

# National assessment program

## Primary newsletter



This newsletter has been written to provide all NSW public primary schools with important information about the 2008 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy. A second newsletter will be sent to schools in February, 2008.

More information can be found at [www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/policies/nap/index.htm](http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/policies/nap/index.htm)  
Questions about the National Assessment Program can be emailed to [naplannsw@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:naplannsw@det.nsw.edu.au)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Purpose

The purpose of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is to assess the literacy and numeracy learning of students in all Australian schools at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

The results of these tests will provide useful information for teachers and parents. In particular, they will help inform teachers in their ongoing efforts to address the literacy and numeracy needs of their students.

In NSW the NAPLAN tests will replace the Basic Skills Tests (BST), English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA) and Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program (SNAP). The national assessment is designed to provide information on student performance across a number of levels of achievement.

### Test schedule

- In May 2008 the National Assessment Program will be carried out across Australia in the same week for all four year groups.
- Testing will take place early in the school day over three days:
  - Tuesday 13 May - Language Conventions (Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Writing
  - Wednesday 14 May - Reading
  - Thursday 15 May - Numeracywith a make-up day on Friday 16 May for students who missed a section or were absent on a particular test day.
- Administration manuals will be sent to schools by March 2008.
- Sample practice items will be made available to schools, via the website, from December 2007.

### Marking the NAPLAN writing tests

- Marking of the writing component of the test will be conducted by qualified teachers under the supervision of the DET Educational Measurement and School Accountability Directorate.
- Information about opportunities for teachers to be involved in marking the tests will be distributed to schools by February 2008.

### Candidacy

All students enrolled in Years 3 and 5, or their equivalent, in all government and non-government schools will be tested. However, parents do have the right to withdraw their children from testing.

### Exemptions

All Year 3 and 5 students are candidates for the NAPLAN. However, as for the BST, consideration for

exemption can be given to students:

- newly arrived in Australia (less than a year before the test) and with a language background other than English
- with significant intellectual delay.

Students with confirmed disabilities or difficulties in learning are expected to participate in the testing. However, parents do have the right to withdraw their children from testing. This is classified as a parent withdrawal and not as an exemption.

### Special provisions

In line with arrangements for existing state-based tests, special provisions will be provided to students with disabilities or special needs.

- Special provisions include access to large print, black on white copy for the use of coloured overlays, Braille, assistive technology, oral sign support, separate supervision, extra time including rest breaks, scribe and reader.
- Special provisions may be accessed by a student for all or part of the tests and more than one provision may be accessed in any one test.
- Special provisions should reflect the type of support the student(s) accesses on a regular basis in the classroom.
- Parents/carers should be involved in the decision about their child's special provisions and participation in NAPLAN.

Further information about special provisions will be provided to schools at the beginning of 2008.

### Students in multi-age classes

Students in multi-age classes should be assigned to a grade according to the census data provided by the school and undertake the test appropriate for that grade.

### Reporting to students, parents and the community

- Information will be reported to schools, students and parents in a way similar to that used for current BST, ELLA and SNAP tests. While the final format of the reports is not yet available, it is anticipated that information will be provided on student achievement across a common reporting scale with performance bands in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy.
- The report format will be available in early 2008.
- The School Measurement, Assessment and Reporting Toolkit (SMART) will be updated to accommodate the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy. It will be provided to all NSW government schools to assist them to analyse the test results and tracking student performance over time.

### NSW sample testing

- NSW will conduct light sample testing in 2008 using existing state-based tests (BST, ELLA and SNAP). The sample testing will occur in March, May and August 2008. It will involve a sample of government primary students in Year 3 and Year 5 for BST and a sample of government secondary students in Year 7 for ELLA and SNAP.
- Sample testing will safeguard the highly regarded school and system-level information currently in place for NSW students regarding their achievements.
- The sample testing program will enable direct comparisons to be made between data from the state-based and national tests, and assist

with the alignment of the standards. This will enable principals and teachers to compare student results from previous NSW tests with the new national tests.

### Preparing students – advice to principals and teachers

NSW schools have assisted students to prepare for the BST for many years now. A similar approach is recommended for the NAPLAN tests. This may involve:

- using previous BST papers and test items in the context of teaching and learning programs
- ensuring that the aspects of literacy and numeracy assessed by the NAPLAN tests (see tables on following pages) are included in the context of teaching and learning programs
- discussing the practice test items provided with the test materials
- developing problem solving strategies for answering different types of test items, including free response and multiple choice answers, and items from across the full range of difficulty levels.

### In planning for 2008, principals need to ensure that:

- teachers are informed about the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- teaching and learning programs address the aspects of literacy and numeracy that are to be assessed
- excursions or other school events do not occur on the dates of the NAPLAN tests
- they identify students who are likely to require special provisions so that arrangements can be made to meet these needs.

# LITERACY

There will be three sections in the Year 3 and Year 5 national literacy tests. Language Conventions (Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Writing will occur on Tuesday 13 May; Reading will occur on Wednesday 14 May.

