**Purposes of assessment**

The purposes of assessment are to:

- promote, assist and improve student learning
- inform programs of teaching and learning
- provide information for those people — students, parents, teachers — who need to know about the progress and achievements of individual students to help them achieve to the best of their abilities
- provide information for the issuing of certificates of achievement
- provide information to those people who need to know how well groups of students are achieving (school authorities, the State Minister for Education and Training and the Arts, the Federal Minister for Education).

It is common practice to label assessment as being formative, diagnostic or summative, according to the major purpose of the assessment.

The major purpose of formative assessment is to help students attain higher levels of performance. The major purpose of diagnostic assessment is to determine the nature of students' learning, and then provide the appropriate feedback or intervention. The major purpose of summative assessment is to indicate the achievement status or standards achieved by students at a particular point in their schooling. It is geared towards reporting and certification.

**Syllabus requirements**

Teachers should ensure that assessment instruments are consistent with the requirements, techniques and conditions of the English Communication Study Area Specification and the implementation year 2004.

**Assessment instruments**

High-quality assessment instruments:

- have construct validity (the instruments actually assess what they were designed to assess)
- have face validity (they appear to assess what you believe they are intended to assess)
- give students clear and definite instructions
- are written in language suited to the reading capabilities of the students for whom the instruments are intended
- are clearly presented through appropriate choice of layout, cues, visual design, format and choice of words
- are used under clear, definite and specified conditions that are appropriate for all the students whose achievements are being assessed
- have clear criteria for making judgments about achievements (these criteria are shared with students before they are assessed)
- are used under conditions that allow optimal participation for all
- are inclusive of students’ diverse backgrounds
- allow students to demonstrate the breadth and depth of their achievements
- only involve the reproduction of gender, socioeconomic, ethnic or other cultural factors if careful consideration has determined that such reproduction is necessary.

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2 Assessment instruments are the actual tools used by schools and the QSA to gather information about student achievement, for example, recorded observation of a game of volleyball, write-up of a field trip to the local water catchment and storage area, a test of number facts, the Senior External Examination in Chinese, the 2006 QCS Test, the 2008 Year 4 English comparable assessment task.

English Communication (2004)

Sample assessment instrument
Written assessment

Compiled by the Queensland Studies Authority
June 2010

About this assessment instrument

The purpose of this document is to inform assessment practices of teachers in schools. For this reason, the assessment instrument is not presented in a way that would allow its immediate application in a school context. In particular, the assessment technique is presented in isolation from other information relevant to the implementation of the assessment. For further information about those aspects of the assessment not explained in this document, please refer to the assessment section of the syllabus.

This sample demonstrates:

- knowledge about constructing texts in the contexts of work, community and leisure, taking into account the way that meanings in texts are shaped by purpose, cultural context and social situation
- knowledge, understanding and control of the appropriate use of textual features for particular purposes and audiences in the contexts of work, community and leisure
- knowledge of how people's different values, beliefs and attitudes influence meaning.

This sample assessment instrument is intended to be a guide to help teachers plan and develop assessment instruments for individual school settings.
Assessment instrument

Happy Valley Music Festival

Context
You have prepared a proposal for a free concert for teenagers featuring a debut band, competitions, demonstrations, displays and food. This proposal has been accepted by the local council.

Task
As one of the event organisers, you are to prepare the following documents:

1. a detailed program for the day including times that bands will be playing and other scheduled activities (Purpose: to inform. Audience: event goers)
2. a map of the venue, including stages, activities, food stalls, toilets and parking (Purpose: to inform. Audience: event goers)
3. an email to a private security company advising them of the event details and your requirements (Purpose: to inform and clarify. Audience: manager of local security company)
4. a business letter to local businesses trying to gather their support for sponsorship (Purpose: to persuade. Audience: local business owners)
5. a two-sided ticket for the event (including rules / expected standards of behaviour) OR a t-shirt design for the event (Audience: event goers).

Length: total of 500 words for all documents
Instrument-specific criteria and standards

Schools draw instrument-specific criteria and standards from the syllabus dimensions and exit standards. Schools will make judgments about the match of qualities of student responses with the standards descriptors that are specific to the particular assessment instrument. While all syllabus exit descriptors might not be assessed in a single assessment instrument, across the course of study, opportunities to demonstrate all the syllabus dimensions and standards descriptors must be provided.

