

CHECKLIST

2004 PRIMARY WRITING ASSESSMENT

Date	Action	Ref. pages	Checklist <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Now	Read <i>Manual of Administrative Procedures</i> , paying particular attention to sections 1 and 2.	4–11	<input type="checkbox"/>
Now	Check and note dates in school diary/calendar.		<input type="checkbox"/>
By 4 June	Fax back request for special materials for vision support students for BST/PWA.	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
By 23 July	Obtain parent/caregivers consent for students who will be exempted.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Check test packages have been received.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Check quantities of materials.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Check condition of materials.	6–7	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Notify parents about PWA 2004 by sending the letter supplied.	13	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Finalise timetabling and rooming arrangements.	7	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Distribute copies of the <i>2004 Teacher Handbook</i> for teachers to read.		<input type="checkbox"/>
28 July	TEST DATE		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Complete test session log sheets.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Principal must verify and sign test session log sheets.	11	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Return test books (non-marking schools). Send fax sheet.	14	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 July–12 Aug	Conduct school-based marking (only in selected schools).	10	<input type="checkbox"/>
13 August	Return test books (marking schools). Send fax sheet.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>
11–15 Oct	Receive school report packages.	12	<input type="checkbox"/>
By end Term 4	Distribute reports to parents.		<input type="checkbox"/>

Contact addresses and telephone numbers

The Educational Measurement Directorate has responsibility for the Primary Writing Assessment (PWA) test and reports.

FOR ANY GENERAL ENQUIRIES ABOUT PWA PLEASE CONTACT

Government Schools

Telephone: (02) 9707 6219 Literacy Team
Fax: (02) 9707 6289

Catholic Schools

Telephone: (02) 9707 6228 Brigitte Ellis
(02) 9707 6224 Margaret Scroope
E-mail address: brigitte.ellis@det.nsw.edu.au
margaret.scroope@det.nsw.edu.au
Fax: (02) 9707 6287

Independent and Non-NSW Schools

Telephone: (02) 9707 6223
Fax: (02) 9707 6287

All Schools

Educational Measurement Directorate
NSW Department of Education and Training
Level 9, 66-72 Rickard Road
BANKSTOWN NSW 2200

FOR ENQUIRIES ABOUT QUALITY OR QUANTITY OF TEST MATERIALS PLEASE CONTACT

PWA Helpline
Telephone: (02) 9311 9955
Fax: (02) 9311 9951

RETURN TEST MATERIALS TO:

PWA Assessment Centre
Reply Paid 6026
PO Box 6026
CHULLORA NSW 1405

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SECTION 1: BEFORE THE TEST DAY

The Primary Writing Assessment (PWA)

The Primary Writing Assessment (PWA) test is a curriculum-based assessment, testing students' skills in particular aspects of literacy. It is a criterion-referenced test that shows what students can do. The distribution of results on the reporting scale is not predetermined but reflects standards of performance which are comparable from year to year.

In 2004, all government primary schools are expected to participate in the Year 3 and Year 5 testing.

Overview

There will be two writing tasks: a factual task and a literary task.

The aspects of writing that will be assessed are:

Text Level – Processes

These criteria look at the generic function of each text and the specific structural and textual processes making up those texts.

Text Level – Features

These criteria look at the grammatical features of each text as a whole.

Sentence Level – Features

These criteria examine the grammatical features of each text at the sentence level and include the syntactic features of the writing, for example punctuation and clause pattern.

Word Level – Features

These criteria examine features such as independent spelling and correct verb form.

The results of the test provide diagnostic information to teachers and schools about student writing achievements that can be used to inform teaching and learning programs in order to improve writing outcomes. After analysing results from the test and adding this information to assessment information from classroom work, teachers can adjust programs to meet the needs of individual students and groups of students.

The aggregation of student results from the Primary Writing Assessment provides the school with an overview of current achievements for groups of students and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of their performance. PWA results are reported on the same scale as the Basic Skills Test results. This enables schools to compare students' results on different aspects of literacy. The analysis of aggregated results can be used by the school in addition to other forms of assessment to assist with whole-school planning.

