

# NAPLAN — Year 9 Literacy

## Set 3 — Sample Language conventions test answers

### About the sample Language conventions test

The NAPLAN Language conventions test has questions on spelling and aspects of punctuation, grammar, style and language use. The formats and response types for these practice items are similar to those used in the real tests. To prepare students for the test, be sure they understand that spelling questions are in two proof-reading formats and in both cases the target word is presented with a misspelling.

The grammar and punctuation questions are about formal, written Australian English, not oral speech habits. When they are told to “correctly complete” a sentence, students must think about conventional grammar, vocabulary and punctuation.

Rather than use proofreading formats alone to test spelling as is done in the NAPLAN tests, teachers should use dictation and spelling-in-writing formats as well. Teachers in all subject areas, not only English, should be responsible for student spelling and other aspects of literacy. They should take note of the skills involved in this sample test but teach and assess them within wider contexts of written communication.

### Answers

<b>Spelling</b>	1 probably; 2 drawers; 3 Spaghetti; 4 anxious; 5 whispering; 6 anniversary; 7 consonants; 8 rewiring; 9 ingenious; 10 extraordinary; 11 ancestry; 12 mechanical; 13 assignments; 14 research; 15 consideration; 16 overwhelmingly; 17 controversial; 18 proposition
<b>Grammar and Punctuation</b>	19B; 20B; 21C; 22D; 23B; 24A; 25D; 26B; 27D; 28A; 29D; 30B; 31C; 32C; 33A; 34B; 35C; 36A; 37[1, 6, 2, 4, 5, 3]; 38C; 39C

Teacher notes on Question 9: The ingenious telephone marketer made a fake enquiry.

The key is *ingenious*. This question was designed to target an error noted in student writing and to provide a teaching opportunity. Explaining why *ingenius* is a non-word is a way to show how word components can explain their meaning. Similarly, explaining why *enquiry* is correct and *inquiry* would be wrong in this sentence is a way to show how word function is important.

#### Analysis of *ingenious*

*in-*: a prefix that can mean either “not” (e.g. *ineligible*) or, as in this case, it can mean “within”, “toward”, “into” (e.g. *infiltrate*).

*gen*: From a Latin root word meaning “produce”, “give birth to”.

*-ious*: a suffix meaning “full of” or “having”. It turns a noun into an adjective.

Putting these elements together, the word literally meant “inborn”, but after much usage in English, it came to mean “especially clever”.

#### Analysis of *genius*

*gen*: This is the same Latin-derived root word with a meaning “produce”. The spirits created in a particular place were called, in Latin, the *genii loci*.

*-us*: This is a suffix in Latin that forms a singular, so the singular of spirits (*genii*) is *genius*, just as the Latin singular of *stimuli* is *stimulus*. Over time in English usage, *genius* came to mean “a specially intelligent or creative person”.

Anglicised plural and singular inflections are increasingly being used for these borrowed Latin words, so, in Australian English, we now say *geniuses* and *stimuluses*.

### Analysis of *enquiry*

To answer this question, students need to be sure that *enquiry* is the correct usage in the context and that it is therefore not the example in the sentence of an incorrectly spelled word. They might believe, in particular, that the word *inquiry* is needed in the context rather than the word *enquiry*. This is not the case. Although the two words are both nouns and both contain word elements with similar meanings, their actual usage and meaning is separate. *Inquiry* is a noun used for an organised set of actions that investigate a problem or event. *Enquiry* is a noun used for a single question. So, the words are used as in this example:

At the official **inquiry** into crime rates, the solicitor made an **enquiry** about police policies.

Teacher notes on Question 21: Her and her cat lives next to your shop.

The correct answer is C (*She and her cat live next to your shop*). *She and her cat* form a compound subject. It could be replaced by *they*. A plural subject requires a plural verb (We say *one lives* but *two live*). *Her* is a possessive pronoun. It is always an adjective and cannot be used as if it were the same as the noun, *She*.

## References

Bear, DR, Invernizzi, M, Templeton, S & Johnston, F, 2008, *Words their way: Word Study for phonics, Vocabulary and spelling instruction* (4th ed), Pearson, Upper Saddle River.

Ganske, K, 2008, *Mindful of words: Spelling and vocabulary explorations 4–8*, The Guilford Press, New York.

## Resources

Resources on the QSA website that may be useful include:

- *Spelling Yrs 1–9: scope and sequence guide* — [www.qsa.qld.edu.au/7284.html](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/7284.html)
- *A framework for describing spelling items* — [www.qsa.qld.edu.au/1443.html](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/1443.html)
- *Grammar Yrs 1–9: scope and sequence guide* — [www.qsa.qld.edu.au/7284.html](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/7284.html)
- *Teachers' notes: Notes on grammar* — [www.qsa.qld.edu.au/1443.html](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/1443.html).