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National Examinations Board
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Handbook for Developing Item Writing Skills
English
2025

Users/Readers are requested to review this draft assessment framework and provide their valuable comments and suggestions.

National Examinations Board

Foreword

The National Examinations Board (NEB) has developed a training handbook for subjects such as Science and Technology, Mathematics, and English for Grades 8, 10 and 12. The overarching aim of the handbooks prepared for different subjects is to improve classroom teaching and learning through standardised items being used in due course of classroom teaching and assessment.

This handbook is designed to support both examiners and classroom teachers in creating high-quality test items. It provides a structured framework for making the assessment more standardised, reliable, valid, and comparable.

Development of test items is based on assessment framework developed by NEB, and approved by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST). This framework is based on the curriculum and specification grids issued by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC). All questions (test items) have been developed in accordance with the specific learning outcomes and cognitive levels envisioned in the curriculum.

This handbook presents sample items/questions for English subjects of Grade 8, 10 and 12. The sample questions included here are meant to serve as representative models for the respective grades. During the development of these model questions, efforts were made to integrate subject content, item/question formats, and cognitive domains. Additionally, the learning outcomes have been taken verbatim from the curriculum where the action verbs are measurable, and where not, they are further specified and adapted as objectives.

Each model question includes the following features:

- Coverage of reading and writing skills
- Aligned with learning outcomes
- Description of the question format
- Cognitive level targeted by the question

This handbook also contains an explanation of question formats as specified by the specification grid, along with examples of cognitive levels and their interpretations. It further presents how learning outcomes of Grades 8, 10, and 12 are aligned with the cognitive levels of the sample questions. This handbook is useful for anyone interested in developing test items for the English subject prescribed in the school level.

This handbook was prepared by an expert team comprising Tika Ram Bhatta, PhD and Matrika Subedi. My sincere gratitude goes to both the expert team and other panelist who provided constructive feedback during the finalization process of this handbook. I am indeed grateful to Prof. Dr. Ganesh Bahadur Singh, who technically guided for its preparation. The administrative task was led by Mr. Subash Pant, Deputy Controller of Examinations with the support of Arjun Prasad Dahal and Subash Siwakoti, at the National Examinations Board.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The teaching-learning process conducted in the classroom is guided by the curriculum and the learning outcomes specified therein. The curriculum serves as the basis for measuring students' achievement of these outcomes, while the specification grid supports the measurement of the learning outcomes. Therefore, classroom teaching-learning as well as assessment of learning outcomes rely on the curriculum, learning outcomes, and specification grid mentioned therein as primary sources. In this context, a brief review of theoretical aspects is considered necessary for preparing items and item sets. Although measurement, testing, and evaluation are distinct processes, they are interrelated. Therefore, these three concepts are often used interchangeably in this handbook.

Basis for Item Development

Since tests based on the curriculum measure the level of students' learning outcomes, the primary basis for item development is the curriculum and grade-wise and subject-specific learning outcomes specified therein. As learning outcomes are related to the subject matter, the scope and depth of the subject matter related to the learning outcomes must also be considered in the textbook developed by the Curriculum Development Centre. However, the textbook alone should not be taken as the sole basis for question construction. If this is done, the cognitive level sought by the stipulated learning outcomes and the specification grid may not be accurately reflected in the test paper, increasing the likelihood of errors.

In the specification grid, the subject matter to be included in a test paper, the cognitive level, the type of item, and the marks assigned to the item are specified, ensuring that the question tests the learning outcomes included in the curriculum. Each item should clearly indicate which learning outcome it measures and to what extent, and this should be determined before constructing the question. Therefore, to construct questions, the cognitive level, type, and marks must be specified according to the learning outcomes, and the specification grid is detailed accordingly. When detailing, if a learning outcome covers two or more content, those subject matters are separated and detailed in the specification grid. This ensures that the number of learning outcomes in the specification grid is often higher than those specified in the curriculum. When constructing item based on a detailed specification grid, the potential number of item increases significantly. (An example of a detailed specification grid is provided in the Annex.)

Items are developed based on the item domain. When constructing these questions, they should be prepared according to the domain, category, or learning outcome, following the cognitive level specified in the detailed specification grid. Additionally, the required number of item should be constructed in excess to ensure the quality of the questions after final selection.

Process for Ensuring Item Quality

The items prepared by the item developer must be of the required quality and aligned with the curriculum and specification grid. Two processes can be followed to ensure this. The items submitted by item writer are paneled and moderated to select, revise, rewrite or discard.

For item paneling, a team of approximately five members, including the subject teacher, evaluation expert, subject expert, and other relevant personnel, is formed. This team ensures whether the item aligns with the learning outcomes and specification grid of the curriculum, modifies them as needed, and sends them back for revision if required.

The items approved through paneling are moderated by a moderation committee, as determined by the relevant authority, and approved according to the prescribed process and rules. The approved items are kept in a repository for additional processes or future use.

Item Card

An item card is a detailed record associated with a specific test item within a repository. It contains information about the item, including its content, characteristics, and usage history, to facilitate efficient management and retrieval of test questions. Teachers should follow certain principles to ensure the quality of the items.

- Items are well aligned to the curricular goals.
- Items assess a range of cognitive dimensions of learning.
- Items cannot be guessed.
- Items are evaluated in a fair, transparent, and credible manner.

The construction of questions in the English subject is done for individual items in accordance with the curriculum and specification grid. For this purpose, item cards are used as described below.

Sample Item Card

1) Subject:

2) Item cell code:

Unit	LO	Area (R/W)	If R - skill	Format	Marks	Text type

3) Elaborated item code (for English):

4) Learning outcome (from curriculum):

.....

5) Objective of the item (in line with learning outcome):

.....

6) Item (in English Only):

.....

7) Key answer/marking scheme (in English only):

.....

.....

Note:- LO = Learning Outcome; R/W= Reading/Writing

Item writers should write the items in the separate item card for each item/question as instructed by the relevant authority

Chapter 2

Item Format

This chapter presents the model items of the English subject prescribed for all Grades in School school-level curriculum in general and for Grades 8, 10 and 12 in particular. It contains item formats, language skills, and content areas to be assessed, cognitive levels and their descriptions, and sample items by the specification grid of the respective grades.

Item Format to Assess Reading Skills

Assessing reading skills in English is a crucial component of language proficiency evaluation, encompassing various sub-skills such as decoding, fluency, vocabulary knowledge, and comprehension. Effective assessment requires a balanced approach that integrates both formative and summative methods. Formative assessments, such as running records and observational checklists, allow educators to monitor progress and adapt instruction accordingly (Afflerbach, 2017). In contrast, summative assessments like standardised reading tests provide a snapshot of students' overall reading abilities and benchmark performance against established norms. Additionally, the assessment of reading comprehension should include both literal and inferential understanding, ensuring that learners not only retrieve information but also make meaning from text (Snow, 2002). The use of diverse text types and question formats enhances the reliability and validity of assessments. Moreover, diagnostic tools are essential for identifying specific reading difficulties, such as dyslexia, enabling targeted interventions (Paris & Stahl, 2005). As reading is influenced by linguistic, cognitive, and socio-cultural factors, assessments should be culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate to ensure equity. Overall, a comprehensive approach to assessing reading in English supports informed instruction and fosters student literacy development. The item types for different grades for assessing reading have been stipulated in the specification grid prescribed for each grade.

Item Stimulus and Context for Assessing Reading Skills

While creating effective test items, the first step is to determine the context and choose or develop a stimulus. The term "stimulus" refers to the prompt or background information upon which a test item is based. This material sets the stage for the question and can include text, diagrams, graphs, tables, maps, charts, or a mix of these elements.

Most test development starts with selecting or crafting suitable stimulus content. In reading assessments, this usually involves longer texts that support multiple questions or assess a variety of skills. Stimuli are crucial in reading comprehension assessments because they provide the context and content for evaluating a student's comprehension of a text. The selection and design of these stimuli directly impact the validity and reliability of the assessment, influencing whether the assessment accurately measures what it intends to. Effective stimulus material should clearly highlight the aspects being assessed and avoid irrelevant, repetitive, or unnecessary details. High-quality stimuli are meaningful and worth analyzing; engaging for the intended audience; well-written and visually well-structured; strike a balance in difficulty—not too easy or too hard; avoid misleading or irrelevant difficulties; factually accurate; prompt thoughtful, in-depth questions and are self-contained, requiring no outside information.

When selecting texts to assess reading skills, it's crucial to consider the text's relevance to students' lives, its readability level, and the purpose of the assessment. Texts should be engaging, developmentally appropriate, and offer opportunities for students to demonstrate various reading

skills, such as comprehension, vocabulary, and inferencing. The following table shows some important consideration about the selection of the texts or the stimuli.

Relevance and Engagement	Relatability: Texts should resonate with students' experiences, interests, Grade level and cultural backgrounds. Interest: Choose topics that students find engaging and motivating. Diversity: Incorporate diverse characters, perspectives, and genres.
Textual Features	Readability: Ensure the text is at an appropriate level of difficulty for the students' reading abilities. Consider factors like vocabulary, sentence length, and complexity. Text Structure: Choose texts with clear structures (e.g., description, cause-effect) that can be used to assess comprehension and inferencing skills, according to Reading Rockets. Purpose: Consider the purpose of the assessment and choose texts that align with the skills being assessed (e.g., informational texts for assessing factual recall, narratives for assessing inferencing). Content: Select texts with rich content and depth of information that can stimulate critical thinking and analysis. Authenticity: Include a mix of literary and informational texts to expose students to a variety of genres and writing styles. Texts can be analyzed by using different tools (e.g., textinspector.com) that indicate the difficulty level, readability and equate them with international standards like Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).
Student Factors	Reading Levels: Assess students' reading levels and choose appropriately challenging texts, neither too easy nor too difficult. Background Knowledge: Consider students' prior knowledge and experiences related to the text's topic. Cultural Background: Be mindful of students' cultural backgrounds and choose texts that are culturally responsive and affirming. Individual Needs: Provide differentiated texts and support to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

Item Writing Guidelines: General Issues

Item writers should consider the following guidelines while developing the items. While developing items for testing reading comprehension, item developers should pay attention to carefully select the text. Item writers need to search for authentic resources allowing enough time for editing and other types of items for revision.

1. Base each item on a learning outcome.
2. Focus on a single problem.
3. Keep the vocabulary consistent with test taker's level of understanding.
4. Avoid cuing one item with another; keep items independent of one another.
5. Use the author's examples as a basis for developing your items.
6. Avoid overspecific knowledge when developing the item.
7. Avoid textbook, verbatim phrasing when developing the item.
8. Avoid items based on opinions.
9. Use multiple-choice to measure higher level thinking.
10. Test for important or significant material; avoid trivial material.
11. The language used in the test items should be simpler than the wording in the text and certainly not more difficult.

