired*

Referring words: words that create links in the writing, by referring to something that has already been mentioned, e.g., *The butterfly has two wings.* ***These*** *are orange, black and white*. The most common referring words are pronouns.

Relative pronoun: the pronouns *who, whom, whose, that, which*. These pronouns introduce relative clauses, such as *People **who recycle plastic bags** are helping to take care of our planet and reduce global warming*; *The tadpole develops two small legs,* ***which will eventually allow it to move on land.***

Reported speech: a summary or paraphrase of what someone said, in which the actual words are not quoted directly. Reported speech does not require inverted commas, e.g., *Bob said it was the first hike he'd ever been on*. *See also* direct speech.

Run-on sentences: two or more sentences that have been run together without appropriate punctuation to separate them (i.e., full stop and capital letter, or a semicolon) or an appropriate conjunction to join them. Run-on sentences are often joined inappropriately with commas (also known as comma splices).

Semicolon: the punctuation mark (;) used between two independent clauses (sentences) that are related in meaning, e.g., *I am going home; I intend to stay there*

Sensory detail/language: language that appeals to the senses, describing how something smells, feels, looks, sounds or tastes

Sentence fragment: a sentence that is incomplete because it is missing at least one essential element, such as a subject or verb. A sentence fragment does not express a complete thought.

Simile: A figure of speech that compares one thing with another, using *like* or *as*, e.g., *The ice cream tasted like a fluffy cloud; Her eyes were as bright as stars.*

Simple ideas: ideas that are related to the personal, immediate world of the writer (concrete, predictable, familiar, personal or close to the writer's experience)

Simple sentence: a sentence that contains a single, independent clause, e.g., *My community needs a new gym*

Structural features: the component parts that are typically associated with a text written for a particular purpose. For example, when narrating, structural features may include an orientation to the context, a series of events, a problem and a resolution.

Subject–verb agreement: use of the correct form of the verb (singular or plural) to match the subject. A singular subject takes a singular verb, and a plural subject takes a plural verb.

Technical vocabulary: words that are specific to a particular topic, field, or academic discipline, e.g., *antennae, chrysalis, larvae*

Tense: a change in the form of a verb to mark the time at which an action takes place (present tense: *tell*; past tense: *told*)

Text connectives/cohesive devices/linking words: the words or phrases used to make links between items or ideas in a text so the reader is able to track how meaning is being developed

Tone: the attitude that the writer conveys, through choice of vocabulary and/or phrasing, e.g., informal/formal or objective/subjective

Topic: the subject matter to be addressed by the writing, e.g., dogs at the beach, the life cycle of the Monarch butterfly, or friendship

Topic sentence: the first and most general sentence of a paragraph, which introduces the main idea (topic) being written about in that paragraph

Vowel digraph: two vowels combining to make a single vowel sound, e.g., *ea* (*beat*), *oa* (*boat*).

Word chunks: *see* chunk**.**

References

Croft, C. (with Mapa, L.). (1998). *Spell-write: An aid to writing and spelling* (Rev. ed.). Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Further information

Additional information about language, which will help teachers to analyse student responses to e-asTTle writing prompts, can be found in ***Thinking about how language works***, available through the Assessment Resource Banks (arb.nzcer.org.nz).

e-asTTle writing marking rubric

	page number
Ideas	1
Structure and language	2
Organisation	3
Vocabulary	4
Sentence structure	5
Punctuation	6
Spelling	7

Note

The e-asTTle writing rubric is supported by a set of generic exemplars as well as smaller sets of exemplars specific to each prompt. The generic exemplars can be downloaded from the 'Enter Scores' page under 'Mark Test'.

Ideas

Skill focus: the relevance, quantity, quality, selection and elaboration of ideas for the topic

Definition

- *Quality of ideas*

  Simple ideas are related to the personal, immediate world of the writer (concrete, predictable, familiar, personal and/or close to writer's experience).

  Complex ideas may involve generalisation, abstraction and reflection on the wider world and groups of people.

- *Selection of ideas*

  The deliberate choice of relevant ideas or subject matter to engage and influence the reader.

