2023 English as an Additional Language Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2023 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

Teachers can improve the moderation process and the online process by:

* thoroughly checking that all grades entered in schools online are correct
* providing a full set of evidence for each student in the moderation sample. In AT1 Academic Literacy Study, this includes both the written report and a recording of the oral interaction. Please do not include further evidence like cue cards, handouts, or quizzes unless this is the only evidence of the student presentation (i.e., lost video)
* reading the performance standards very carefully to assess how each student has genuinely demonstrated communication, comprehension, and application
* providing a video recording, rather than only an audio recording of the oral interaction. This can support moderators to confirm the grade based on the full range of evidence. It is useful if each student’s oral interaction is recorded separately and not in one recording for all students
* including the teacher’s LAP with variations for students or whole class clearly documented
* including performance criteria for each task clearly highlighted for moderation match.

Assessment Type 1: Academic Literacy Study

Students develop their academic literacy skills through creating written and oral academic texts and extending their communication skills and strategies. Students investigate a question or a topic and present their findings in an academic style by producing two tasks:

* a written report
* an oral interaction, such as a tutorial or discussion.

**Written report:** students engage in the exploration of a question or topic, presenting their findings in an academic manner through a report of a maximum of 1500 words. The report requires a structured format, commencing with an introduction that clearly outlines the question or topic. Subsequently, the body of the report is systematically organized using headings and subheadings. Inclusions such as an abstract, source analysis, annotated bibliography, or an account of the research methodology are permissible, provided they adhere to the stipulated word count. The conclusion serves to succinctly recapitulate the findings, critically evaluate information, and potentially offer recommendations.

Importantly, the report must incorporate references to sources, employing consistent referencing throughout. Notably, one of the sources must encompass a listening and/or multimodal presentation related to the studied question or topic. This could range from a public lecture, online session, conference keynote address, or seminar to a broadcast, podcast, TED talk, interview, or speech.

**Oral interaction:** In the context of group interaction, each student is required to concisely present their study findings or a relevant aspect to the group. The individual oral interaction segment for each student should not exceed 10 minutes, and it is crucial to adhere to this time limit. During this presentation, students are expected to respond to queries from fellow group members, initiate and guide group discussions, and actively contribute to collaborative efforts. The emphasis in oral interaction lies in the natural and spontaneous use of language, all within a pre-established structure. Furthermore, students are encouraged to use technology to enhance the effectiveness of their oral presentations.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* communication
* comprehension
* application.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* making sure at least one of the sources is aural, visual, or multimodal. This should at least be evident in the reference list
* remembering that the more relevant evidence that can be provided for each task, the more effectively the moderators are able to confirm teachers’ assessments. Relevant evidence includes written tasks, oral recordings, performance standards, teacher summary comments, learning and assessment plans, task sheets and addendum, and variation forms. Relevant evidence does not generally include drafts, formative work, folios of research sources, or Turnitin reports
* ensuring that uploaded files are in the format specified on the SACE Website
* ensuring (by testing) that files work for online submission.

The more successful **written reports** commonly:

* were based on a well-defined question or topic which is appropriate for a 1500-word report
* were based on topics of genuine interest to the students and showed substantial evidence of learning
* were based on topics that allowed for a depth of understanding and allowed the development of an argument
* included detailed analysis and evaluation of the social impacts of the issues explored by the student
* resolved the posed question insightfully with consistent substantiation and evidence from a range of appropriate sources, referenced consistently
* addressed carefully chosen ideas within the topic that they then explored in depth to show their understanding of the concepts
* used a purposeful and structured text type to directly address the topic and explore their research
* contained elements such as an abstract, a sources analysis, an annotated bibliography, or an account of the research methodology. Students who demonstrated excellent depth of knowledge did not include all of these in the report, but included at least one, possibly two
* consistently demonstrated text features and appropriate language for an academic written report. Such features may include headings, topic sentences, technical vocabulary, objective language, images, data, and consistent referencing
* used both in-text referencing and an appropriately formatted reference list, consistently following referencing conventions. A wide variety of resources were used with substantial evidence of thorough comprehension of the resources.

