

Understand writing in Prep–Year 10

The Australian Curriculum achievement standards describe the learning expected of students at each year level or band and can be demonstrated by multiple means.



Reflect on practice

Compare the following two definitions. How does an understanding of the difference between *write* and *handwrite* support:

- teachers to provide the curriculum with rigour and fidelity in a way that responds to the diversity of learners?
- students to access and participate in learning, and demonstrate the full extent and depth of learning against achievement standards?

Write

The Australian Curriculum: English glossary defines write across all eight learning areas of the curriculum as:

'plan, compose, edit and publish texts in print or digital forms. Writing usually involves activities using pencils, pens, word processors; and/or using drawings, models, photos to represent text; and/or using a scribe to record responses or produce recorded responses.'

Handwriting

The Australian Curriculum: English glossary defines handwriting as:

'a production of legible, correctly formed letters by hand or with the assistance of writing tools, for example, pencil grip or assistive technology.'

(Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2021)

Understand access to writing in the Australian Curriculum

Students can demonstrate writing by multiple means, including the use of:

- a scribe to transcribe a student's verbal or signed responses and directions including punctuation, exactly as dictated by the student;
- a Braille device;
- drawings or photos;
- eye gaze technology and software;
- handwriting;
- speech-to-text assistive technology;
- typing, including use of spell-check and word prediction.

Understand how handwriting differs to writing

Only one small portion of each English achievement standard from Prep–Year 3 demands the demonstration of handwriting — the bulk of productive modes in these achievement standards refer to writing or creating texts which can include, but are not limited to handwriting. Handwriting is not explicitly taught or assessed in other learning areas.

Unless handwriting itself is being assessed, a student does not need to *handwrite* a response to an assessment task. Teachers have the autonomy to plan or adjust assessment tasks that respond to the diverse needs of their students by providing options and choices in how students demonstrate writing.

If a student cannot demonstrate¹ handwriting, they may not need to be assessed against the aspects of the achievement standard where handwriting is being assessed. The student is assessed against the remainder of the achievement standard with this decision not affecting their overall level of achievement or opportunity to progress to the next achievement standard.

It may be appropriate to isolate the handwriting aspects of the Prep–Year 3 achievement standards to assess independently of the assessment task, or, if evidence of this skill is gathered in an assessment task in another unit, this aspect may be omitted.

Spelling

Spelling makes up a very small portion of the English and Languages achievement standards. Unless spelling itself is being assessed, students do not need to demonstrate accurate spelling when responding to an assessment task and may use supports such as spell-check or predictive text. If spelling is being assessed, and a student uses technology that enables spell-checking to create their text, then spelling can be isolated and assessed independently of the written task.

Consider an example

The following is one example of how a classroom teacher might plan to adjust the mode of writing in an assessment task. The differentiation or adjustments made to assessment are also reflected in the teaching and learning sequence².

A Year 10 English assessment task asks students to **write** an 800-word film review that evaluates the value of a film interpretation of a Shakespearean play to persuade contemporary Australian teenage audiences.

- To support **all students** to write a film review, the teacher can offer options such as typing or using speech to text technology.
- To support **an individual student** with Dysgraphia to write a film review, a scribe can transcribe the student's response.

This document has been republished from the Assessment and Moderation Hub, an internal Department of Education website.

¹ A decision that a student cannot demonstrate an aspect of the achievement standard is made when the aspect being assessed demands the production of a skill that if adjusted would impact what is being assessed. For example, a student who does not have movement in their hands does not need to be assessed against the English aspect: write using joined letters that are accurately formed and consistent in size in Year 3.

² Differentiation and/or adjustments planned for cohorts are recorded in the Year/Band plans, and/or Unit Plans. Differentiation and/or adjustments planned for identified groups and/or individual students can be recorded in the OneSchool Support tab.