- *Elaboration of ideas*

  Elaboration should be relevant and may be given by providing background information or factual detail, describing, explaining, providing evidence, analysing, or evaluating.

Category	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
Descriptor	**Ideas are unrelated to the topic** OR **One brief, simple idea related to the topic**	**Text has a few simple, unelaborated ideas related to the topic**	**Text has many simple, unelaborated ideas related to the topic** OR **An idea is related to the topic and has some basic elaboration**	**Ideas are relevant and begin to show some complexity** AND • **Text has one elaborated idea** OR • **Text has several ideas that have some elaboration**	**Ideas are complex and elaborated**	**Ideas show insight, originality and some authority and/or reflection on the wider world** **Ideas are deliberately selected, effective and elaborated**
Notes		One idea may be repeated	Ideas may be disconnected or brief points in a list Some evidence of a main idea (e.g., persuasive text may take a position)		Elaboration may lack depth and detail Complexity may not be controlled Main idea/theme is present but focus may not be sustained	Elaboration is detailed Complex issues or themes are raised Main idea is focused
Generic exemplars	• S n • The girl	• I be kin • Fealing seaweed	• The Erfeh • The adventerous dog	• Margin for era • When I	• Evolving life pattern • Heavy-booted feet	• Plastic bags • Don't move

1

Structure and language

Skill focus: the presence and development of structural and language features appropriate to the specified purpose

Definition
- *Structural features*

  The component parts that are typically associated with a text written for a particular purpose. For example, when narrating, structural features may include an orientation to the context (place, time and participants), a series of events/actions, a problem or complication, and a resolution.
- *Language features*

  The language patterns that are typically associated with a text written for a particular purpose. These include selection of tense, tone, text connectives and vocabulary. For example, when narrating, typical language features include use of past tense, connectives denoting time (in order to provide a clear sequence of events), expressive and/or descriptive vocabulary, and dialogue.

Category	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
Descriptor	Structural features and language features are inappropriate for purpose or absent	Some structural features are appropriate to purpose AND/OR Some language features are appropriate to purpose	Some structural features are appropriate to purpose AND Language features are mostly appropriate to purpose	Structural features are appropriate to purpose and some show development (may be one well-developed element with others less developed) AND Language features are appropriate to purpose	Structural features are appropriate to purpose and are developed and mostly controlled AND Language features are appropriate to purpose and mostly controlled	Structural features and language features are appropriate to purpose, controlled and effective
Notes				See 'Structure and Language Notes' for each prompt for guidance on appropriate structural and language features.		
Generic exemplars	• The girl • The adventerous dog	• Yea I'm agree • By the mall	• The Erfeh • My iPod	• Rainbow's end • When I	• Plastic bags • Youth gym	• Don't move • And the All Blacks scored!

2

Organisation

Skill focus: the organisation of ideas into a coherent text

Definition

- *Coherence*

The way ideas are linked to each other and to the broader context of the writing and/or the wider world, to produce a text that is meaningful to the reader. When the text is coherent, the relationships between ideas are clear and the writing 'flows'. When assessing a text's coherence, look for clear text connectives, consistency of verb tense, and accuracy of referring words (e.g., pronouns) across the text as a whole.

NOTE: The focus is on the text as a whole, rather than on individual sentences.

Category	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Descriptor	**Ideas are disconnected and/or random** **OR** **Text lacks coherence**	**Text attempts to group and sequence ideas** **Text has some coherence**	**Ideas are grouped and sequenced, and text generally flows** **Text may be brief but coherent**	**Text shows control over grouping and sequencing of ideas but paragraphs are not used or are indicated incorrectly** **Text is coherent**	**Ideas are organised into basic paragraphs**	**Paragraphs support the development of the text**	**Paragraphs are deliberately structured to direct the reader** **Ideas are linked effectively within and across paragraphs**
Notes	May be a very short text	Some ideas are grouped spatially, temporally or logically May have random or visual breaks (breaks do not support reader meaning) Text contains like ideas	Errors in or absence of linking words or inconsistencies in tense across text may interrupt flow	Errors in or absence of linking words or inconsistencies in tense across text do not interrupt flow	Paragraphs have minimal development (e.g., one sentence), or some paragraph breaks are not indicated Some paragraphs may be out of sequence May be a minor glitch in flow that does not interfere with meaning	Subheadings, topic sentences and linking words are present and appropriate	
Generic exemplars	• S n • I be kin	• The Erfeh • By the mall	• The adventerous dog • My iPod	• Plastic bags • Rainbow's end	• Think about • A library	• Evolving life pattern • And the All Blacks scored!	• Don't move • I personally believe