The more successful **oral interactions**:

* explored an aspect of their report and built on this beyond what they had written for the report, rather than summarising the entire issue
* used cue cards as memory prompts and engaged with the audience through fluent and interpersonal speech, rather than a memorised script
* understood that the oral interaction is a presentation and considered eye contact and body language rather than a reading
* connected to their research as they were presenting. This was demonstrated in several ways, either through oral referral to sources or supported referencing in their tutorial resources (e.g., PowerPoint, handouts, visual aids)
* showed exuberance and excitement about the research topic and findings in the oral interaction
* used innovative ways to introduce the topic and engaged in extended and purposeful discussion with the group to incite the audience’s curiosity
* engaged the group in spontaneous interaction and discussion, incorporating discussion of more complex issues and justification of opinions, to address the requirements in the subject outline and the application criterion in particular
* made purposeful use of the maximum allowed time to show a range of evidence with only brief presentation of the findings of their study or an aspect of their study before answering questions posed by other group members, and/or leading a group discussion, and/or contributing collaboratively to the group.

The less successful **written reports** commonly:

* were based on topics that were overly broad and difficult to contextualise
* used limited or unreliable sources for research
* showed little evidence of comprehension due to the scarcity of in-text citations
* showed insufficient evidence of learning as there was repeated information.

The less successful **oral interactions** commonly:

* responded to pre-prepared rehearsed questions from the audience where fellow students posed questions that had been written by the presenter and the student read their answer, showing no spontaneity or genuine interaction
* followed the same structure and presented the same ideas and information as in the written response, without taking into consideration the tutorial’s unique context
* mispronounced or could not say key words clearly, for example, their topic of research or the key technical vocabulary about their chosen topic
* solely or mostly presented information without interacting with the audience or responding to questions in the oral interaction
* engaged the group in discussion only by testing knowledge of the content of the presentation
* reflected on the research process in the oral interaction rather than addressing the research findings.

Assessment Type 2: Responses to Texts

Assessment Type 2: Responses to Texts aims to enhance comprehension skills and language/text analysis strategies. Comprehension development involves evaluating facts and opinions, and exploring personal, social, and cultural perspectives in texts, with a flexible focus on at least one of these perspectives per response. Language and text analysis strategies include scrutinising persuasive techniques and understanding how language features influence audiences.

Four responses are usually required, encompassing a literary text and presenting at least one oral and two written responses. These include:

* a response to a theme or issue in a text
* a creative response (e.g. journal entry, narrative, speech, role play)
* an analysis of a persuasive or emotive text (e.g. poem, short story, film trailer)
* a free-choice response, with a maximum of 3000 words or equivalent in oral/multimodal form (6 minutes = 1000 words).

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* communication
* comprehension
* analysis.

For 2023, through the use of subject adjustments, students were able to complete three or four tasks for the responses to texts (at least one on a theme/issue, one creative, and one analysis of a persuasive text. Of these responses, one needed to be to a literary text, and the responses overall needed to have one oral and one written).

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* making sure the four responses total a maximum of 3000 words or the equivalent in oral or multimodal form, where 6 minutes is equivalent to 1000 words
* submitting a full set of evidence for each student in the moderation sample. In AT2, that is four tasks, including at least one that is a recording of an oral and at least two written tasks
* reading the performance standards very carefully to assess how each student has genuinely demonstrated communication, comprehension, and analysis
* making sure that the correct word count for this section is followed
* indicating if students are missing a task in the variations section of the teacher’s LAP (Learning and Assessment Plan)
* indicating if there are any variations for some students or the whole class in the teacher’s LAP
* making sure the LAP and performance criteria highlighted for moderation match.

The more successful responses commonly:

* used a purposefully chosen and specific text type for each task. Successful sets of evidence included some variation in addition to more standard academic text types such as essays, reports, or formal letters. Examples of diverse text types (particularly in the creative response) included newsletters, scripts, news reports, personal letters, vlogs, TED talks, reflections, and narratives
* were assessed based on selected specific features to suit the purpose, content, and language of the individual task
* showed advanced understanding of texts and how the texts are used to target specific audiences and achieve specific purposes
* were able to link the language features of the text to its intended audience and purpose
* evaluated the texts within the contexts that the texts were made for. They used their understanding of social, cultural, and personal perspectives to evaluate the impact the text has on its intended audience
* in oral tasks, required a degree of interaction or engagement with the audience, rather than reading a script. This allowed a wider range of communication (and potentially application) to be demonstrated
* used a variety of resources effectively.

