



Teacher guidelines

Messages in text

Year 8

English

Students write a series of informal texts (emails or blog). They then transform this to a formal text highlighting how language and text structures change according to purpose, audience and mode.

Context for assessment

The unit supporting this assessment involves reading and writing a number of functional texts, including nonlinear and linear narratives (emails and blog messages) to invite an audience to accept a particular view or opinion about a real world issue or personal concern. Use of persuasive language, text structures and appropriate audience considerations are the focus.

**Identify
curriculum**

Defining what students are expected to learn, and how they will demonstrate their achievement.

This assessment gathers evidence of learning for the following **Essential Learnings**:

English	Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9
<p>Ways of working</p> <p>Students are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate and analyse the relationship between audience, subject matter, purpose and text type • construct non-literary texts by planning and organising subject matter according to specific text structure and referring to other texts. 	<p>Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Writing and designing</p> <p>Writing and designing involve using language elements to construct literary and non-literary texts for audiences across local, national and global contexts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of writing and designing includes parodying, analysing and arguing. • Words and phrases, symbols, images and audio affect meaning and establish and maintain roles and relationships to influence an audience. • Text users make choices about grammar and punctuation to affect meaning. • Writers and designers refer to authoritative sources and use a number of active writing strategies, including planning, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, publishing and reflecting. <p>Language elements</p> <p>Interpreting and constructing texts involve manipulating grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, audio and visual elements, in print-based, electronic and face-to-face modes (speaking and listening, reading and viewing, writing and designing) across local, national and global contexts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraphs build and sustain cohesion and develop a central idea. • Vocabulary is chosen to establish roles and relationships with an audience, including the demonstration of personal authority and credibility.

Source: Queensland Studies Authority 2007, *English Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9*, QSA, Brisbane.

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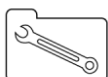
English	Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9
	<p>Knowledge and understanding</p> <p><i>Literary and non-literary texts</i></p> <p>Manipulating literary and non-literary texts involves analysing purpose, audience, subject matter and text structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audiences can be positioned to view characters and ideas in particular ways and these views can be questioned. • Dialogue constructs relationships between characters and furthers a narrative. • Non-literary texts analyse, inform, argue and persuade. • Feature articles, current affairs and news reports, formal letters, editorials, radio programs, film documentaries, reviews, biographies, advertisements, letters to the editor, expositions, formal meetings and debates, and extended presentations are types of non-literary texts. • Non-literary texts can conclude with recommendations, restating the main arguments or summarising a position.
<p>Assessable elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and understanding • Constructing texts • Interpreting texts 	
<p>Source: Queensland Studies Authority 2007, <i>English Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9</i>, QSA, Brisbane.</p>	

Sequence learning

Describing learning experiences and resources that will enable students to complete the assessment.

Listed here are suggested **learning experiences** for students before attempting this assessment.

- Select a:
 - subject focusing on a real world issue, such as rising ocean levels/global warming/water restriction
 - multimodal genre. Use a number of devices (such as a story web) to map a nonlinear persuasive narrative.
- Model and provide examples to highlight responses to questions such as:
 - how will the subject be seen or imagined?
 - what special subject or trait will the nonlinear narrative assume?
- Select the kinds of words that will persuade the audience.
- Plan the content of the text using concept maps, drafts and peer reading.
- Model and review functional text samples, nonlinear narratives and multimodal models, e.g. a blog demonstrating features of a nonlinear narrative.
- Revise text type samples to demonstrate how one form can be transformed to represent different purposes and audiences.
- Review draft feedback expectations to be provided by peer and teacher.
- Review language elements and structures used in texts to engage different audiences and text purposes.



Teacher resources

Blog starting point site: <www.blogger.com/start> (Provides space and step-by-step instructions.)

Letter styles: <<http://englishplus.com/grammar/lettrcont.htm>>

Formal letters: <www.usingenglish.com/resources/letter-writing.html>

Language use: <www.cybergrammar.co.uk/discourses_cohesion.php>

Writing style: <<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/studyskills/academic/writing-style/index.html>>

Develop assessment

Gathering evidence that demonstrates how well students have achieved the curriculum expectations.

