# Stage 1 Essential English

# 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 consider a variety of ways in which texts communicate information, ideas, and perspectives. Students explore the relationship between structures and features and the purpose, audience, and context of texts. In responding to texts, students provide evidence of learning *primarily* against the Communication, Comprehension, and Analysis assessment design criteria. Responses should be no more than 800 words or 5 minutes, or the equivalent in multimodal form. Most schools weighted this assessment type at 50%.

Successful achievement at the C grade

* Demonstrated generally clear writing and speaking using appropriate vocabulary and grammatical control. Whilst there were some errors with grammar, the intended meaning was not impeded.
* Understood ideas in a narrow range of texts and their associated purpose, structure and language features.
* Were able to demonstrate analysis of texts and provided evidence from texts to support their response.
* Had the opportunity to respond to texts that were relevant to their context. This enabled them to make personal connections with a text and explore their particular interests.
* Had the task explicitly explained to them and were provided with guiding questions that supported them in framing their response.
* Could identify specific language features and discuss how the author had used them to create meaning. They were able to use appropriate metalanguage to describe and discuss techniques.
* Could clearly identify and connect the purpose of the form to the audience.

Application of the performance standards

* Schools generally interpreted performance standards at the C and D grade levels consistently.
* Most students demonstrated clear evidence of the Communication and the Application assessment design criteria at the C grade level, however there were some inconsistencies in the assessment of C1.
* There was some inconsistency in assessment of Analysis. Students were rewarded for recount of events, themes or ideas rather than an analysis of the text. Student responses demonstrated a lack of understanding of analysis, particularly in regard to language features or film techniques.
* In some instances, task design did not allow students to provide sufficient evidence to make an assessment decision in relation to the performance standards being assessed.
* Application of the performance standards did not align with evidence provided by students. This was often a reflection of poor task design.
* The application in some instances of inappropriate assessment design criteria to tasks, particularly regarding the assessment of Application.
* Lack of audio files or electronic materials limited student evidence and made it difficult to support teacher assessment decisions.

Task design

* Many teachers provided students flexibility in the delivery mode of text type responses (oral, written, multimodal, and visual).
* Moderators noted that tasks with only a few focus questions enabled students to demonstrate more detailed comprehension, analysis and communication skills. Conversely, too many short answer questions resulted in brief responses that lacked depth of understanding and analysis.
* It was clear to moderators when there had been explicit teaching of language features and conventions; this provided students with the language to discuss how different text types were shaped to reflect different purposes and audiences.
* It was evident that the modelling and deconstruction of language features supported students in being able to demonstrate evidence of Comprehension and Analysis. For example, when studying a film, students were able to analyse camera techniques, such as close-ups and wide-angle shots, and the pace of the scene editing.
* Where teachers used the language of the performance standards when designing tasks and providing feedback to students, 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.
* Scaffolded tasks allowed a range of students to have greater capacity to demonstrate their knowledge. However, at times highly scaffolded tasks limited students’ ability to demonstrate learning against the performance standards at higher grades as it restricted the flexibility of responses and formulaic responses were produced as a result.

## Assessment Type 2: Creating Texts

Within this assessment type, students create their own written, oral, and/or multimodal texts after examining the links between language and the context in which texts are produced. The texts may be functional, informational, analytical, imaginative, interpretive, and/or persuasive in purpose. In creating texts, students provide evidence of learning *primarily* against the Communication and Application assessment design criteria. Texts should be no more than 800 words or 5 minutes, or the equivalent in multimodal form. Most schools weighted this assessment type at 50%.

Successful achievement at the C grade

* Were able to create texts using appropriate textual conventions that demonstrated an understanding of the audience, structure and purpose of different forms of writing.
* Demonstrated a range of vocabulary.
* Were able to sustain clear and coherent communication, demonstrating good grammatical control, with accuracy in spelling and grammar.
* Modelled their responses on appropriately scaffolded examples.

Application of the performance standards

* Most schools consistently interpreted the performance standards at the C and D grades.
* While Application was mostly consistently assessed by teachers, there were some inconsistencies regarding the assessing of Communication.
* Detailed teacher feedback, using the language of the performance standards, assisted moderators in confirming grades.