The less successful responses commonly:

* in oral responses, read directly from cue cards without considered intonation and body language. Scripts that are read out without showing understanding of the information are less successful in application (appropriate language for the purpose and audience) and communication (clarity and coherence)
* recounted information or events from a stimulus text rather than expanding, evaluating, or analysing the text structures and language features
* went significantly over the word count or time limit
* were limited in scope to a summary of the text instead of a full response, limiting evidence of analysis
* lacked coherence and cohesion, and were often repetitive and formulaic.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination

The examination provided an opportunity for students to display their proficiency in a range of skills against performance standards. A majority effectively managed their time, navigating and completing the required sections with success. Given the online nature of the exam, students proficient in typing had an advantage, therefore it is important to allow students the opportunity to practice both sections of the examination online.

Section 1: Comprehending multimodal texts

This section generally exhibited a high standard of completion. While teachers can use past exams for revision and practice, caution should be exercised to prevent the assumption that questions, skills, and content will remain consistent annually. It is essential for teachers to acquaint themselves with the subject outline, ensuring comprehensive preparation that addresses the entire spectrum of possibilities outlined for this section of the examination.

Part A: Question 1

Teachers can elicit more successful responses in Part A by:

* making sure students are aware they should listen to the text twice
* making sure students are aware they should answer the questions using the information from the text
* encouraging students to answer the questions fully and follow the marking guide as to how much information they need to include in their answers
* highlighting the value of listening for key words, and not including unnecessary details
* reminding students to check their work, paying close attention to their spelling and grammar to ensure that they have conveyed their intended meaning
* aiding their students by revising subject verb agreements
* reminding the students to allow time to edit their work, so they remember to have capital letters at the beginning of a sentence and full stops
* reminding students that too many typing errors impact on meaning and therefore affect grades.

Part B: Questions 2 and 3

Many students exhibited an understanding of the texts and how language functioned to persuade an audience. Text 2, presented as an advertisement, and Text 3, a recorded passage that students had the opportunity to listen to twice, offered different challenges. The most adept students meticulously followed the instructions for each question, ensuring a comprehensive response that addressed every aspect.

*The more successful responses commonly:*

* had a focused approach and a solid understanding of the texts to write responses that were both pertinent and detailed
* avoided merely reproducing information from the text or expressing personal opinions
* seamlessly integrated ideas and language from the text into their answers, displaying a deeper level of comprehension.

*The less successful responses commonly:*

* incorporated disconnected words they had heard without establishing relevance to the question
* repeated the same response for multiple questions without effectively using the information to address each question
* lacked the necessary extended prose or paragraphs for a thorough examination of the content.

Question 2 (a) to (c)

(a) What is the purpose of Text 2? Give **one** example from the text to support your answer. (2 marks)

The more successful responses showed an understanding of the purpose of the advertisement and linked this answer to one example from the text.

The less successful responses may have found an example from the text but did not link this to a purpose. Students need to ensure they carefully read the question and follow the requirements they are being asked.

(b) Is Text 2 a reliable source of information? Provide **two** examples from the text to support your answer. (3 marks)

The more successful responses concluded that the advertisement was written to be unreliable. They were then able to find two examples from the texts that proved that the text was unreliable. If the student said the text was reliable, they needed to provide the very small amounts of information that could have been taken and explored as reliable, but it was more difficult to prove this.

The less successful responses presented information from the text that they should have seen was unreliable, but they thought it was reliable and were not looking at the advertisement critically.

(c) Describe **two** persuasive techniques that have been used in Text 2 and explain the effectiveness of these techniques. (4 marks)

The more successful responses described two different persuasive techniques and explained their effectiveness in some detail.

The less successful responses named persuasive techniques that were not in the text, which were probably rote learned, or provided examples that did not match the persuasive technique mentioned.

Question 3 (a) to (d)

(a) Suggest **two** questions you could ask Mr Clark about the Achieve Intensive English Summer Course. (2 marks)

The more successful responses had two questions using question marks, and were written in the correct word order for a question in English.

The less successful responses did not use the correct word order in English.

(b) Why do you think Ms Jones is introducing her students to this English summer program and encouraging them to take part? (2 marks)

The more successful responses put forward two examples from the text as to why Ms Jones was introducing her students to this English summer program and encouraging them to take part.

