

Development of the asTTle Writing Assessment Rubrics for Scoring Extended Writing Tasks

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This report outlines an assessment procedure for extended texts based on “Writing” components of the English Curriculum. It reviews recent research on scoring such texts, explores the notions of genre and purpose, notes difficulties for New Zealand teachers in the current documents available to them, and defends the argument that writing is a social act and the purpose or function of the writing is defined by the context. This means that the form and features of the text may differ according to purpose or that the same form (such as a letter) can serve different purposes. Thus, the scoring rubrics are aligned with the function of the writing, and communication and social purpose are overarching concepts. Rubrics are developed for each of these major functions, each containing three meta-divisions from which to consider the features of text as related to the purpose and context: rhetorical (audience awareness/ purpose); organisational/structural (content inclusion; coherence – sequencing ideas and linking; and language resources for achieving purpose), and conventional: sentences and words (grammatical conventions, spelling, and punctuation).

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Assessment of Extended Text: The Scoring Rubrics

Theoretical Perspective and the Context for Development

Assessment of students’ extended writing is a challenging task that presents a range of issues and problems depending on a stakeholder’s vantage point (White, 1994). The work reported here specifically concerns assessment linked to teaching and learning. The work involved the development of scoring rubrics for teacher assessment of extended text as part of a larger national project, designed to provide teachers of children in Years 5–7 with assessment tools that can be tailored to teachers’ and schools’ requirements. The assessment tools are designed to serve a dual purpose: They are designed to provide teachers with information about their students, specifically to assist their teaching for increased learning outcomes in the areas of reading,

writing, and numeracy. They are also designed to allow teachers to compare their students with others using the norms for the assessment tasks selected. These tools can be used when and where schools or classroom teachers wish and as often as they find useful. Thus, the task was to develop rubrics within this context to serve such purposes.

Where assessment is to serve the function of informing teaching practice and, subsequently, improving individual students' learning, such tools have to be designed with close attention both to notions of developmental progression and to contextual factors. Contextual factors include the present state of knowledge in the field of written composition and its assessment; the mandated curriculum; the skills in, training in, ideas about, and goals for literacy learning held by teachers doing the assessment; psychometric concerns for sound assessment; and more pragmatic considerations such as the organisational practices of those who will use the rubrics. The task was to develop rubrics that would both reflect and construct teachers' expertise in teaching writing as well as in assessing it.

Recent approaches to assessing writing appear to reflect the broader debate about genre versus context. The view that acquiring expertise in writing is the acquisition of a generic set of processes that could be applied across all writing tasks is reflected in the assessment rubrics developed (e.g., the Six-Trait Analytic Writing Assessment Model, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1998). Functional genre theorists (e.g., Martin, Christie, & Rothery, 1987) emphasise the definable text features common across various contexts. Social process theorists (e.g., Berkenkotter, 1993; Chapman, 1999; Freedman & Medway, 1994) argue that genres are highly context dependent and that writers access them for particular social purposes. The theoretical stance informing our development of scoring rubrics is that writing is a purposeful social interaction that can function to accomplish certain social goals. Further, features of texts are related to the purposes of and contexts for writing, so scoring rubrics need to reflect this.

Although there are differing ways of classifying the functions of writing, there tends to be considerable overlap among the systems of various authors (e.g., Derewianka, 1990; Knapp & Watkins, 1994; Wing Jan, 1991; Wray & Lewis, 1999). Informed by research – but also keeping in mind the New Zealand national curriculum, where writing (after Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975) is seen to serve three broad functions: expressive, transactional, and poetic – we viewed writing as serving six major functions or processes (after Knapp & Watkins, 1994). These are: to explain; to argue or persuade; to instruct or lay out a procedure; to classify, organise, describe, and report information; to inform and entertain through imaginative narrative; and to inform and entertain through recount. This was the theoretical stance and resulting framework for the development of the scoring rubrics.

Thus, the choice we made was to follow the conceptualisation of genre as driven by functional purpose (Gerot & Wignell, 1994; Martin, 1985) rather than by mode (text form). Even in this choice, we hope there will be ramifications for professional development of teachers. In some teachers' texts, there appears to be a certain measure of confusion between function and mode or text form; indeed, some writers seem to view them as synonymous. For example, in the research that preceded this report (Limbrick, Girven, & Keenan, 2000), the task was to map the New Zealand English curriculum. Under the heading "Writing Strategies" was the aim derived from *English in the New Zealand Curriculum (ENZC)* (Ministry of Education, 1994) – namely, to "demonstrate ability to record experiences, events, feelings and ideas in a range of text forms using appropriate language and text features" (p. 9 in draft). Listed under this aim (see Appendix 1, p. 7) was a mixture of both functions such as *to recount*, *to argue*, or *to list a procedure* and text types such as *a letter*, *a diary*, or *a play*.

Further confusion over the blurring of distinction between text form and function is apparent in classroom practice. Many New Zealand teachers, for example, teach their children how to structure letters in the belief that this will be helpful information for them as

developing writers. The erroneous assumption here is that writing a letter is mostly about format and layout (e.g., teachers will often point out to children the difference between *formal* and *friendly* letters in terms of language use, or register, and layout). In reality, the letter format is a matter of mode not genre. An over-riding consideration for one's letter writing needs to be the *function* or *purpose* for which a letter is being written. Letters may be written to make complaints, to argue a point, to recount an event, to make an explanation, to tell an anecdote, or to advertise a product. In short, letters may have different purposes and, thus, the structuring of these texts and their lexicogrammatical resources will differ significantly, regardless of the fact that each will still be considered a letter in terms of layout and transmission. So, a letter, it seems, is not just a letter (Gerot, 1995). To teach children text types with little regard for purpose or audience masks important rhetorical considerations.

Teachers who wish children to understand language as a system for representing and transforming their own worlds will recognise the need to develop knowledge not just about texts but about writing as a purpose-driven communicative response to social and cultural contexts. This concept of communication in response to social and cultural contexts is what we wish to foreground with the assessment tasks and the rubric design.

In line with others (e.g., Derewianka, 1990; Knapp & Watkins, 1994), we argue that there are features of text associated with each of its functions or purposes. Specification of these, similarly, draws from a research tradition that began with Nold (1981; see also Parr, 1989; Glasswell, 1999), which views written pieces as having rhetorical, structural, lexicogrammatical, and conventional dimensions.

A further premise that was important in informing our design of the scoring rubrics broadly involved the idea that diagnostic assessment should help teaching to proceed in an individual's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). That is, diagnostic assessment needs not only to specify criteria that place a student at a particular point, but also to suggest what is required for that student

to move forward. Thus, one of the criteria for the rubrics was that they had to specify a developmental continuum. *English in the New Zealand Curriculum (ENZC)* indicated that the school year groups (Years 5–7) covered by the assessment tools were likely to span three developmental levels (curriculum levels 2–4) within the eight-level curriculum (NB: levels do not correspond to years of schooling). Further, the developmental continuum concept was to operate within a single task as per *Planning and Assessment in English* (Ministry of Education, 1997).

The design approach taken here reflects the goal of the Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning (asTTle) Project to have rubrics that would be used for assessing responses for a range of tasks associated with each of the functions of writing. For example, there may be several different writing tasks that require a student to argue or persuade and the rubrics need to be applicable to each task and across levels. This approach differs significantly from that used by large-scale testing organisations (e.g., National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (USA), National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) (NZ), and Educational Testing Centre (ETC) (Australia)) where task-specific rubrics are designed and used. In addition, NAEP and ETC generally design tasks specifically for a single year level. In these regimes, performance, therefore, is assessed against a specific task and within one level. The asTTle project, as its title suggests, is primarily concerned with assessment tools for teaching and learning. Information about relativity is only one part of it. Thus, the set of constraints and the purpose underpinning the rubric design makes direct comparison with other writing scoring rubrics difficult.

The tasks for extended writing assessment do not vary across the three levels of achievement; rather students' degree of expertise in responding to the task varies. In the theoretical context underpinning the design of these rubrics, expertise is seen to exist on a continuum of developing expertise. Thus, in scoring, decisions are to be made about where on the continuum of levels the various aspects of a piece lie, according to the criteria specified.

Further, within each level, the *weight of evidence* should allow aspects of the piece of writing to be seen as demonstrating *basic*, *proficient*, or *advanced* qualities on the criteria within each of the categories.

