Feedback on the draft Years 7–13 English learning area

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Summary

This report presents findings from analysis of feedback on the draft English learning area for Years 7–13 carried out by NZCER for the Ministry of Education (the Ministry). The feedback was gathered from 31 March to 13 June 2025 through an online survey and submissions sent directly to the Ministry. There were 296 survey responses. Most of these (82%) were from schools, and a smaller proportion (18%) came from other individuals or groups. There were 68 submissions, mostly from individuals or groups with education-related roles.

Purpose Statement and Understandings

There were some positive comments about the clear and comprehensive nature of the Purpose Statement and Understandings, and the focus on both local and global literature. However, many respondents expressed concerns about the lack of coherence between the aspirations expressed in these sections and the requirements in the rest of the document. There were also concerns about the lack of coherence across Phases 3–5, and between *English Years 0–6* and the draft *English Years 7–13*. Many respondents wanted better recognition of critical literacy and multiple literacies; the Aotearoa New Zealand context; te reo Māori, mātauranga Māori, traditional Māori texts, and Māori authors; student diversity and inclusion; student enjoyment of English; and teacher agency. Many wanted better recognition of Te Tiriti.

The learning area structure

There were some positive comments about the clarity of the strands and the explicit nature of the material to be taught at each phase. However, most of those responding to the learning area structure expressed concerns. These concerns included the lack of coherence across the phases of learning; "unrealistic" expectations of student achievement; and "missing" or "underrepresented" components of the English learning area that were considered important; and the lack of alignment with NCEA assessment requirements.

Teaching guidance

Some respondents commented positively about the focus on a "knowledge-rich" curriculum, explicit instruction, and the science of learning. However, others worried that these approaches would narrow the curriculum. These respondents wanted better explanations of these concepts, rationale for their adoption in the curriculum, references to supporting research evidence, and examples of their implementation in practice. Some respondents were positive about the adoption of structured literacy, although others questioned the need for a structured literacy approach beyond Year 6, and what this would look like.

Some respondents commented positively on the aspirations for inclusion and for supporting student confidence as communicators, readers, and writers. However, others considered that the phase requirements were not in keeping with these aspirations. Respondents wanted more guidance on

working effectively with neuro-diverse, dyslexic, and disabled students. Some highlighted the need for PLD in NZSL, Braille, and ELLP.

Many respondents expressed concern about the number of text types at each year level and the requirement to cover a Shakespearian and a 19th century text at Year 13 and wanted the autonomy to match texts to student interests and needs. Many respondents suggested increasing the focus on Aotearoa New Zealand contexts, texts, and authors, including mātauranga Māori, traditional Māori texts, and Māori authors; and on critical engagement with texts, and critical literacy. Some respondents also highlighted the need to focus more on multimodal texts and digital literacies.

Some respondents liked the focus on formative assessment. However, others felt their ability to provide quality formative feedback would be hindered by the large amount of material to cover. Some respondents (mainly secondary teachers) wanted more guidance on summative assessment and NCEA, and on how to assess structured literacy. Some wanted guidance on the "hard to assess" aspects of English, such as critical thinking, critical literacy, creativity, cultural knowledge, voice, orality, visual storytelling, and collaborative expression.

There were positive comments on the guidance for planning, particularly for beginning teachers, teachers from overseas, and for ensuring consistency in instruction across the country. However, many respondents raised concerns about the feasibility of following this guidance in time for implementation at the beginning of 2026.

The progress outcomes

Many respondents expressed concerns about inconsistencies in the number, structure, and naming of the strands and progress outcomes across the phases. Some respondents wanted clearer differentiation between the "Know" and the "Do" progress outcomes, arguing that there is little difference between "know" and "know how to". These respondents asked whether students were expected to be able to do the things described in the "Do" section, or whether they were only expected to know *how* to do those things. They argued that if the "Know" section covers the knowledge of subject English, then the "Do" section should encompass the practices of English and require students to engage in these practices, not simply know about them. Some respondents were concerned that opportunities for student agency, creativity, and criticality were limited and that the focus on responding to texts would be at the expense of creating them.

The teaching sequence

Some respondents made positive comments about the usefulness of the text descriptors for supporting planning and practice, and many expressed concerns. While respondents agreed in principle with the importance of covering a range of text types, most wanted the freedom to tailor text selection to the young people in front of them. Respondents argued that text selection should occur at the school and classroom level to ensure English programmes are coherent within and across year levels and that students are appropriately engaged and challenged as learners.

Many thought the range of text types, and the concept of "what counts as text", to be limited, and questioned the focus on "seminal" world texts. These respondents objected to the priority given to Shakespeare and 19th century texts at Year 13 and asked why "Eurocentric, canonical texts" were prioritised over the voices of Indigenous groups and other minorities, from Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world.

Some respondents questioned the validity of the criteria used to determine text difficulty, arguing that conceptual depth was as important an indicator of difficulty as vocabulary and syntax. Some highlighted the need to consider other criteria for text selection, such as “relevance” or “critical potential”.

While some liked the “renewed emphasis on extended texts”, many felt there were too many text types to cover well in one year of school. Others commented on the absence of multimodal texts such as graphic texts, and more contemporary text forms such as social media and online games. Suggestions included removing, reducing, or softening requirements to cover certain text types.

There were some positive comments about the clarity and detail of the progressions in the year-by-year teaching sequence and many suggested improvements. These included ensuring that the teaching sequence supported the aspirations expressed in the Purpose Statement and Understandings, and increasing the coherence between phases 3 and 4. Many commented on the lack of coherence across phases 3 and 4 in terms of both structure and content. Some suggested providing better scaffolding towards the more conceptual aspects of the English learning area in phase 3 and a continued focus on constrained literacy skills—especially in reading—at phase 4. Some wanted clearer guidance on the progression of knowledge and practices across the year levels within a phase, especially for phases 4 and 5.