The assessment instrument presented in this document provides opportunities for the demonstration of the following criteria:

- Knowledge of contextual factors
- Knowledge of textual features
- Knowledge and understanding of texts.
### Knowledge of Contextual Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>consistently using patterns and conventions of nominated genres to achieve particular purposes</td>
<td>using patterns and conventions of nominated genres to achieve particular purposes</td>
<td>in the main, using patterns and conventions of nominated genres to achieve particular purposes</td>
<td>unevenly using patterns and conventions of nominated genres to achieve some purposes</td>
<td>using some conventions of nominated genres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>selecting and synthesising relevant subject matter</td>
<td>selecting sufficient relevant subject matter</td>
<td>explaining information, ideas and arguments</td>
<td>selecting some relevant subject matter</td>
<td>selecting some relevant subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explaining information, ideas and arguments</td>
<td>using adequate role as event organiser and relationship with nominated audience</td>
<td>using appropriate role as event organiser and relationship with nominated audience</td>
<td>explaining some information, ideas and arguments</td>
<td>occasionally using appropriate role as event organiser and relationship with nominated audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>controlling appropriate role as event organiser and relationship with nominated audience</td>
<td>selecting and integrating modes and media, where appropriate</td>
<td>selecting and combining modes and media, where appropriate</td>
<td>using some designated modes and media</td>
<td>using some designated modes and media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Knowledge of Textual Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>consistently sequencing and organising subject matter</td>
<td>sequencing and organising subject matter</td>
<td>in the main, sequencing and organising subject matter</td>
<td>unevenly sequencing and organising subject matter</td>
<td>linking some ideas with conjunctions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consistently using cohesive ties to link ideas</td>
<td>usually linking ideas with cohesive ties</td>
<td>sometimes linking ideas with cohesive ties</td>
<td>linking some ideas with conjunctions</td>
<td>using a narrow range of basic vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>using a range of suitable vocabulary</td>
<td>using suitable vocabulary</td>
<td>in the main, using suitable vocabulary</td>
<td>using some ideas with conjunctions</td>
<td>using a narrow range of clause and sentence structures, with frequent lapses that impede understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>controlling most clause and sentence structures</td>
<td>generally maintaining control of most clause and sentence structures</td>
<td>using clause and sentence structures with occasional lapses in accuracy</td>
<td>using some clause and sentence structures, with frequent lapses</td>
<td>using some punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maintaining control of paragraphing and most punctuation</td>
<td>generally maintaining control of paragraphing and most punctuation</td>
<td>in the main, controlling paragraphing and punctuation</td>
<td>sometimes using conventional spelling</td>
<td>infrequently using conventional spelling so that understanding is impeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>controlling conventional spelling</td>
<td>generally controlling conventional spelling</td>
<td>using conventional spelling with some lapses</td>
<td>using some visual (graphic, still and moving images) and/or digital (graphic design elements) features</td>
<td>linking some ideas with conjunctions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>controlling visual (graphic, still and moving images) and/or digital (graphic design elements) features to make meaning in layout or presentation of texts</td>
<td>using, with some success, visual (graphic, still and moving images) and/or digital (graphic design elements) features to make meaning in layout or presentation of texts</td>
<td>using visual (graphic, still and moving images) and/or digital (graphic design elements) features that in the main contribute to the layout or presentation of texts</td>
<td>using some visual (graphic, still and moving images) and/or digital (graphic design elements) features</td>
<td>using some punctuation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student has demonstrated knowledge of the ways that meanings in texts are shaped by purpose, cultural context and social situation by:

- consistently using patterns and conventions of nominated genres to achieve particular purposes
- selecting and synthesising relevant subject matter
- explaining information, ideas and arguments
- controlling appropriate role as event organiser and relationship with nominated audience
- selecting and integrating modes and media, where appropriate

The student has demonstrated knowledge of the appropriateness of textual features for purposes and audiences by:

- consistently sequencing and organising subject matter
- using a range of suitable vocabulary
- controlling most clause and sentence structures
- maintaining control of paragraphing and most punctuation
- controlling conventional spelling
- controlling visual (graphic, still and moving images) and/or digital (graphic design elements) features to make meaning in layout or presentation of texts
The student has demonstrated knowledge of how texts are interpreted and constructed by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge and understanding of texts</strong></td>
<td><strong>Purposefully shaping</strong> representations of places, events and concepts in texts</td>
<td><strong>Shaping</strong> representations of places, events and concepts in texts</td>
<td><strong>Unevenly shaping</strong> representations of places, events and concepts in texts</td>
<td><strong>Sometimes shaping</strong> representations of places, events and concepts in texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Effectively using cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs in texts</strong></td>
<td><strong>Using cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs in texts</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unevenly using cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs in texts</strong></td>
<td><strong>Using attitudes and beliefs in texts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Making language choices to invite nominated audiences to take up positions in relation to texts.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Making language choices that generally invite nominated audiences to take up positions in relation to texts.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Making language choices that sometimes invite nominated audiences to take up positions in relation to texts.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Recognising that texts influence nominated audiences.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: Colour highlights have been used in the table to emphasise the qualities that discriminate between the standards.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>