The less successful responses only provided one example from the text as to why Ms Jones was introducing her students to this English summer program and encouraging them to take part.

(c) Which students would be interested in the course described in Text 3? (1 mark)

Most students were able to answer this question.

(d) Which of the two texts — Text 2 (*advertisement*) or Text 3 (*listening*) — do you think would be more likely to convince a student to attend their language program? Support your answer with evidence from both texts. (6 marks)

*The more successful responses commonly*:

* effectively used well-structured paragraphs
* began the response by clearly identifying which text held a greater sway in convincing them to enrol in one of the language programs
* demonstrated adept use of clear signposting and conjunctions, employing language such as "in the same way," "compared to," "whereas," "in contrast," "on the contrary," "however," "even though," and "on the one hand" to articulate why one text was more persuasive than the other. The deliberate use of these comparative expressions lent a distinct structure to their responses, reflecting a thoughtful planning process
* substantiated their arguments with specific examples, elucidating why one text had a more convincing impact on their decision to attend a language program. By adopting this structured approach, they facilitated the marker's understanding of their responses, avoiding the common pitfall of attempting to amalgamate all three parts of the question into a single paragraph.

*The less successful responses commonly:*

* focused exclusively on one text without delving into a comparative analysis of why one text held greater persuasive power in enticing them to join the language program
* wrote very little
* resorted to generalized statements such as, ‘Text A did A, but Text B didn't’, without offering explicit supporting evidence from each text.

Section 2: Extended response

In general, students have successfully adjusted to the online exam. They used the highlighting tool to highlight the arguments for and against. Some students either planned their essay in the designated notes drop-down box or mapped out their essay on scrap paper before expressing their perspective on the computer.

This year, copying directly from the text without paraphrasing or minimally quoting was a significant issue. Some students directly cut and pasted from the texts and changed very few words. The students who achieved less success solely drew evidence from Text 4 and failed to incorporate evidence from Texts 5 and 6. There was a tendency among some students to overly rely on direct quotes from texts rather than attempting to rephrase ideas in their own words. Additionally, those who were less successful in the examination often neglected the use of formal language, resorting to informal expressions like ‘etc.’, ‘pro’, and ‘con’. It is essential for students to employ language that aligns with the conventions of their chosen genre, recognising that the language found in the texts may not necessarily suit their intended style of writing.

Successful students exhibited the ability to skilfully handle language and displayed proficient grammatical control. The students demonstrated a range in the complexity of their language and the aptness of their vocabulary. The majority effectively initiated the topic by incorporating information from the texts, supplemented by a modest amount of personal knowledge related to the subject. The most effective introductions were broad, allowing students to rephrase provided information and, as a result, eliminating the need for explicit referencing to the texts. These introductions precisely communicated the selected text type and consequently constrained language choices.

The evident diversity in taught genres enabled students to display their understanding through various means. Responses that achieved greater success exhibited a clear structure, facilitating a logical progression of the student's position.

When students were uncertain about the type of text they were crafting, the absence of logical development weakened their stance and rendered their responses more challenging to comprehend. Effective application of persuasive or discursive essay conventions often resulted in better analysis and comprehension, leading to higher bands in the evaluation criteria. Reports faced occasional challenges, though the incorporation of subheadings enhanced the demonstration of Cp1, Ap1, and C1. Conversely, those who composed formal letters encountered difficulties in demonstrating all criteria, particularly An1, C1, and Cp1.

In selecting a text type for their response, students must consistently adhere to genre rules and purposeful language choices. Notably, an academic style exposition is a prevalent choice, facilitating achievement across all performance standards. For adept students, it was evident that the genre had been taught and wasn't a hasty selection during the exam.

Continued attention is required to the importance of referencing. The referencing styles adopted by some students were frequently inconsistent, ranging from using first and last names to only first names, titles, or solely referencing the text number (e.g., Text 4, Text 5, or Text 6). Students achieved greater success when employing a uniform and deliberate referencing approach. Certain written responses lacked referencing altogether, diminishing the potential for high scores despite commendable analysis.

Successful students demonstrated their comprehension of evidence usage through the adept application of various in-text referencing methods. Examples include:

* Author (year) explored that…
* it was argued that… (Author, year)
* an argument elaborated by Author (year) posited that…
* both Author 1 (year) and Author 2 (year) showed that…
* a contrasting argument presented by Author (year) demonstrated that…
* explicit instruction on referencing and the appropriate sourcing of references should be an integral part of teaching.