There were a few general positive comments about the clarity of the teaching sequence. However, many felt there was a lack of overall coherence in the teaching sequence, along with little to differentiate the statements at Year 11 and Year 12. Some expressed concern about the structure of the strands overall and the relationship between the three strands in phases 1–3, and the five strands and two knowledge areas in the subsequent phases.

Many respondents felt that, overall, the content was too difficult, that there was too much to cover, and wanted more guidance on how to cater for students working well below or above phase expectations. Many felt that the content was too academic, especially at phases 4 and 5. These respondents wanted more inclusive approaches and argued that subject English should cater for *all* students, and not just those on an academic pathway to study English literature at university. These respondents suggested expanding the recommended knowledge and practices beyond the “purely academic” to include more “practical” and “inclusive” uses of English.

There were some positive comments about the representation of the strands in general. However, many respondents suggested expanding the focus on creating texts to ensure a better balance between text production and reception. Many respondents liked the increased prominence of oral language. Suggestions for improving the oral communication strand most frequently included broadening the focus beyond formal speeches and debates to encompass, for example, spoken word poetry, podcasts, seminars, oral storytelling, and whaikōrero. Some wanted to see a greater focus on rhetorical devices, and the nuances of language and intonation, when creating and interpreting oral texts. Many wanted the application of the writing process broadened “beyond the written essay” to encompass a wider range of text types including narratives and other forms of storytelling. Others wanted the writing process to better reflect the actual process writers follow, and the removal or downplaying of generic, cross-curricular literacy skills such as keyboarding, handwriting, and spelling, which some respondents saw as the responsibility of all learning areas, not just of subject English. Other frequently suggested improvements included increasing the prominence of critical literacy, literary analysis, reading for pleasure, and personal response to text.

Overall feedback

The survey asked respondents to consider whether they thought the draft was knowledge rich, underpinned by the science of learning, inclusive of evidence-informed teaching practices, and internationally comparable. Some responded positively to these questions. Many respondents expressed concerns about the lack of a clear conceptual framework and rationale underpinning the content. Some described the content as narrow, using words such as "exclusionary", "ideologically driven", "one-size-fits-all", "Eurocentric", "print-dominant", "prescriptive", and "canonical". Most considered there was too much material to be covered well in one school year.

Some respondents found the draft curriculum to be clear and consistent. However, many others found it difficult to read and lacking consistency. Respondents were especially concerned about the lack of consistency, both internally and with *English Years 0–6*. These respondents considered this lack of consistency would make planning, teaching, and assessment difficult for teachers in full primary schools, teachers with multi-level classrooms spanning different phases of learning, and teachers in composite schools. Some respondents queried that lack of structural consistency between *English Years 7–13* and other recently refreshed curriculum documents, such as Mathematics. Some queried the mismatch between English Years 7–13 and NCEA assessments.

The survey asked respondents to consider whether the new curriculum was inclusive of all students. A few respondents considered that it was. However, many felt the draft excluded some groups. Others expressed concern about a failure to reflect Te Tiriti commitments and obligations.

Some respondents were concerned about the process of developing *English Years 7–13*. They felt that the process lacked transparency and that the curriculum writers did not accurately represent the teaching population of Aotearoa New Zealand, or their views.

Support needed for planning, teaching, and assessment

In terms of planning, respondents most frequently wanted exemplars of school-wide, cross-phase, and cross-level plans for subject English underpinned by clear rationale. They wanted these exemplar plans to demonstrate a holistic, coherent, and spiral approach within and across year levels and phases. Respondents also wanted exemplar unit plans at a range of levels that they could adapt to meet their context-specific needs or use as models to develop their own units of work. While most respondents did not want a list of prescribed texts, some wanted guidance on how to select texts and examples of suitable texts at the difficulty level recommended for each phase.

In terms of teaching, respondents most frequently wanted practical examples of how to meet the diverse needs of students when teaching to phase- and year-level content. They wanted guidance on how to extend those students who had already mastered the phase 5 content and how to accelerate those who were behind, especially those still developing constrained literacy skills. Respondents also wanted guidance on how to assess and report against the phases, and how to align teaching with NCEA standards and assessments.

Most respondents considered that implementing the new curriculum at the beginning of 2026 was unrealistic. They wanted more lead-in time to familiarise themselves with the new curriculum and support materials, and to plan at schoolwide and class levels. Some pointed out that there would not be time to order and attain new class sets of texts to meet the text type requirements and asked whether the Ministry would fund schools to do so. Some of the most strongly worded feedback related to expectations of implementing a new curriculum within one term of it being finalised.

1. Introduction

This report presents findings from an analysis of feedback on the draft English learning area document for Years 7–13 by carried out by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) for the Ministry of Education (the Ministry). The feedback was gathered from 31 March to 13 June 2025 through two avenues. One was an online survey comprised of demographic and open-ended feedback questions, and the other was through submissions sent directly to the Ministry. The purpose of this report is to inform the work of the Ministry Writers Group in finalising the English learning area content.

The survey

The survey was accessible alongside the draft of *English Years 7–13* on Tāhūrangi and was promoted by the Ministry. The survey was aimed at schools, but others could also respond. Respondents could complete the feedback in groups or individually. As the survey sample is self-selected, the results cannot be considered generalisable to the wider population.

Respondents answered an introductory set of demographic questions. The next three questions asked respondents for feedback on the Purpose Statement and Understandings, the learning area structure, and the teaching guidance. Respondents could then choose whether to give feedback on the progress outcomes and teaching sequence for phases 3, 4, and 5. The final two survey questions asked for overall feedback on the draft curriculum and the support needed to implement it.