Test arrangements

PWA will be held on **Wednesday 28 July 2004**. Please mark the test date on the school calendar to avoid clashes with other school activities. All used books must be returned promptly for scanning, but some schools will mark their own students' writing tasks first.

Where there are individual or small groups of students absent due to illness or unavoidable variation of school routine, arrangements may be made to test on Thursday 29 July.

It is recommended that schools hold the test in the morning. There is no need to accommodate all students in a central venue. It is preferable that students do the test in classrooms supervised by one teacher.

Candidacy and Exemptions

Candidacy

- All students enrolled in Year 3 and Year 5 should participate in PWA. However, parents do have the right to withdraw their children from testing. This is NOT the same as an exemption (see below) or ordinary absence. Absent should only be entered on the Log and Tally sheets (see test pack) for those students who did not sit for the test because they were not at school on the test day due to sickness or holidays.
- Participating schools include government and non-government schools.

Exemptions

It is expected that students with learning difficulties and those with mild intellectual disabilities will also undertake the PWA assessment. This may also include some students in SSPs. For a very few students though, PWA will not be appropriate.

The principal may exempt students from the test, but only in consultation with the parents or caregivers. In these cases the principal must ensure that an exemption has been agreed to by the parents or caregivers.

Consideration for exemptions can be given to:

- some students newly arrived in Australia (up to 12 months) from non-English speaking backgrounds
- students with moderate or severe disabilities
- other students who have a current disability confirmation sheet who cannot be accommodated through special provisions
- students with a medical condition that would affect well-being and test performance
- students attending Stewart House on the test day.

Principals will be required to give the reason why a student has been exempted on the test log sheet (see test materials). Exempted students will be listed in school report tables.

All students in Year 3 and Year 5 should be assessed in writing. For students who are exempted from PWA and those students whose results indicate a very low achievement, the school learning support team may need to conduct further assessment to plan suitable programs that provide support.

Special provisions

Test room support

PWA is a diagnostic test which provides information about student performance in writing. The administration of the test should be sufficiently flexible to allow all students to perform at their best.

You can vary test conditions for students with disabilities in any way you think will help. For example, you could provide:

- reasonable extra time without causing fatigue
- another classroom or test area which is more suitable
- extra people such as sign interpreters (but not scribes)
- enhanced lighting or other visual aids
- toilet breaks for students with diabetes.

Schools should aim to include their students with special needs by providing them with the kind of support and assistance that is normally provided in the classroom. This support should **not** include spelling words or using a spellcheck, suggesting ideas to use in their writing or explaining terms.

In the case of a specific disability or an unexpected accident or injury where a student is unable to write, permission may be sought to have a scribe. Principals can phone the appropriate contact person (see page 2) to explain circumstances and receive a copy of the specific conditions that will apply.

Large print and braille support

Large print and braille versions of the test are available for students with diagnosed visual impairments that would qualify them for itinerant support. (If in doubt about identifying these students, please consult the *Special Education Handbook for Schools*, 1998.) Large print test materials will be an enlarged colour photocopy of the magazine and a black and white enlarged copy of the test book printed on one side of the page.

Large print and braille materials will automatically be provided for students for whom large print and braille materials were requested for BST. A fax-back request form was sent with the *BST Manual of Administrative Procedures*. The closing date for these requests is 4 June 2004.

Communicating with students and parents

- Schools must send home a letter giving parents information about the test. Some of this information must be given to parents according to the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998. On page 13 is a letter which can be copied by the school and sent to parents.
- Please note that parent reports must be distributed by the end of the school year.
- Prepare students before the test by explaining that:
 - the PWA test is another way of finding out what they can and cannot do so that future programs can help them
 - all students do the PWA test at the same time
 - there is no pass/fail mark in the test
 - the PWA test indicates what an individual student can do, which is why the students cannot talk to each other or ask teachers to help with spelling or other problems
 - there may be special rooming or timetabling arrangements they should know about.

The test package

The packages will arrive in school at least a week before the test. The principal, or designated member of school executive, should ensure that all test material is stored securely and that sufficient test materials are available at the school on the test day. Packaging should be retained for use when returning completed materials.