12. The test items should act as a kind of framework enabling the test taker to keep track of the text.
13. The same words/sentence structure as those that appear in the text should be avoided if testing comprehension unless the alternative word is more difficult.
14. The key should appear on the final page of the task so as not to influence those involved in providing feedback. Make sure it is correct/complete.
15. Each task should include an example of the same quality as the rest of the items and be based on the text mapping results.
16. The first and last sentences of the text must not be used as they act as a scene-setter or provide insufficient follow-up context.
17. Make sure the wording of one item does not help the test taker to answer one of the previous/future items.
18. Avoid two questions focusing on the same point of information or detail. Each item should provide new information about the test taker's ability.
19. Make sure that the items cannot be answered simply on a test taker's general /world knowledge.
20. Make sure the items are independent of each other, i.e., the test taker does not need to get one item right to answer the next one correctly.
21. Make sure that non-linguistic knowledge (e.g., mathematics) is not required to answer the item correctly.
22. The answers to the items must be in textual order.
23. There must be sufficient redundancy in the text between items for the test taker to complete his/her answer.
24. All items must reflect the focus/construct given in the specification grid.
25. Make sure the item cannot be answered simply by using grammatical knowledge.
26. All items should require students to give a numerical result, provide a short explanation or description given in one or two phrases or sentences, complete a table, fill in the blanks.
27. In case of reading comprehension test items, each item carries 1 mark.
28. Give clear instructions by using simple vocabulary and sentence structure.
29. Be as specific as possible (e.g., 'give three reasons' instead of 'give some reasons').
30. Avoid asking questions that cannot be scored strictly in terms of the accuracy of mathematical understanding.
31. Produce a scoring guide at the same time while writing the items.

Multiple Choice Question (MCQ)

A multiple-choice question is a selected-response test item in which students select one of the correct alternatives. In English subject for all grades, MCQs will be used in testing reading comprehension, vocabulary and grammar. MCQs with four alternatives will be used in testing reading comprehension, testing grammar and short answer questions. One of the alternatives is the correct answer. The major components of MCQs are mentioned below.

1. *The Stimulus*: MCQ can be asked with a stimulus that provides the context for the item.
2. *The Stem*: The stem of the MCQ is the leading sentence that puts up a question or a problem to be solved. Stem can be in the form of a question, an incomplete sentence, a fill-in-the-blanks form, or a part of a cloze such as in a gap fill passage. In whatever form, the stem should provide enough information to the examinee so that the well-prepared examinee can choose the right answer (key) from the given alternatives. In a test, all the MCQs should follow the same format

of the stem. However, asking a direct question is considered better than having blank spaces in the stem in the case of the items for reading passage.

3. *The Options/ Alternatives:*

3a. *Distracters:* A distracter is an alternative in the MCQ format which would lead less able/ - less prepared students to think of the correct answer, and thus attracts him/her.

3b. *Key:* The 'key' is the correct answer among the alternatives given in the MCQ.

Guidelines for Constructing Multiple Choice Questions

General issues

1. Use the correct answer format (not like best or appropriate).
2. Avoid the complex multiple-choice format (e.g. A and D, A and C, all the above, none of the above, A, B and C etc.)
3. Format the item vertically, not horizontally.
4. Allow time for editing and other types of item revisions.
5. Use good grammar, punctuation, and spelling consistently.
6. Minimize examinee reading time in phrasing each item.
7. Avoid trick items, those which mislead or deceive examinees into answering.

Stem Construction

8. State in question form or completion form
9. When using the completion format, don't leave a blank for completion in the beginning or middle of the stem of the question.
10. Ensure that the directions in the stem are clear, and that wording lets the test takers know exactly what is being asked.
11. Avoid window dressing (i.e. excessive verbiage) in the stem.
12. Word the stem positively; avoid negative phrasing. In unavoidable circumstances of negative phrasing, use NOT (in its highlighted form).
13. Include the central idea and most of the phrasing in the stem.

General Option Development

14. Use as many options as are feasible; more options are desirable.
15. Place options in logical or numerical order.
16. Keep options independent; options should not overlap.
17. Keep all options in an item homogeneous in content.
18. Bring options from the stimuli, NOT from outside.
19. Keep the length of the options fairly consistent.
20. Avoid distractors that can clue test-wise test takers; for example avoid clang associations, absurd options, formal prompts, or semantic (overly specific or overly general) clues.
 - Specific determiners including always, never, completely and absolutely.
 - Clang associations, choices identical to or resembling words in the stem
 - Grammatical inconsistencies that cue the test taker to the correct choice.
 - Conspicuous correct choice
 - Pairs or triplets of options that clue the test taker to the correct choice
 - Blatantly absurd, ridiculous options.
21. Avoid giving clues through the use of faulty grammatical construction.
22. Avoid specific determiners, such as "never and always".

Correct option Development

23. Position the correct option so that it appears about the same number of times each possible position for a set of items.

24. Make sure there is one and only one correct option.

Distractor Development

25. Use plausible distractors; avoid illogical distractors.

26. Incorporate common errors of students in distractors.

27. Avoid technically phrased distractors.

28. Use true statements that do not correctly answer the item.

29. Use familiar yet incorrect phrases as distractors.

30. Finally, use a distractor rationale i.e., explain why the students are likely to choose that particular distractor.

Example # 1: UNSEEN TEXT FOR ALL GRADES

Read the following text and choose the correct alternative to answer the questions that follow.

TEXT 1

Taylor Swift is an American singer and songwriter. She is renowned for her narrative songwriting, which often draws inspiration from her personal life. She was born on December 13, 1989, in Reading, Pennsylvania, in the USA. Swift showed her talent in music from an early age. At the age of 14, Swift moved to Nashville with her father, Scott Swift. There, she pursued her career in country music. In Nashville, Swift worked with other songwriters such as Troy Verges, Brett Beavers, Brett James, Mac McAnally, and the Warren Brothers. She formed a lasting working relationship with Liz Rose. She released her self-titled debut album in 2006. The album, also called, Taylor Swift, immediately gained popularity. It showcased her songwriting talent through lyrics that explore themes of young love, heartbreak, and teenage anguish. Swift's music often explores themes of love, heartbreak, and everyday life, resonating with a wide audience, particularly young women. Her ability to craft personal narratives into catchy songs has been a key factor in her popularity.

Swift shifted from country to pop music with her album 1989, released in 2014. It marked a significant turning point in her career. She gained international fame because of her popular hits like “Shake It Off” and “Blank Space”. She was truly recognised for her ability to reinvent herself. She continued evolving her music with albums such as Reputation, Lover, Folklore, and Evermore. She began her record-breaking Eras Tour via one conducted at the State Farm Stadium of Glendale, Arizona, on March 17-18, 2023 in 2023, celebrating her musical journey. The tour generated immense media attention and social media buzz, solidifying her status as a global cultural icon.

Swift is also known for her strong stance on artists' rights, re-recording her early albums to gain control of her master recordings. She has won 14 Grammy Awards and has been nominated 58 times throughout her career. Her consistent success, including multiple Grammy wins and record-breaking tours like the Eras Tour, solidifies her position as one of the most prominent artists in contemporary music worldwide. She also uses her platform to address social issues and champion for women's rights. Beyond music, she is admired for her philanthropy, activism, and connection with fans. (368 words)

(N.B. The ‘learning outcomes’ mentioned in each item in all item formats are taken verbatim from the curriculum where possible and adapted when they are not measurably stated in the curriculum in order to show the importance of learning outcomes while developing items.)

#1

Learning Outcome: Students can scan the text and retrieve specific information.

Item I. What year was Taylor Swift born?

- A. 1989
- B. 2006
- C. 2014
- D. 2023

Answer Key with Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark to any answer that mentions **A. 1989**

Comprehension Type: Literal Comprehension

Explanation: This question checks direct factual recall from the text.

#2

Learning Outcome: Students can paraphrase information or ideas of the texts.

Item II. Why did Taylor Swift move to Nashville?

- A. to work with Liz Rose and the Warren Brothers
- B. to show her talent in music from an early age
- C. to pursue a career in country music
- D. to write songs with Troy Verges and Brett James

Answer Key: Award 1 mark to any answer that mentions ‘C. to pursue a career in country music’.

Comprehension Type: Reorganisation

Explanation: This question requires skills for reorganising and sequencing information from across lines in the text.

#3

Learning Outcome: Students can make predictions about the content of a text while reading, based on contextual clues, text features, background knowledge, patterns of relationship of ideas, etc.

Item III. Which of the following helped to make Swift a superstar? (I)

- A. Shake It Off
- B. Lover
- C. Evermore
- D. Eras Tour

Answer Key: Award 1 mark to any answer that mentions ‘A. Shake It Off’.

Comprehension Type: Inference

Explanation: The text does not directly state what helped Swift become a superstar but it is implied in the text. It invites inference from the evidence (she gained international fame because of her popular hits like ‘Shake It Off’ and ‘Blank Space’). It tests the student's ability to interpret implication, not just restate information.

#4

Learning Outcome: Students can read, review and present a critical response to a text.

Item IV. Which of the following indicates that Taylor Swift was successful as a musician?

- A. She transitioned from country to pop music.
- B. She showed her strong stance on artists’ rights.
- C. She got many Grammy Awards.
- D. She was engaged in philanthropic activities.

Answer Key: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions C. She got many Grammy Awards.

Comprehension type: Evaluation

Explanation: This question involves judging Taylor Swift's success as a musician based on evidence (receipt of numerous Grammy Awards) provided in the text.

Short Answer Questions

Short Answer Questions (SAQs) are the test items which assess students' ability to respond in a single word OR a phrase OR one sentence to a maximum. SAQs will be used to assess reading comprehension. Item writers need to supply the marking scheme along with the SAQs. The marking scheme should include all the possible answers for the particular SAQ. SAQ in the context of Grade 8 and 10 refers to the constructed response items constructed from a reading text. This applies in Grade 12 too. However, short answer questions refer to constructed response items prepared to check the understanding of literary texts from the textbook of Grade 12. So, care must be given while allotting the marks. SAQs from reading comprehension texts carries 1 mark while each SAQ from textbook carries 2 marks.

General Guidelines for Constructing Short Answer Questions.

1. Effective short answer questions should provide students with a focus on types of thinking processes and content (both from the reading text given in the examination and textbook-based reading texts) to use in their response. Therefore, examiners/classroom teachers must avoid indeterminate and vague questions that are open to numerous and/or subjective interpretations.
2. Select verbs that match the intended learning outcome and direct students in their thinking.
3. Avoid using 'discuss' or 'explain'. If you use, give specific instructions as to what points should be discussed/explained.
4. Delimit the scope of the task to avoid students going off topic on an unrelated matter.
5. Make sure what a good response would look like and what it might include i.e. reference.
6. Practice writing a good response yourself so you have an exemplar and so you are aware of how long it may take to answer.
7. Provide students with practice questions so they are familiar with question types and understand time limitations.
8. Distribute marks based on the time required to answer.
9. Review the question to ensure whether it aligns with the learning outcome/s.
10. Make sure whether the focus of the question is clear or not.
11. Make sure that the scope is specific and clear enough for students to be able to answer in the time allocated.
12. Make sure there is enough direction to guide the student to the expected response.
13. Structure an item so that the required response is concise.

Text-based SAQ Example: Refer to TEXT 1

#1

Learning Outcome: Students can identify explicit information.

A. Where was Taylor Swift born?

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark to any answer that mentions 'She was born in Reading/ in Pennsylvania/ in Reading, Pennsylvania/ in the USA.'

Comprehension type: Literal Comprehension

Explanation: This question checks direct recall of factual information given in the text.

#2

Learning Outcome: Students can paraphrase and organise the information given in various parts of the text.