Task design

* Many tasks allowed for student diversity in responses; students were provided with the choice to produce their evidence in written, oral or multimodal form.
* Orals provided opportunities for students to show their creativity, especially when coupled with multimodal forms such as “Screencastify” and “Snag it”.
* There were some instances where word counts for tasks were too limiting and did not allow students to demonstrate the full extent of their abilities.
* The more successful students responded to tasks that were clearly structured and allowed for individual flair. In these instances, task sheets provided clear, explicit instructions and outlined the purpose of the task.
* Tasks that linked to Responding to Text tasks were often successful.

Preparation and submission of student materials

* Schools are advised to refer to [Stage 1 moderation](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/coordinating/admin/moderation/stage-1) and information sheet‘ [Preparing materials for Stage 1 moderation submission’](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/documents/652891/704359/Preparing+materials+for+Stage+1+moderation+submission.pdf/31814296-aa36-4875-a1ea-63604ddaff0d?t=1618901762870) on the SACE website for information on participation in Stage 1 moderation.
* Assessment at Stage 1 is 100% school assessed; tasks are designed and marked by teachers. Teacher grades and feedback should be evident on all student work.
* Student materials were mostly packaged in accordance with the information sheet — *The preparation and packaging of materials for Stage 1 Moderation*. The work could be quickly accessed and moderated when teachers included a learning and assessment plan reflecting the current year’s teaching program, all tasks, and appropriately scanned electronic work that included the student’s name and/or SACE registration number.
* It is important that the grade assigned to the student work matches that written on the Stage 1 Moderation Sample Form submitted with the materials; some discrepancies were observed. Moderators are advised to assume that the grade on the signed Moderation Sample Form is correct, and to moderate accordingly.
* It is pleasing to note the practice of providing an individual shaded performance standard across both assessment types where each task is colour coded to reflect the performance standards attained. This practice supported moderators to look for evidence in the student work to confirm the teachers’ holistic assessment decision.
* Given 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, and in determining the final assessment decisions for each assessment type when entering students’ results in Schools Online. Each school requested for Stage 1 Essential English 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.
* Student evidence in the form of a recording should be included for oral and/or multimodal presentations. Teachers should submit work in accordance with the [Submission of Electronic Files](https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=006879145118988626081:ccgycjzy0py&q=https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/documents/652891/e1ccfbf4-fc97-4cf6-8a06-8786aa2328ae&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwjSjrfN_67mAhUBxTgGHYnQDSEQFjAAegQIBRAB&usg=AOvVaw3Z3_7LDaaixPucJbAs70Zs) (document) or Preparation of Non-written Materials and Submission of Electronic Files (video). Teachers should check CDs/DVDs/USBs to make sure that evidence can be accessed. Where student evidence is provided on a USB, the USB should be clearly labelled with folders of student folios.

### 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 [Essential English minisite](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/essential-english/stage-1/planning-to-teach/learning-and-assessment-plans).
* Teachers are encouraged to access the online clarifying and benchmarking activities on PLATO and the [Essential English minisite](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/essential-english/stage-1/support-materials) to 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. These activities provided schools with opportunities to complete in-school moderation activities to support consistency across classes in the application of the performance standards.
* The more effective learning and assessment programs comprised a variety of responding to/creating texts that related to a common theme or product and connected texts. Such an approach engaged students allowing them to develop their literacy skills and demonstrate growth of learning. Moderators noticed some learning programs applied this strategy.
* Effective use of the addendum to a learning and assessment plan enabled moderators to confirm evidence reflective of the C and D grade levels. This included teachers detailing the changes made, explaining why the changes were required, and clearly identifying the focus of the assessment design criteria. This helped moderators to understand which criteria were being assessed and which tasks had been changed. When completing an addendum, it is important to check that the changes made still meet the subject outline requirements and are endorsed by the principal or principal’s delegate.
* At times there were inconsistences in the application of the performance standards, where samples were drawn from across different classes within schools. To ensure consistency across the range of Essential English classes, schools are encouraged to cross-moderate as part of the in-school quality assurance process before submitting samples for moderation.
* It is important to note that where students are provided with opportunities to present their evidence of learning as an oral, discussion and/or multimodal form that the accompanying oral evidence should be provided. In some instances, only teacher feedback was provided in the absence of a student’s own evidence. This was not sufficient to support assessment decisions for those tasks. Teachers are encouraged to explore this form of learning more broadly by considering students producing movies, podcasts, documentaries, websites, and vlogs for example.
* 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, and teachers made 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. 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.