Description of Rubrics

Our argument, therefore, following others in the research literature, is that writing is a social act and the purpose or function of the writing is defined by the context. This means that the form and features of the text may differ according to purpose and that the same form (such as a letter) can serve different purposes. Thus, the scoring rubrics are aligned with the function of the writing, and communication and social purpose are overarching concepts.

The three types of writing described in *English in the New Zealand Curriculum (ENZC)* – namely, expressive, poetic, and transactional – were seen as too broad a delineation within which to develop workable rubrics. Specified in the writing achievement objectives within the *ENZC* document are narrating, instructing, arguing, recounting, explaining, and providing factual account or reporting. Finally, Drawing from the research and teaching literature (e.g., Derewianka, 1990; Knapp & Watkins, 1994; Wing Jan, 1991; Wray & Lewis, 1999), we defined writing as serving these six main functions:

- To explain;
- To argue or persuade;
- To instruct or lay out a procedure;
- To classify, organise, describe, and report information;
- To inform or entertain through imaginative narrative;
- To inform or entertain through recount.

Rubrics were developed for each of these major functions. (Note: There were no tasks in the trial papers that could be said to call for personal interpretive writing or for explanation. Indeed, official documents accompanying *ENZC* state that expressive writing, as they term it, is not assessable. Our feeling, however, is that the type of personal writing that reflects on actions and events is able to be assessed.)

The scoring rubrics all contain three meta-divisions from which to consider the features of text as related to the purpose and context (see Figure 1). Within the three meta-divisions, there are seven categories with criterion statements. The meta-divisions with their categories are: *rhetorical* (audience awareness/purpose); *organisational/structural* (content inclusion; coherence – sequencing ideas and linking; and language resources for achieving purpose); and *conventional: sentences and words* (grammatical conventions, spelling, and punctuation).

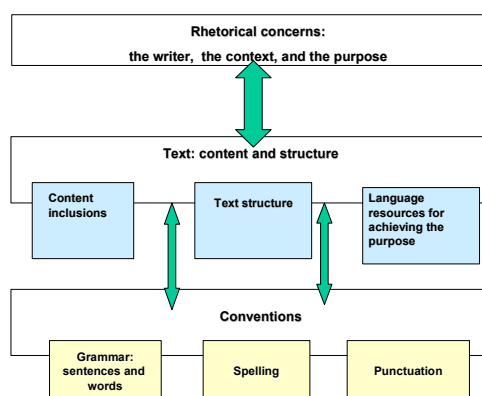


Figure 1. A common framework for all rubrics.

Thus, rubrics to score tasks encapsulating the five major functions were developed, each with common meta-divisions. However, criteria within the categories of two of the meta-divisions (*rhetorical* and *organisational*) differed according to function.

Criteria in the seven categories under these meta-divisions can be scored at levels 2, 3, or 4 and, within a level, at basic, proficient, and advanced *according to the weight of evidence*. This allows a profile to be constructed for a writer, a profile that may be different across writing functions as well as across aspects (categories) within a function. Our goal was to design rubrics that had the potential to provide detailed, useful information to classroom teachers. Assessing children's performance on writing tasks using the rubrics will allow teachers to view each child's development individually. Teachers will be able to ascertain an individual child's profile across the dimensions of text and compare this profile to the profiles of other students. In some cases,

children achieving the same “score” will do so for different reasons.

Developmental theorising would support this notion of differences in forms as well as levels of expertise. Our assumption is that while our achievement goals for children will remain stable (for example, that they will reach Level 4 advanced, or the Literacy Task Force’s statement that “by the age of nine every child will be able to read, write and do maths”), the paths they may take to that achievement will differ (Clay, 1998; McNaughton, 1995). When teachers use the rubrics, they will be able to “map” a child’s development across dimensions of text, allowing diagnosis of sub-skill difficulties to be situated within the context of a whole communicative task. Teachers will see where each child’s strengths and weaknesses lie and will then be able to use the developmental characteristics provided by the rubrics (based on *ENZC*) to plan teaching and learning activities in each child’s zone(s) of proximal development. They have a description of how to “up the ante” (Bruner, 1983).

This is a powerful feature. Further, the fact that the rubrics relate to broad purposes for writing rather than individual tasks or text forms, becomes a major strength. Teachers cannot “teach to the test” as the “test” is not a stable task. The specifics of the task vary, while the broad communicative functions of writing will remain the same. This is our approach to teaching writing and to developing skilled writers, and it dovetails with New Zealand teachers’ philosophy of developing literacy through real and meaningful activities.

Following is an explanation related to the criteria in each of the categories for each of the functions of writing. This explanation includes the major feature of the functional genre, the text types that may be included, the content and structural features, and the major language resources identified with each function.

Table 1

Explanations for the criteria in the rubric “to explain”

Purpose or function of writing

To explain (excluding commonsense or everyday explanations)

To give an account of how something is formed or how something works, and provide associated reasons.

To explain the processes involved in, and reasons for, mechanical, natural, technological, or sociocultural phenomena.

Types

Two main types of explanation with variations in focus:

How does it work? (E.g., How does a pump work? How does Parliament work? How are mountains formed? How do plants grow?)

Why is it so? (Why do some things float? Why do our bodies need food? Why is the ozone layer thinning?)

Generic Features (Content)

Staging (essential):

Introduction: A general statement to establish the purpose of the text to position the reader (may be in the form of a title). Identifies the phenomenon to be explained.

Body: Explanation Sequence – an account is given of how and/or why something occurs or works (focus on giving reasons and making the process understandable). Note: Complex explanations may have multiple parts or sub-sections. Explanations may be part of more complex or substantial texts (e.g., a report on tuatara may include an explanation section to detail the reproductive cycle – how tuatara reproduce).

Text Organisation/ Structure – sequencing and linking

Generally organised around a sequence explaining why something is so or how it works. Ordering is logical and links between aspects of the phenomenon (e.g., sequence or parts) and their associated reasons/functions are evident (use of conjunctions of time and cause and effect).

Organising devices such as paragraphs assist writers to structure related aspects into themed groups. Links between paragraphs assist in creating cohesion and relevance.

Language Resources for Text

Focus on generic (non) human participants (the wind, glaciers, tuatara, computers).

Precise, descriptive, factual language (verbs, adverbials, adjectivals, nouns) employed to give detail to the explanation and causal circumstances.

Technical language related to the topic (where appropriate) adds authority to the text and writer. Explanations generally employ declarative mood choices to make statements of fact and offer reasons for and explanations of the phenomena.

Verbs: Mainly *action* verbs that tell of actions (and behaviours – depending on the field). Some *existing* and *relational* verbs assist in establishing explanations.

Tenses are commonly *timeless present* tense (*evaporates, grows, eats, orbits*). Some use of passives to define and/or describe actions where

agent is obscured or unimportant in the explanation sequence (e.g., “Gradually, these rocks are eroded and sand is formed”).

Conjunctions show linkages in time and place relationships for sequencing (e.g., *first, then, following, finally*). Conjunctions of consequence (cause and effect) link aspects and reasons through causal relationships (e.g., *if ..., then ..., so, as a consequence*).

Table 2

Explanations for the criteria in the rubric “to argue or persuade”

Purpose or function of writing
To argue or persuade To argue a position or persuade a reader to the writer’s point of view. Arguments are expository texts centring on an assumption that the writer must convince the reader through the presentation of relevant points with supporting evidence.
Types
Many types of persuasive texts with variations in focus. E.g., arguments: <i>analytic exposition (describing component elements)</i> and <i>hortatory exposition (tending to exhort readers to a course of action or beliefs)</i> . Persuasive texts: advertisements. Main focus for this rubric is argument.
Generic Features (Content)
Staging: Thesis or position statement (provides the reader with the context). Body: Main points with elaboration or supporting evidence take the reader through a structured and logical presentation of information (evidence and/or illustration) to support the writer’s position (thesis). Conclusion: Re-states the writer’s position (and/or recommendation for action – what ought or ought not to be done – <i>hortatory exposition</i>).
Text Organisation/ Structure – sequencing and linking
Focus on objects and ideas (rather than events, happenings, or processes). Logical Organisation: Information and ideas grouped logically and linked thematically. Organising devices such as paragraphing and conjunctions are used to show relations among content items or ideas.
Language Resources for Text
The arguments name and describe generalised participants or abstract concepts (e.g., “parents”, “blue whales”, or “the gun-control lobby”). Arguments employ declarative mood choices to make statements of fact and offer personal opinions on the topic. Language resources: Precise, descriptive, factual language employed to give detail and credibility to the argument. Persuasive/emotive language

commonly used to add to reader impact and make argument seem powerful. Use of idiomatic language to appeal to readers’ senses and emotions. Technical language related to the topic (where appropriate) adds authority to the text and writer.