B. In Nashville, whom did Taylor Swift form a lasting relationship?

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions 'Liz Rose'.

Comprehension type: Reorganization

Explanation: The answer requires gathering and reorganizing scattered information from the two consecutive sentences.

#3

Learning Outcome: Students can identify implicit information

C. How did Taylor Swift support other artists?

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions the idea 'she showed her strong stance on artists' rights.'

Comprehension type: Inference

Explanation: Understanding the underlying reason from the text involves inferring Swift's intention and values (artists' rights) and her support to other artists' rights.

#4

Learning Outcome: Students can interpret multiple levels of meaning.

D. How can we say that Taylor Swift's decision to re-record her albums was a good one?

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for each answer that mentions 'it allowed her to reclaim ownership and showed her commitment to artistic control.'

Comprehension Type: Evaluation

Explanation: This question invites a value judgment and personal reasoning based on the text.

Textbook-based SAQ Example: Refer to the Textbook of Grade 12

#1

Learning Outcome: Students can identify and describe characters' daily activities and cultural practices as directly presented in the story "Neighbours."

Question: Describe the newly-wed couples' house.

Skill: Comprehending/paraphrasing/ literal comprehension

Expected Answer:

In the story Neighbours, by Tim Winton, the house of the newly-wed couple is described as small but charming. The features of the house gave it the feel of an elegant cottage. It has high ceilings and paned windows that gave it a distinctive character. From the young man's study window, there is a view of extending land beyond the rooftops, encompassing the used car yards and the Morton Bay figs in the nearby park where the community people walk their dogs.

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Prepare a rubrics for 2 marks based on the analytic rubrics provided in the annex with the criteria *content*, *organization*, *mechanics* and award marks as per the rubrics.

Explanation: What makes this item a literal comprehension item?

Literal comprehension involves understanding facts and details that are explicitly stated in the text. It does not require interpretation, inference, or critical thinking beyond what is directly given. In the story "Neighbours" by Tim Winton, the author clearly highlights the following information:

- The house (small, high ceilings, paned window)
- Location (nearby park, Morton Bay figs could be seen from the window)

- Parts (study room from where beautiful landscape can be seen)

This question is simply asking for information that is directly stated in the story (e.g., what the house looks like) and it does not seek for personal opinions, analysis, or inferred meaning.

What the students do: The students simply need to recall and organize the factual details provided.

#2

Learning Outcome: Students can identify and organize information from various parts of the text to describe character development and relationship dynamics.

Competency: reorganize information by comparing early vs later behavior/ recognizing transitions in relationships/ summarizing character development from various points.

Question: How did the young couple's attitude towards their neighbours change over time? Organize the stages of their relationship development using details from the story.

Comprehension Type: Reorganization

Expected answer:

At first, the young couple felt uncomfortable and annoyed by their neighbours' noisy and unfamiliar lifestyle. They found the loud voices, traditional customs, and constant gatherings and disturbances. However, over time, they began to observe the warmth, cooperation, and generosity within the neighbours' community. As the couple spent more time in the neighbourhood, they received small gestures of kindness, such as help with gardening and pregnancy advice. Gradually, their attitude changed from irritation to appreciation and affection. By the end of the story, they had developed a deep sense of connection and belonging within the multicultural community.

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Prepare a rubrics for 2 marks based on the analytic rubrics provided in the annex with the criteria *content*, *organization*, *mechanics* and award marks as per the rubrics.

Explanation: Reorganization questions require students to collect information from different parts of the text, combine, reorder, or sequence that information logically and present it in a coherent form (e.g., timeline, stages, cause-effect, and comparison). They are not simply asked to recall one fact (literal) or interpret a hidden meaning (inferential), but to restructure multiple details into a meaningful pattern or progression.

What the students do: The student must identify key points from the beginning, middle, and end of the story. They must reorder events or feelings chronologically to show change over time. This demands them to connect different text segments (e.g., initial discomfort to gradual acceptance and then to mutual appreciation). The answer must be organized, not just copied from one spot in the text.

#3

Learning Outcome: Students can interpret implicit meanings and infer characters' feelings and motivations from contextual clues within the text.

Competency: Critical reading skills / Making logical deductions based on textual clues/ Understanding implicit content that is not directly stated/ Connecting textual evidence with prior knowledge or reasoning

Question: Why do you think the young couple initially felt uncomfortable and irritated by their neighbours, even though there was no direct conflict?

Comprehension Type: Inferential

Expected Answer:

The young couple's discomfort likely stemmed from unfamiliarity and cultural differences. They were used to living a quieter, more private lifestyle in the inner city, whereas their neighbours had a lively, communal way of living, which included loud voices, family gatherings, and traditional customs. This contrast made the couple feel uneasy and alienated. Their irritation was not because the neighbours were hostile but because the neighbours' behaviour challenged their expectations of how people should live and behave, highlighting the couple's initial lack of understanding and acceptance.

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Prepare a rubrics for 2 marks based on the analytic rubrics provided in the annex with the criteria *content*, *Organization and Mechanics* and award marks as per the rubrics.

Explanation: Inferential questions require students to read between the lines rather than find explicit facts, and use clues from the text combined with their own reasoning. They also make logical guesses about feelings, motives, or causes that the author implies but does not state directly. The story never says outright why the couple were uncomfortable.

What students do: Students must infer from descriptions of the neighbours' lifestyle and the couple's reactions. They combine textual evidence (noisy, different customs) with their own understanding of human feelings (discomfort with unfamiliarity). This involves a deeper level of comprehension beyond just recalling facts.

#4

Learning Outcome: Students can critically assess character behaviour and support their opinions with textual evidence.

Competency: Critical thinking and judgment skills — ability to evaluate character actions and attitudes, justify opinions, and support evaluations with textual evidence.

Question: Do you think the young couple's change in attitude towards their neighbours was justified? Use evidence from the story to support your opinion.

Comprehension Type: Evaluation and reflection

Expected Answer:

Yes, the young couple's change in attitude was completely justified. At first, they felt uncomfortable due to cultural differences and unfamiliar behaviours, such as loud conversations and traditional food preparations. However, as they observed the kindness and helpfulness of their neighbours, their perspective began to shift. The neighbours supported them during the pregnancy, offered advice, and welcomed them into the community. This gradual display of warmth and humanity helped the couple see past their initial prejudice. Their change was a result of genuine experiences and growing emotional connection, making it both natural and reasonable.

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Prepare a rubrics for 2 marks based on the analytic rubrics provided in the annex with the criteria *content*, *organization*, *mechanics* and award marks as per the rubrics.

Explanation: Evaluative questions ask students to make a judgment or form an opinion about the characters' actions or feelings. They require to assess the reasons behind the change, weighing both sides. They must support their evaluation with evidence from the text, not just personal opinion. This moves beyond recall or inference to critical thinking and value judgment.

What students do: Students formulate reasoned opinions based on text and analyze motivations and changes in characters using evidence effectively to support arguments. They also reflect on values and perspectives within the story context.

Fill-in-the-Gaps Questions

‘Fill-in-the-gaps’ is an information-seeking type of test item in which students are asked to fill a gap with a word, a phrase or a piece of information that is appropriate in the blank space. They can be asked with or without giving a choice. ‘Fill-in-the-gaps’ items will be used in assessing reading comprehension and vocabulary.

Fill-in-the-Gaps Example: Refer to TEXT 1

#1

Learning Outcome: Students can scan the text and retrieve specific information from it.

A. Troy Verges was also a great

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions ‘songwriter’.

Comprehension Type: Literal Comprehension

Explanation: This checks for explicit information directly stated in the biography

#2

Learning Outcome: Students can read the text and identify the order of events.

B. The self-titled album released in 2006 earned Taylor Swift huge.....

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark to any answer that mentions ‘popularity’.

Comprehension type: Reorganization

Explanation: The student must combine and reorder facts from different parts of the text — her early genre and the name of the album that marked her genre shift.

#3

Learning Outcome: Students can interpret multiple levels of meaning such as literal meaning, contextual meaning, figurative meaning and intended meaning in literary texts.

C. ‘Blank Space’ is an album from (genre of) music.

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark to any answer that mentions ‘pop’.

Comprehension type: Inference

Explanation: The reason is not stated directly but can be inferred from the text mentioning Swift shifted from country to pop music with her album 1989, released in 2014. It marked a significant turning point in her career. She gained international fame because of her popular hits like ‘Shake It Off’ and ‘Blank Space’.

#4

Learning Outcome: Can interpret multiple levels of meaning such as literal meaning, contextual meaning, figurative meaning and intended meaning in literary texts.

D. Swift’s advocacy to artists’ rights and her engagement in philanthropy show that she is a/an person.

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark to any answer that mentions ‘sociable/benevolent/kind hearted.’

Comprehension type: Evaluation

Explanation: This question asks students to make a judgment about her involvement in various societal activities besides music.

Guidelines for preparing fill-in-the-blanks items

1. Avoid using blanks in the beginning or in the middle.
2. Restrict the number of blanks to one, or at most, two.

3. Blanks for answers should be of equal length.
4. Omit only significant words/phrases/piece of information from the statement.
5. Avoid obvious clues to the correct response.
6. Be sure there is only one correct response.

TRUE/FALSE/NOT GIVEN

In TRUE/FALSE items, students are asked to point out whether the given statements are TRUE or FALSE based on the reading passage given. TRUE/FALSE items will be used to assess reading comprehension. TRUE statements refer to the statements that directly agree the information given in the text whereas FALSE statements contradict the information given in the text. However, NOT GIVEN statements refer to the information related to textual information but this information is not given in the text.

TFNG Example: Refer to TEXT 1

Write

TRUE if the statement agrees with the information given in the text.

FALSE if the statement contradicts the information given in the text.

NOT GIVEN if there is no information in the text.

#1

Learning Outcome: Students can scan the text and retrieve specific information from it.

A. Taylor Swift moved to Nashville alone.

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark to any answer that mentions 'FALSE'.

Comprehension Type: Literal Comprehension

Explanation: The text clearly states she moved to Nashville with her father. This tests direct factual understanding.

#2

Learning Outcome: Students can find out main ideas and supporting details.

B. Taylor Swift released her music album '1989' before 'Reputation'.

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark to any answer that mentions 'TRUE.'

Comprehension Type: Reorganization

Explanation: The biography mentions Swift's albums in throughout the second paragraph. So the readers must gather and reorganize information to confirm this is accurate.

#3

Learning Outcome: Students can make predictions about the content of a text while reading based on contextual clues, text features, background knowledge, patterns of relationship of ideas, etc.

C. Taylor Swift seems to value artistic independence.

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark to any answer that mentions 'TRUE.'

Comprehension Type: Inference

Explanation: While the text does not mention this information directly, it implies through she has a strong stance on artists' rights.

#4

Learning Outcome: Students can arrive at a conclusion and comment on a given text.

D. Taylor Swift's influence in the music industry is only due to her popularity.

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark to any answer that mentions 'FALSE.'

Comprehension Type: Evaluation

Explanation: The text emphasizes both her artistic control and activism, not just popularity. This asks readers to critically assess the statement in light of a deeper understanding.

#5

Learning Outcome: Students can arrive at conclusion and comment on a given text.

E. Grammy Awards are given to the most influential artists in the music industry.

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark to any answer that mentions ‘NOT GIVEN.’

