

# NAPLAN 16

Newsletter: August 2016

To keep teachers informed, please post this newsletter on staff noticeboard.

## NAPLAN reports

Class and school reports are now available on the NAPLAN portal

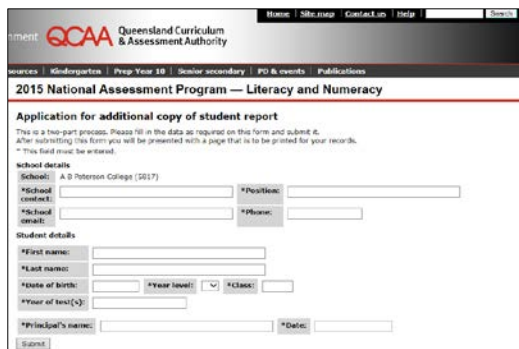
<https://naplan.qcaa.qld.edu.au/naplan/>.

For any queries or changes to the results please lodge an appeal through the test administration page of the portal. All appeals must be received by 16 September 2016.

Student reports should now have been received by most schools. Please check them before sending them home. For further information, see the July newsletter and the memo.

## Request for additional copy of a student report

All schools will now be able to access this form all year round via the NAPLAN portal. Log in with your school BIC and password and select *Forms* from the list on the left. You will need to complete one form per student. The QCAA will process the application and send the report via Australia Post for you to pass on to parents/carers.



## Faint scripts: 2B or not 2B

Electronic copies of individual student writing test scripts are made available to schools through the NAPLAN portal. Some of these images are faint, because of the writing implements used by students when the test

was conducted. It is not possible to provide schools with any further or enhanced images. However, the QCAA does have processes in place to deal with faint scripts at the time of marking.

Writing test scripts are scanned by the contractor so electronic image can be presented to markers using the OLA (Online Assessment) software. In most cases, these electronic images are easily accessible to markers. However, some scripts are so light in image as to be almost unreadable.

This problem is usually caused by Year 7 and 9 students using mechanical pencils. That is why students are asked to use a 2B or HB pencil, or a pen.

When scripts cannot be read on screen, often the markers have to use both the student's paper test and the image to mark the writing task.



Very light scripts take a long time to read and mark. The task is particularly challenging where the writing is very pale and badly written and/or spelt. As seen in the photograph, markers often have to work together to decipher the script so that students receive the fairest possible mark.

**Your support in making sure that students do not use mechanical pencils in 2017 would be greatly appreciated.**

# The Writing test

## Approaches to genre

The 2016 NAPLAN Writing test was based on the Narrative genre, for the first time since 2010. **ACARA** advise that the 2017 Writing test will be based on either **persuasive** or **narrative** genres. Attempts to 'predict' the genre at a school level as a means of informing classroom planning and instruction are not overly successful and may disadvantage students in their learning.

The NAPLAN writing test results should be seen within the context of a broadly-based school writing program, i.e., the test result is simply one measure of how students are performing in this aspect of literacy. The more schools and teachers focus on a broad range of written text types across all written genres appropriate to the particular year level/s, the stronger the improvement in writing outcomes is likely to be. In essence, the more students write (with appropriate support, feedback, modelling, authenticity), the more likely their writing will show development and maturity.

Certainly, the NAPLAN Writing test results inform school curriculum planning and priorities. The provision of the original scripts, via the QCAA NAPLAN Portal, are useful in illustrating trends, strengths and weaknesses in student writing.

## Aspects of the 2016 Writing test

A more thorough analysis of the 2016 NAPLAN testing program will be provided in the State Report, produced by the QCAA later this year. However, some broad features of note are provided here.

- Writing within the narrative genre, students tended to produce longer scripts.
- 'Off topic' responses were generally rare. The broad Year 3 & 5 prompt, *Imagine*, provided considerable scope for younger writers in particular.
- Though the prompt for Years 7 & 9, *The sign said*, was more specific than that for Years 3 & 5, students were able to

generate ideas that suited the narrative form. The images provided on the prompt did provide adequate stimulus for writing. At the higher end, students were able to generate their own '*signs*', with some choosing quite unique and provocative interpretations, such as the Year 9 student who took a telling facial expression as a 'sign' to drive the narrative.

- The notion of **complication** within 'story' was not always clearly understood or applied. This was the case in both the Years 3 & 5 task, and the Years 7 & 9 task. This would seem to be an area that would suit quite direct approaches in teaching programs, particularly in the lower grades where *recount* is a more familiar and comfortable narrative form for younger writers. The *Text Structure* criterion within the NAPLAN marking rubric rewards story forms that include identifiable complication/s that 'drive' the narrative.

## 2017 Marking

Training as a NAPLAN Writing test marker is one of the best professional development opportunities in writing. To join the marking team, please go to the QCAA website: [naplan.qcaa.qld.edu.au/naplan](http://naplan.qcaa.qld.edu.au/naplan).

## NAPLAN ONLINE

During August, a number of Queensland schools will conduct the PTRT (Platform Trial Readiness Test) to prepare for the initial pilot of NAPLAN Online, planned to begin in 2017. Approximately 100 schools will be involved in this process, representing all school sectors.

Currently, schools involved with PTRT are being inducted into aspects of the platform through webinars, presentations and workshops. A range of publications will also soon be available. Feedback will inform aspects of the delivery of NAPLAN Online.

Future newsletters will provide more detailed information on NAPLAN Online.