There were 296 survey respondents. As shown in Table 1, most of these respondents (82%) were from schools. Others who gave feedback included university academics and teacher educators, professional development providers, advisory groups, and teacher professional associations, such as NZATE.

TABLE 1 **Survey respondents by type (n = 296)**

Response category	Count	Percentage
From a school	243	82
From another education organisation	13	4
Other	40	14

Of the 243 school respondents, 171 could be matched to a school name or school ID, resulting in 134 unique school IDs. There were 14 schools from which two responses were received, three schools from which three responses were received, two schools from which four responses were received, and one school from which five responses were received. The demographic characteristics of the schools that responded to the survey are summarised in Appendices A and B.

The roles held by school respondents are shown in Table 2. Respondents could select more than one role. The most frequently selected roles were fully registered teacher (55%) and head of department/ faculty (53%). The role(s) held by the school respondents to the survey are shown in Table 2 below. Respondents could select more than one role. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 2 **Role(s) held by school respondents (n = 243)**

Role	Count	Percentage
Principal	11	5
Deputy/Assistant/Associate principal	18	7
Specialist teacher	11	5
Head of department/Faculty	130	53
Fully registered teacher	133	55
Provisionally registered teacher	17	7
None of the above	1	0

The submissions

The Ministry received 68 submissions. Most submissions (60%) were received from individuals, mainly teachers and academics currently working in education as well as some who had retired. The remainder of the submissions (40%) were from groups, with around half of these being from school teams, including one Kāhui Ako. Other group submissions came from subject associations, academic groups based in universities, educational unions and stakeholders, and community health and wellbeing agencies.

The length of submissions varied, from short paragraphs or emails through to extensive, lengthy documents. There were 13 submissions that were 5+ pages in length and two of these were over 23 pages.

Data analysis

We analysed and coded survey comments thematically using NVivo. We also read and summarised the main points of every submission and sent these summaries to the Ministry to inform their selection of the submissions for the Writing Team to read. Most submissions provided detailed feedback on multiple parts of the draft English curriculum. In general, the submissions addressed the same themes that emerged from the survey. In this report, we provide an overview of the most common themes across the survey responses and submissions and provide quotes to provide examples of the range of ideas within each theme. The qualitative data were not easily quantified due to the range of ideas expressed. For each section, we present the positive feedback first, followed by feedback on concerns or suggestions for improvement. Overall, there was considerably more of the latter than the former. In addition, responses describing concerns or providing suggested improvements tended to be longer and more detailed than the positive responses. Some survey comments were extensive and the breadth of themes in the feedback made it difficult to capture all points. Closed questions are better suited to provide quantifiable information and could be considered for future feedback cycles.

2. Purpose Statement and Understandings

The survey sked for feedback on the Purpose Statement and Understandings. There were 219 responses. There were some positive responses and many concerns and suggestions for improvement. The aspects some respondents liked were sometimes the same as those that others were concerned about.

Positive responses

Clear and comprehensive

Some respondents made general positive comments about the Purpose Statement and Understandings, describing these sections as clear and comprehensive.

> The Purpose statement certainly says the right things and indicates the purpose of the document with clarity.
>
> The purpose statement and key understandings are clear and effectively highlight the role of English in developing students' communication skills, critical thinking, and societal engagement.

These respondents felt the Purpose Statement and Understandings sections achieved the right balance in focusing on the literary, language, and literacy aspects of English.

> The purpose statement offers a view of English which encompasses skills in literacy as well as literary analysis. I like the focus on English being a medium for broadening students' horizons and the universal themes of literature.
>
> I like the emphasis on knowledge codes and conventions of literacy, language, and texts, and 'the beauty and richness of classic and contemporary literature'.
>
> We strongly support the Purpose and Understandings statements, especially the emphasis on explicit instruction and foundational literacy. However, we recommend explicitly acknowledging the importance of cumulative knowledge-building across genres and themes.
>
> I like the focus on critical thinking, and grammar.

Range of text types

Some respondents commented positively on the broad range of literature referenced in the Purpose Statement and Understandings, including classic as well as contemporary texts, New Zealand as well as global texts, and "window" as well as "mirror" texts.

> The inclusion of both 'classic' and 'contemporary' literature is fantastic, as this allows us to teach through the cannon and not pigeon-hole the teaching of this subject. The focus on how literature evolves allows students to understand our place in the world and the valuing of knowledge rather than just skills is critical.
>
> What I like about the Purpose Statement and Understandings is ... the idea of integrating not only local and national stories but also including global stories. This helps with making our ākonga global citizens with global awareness.

> This emphasis on texts that [are] literarily and/or historically rich is a necessary adjustment to the overly flexible approach of the current curriculum and practice, where contemporaneity and familiarity to students is valued above [all] else.
>
> I think it's important that students realise that texts can be mirrors to their lives, but they can also be windows into other people's lives, and the Understandings reflect that.

Concerns and suggested improvements

Constrained literacy skills at the expense of disciplinary knowledge

Some respondents saw the representation of subject English as "narrow". These respondents were concerned that a focus on constrained literacy skills and knowledge was at the expense of disciplinary knowledge associated with the English learning area. Some expressed concern about the conflation of literacy and subject English.

> Seen together, the purpose statement and 'Understandings' show an extremely narrow view of subject English that is reduced largely to generic literacy skills. There is also limited conception of what English teaching is in Aotearoa New Zealand.
>
> The English Curriculum's purpose statement suggests an underlying assumption that English teachers are the gatekeepers of literacy across all learning areas. This places an undue burden on the subject, potentially narrowing its scope and reducing its function.
>
> There is now integration of 'literacy' which is not simply something that can be achieved under, or through, English. This is not what the purpose of English as a curriculum was and will need significant support. Most English teachers have a literary degree—how far the literacy responsibility and element go I will keep reading.
>
> I am concerned that the proposed curriculum positions English primarily as a vehicle for delivering generic literacy skills to support learning across all curriculum areas.