Comprehension Type: Evaluation

Explanation: The biography does not mention anything about the genre and the people who receives Grammy Awards, so we cannot say if this is true or false. This tests the ability to decide what is and is not stated.

Long-Answer (Critical Thinking) Questions

Long answer or essay questions provide a complex prompt that requires written responses, which can vary in length from a couple of paragraphs to many pages. Like short answer questions, they provide students with an opportunity to explain their understanding and demonstrate creativity, but make it hard for students to arrive at an acceptable answer by bluffing. They can be constructed reasonably quickly and easily but marking these questions can be time-consuming and grader agreement can be difficult.

Essay questions differ from short answer questions in that essay questions are less structured. This openness allows students to demonstrate that they can integrate the course material in creative ways. As a result, essays are a favoured approach to test higher levels of cognition including analysis, synthesis and evaluation. However, the requirement that the students provide most of the structure increases the amount of work required to respond effectively.

LAQ Example: Refer to Textbook of Grade 12

#1

Learning Outcome: Students can identify, interpret, and explain the central theme of cultural acceptance in the story by connecting character development and key events to that theme.

Competency: Interpretation and theme analysis

Question: Describe how the theme of cultural understanding and acceptance is presented in the story “Neighbours.” Support your answer with examples from the text.

Comprehension Type: Interpretive/Inferential

Expected Answer:

The story “Neighbours” by Tim Winton examines the theme of cultural accepting and understanding by revealing the relationships, complications and agreements between a young couple and their neighbours. When the couple relocates themselves to a multicultural suburb, they initially sense isolated. They notice their neighbours’ loud voices, traditional practices, and lively gatherings of their neighbours. The young couple found all these activities irritating. As such, there appears a high cultural gap between the couple and their neighbours.

However, in course of time, the couple begin to notice their misconceptions about their neighbours due to the occasional changing behavior such as benevolence, support and generosity in their neighbours’ actions. For instance, the neighbouring women who were wearing headscarves and carrying bottled fruit shared warm and friendly smiles. They also provided the young couples good pieces of advice during the young woman’s pregnancy. Equally, the neighbouring men whom the young couple viewed as loud and intrusive were found to be supportive and caring such as they helped to build a chicken coop. Gradually, the young couple’s

prejudices weaken and were replaced by gratefulness and emotional intimacy. Consequently, the neighbours appeared to be a source of comfort, guidance, and shared humanity.

The story vividly reveals that everyday kindness and human connection can gradually overcome cultural barriers. The behaviours also proves that acceptance does not come from big gestures, but from simple, constant acts of benevolence. Additionally, by the end of the story, the young couple not only accepts their neighbours but also feels deeply connected to the community. In this way, Tim Winton proudly uses this transformation to highlight the value of multicultural harmony and the potential for understanding across cultural divides.

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Prepare a rubrics for 5 marks based on the analytic rubrics provided in the writing section with the criteria *content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics* and award marks as per the rubrics.

Explanation: This question is interpretive/inferential question, which requires students to identify and explain the theme, which is not explicitly stated in the story. They also interpret characters' actions and relationships to reveal the underlying message using textual clues and examples to support an understanding that goes beyond surface-level facts. It does not just ask what happened, but why and what it means, which is the essence of inferential comprehension.

What Students do: The students identify and recognize themes of the story and interpret character relationships and changes. They also connect specific textual evidence to broader messages and organize thoughts clearly in such extended written responses.

Ordering/Sequencing

Ordering is another objective type of test item in which examinees are asked to rearrange the sentences or ideas given. Ordering will be used to test reading comprehension and grammar.

Example: Refer to TEXT 1

Learning Outcome: Can read the text and identify the order of events.

1. Rearrange the following sentences in the correct order as they appear in the text.

- A. Taylor Swift built connections with established songwriters.
- B. Taylor Swift became the most influential female artist of her generation.
- C. Eras Tour amplified her fame worldwide through global audience.
- D. Taylor Swift moved to Nashville with her father.
- E. Taylor Swift released 1989 to prove her versatility.

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions the following order. However, marks should be deducted only to the statement that is in wrong order.

- I. D. Taylor Swift moved to Nashville with her father.
- II. A. Taylor Swift built connections with established songwriters.
- III. E. Taylor Swift released 1989 to prove her versatility.
- IV. C. Eras Tour amplified her fame worldwide through global audience.
- V. B. Taylor Swift became the most influential female artist of her generation.

Comprehension Type: Mixed (All Levels)

Explanation:

Statement A is an inferential comprehension because the reader infers purpose and intention of her craft and networking ability in the music industry.

Statement B is an evaluative comprehension because the reader requires to assess or judge Swift's artistic growth based on broader context or evidence.

Statement C is reorganization if we consider connecting the cause (Eras Tour) with the effect (amplified fame) or it can be an inferential comprehension if we draw that conclusion from multiple ideas such as global cultural event performed during the tour.)

Statement D is Literal comprehension because it is a straightforward recall of stated fact because her journey begins with a bold step toward a music career.

Statement E is an inferential comprehension because the reader comes up with a conclusion that her intention of being a versatile songwriter is an interpretation beyond the literal release of the album and it also shows a major artistic shift that expanded her audience.

Matching

Matching is an objective type of test item in which students are asked to pair an item from **Column A (Premises)** to a related item from **Column B (responses)**. Matching items will be used to test students' reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. Generally, the number of responses will be more than the premises in order to avoid guessing for the item presented at last.

Example: Refer to Text 1

Learning Outcome: Students can deduce the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items on the basis of contextual, syntactic and semantic clues.

Match the definitions/meanings given in Column A with the correct words given in Column B. One word does not have a match.

Column A

- A. the desire to promote the welfare of others
- B. relating to the whole world; worldwide
- C. very well-known and important
- D. a person's first performance in a particular role
- E. known or talked about by many people

Column B

- i. renowned
- ii. debut
- iii. global
- iv. prominent
- v. contemporary
- vi. philanthropy

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions:

- A. the desire to promote the welfare of others
- B. relating to the whole world; worldwide
- C. very well-known and important
- D. a person's first performance in a particular role
- E. known or talked about by many people

- vi. philanthropy
- iii. global
- iv. prominent
- ii. debut
- i. renowned

Reading Competencies

Reading is one of the four major skills of language learning. Reading competencies refer to the combination of knowledge and skills that enable a person to effectively understand, interpret, and utilize written information. It encompasses not just the ability to decode words, but also the capacity to comprehend the meaning of the text, analyze its content, and apply it to different contexts and purposes. The curriculum of the English Subject for Grades 8, 10 and 12 mentions different reading competencies that the students should achieve after learning from this course. The following table shows examples of these competencies outlined in the curriculum of the respective grades. (See curriculum for details.)

Grade 8	Grade 10	Grade 12
➤ Read and understand a variety of literary, informational, and graphic texts, using a range of strategies or cognitive processes to construct meaning.	➤ Read a variety of texts for information and understanding.	➤ Read a wide variety of texts for information and understanding.
	➤ Read short literary texts for pleasure and understanding.	➤ Read a variety of literary texts for pleasure and appreciation.
	➤ Use e-resources to boost their learning and enhance language skills.	➤ Read, reflect and interpret a wide range of texts.
		➤ Critically analyse and evaluate ideas in a wide range of level appropriate texts.
		➤ Search, select and manage information from various textual and online sources.
		➤ Appreciate diverse cultures.

Specification Grid

A specification grid, also known as a test blueprint, is a document that outlines the content and cognitive skills to be assessed in an exam or evaluation. It serves as a detailed plan for constructing the assessment, ensuring it aligns with the curriculum and measures intended learning outcomes. The specification grid of each of Grade 8, 10 and 12 mentions the following reading skills to be assessed in both internal and external assessments. Internal assessment is required to cover 50 marks in Grade 8, 25 marks in Grade 10 and 12 whereas external assessment covers 50 marks in Grade 8 and 75 marks in both Grade 10 and 12.

Specification Grid for Reading Test of Grade 8, 10 and 12 for external assessment

	Grade 8		Grade 10		Grade 12		Remarks
	Text type and length	Item type	Text type and length	Item type	Text type and length	Item type	
Reading 1 (R1)	One short reading text from the textbook Different type of text from R2 (5 marks)	One type out of: TRUE/FALSE FILL IN THE GAPS MULTIPLE CHOICE MATCHING ORDERING SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS	One short reading text of about 100 words from the textbook Different type of text from R2 as far as possible (5 marks)	One type out of: TRUE/FALSE FILL IN THE GAPS MULTIPLE CHOICE MATCHING ORDERING SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS	One short reading text not given in the textbook in about 500 words (15 marks)	Three types out of: TRUE/FALSE FILL IN THE GAPS MULTIPLE CHOICE MATCHING ORDERING SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS One type must be testing vocabulary.	
Reading 2 (R2)	One short reading text from the textbook Different type of text from R1 (5 marks)	One type out of: TRUE/FALSE FILL IN THE GAPS MULTIPLE CHOICE MATCHING ORDERING SHORT ANSWER	One short reading text of about 200 words from the textbook Different type of text from R1 as far as possible (10 marks)	Two types out of: TRUE/FALSE FILL IN THE GAPS MULTIPLE CHOICE MATCHING ORDERING SHORT ANSWER	Textbook based questions (5 items carrying 2 marks each) (10 marks) Genre type	SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS expected response should have 50-75 words	

		QUESTIONS		QUESTIONS	must be different from R3		
Reading 3 (R3)	One short reading text not given in the textbook not exceeding 250 words Different type of text from R4 Type of text: Story, dialogue, timetable, menus, charts, calendar, notice, letter, news stories, brochure, biography and short essay (5 marks)	One type out of: TRUE/FALSE FILL IN THE GAPS MULTIPLE CHOICE MATCHING ORDERING SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS	One short reading text not given in the textbook in about 200 words Different type of text from R4 Type of text: Story, notice, advertisement, product guide, letters, news story, brochure, instruction/manual, diary entry, interview, letter, recipe (10 marks)	Two types out of: TRUE/FALSE FILL IN THE GAPS MULTIPLE CHOICE MATCHING ORDERING SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS	Textbook based questions (2 items carrying 5 marks each) (10 marks) Genre type must be different from R2	LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS expected response should have 120-150 words	
Reading 4 (R4)	One short reading text not given in the textbook not exceeding 300 words Different type of text from R3 (10 marks)	Two types out of: TRUE/FALSE FILL IN THE GAPS MULTIPLE CHOICE MATCHING ORDERING SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS One type must test vocabulary.	One short reading text not given in the textbook in about 300 words Different type of text from R3 (15 marks)	Three types out of: TRUE/FALSE FILL IN THE GAPS MULTIPLE CHOICE MATCHING ORDERING SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS One type must test vocabulary.			

Curriculum- Grade 6-12(CDC, 2078)

Cognitive Levels

The curriculum and specification grid of English subject for Grade 8, 10 and 12 mentions the following four cognitive levels of reading comprehension for assessing reading competencies. The curriculum also mentions the number of questions that each of these cognitive levels is required to cover.

Grades	Literal Comprehension	Reorganization	Inference	Evaluation and reflection	Vocabulary	Total
8	8	4	5	3	5	25
10	16	8	8	3	5	40
12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	15

These types of comprehension are also understood as the cognitive levels. These cognitive levels are discussed below along with the sample test items and descriptors.