Each package will be labelled clearly and will contain:

- an *Information for Principals* sheet
- copies of the *2004 Teacher Handbook* and test session log sheet (one or more brown parcel(s) with white label(s))
- test books and stimulus booklets (in one or more brown cover(s) with green [Year 3] or blue [Year 5] labels on the outside)

- a school tally sheet
- return address labels for returning packages.

On receipt of the packages the principal should ensure that the following are completed.

- **The packages are opened as soon as they arrive** and quantities of the test books, stimulus booklets and copies of the *2004 Teacher Handbook* are checked, making sure the correct numbers have been received.
- A quick check of the test materials for any printing defects is important. (Test material must not be made available to anyone prior to the test date other than for checking the quantity and the printing quality.)
- The *2004 Teacher Handbook* is passed on **only** to those teachers involved in administering the test so that they can familiarise themselves with the procedures to be followed on the test day, and raise any queries they may have beforehand. **Please ensure all test materials and content remain confidential.**
- The packages are resealed and stored in a secure place.
- Timetabling and rooming arrangements have been made.

In case of non-receipt of packages by Thursday 22 July 2004, the principal, or designated member of school executive, should check with the local post office to see if packages have arrived there. If the materials still cannot be located, ring the PWA Helpline on (02) 9311 9955.

Test timetabling

The test consists of two parts: Writing Task 1 and Writing Task 2. To minimise fatigue it is strongly recommended that timetabling of the test incorporates an outdoor break of 15-20 minutes between tasks. Suggested times for planning a timetable are given below. More specific guidance will be given in the *2004 Teacher Handbook*.

Teachers may also give students (as a whole group) a few minutes extra time in any session when they judge that it would allow most students to finish.

Filling out cover of test book and overview of materials		10 mins	
Writing Task 1			
Task 1	Read, plan, write and edit task	Year 3	25-30 mins
		Year 5	30-35 mins
	RECESS		15-20 mins
Writing Task 2			
Task 2	Read, plan, write and edit task	Year 3	25-30 mins
		Year 5	30-35 mins

Before the test teachers should:

- be thoroughly familiar with the *2004 Teacher Handbook* and how to manage the test session
- check that they have some spare pencils, pencil sharpeners and erasers, as well as the *2004 Teacher Handbook* and the test session log sheet.

Testing at more than one site and at Distance Education Centres

In general, all students sit for the test on the same day. If one or more students are not at their own school on that day the following arrangements can be made by the principal.

If students are attending another school

- Notify the other school(s) if one or more of your students will be attending their school to do the test.
- Make sure that enough test materials are available at the other school(s).
- Make sure that all students who are temporarily at your school put their **own school code number and school name** on the test book.
- Collect all the completed books from the other school(s) and return them in your **own** school package.

OR

arrange for the books of visiting students to be sent in with the host school's package. The different code numbers should be noted on that school's log sheet.

If students are at a camp/excursion site

- Check that it is possible for the test to be conducted under test conditions at the site.
- Arrange with the camp/excursion supervisors or teachers to conduct the test under test conditions.
- Make sure that sufficient quantities of test materials are available and secure at the site.
- Arrange for all completed test books to be returned to your school for inclusion in your school's package.

Distance Education Centres (DECs) will need to:

- arrange for a 'class day' for DEC students on the test date

OR

- send sets of test materials to individual students' homes or learning centres, together with a *2004 Teacher Handbook*, to arrive by the test date

OR

- arrange for individual students to attend another school on the test date. These students should write their **own** school code number and school name on the test book and include it in the host school's returns (see above)

AND

- collect completed test books and return them by 13 August 2004.

SECTION 2: ON THE TEST DAY

Administering the test

On the test day the principal, or designated member of school executive, should ensure:

- distribution of appropriate numbers of the test books and stimulus booklets to teachers, making sure that the correct material is being used (that is, green Year 3 test books and blue Year 5 test books)
- that the packaging is kept for use later when returning completed tests
- that any special provisions for students with disabilities are in place
- that the classrooms are adequately prepared.

