# Stage 1 English as an Additional Language

# 2018 Subject Assessment Report

## Overview

At Stage 1 the English and mathematics subjects and the Personal Learning Plan are moderated. For most schools, only the C and D grades are moderated, as the C grade represents the minimum grade required for SACE completion.

Stage 1 assessment reports give an overview of how students performed at the C and D grades in their school assessments, relative to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outlines. They provide information and advice on: teacher engagement and student engagement with the assessment types, including task design; the application of the performance standards in school assessments; and the quality of student performance.

Assessment Type 1: Responding to Texts

In this assessment type students read and view a variety of texts, including one literary text ([Suggested Text List](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/english-as-an-additional-language/stage-1/support-materials/suggested-text-lists)). The subject outline specifies that for a 10-credit subject, students complete one written response to texts (maximum of 600 words) and one oral response to texts (maximum of 5 minutes). Most schools weighted this assessment type at 50%.

Successful achievement at the C grade

* Students who achieved at the C standard demonstrated appropriate use of language features and conventions when interpreting information, ideas, and opinions in texts for different audiences and purposes.
* Students achieving at the C standard wrote and spoke in a generally clear and coherent manner using references from a range of sources to support a point of view. Moderators noted that at the C standard whilst a few grammatical errors were evident, this did not impede the flow or general meaning of the information, ideas, and opinions expressed in texts.
* When evidence and examples from texts were specific and interwoven in the responses, students were able to achieve at the C grade (or higher).
* As outlined in the 2017 Subject Assessment Report, where students were able to make personal connections with a text, and were given choice in the mode of response, that they were able to articulate their responses both in a written and oral format at the C grade or better.
* A strategy continued to be used by many schools is the shared text approach – a text is read/viewed and discussed by the whole class. This supported both student engagement and successful achievement at the C standard or better.
* Formats of evidence presented varied from written responses such as the creative text and the review, to oral responses including the multimodal media of PowerPoint, and the vlog (video blog). The latter mode enabled students to articulate their understanding by blogging through the medium of video with supporting texts and images.
* The more successful oral presentations used close to the maximum time limit of 5 minutes, which gave students more opportunity to meet the performance standards at the C grade or higher. Students were limited in achieving higher grades if their oral presentation was only 2−3 minutes long.

Application of the performance standards

* For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning *primarily* in relation to the assessment design criteria of communication, comprehension and application. Students’ ability to make strong connections with texts studied provided them with more successful opportunities to demonstrate evidence of their learning of these criteria.
* Teachers accurately applied the performance standards for the C and D grade and in some cases the B grade where there were no results in the C and D grades.
* As noted in the 2017 Subject Assessment Report, when teachers explicitly taught the language features and conventions of different text types and how they were appropriate to different audiences and purposes, e.g. comprehension and application skills, students were successful at demonstrating evidence of those performance standards. For example, teaching the language features of a narrative gives students the opportunity to write an alternative ending to a story. Interrelated with this strategy is providing students with the learning platform to select appropriate vocabulary to support their logical sequencing of ideas when writing and speaking.
* An effective strategy to support students’ understanding of the specific features of the assessment design criteria continues to be providing students with prompted guiding questions relevant to the specific feature being assessed in a task. For example, *Retell or transform a selected short story or section of the story into a written newspaper article, using an appropriate structure that includes all the text features of a feature article*:
* Cp1 – ‘Comprehension and interpretation of information, ideas, and opinions in texts’
* Have you included ideas gained from the visual images/text?
* Have you made it clear *what* is happening in the story?
* Have you incorporated *the main idea* *or opinion* that is being presented into the story?
* C1 – ‘Clarity and coherence of written expression, using appropriate vocabulary’
* Is your writing in clear paragraphs?
* Have you used interesting and diverse words?
* C2 – ‘Demonstration of grammatical control and complexity
* Is there a variety of different sentence structures to keep the writing interesting?