Verbs: Many *existing* and *relational* verbs (being and having verbs such as *is, are, have, belongs to*). Verbs are used to make clear the “state of play”. Choice and use of verb-vocabulary often reflects the desire to create particular information-laden meanings for the reader.

Modals (*must, might, can, ought to, should*, etc) are often used to give information about the degree of obligation or certainty involved in the argument.

Verbs are commonly in *timeless present* tense. This adds to the authority of the text as readers are given a version of the world “as it is”. Passive structures are also employed to make the text seem more objective and formal.

Nouns: Arguments often make use of nominalisation and abstract nouns to enhance (the appearance of) objectivity and formality. Noun-packing is a common device for developing concise and precise descriptions. Adjectivals are often “stacked” to produce densely packed noun-groups.
Conjunctions: Additive and causal relations are common in these texts which define and elaborate positions and their underlying reasons (e.g., *in addition to, and, if ..., then ...*).

Table 3

Explanations for the criteria in the rubric “to instruct or lay out a procedure”

Purpose or function of writing
To instruct or lay out a procedure To give instructions or to lay out a procedure. Usually to describe how something may be accomplished through a sequence of actions or steps. (To tell someone how something is done.)
Types
Several types: recipes, appliance manuals, assembly instructions, games’ rules, etc.
Generic Features (Content)
Instructions and procedures contain information statements (often imperative and declarative) that tell another person how something may be achieved. Domain elements include: <i>Goal statement/title</i> : provides information for the reader about the nature of the procedure to be outlined. Identifies the product to be made or the process to be done. <i>Materials</i> (not required for all procedural texts): Tells the reader what resources may be required to complete the procedure, usually ordered. <i>Steps (1-n)</i> : The description of the sequence of steps required in order for the reader to achieve the goal.

Advice/background information may be included at any time as a means of clarifying the procedure.

Text Organisation/Structure – sequencing and linking
Generally organised around a *process*. Focus is on actions (rather than events or things) and human agency.

Content is structured according to a prescribed sequence of events. Temporal sequence is employed to tell the reader the order of the steps. Text organisers such as titles, headings, and sub-headings may be used to orient readers.

Language Resources for Text

Precise, descriptive language is employed to clarify aspects of procedure (e.g., action verbs, adverbials, adjectivals add detail and clarity what is needed and what is to be done).

Pronoun use or omission (where the reader is inferred) refers to reader in a generalised way (e.g., “First you break the egg” or “Break the egg”).

Verbs: Many *action* verbs are used, to describe processes to be done by the reader (e.g., *whisk, cut, deal, transfer, twist*).

Choice and use of verb-vocabulary: Precise verb choices reflect the desire to clarify meanings for the reader (e.g., *trim* rather than *cut*).

Verbs are commonly in simple *present* tense.

Mood choice is often imperative (command-like statements), though declarative statements may be used to contextualise the action or give advice to the reader.

Conjunctions: Time/sequence relationships in procedure generally indicated by the use of temporal conjunctions (e.g., *first, then, next, after*) or numbering.

Some cause-and-effect conjunctions may be present (e.g., *if ..., then ...*).

subject of the text (e.g., “Kiwis are flightless birds”; “My teddy is the most precious toy that I have”).

Descriptions – Tells what the phenomenon/item under discussion “is like”. Information is managed in parts to provide details about (depending on topic of report or description) components and their functions, properties, behaviours, uses, locations or habitats, types, and relationship to writer).

Conclusion (optional) – The writer may conclude the text in a simple manner. The text does not have an ending as such, but writer may round off with a general statement about the topic (e.g., “Today the Kiwi is well known around the world as a symbol of New Zealand”. Or “I love my teddy more than any other toy I have. I hope I never lose him”).

Text Organisation/Structure – sequencing and linking
Generally organised around things and their description.

Logical ordering of information (no temporal sequence) – content is grouped/structured according to common themes evident in the information given. Sentences are linked thematically to topic of paragraph or section.

Text organisers such as titles, headings, and sub-headings are commonly used to orient readers.

Language Resources for Text

The descriptions name and describe specific people or things (e.g., “my teddy”).

Reports name and describe generalised participants or whole classes of things (e.g., blue whales or the kiwi as species, telephones).

Reports and descriptions employ declarative mood choices to make statements of fact.

Language resources: Precise, descriptive, factual language employed rather than “flowery” or aesthetically pleasing language. Technical language related to the topic is common in reports. Language of comparison is common (comparatives, superlatives). Simile and metaphor may also be utilised as devices of comparison.

Verbs: Many *existing* and *relational* verbs (being and having verbs such as *is, are, have, belongs to*). Verbs are used to classify, to identify what the phenomenon is like, and what it comprises.

Some *action* verbs are used to describe behaviours (if living) or uses (if non-living).

Choice and use of verb-vocabulary often reflects the desire to create particular information-laden meanings for the reader (e.g., *forage* rather than *search for food*).

Verbs are commonly in *timeless present* tense.

This adds to the authority of the text as readers are given a version of the world “as it is”. Passive structures are also employed to make the text seem more objective and formal.

Nouns: Noun-packing is a common device for developing concise and precise descriptions.

Adjectivals are often “stacked” to produce densely packed noun-groups.

Table 4

Explanations for the criteria in the rubric “to classify, organise, describe, or report information”

Purpose or function of writing

To classify, organise, describe, or report information

To document, organise, and store factual information on a given topic. Usually to classify and describe whole classes of things (reports) or specific things (descriptions) living and non-living (scooters, Pikachu, my teddy, blue whales).

Types

Many types – This rubric deals specifically with information reports and descriptions.

Generic Features (Content)

Reports and descriptions contain information statements (often declarative). Domain elements include:

General classification statement – provides information for the reader about the nature of the

Conjunctions: Additive relations are common in these texts which define and elaborate through descriptions (e.g., in addition to, and).

Table 5

Explanations for the criteria in the rubric “to inform or entertain through imaginative narrative”

Purpose or function of writing

To inform or entertain through imaginative narrative
To inform or entertain a reader or listener by constructing a view of the world that the reader can enter. Narratives centre on a problem that is usually resolved in the course of the telling.

Types

Many types of narrative with variations in focus: folktales, fairytales, myths, legends, short stories – e.g., historical, romance, fantasy, crime, science fiction, adventure.

Generic Features (Content)

Narratives develop characters, setting(s), plot, and theme. Point of view (perspective from which the story is told). Use of dialogue.
Staging – most writing for this purpose contains the following elements (not always in this order):
Orientation (provides the setting and usually introduces the main character(s));
Complication (a problem or crisis – something is/goes wrong) – this usually necessitates going through a...
Series of events (steps to resolve the problem) until readers are taken through to a...
Resolution (the problem is solved – for better or worse);
Coda (optional) (a reflective statement often related to the theme may occur at any time – in some types of narrative it is common at the end).

Text Organisation/Structure – sequencing and linking

Generally organised around events or happenings.
Temporal sequence: Organised through time (conjunctions and adverbials show linkages in setting events in time, ordering the events and the passage of time).

Language Resources for Text

Specific people, places, and events are named (e.g., “Winnie the Pooh and the Hundred Acre Wood” rather than “bears and forests”).
Language resources (figurative language devices such as metaphor, idiom, and onomatopoeia, and descriptors such as adverbials and adjectivals) are commonly used to add interest, engage the reader, and give detail to characters, settings, and events.
Dialogue (or direct speech) is often used to develop characters and plot and to give the story a “realistic” feel.
Verbs: Many *action* verbs that tell of happenings and behaviours.

Some *sensing* and *thinking* verbs used to describe the thoughts and feelings of characters.

Some *saying* (verbal) verbs that tell of characters speaking.

Some *existing* and *relational* verbs used to tell of settings establish and reflect on characters and problems as they *are*.

Choice and use of verb vocabulary often reflects the desire to create particular images or feelings for the reader.

Verbs are commonly in past tense, although tense can vary (e.g., flash-back may use present tense to relate a past event “as it happens”).

Conjunctions and adverbials show linkages in setting events in time, ordering the events and the passage of time).

