# Stage 1 English as an Additional Language

# 2019 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

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). 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)). Texts selected are intended to stimulate thinking about teaching.

Successful achievement at the C grade

* Students who achieved at the C standard demonstrated appropriate use of language features and conventions when interpreting information, main ideas and opinions in texts for different audiences and purposes.
* Students who achieved 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.
* Students who referred to excerpts/evidence from texts in their responses were able to achieve at the C grade (or higher).
* As noted in the 2018 Subject Assessment Report, where students made personal connections with a text, especially if provided the option to select a text and choice in the mode of response, they were able to articulate their responses both in a written and oral format at the C grade or better.
* A strategy used by many schools is the shared text approach – a text such as a film and/or novel is read/viewed and discussed by the whole class to respond to or as a planning tool to teach skills in responding to texts followed by student selection of a text which they can make a personal connection with. This supported both student engagement and successful achievement at the C grade or better.
* The more successful oral responses used close to the maximum time limit of 5 minutes. This provided students the appropriate opportunity to meet the performance standards at the C grade or higher. Oral responses of 2−3 minutes in length tended to limit achievement.

*Application of the performance standards*

* Students provide evidence of their learning *primarily* in relation to the assessment design criteria of Communication, Comprehension and Application.
* As noted in the 2018 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. Examples include, teaching the language features of a narrative gives students the opportunity to write an alternative ending to a story, teaching the language features of a well-known speech gives students the opportunity to produce an alternative point of view. 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 used by more and more teachers to support students’ understanding of the specific features of the assessment design criteria continues to be providing students with 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 2018 Subject Assessment Report, examples of texts studied this year include Doris Garimara Pilkinton’s *Rabbit Proof Fence* and Anthony Hill’s *The Burnt Stick.*
* Teachers are taking advantage of using a range of texts from the suggested text list guide.
* There continues to be many interesting tasks designed that capture the interests of specific student cohorts. In addition to those noted in last year’s report, this year’s examples included: students visiting a restaurant, school canteen or fast food venue with the aim of collecting information used to write a response to a couple of reviews focussing on bias, language, purpose and audience; writing an essay on the short 14-minute film, *Ali and The Ball,* where students explain the ideas, and the personal, social and/or cultural perspectives together with an exploration of techniques the director uses to demonstrate the ideas and perspectives.
* As noted in previous Subject Assessment Reports, providing scaffolding for assessment tasks supported students to be successful. For example, providing a structure for reflective writing/speaking. Research findings demonstrate that *supporting, guiding and affirming learning through scaffolding aids confidence in the learner but over-scaffolding stifles creativity in thinking and learning (p.59 Jefferson, M & Anderson, M Transforming Schools, 2017*). 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 sighted 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, teacher or relative enabled successful achievement at the C grade. However, it was interviews held where students chose 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 2018 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, interaction between the teacher and the student and spontaneous use of language. For example, questions beginning with *‘discuss’, ‘explain’, ‘justify’, and ‘what do you think’*.
* It is important that the student lead 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 respectively.

Application of the performance standards

* 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 or when discussing ideas, opinions, or perspectives discovered while exploring at least two different texts for the discussion; in particular An1 – *‘Analysis of the personal, social, and cultural perspectives in texts’*. This experience provided students with greater confidence to address the Analysis criterion in Assessment Type 3: Language Study, where it is required.
* Explicitly teaching the difference between open and closed questions when conducting an interview, supported students’ application of the assessment design criteria.
* 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 in preparing for the interview or recounting their findings. 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 from both the interview and the discussion 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*](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/documents/652891/91d6c2ae-1e6d-4d07-8c03-6abd619f1070) for guidance.

Task design

* In designing this task, teachers took advantage of adopting and/or adapting exemplar tasks available on the subject minisite, taking into account the cultural background of their students.
* It is important to note that the interview report is comprised 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. It is important that the task provides students with the opportunity to address both of these requirements. A balance between these two components should be evident. The reflection component tended to be limited in focus or in a few cases, not addressed.
* Examples of questions to engage student interest in selecting an appropriate person to interview include:
* How did you face the challenges you described during your youth growing up in a culture different from your own?
* Do you think the education system is better/worse that it was when you were young?
* What changes have you seen in the world of work since you started work?
* Examples of reflection questions include:
* How did you give the interviewee a chance to provide in-depth responses?
* Did you go off script and ask questions you did not plan? Why?
* What did you notice about the non-verbal cues (body language) in the interview?
* 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 whether an individual can make a difference to world poverty after researching individuals who have made a difference since 1950.