Literal Comprehension

Literal comprehension is the basic level of reading comprehension in which students are required to recognize the information explicitly given in the text. Literal comprehension occurs at the surface level. The details are stated and clear for anyone to identify while reading a particular text. It is often referred to as 'on the page' or 'right there' comprehension. The students/examinees are expected to locate or identify facts such as the names of characters, the time of the story, or the place of the story or any other kind of explicit information. The test items at this level assess students' ability to:

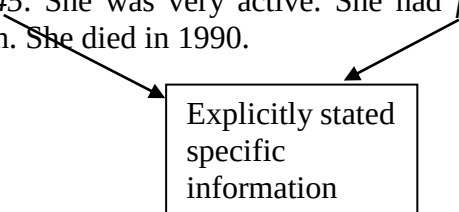
- Recognize ideas and information in the text;
- Locate explicit information given in the text;
- Read for facts and central idea stated in the text;
- Understand the straightforward information in the text, such as facts, vocabulary, dates, times and locations.

Example:

A woman named Maria Kim was born in 1945. She was very active. She had *four* children. Unfortunately, she had to face a premature death. She died in 1990.

- **When was Maria Kim born?**
- **How many children did Maria have?**

Explicitly stated
specific
information



Reorganization

Reorganization is the competence level just beyond literal comprehension. At this level students are required to reorder or reconstruct two or more pieces of information explicitly mentioned in the text. Reorganization covers the literal understanding of the text by combining information from two or more sentences/parts/sections of the text. Reorganization requires students to analyze, synthesize, and/ or organize ideas or information explicitly stated in the text. The questions in this level are constructed in such a way that the students need to understand various parts of the text to answer them. To produce the desired thought product, students may utilize the statements of the author verbatim or they may paraphrase or translate the author's statements. The test item under reorganization assess the students' ability to:

- Reconstruct two or more pieces of information to form a complete idea.
- Reorder the ideas and facts explicitly mentioned in the text.

- Use information from two or more sentences/parts/sections of the text and combine them to generate a single idea.

Example:

John returned to find his car gone. He was sure he had locked it before he went along the riverbank. *He couldn't even use his mobile phone to call for help.* He had spent all day at work thinking about the fish he would catch. *In his rush to get away that afternoon he had left it on his desk.*

The italicized words are scattered in different sentences/parts. Readers need these to form the answer.

- ***Why could John not use his mobile phone to get help?***

Inference

Inference is another level of reading comprehension in which students are required to infer the meaning on the basis their prior knowledge, intuition and the ideas or clues given in the text. Inference level covers use of cognitive process to deduce implied, inferred or assumed meaning based on evidence and reasoning. Making inferences involves more than a literal understanding. The answer of an inference question is open since it is not explicitly stated. Students create their answers by drawing conclusions based on some clues and evidence from the text. The test item under inference assesses students' ability to:

- Make meaning or sense based on their prior knowledge, intuition and the ideas and facts given in the text;
- Infer the idea which is not explicitly stated;
- Make generalization or future predictions;
- Show cause and effect relationships.

Example:

Charlie Chaplin was a famous actor and film director who made very funny movies. *Many of his best films were silent, but when sound for movies was invented, people all over the world heard Charlie Chaplin's voice for the first time.*

The italicized words are the clues.

- ***Why were many of Charlie Chaplin's best movies silent?***

Evaluation and reflection

Evaluation and reflection is the highest level of reading comprehension in which students are required to make judgement of the text or some parts of the text to answer the test item. This level covers reading beyond lines that requires personal judgment i.e. analyzing, evaluating and creating. Evaluation requires the students to give a global or comprehensive judgment about some aspects or the totality of the text. The questions at this level are open in nature and therefore they may include multiple responses based on the students' understanding. Students have to extrapolate to respond to the evaluative questions as the answers are not found in the text. The test item under evaluation and reflection assesses students' ability to:

- Make comprehensive judgement of a text in its entirety or some parts of it;
- Judge the text and context, information and character;
- Relate text with personal experience, opinion or reflection;
- Judge the purpose of the text or part of text (paragraph) and audience.

Example:

Jess had been walking for an hour. Through the misty rain, she could see cars going back and forth in the distance. ‘That’s the main road,’ she thought. As she got closer to the intersection, she could see a bus shelter. Although she was a little tired, she ran towards it. She shook her wet hair, looked at the timetable on the wall and looked at her watch. ‘Twenty minutes to wait,’ she thought. ‘And the fare will use up the last of my money. I could be home in twenty minutes if I walked.’

- **Do you think Jess should wait for the bus? Give a reason.**

Any answer that mentions ‘Yes’ with the idea ‘she was wet and tired/walked through the rain for over an hour.’

Any answer that mentions ‘No’ with the idea ‘only has a twenty minute walk to home/ would be there by the time the bus arrived/ already wet/ could save the last of her money.’

Additional Examples

The following section provides additional examples of Grade-level-appropriate reading comprehension texts for improving classroom teaching and learning. Teachers are advised to use these samples as example for dealing with textbook based texts. Creating literal, reorganization, inferential and evaluative questions during the class boosts up students’ competency in reading comprehension. The text extracted from English Textbook of Grade 12 is not included from the examination point of view.

Sample Text from English Textbook of Grade 8

Read the following text and answer the questions that follow.

A Diary Entry

Saturday, 5 March 2022

Time: 10:00 p.m.

Dear Diary,

Brought up in the Western world, I was unaware of Nepal before. But as soon as I heard about Nepal, I could not stop myself visiting here. Fortunately, the long-awaited day came in 2022.

Today, I went to a Nepali village located in Dhading district from Kathmandu. My day started very early in the morning. I was very excited. I travelled with my Nepali friend on an old bus at 7 a.m. in the morning. The bus was decorated with colourful images. It travelled along bumpy and windy roads and I nearly fell off my seat a few times. We stopped at a rest stop halfway for coffee. Later, two young boys jumped onto the bus with instruments and played Nepali songs. I gave them fifty rupees because they made me feel close to the Nepali community. I would have given them more money if I had any to spare. (162 words)

Learning Outcome: Understand and extract relevant information from everyday materials.

Objective: deduce implicit information based on clues and intuition.

A. How can you say that the writer is a tourist? (I)

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions the idea ‘he was brought up in the western world/ he was unaware of Nepal before’.

Learning Outcome: Students can understand and extract relevant information from everyday materials.

Objective: Students can gather information from various parts of the text to make their answer.

B. How did the writer feel while travelling by bus? (RE)

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions 'excited'.

Learning Outcome: Understand and extract relevant information from everyday materials.

Objective: make judgment and decide to give their own opinion based on the given text.

C. Was the writer's journey to Dhading a good one? Give a reason. (EV)

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions 'No' with the idea 'the road was bumpy/he nearly fell off his seat'.

Learning Outcome: Students can understand and extract relevant information from everyday materials.

Objective: Students can scan the text and retrieve specific information.

D. Who played Nepali music in the bus? (LC)

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions 'two young boys'.

Sample Text from English Textbook of Grade 10

Read the following text and answer the questions that follow.

Pratap Malla was a religious-minded person. He built a beautiful temple at Guhyeshwari and fenced it. He renovated the temple of Pashupatinath and raised a pinnacle over it. At Swayambhu he built Pratappur, Kabeendrapur and many other temples and also set up a copper gilt 'Bajra'. He also renovated the temples of Basuki Bhimsen, Taleju, and Degutale. With a view of warding off evils, he erected an image of Hanuman, the monkey god, by the side of his palace gate and called the palace Hanumandhoa. He erected the golden gate of the palace, set up an image of Nri Simha, Kal Bhairab, and Vishworoop, at Layaku Bahi. Inside the palace, he also set up Sundari Chowk and Mohan Chowk. A pond was dug at Bhandarkhal and filled with water brought from Budhanilkantha. He instilled an image of Narayan lying in the pond, and exact replica from Budhanilkantha.

Pratap Malla was vastly-learned king and poet. He could compose poems in Sanskrit, Nepal Bhasa, Nepali, Bengali and Hindi. He also knew Arabic, Roman and English scripts. Because of his excellent poems, he conferred on himself the title of 'Kabeendra', a king of poets. Himself learned, Pratap Malla had a galaxy of learned men in his palace as the Mughal Emperor Akbar had. Like Akbar, he also respected and patronized the scholars of his time.

Objective: Students can arrive at a conclusion and comment on a given text.

A. Why do you think Pratap Malla built and renovated religious sites mostly? (EV)

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions 'because he was a religious-minded person'.

Learning Outcome: Students can extract relevant information from the text.

Objective: Can scan the text and retrieve specific information from it.

B. Which religious site did Pratap Malla renovate? (LC)

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions 'Pashupatinath'.

Learning Outcome: Scan longer texts in order to locate desired information, and gather information from different parts of a text.

Objective: Can paraphrase information or ideas from various parts of the texts.

C. Whose image is placed in the pond at Bhandarkhal? (RE)

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions 'Narayan'.

Learning Outcome: Extrapolate the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases from the contexts and deduce sentence meaning.

Objective: Can make inferences from contextual information, writer's viewpoints, implied information, etc.

D. Why do you think Pratap Malla could compose poems in different languages? (IN)

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions 'because he was a vastly-learned king and poet/because he had a command over these languages'.

Sample Text from English Textbook of Grade 12

In the external examination of Grade 12, textbook based text is not asked. However, this text is given here in order to encourage teachers for developing the different levels of items while teaching the literary texts in the classroom.

Read the following text and answer the questions that follow.

Frightened by that nightmare, Pelayo ran to get Elisenda, his wife, who was putting compresses on the sick child, and he took her to the rear of the courtyard. They both looked at the fallen body with a mute stupor. He was dressed like a rag picker. There were only a few faded hairs left on his bald skull and very few teeth in his mouth, and his pitiful condition of a drenched great-grandfather took away any sense of grandeur he might have had. His huge buzzard wings, dirty and half-plucked, were forever entangled in the mud. They looked at him so long and so closely that Pelayo and Elisenda very soon overcame their surprise and in the end found him familiar. Then they dared speak to him, and he answered in an incomprehensible dialect with a strong sailor's voice. That was how they skipped over the inconvenience of the wings and quite intelligently concluded that he was a lonely castaway from some foreign ship wrecked by the storm. And yet, they called in a neighbor woman who knew everything about life and death to see him, and all she needed was one look to show them their mistake.

Learning Outcome: Students can scan the text and retrieve specific information from it.

A. Who was not well in Pelayo's family? (LC)

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions 'the child'.

Learning Outcome: Students can paraphrase information or ideas of the texts.

B. Where was the fallen body? (RE)

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions '(in the rear of) the courtyard.'

Learning Outcome: Can make inferences from contextual information, writer's viewpoints, implied information, etc.

C. What made Pelayo and Elisenda think that the fallen body was not an angel? (IN)

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions 'enormous and muddy wings incomprehensible dialect and the strong sailor's voice'.

Learning Outcome: Can read and interpret literary texts.

D. Do you think Pelayo and Elisenda are the daring couples? Give a reason.

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions 'Yes' with the idea 'because they approached him (the old man) instead of running away from it'.