Similar to the national sample assessments and international tests undertaken by a number of students e.g. PISA and TIMMS, the NAPLAN will test the full range of student ability and will include some more challenging items.

Separate test booklets will be provided for each section, including Language Conventions, Reading and Writing. A separate reading stimulus magazine and a separate writing stimulus page will also be provided.

Schools should be aware of additional time and/or rest breaks that some students may seek and factor these into how the school will manage the assessment program.

The following tables provide information about the tests, along with comments and advice on preparation for the tests.



## Tuesday 13 May 2008

### Language conventions (covering spelling, punctuation and grammar)

	Year 3	Year 5	Comments and advice on preparation
Number of items	50 in total	50 in total	
Item types	Multiple choice (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and constructed response (spelling only)	Multiple choice (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and constructed response (spelling only)	A constructed response will involve students writing a response rather than choosing from a range of possible answers.
Coverage	50% spelling 35% grammar 15% punctuation	50% spelling 35% grammar 15% punctuation	This test will assess knowledge and use of spelling, punctuation and grammar, commensurate with syllabus expectations.  It is expected that students will be able to demonstrate their use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>punctuation markers such as capital letters, full stops and commas</li> <li>grammatical features such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.</li> </ul> Spelling will be assessed using a combination of multiple choice and constructed response items.
Test time	40 mins	40 mins	The NAPLAN gives significant attention to spelling which has resulted in this component of the tests being longer than the equivalent NSW tests.

Writing

	Year 3	Year 5	Comments and advice on preparation
Number of writing tasks	1	1	The NAPLAN will have only one writing task, rather than the two previously used in the BST.
Writing stimulus prompt	1 page full colour	1 page full colour	All Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students will respond to the same writing stimulus and question.
Item types	Narrative	Narrative	In 2008 the NAPLAN writing task will require students to compose a narrative text.
Number of test booklet pages for writing	4 pages	4 pages	A cover page plus three pages for written response.
Test time	40 mins, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 mins planning time</li> <li>• 30 mins writing time</li> <li>• 5 mins editing time</li> </ul>	40 mins, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 mins planning time</li> <li>• 30 mins writing time</li> <li>• 5 mins editing time</li> </ul>	With only one task there is less time required for this component of the NAPLAN compared to the BST.

Reading

	Year 3	Year 5	Comments and advice on preparation
Number of stimulus texts	6 stimulus texts	6 stimulus texts	The NAPLAN stimulus material contains fewer stimulus texts than the BST.
Number of items	35-40	35-40	The NAPLAN comprises similar numbers of test items to the BST.
Item types	imaginative 30-40% informational 40-60% argumentative 0-10%	imaginative 30-40% informational 40-60% argumentative 0-10%	The NAPLAN literacy framework categorises the different types of texts into three distinct classifications. A balance of both literary and factual text types is proposed which is comparable to the BST.
Item spread	90-100% multiple choice 0-10% constructed response	90-100% multiple choice 0-10% constructed response	BST includes a similar spread of items.
Skill area coverage	Contextual understandings 10-20% Text location and interpretation skills 60-80% Text and language knowledge 10-20%	Contextual understandings 10-20% Text location and interpretation skills 60-80% Text and language knowledge 10-20%	The skills assessed in the NAP are consistent with those taught through the <i>NSW English K-6 Syllabus</i> .  The reading test will assess understanding of a range of written texts used in Key Learning Areas of the primary curriculum. These texts will include both literary and factual texts. Questions may include reference to visual components of texts.
Test time	45 mins	50 mins	The length of this test is similar to the length of the reading test in the BST.

# NUMERACY

The Year 3 and 5 national numeracy tests will cover the aspects of numeracy with a degree of balance similar to the Basic Skills Test.

The national numeracy assessment is designed to provide information on performance across a number of levels of achievement. Similar to the national sample assessments and international tests undertaken by a number of students, the NAPLAN will test the full range of student ability and will include some more challenging items.

Schools should be aware of additional time and/or rest breaks that some students may seek and factor these into how the school will manage the assessment program.

The following table provides information about the tests, along with comments and advice on preparation for the tests.



Thursday 15 May 2008

**Numeracy (covering number and patterns, space and geometry, measurement, chance and data)**

	Year 3	Year 5	Comments and advice on preparation
Number of items	35 items	40 items	This is the same number of items for Year 3 BST and 8 fewer items than Year 5 BST.
Item types	75% of the items will be multiple choice with the remainder constructed response	75% of the items will be multiple choice with the remainder constructed response	A constructed response may include writing a numeral and is sometimes described as a free response. The balance between multiple choice and constructed response items will be similar to the BST.
Coverage	35-45% number and patterns 25-35% space and geometry 25-35% measurement, chance and data	35-45% number and patterns 25-35% space and geometry 25-35% measurement, chance and data	This test will assess knowledge and use of aspects of the <i>NSW Mathematics K-6 Syllabus</i> .  In assessing the measurement strand, students will not have access to an instrument sheet. Rulers and protractors will not be necessary to answer measurement questions.
Test time	45 mins	50 mins	