Table 6

Explanations for the criteria in the rubric “to inform or entertain through recount”

Purpose or function of writing

To recount

To inform or entertain a reader or listener by reconstructing a view of the world that the reader can enter. Recounting centres on the sequenced retelling of experience (real or imagined).

Types

There are three common types of recounting – each with its own variations in focus.

Personal recounting involves the reconstruction of a personal experience. Often include reflections on the writer’s feelings.

Factual recounting involves the recounting of events from an informational perspective (e.g., a visit to McDonalds). Often include statements of observation as asides to the recounting of events (e.g., “The ice cream machine behind the counter is big and shiny. I saw people polishing it. It takes a lot of work to keep it that shiny”).

Imaginative recounting may involve the writer in recounting events from an imagined perspective (e.g., A day in the life of a Viking Raider) or recounting imagined events from a personal perspective (e.g., A field trip to Mars); these recounts may include both imagined observation and comment.

Generic Features (Content)

Staging:

Orientation recounting uses a succinct orientating device early in the piece to introduce characters, setting(s), and events to be recounted (who, what, why, where, when, and how).

Point of view is often established here (perspective from which the recount is told).

Events related in time order.

Comment, observation, and/or reflection is used to *foreground* events or details of significance to the writer. May be interwoven with the retelling.

Re-orientation (optional) – an ending statement often used to reflect on or comment on the events recounted, or to predict (e.g., “I had a great time at Camp Hunua. I wonder what will happen to us next year!”).

Text Organisation/Structure – sequencing and linking
 Recounts are organised around a sequenced account of events or happenings.

Temporal sequence: Organised through time – conjunctions and adverbials show linkages in setting events in time, ordering the events, and the passage of time.

Language Resources for Text

Specific people, places, and events are named (e.g., “On Saturday, our class had a sleepover at Kelly Tarlton’s Underwater World in Auckland.” or “Today, we raided Lindisfarne Abbey to gather more gold for our longboat”).

Detailed recounting makes effective use of descriptive verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and idiomatic language to catch and maintain reader interest. Frequent use of prepositional phrases, adverbials, and adjectivals to contextualise the events that unfold.

Dialogue (or direct speech) is often used to give the recount a “realistic” feel, to assist in the reconstruction of the events, or to provide opportunities to comment on the happenings.

Verbs: Many *action* verbs tell of happenings and behaviours of those involved. Some *relational* verbs to tell how things *are* as the writer reflects, observes, or comments. Choice and use of vocabulary often reflects the desire to create particular images or feelings for the reader.

Verbs are commonly in *past tense*, although tense can vary in comments (e.g., “On Tuesday, Mary and I went to the shop. We are best friends”).

Conjunctions and adverbials show linkages in setting events in time, ordering the events, and the passage of time).

The actual rubrics in the form they appear for scoring each of these functions are in Appendix 1.

Overview of Process of Development and Trial Implementation

Method

The development of the rubrics was an iterative process and involved both conceptual work on the part of the researchers and trial and development work with teachers. From the conceptual framework outlined above, the researchers drafted rubrics for each of the five major functions to score tasks designed to demonstrate that function. Seventeen teachers

were recruited to work for four hours a session for five sessions to score using the rubrics and provide feedback on the process. This feedback concerned both the framework for the rubrics and the teachers’ ability to score using them.

The teachers were given an explanation of the features of each rubric in turn before they began any scoring. They then individually scored a test set that consisted of 8 to 10 scripts in randomised order with a core of four scripts the same for each teacher. The pool of 30 scripts for each function of writing was randomly selected from three schools that had participated in trials of the extended writing tasks. The schools were selected to represent three different points on the decile range (schools are classified from 1 to 10 on the basis of socio-economic features of their catchment area). Teacher feedback was formally sought at selected points and informal feedback was welcomed throughout the sessions.

Data Sources

The National Curriculum document, and other official material (e.g., *Dancing with the Pen, Planning and Assessment in English*) published for teachers to support the curriculum document, were consulted to ensure that the functions of writing that we finally agreed on were congruent with the way that the curriculum views the functions of writing. The curriculum also outlines general levels at which we would expect various functions to appear and in what broad form. Our scoring rubrics had to be consistent with this while taking into account what other local professional development literature reported that teachers actually did in their classrooms in this respect.

The other major data source was feedback from the teachers recruited to trial the draft rubrics. This was obtained in several ways. During the trial week, there was a cycle in which teachers were introduced to each of five rubrics in turn, then they all marked a set of scripts. After this, there was a discussion and feedback session. We also asked for written feedback at the end of the second day, guided by some broad questions that drew from the objectives we placed before them on Day One. The objectives were that we wanted to develop

rubrics that provided information useful to classroom teachers, that linked to *ENZC*, and that could be scored reasonably expeditiously (that is, the pay-off would be sufficient for the effort in scoring). Then, there was a more formal questionnaire on the final day (see Appendix 2 attached). There were also data from the annotations the teachers made on the scoring sheets as they dealt with individual scripts.

Clearly, another important set of data in developing these scoring rubrics was the extent to which teachers could reliably use the rubrics. During the development phase, the scoring sheets were eyeballed and reliability was roughly calculated after the test set for each rubric was scored. Changes were made to each rubric in the light of discussion and the extent to which teachers were scoring consistently.

The Teachers

The teachers who took part were simply those who responded to an advertisement under the heading “professional development” in the Education Gazette and agreed to participate during their summer holidays. The reasoning behind this method of selection was that the rubrics should be able to be used by any classroom teacher. However, the sample of teachers who presented may not have been representative of New Zealand primary classroom teachers. Of the 17 teachers who took part, three had trained in South Africa; two in India, and two in the United Kingdom, although all but two of the teachers had had some teaching experience in New Zealand. One was a secondary science teacher by training and another was primarily a tertiary teacher. Feedback from non-primary, non-language teachers – some trained in a system with a radically different view of language teaching – is helpful to an extent to refine the descriptions of the criteria in each rubric. However, if the sample had contained more teachers like the two or three who were clearly expert in literacy teaching, more feedback may have been available at a more conceptual level.

The teachers ranged in years of experience from a teacher with one year’s experience to several teachers with over 30 years’ experience.

For such an experienced group, the professional development they could recall receiving in the writing area was limited. Their responses to the prompt in the evaluation questionnaire to provide details of the ways in which they usually assess writing in their classrooms indicated that there is a move towards more criteria-based evaluation of unassisted samples and the use of exemplars and benchmarking. However, much of writing assessment information came from the “log in the head” obtained through observation, conferencing, or simple checklists.

The aim was to design rubrics that not only could be scored reliably and reasonably expeditiously, but that would also provide diagnostic information as described above. Presumably, such rubrics would also fulfil some professional development role in terms of teachers’ knowledge of teaching writing. Consequently, the rubrics were designed to reflect and, hopefully, construct best practice aspects of teaching writing, not for scoring by the lowest common denominator in terms of teacher skill. In this respect, we faced a conundrum. To oversimplify the scoring rubrics to accommodate the needs of a small minority of the teachers in the group would defeat this purpose. In the future researchers should take care to ensure that teachers selected represent the target population of primary teachers currently practising in New Zealand.

Feedback from Teachers Concerning Rubrics

The development exercise with the teachers yielded data in several forms. The taped discussion sessions following the trial marking of a set of papers resulted in some revisions to the draft rubrics, largely to clarify wording of the criteria or to make the criteria more explicit. The researchers were able to establish what was an accessible way (“teacher-friendly”, the participants termed it) to talk about criteria like grammatical features. Many practising teachers had, apparently, received no formal training in grammar and admitted in the evaluation to being unfamiliar with the professional language used to refer to tense, for example.

At the outset, we explained that our goals were to create rubrics that were able to be used

expeditiously, were relevant to the New Zealand context, were useful in the classroom, and were able to both reflect and construct good practice. It was in these terms that we sought feedback.

Ease of Use

If teachers are to use the rubrics, then they need to be able to understand them and also feel that the pay-off received in terms of information gained is worth the effort of scoring using the rubrics. With respect to understanding the rubrics, the group had about an hour of introduction to the first rubric and, with each succeeding one, it was necessary only to highlight the important features in a brief introduction. As the teachers noted at the end of Day Two and the second rubric, they were getting more skilled at using them. One teacher commented, “With more experience, I have become more comfortable.”

This process was helped by the fact that each rubric has a common framework and layout. This does not mean that the task of scoring was easy. One teacher claimed to be putting in greater effort than s/he would normally, and others noted the concentration required, one saying “they [the rubrics] demanded close inspection”.