Recognition of the Aotearoa New Zealand context

Many respondents wanted the Purpose Statement to be more firmly grounded in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. Respondents wanted this grounding to ensure students had opportunities to build an understanding of themselves and their place in the world and learn how the Aotearoa New Zealand context influences the ways we create and interpret text.

> [I]t misses a key component of New Zealand literature and our understanding of it as New Zealanders. I believe it should read more like: 'New Zealand authors make an important contribution to the development of language, literature, perspectives, and to further develop our understanding of the place we have at home and within the wider world.' This small change shows the importance of how NZ authors help us to see different perspectives of the world, from people within our own society … English is about sharing ideas, and different perspectives, and our understanding and interpretation of that perspective is how we see the world.
>
> New Zealand has its own unique relationship with English that has been informed by our past experiences and history. This includes our interactions with the Indigenous culture of New Zealand. By centring European texts and experiences we ignore our own strengths.
>
> NZ Lit in the understandings part … I think this should be broadened … to understand our time/place/society and the perspectives NZ knowledge brings to deconstructing and understanding text—and this doesn't necessarily need to be from a NZ text.

> While this [recognition of New Zealand literature] is present in the purpose statement, the importance and significance of New Zealand literature is not recognised through the rest of the draft curriculum.

Recognition of critical literacy and multiliteracies

Some respondents queried important aspects of the English learning area that were missing from the Purpose Statement and Understandings. These included a focus on critical literacy, multiliteracies, and digital literacies.

> Critical literacy is more than just 'critical thinking' and needs to be more explicit here.
>
> Digital and multimodal literacy only implied. Consider naming the skills students need to create, critique and curate digital/multimodal texts, so the statement reflects contemporary communication demands.
>
> The statement 'oral and written language' leaves out visual which is an important aspect of the curriculum.
>
> It is essential to include 'interpret, analyse and process' texts. We have a growing economy and in the next 5 years, the students will require the ability to interact with confidence in all avenues. Along with literary knowledge and understandings, they will require the need for rhetoric that is used in communication.

Recognition of te reo, mātauranga Māori, and Māori authors

Some respondents thought the Purpose Statement could be improved with greater recognition of te reo Māori, mātauranga Māori, and Māori authors. These respondents saw the content as predominantly Western, colonial, and canonical.

> While I appreciate the aspiration to 'fill the basket of knowledge' and the recognition of NZ authors and te reo Māori, I believe the Purpose statement still centres a Western literary tradition as the default. Terms like 'universal themes' and the emphasis on 'global literary traditions' is a road to re-establishing colonial hierarchies unless Indigenous and local knowledge systems are placed first rather than added in as supplementary.
>
> Whose 'basket of knowledge'? There is only one reference to the 'relationship with te reo Māori' or 'local contexts'—what about mana ōrite or te ao Māori generally?
>
> It runs contrary to the experience of teachers who have been endeavouring to deliver equitable outcomes for Māori students. It is an act of re-colonisation, an enterprise that has racism at its core.
>
> I am concerned about the minimizing of the importance of studying texts by and about Māori and Pasifika as I think it needs to be part of requirements to ensure all teachers and schools continue to include these in our programmes. It is also what makes our country and our identity unique.

Respondents also wanted to see more explicit reference to Te Tiriti in the Purpose Statement and Understandings.

> There is no mention of Te Tiriti in the purpose statement. As we know, Te Tiriti underpins everything within our education system. My department do[es] not feel comfortable teaching to a curriculum that does not even mention it.
>
> Except for a brief mention of te reo Māori and the Understandings being translated into te reo Māori, there is little to no mention of our need to uphold Te Tiriti in the senior years of this subject. This needs to be explicit, or it will not be properly recognised.

Recognition of world Indigenous texts and perspectives

Some respondents also commented on the centring of Western perspectives in the Purpose Statement. They wanted greater prominence of global Indigenous texts and voices.

> The global literary tradition is considered 'unique', but what equals 'global'? Is it Anglo-American? British? What room is there for Indigenous texts?
>
> The purpose statement rests on faulty assumptions of universalism in literature which makes the document fundamentally colonial.
>
> Unfortunately, the word 'classic' carries with it clear links and connotations to an established 'English' canon and thus links with colonialism that might not be appropriate for teaching English in Aotearoa in the twenty-first century.

Recognition of learner diversity and the importance of inclusion

Some respondents expressed concerns that, although the Purpose Statement explicitly states that the learning area "opens pathways for every student to maximise their life opportunities", they could not see this translated into the rest of the curriculum document.

> 'The English learning area opens pathways for every student to maximise their life opportunities' → No it does not. This is a curriculum designed for students who have an inequitable access to time and resources. This curriculum is designed with a Western mindset at the forefront and does not demonstrate scaffolding to equitably support Māori and Pasifika learners, or English as a second language students. It is designed for the upper band of students in Aotearoa.
>
> As a teacher at a high equity index/low decile school, with a largely immigrant community, the 'content' selected feels quite exclusionary.
>
> Equity and inclusion could be explicit. Adding a sentence about meeting the needs of diverse ākonga (e.g., multilingual learners, students with disabilities) would align with the curriculum's wider vision of equity. Consider low-level learners who struggle with the basics.
>
> I think a focus on Neurodivergent students needs to be included. They don't do well in public speaking but can excel in writing. Trying to improve their oral skills is commendable but ill directed. Plus, they often struggle with exams.

Enjoyment of English

Some respondents wanted to see more emphasis on the enjoyment of English.