Task design

* The [Suggested Text List](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/english-as-an-additional-language/stage-1/support-materials/suggested-text-lists) is a *guide only*. It is important that the variety of texts selected is done in consultation with students to better enable their engagement.
* In addition to texts used by schools listed in the 2017 Subject Assessment Report, examples of texts studied this year include Rosanne Hawke’s *Soraya the Storyteller*; Tim Winton’s *Neighbours*, Witi Ihimaera’s *The Whale Rider,* Steve Worland’s *Paper Planes –* the latter two available in film*;* Films: *The Sapphires, Bend it Like Beckham, Tropfest 2018 (series of short films), Between Borders*.For international students in particular, moderators noted *When I was 11* allowed them to connect with experiences from their own country.
* There continues to be many interesting tasks designed that captured the interests of specific student cohorts. In addition to those noted in last year’s report, this year’s examples include an instructional lesson on the game of marbles to a junior year level after researching the history of marbles; selecting two songs based on the theme of ‘Peace’ and writing a personal response for the school newsletter; writing two blog reflections in response to a migration story and viewing the documentary *Between Borders*.
* Two aspects of task design that moderators found supported successful responses to texts were: explicitly providing students with the structure of responses, for example, using TEEL (topic sentence, elaboration, audience effect, and linking back); and explicitly directing students to use appropriate voice in both written and oral presentations.
* Providing scaffolding for assessment tasks supported students to be successful. For example, providing a structure for reflective writing/speaking outlining what students need to do to produce a discussion or a recording of a documentary. However, in some cases over-scaffolding resulted in almost identical, formulaic responses (e.g. same topic sentences, same supporting information). This limited students’ ability to demonstrate learning against the performance standards at the higher grades.

## Assessment Type 2: Interactive Study

Students completed either an interview or a discussion for this assessment type. The subject outline stipulates that if selecting the interview, it must be conducted in English and presented as a written 800-word report or if selecting a discussion, it should be a maximum of 5 minutes. The interview tended to be the most popular presented at moderation. Most schools weighted this assessment type at 25%.

Successful achievement at the C grade

* As with Assessment Type 1, students who achieved at the C grade demonstrated appropriate use of language features and conventions when interpreting information, ideas, and opinions in the written report for the interview or texts studied for the discussion.
* Students who achieved at the C standard were generally able to write and speak in a clear and coherent manner, quoting information gathered from the interviewee or references from the two or more texts studied to support a point of view for the discussion.
* Students who achieved at the C grade demonstrated some analysis of their personal, social, and cultural perspectives in interviews and discussions, taking into account their particular audience.
* To support students’ success, schools tended to design tasks with either the interview or the discussion as a focus for the whole class
* Students should be provided with the opportunity to undertake some interview work prior to this assessment task in order to better prepare them for the confidence to conduct and reflect on an interview. Interviews held with a person known to the student, such as a parent or teacher provided successful achievement at the C grade. However, it was interviews held with a person relatively unknown to them which tended to be more thorough in their preparation and more focused in the interview and hence of a higher standard.
* As noted in the 2017 Subject Assessment Report, the more successful discussions were those for which the teacher and/or other students asked open-ended questions that required extended responses and spontaneous use of language. For example, questions beginning with *‘discuss’, ‘explain’, ‘justify’, and ‘what do you think’*.
* It is important that the student leads the discussion. In some instances evidence at the C grade was limited by over-scaffolded questions and over-scripted discussions.
* Where using group discussions, it is important that each student be clearly identified in aural or multimodal presentations, and provided with equal discussion time of a maximum of 5 minutes.

Application of the performance standards

* Teachers were able to accurately apply the performance standards for the C and D grade and in some cases the B grade where there were no results in the C and D grades.
* While students provided evidence of their learning *primarily* in relation to the Communication, Comprehension, and Application assessment design criteria, this does not preclude teachers from providing opportunities for students to demonstrate evidence of the Analysis criterion. Moderators noted some tasks did provide opportunities for students to analyse when reflecting on the interview held or when discussing ideas, opinions, or perspectives discovered while exploring at least two different texts for the discussion. This experience provided students with greater confidence to address the Analysis criterion in Assessment Type 3: Language Study, where it is required.
* When reflecting on communication skills in the written report for the interview, students were able to critique the types of questions they asked in the interview, analyse their use of non-verbal cues, and assess their ability to sustain a conversation. In so doing, they provided evidence of Ap1 *– ‘Use of language features and conventions for different purposes and audiences’* and An2 – ‘*Analysis of ways in which texts are created for specific purposes and audiences’*. Students must go beyond simply recounting what they did or found out. When students were able to provide justifications for their actions (in both preparing for and carrying out the interview), as well as contemplate how they could have done things differently, they were clearly able to achieve at the C grade or higher against the performance standards. In comprehending structure and language features for the interview (Cp2 – *‘Understanding of the purpose, structure, and language features of texts’*), it is important that students clearly understand the purpose of this activity.
* Successful responses came from students who had been taught how to reference their quotations representing ‘*evidence selected from a range of sources to support a point of view* ‘- Ap2. Teachers are advised to refer the *Supervision and Verification of Students’ Work Policy* for guidance.