## 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.

Due to the language requirements of this task, it tends to be the final task students produce and as such was pending from schools at moderation. 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 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.
* As noted in the 2018 Subject Assessment Report, 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, persuasive speeches.

Application of the performance standards

* 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.
* As noted in the 2018 Subject Assessment Report, 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 a feature of good task design. In some instances, moderators noted highly scaffolded tasks, which 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. Some interesting language studies noted over the last few years include analysis of banding used to influence consumer purchase, analysing symbols used in advertising (i.e. public and commercial signs, posters or billboards) and their meaning in different cultures; and a role play analysing the technical language used at an on-site auction and at an auction home.

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+preparation+and+packaging+of+materials+for+Stage+1+Moderation+-+flowchart.pdf/31814296-aa36-4875-a1ea-63604ddaff0d). Teachers provided a copy of their current approved learning and assessment plan (LAP) with the set of tasks that corresponded to the learning and assessment plan.
* 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. In some instances; however, schools sent more samples than were necessary, including more than three C and /or D 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. Most teachers now attach 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 helps 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, which further assisted moderators to review assessment decisions.
* There were a few schools running multiple classes with different teachers, it is important to identify and include multiple LAPs, so it is clear which tasks each student completed as well as carry out in-school moderation to ensure assessment decisions are comparable across the classes.
* Teachers are asked to check that all work on discs and other electronic media have successfully been copied and will be accessible to the moderators.
* Teachers are also 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](https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-uds-cse&cx=006879145118988626081:ccgycjzy0py&q=https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/documents/652891/e1ccfbf4-fc97-4cf6-8a06-8786aa2328ae&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwiiu9zXl4bjAhVb8HMBHUgCD5wQFjAAegQIBhAB&usg=AOvVaw3p6oYhpNMh8pp7wzaS2Vm9) or [Preparation of non-written materials](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/documents/652891/d9bbdce0-5773-49c3-82d4-773da07b1df6). 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.
* Where a group assessment is filmed, individual students should be identified.
* 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. It is pleasing to note that this student evidence is supplied by schools and not just teacher feedback.

General comments

* In the main, schools offer two 10-credit programs of learning.
* 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)
* In the main, 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.
* 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 subject minisiteand the [STAGE 1 CLARIFYING - English as an Additional Language](https://plato.sace.sa.edu.au/course/view.php?id=615) course in PLATO to help interpret and consistently apply the performance standards to student work.
* An effective teaching strategy noted in previous subject assessment reports and which more and more teachers are now utilising, is designing tasks with a thematic connection across the assessment types. This strategy supports student engagement whilst developing their literacy skills. For example, one learning and assessment plan noted focussed on the food industry and was assessed through four tasks that involved:
* a written response to a series of questions after viewing and discussing a film/documentary such as Food Inc or Supersize Me (or another documentary approved by the teacher) (Assessment Type 1: Responding to Texts)
* an oral presentation in response to a biography of a famous chef or inspirational culinary personality of the student’s choice (Assessment Type 1: Responding to Texts)
* using the film/documentary from Assessment Type 1 (Food Inc or Supersize Me or another documentary approved by the teacher) to create a 5-minute multi-media display to educate a target group about a food issue and engage the class in a student led-discussion about the food issue (Assessment Type 2: Interactive Study)
* an oral presentation or a written response or equivalent in multimodal form where students select two examples of news items relating to food or hospitality from any media and analyse the similarities and differences between the way the information is delivered (Assessment Type 3: Language Study).
* 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*.
* Where required, teachers documented changes to their approved learning and assessment plans to better meet the needs of their student cohorts during the course of the semester. This included explaining why the changes were made and adjusting the assessment design criteria and specific feature focus. This is pleasing to note as a learning and assessment plan is a document of intention *only*, to be adjusted as needed. It is important to check that where changes are made, that those changes still meet the subject outline specifications and are endorsed by the principal or principal’s delegate. Fewer addendums were noted this year.