> It does not reflect how, through literature, we can make sense of the world, explore ideas and concepts beyond our real-world experience and find joy and beauty.
>
> The purpose statement also seems to emphasise the function and practical benefit of English over the enjoyment that reading and crafting stories affords, which is disappointing.
>
> I am also concerned that this list of pathways is concerned only with the utilitarian, rather than some of the things I think English does best—enhancing a sense of life's meaning, beauty, connection to people, place, and self, and ultimately contributing to wellbeing.

Coherence and consistency across phases and curriculum documents

Some respondents worried about the lack of consistency and coherence between different iterations of the draft learning area (2023 and 2025) and between the Years 0–6 and draft Years 7–13 documents. They thought that the Purpose Statement and Understandings section should be consistent with the

"Understand, Know, Do" structure used in *English Years 0–6,* and the other refreshed learning areas. These respondents questioned why it was not.

> Which purpose statement will be at the beginning of the curriculum document? The Years 0–6 is different from the Years 7–13. We suggest they are amalgamated. Why are the Understandings not Understand? Will phases 1–5 align? We prefer the original whakatauki in the Years 0–6 document.

> So, it's 'Understandings' now? All previous learning areas have had a very different Understand, Know, Do structure, so this seems to be an early, and completely unexplained change to the learning area drafts we have seen to date.

> Why isn't there consistency in the terminology across all phases of learning?

> I do not like the fact that the whakatauki for this section is different to that of the 0–6 curriculum. I would like the previous whakatauki for the English curriculum to be used across both, as I think it encompasses the kaupapa of English as a subject.

Some respondents expressed concerns about the lack of coherence across *English Years 7–13.*

> Some of the information provided in the Purpose Statement was pleasing to read. However, I do worry that a lot of what was in [it] is not actual[ly] practical when put alongside the rest of the drafted curriculum.

> What is English about? How is everything related? What is the purpose of English? Content, skills, literacy and communication—how are these things related to each other?

Others wanted greater clarity and specificity in the wording used.

> The[re] needs to be a bit more clarity. It should be written concisely using language and terminology with given examples that anyone can understand, not just those working in NZ education.

> Feedback on the Purpose Statement—Some paragraphs (e.g., the second and fifth) reiterate ideas already expressed earlier. Tightening the prose would sharpen the overall message and better model the clarity we want from student writing.

> Some of the language is quite vague: 'students examine how ideas and language evolve, while recognising that some concepts remain timeless'. It is unclear what students specifically are learning and what concepts they need to learn.

Recognition of teacher agency

Some respondents commented on the loss of teacher voice and professional judgement.

> Who is 'carefully selecting' this content? We want teachers to be able to select content for their students.

> If topics and texts are prescribed you remove teachers' ability to cater to the class in front of them, based on language, schemata, ability and interest.

3. The learning area structure

The survey asked respondents for feedback on the learning area structure. There were 195 responses.

Positive responses

In addition to general positive comments, some respondents specifically praised the clarity of the strands and the logical, explicit, and systematic presentation of material to be taught at each phase.

> These two pages have very clearly expressed summaries of the Learning Area. I am so thankful and relieved we finally have a more systematic method for teaching English, and explanation of the skills to be taught and acquired, and the types of texts for the students to be exposed to. I started my teaching training in 1985, and over the years, the curricula has increasingly become more generalised and conceptual, and it has horrified me as to what some teachers, particularly those more recently trained, think is quality literature to be taught. It has made me aware of how much breadth there is across the nation, and how therefore some students are being disadvantaged.

> These feel appropriate, logical, and aligned with other international curriculums (e.g., MYP Language and Literature).

> The structure of the phases makes sense with the way we build our curriculum and already have junior and senior programs. It fits with NCEA and the difference in learning for the age groups.

Concerns and suggested improvements

Overall, there were many more respondents who expressed concerns about, or suggested improvements to, the learning area structure than respondents who were positive about it. Concerns centred on a lack of coherence in the content across the phases, a general lack of clarity, a mismatch between phase-based expectations and student 'readiness', a lack of both consistency and flexibility of the structure, a mismatch with assessment requirements, and components of the English learning area that were underrepresented or missing.

Coherence of content across the phases

Many respondents felt the strands needed greater coherence across the phases.

> The very different ways in which subject English is presented across the five phases is confusing and distracting. These differences make it difficult to plan for effective transitions from one year level to the next, as students move from primary to secondary education.

> As a high school teacher, phase 5 (Years 11–13) is where I am most focused, and I have significant concerns about the direction it takes. While the learning strands may appear clearly labelled on paper, they do not provide the depth or continuity needed for teachers to understand where students have come from, what knowledge and skills are most critical at their current level, or where they're heading. This weakens the overall coherence of the curriculum and makes it harder to build meaningful, scaffolded learning across phases.

> While the strand structure is logical, it lacks vertical coherence in content. There is no clear thematic or genre progression across phases. To strengthen this, we suggest adopting a spiral curriculum approach: Thematic spirals: Justice, Identity, Power, Belonging; Control Genre spirals: Dystopia, Memoir, Protest Theatre, Shakespeare, Absurdism. Each spiral features age-appropriate texts, revisited at increasing complexity.

Some respondents felt particularly concerned about the "abrupt" shift between phase 3 and phase 4, noting that "the way the strands from phase 1–3 link to phase 4 and up is a bit hard to gather". Many respondents expressed the need for greater clarity around the shift from phase 3 to phase 4.

> The transition between phase 3 and phase 4 could benefit from greater clarity—particularly for Years 7–8 teachers who straddle primary and secondary contexts.

> For schools offering a Years 7–10 curriculum, the differences in phases 3 and 4 create barriers to clear vertical planning.

> The change from the focus of oral language/reading/writing in phases 1–3 to Language Studies and Text Studies in phases 4 and 5 is confusing.

> There is a lack of clarity around how high school educators are expected to build on the foundations laid in Years 1–8, and what professional development or support will be provided to ensure we can continue to develop ākonga reading skills effectively.