Task design

* In designing this task, teachers took advantage of adopting and/or adapting exemplar tasks available on the subject minisite. These provided a scaffolded approach for directing students to address specific aspects of the assessment design criteria.
* It is important to note that the interview report is of two parts – key findings of the interview *and* reflection on the communication skills and strategies used in the planning and conducting of the interview. A balance between these two components should be evident. The latter component tended to be limited in focus or not addressed. The more successful responses were authentic and specific when reflecting on communication skills and strategies. Examples of questions to engage student interest in selecting an appropriate person to interview include:
* How has Australian society changed since you were a child?
* Do you think the education system is better/worse that it was when you were young?
* What changes would you like to see in Australian society?
* What changes have you seen in the world of work since you started a job?
* Where an interview task is designed, it is important that the task provides students with the opportunity to address both requirements of the task, e.g. key findings of the interview *and* reflection on the communication skills and strategies used in the planning and conducting of the interview. In some cases, tasks were submitted without the component of reflection.
* Where a discussion task is designed, the challenge is to design a task to ensure that students are provided with the opportunity to *interact* with the audience which can be the class or the teacher, as well as, respond to open-ended questions. In some cases, the evidence presented tended to be heavily prompted and limited student opportunity to discuss the ideas, opinions or perspectives studied with reference to texts. An interesting discussion noted by moderators was the exploration of themes, opinions and mood of two song lyrics.

## Assessment Type 3: Language Study

For the language study, students identify and analyse aspects of language used in one or more texts. Students are required to produce a written text to a maximum of 800 words; an oral presentation of a maximum of 5 minutes or the equivalent text in multimodal form. Most schools weighted this assessment type at 25%.

Successful achievement at the C grade

* Students who achieved at the C standard were able to provide evidence of learning reflective of appropriate comprehension and interpretation of information, ideas, and opinions expressed in the language study where they understood the general purpose, structure, and language features of the text type studied.
* Students who achieved at the C standard demonstrated some analysis of personal, social and cultural perspectives in texts was identified together with some description of the intended purpose and audience. These students referred to specific sections of the text/s when analysing these perspectives. For example, specific language in a political speech used to persuade others. Students used vocabulary appropriate to the source of the language study and generally wrote and/or spoke in a clear and coherent manner.
* Achievement at the C grade or higher was evident when students had been taught to distinguish between the purpose of informative and persuasive language; the language of comparing and contrasting (however, neither, both), the language of similarity and difference (the same, alike, unlike, different from, similar to). For most schools, the language study focussed on language used to persuade others, such as the language of advertising and marketing.
* This task tended to be the final task pending from schools at moderation.

Application of the performance standards

* Teachers were able to accurately apply the performance standards for the C and D grade and in some cases the B grade where there were no results in the C and D grades.
* Students provided evidence of their learning *primarily* in relation to the Communication, Comprehension, and Analysis assessment design criteria. Some analysis of perspectives in texts, together with some description of ways that texts were created for specific purposes and audiences, supported students to demonstrate learning at the C grade. However, moderators noted that Analysis at times proved problematic for students and this was linked to task design.
* At the highest level of the performance standards, texts were considered simultaneously rather than consecutively.
* Providing students with examples of verbs with which to analyse texts created for purposes and audiences such as *‘illustrates’, ‘portrays’, ‘explores’, ‘confronts’*, enabled them to successfully demonstrate An2.

Task design

* Clear structure was noted as a feature of good task design for this assessment type. It assisted students in their understanding of the task requirements and helped them provide evidence at the C grade. However, highly scaffolded tasks at times, limited their ability to demonstrate learning against the performance standards at higher grades as it limited the flexibility of responses and formulaic responses were produced as a result.
* Students, in the main, presented their language study as a report or multi-modal presentation enriched with images. Interesting language studies noted this year include analysing symbols used in advertising (i.e. public and commercial signs, posters or billboards) and their meaning in different cultures; analysing non-verbal body language cues; comparing the musical lyrics and dynamics of two songs based on a theme; analysing language (written words and visual images) used to create gender or race stereotypes through the deconstruction of two advertisements.