There were aspects involved in the use of the rubrics that were difficult and the teacher group endorsed the need for some professional development to accompany the asTTle package. The concept of “hot links” on the CD-ROM to provide help was appealing. In the final evaluation, nearly 90% strongly agreed that the concept of hot links would help the assessment process when using the rubrics. Our sense is that such support would have enormous professional development benefits. This was confirmed by teacher comments, including one that stated, “We need a more comprehensive resource than what is available. What accompanies these rubrics would be logical and appropriate”.

The professional language used to describe features of text or linguistic terms like *article* were an issue for some. Several teachers were unsure of their syntactical expertise, noting that grammar, for example, was never taught during

pre-service training and they did not feel confident in this area. However, the use of the rubrics had a professional development spin-off for many of the teachers, who talked of becoming more familiar with the *genres* and about the complexities of language and grammar use associated with them. Those who were already quite expert felt that they learned more and were also confirmed in many of their understandings about teaching and assessing writing.

In the feedback sessions and in the final evaluation questionnaire where teachers were asked what was a difficult aspect of using the rubrics, most discussion centred round the descriptors selected to describe movement within a level (between *basic*, *proficient*, and *advanced*). Early reliability indicators from the scoring of test sets suggested that, while there was consistency in placing aspects of a piece of writing at a particular level, there was less success in agreeing where the weight of evidence in terms of the criteria placed the piece within a level. Experienced language teachers expressed a preference for familiar descriptors like *beginning*, *developing*, and *proficient* to describe progression within a level and they said that they thought teachers saw the continuum as beginning, middle, and end. We began the development exercise with the descriptors *beginning*, *developing*, and *proficient*. However, given the initial trends in scoring consistency and given general research consensus that such terms are imprecise and subject to interpretation, we switched to the more generally accepted terms – *basic*, *proficient*, and *advanced*. The initial trends may have been confounded with lack of practice/training, however.

In the summative evaluation questionnaire, many of the teachers indicated they were still unhappy with the nomenclature, blaming it for the continuing struggle to place within a level. One of the expert language teachers was still concerned that there is too big a step from *basic* to *proficient*, as the term *proficient* suggests *capable*. This teacher said, “*Proficient* is a superlative, not a middle-ground descriptor”. The interval between *proficient* and *advanced* did not seem to the teachers to be as great as

that between basic and proficient. Despite the concern surrounding the levels or, rather, the intra level placement, there was also a positive spin-off, with one teacher noting that the rubrics gave her “a better sense of levels and what they meant in reality”.

In terms of whether the pay-off is worth the effort, it seems that this may depend on the teacher’s view of the purpose of the assessment. It is well to note that even after careful explanation, it was clear that one teacher, at the end of Day Two, was still confused as to the purpose of such assessment. This teacher claimed that an interview was still the preferred way of reporting to parents and the rubric would not be a suitable way of doing this. This teacher viewed the accountability aspect as the main reason for assessment. The most likely explanation for this is that the teacher trained in a system quite different to that in New Zealand. Other teachers saw what the value of the rubrics could be and their evaluation was overwhelmingly positive.

The bottom line is whether the teachers would use the rubrics. Asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 5 is *definitely* and 1 is *definitely not*), how likely, as a classroom teacher, they would be to use the rubrics, the mean response was 4.9. “I can’t wait to use them in my school,” wrote one. “They are manageable and therefore useable,” wrote another. The estimate of the time they would have to expend scoring each sample varied from 4 to 8 minutes and our observation confirms that, once the teachers were familiar with the rubrics, 4 to 5 minutes per sample was the norm.

Relevance to NZ Context

Although teachers were not asked directly about the relevance to the New Zealand context, it was clear from several responses that they saw a role for the rubrics. One claimed that *ENZC* should be more specific in its demands for the teaching of what s/he termed “genre”. For two teachers, the rubrics clarified the curriculum or “what to teach”. Another wrote, “If only this sort of detail was in the curriculum”. As noted above, for some it made transparent what the curriculum levels actually meant in real terms.

After scoring a number of scripts from the trials, disquiet was expressed about whether writing was being taught as well as it should be. “We have to do better,” wrote one. Another said that scoring the scripts “reinforced a feeling that our standard in writing has been exacerbated by the curriculum document and a lack of clear instruction, professional development, and national norms”.

Usefulness for Classroom Teachers

At the most general level, teachers talked of the rubrics moving them away from relying on “gut feeling” or “professional intuition” in assessing writing. They were pleased to see a “more formalised system”. “This [rubric] is more specific and I appreciate that”. “It defines *what* we are marking.” “It goes a long way towards removing subjectivity and will provide consistency across schools”. One teacher summed it up saying, “I can see myself using this as a major assessment, diagnostic, and planning tool”.

Teacher evaluation of the utility of the rubrics was positive, and teachers saw this in terms of the rubrics’ usefulness for diagnosis and planning as well as assessment. One of ways teachers suggested they might use the rubrics was to give a profile of “where the child was at” and a profile of his/her “strengths and weaknesses”. The rubrics were seen as giving “excellent detail about a child’s current level of expertise”. The teachers appreciated that they would get a profile – information that would show that a child may not be on the same level in each of the seven areas specified in the rubric categories.

The teachers were asked to rate the helpfulness of the rubrics for diagnosing where a writer is at in each of the different functions or purposes of writing. Using a 5-point scale where 5 is *very helpful* and 1 is *not at all helpful*, they rated the rubrics’ helpfulness in this regard as 4.5. This profile may also be different for the five different functions of writing and teachers found the rubrics helpful for providing information about this (mean = 4.8, where 5 = *very helpful*).

In addition, teachers noted that the use of the rubrics had helped them to see the different

aspects that should be assessed: “It showed me areas to look for that I had not previously considered”. “It helped me focus on what it is that we are assessing”. The rubrics would also serve the function one teacher noted of “helping us to teach all [genres], not just those we are familiar with”.

In terms of teaching writing, there were numerous comments about the utility of the rubrics. One aspect was that the rubrics would help a teacher to be more focused and clearer in planning objectives – “Planning can become more directed”. “I will know where to place emphasis”. Another teacher wrote, “I realise now the importance of teaching the detail of the different genres, and I see the key elements that need to be identified and explained to the students”. And another, in similar vein, wrote, “It [the set of rubrics] fills an important gap, namely, detail about where specifically we want to take the child’s writing”.

The detailed nature of the information would be useful, several teachers thought, for grouping children for focused instruction. Another commented that s/he “could see now the developmental process that a child would move through to gain control of a genre”. Asked how helpful the rubrics were in terms of information on which to base teaching the writer about each of the different functions or purposes for writing, the teachers gave a mean rating of 4.6 (again on a 1 to 5 scale where 5 was *very helpful*).

Similarly, for helpfulness in providing information on which to base teaching about the different aspects within a particular purpose or function of writing, teachers gave a mean rating of 4.5. Some also saw the scoring from the rubrics as providing a means of reflecting on teaching. “It [the outcome of the scoring] would alert me to realise how I, as a teacher, had taught that unit, from the child’s responses”.

This trial was important as it demonstrated several points with respect to producing carefully designed, but flexible, diagnostic assessment tools. The first is that, in designing such tools, researchers have to be aware of the context, particularly the curriculum context and the skills and practices of the teachers who will

use them. Second was the, not unexpected, finding from this exercise that significant professional growth can result from the use of tools such as the scoring rubrics.

Although the development and trial sessions were not designed as a professional development exercise, teachers gave unsolicited feedback that it had been a “rewarding experience in terms of learning about teaching and assessing writing”. Some of the professional development they reported took the form of acquiring a shared vocabulary to talk about what they did as practitioners or what was characteristic of the text types associated with certain functions of writing. Another valuable piece of knowledge for some came from a clarification of function or process as opposed to text form and of the relationship between the two. This gave them a new way of viewing teaching writing, congruent with the curriculum and with the beliefs they held about reading as highly contextualised.

Support for Teachers when Using Rubrics

While the team has never doubted the commitment of New Zealand teachers to literacy, we have been aware that their expertise in writing does not match their expertise in reading. The *ENZC* is a purposely non-prescriptive, open document. The teachers see much of the official supporting material as vague. Teachers lack a shared language for talking about writing. Feedback, from those in our sample who were employed primary teachers, confirms that they feel far less confident about their ability to teach writing than about their ability to teach reading. Many of the terms common in the professional literature were foreign to them, suggesting a lack of pre- and inservice development in this area.