Some wanted to see more focus on the disciplinary knowledge and skills of subject English in phases 1–3 so that younger students had opportunities to access this in age-appropriate ways.

> The idea that in phase 4 there is a 'greater emphasis on students developing their disciplinary English knowledge and skills' illustrates a limited conception of subject English. There needs to be a consistent emphasis on disciplinary English knowledge at every stage. The failure to do this has resulted in an incoherent curriculum framework—particularly when looked at from Years 0–13.

> I cannot see real coherence between the content at 1–3 and the content in 4–5. This will prove a practical issue for teachers and schools—learners are at a diverse range of learning levels and teachers will need to understand and be able to map across these two 'segmented' parts of the English curriculum. The divide between 'literacy' and 'literature' reduces the joy of reading in the early years to perfunctory tasks and the later years to extracting content from texts.

> The introduction of new terminology (e.g., 'text studies' and 'language studies' in phase 4) might feel abrupt. It may help to gradually introduce or preview these concepts in phase 3, even briefly, to ease this shift.

Likewise, respondents recommended that a focus on literacy skills should continue into phase 4, particularly in reading.

> Reading should still be a focus in Years 9–10 because students are required to sit [the] literacy reading exam which is prepared for and sat in Year 10 (generally).

> We want to know why oral language, reading and writing is not mentioned from phase 4, even though it is a key part of earlier phases.

> How … can high school teachers better ease the transition from phase 3 to 4? We have no experience of Structured Literacy, for example, and greater alignment and upskilling around this is necessary for teachers of high school English.

Clarity and accessibility

Some respondents found the content of the learning area structure section "too wordy and repetitive", "unwieldy", and "dense in structure". They wanted to see "a better layout and flow" and made recommendations to this end.

> It might be helpful to provide a visual summary table or diagram to show how the strands develop and transform from phases 1 to 5. This would support clearer understanding at a glance, particularly for school leaders overseeing progression across year levels.
>
> This is a challenging curriculum to navigate. It would be nice to see things laid out horizontally, so we can see the connections.
>
> Would probably be better presented in a table format, to give immediate clarity around the strands for each phase and how they change over the 5 phases.

Mismatch between phase-based expectations and student "readiness"

Several respondents observed that the success of the learning area structure was dependent on all students having acquired the necessary prior skills and knowledge. Given that this was often not the case, many felt that teaching to year-level and phase requirements for all students was unrealistic.

> Phases aligned to years. This won't always align. They could be Year 11 but only phase 4. Do we teach that student at phase 5 or phase 4?
>
> The concept of fixed 'phases' risks limiting both our most capable students—who may be ready to move beyond their chronological level—and those who require more time or different approaches, including neurodiverse learners and ESOL students.
>
> Are these phases limiting—can very able students be extended beyond their chronological age for example? Are our less able students able to access the learning in these phases? Are they sidelined? Are these accessible for all students? What about neurodivergence and other human differences (ESOL?)?

Respondents called for a structure that genuinely reflects the real and diverse needs of learners.

> We need assurance that the curriculum's progressions are genuinely accessible and inclusive … the new structure risks reinforcing a deficit model, particularly if it leads to a resurgence in streaming practices under the guise of 'tailored learning programmes'. We need clearer guidance on how differentiation will work in practice, without reinforcing inequities.
>
> Ensuring the year-by-year sequence accommodates students working at different phases would enhance the resource's effectiveness.

Flexibility of the structure

Several respondents expressed concern about the prescriptive and linear nature of the learning structure. Some described feeling "hamstrung" by the amount of material to be covered and felt their autonomy to tailor programmes to the needs, strengths, and interests of their students would be curtailed.

> In the Year-by-Year teaching sequences it states that teachers should 'deliver tailored learning programmes, drawing on their professional judgement'. We find this in stark contradiction with a curriculum that then prescribes the texts to be taught. We currently have tailored programmes that meet the needs of our students but these are at risk if this curriculum goes through.

> Far too prescriptive of what is being taught. This does NOT allow for knowing our students, our community needs etc. There is just too much syllabus here that seems very difficult to cover over the progressive years.
>
> We are told that students do not learn in a linear fashion, yet this seems to be a very linear approach.

Consistency of the structure

Some respondents had concerns about the lack of consistency in the structure between phases 1–2, phase 3, and phases 4–5.

> There is a noticeable lack of alignment between the Years 0–6 and Years 7–8 information. In the 2024 Curriculum for phases 1–2, the learning area structure helpfully outlines the progress outcomes and gives and overview of the Understand, Know, Do framework. Then the three strands are summarised. In the 2025 phase 3–5 Curriculum, there is no orientation to the Understand, Know and Do elements. The 'Phase 1–3 Learning Structure' is similar to the Years 0–6 document; however, the Oral Language statement lacks the acknowledgement that oral language is the foundation of learning and crucial for success within English and across all learning areas.
>
> What has happened to the Understand and weaving knowledge and practice together to build deeper conceptual and life worthy capacities. The structure narrowed focus on Know and Do reduces the position of the Understands effectively to nothing. If they are not presented and woven into the teaching and learning structure they won't get done.
>
> Please put Years 7 and 8 within the 0–6 curriculum, we are a full Primary so our teachers should not be expected to work from 2 curriculums. Do what maths has done and make the English 0–8. Once again it seems that rural full primary schools have been ignored or forgotten about.

Several respondents queried the inconsistency between the draft *English Years 7–13* and the structure of the other refreshed learning areas.

> Where is the Understand? We have spent a long time getting our head around this structure. Why change it? How does this link to the Understand Know Do in the Social Science and Maths Curriculum. These are the progress outcomes. Teachers with Years 6, 7, 8 will have difficulty with this.
>
> The Knows and Dos also appear to change by phase … which again represents a fundamental shift in the way the refreshed curriculum works, though this does not appear to be explained in any detail. Are we to expect that the already mandated learning areas will be changed to match this (apparent) new structure?