Before the test session teachers should:

- make sure they have
 - the test books, stimulus material and pencils for their class
 - a cleared board and some chalk or whiteboard markers
 - some work material for students who finish early
 - the *2004 Teacher Handbook* and a test session log sheet
 - some spare pencils, pencil erasers and pencil sharpeners
 - a reliable watch or clock.
- ensure each student has
 - a 2B pencil and eraser
 - a pencil sharpener
 - adequate working space
 - a book to read if finished early.
- make sure students do not have or use white-out/correction fluid, biros, felt pens, coloured pencils or textas.

During the test session teachers should:

- take as much time as needed for preliminaries such as making students feel at ease and filling in the cover of the test booklet accurately and neatly
- explain to students that they are to work on their own
- allow additional time where needed (the appropriate extra times are in the *2004 Teacher Handbook*).

Organising completed test material

Teachers should:

- collect all completed and partially completed test books
- check that the names of students are legible and spelt correctly
- complete the first section marked 'For teachers only' on the front cover of the test books for students who missed one or other of the tasks because they were absent from part of the session
- collect unused books separately and keep for school reference
- record on the test session log sheet the names and other details of students who:
 - were absent for the test
 - were exempted from the test and the reason for the exemption
 - missed a **whole** section of the test (Task 1 or Task 2) due to late arrival or illness
 - received special provisions
- check that any visiting students have the correct code number and name of their own school and that you have recorded these students' names and test book numbers on the test session log sheet to be returned
- place any visiting students' books on top of the other used test books
- **copy the test session log sheet(s)** (for your use) and place the original(s) on the top of the test books
- return the bundle of completed test books as well as the test session log sheet copies to the principal or the staff member in charge of tests
- keep unused books in a central location for later reference when reports arrive.

Please note

The notification on the test session log sheet and the front cover of the test book of students who did not do one of the tasks due to temporary absence (such as illness or medical appointment or received special provisions) is important information. It will be used when results are reported to avoid incorrect statements being given to students who did not sit for the whole test.

Students who were absent on test day can be tested on their return to school if the school is able to administer the tests appropriately.

Returning completed test material

For schools selected for school-based marking

The school should designate a PWA marking coordinator.

The PWA marking coordinator should:

- collect all material into one place
- organise markers, training (with district consultants) and duration of marking
- distribute student books and undertake marking (see *Marking Procedures*)
- collect test books for return
- arrange for return of test books by **Friday 13 August 2004**.

For schools not marking their papers

Principals are required to sign off the completed test session log sheets. Principals should check that the test session log sheet details are complete and accurate. These test session log sheets have information about absent students, exempted students, partially absent students and students who received special provisions. This information is required for individual, school and state reports.

Principals should also check the following list is complete

- Keep unused test books and the photocopies of the test session log sheets at the school for reference when results arrive.
- Count the total number of books to be returned and complete the school tally sheet; put the tally sheet on top of the bundle.
- Package bundles of completed test books, test session log sheets and the tally sheet, keeping all books flat.
- Send bundles together in one large parcel if possible (use the pieces of card and outer packaging from the original packaging).
- Apply the labels provided, and take to an Australia Post Office.

If label is lost or misplaced complete a registered post lodgement form and present to Australia Post when lodging the parcel. Label the package(s) with the address below.

PWA Assessment Centre
Reply Paid 6026
PO Box 6026
CHULLORA NSW 1405

- **post the package/s no later than 30 July 2004 (unless participating in school-based marking). Delays in returning test books cause delays in production of reports.**
- **record the date, place and time of posting here and keep this manual. This information will be used to track any late or missing packages.**

SECTION 3: AFTER THE TEST DAY

The school report package

The school report package will be distributed to schools in October 2004 and will include:

- a summary of various aspects of school results
- Table 1: a table showing the mean score and standard deviation for the school and the NSW test population
- Table 2: a list of the names of all students in the school and their results
- Table 3: a table showing percentages of students in various achievement levels for the school and the NSW test population
- Table 4: an analysis of each test question showing the proportion of the school, and the NSW test population, choosing each answer
- Table 5: a list of the names of each student showing their achievement on each criteria
- Table 6: a table showing overall progress from Year 3 to Year 5
- Copies of *Linking PWA 2004 to the Curriculum*, describing subject curriculum links and classroom strategies and copies of *Linking PWA to the ESL Scales*
- individual student reports
- parent reports
- *Marking Procedures Manual*.