3

Vocabulary

Skill focus: the range, precision and effectiveness of word choices appropriate to the topic

Definition
- *Simple everyday words*: words that are related to the personal world of the writer; words that are used frequently
- *Precise words*: words that are descriptive, expressive, academic, technical or abstract

Category	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
Descriptor	**Uses a small range of simple, everyday words and phrases from personal vocabulary**	**Uses a range of simple, everyday words and phrases from personal vocabulary**	**Uses a range of everyday words and phrases, with a small number of precise words to add detail**	**Uses a variety of precise words and phrases to add information and/or interest**	**Selects words and phrases to enhance meaning and/or mood**	**Precise language choices consistently enhance meaning and/or mood**
Notes			May use adjectives, adverbs and/or precise verbs to add interest and detail May use simple idioms or figures of speech	May use idioms, metaphors, similes and other figures of speech May be some experimentation with vocabulary: some words may be used incorrectly	Use of precise words may be inconsistent (use of everyday or overblown language may cause jarring)	Deliberate and sustained use of precise vocabulary (descriptive, expressive, academic, technical and/or abstract) for effect
Generic exemplars	• S n • I be kin	• The adventerous dog • Stifcit	• The Erfeh • Think about	• Margin for era • Rainbow's end	• Youth gym • Plastic bags	• Don't move • And the All Blacks scored!

4

Sentence structure

Skill focus: the quality, effectiveness and correctness of sentences

Definition

When judging the correctness of each sentence, consider the following (note: the focus is on the use of correct forms within a sentence, rather than between sentences or paragraphs or across the text as a whole):

- word form (e.g., singular or plural)
- verb tense
- subject-verb agreement
- articles and pronouns

- use of prepositions and relative pronouns to expand sentences
- arrangement of (order of) elaborating phrases and clauses
- missing words
- order of words

NOTE: In order to make assessment of sentence structure more manageable, 'read in' missing or incorrect sentence punctuation (including full stops). (Punctuation is assessed separately, in the 'Punctuation' element.)

Category	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
Descriptor	Few correct sentences	Correct sentences are short and may have minimal extension	Correct sentences begin to show variety in structure and type	Most sentences are correct Correct sentences show variety in structure, length and type and have extending phrases and/or clauses OR All sentences are correct but repetitive	Sentences are controlled and show variety in structure, length and type and have extending phrases and/or clauses	Sentences are deliberately crafted to impact and engage
Notes	Text consists of fragments, phrases or sentences with missing words Some meaning is discernable	Sentences may be simple and/or compound and/or basic complex May contain long, run-on sentences with overuse of conjunctions	Some sentences may have repeated structures Errors in longer sentences may be brought about by use of speech-like structures	May attempt to use sentences for effect	Some sentences may be controlled for effect Meaning is clear (may be some inconsistency or minor error)	Sentences express precise meaning
Generic exemplars	• The girl • Yea I'm agree	• The adventerous dog • Stificit	• The Erfeh • My iPod	• Rainbow's end • When I	• Evolving life pattern • Plastic bags	• Don't move • And the All Blacks scored!