Mismatch with assessment requirements

A few respondents raised concerns about "a mismatch between assessment and curriculum".

> There seems to be a mismatch between assessment and curriculum, when the CAA for literacy and numeracy are situated within the Y9–10 bracket, at the same time as the curriculum proclaims to be moving towards text study as opposed to literacy skills.
>
> The roll out of Level 1 NCEA prior to this is awkward, as it will not cleanly match. Equally, we will need support to marry up the existing Levels 2 and 3 standards with this curriculum as interim measures until the new NCEA standards are designed to be aligned with this curriculum and the expectations of the phases.
>
> Investment in assessment structure should be a priority if these understanding are going to be tracked. E-asTTle is a platform that needs development or a clear replacement for teacher understanding.

Missing components

Some respondents commented on aspects of the English learning area that they considered to be important but were missing. For example, several respondents wanted to see visual language better represented in the structure of the learning area.

> What about viewing? Is that now covered by reading, as in reading a film??? Media is hugely consumed by our students; shouldn't we also guide and teach different ways to think about this rather than just passively or abundantly?

> P. 8. You state oral language 'includes images'. Does it? Oral language may be accompanied or supported by images, but they are surely perceived via two distinct sensory mechanisms.

Several respondents expressed concern about the "demotion'" of reading for pleasure from being a strand in the draft 2023 English curriculum, to being subsumed into the strand *Working with texts* in the 2025 draft. They wanted reading for pleasure to be better represented in the learning area structure.

> In the 2025 version [compared with 2023], reading for pleasure has been seriously demoted: rather than a core part of learning, teachers should 'support' and 'encourage' reading for pleasure under the heading 'Working with Text'. This is from Years 9–13. There is no mention of reading for pleasure for students in Years 7–8. It is an activity empirically proven in multiple studies to have enormous benefits for student success far beyond the subject of English. This is a curriculum focused on telling students what they have to read, not helping them to find what they should, need, or want to read.

A few respondents highlighted the inconsistent reference to certain aspects throughout the structure.

> Phases 1–3 have specific reference to NZSL, but there is no other reference to it in any other part of the curriculum. As an official language of Aotearoa, this should be more visible in phases 4 and 5.

4. Teaching guidance

The survey asked respondents to give feedback on each part of the Teaching Guidance section including: the characteristics of how people learn; developing a comprehensive teaching and learning programme; using assessment to inform teaching; and guidance for planning. There were 209 responses.

The characteristics of how people learn

Some respondents were positive about the section covering the key characteristics of how people learn. Others felt that the aspirations of this section were not supported by the expectations expressed in subsequent sections.

> I think the teaching guidance will be a big help to new teachers learning the curriculum. The key characteristics are important parts of teaching.
>
> It certainly feels as if this section says all the 'right' things. However, the sections that follow tend to have a sense of disconnect from what is suggested in the wording in here.
>
> 'Our social and emotional wellbeing directly impacts on our ability to learn new knowledge'—this whole statement feels like tokenism in relation to the huge amount to learning the students [will] have to catch up on to meet the year level knowledge.

Teaching and learning programme

The Teaching and Learning Programme section is divided into a series of subsections. Respondents' feedback is organised here, according to these subsections.

Explicit teaching and structured literacy approaches

Some respondents commented positively about the focus on structured literacy, explicit instruction, and the science of learning.

> I LOVE THIS SECTION! I am thrilled that it is so explicit regarding skills and texts. It builds upon previously acquired skills, so there is a real sense of mastery being expected and therefore explicitly taught. I believe this will produce young New Zealanders who are far more literate than we have had for some time.
>
> We support the introduction of structured literacy approaches in phase 3. It aligns with the requirement to pass Literacy Co-Requisites.

However, other respondents questioned the need for a structured literacy approach beyond Year 6.

> Structured literacy should not really be a consideration after Years 1–6 … it seems unnecessary to include structured literacy approaches in the 7–13 curriculum when it is not mentioned in the 9–13 curriculum.

Conversely, some respondents asked what a structured literacy approach would entail at the secondary school level, and how they would be supported to teach it.

> As a secondary teacher some of this was new to me … systematic synthetic phonics and decoding are not something we were taught to do 20+ years ago when I trained. Students came to us with the skills to read and write and our job was to teach students to appreciate literature and write essays. If that needs to change, so be it, but we need to be taught how.

Some respondents expressed concern about the "reliance on a cognitive science model", using words like "narrow", "rigid", "transactional", "technical", "decontextualised", "prescribed", and "pre-defined". These respondents wanted to see "relational", "reciprocal", "identity affirming" pedagogies that "reflect who students are, where they come from, and how they make sense of the world". They wanted "te ao Māori, Pacific world views, and Indigenous knowledge systems to be foundational, rather than peripheral", to the teaching of English. They wanted to see recognition of the social, cultural, and emotional dimensions of learning. Some of these respondents were concerned about a lack of space for student agency.

> The framing of 'explicit teaching' is narrow and rigid. It reduces teaching to a transactional sequence of instruction, practice, and recall, rather than a relational and reciprocal process. In Aotearoa, effective teaching must include approaches like ako, tuakana–teina, and storytelling—not as optional extras, but as central, legitimate methods of knowledge sharing and literacy development. These approaches are absent from the guidance. This absence is part of a wider pattern throughout the document.
>
> A curriculum designed in this way risks reducing students' complex identities and ways of knowing to a narrow set of predefined knowledge outcomes. It reinforces a deficit model that positions students as needing to be filled up, rather than recognising them as knowledge-holders in their own right.