Preparation and packaging of student materials

* Student materials were generally packed in accordance with the information sheet — [*The preparation and packaging of materials for Stage 1 Moderation*](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/documents/652891/704359/The%2Bpreparation%2Band%2Bpackaging%2Bof%2Bmaterials%2Bfor%2BStage%2B1%2BModeration%2B-%2Bflowchart.pdf/31814296-aa36-4875-a1ea-63604ddaff0d). Teachers provided a copy of their current approved learning and assessment plan with the set of tasks that corresponded to the learning and assessment plan.
* The majority of samples viewed were pending completion of the final task.
* Most schools provided student samples from the C and D grade bands. Given the samples are requested before the end of the semester, schools could submit three out of the four assessed tasks and still be advised of the moderation outcome. The moderation advice is then taken into consideration during the assessment of the final task by the teacher. Each school requested for Stage 1 English as an Additional Language moderation received notification of the moderation outcome via an email to principals. Materials are returned to the school early in Term 3 for the June resulting period and early in Term 1, the following year for the December resulting period. In some instances; however, schools sent more samples than were necessary, including more than three C grade samples or A and B samples together with C and D grade samples. Where C and/or D sets of evidence are prepared and packaged together with sets of evidence prepared and packaged at the A and/or B grades, the A and or/B grades are not moderated.
* Assessment at Stage 1 is 100% school assessed; tasks are set and marked by the teacher. Moderation seeks to confirm teacher assessment grades. Many teachers attached a cover sheet listing the completed tasks within the Assessment Types and the assessment decision for each task together with an overall assessment decision for the set of tasks. This helped the efficiency of the moderation process.
* Teachers provided copies of the performance standards and highlighted the descriptors that aligned with evidence of student learning for each task, this further assisted moderators to confirm assessment decisions.
* Teachers are asked to check that all work on discs and other electronic media has successfully been copied and will be accessible to the moderators. Where recordings are submitted for moderation, teachers are asked to check the quality of the recordings for clarity, as background noise, at times, made it difficult for moderators to hear the student voice. It is important that all electronic media is clearly labelled, and, if the work of more than one student is on a disc or USB drive, that each student is identified by their SACE registration number. One way of ensuring correct identification is to include, in the order in which they appear in the recording, a list of students, their SACE registration numbers, and the name of the assessment type. Teachers should submit work in accordance with the Submission of Electronic Files (document) or Preparation of Non-written Materials and Submission of Electronic Files (video). Where possible, moderators noted the submission of material electronically on two USBs or two discs allowed for a more efficient way of reviewing student materials.
* Student evidence in the form of a recording or transcript should be included for oral and/or multimodal presentations. The submission of aural recordings clearly identifying the student voice can be used in lieu of excessive large file size uploads i.e. video. In some instances, only teacher feedback was provided in the absence of the student’s own complete evidence. It is important to note that the process of moderation relies on having access to student evidence and their alignment with the descriptors of the performances standards.

### General Comments

* Schools are continuing to make effective use of adopting or adapting tasks from the pre-approved learning and assessment plans available on the [English as an Additional Language minisite.](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/english-as-an-additional-language/overview)
* Many learning and assessment programs focussed on engaging students’ strengths through the use of multi-media work and tasks students could make a personal connection with. Continued use of this media is encouraged.
* Teachers are reminded to access the [online clarifying and benchmarking activities](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/english-as-an-additional-language/stage-1/support-materials) on the English as an Additional Language minisiteto help them interpret and consistently apply the performance standards to student work. Once teachers submit their assessment decisions on the provided samples of work, annotated versions of the student responses can be downloaded and viewed.
* The subject outline states that *‘the set of assessments, as a whole, must give students opportunities to demonstrate each of the specific features by the completion of study of the subject.’* Successful responses across the assessment types were produced when tasks were carefully designed with the end in mind, making discerning selections of specific features to be assessed in each task. Teachers are encouraged to focus on fewer relevant specific features per task across the assessment types. This allows students to demonstrate a more directed focus on their development of literacy skills, especially important for English as an Additional Language students. When nearly every specific feature was assessed in each of the four tasks in a program of learning, students only had superficial opportunities to address the performance standards adequately and as a result had difficulty demonstrating achievement against the performance standards at higher grades.
* Where teachers used the language of the performance standards when designing tasks and when providing feedback to students including suggestions for improvement, moderators were more easily able to confirm assessment decisions. For example, some teachers clearly identified the specific features of focus for each question in a task and provided feedback such as ‘*your writing is generally clear and coherent’* and ‘*you have* *selected evidence from a range of sources to support your point of view’*. ‘*In future consider using a varied vocabulary including words such as .......’* At times teacher comments were distracting to moderators as they focussed on areas outside of the performance standards. For example, *a well written piece; a great interview, good content*.
* Many schools completed addendums to the approved learning and assessment plans to change a task/text/method of evidence to better suit the student cohort. This included detailing the changes made, explaining why the changes were required and adjusting the assessment design criteria and specific features of focus. This is pleasing to note as a learning and assessment plan is a document of intention ONLY to be adjusted as and when required. It is important to check that where changes to an approved learning and assessment plan are made, that those changes still meet the subject outline specifications and are endorsed by the principal or principal’s delegate.