Preparing

Section 1. Nonlinear narrative

This assessment has been designed for partnership writing and responding. Each member in the partnership will fulfil a responder role for the other's email or blog messages over the course of the work sessions. Alternatively a student could work by themselves assuming both the lead and responder roles for their own email or blog messages.

- Organise the partnership working roles and responsibilities. Consideration of gender balance, interests and collaborative skills may inform decision.
- Establish appropriate user protocols with students when using genres that involve technology.
- Design an appropriate concept map or other format to assist students in structuring their subject/event. You may wish to use the supplied resource, *Concept map* (Appendix C).
- Review and display the resource *Informal writing conventions* sheet (Appendix A).
- Use these types of questions to guide student decisions and content focuses.
 - How will the subject be seen or imagined?
 - What special subject or trait will the nonlinear narrative assume?
 - In what ways will the subject and information be communicated to provide clear representations and interpretations to the reader?

Section 2. Formal text transformation

- Identify and clarify the last component of the assessment with students.
- Remind students how the language selection in formal texts differs from that in informal texts, and how language use changes depending on the audience. For example, the language level used when talking with friends would differ from the language level used with the school Principal.
- Provide a sample of a formal letter to explain structure. Refer to and display the resource *Formal writing conventions* (Appendix B). Revisit the conventions of grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Use of ICT formats

Students will need permission to use any electronic medium that relies on school network resources. Teachers should outline the guidelines and expectations for acceptable use.

If you want to offer alternatives to email or blog modes for the nonlinear text, consider a movie production. This may involve a series of three interviews or a dramatic documentary captured using video footage. Students should include storyboards and scripts.

If choosing to use “real time” blog or email formats, please liaise with the Head of Department or Information Communication technician to set up and select a suitable blog site and browser protocols.

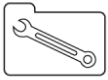
As another option, consider the use of a paper template for the blog or email format. This alleviates the reliance upon access to computers without compromising the intent of the assessment. Using computers to generate the nonlinear narrative is optional, but it may help to engage students.

Implementation

Sample implementation plan

This table shows one way that this assessment can be implemented. It is a guide only — you may choose to use all, part, or none of the table. You may customise the table to suit your students and their school environment.

Suggested time	Student activity	Teacher role
Section 1. Nonlinear narrative		
Session 1	Students are introduced to messages in texts. They revisit key challenges and demands of the assessment, and read a sample text to highlight features of nonlinear narratives (emails/blogs). Students select partners and mode of informal text. Students commence research and planning for the real world issue or personal concern using a selected graphic organiser or alternative strategy.	Print off concept map (Appendix C) or organiser format for drafting purposes. Allocate partnership. Source text or other prompt to demonstrate desirable features of a nonlinear narrative. Post <i>Informal writing conventions</i> sheet (Appendix A) in the classroom.
Session 2	Students produce first and second drafts using text information, language elements for audience and subject representation on concept map. Share draft with partner.	Provide feedback on student drafts.
Session 3	Students work towards completing a draft of their informal messages. Exchange work with partner for feedback.	
Session 4	Students complete their final draft of nonlinear text. Select audience for the formal letter text transformed from the nonlinear text.	Sign student drafts. Post samples of persuasive formal language features in the classroom. Post <i>Formal writing conventions</i> sheet (Appendix B) in the classroom. Review set text structure punctuation, spelling and grammar.
Section 2. Formal text transformation		
Sessions 5–7	Commence writing of formal text. Finalise draft of formal text and share with partner. Hand in completed nonlinear narrative, draft materials and transformed letter text.	Review formal text structures and features. Collect completed drafts, concept maps and text types.



Resources for the assessment

- Appendix A Informal writing conventions
- Appendix B Formal writing conventions
- Appendix C Concept map

Make judgments

Making standards-referenced, consistent judgments.