E. Was the strange creature a good-looking one? Give a reason. (EV)

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for any answer that mentions ‘No’ with the idea ‘he was dressed like a rag picker/few faded hairs, few teeth in his mouth/ huge buzzard wings, dirty and half plucked’.

The specification grid of English subject of Grade 12 mentions different skills such as comprehending, narrating, summarizing, writing character sketch, paraphrasing, writing theme/central idea of the text, comparing and contrasting, making judgment (e.g. title justification), arguing, analyzing and interpreting, explaining with reference to context, literary interpretation and critical appreciation as the type of questions for the textbook based questions.

Writing Assessment

Assessing writing, grammar, and vocabulary in English involves evaluating learners’ ability to express ideas effectively, use accurate language structures, and demonstrate lexical knowledge. Writing assessment typically focuses on organization, coherence, content, grammar usage, and vocabulary range (Weigle, 2002). Formative assessments such as peer review, writing journals, and teacher feedback help monitor student progress and guide instruction. Summative assessments, including timed essays and standardized writing tasks, offer a broader measure of writing proficiency. Grammar assessment evaluates knowledge and application of syntactic structures, often through sentence transformation, error correction, and cloze tests (Alderson et al., 1995). Vocabulary assessment includes receptive and productive tasks, such as multiple-choice tests, word definitions, and gap-filling exercises, which measure both breadth and depth of lexical knowledge (Nation, 2001). Effective assessment must align with learners' proficiency levels and communication needs, emphasizing meaningful use over rote memorization. Moreover, integrated tasks that assess grammar and vocabulary within writing provide a more authentic and holistic evaluation of language ability. To ensure fairness and validity, rubrics with clear criteria and descriptors should be employed. A comprehensive assessment approach not only evaluates accuracy but also encourages learners to develop greater fluency and complexity in their language use.

Assessing Writing

Like reading, writing is another major skill of language learning. The curriculum of English for Grades 8, 10 and 12 outlines various competencies that students should be able to achieve after the completion of the course. The following table shows the competencies to be achieved after completion of Grades 8, 10 and 12.

Grade 8	Grade 10	Grade 12
➤ Write for an intended purpose and audience by generating, gathering, and organizing ideas and information.	➤ Creatively produce a variety of texts for personal, academic and functional purposes.	➤ Create a variety of writing for different purposes and audiences with appropriate content, style, and accuracy.
➤ Demonstrate good control of vocabulary and syntax to express basic communicative needs.	➤ Convey information and ideas on concrete as well as abstract notions in written and spoken form.	➤ Produce a variety of creative and critical writings.
	➤ Demonstrate a good control of vocabulary to express communicative needs.	➤ Appreciate diverse cultures. ➤ Listen and respond in English with accuracy and fluency.

The specification grid mentions different tasks for assessing writing. Equally, it mentions the structure of writing skill. The following table presents the writing tasks, the framework of external assessment for writing skills including grammar.

Task	Grade 8	Grade 10	Grade 12
Writing Task 1	Punctuation: A short and simple paragraph containing ten punctuation errors (5 marks)	Guided writing I: paragraph, description of tables/charts/ diagrams, a set of instructions, recipe, advertisement, notice and a set of rules and regulations. (5 marks) Response Limit: about 100 words	Writing Task 1: Any one of paragraph writing, summary writing, interpreting graphic text, news story writing, note taking, and skeleton stories. (7 marks) Response limit: about 150 words
Writing Task 2	Guided Writing: One task from paragraph/ news story/story/ description of tables/charts and diagrams and some guideline (5 marks)	Guided writing II: news story, skeleton story, message of condolence, message of congratulations, invitation letter, thank you letter, biography. (5 marks) Response Limit: about 100 words	Writing Task 2: Any one of: personal letter, job application letter, letter to the editor, business letter, emails, writing a CV. (8 marks) Response Limit: 180 words
Writing Task 3	Free Writing: One task from personal or official letter or a short essay (10 marks)	Free writing I: paragraph (presenting views, opinion, experience, feeling), leave application, job application, dialogue (6 marks) Response Limit: about 150 words	Writing Task 3: Any one of essay, travelogue/ memoir, book/film review, biography, diary entry, communicate and press release (10 marks) Response Limit: 300 words
Writing Task 4	-	Free writing II: personal/official letter, letter to the editor, email, short essay (narrative, argumentative, descriptive), diary, newspaper article, book review/film review (8 marks) Response Limit: about 200 words	-
Grammar Task 1	Reproduction: one of each tense, question tag, reported speech, voice, question and negation (2.5 marks)	Reproduction/ Transformation: one of each tense, question tag, reported speech, voice, interrogation (Wh-question) and negation (6	Grammar Contents: a. Adjectives and adverbs b. Concord/subject verb agreement c. Prepositions d. Modal auxiliaries

		marks)	e. Tense and aspects f. Infinitives and gerunds g. Conjunctions h. Relative clause i. Voice j. Reported speech Question Types: Fill in the gaps with or without choice, Reproduction/Transformation, identifying and correcting errors all as instructed in the brackets. (10 marks)
Grammar Task 2	Multiple Choice (Individual sentences or a contextual passage) It should contain article, preposition, connectives, conditional sentence and subject verb agreement (5X0.5=5)	Multiple Choice (In a contextual passage) It should contain articles, prepositions, tense, question tag, voice, reported speech, connectives, conditional sentence, subject verb agreement, causative verbs, modals, adjectives and adverbs, and relative pronouns (10X0.5=5) Note: Multiple choice items should contain four alternative choices	Vocabulary Contents: a. Sound system of English: consonants and vowels b. Vocabulary study - Stem/root - Suffixes - Prefixes - Derivation - Inflexion - Synonyms/antonyms - Parts of speech - Idioms and phrases - Nouns-number - Verb conjugation - Spelling - Punctuation c. Dictionary use d. Idioms and phrasal verbs Item Types: MCQ (5 marks)
Note	The writing task type should not be similar to that of reading texts given in the reading section.		

Cognitive Levels for Writing Tasks

The writing tasks in Grades 8, 10 and 12 broadly comprises of both guided and free writing tasks. The writing tasks are valid and reliable only when they measure the competencies and learning outcomes stipulated in the curriculum of each grade. In addition, the writing tasks should discriminate students' cognitive levels. It is desirable to funnel down the items and provide context or the stimulus to lead the students towards getting the expected response. It is advisable that teachers use measurable action verbs representing Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. The four levels of writing task are given below.

Knowledge

Knowledge level is the lowest level of cognition in which the students are expected to recall information and ideas to answer the question. This level emphasizes remembering and memorization of the contents learnt/taught. In language assessment at this level, students mostly perform rote learning, and remember the contents or ideas learnt or taught, and answer the test item.

Understanding

Understanding is another cognitive level in which students are expected to understand, interpret and extrapolate the information while solving the given problem or responding to a question. Understanding occurs in the case of narrating events in writing. Yet, narrating events also demand more higher-order thinking skills as well.

Applying

Application is another level of cognition in which students are expected to apply the learnt knowledge to solve similar or slightly different problems. At this level, students respond to the question or item using the information in new ways. If the problem raised by the question or item is similar, students perform at lower level of application. However, if the problem raised by the question is different, students are expected to apply higher level application.

Higher Abilities (Analyzing, Evaluating and Creating)

Higher abilities also known as higher order thinking skills (HOTS) demand students to analyse, synthesise and/or evaluate information or ideas to answer the question. At this level in language assessment, students are expected to either break ideas into constituent parts (analyse), put information and ideas together to form a coherent or functional whole (synthesise), make judgements based on criteria (Evaluate), and/or generate and produce new information (create). This level is the highest level of cognitive development, and it prompts students to produce a response using multiple cognitive processes.

The items designed for guided writing and free writing both assess the students' higher order cognitive behavior of language learning. Rather than recalling and memorizing the learnt knowledge, students are expected to analyse, synthesise, evaluate and produce a response on the basis of their background knowledge of structure, content, tone of language and writing mechanics. Of course, the space for creativity differs in guided and free writing. In guided writing, the students are mostly guided by the prompts or clues given. Students will have a little space for production. However, in the case of free writing, there exists more space to explore relevant ideas, analyse, synthesise, make a judgement and produce new information.

Types of Items/Questions

Guided Writing

Learning Outcome: Can compose well-formed paragraphs including the appropriate topic sentence, supporting details and a concluding sentence based on the clues given.

Item/ Question

Develop a readable story in about 100 words using the clues given below. (Suggested for Grade 10)

a villager starts to cut down trees to sell other villagers come request him not to denies and continues to fall down trees satisfied to get a lot of money monsoon starts landslides everywhere fertile plots of land gone laments about his deeds moral

Free Writing**Learning Outcome:****A. Persuasive Writing Prompt**

In order to save money, your Head teacher is thinking about cancelling all field trips for the remainder of the academic year. Write an essay persuading him or her to allow students to continue attending field trips. Use specific reasons and examples to support your response.

Learning Outcome: Can write well-organized descriptive, narrative, argumentative and expository essays on the given topics and the topics of interest.

B. Descriptive Writing Prompt

Describe the purposes of the Internet. Include various viewpoints, including that of users and providers.

Learning Outcome: Can write well-organized descriptive, narrative, argumentative and expository essays on the given topics and the topics of interest.

C. Narrative Writing Prompt

Many things can interfere with our plans. Sometimes an illness prevents us from doing something we really want to do. Describe a time when you became ill and missed out on doing something you had really been looking forward to.

Learning Outcome: Can write different types of formal letters such as letters to the editors, complaint letters, job application, and business letters.

D. Letter Writing Prompt

Recently, you attended a birthday party of your close friend. Write a letter to your friend living in a foreign country describing the birthday party and your experience in about 100 words.

Rubrics

A rubric is a simple guide to awarding marks to examinees' answers. It is a structured tool, which precisely provides clear criteria and expectations for assessing student work or other types of performance. It outlines specific components of an assignment and describes what constitutes different levels of performance for each component. Rubrics help ensure fair and consistent grading, and they can also serve as a guide for students to understand expectations and improve their work. Rubrics consist of criteria, levels of performance, scores or points and descriptors.

Criteria refers to the specific aspects of the assignment or task that will be assessed whereas 'Levels of Performance' refers to descriptions of what different levels of performance look like for each criterion (e.g., "A," "B," "C"). 'Scores' or 'Points' indicate the numerical values assigned to each level of performance while 'Descriptors' mean the clear and concise language describing what each level of performance entails. The rubrics are provided with two different options for questions carrying two or more marks, i.e. holistic and analytic.

Holistic Rubrics

A holistic rubric consists of a single scale with all criteria to be included in the evaluation being considered together (e.g., clarity, organization, and mechanics). With a holistic rubric the rater assigns a single score (usually on a 1- 4 or 1- 6 point scale) based on an overall judgment of student work. The rater matches an entire piece of student work to a single description on the scale.

Sample Holistic Marking Scheme for Textbook Based SAQ of Grade 12.