We recommend that the rubric for each function of writing be accompanied by a description highlighting the major structural and linguistic features of the process. In addition, while working with the teachers, we developed a “Tips for Scoring” sheet (see Appendix 3). A similar sheet should accompany the rubrics.

In the course of developing the rubrics, we have identified areas where it would be useful

on the CD-ROM to have hot links that a scorer can invoke to clarify a term or to see an example. We think that the scoring rubrics should be accompanied by detailed exemplars.

We feel that a very useful addition to the CD-ROM would be an instructional video that would include the type of introduction that the team, and Kath Glasswell, in particular, gave for each rubric. A productive format might be to have regional inservice sessions for literacy leaders, then an instructional video to assist the resource people when they return to their schools. Alternatively, the video could serve as a resource for teachers to teach themselves more so they can gain maximum benefit from the scoring of their class samples.

The Writing Tasks

“The rubrics make more sense than the tasks” was a common sentiment from the group. The teachers were not necessarily aware of the constraints under which the initial trial tasks were written. In our view, for the rubrics to work well as assessment tools, there needs to be consistency between the extended writing tasks and the rubrics. Several issues need to be borne in mind when constructing further tasks. These issues concern the context of the task, including the accompanying instructions, as well as the necessity to provide a communicative context in which to embed the task and also the actual content of the tasks themselves.

With respect to the context of instructions, it was apparent from a close reading of numerous batches of samples from schools that administration was not standardised. Some teachers (or adults) appear to have scribed for students unable to write, while others appear to have developed a planning web with the children or have given additional instructions like “write your views in a letter to the principal”. In order to achieve some degree of standardisation, instructions need to be made explicit and given verbatim.

Perhaps the most striking omission in the development of the extended writing assessment tasks, for a teaching profession that works top-down and is concerned with context, is the failure of the tasks to specify the function and audience for the piece of writing. Writing

always has a social function and New Zealand teachers have tried to move away from writing for the teacher as audience, yet this is what the tasks do. Each task should say for whom it is to be written or where it will be published. It is important to state who will see it and read it, as the writing is crafted with this in mind. A set of instructions for a young child may look very different from a set of instructions devised for a more expert person. The task that required an argument, the changing school hours, did not stipulate an audience, so some students addressed the principal, others seemed to be writing for their fellow students, and others moved between audiences, usually unsuccessfully.

In addition to specifying the purpose and audience, the issue of instructions that accompany the task needs considerable and careful thought. The invitation to illustrate in the muffin task meant that some children did not write much, if anything, or spent valuable time drawing, leaving little text to score. If we intend to score literacy that represents a “turn to the visual” (after Kress, 1999), then we need to develop a specific task and scoring rubric. Also, there is a need to rethink the hints to make sure that they dovetail with the scoring rubric.

Further, each task should call for only one function for writing. Although *genre blurring* may happen in real life writing and may be deliberately used as a device by authors, for diagnostic assessment scoring purposes, the task should include only one process.

With regard to content, some of the topics set may cause undue bias. Although there will always be differential knowledge in terms of content to write about (and content knowledge is an important source of variance in writing scores), items should be constructed to avoid cultural bias. Migrant ESOL learners are unlikely to have the English vocabulary to talk about making muffins. Instead of instructions about how to cook muffins (not an item in many migrant cuisines), perhaps the task could be to cook a dish for a special occasion. The task could be to describe this preparation for a new friend who has tasted it at your place and wants to know how to make it. Similarly, the topic concerned with the time machine caused

problems for those not exposed to *Dr Who* or *Back to the Future!* Some children seemed to have no concept of what a time machine was. Others either did not know or could not work out how to read the word from the context and wrote about a typewriter machine!

Tasks such as the recounting task need to be quite specific, because being open-ended, as in this case, increases the difficulty level of the task, which calls for selection of significant content. A writing task about a school camp or holiday needs to specifically refer to an important or interesting event in order to avoid a dawn to dusk recount of a week's camp or a fortnight's holiday.

When scoring, standard decisions need to be made about what is an acceptable length of text in order to make a judgement. Rather than place a two-word piece at below level 2, should it be declared "unable to be scored"? There also arose the issue of what to do with creative responses, particularly to the narrative task. Some of these could be considered off task in terms of the topic set, but they may have been quite successful examples of writing to inform or entertain through narrative (and may have provided the teacher with valuable diagnostic information). We decided to score these and included a new line under content inclusion that simply asked whether the writing was on topic or not (this was partly because of the nature of some of the tasks where it seemed unfair to penalise students for unclear or biased tasks).

Summary

Overall, the teachers in the trial were positive about the writing assessment rubrics. Once the teachers were more familiar with using the rubrics, they seemed to find them easy to use, although some teachers expressed a preference for the proficiency level terms that they currently used over those in the rubrics. In spite of these reservations, teachers indicated that they were highly likely to use the rubrics in their classrooms when they became available.

The teachers in the trial felt that they would benefit from the specific nature of the rubrics; some felt that the detail given in the rubrics added to their understanding of the writing curriculum and what they should be teaching as

well as assessing in writing. Teachers indicated that they would use the rubrics for diagnosis of individual children's strengths and weaknesses and for planning for the class, as well as for assessment. They generally saw the rubrics as being very helpful for diagnosis and felt that their planning would be more focused.

The teachers in the study also felt that the rubrics were very helpful in informing them about the functions and purposes of writing, which they indicated they would feel more confident about teaching to their students.

Although the study was not intended to be a professional development exercise, it did have this effect for many of the teachers, in terms of the "shared vocabulary" they now had and what they had learnt about function or process as opposed to text form.

More importantly, the study has provided a set of rubrics for the evaluation of writing consistent with the New Zealand English curriculum levels framework and international research on writing. The rubrics can be used with confidence as valid, manageable, and reliable means of establishing children's progress towards desired levels of writing achievement.

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Appendix 1 – Scoring Rubrics

Appendix Table 1
asTTle Writing Scoring Rubric: to explain

Rhetorical: the writer and the context												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Audience awareness and purpose	The writer recognises that an explanation is required and that he/she is writing for an audience other than the self. Assumed shared knowledge with the reader may interfere with meaning.				Language and writing style of explanation is appropriate to the audience. May rely on context and require some reader inference to understand explanation.				Language use and writing style appropriate to purpose and directed to the reader/audience (e.g., evidence that needs of the reader are being considered). Explanation is clear and can “stand alone.”			
Text: content and structure												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Content inclusion	The writer makes an attempt to identify the phenomenon or process and gives two or more simple reasons for its occurrence. May include statements that are tangential to the topic and/or task or include a personal perspective to the explanation (e.g., “I like rocks.” “I saw a tuatara at the zoo in Auckland”).				The writer identifies the phenomenon or process clearly. Body of text contains further elaboration and gives associated reasons for why or how it occurs. Limited tangential information evident.				The writer identifies the phenomenon or process clearly in an introduction that may also give contextualising information. Body of text contains a sequenced account of elaborated aspects or processes, and gives detailed associated reasons for why or how it occurs. Includes only relevant content.			
Coherence: sequencing ideas and linking	Generally organised at sentence level. May attempt to show cause-and-effect relationships in the explanation by using within-sentence links (e.g., <i>because</i> , <i>so</i>).				Evidence of attempts at structuring content through the grouping of ideas within and across sentences. May be attempting to associate ideas and reasons by using devices such as paragraphing and between-paragraph links.				Attempts at grouping or sequencing of explanation evident (e.g., descriptions and reasons are grouped thematically). Across the text there is a sense of an attempt to sequence content (using conjunctions and expressing causal relationships through links) to give a full and explicit explanation sequence.			

(continues...)

Text: content and structure												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Language resources for achieving the purpose	Simple factual statements (declarative) evident. Topic-related vocabulary present but little detail conveyed through the language (e.g., nouns may lack adjectivals). Action verbs choices reflect topic and task. Topic-related vocabulary used. Shows some understanding of pronoun use (related to cohesion) but unclear or overused pronoun reference may interfere with meaning.				Evidence of use of task-appropriate language (e.g., action verbs mainly present tense to tell how it is or happens). Topic-related vocabulary contributes to understanding of parts or aspects of phenomenon to be explained. Some use of adjectivals and/or adverbials to give detail and precision to explanation. Some unclear or repetitious reference.				Consistent use of appropriate language (for task and topic) enhances the clarity and coherence of the explanation (e.g., technical language is included where appropriate). Conjunctions used to link ideas within and across sentences. Reference links clear.			