During the learning process, you and your students should have developed a shared understanding of the curriculum expectations identified as part of the planning process.

After students have completed the assessment, identify, gather and interpret the information provided in student responses. Use only the evidence in student responses to make your judgment about the quality of the student learning.

Refer to the following documents to assist you in making standards-referenced judgments:

- *Guide to making judgments*
- *Indicative A response*
- *Sample responses* (where available).

Evaluate both sections for each assessable element. You may wish to highlight your judgment for each text type in the space provided at the bottom of each task-specific standard descriptor (Informal text | Formal text). You can then use this to help you make a collective judgment.

The Observation record located at the bottom of the *Guide to making judgment* sheet is a simple “yes or no” judgment. It does not inform the overall A to E standard given for the assessment, but gives useful feedback to inform future student learning.



For further information, refer to the resource [Using a Guide to making judgments](#), available in the Resources section of the Assessment Bank website.

Use feedback

Using feedback to enrich teaching and learning.

Evaluate the information gathered from the assessment to inform teaching and learning strategies.

Involve students in the feedback process. Give students opportunities to ask follow-up questions and share their learning observations or experiences.

Focus feedback on the student’s personal progress. Emphasise continuous progress relative to their previous achievement and to the learning expectations — avoid comparing a student with their classmates.



For further information, refer to the resource [Using feedback](#), available in the Resources section of the Assessment Bank website.

Informal writing conventions

Language elements	Correct spelling, tense and punctuation are not the focus of informal writing and may be inconsistent. However, the selection and use of language should always be appropriate. Text is written in the present tense.
Structure	Text posting/sharing can continue indefinitely and paragraph conventions do not apply. Text messages and responses are posted when the reader chooses, and URL links to other electronic sources or websites should be featured.
What is a blog?	<p>A blog is a personal diary. It can also be a collaborative space, a political soapbox, a breaking-news outlet, a memo to the world, or a collection of links that represent your own private thoughts.</p> <p>In simple terms, a blog is a website where you write content on an ongoing basis. New postings show up at the top of the page while the oldest information is located at the bottom of the blog frame. Participants post their thoughts or responses and these are logged within a new frame and automatically dated.</p>

Source: <www2.blogger.com>

Formal writing conventions

Language elements	The tone of this writing should be formal, so avoid conversational language such as contractions, abbreviations, and slang. Write in the present tense using full sentences (simple and compound). Structure your ideas in paragraphs and use linking words and phrases, such as “therefore” and “for this reason”, which support reasoning or refer to cause and effect information.
Writing a formal letter	<p>Write your address in either the top left-hand corner of the page. Write the address of the person to whom you are writing in the top left-hand corner of the page, starting below your address. Capitalise the first letter of each name and place, and leave out commas and full stops.</p> <p>Write the date on the left, on the line after the address of the person to whom you are writing. Write the day’s date as a number and the month as a word, e.g. 20 January 2007.</p> <p>If you do not know the name of the person you are writing to, use “Dear Sir or Madam” with no comma. If you know the name, use the title (Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss, Dr, Cr, etc.) and the surname only and don’t use punctuation. If you are writing to a woman and do not know if she uses Mrs or Miss, use Ms as this represents both married and single women.</p>
	The first paragraph should be short and state the purpose of the letter. This may be to make an inquiry, a complaint or request.
	The middle paragraph/s should contain relevant information connected to the purpose of the letter. Most formal letters are not long, so keep the information concise, use persuasive language and supporting evidence that is organised in a clear, logical manner.
	The concluding paragraph should state what action you would like the person to whom you are writing to take as a result of the letter.
	To end the letter , use “Yours sincerely” if you know the name of the person, or “Yours faithfully” if you do not. Sign your name, and then print your name underneath the signature. If you think the person you are writing to might not know whether you are male or female, put your title in brackets after your name.

Sources: <www.usingenglish.com/resources/letter-writing.html>
<www.cybergrammar.co.uk/discourses_cohesion.php>
<<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/studyskills/academic/writing-style/index.html>>

Concept map

Name