5

Punctuation

Skill focus: the accurate use of sentence punctuation markers and the range and accuracy of other punctuation to aid understanding of the text and to enhance meaning

Category	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Descriptor	Little, no or random punctuation	Experimentation with sentence punctuation	Some correct use of sentence punctuation	Correct punctuation of most sentences – beginning and end – AND some correct use of other punctuation OR Correct punctuation of ALL sentences – beginning and end – with no other punctuation used	Correct sentence punctuation AND correct use of other punctuation (contractions, commas in lists) with experimentation in complex punctuation (e.g., direct speech, commas for phrases and clauses)	Punctuation assists meaning Sentence punctuation is correct AND a wider range of other punctuation is used correctly, including capital letters	Control of punctuation to enhance meaning Few or no errors in punctuation
Notes	**FULL STOPS** May be one full stop at end of writing **CAPITAL LETTERS** Letter formation may make it hard to distinguish whether capitals are intended for sentence beginnings or proper nouns	**FULL STOPS** Used separately to meaning of text (e.g., random, end of line or end of page). May be one instance of correct use **CAPITAL LETTERS** Letter formation may make it hard to distinguish whether capitals are intended for sentence beginnings or proper nouns **OTHER PUNCTUATION** May experiment with contractions or commas (may be some correct use)	**FULL STOPS** Some sentences may be joined by commas **CAPITAL LETTERS** Letter formation may make it hard to distinguish whether capitals are intended for sentence beginnings or proper nouns **OTHER PUNCTUATION** May experiment with contractions, commas or other punctuation (may be some correct use)	**FULL STOPS** Sentence endings are marked by full stops, exclamation marks or question marks **CAPITAL LETTERS** Used to begin sentences May be used randomly (incorrect use, where handwriting style overrides function) **OTHER PUNCTUATION** May use one or two other types correctly	**FULL STOPS and CAPITAL LETTERS** May have some minimal incorrect use **OTHER PUNCTUATION** Experiments with other types: direct speech may not use a new line for new speaker; punctuation within "" incorrect; attempts to create effects Capital letters may be used incorrectly (handwriting style overrides function)	**FULL STOPS and CAPITAL LETTERS** May be some minor error in sentence punctuation **OTHER PUNCTUATION** May include dashes, parentheses, commas for phrases and clauses, hyphens, semicolons, colons, more control over direct speech May have one area that shows consistent weakness	**FULL STOPS and CAPITAL LETTERS** May be some minor error in sentence punctuation **OTHER PUNCTUATION** May have minor error in complex punctuation, e.g., in direct speech or commas for phrases and clauses
Generic exemplars	• The girl • The Erfeh	• The adventerous dog • Yea I'm agree	• My iPod • Margin for era	• Plastic bags • When I	• A library • I personally believe	• Youth gym • Heavy-booted feet	• Don't move • And the All Blacks scored!

6

Spelling

Skill focus: the difficulty of words used and the accuracy of the spelling

Category	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
Descriptor	**Uses some letters to represent meaning** Single letters or strings of letters that do not support meaning	**Spells a few personal and high-frequency words correctly (e.g., my, it, if)** **Attempts words using phoneme–grapheme relationships**	**Spells a range of personal and high-frequency words correctly (e.g., school, where, friend, outside, playing)** **Attempts a wider range of words using phoneme–grapheme relationships and word chunks**	**Spells a wide range of high-frequency words correctly** **Attempts difficult word/s using phoneme–grapheme relationships and developing knowledge of spelling rules and morphemes**	**Spells high-frequency and some difficult words correctly** **Attempts difficult words using diverse phoneme–grapheme relationships, and knowledge of spelling rules and morphemes**	**Spells high-frequency and a range of difficult words with few or no errors**
Notes		Some consonants and vowel sounds (including blends and digraphs) may be reproduced correctly, e.g., -sh, -ch, ee, -ow Some words may contain all their letters but in the wrong order (e.g., fnu, swa) Records the dominant sounds in words	May attempt words with more than two syllables, e.g., amasing (amazing)	All sounds are represented in words Uses basic spelling rules but may over-generalise Achieves close approximations of difficult words	Irregular words may be spelt correctly (e.g., weird, through)	
Generic exemplars	• S n • Mi kat	• I be kin • The Erfeh	• My iPod • Margin for era	• The adventerous dog • Think about	• Evolving life pattern • I personally believe	• Plastic bags • Don't move

7