When the report packages arrive check that all components are included. Contact the Educational Measurement Directorate **immediately** if any deficiencies are found. Queries cannot be investigated after 26 November 2004.

If report packages are not received

- Country schools - check with your local post office if you have not received the school report packages by the due date. If packages are not at the post office ring the PWA Helpline on **(02) 9311 9955**.
- Metropolitan Sydney Schools ring the PWA Helpline on **(02) 9311 9955** if your report packages have not arrived by the due date.

Interpreting results

The PWA results provide a snapshot of the relative performance of a very large group of students at a particular time in relation to a range of writing skills. The PWA results need to be analysed in conjunction with the Basic Skills Test results and the school data on students' writing skills.

Storage of results

The school results form a valuable cumulative set of data for evaluation and diagnostic use. Store the whole-school results carefully and securely, together with a set of test materials for reference for a minimum of 10 years after last action, then destroy securely.

Individual student reports must be retained until the student reaches the age of 25, or for seven years whichever is the greater, then destroyed. Individual student reports may be included as part of the student record cards.



Dear Parent/Caregiver,

On Wednesday 28 July 2004 all Year 3 and Year 5 students will be participating in the Primary Writing Assessment.

The writing assessment is produced by the Educational Measurement Directorate in the Department of Education and Training. The program consists of two writing tasks that will be marked against sets of criteria. These criteria assess aspects of writing such as structure, grammar, spelling and punctuation. Students complete a factual writing task and a literary task. The assessment will take about one hour.

Students are requested to provide their name, gender and age. This information will be used when reporting student achievement in writing. Students are also requested to provide information as to whether they are from an English or non-English speaking background and information as to whether or not they are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. This information is treated confidentially and held securely to ensure that all student rights to privacy are maintained. Any personal information provided by a student may be corrected at any time by contacting the Educational Measurement Directorate (telephone number (02) 9707 6280).

The results of the test will provide important information about what your child can do, and will indicate where he or she may need help. Reports will be sent to the school in Term 4 and will be used to support teaching and learning programs that will improve the literacy achievement of our students. A report giving results achieved by your child will also be provided to you.

For more information about the Primary Writing Assessment, please contact the Educational Measurement Directorate on (02) 9707 6216.

Robert Cordaiy

**Manager Contracts Development and Test Administration
Educational Measurement Directorate**

EDUCATION REGULATION 2001
Under the *Education Act 1990*

Her Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, has made
the following Regulation under the *Education Act 1990*.

JOHN AQUILINA, M.P., Minister for Education and Training

Clause 5

Publication of results: section 18A

- 1) This clause applies to the following results:
 - a) results of basic skills testing under section 18 of the Act,
 - b) results of School Certificate and Higher School Certificate examinations and related assessments.
- 2) The following are included for the purposes of subclause (1) (a):
 - a) English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA),
 - b) Year 3 and 5 Basic Skills Test (BST),
 - c) Primary Writing Assessment,
 - d) Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program (SNAP),
 - e) Year 6 and 10 Computing Skills Assessment.
- 3) Results to which this clause applies must not be publicly revealed if the results relating to particular students are revealed.
- 4) Results relating to a particular student may however be revealed as follows:
 - a) to the student, or to anyone with the student's consent,
 - b) to the student's parents (or his or her other caregivers),
 - c) to the principal of a school at which the student is enrolled or at which the student was previously enrolled,
 - d) in the case of results of School Certificate or Higher School Certificate examinations and related assessments – by or with the approval of the Board of Studies, by way of the publication of the results of students who the Board considers have achieved outstanding results.
- 5) Results to which this clause applies must not be publicly revealed in a way that ranks or otherwise compares the results of particular schools.
- 6) If a school is required (by the appropriate authority for the school) to publish an annual report of school performance but fails to do so by the due date for publication, this clause does not prevent the public release of any results that were required to be the subject of that report.
- 7) The *appropriate authority* for the purposes of subclause (6) is:
 - a) in the case of a government school – the Department of Education and Training, or
 - b) in the case of a non-government school registered as a member of a system of non-government schools – the approved authority for the system, or
 - c) in the case of a non-government school registered as an individual school – the proprietor of the school.

