

2008 Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 National Results in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy

Introduction

In July 2003, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) decided to improve the comparability and diagnostic potential of national literacy and numeracy data through the development of common national tests.

The first National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests were conducted in May 2008 for all Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in government and non-government schools. For the first time, all students in the same year level were assessed on the same test items in the domains of Reading, Writing, Language Conventions (Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Numeracy. Prior to 2008, students had undertaken different tests in each State and Territory.

The NAPLAN tests were developed collaboratively by the States and Territories, the non-government education sectors and the Australian Government, with Curriculum Corporation as project managers. The tests broadly reflect the curriculum content across all States and Territories, and the types of test questions and test formats were chosen so that they would be familiar to teachers and students.

NAPLAN is an important innovation in national literacy and numeracy assessment in Australia. It reports the full range of student achievement against a common scale and uses a common set of tests to resolve the technical difficulties associated with equating State and Territory based tests.

For each of the assessed aspects of literacy and for numeracy, there is now a single continuous scale of student achievement across ten national achievement bands spanning Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Each year level is reported against six of these bands.

As students progress through their years of schooling, it will now be possible to monitor how much progress they have made in literacy and numeracy. Individual student reports also show their results against the national average and the middle 60 per cent of students nationally.

Individual student reports contain plain English descriptors of what was assessed in each of the tests. This provides

parents, in particular, with valuable information on what a student can typically do.

Importantly, NAPLAN can be used by teachers for diagnostic purposes. At the national level, teachers can refer to this information to gauge the achievement of the most able students, as well as focus on students who have yet to reach the national minimum standard and who may need further support.

The NAPLAN Assessment Process

On 13, 14 and 15 May 2008, over one million students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 sat the same NAPLAN tests.

The test administration authorities in each State and Territory were responsible for printing the NAPLAN 2008 tests, and for test administration, data capture and delivery of reports. Curriculum Corporation managed these processes for non-government schools that did not elect to use the State or Territory service.

National Protocols for Test Administration ensured consistency in the administration of the tests by all test administration authorities across Australia. The Test Administration Manuals, which were provided to all schools and supervising teachers, ensured that all students sat the tests under similar conditions.

Tests for Reading, Language Conventions (Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Numeracy used optical mark recognition to score multiple choice items and optical character recognition and professional officers to score constructed response items.

Writing was marked by professional officers using online marking technology to assist the process. Test administration authorities in each State and Territory managed the marking of student writing, with ongoing monitoring of marking consistency across all marking centres. The same training was provided to all markers to ensure the consistent application of the common marking rubric.

Test administration authorities submitted de-identified student data from all tests to a national data contractor, appointed to undertake the analysis of the test data on

behalf of the States and Territories. The national contractor undertook two separate and parallel analyses of the data. Comparative data showing the performance of each State or Territory and the nation were fed back to each testing authority.

The national central data analysis was used to determine the national achievement bands, the national mean and the middle 60 per cent of achievement for each year level, for each domain.

Student reports were produced by the test administration authorities, using a common reporting format agreed by MCEETYA. During September 2008, individual student reports were delivered to parents, and schools received their school reports. The *NAPLAN Summary National Report* was released on 12 September, by MCEETYA.

Student Achievement

NAPLAN results are reported using five national achievement scales, one for each of the assessed aspects of literacy—Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation—and one for Numeracy. The national achievement scales each span Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. The skills and understandings assessed in each domain from Year 3 through to Year 9 are mapped onto achievement scales with scores that range from 0 to 1000. By locating all students on a single national scale, which maps the skills and understandings assessed, each scale provides significantly more information about the literacy and numeracy achievement of students than was previously available.

The use of a common scale that spans Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for each domain, allows both the status of, and growth in, student achievement to be monitored and reported throughout a student's years of schooling.

These reporting scales are constructed so that any given scaled score represents the same level of achievement over time. For example, a score of 700 in Reading will have the same meaning in 2010 as it has in 2008. A key feature of these scales is that they enable changes in literacy and numeracy achievement for all students to be monitored.

Each scale consists of 10 bands to cover the full range of student achievement demonstrated by the tests across Year 3 to Year 9. The national achievement bands are provided to map the increasing complexity of the skills and understandings assessed by NAPLAN. Six of these bands are used for reporting student performance in each year level:

Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Bands 1-6	Bands 3-8	Bands 4-9	Bands 5-10

For each year level, the national minimum standard is located on the common underlying scale at the following national achievement bands:

- Year 3 – Band 2
- Year 5 – Band 4
- Year 7 – Band 5
- Year 9 – Band 6

The national minimum standards at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 represent increasingly challenging skills and understandings and require progressively higher scores on the NAPLAN scale across the years of schooling.

Students whose results are in the minimum standard band have typically demonstrated the basic elements of literacy and numeracy for the year level.

Students whose results are in the lowest band for the year level have not achieved the national minimum standard for that year, and need focused intervention and additional support to help them achieve the skills they require to progress in schooling.