2019 Essential English Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the previous year’s assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Responding to Texts

Students produce three responses to texts. At least one of the responses must be produced in written form, and at least one response in oral or multimodal form. For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* communication
* comprehension
* analysis.

The more successful responses commonly:

* were in response to texts that were appropriate for the student’s level of ability
* were in response to texts that provided opportunities for rich analysis of the ways in which creators conveyed information, ideas, and perspectives (Analysis 1)
* included supporting annotations that provided further evidence of the student’s comprehension and analysis skills
* specifically explored the elements of cultural, social and/or technical language (Analysis 2)
* allowed students to demonstrate achievement against a limited number of selected performance standards
* relied on texts like videos, songs, or articles that allowed the student to highlight a contemporary issue which could be discussed from their local or community perspective (Comprehension and Analysis)
* answered targeted prompt questions that focused on Comprehension and Analysis of a specific text.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were in response to guiding questions that elicited a recount of the text rather than analysis or thorough comprehension
* recounted and described the text being analysed
* were assessed against too many performance standards
* were in some circumstances assessed against the Application standards which are more appropriately assessed in Creating Texts than Responding to Texts
* did not provide sufficient evidence of Analysis 2 within the assessment type
* included responses where students struggled to identify and understand language and stylistic features.

General Comments

The Communication Performance Standard explicitly refers to ‘coherent writing and speaking’. Student responses that did not include oral elements did not provide moderators sufficient evidence of Communication 1 to support decisions.

Assessment Type 2: Creating Texts

Students create written, oral, and multimodal texts for procedural, imaginative, analytical, persuasive, and/or interpretive purposes.

Students create:

* one advocacy text
* two additional texts.

At least one of the responses must be produced in written form, and at least one in oral or multimodal form. For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* communication
* application.

The more successful responses commonly:

* had a clear audience and purpose which provided a structure for the text
* were advocacy texts that focused on a local context that students could connect with
* included oral presentations that played to student strengths (e.g. cooking and make-up tutorials)
* demonstrated appropriate textual conventions
* had been scaffolded to develop student understanding of their target audience and the purpose of the text
* demonstrated a wide range of language and stylistic features appropriate to the genre.

The less successful responses commonly:

* included a writer’s statement which did not allow students to demonstrate the creative components within the Application criteria. Students analysing their own work used up too much of the 800 word count and generally did not meet the Application performance standards
* were assessed against too many performance standards for individual tasks
* used explicit/inappropriate language that did not suit the audience or purpose of the text
* were multimodal or oral presentations that did not provide sufficient evidence of the student’s communicative ability.

General Comments

The Communication Performance Standard explicitly refers to ‘coherent writing and speaking’. Student responses that did not include oral elements did not provide moderators sufficient evidence of Communication 1 to support decisions.

Designing creative tasks that assessed Analysis and/or Comprehension did not allow students to successfully demonstrate against either criteria.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Language Study

The Language Study requires students to select a context in which language is used for a purpose with a particular audience. Students focus the study with a question or hypothesis. Students use at least two different language resources as the focus for the study. Students are required to analyse how the language used in the resources can answer the question or prove or disprove the hypothesis.

Students are required to communicate in clear and coherent writing or speaking. They should:

* use the textual conventions of the style of study they complete
* choose a format which is appropriate for the context and purpose of their study
* demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which language features are used in a variety of texts for a specific purpose
* analyse ways in which the creators of texts convey information, ideas and perspectives
* analyse the use of cultural, social or technical language in the given context
* select and use a range of language and stylistic features in the study to convey the information that answers the question.

Successful questions included (please also look at the 2018 report for a variety of question types):

* How does Toyota use language and stylistic features to advertise their cars to different target audiences?
* Through the language and visual features in his songs, music videos and speeches, how did Michael Jackson promote anti human-rights abuse messages to society?
* How does a sportswear company use visual and written language in two advertisements to appeal to consumers?
* How do spoken and visual language features vary in the promotion of two reality TV programmes?
* How do charity organisations use verbal and nonverbal techniques to persuade people to donate?
* How do restaurant workers use descriptive and detailed language to enhance or improve customer’s experience?
* How does two media companies use language to influence their audiences by commenting on the success of Greta Thunberg in positive and negative ways?
* How are language techniques used in the media to persuade audiences perspectives on the new abortion laws in America?
* How do the editorials of Girlfriend and Woman’s Day magazines use language to appeal to different audiences?
* How is both written and oral language used in my workplace to communicate successfully with a broad range of people?
* How does director Vince Gilligan use a variety of language features in the introduction of the pilot episodes for Breaking Bad and Better Call Saul?
* How is language used in two Australian drink-driving resources to deter people from drinking and driving?
* How does the language of Macdonald’s Crew Trainers compare to the language used by MacDonald’s to present and to assists new crew members to complete online training modules?
* How do two episodes of Sesame Street use language to enhance the development of social skills and attitudes within young children?
* How are a variety language resources used at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station to convey information to tourists?
* How do websites for Head Space and Black Dog Institute use language and stylistic features to appeal to their target audiences?
* How do the authors of the texts ‘Eddie Betts, banana-throwing fan speak out about racial abuse at Showdown 41’ and ‘why I feel sorry for the woman who threw a banana at Eddie Betts use different language features to convey their attitudes to the public?
* How does the Adelaide Zoo use a range of language features to attract and inform customers?
* How do Steve Jobs and Michelle Obama use a range of language features in their speeches to influence a target audience?

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated a clear understanding of purpose, context and audience
* used a specific, detailed and explicit focus question
* used two language resources and identified them in the question or in the introduction
* used meaningful language resources which enabled them to analyse at the highest level
* provided textual evidence in the form of quotations or specific examples
* used relevant metalanguage to inform their analysis for example: colloquial, metaphor, jargon
* exhibited control over grammar, spelling and punctuation conventions
* planned, drafted and edited their work and adhered to word count or time restrictions
* explored a context of personal interest
* analysed the use of social, cultural or technical elements of language explicitly
* understood and named the context of their study and showed throughout their language study an understanding of how the language appealed to specific audiences
* considered examples and evidence which best revealed the conventions and explained the use of stylistic and language features for their intended audience
* showed how the crafting of the texts through stylistic conventions reinforced the ideas presented
* structured the study by adhering to the textual conventions of the study format chosen whether report style, multimodal or oral response
* completed an oral response which communicated with the audience using clear and coherent speaking rather than just reading to them.

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided only a recount of what the student did without analysing language use
* described an event or place rather than analysing the language used at it
* discussed the language of animals and/or inanimate objects
* provided a plot recount of texts
* described the language use rather than analysed it
* used only one language resource or used three
* communicated generally about language without referring to specific resources
* provided lists or tables of terms without analysis of their use in context
* posed a question which did not support language analysis
* did not refer to the social, cultural or technical uses of language
* did not plan or draft carefully
* used lengthy and irrelevant quotes or didn’t use quotes or specific examples at all
* did not use the metalanguage of the text type
* compiled a literature review of a particular type of language use without personal analysis of language
* reviewed the success of the text type rather than analyse the language used
* conducted an unnecessary survey or interview
* conducted an unnecessary comparison of texts which was beyond the ability of the student to accomplish
* completed a task from the old ESL subject namely an interview analysis How does language determine the success of an interview (it is disappointing that this still persists)
* submitted a task they had completed for Responding to Texts
* did a class task rather than chose an independent study
* did not utilise their 1500 word count or time limit appropriately
* did not use the Essential English subject outline information for the Language Study.