Q. N.	Textbook Based Questions: Short Answer Questions (5 questions each carrying 2 marks)	10
	Descriptors	Marks
2	Suggested Value Points/ Answer Key :	2
	• Uses rich content relevant to the topic as given in the text. • Makes use of all possible value points. • Demonstrates the ability to use references, allusions, tone and meaning. • Identifies authors, materials, plot and other relevant characteristics • Explicates specific literary, cultural and biographical information when required. • Uses varied vocabulary and sentence structures and linking words • Expresses interesting and unexpected ideas. • Communicates ideas clearly and coherently • Demonstrates fluent and authentic use of the language. • Shows ability to use stylish expression	2
	• Makes use of one or two value points. • The organization of ideas is clear, but could be improved • Shows evidence of continuity • Overall communication of ideas is clear with some grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors • Uses limited and often inconsistent vocabulary and sentence structures	1
	• Blank or un-attempted answer • Transliterated language use • Uses completely irrelevant ideas • Uses mother tongue script	0

Analytic Rubrics

An analytic rubric is a type of grading tool that breaks down an assignment into specific criteria, allowing for individual scores to be assigned to each. It is a grid-like structure where each criterion is listed in a row, and different levels of performance are listed in columns, with cells in the center often containing descriptions of what each level looks like for that specific criterion. Teachers are advised to prepare their own rubrics.

Sample #1

Marks/ Criteria	Content	Organization	Vocabulary and Rhetoric	Grammar and Mechanics	Format/Layout
2	Substantial, specific, and/or illustrative content demonstrating strong development and sophisticated ideas about a single topic with evident awareness of the task	Sophisticated arrangement of content with evident and/or subtle transitions	Precise, illustrative use of a variety of words and sentence structures creating voice and tone appropriate to audience	Evident control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation	Appropriate, expressive, chronological and coherent
1.5	Sufficiently developed content with adequate elaboration or explanation about a single topic with sufficient awareness of task.	Efficient arrangement of content that sustains a logical order with good evidence of transitions.	Considerable use of a variety of words and sentence structures that may create writer's voice and tone appropriate to audience.	Sufficient control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation.	Appropriate, expressive, logical and coherent
1	Haphazardly developed content with adequate elaboration or explanation about a single topic with insufficient awareness of task.	Partially functional arrangement of content that sustains a logical order with little evidence of transitions.	Generic use of a variety of words and sentence structures that may or may not create writer's voice and tone appropriate to audience.	Considerable or often haphazard control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation.	Often inappropriate, inexpressive, illogical and incoherent
0.5	Limited content with little elaboration or explanation making no apparent point but evidence of a specific topic.	Confusing arrangement of content with or without attempts of transitions.	Very limited word choice and control of sentence structures that impede voice and tone.	Very limited control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation.	Inappropriate layout and/or format
0	Un-attempted or Blank or use of transliterated language				

Sample #2

Criteria	5 – Excellent	4 – Very Good	3 – Satisfactory	2 – Needs Improvement	1 – Inadequate
Task Fulfillment	Fully addresses all parts of the prompt with clear and focused ideas	Addresses most parts clearly and stays mostly on topic	Addresses some parts; focus may not be fully clear	Incomplete response; limited understanding of the task	Task is misunderstood or ignored; off-topic
Organization & Structure	Excellent structure with logical sequence and effective paragraphing	Clear structure with minor lapses in coherence	Some organization; transitions may be weak or mechanical	Disorganized with limited paragraphing	No clear structure; ideas are jumbled
Content & Ideas	Rich, relevant content with depth, detail, and creativity	Relevant and developed content with some supporting details	Basic ideas with limited development	Few ideas; weak development or irrelevant content	Lacks ideas or content; mostly irrelevant
Language & Vocabulary	Wide range of vocabulary; strong word choice and varied sentence structures	Good vocabulary with some variety in sentence structures	Basic vocabulary; simple or repetitive sentences	Limited word choice and sentence variety	Very poor vocabulary; confusing or incoherent language
Grammar & Mechanics	Almost no errors; grammar, spelling, and punctuation are excellent	Few minor errors; do not distract from clarity	Some errors; may affect clarity occasionally	Frequent errors that sometimes interfere with understanding	Persistent errors that seriously hinder understanding
Use of Guidance/Clues	Effectively uses all given clues, prompts, or models in creative, accurate ways	Uses most of the clues well with minor omissions	Some clues used; basic use of the model	Uses few clues; misses important parts of the guidance	Ignores or misuses clues; no link to the given model or guidance

Punctuation

The English curriculum for Grade 8 mentions punctuation as a part of writing competence. Considering punctuation as a learning outcome, the assessment framework states that it requires a test item with 10 errors in language use in context. The item is designed to test the students' ability to use the punctuation marks correctly. Though it is not explicitly stated in the assessment framework, the punctuation item should include the errors as follows:

- Capitalization: 3 (proper nouns – 2, sentence initial -1)
- Full stops: 2

- Question mark: 1
- Exclamation mark: 1
- Comma: 1
- Apostrophe: 1
- Inverted comma: 1

Learning Outcome: Use punctuation correctly.

Example # 1: Text with Specified Errors for Punctuation

last Saturday, Emma and her friend lucy went to visit the london zoo They were excited to see the animals especially the lions and giraffes! Emma said I can't wait to see the baby elephant Lucy replied, "Do you think we'll see it today" When they reached the enclosure, lucy shouted, "Look at that one - its waving with its trunk".

Included Errors

Error Type	Examples from Text
Capitalization (3)	– "last Saturday" → should be Last Saturday (sentence initial – 1)
	– "london zoo" → should be London Zoo (proper noun – 1)
	– "lucy" → should be Lucy (proper noun – 1)
Full Stop (2)	Missing after "...the london zoo" → should end with a period. Missing after "...I can't wait to see the baby elephant" should end with a period.
Question Mark (1)	"Do you think we'll see it today?" is missing one initially, but added correctly here.
Exclamation Mark (1)	"...especially the lions and giraffes!" (Correctly used as the one required.)
Comma (1)	Missing after "Emma said,"
Apostrophe (1)	"its waving" → should be "it's waving" (contraction of it is).
Inverted Comma (1)	"look at that one its waving with its trunk" → Should be capitalized and punctuated: "Look at that one – it's waving with its trunk!"

Marking Scheme: Award 0.5 marks to each correct answer.

Last Saturday, Emma and her friend **Lucy** went to visit the **London zoo**. They were excited to see the animals- especially the lions and giraffes! Emma **said**, "**I can't wait to see the baby elephant.**" Lucy replied, "Do you think we'll see it **today?**" When they reached the enclosure, Lucy shouted, "Look at that one – **it's** waving with its trunk!"

Cognitive Level

This item assesses the students' knowledge and low-level application. Here, students need not be creative enough, yet they need to recall the explicit rules of punctuation and capitalization and apply where appropriate.

Grammar

The questions in grammar follow the same pattern in Grades 8 and 10. There are reproduction tasks and contextual tasks. In Grade 8, five questions are asked in reproduction and five blank spaces with multiple choice items in contextual tasks. However, in Grade 10, there will be six questions in reproduction task and 10 questions in contextual task. Each item under reproduction

carries 0.5 marks for each of the five questions in Grade 8 while each item under reproduction carries 1 mark for each of the six questions in Grade 10. Textual MCQ carries 0.5 marks for each item. The number of items in Grade 8 are 5 and 10 in Grade 10.

Sample Grammar Items of Grades 8 and 10.

Reproduction

Learning Outcome: Students can reproduce sentences by applying knowledge of the previously learned material.

Change the following sentences as directed in the brackets. (5 x 0.5 = 2.5)

- a. Children jump a lot in the garden. (Change into simple past tense.)
- b. Dolma cut her leg,? (Add a suitable question tag.)
- c. Mala said to me, "Help me, please." (Change into indirect speech.)
- d. The students have solved the problem. (Change into passive voice.)
- e. Ramesh bought a lot of books. (Change into negative.)

Answer Key

- a. Children jumped a lot in the garden.
- b. Dolma cut her leg, didn't she?
- c. Mala requested me to help her.
- d. The problem has been solved by the students.
- e. Ramesh did not buy many books.

Grammar in Context: MCQs

Learning Outcome: Can apply knowledge of grammar in contextual texts.

Choose the correct answer from the given options in the brackets. (5 x 0.5 = 2.5) (Suggested for Grade 8)

A lion once fell in love 1... (from/to/with/in) a farmer's daughter. The farmer thought that all the lion really wanted was 2.... (a/ an/ the/ no article) good meal. So he made a clever plan. He said to the lion, "I think you might be the best son-in-law for me. I won't need a scarecrow 3..... (for/to / so that/ because) keep the crows away from you around". The lion laughed politely. The farmer said, "You are a lion. My daughter is a little bit frightened. If you really 4.... (will love/ love/ had loved/loved) her, you will need to pull out your teeth and cut off your claws." Finally, the lion did what the farmer suggested. Later no one 5..... (was/were/ is/ have been) frightened of him anymore, and the farmer beat him with a stick and drove him away.

Answer Key

1. with
2. a
3. to
4. love
5. was

Cognitive Level

This question assesses the students' knowledge in grammar and low-level application of the grammar in context. Though the students need to work with the language context, they again use the knowledge of preposition, article, verbs and connectives.

Sample Grammar Item for Grade 12

Learning Outcome: Can use knowledge of grammar in new situations.

Do as instructed in the brackets and rewrite the sentences. 10 x 1 = 10

- a. He played the piano very good. (Find the mistake in this sentence and correct it.)
- b. She apologized (at/on/for/of) being late to the meeting. (Choose the correct preposition to complete the sentence.)
- c. While she **was studying** in the library, her friends **plays** outside, one of them **was listening** to music, and another **had finished** his homework. (Identify which bolded verb form is incorrect and rewrite it.)
- d. You (could/must/might/would) finish your homework before playing video games. (Fill in the blanks choosing the appropriate modal auxiliary verb.)
- e. If she (was/were/ had been/ must have been) more careful, she would have avoided the accident. (Choose the correct verb form to complete the sentence.)
- f. She enjoys (to paint/ to painting/ painting/ paint) in her free time. (Choose and copy the correct verb in the brackets to complete the sentence.)
- g. He speaks Spanish. He speaks French. (Combine the sentences using the conjunction both ... and.)
- h. The man is my uncle. He lives next door. (Join the two sentences using an appropriate relative pronoun.)
- i. The chef cooked a delicious meal. (Change the sentence into passive voice.)
- j. She said, "I will visit my grandmother tomorrow." (Change the sentence into indirect speech.)

Answer Key and Marking Scheme: Award 1 mark for each correct answer.

- a. He played the piano very well.
- b. She apologized for being late to the meeting.
- c. While she was studying in the library, her friends played outside, one of them was listening to music, and another had finished his homework.
- d. You must finish your homework before playing video games.
- e. If she had been more careful, she would have avoided the accident.
- f. She enjoys painting in her free time.
- g. He speaks both Spanish and French.
- h. The man who lives next door is my uncle.
- i. A delicious meal was cooked by the chef.
- j. She said that she would visit her grandmother the following day.

Chapter 3

Test Set Development

To ensure a reliable and effective examination process, at least twice the number of questions required for the necessary sets of tests must be developed and stored in advance. Once a sufficient item bank has been prepared, the actual test paper sets should be prepared shortly before the examination begins.

Each set of tests should be designed based on a specification grid, which is organized in the form of a test matrix. Each test matrix must differ in some way from the others, ensuring that no two students from the same school receive an identical test set in different years. Ideally, all questions in each set should be different to maintain uniqueness.