Appendix Table 2

asTTle Writing Scoring Rubric: to argue or persuade

Rhetorical: the writer and the context												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Audience awareness and purpose	Evidence that writer recognises that his/her <i>opinion</i> is needed. Uses language to state opinions from a personal perspective.				Language use and writing style generally appropriate to audience. Writer states his/her <i>position</i> . Some attempt to influence the reader is evident.				Language use and writing style appropriate and directed to audience (e.g., writing attempts to persuade reader). Clearly stated consistent position is evident.			

Text: content and structure												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Content inclusion	Makes two or more argument statements related to the topic. Content can be tangentially related to the topic.				Position statement present. Most other argument elements (e.g., main points, evidence, re-statement) are included. Some elaboration. <i>May</i> include information that does not contribute to argument.				Content relevant and adds weight to argument. Argument elements (i.e., position statement, main points, evidence, re-statement) are comprehensive. Contains elaboration of main points.			

(continues...)

Text: content and structure												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Coherence: sequencing ideas and linking	Organised at sentence level (e.g., limited because of haphazard or stream of consciousness-type organisation).				Evidence of attempts at structuring content through grouping ideas within and across sentences – may use devices such as paragraphing and simple linking words (e.g., <i>because, and</i>).				Content managed effectively through grouping and/or paragraphing main ideas and varied use of linking words and phrases (e.g., <i>on the one hand, however, although</i>).			
Language resources for achieving the purpose	Topic-related vocabulary present. Often speech-like in structure and uses a personal voice (e.g., “I reckon”).				Uses topic-appropriate vocabulary. Attempts to use language to make arguments seem more objective (e.g., passive structures) and powerful (e.g., emotive language).				May attempt to use persuasive language (e.g., emotive vocabulary) to influence readers or includes or refers to the reader (e.g., “you would”). Uses language to make arguments seem more objective (e.g., passive structures) and/or powerful (e.g., <i>certainly, must, absolutely</i>).			

Appendix Table 3

asTTle Writing Scoring Rubric: to instruct or lay out a procedure

Rhetorical: the writer and the context												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Audience awareness and purpose	The writer recognises the purpose for writing and that he/she is writing for an audience other than the self (e.g., uses <i>you</i> or imperative form). May assume shared knowledge with the reader.				Language use and writing style is appropriate to audience. Relies on context and requires some reader inference to complete the procedure.				Interprets needs of audience. Language use and writing style directed to audience. Requires little reader inference to complete procedure.			

Text: content and structure												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Content inclusion	Some elements of procedure (e.g., headings, actions, materials) included. Some topic-related information included. Evidence of instruction-like statements.				All basic procedure elements (e.g., headings, actions, materials) included. Some elaboration of elements. Limited tangential information.				Procedure elements (i.e., headings, sub-headings, materials, actions) sufficiently elaborate, precise, and comprehensive. Includes only appropriate content.			

(continues...)

Text: content and structure												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Coherence: sequencing ideas and linking	Semblance of order to procedure. May use a simple ordering device (e.g., numbers).				Some grouping or sequencing of procedure elements evident. Some use of ordering devices but limited in number and/or scope (e.g., repetitive use of <i>then</i>).				Elements of procedure grouped or sequenced appropriately. Effective use of ordering devices.			
Language resources for achieving the purpose	Simple, unelaborated statements evident. Some command-like statements present. Actions recounted from a personal perspective.				Evidence of use of task-appropriate language (e.g., use of descriptors – action verbs, adverbs, adjectives to describe materials and actions). Command-like statements predominate. Attempts to use generalised <i>other</i> (e.g., second or third person).				Consistent use of task-appropriate language (i.e., precise and varied use of descriptors – action verbs, adverbs, adjectives) to clarify procedure. Consistently refers to reader in generalised way (using <i>one</i> , or <i>you</i>). May adjust language to both instruct and advise.			

Appendix Table 4

asTTle Writing Scoring Rubric: to classify, organise, describe, and report information

Rhetorical: the writer and the context												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Audience awareness and purpose	Evidence that the writer recognises the purpose for writing. Gives information from a writer's perspective (e.g., may require reader to infer or select information to make sense of complete text).				Language use and writing style generally appropriate to audience and purpose. Informs but may require some reader inference.				Interprets needs of audience. Language use and writing style directed to audience and appropriate to purpose. Informs (i.e., is comprehensive and explicit enough to require little or no reader inference).			

Text: content and structure												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Content inclusion	Evidence of statements of fact. Writing includes some facts relevant to the topic and task, covering, for example, some (2 or more) task-appropriate domains: attributes, behaviours, properties, functions, location, etc. Can include many statements tangential to the topic and/or task.				Most domain elements appropriate to the task present (e.g., the writer classifies and deals with attributes, behaviours, properties, functions, location, etc.). May include some material tangential to the topic and the task.				Domain elements are comprehensive and elaborated (i.e., the writer classifies, deals with attributes, behaviours, properties, functions, location, etc.), given task. Almost all material related to topic and task.			

(continues...)

Text: content and structure												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Coherence: sequencing ideas and linking	Semblance of framework (e.g., some grouping of information). For example, text is limited because of presentation of fact statements as discrete elements or mixture of text types.				Evidence that the writer is using a framework for ordering content (e.g., categorising or classifying). May not be consistently or optimally ordered, and elements may be inappropriately assigned to parts of framework.				Logical, effective, and obvious framework for ordering description (e.g., categorisation or classification). Elements appropriately assigned. Thematic linking of sentences to topic of paragraph or section.			
Language resources for achieving the purpose	Simple factual descriptions evident. Topic-related vocabulary present but little detail conveyed through language (e.g., nouns may lack adjectivals). Shows some understanding of the use of pronouns but pronominal reference (the <i>who</i> or <i>what</i>) may be unclear or overused.				Evidence of use of task-appropriate language (e.g., <i>relating</i> verbs – <i>to be</i> or <i>to have</i> – for classifying; <i>action</i> verbs for describing behaviours or uses, most often present tense; some use of adverbs and adjectives). Some pronominal reference unclear; some repetitious reference.				Consistent use of appropriate language for task and topic (e.g., <i>relating</i> verbs – <i>to be</i> or <i>to have</i> – for classifying; <i>action</i> verbs for describing behaviours or uses, most often present tense; adding information to the noun-noun "packing"). Reference links clear. Language of comparison is evident.			

Appendix Table 5

asTTle Writing Scoring Rubric: to inform or entertain through imaginative narrative

Rhetorical: the writer and the context												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Audience awareness and purpose	Evidence that the writer recognises the purpose for writing (i.e., to tell a story) and that he/she is writing for an audience other than the self.				Evidence of attempts to capture the reader's interest. Language use and writing style appropriate to telling a story. Attempts to adopt a perspective to tell the story.				Engages audience and sustains reader attention. Language use and writing style enhance the telling. The writer's "voice" may enter the text and invoke a reaction.			

Text: content and structure												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Content inclusion	Some attempt at a story. Writing is a series of loosely related sentences or a series of sentences that all describe a single event.				Writing includes important elements of story (i.e., has essentials of characters, settings, and events. Evidence of inclusion of problem or complication. May attempt to conclude events.				Story includes comprehensive elements (i.e., orientation, complication, resolution, and sometimes coda). Clear focus on and development of specific events, characters, and settings.			

(continues...)

Text: content and structure												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Coherence: sequencing ideas and linking	Semblance of order evident but limited because of haphazard or stream of consciousness-type organisation.				Some sequencing of story elements evident. The story is organised around happenings and has a point. Ideas and events may be linked through the use of devices such as paragraphing or linking words and/or phrases (e.g., "Later that evening...", <i>because</i>).				Story element sequencing managed well (e.g., effective plot or development of events). Effective linking is evident through the use of some linking devices (e.g., conjunctions of time – <i>afterwards, next, meanwhile</i>), which make the story flow.			
Language resources for achieving the purpose	Language is simple. Actions recounted with little elaboration, and, overall, style lacks variety or may be limited for topic (e.g., pedestrian use of descriptors – adverbials, adjectives – such as <i>nice</i> or <i>nicely</i>). May insert direct speech but context lacks clarity.				Evidence of attempts to add interest and detail through the use of descriptors (e.g., adverbials, adjectives). May attempt to use dialogue to add to story.				May use language devices (e.g., figurative language) and descriptors (e.g., adverbials, adjectives) to engage the audience and give detail to and develop characters, actions, and settings. Purposeful use of dialogue (where included).			