The primary objective of the written paper is to articulate an argument and convey a stance. The intention goes beyond listing evidence from the texts. In instances where students failed to engage in paraphrasing, markers were unable to assign high scores, particularly in the realms of comprehension and analysis performance standards. Directly copying from the texts often indicated a limited understanding, as examples were reproduced verbatim but out of context or in an illogical manner.

Successful students adeptly used argumentative language to assertively articulate their opinions in an academically sound manner. Some less successful students personalised their arguments, relying on language like 'I believe' and 'I think' without integrating the texts. To demonstrate linguistic complexity, students are encouraged to incorporate a variety of language constructions, including the utilisation of passive voice and adopting a more academic and formal tone to articulate their ideas.

The more successful responses commonly:

* allowed time to edit their work carefully online to avoid typing errors, remembering to have full stops followed by a capital letter
* used the information and opinions in the texts to produce an extended written response which developed a point of view
* made it clear, either implicitly or explicitly, which text type and structure they had chosen to write
* wrote clear introductions with points that were reflected throughout their writing and repeated in their conclusions. These students did not reference in their introductions or conclusions as they were not presenting detailed evidence from the texts
* summarised different points in a unique way without copying directly from the text, and elaborated with relevant examples and different perspectives (that might not have been included within the exam texts)
* used a high level of grammatical control using nominalisation, adverbial clauses, conjunctions, and a diverse and effective vocabulary and expressions
* showed a clear understanding of the issue and could effectively rephrase ideas from the source texts and maintain the original meaning
* synthesised information from the texts and used academic language where appropriate
* combined information from more than one source text in each body paragraph
* applied the chosen style consistently throughout the piece. For example, if a first person, informal style is adopted this should be evident in every paragraph. Similarly, if an impersonal, objective tone is adopted this must be sustained
* were judicious and critical in their selection and incorporation of evidence from the texts
* when writing an argumentative essay presented their position using formal and objective language
* when writing in text types other than essays made their choice explicit by writing the text type and context at the top or made it clear through the introduction (for example, ‘Good evening fellow students, and thank you for gathering in the hall today, before we depart this school for the very last time.’)
* were careful only to copy some key words and phrases with considered paraphrasing and evaluation of information drawn for all texts
* chose a referencing style like the Harvard (author, year) referencing convention and applied it consistently where appropriate
* showed a greater understanding of referencing by varying the way references were included in sentences. Rather than using only brackets at the end of a sentence, some students could integrate the author’s name into the sentence itself
* were careful not to over-reference when exploring general points
* used the first-person point of view (I, we), the second person (you, your), or the third person (he, she, it, they) consistently. For example, a persuasive piece may be written in the first person, but a report would usually be written in the third person
* used the personal pronoun and personal opinions in the appropriate context.

The less successful responses commonly:

* wrote loosely or without structure, confused genres, and used an inconsistent form
* had an introduction which was either too long or contained too many quotes
* wrote significantly under 500 words, limiting comprehension and analysis
* used informal language with cliches or slang, with limited, repetitive vocabulary and sentences
* did not develop a point of view as required by the question
* displayed limited spelling and grammar making it difficult to understand meaning
* contained minimal synthesis
* did not use many cohesive devices or signals throughout the written response
* copied entire sentences or consecutive phrases directly from the texts, impacting achievement in the Application criterion
* significantly overused direct quotations
* did not use appropriate and consistent in-text referencing conventions. Text types which may not normally include academic in-text referencing (such as a blog) should nevertheless use it for the purposes of this assessment task
* used first names or a website URL in their referencing
* referenced opinions instead of publications
* only used referencing at the end of each paragraph
* relied on their knowledge of the topic and struggled to demonstrate their ability to select appropriate information from the texts to develop and support their responses
* used short sentences containing direct copying and limited referencing
* did not divide their response into paragraphs and did not use topic sentences for each new paragraph
* had paragraphs that contained multiple ideas jumbled together
* did not have a clear structure or organise ideas logically
* were inconsistent with their register for the implied audience or context
* recounted information in the texts without analysis
* attempted to summarise each text to represent a paragraph in the response with no logical link and no opinion presented.