The test matrix is populated by selecting appropriate types and numbers of questions from an elaborated specification grid. In this table, the question cells are initially left blank, while the right column includes the total number of items and marks, and the bottom row outlines the types of items, their count, and marks. The matrix is then filled by entering the codes of selected items into the respective cells.

A test paper is considered fully constructed when all the cells in the matrix are filled in such a way that the total number of items/questions and marks in the right-hand column and the bottom row align with the requirements of the specification table. Additionally, each matrix must reflect significant variation so that test papers from one test to another are not repetitive. This difference ensures that each examination assesses student learning through distinct sets of tests, preventing guessing.

Not all types of items/questions must be included in every test; each exam serves as a sampling of the curriculum. Therefore, it would not be possible to predict which questions will appear in future tests. This integrity is guaranteed through the careful construction and variation of test paper matrices.

Teachers can prepare their own test matrix every time they construct a test. Below are given different types of test matrices applicable for different classes.

Sample 1: Grade 10, English (Set 1)

Area	Text types	Multiple Choice	Sequencing	Fill in the gaps (without choices)	Matching	True/False	Short Answer Question	Vocabulary	Marks
Reading	Seen text 1	Poem 5							5
	Seen text 2		Biography 5				Biography 5		10
	Unseen text 1			Job Advertisement 5			Job Advertisement 5		10
	Unseen text 2				Essay 5	Essay 5	Essay 5		15

Writing	Guided Writing 1	Recipe (with clues)	5
	Guided Writing 2	Invitation letter (with clues)	5
	Free Writing 1	Views and attitudes (on current/important issues)	6
	Free Writing 2	Letter and email (formal/informal)	8
Grammar	Reproduction	6 tasks representing each of tense, question tag, reported speech, voice, and interrogation and negation	6
	Grammar in Context	10 MCQs representing articles, prepositions, tense, question tag, voice, reported speech, connectives, conditional sentence, subject verb agreement, causative verbs, modals, adjectives and adverbs, and relative pronouns	5

Sample Test Matrix (Grade 8)

Test Matrix

Subject: English

Grade_8

Test Set No:

S. No.	Skill Area	Content	Item Code	Text Type	Item Format	Marks	Literal	Reorganization	Inference	Evaluation and	Vocabulary
1	Reading 1	Seen Text1		Poem	MCQ	5	2	2	1	0	
2	Reading 2	Seen Text2		Essay	TRUE/FALSE	5	2	1	1	1	
3	Reading 3	Unseen Text1		Story	Ordering	5	2	1	1	1	
4	Reading 4a	Unseen Text2		Biography	Vocabulary /Matching	5					5
	Reading 4b	Unseen Text2		Biography	SAQ	5	2	0	2	1	
5	Punctuation	Short text with 10 errors				5					
6	Guided Writing	GW1		News Story		5					
7	Free Writing	FW1		Official Letter		10					
8	Grammar 1(Reproduction)	G1				2.5					
9	Grammar 2 (MCQ)	G2				2.5					
Total						50	8	4	5	3	5

Sample Test Matrix (Grade 10)

Test Matrix

Subject: English

Grade_10

Test Set No:

S. No.	Skill Area	Content	Item Code	Text Type	Item Format	Marks	Literal Comprehension/K	Reorganization/U	Inference/A	Evaluation and Reflection/HA	Vocabulary	Total Items
1	Reading 1	Seen Text1		Poem	MCQ	5	2	2	1	0		5
2a	Reading 2 a	Seen Text2		Essay	TRUE/FALSE	5	2	1	1	1		5
2b	Reading 2 b	Seen Text2		Essay	SAQ	5	3	0	2	0		5
3a	Reading 3 a	Unseen Text1		Story	Ordering	5	2	0	2	1		5
b	Reading 3 b	Unseen Text1		Story	Fill in the gaps	5	3	2	0	0		5
4a	Reading 4a	Unseen Text2		Biography	Vocabulary /Matching	5					5	5
4b	Reading 4b	Unseen Text2		Biography	TRUE/FALSE	5	2	1	1	1		5
4c	Reading 4c	Unseen Text2		Biography	SAQ	5	2	2	1	0		5
5	Guided Writing1	GW1		recipe		5						1
6	Guided Writing 2	GW2		news story		5						1
7	Free Writing1	FW1		Letter to the Editor		6						1
8	Free Writing2	FW2		Essay		8						1
9	Grammar 1(Reproduction)	G1				6						6
10	Grammar 2 (MCQ)	G2				5						10
Total						75	16	8	8	3	5	60

Sample Test Matrix (Grade 12)

Test Matrix

Subject: English

Grade_12

Test Set No:

S. No.	Skill Area	Content	Item Code	Text Type	Item Format	Marks	Literal Comprehension/	Reorganization/U	Inference/A	Evaluation and Reflection/H/A	Vocabulary	Total Items
1a	Reading 1a	Unseen Text1		Biography	Vocabulary /Matching	5					5	5
1b	Reading 1b	Unseen Text1		Biography	TRUE/FALSE	5	2	2	1	0		5
1c	Reading 1c	Unseen Text1		Biography	SAQ	5	2	1	1	1		5
2	Reading 2a	Textbook based SAQ		Literary	SAQ	10	2	1	1	1		5
3	Reading 2b	Textbook based LAQ		Literary	LAQ	10	0	0	1	1		2
4	Free Writing1	GW1		Chart		7						1
5	Free Writing 2	GW2		Letter to the Editor		8						1
6	Free Writing 3	FW1		Essay		10						1
7	Grammar	FW2				10						10
8	Vocabulary	Vocab				5						5
Total						75	6	4	4	3	5	60

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Item_bank

Sample item cell codes for Grade XII

ITEM CELL CODE (UNSEEN READING TEXT)

Area	TEXT TYPES	LC						RE						IN						EV					
		TFNG	MCQ	MC FG/SENC/SU	ORD	VSAQ	MG	TFNG	MCQ	FG	ORD	VSAQ	MG	TFNG	MCQ	FG	ORD	VSAQ	MG	TFNG	MCQ	FG	ORD	VSAQ	MG
UNSEEN READING TEXT	essays	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	biographies/auto-biographies	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
	stories	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72
	letters or emails	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96
	news reports and articles	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
	product guides	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144
	travelogues/memoire	145	146	147	148	149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168
	brochures	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192
	book/film reviews	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216
	reports	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240
Blogs	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	

ITEM CELL CODE TEXTBOOK BASED QUESTIONS

AREA		LC		RE		IN		EV	
		SAQ	LAQ	SAQ	LAQ	SAQ	LAQ	SAQ	LAQ
SHORT STORIES	UNIT 1	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272
	UNIT 2	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280
	UNIT 3	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288
	UNIT 4	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296
	UNIT 5	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304
	UNIT 6	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312
	UNIT 7	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320
POEMS	UNIT 1	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328
	UNIT 2	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336
	UNIT 3	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344
	UNIT 4	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352
	UNIT 5	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360
ESSAYS	UNIT 1	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368
	UNIT 2	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376
	UNIT 3	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384
	UNIT 4	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392
	UNIT 5	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	399
DRAMA	UNIT 1	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407
	UNIT 2	408	409	410	411	412	413	414	415
	UNIT 3	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423

ITEM CELL CODE WRITING TASKS

TASK TYPES	CONTENT AREA	K	U	A	HA
WRITING TASK 1	paragraph writing	424	425	426	427
	summary writing	428	429	430	431
	interpreting graphic text	432	433	434	435
	news story writing	436	437	438	439
	note taking	440	441	442	443
	skeleton stories	444	445	446	447
WRITING TASK 2	personal letter	448	449	450	451
	job application letter	452	453	454	455
	letter to the editor	456	457	458	459
	business letter	460	461	462	463
	emails	464	465	466	467
	writing a CV	468	469	470	471
WRITING TASK 3	essay	472	473	474	475
	travelogue/memoir	476	477	478	479
	book/film review	480	481	482	483
	biography	484	485	486	487
	diary entry	488	489	490	491
	communique and press release	492	493	494	495

ITEM CELL CODE GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY

AREA	CONTENT	K					U					A					HA				
GRAMMAR		IDENTIFYING ERROR	MCQ	FG	TRANSFORMA TION	SENTENCE COMBINATION	IDENTIFYING ERROR	MCQ	FG	TRANSFORMA TION	SENTENCE COMBINATION	IDENTIFYING ERROR	MCQ	FG	TRANSFORMA TION	SENTENCE COMBINATION	IDENTIFYING ERROR	MCQ	FG	TRANSFORMA TION	SENTENCE COMBINATION
	Adjectives and adverbs	496	497	498	499	500	501	502	503	504	505	506	507	508	509	510	511	512	513	514	515
	Concord/subject verb agreement	516	517	518	519	520	521	522	523	524	525	526	527	528	529	530	531	532	533	534	535
	Prepositions	536	537	538	539	540	541	542	543	544	545	546	547	548	549	550	551	552	553	554	555
	Modal auxiliaries	556	557	558	559	560	561	562	563	564	565	566	567	568	569	570	571	572	573	574	575
	Tense and aspects	576	577	578	579	580	581	582	583	584	585	586	57	588	589	590	591	592	593	594	595
	Infinitives and gerunds	596	597	598	599	600	601	602	603	604	605	606	607	608	609	610	611	612	613	614	615
	Conjunctions	616	617	618	619	620	621	622	623	624	625	626	627	628	629	630	631	632	633	634	635
	Relative clause	636	637	638	639	640	641	642	643	644	645	646	647	648	649	650	651	652	653	654	655
	Voice	656	657	658	659	660	661	662	663	664	665	666	667	668	669	670	671	672	673	674	675
	Reported speech	676	677	678	679	680	681	682	683	684	685	686	687	688	689	690	691	692	693	694	695
VOCABULARY STUDY	consonants and vowels	696	697	698	699	700	701	702	703	704	705	706	707	708	709	710	711	712	713	714	715
	Stem/root	716	717	718	719	720	721	722	723	724	725	726	727	728	729	730	731	732	733	734	735
	Suffixes/ Prefixes	736	737	738	739	740	741	742	743	744	745	746	747	748	749	750	751	752	753	754	755
	Derivation/ Inflexion	756	757	758	759	760	761	762	763	764	765	766	767	768	769	770	771	772	773	774	775
	Synonyms/antonyms	776	777	778	779	780	781	782	783	784	785	786	787	788	789	790	791	792	793	794	795
	Parts of speech	796	797	798	799	800	801	802	803	804	805	806	807	808	809	810	811	812	813	814	815
	Idioms and phrases	816	817	818	819	820	821	822	823	824	825	826	827	828	829	830	831	832	833	834	835
	Nouns-number	836	837	838	839	840	841	842	843	844	845	846	847	848	849	850	851	852	853	854	855
	Verb conjugation	856	857	858	859	860	861	862	863	864	865	866	867	868	869	870	871	872	873	874	875
	Spelling	876	877	878	879	880	881	882	883	884	885	886	887	888	889	890	891	892	893	894	895
	Punctuation	896	897	898	899	900	901	902	903	904	905	906	907	908	908	910	911	912	913	914	915
	Dictionary use	916	917	918	919	920	921	922	923	924	925	926	927	928	929	930	931	932	933	934	935