Appendix Table 6

asTTle Writing Scoring Rubric: to recount

Rhetorical: the writer and the context												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Audience awareness and purpose	The writer recounts to tell of a past experience or happening. Recognises that he/she is writing for an audience other than the self, but may be limited by assumption of shared knowledge.				Language use and writing style appropriate to recounting a past happening. Audience has sufficient information to make sense of the experience recounted. Recount shows evidence of attempts to capture the audience's interest.				Language use and writing style enhance the recounting. The text is complete for audience understanding. Engages audience and sustains attention. The writer's "voice" may be evident.			

(continues...)

Text: content and structure												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Content inclusion	Writer recounts events. Writing begins with an orientation (background information) using some of the elements of recounting (i.e., when, where, who, what, and why). May be some evidence of selection of events for inclusion or of comment on events. May include content that is not relevant.				Writing includes, in addition to where, when, who, what, and why etc., evidence of foregrounding of significant content. Evidence of attempts to add detail to, comment on, or evaluate selected points of interest. There may be an attempt to conclude.				Orientation is comprehensive, yet succinct. Clear focus on and development of specific events of interest. Recount is enriched with interpretive comments, evaluation, and observation. Writing is moving to a satisfactory conclusion.			
Coherence: sequencing ideas and linking	Events are largely sequenced in time order. Events are linked by using words that indicate the passage of time (e.g., <i>then</i> , <i>later</i> , <i>next</i>).				Events are in time order and seem to follow on. Events are linked in a variety of ways (e.g., by using a wider variety in devices that indicate passage of time).				Events are in time order, and sequencing is managed well. The detailed sequence of events is interwoven with evaluative comment and/or observation.			
Language resources for achieving the purpose	Language is simple. Some action verbs used but limited in scope (e.g., "I went", "I got"). Uses simple past tense. Events and actions recounted with little elaboration (may be limited by repetitive use of sentence structure and/or language to indicate passage of time). May insert direct speech.				Evidence of attempts to add detail to content through using a variety of verbs, adverbials, and adjectivals. Pronoun use is appropriate and consistent. Uses appropriate verb tense for content inclusion. Variety in sentence structure. May include dialogue to assist reconstruction of events.				Language devices may be used (e.g. figurative language, metaphors) to amplify content. Varied use of verbs to describe actions and events and to capture thoughts and feelings. Appropriate tenses used throughout. Where used, dialogue enhances the telling.			

Appendix Table 7

asTTle Writing Scoring Rubric: Conventions: sentences and words

Conventions: sentences and words												
	Level 2	B	P	A	Level 3	B	P	A	Level 4	B	P	A
Grammatical conventions	Sentence-like structure evident, but errors interfere with meaning (e.g., uses participle phrase; may have errors in agreement, tense, and/or word order).				Many simple sentences correct but few complex sentences evident. Some errors in sentences (e.g., subject and finite verb not present or do not agree, split inappropriately infinitive, word order). Tenses may vary unintentionally.				Most sentences correct. Control of complex sentences evident (where appropriate). Uses complete sentences with subject-verb agreement and appropriate word order. Maintains consistent tense.			
Spelling	Many HFW* (Lists 1–4) spelt correctly. Evidence of some knowledge of common spelling patterns and approximate phonetic spelling.				Most HFW* (Lists 1–6) and common spelling patterns correct. Spelling shows some understanding of more complex spelling patterns.				Few errors. Familiarity with HFW* (Lists 1–7) and common spelling patterns evident. Evidence of ability to spell multi-syllabic, irregular, or technical words.			
Punctuation	Some of the <i>basic</i> punctuation used correctly (e.g., end points (! . ?), capitals for sentence beginnings and proper nouns, commas in lists, speech marks). May use apostrophe for contraction.				<i>Basic</i> punctuation is <i>mostly</i> correct. May be <i>attempting</i> more <i>complex</i> punctuation (e.g., apostrophe for ownership, commas for parentheses and clauses, semi-colons and colons).				<i>Basic</i> punctuation <i>correct</i> . Evidence of <i>correct</i> use of <i>some</i> examples of <i>complex</i> punctuation.			

Note: *HFW (High Frequency Words) taken from NZCER Essential Word Lists 1–7.

Appendix 2 – Teacher Summative Evaluation Questionnaire

asTTle Writing Rubric Development Questionnaire

Please help us by answering the following questions. Be assured that your responses are confidential.

Professional background

1. Qualifications (type, when gained and where from eg. Dip Tchg, Auckland College of Education, 1988)

2. Years of teaching-related experience (please specify where and age range students)

3. Details about the ways in which you usually assess writing in your classroom. (eg. portfolio to showcase etc.)

4. **Although this week was not designed as a professional development exercise, we are interested to know what you have “taken” from the experience.**
 - About assessing writing?

 - About teaching writing?

 - More generally about writing?

5. As a classroom teacher, how likely would you be to use the asTTle concept (a task bank to select from; tools to assess; individual and group norms available) in the writing area?

No, definitely not, not likely, probably, very likely, definitely (please circle)

6. The rubrics have sufficient detail for scoring

Strongly disagree, mostly disagree, slightly agree, moderately agree, mostly agree, strongly agree

7. The concept of “hot links” would help the assessment process when using the rubrics

Strongly disagree, mostly disagree, slightly agree, moderately agree, mostly agree, strongly agree

8. How helpful are the rubrics for:

- Diagnosing where a writer is at in each of the different functions or purposes of writing (eg. to argue, to instruct etc).

Very helpful, helpful, of some help useful, not very helpful, not at all helpful

- Information on which to base teaching the writer about each of the different functions or purposes of writing.

Very helpful, helpful, of some help useful, not very helpful, not at all helpful

- Diagnosing where a writer is at within a “genre” (like to argue or persuade) in terms of the different aspects (audience awareness, coherence, language resources etc)

Very helpful, helpful, of some help useful, not very helpful, not at all helpful

9. Information on which to base teaching about the different aspects (audience awareness etc) within a “genre”.

Very helpful, helpful, of some help useful, not very helpful, not at all helpful

10. A difficult thing about using the rubrics was:

11. The good thing about using the rubric was:

12. Comments on the tasks as they are currently framed.

13. Comments on the concept of basic, proficient, advanced.

Appendix 3 – Tips on Scoring

**AsTTle Writing Rubrics Design Workshops
Tips on Scoring**

Get a handle on the WHOLE RUBRIC (see what is being scored where)

Read the child's whole text. Consider options for invented spellings-focus on context and meaning. Know what the child is saying before you begin to score.

Think FUNCTION (What is the purpose here?)

Think TASK (What has this child been asked to do?)

Read CHARACTERISTICS carefully in the light of the child's response.

Select the characteristic at the LEVEL 2/3/4 that best suits this sample. This is your working hypothesis! Check the sample carefully for evidence to support your judgement. For example, if the characteristic is about sentences, isolate sentences for examination. Check, which sentences are simple and which are complex (appropriate to the task). Is there evidence to support your working hypothesis? Look for disconfirming evidence. Re-check your Level 2/3/4 judgement.

Selecting B P A within a level

The inclusions on the scoring rubrics are common characteristics for children at the levels. For example a skilled argument writer will limit his/her statements to those that are relevant but a seven-year-old child who is learning to argue will often include tangential information. This does not mean that they "lack" ability to argue but that they are learning to control that function of writing. The criteria are relevant to the LEVEL of the curriculum. We would expect to see the embryonic form of argument in early curriculum levels and have written the criteria accordingly.

Basic (criteria at this level/category) Showing signs of these elements. Elements are evident in embryonic form.

Proficient (at this level/category) There is evidence that the child is controlling the criteria elements.

Advanced (at this level/category) Child is consistently meeting the criteria at this level. Little disconfirming evidence is found.

Tick the box that BEST FITS

Seductive details

- In each question- Think task: A child may have written well and at length but did not answer the question and has not achieved the purpose as outlined in the task.
- May have lots of content but it is incidental rather than central to the argument.
- Interference from surface features (e.g. spelling, handwriting, punctuation).
- Knowing the writer or making inferences about the writer from information given.
- Distraction by interesting language use that does not contribute to the task .

Goals for the Writing Rubric design

Relevant in the NZ context

Useful in the classroom

Expedient (in terms of teacher time in training and use)

Reflective of current research, theory and models of good practice

Chasing precision in criteria