Inclusive teaching and learning

Some respondents commented positively on the inclusive approaches described in this section, such as references to NZSL. Others highlighted the need for PLD in NZSL, Braille, ELLP, and for support in working effectively with neurodiverse, and dyslexic, students.

> You also want us to be experts in New Zealand Sign Language and Braille now? That's cool but where is the PLD and time to do that?
>
> A lot of the areas are things that many teachers are already incorporating into the subject; however, not many are familiar with ELLP.
>
> I would like to have guidance on what can be done for neurodiverse, dyslexic, differently abled students for whom scaffolds will not be the only support needed.

Some respondents were sceptical about the focus on inclusion, pointing out that the statements made in this section were not always supported by statements in the rest of the document.

> I would like this section better if it in [any] way, shape, or form informed the rest of the curriculum. It discusses feeling like we belong and then the prescribed texts are from old white dudes who are so removed from our experiences and the students' experiences that it is like it [the text] is written by an alien.
>
> It doesn't acknowledge that there is a diversity when it comes to learning … It feels like we are going backwards instead of forwards. For instance, motivation is discussed but it doesn't acknowledge that this is often a biological issue. For instance, for those who have ADHD, will power and motivation are complex and mostly unregulated. While this is acknowledged as needed in learning there is no scope whatsoever for teachers to adapt their context or teaching to engage with students.
>
> Students needing to have a mastery of handwriting before using a digital device is almost laughable nowadays. The amount of students with illegible handwriting due to other cognitive issues has increased. Using a digital tool is helpful for them and empowers them to be at the level of their peers.

Several respondents highlighted the need for greater inclusion of te ao Māori and te reo Māori.

> It would be nice to see more explicit recognition of New Zealand English and Te Ao Māori as well as Te Reo Māori.
>
> There is a comment about 'sense of belonging'—is it harder for our Māori students to feel a sense of belonging or see themselves in the new curriculum?

Developing as confident communicators, readers, and writers

There were some positive responses about the aspirations expressed in this section, such as "the focus on student confidence alongside skills" and "the helpful additions to teaching practices, particularly in its attention to alleviating anxiety". However, many respondents commented on the contradiction between the statements made in this section and the requirements described in the phases.

> The acknowledgement of dynamic and non-linear learning vs. the homogenising expectations of the phases of the curriculum is contradictory.
>
> I like the statement 'Teachers adapt the pace of their teaching in response to students' progress'; however, this will be hard to do with an overly prescribed amount of texts etc. we are expected to teach each year. I like the statement 'Teachers select texts based on their knowledge of their students and of the learning purposes'—again this goes against overly prescribed texts.
>
> It is important that we are promoting teaching grounded in Aotearoa for 2026 and beyond. The detail here that 'motivation is critical' does not seem to have been taken on board by the curriculum writers in producing the 'Knows and Dos' at each phase.

Respondents also highlighted the need to focus on multimodal texts and digital literacies.

> Finally, explicitly including the analysis of non-physical texts like film and video could broaden the curriculum's scope.
>
> Is there any reference to the digital age and the challenges therein for this subject area?
>
> Again, the lack of any reference to digital literacies is startling.

Working with texts across the learning area

Respondents made positive comments about references to reading for pleasure.

> Great to see the sprinkle of references to reading for pleasure and enjoyment of language.

Some wanted reading for pleasure to have greater prominence in the curriculum. Others questioned the feasibility of finding time for this aspect of reading.

> On page 14, the curriculum discussing reading for pleasure, which is important—however, with the two 'must-do' texts and the amount of texts required to be covered in a year, how will reading for pleasure be developed?

There was widespread concern about the number of text types to cover in one school year and the requirement to cover a Shakespearian and a 19th century text at Year 13.

> I am concerned how it will be possible to teach texts properly, when there is an expectation of teaching 3 extended texts, including Shakespeare in a year, as well as a number of short texts and a poetry collection.
>
> This will involve a minimum of seven text studies throughout the year. This is in addition to doing NCEA assessments. Programmes will be unworkably crowded, making it impossible for teachers to 'adapt the pace of their teaching' as required.

Some respondents observed that text requirements would disrupt their cross-school planning of English programmes.

> At present we work on thematic units for each year level from 7–10. I'm not sure how this will work with texts being prescribed for these year levels. Also, year levels are grouped into phases. We teach for all strands of the curriculum in each year level, but the teaching and learning will need to be planned over two years so that we manage to get all the text types into the programme.

Respondents considered that this section of the draft curriculum could be improved by removing, reducing, or being more flexible about the text types to be covered at each phase. This would allow teachers to tailor their programmes to student interests and needs, to plan thematically across and within year levels and phases, and to cover fewer texts in greater depth.

> We seek the flexibility to design courses responsive to the needs and abilities of our students, including the freedom to choose appropriate texts. The mandated inclusion of canonical works (e.g., Shakespeare, 19th century texts) may alienate some senior students, leading them to opt out of English altogether.
>
> I am concerned I will have less freedom to engage my students, as this new curriculum is telling us what students must be exposed to. The reality is that students often need their skills building up, so having texts they are interested in and that are accessible is of utmost importance.

Respondents also wanted to see authors from Aotearoa New Zealand foregrounded—including Māori authors, and more of a focus on critical literacy.

> We do strongly believe that 'a text by a Māori author' should be mandated in each phase of the 7–13 curriculum. There is a rich and ever-growing canon of Māori texts written in English, and deep, meaningful knowledge of these is part of the cultural capital of being a New Zealander. It is clear both from staff in our own department and from the wider community of English teachers that this is an integral part of our conception of Subject English in New Zealand.
>
> It makes huge assumptions with phrases like 'important writings', which seems to point to a pre-existing canon of acceptable texts, which exist in direct contrast to the other advice about using diverse texts and voices. It almost seems like there are several curricula jammed together here, and then a subtle layer of cultural (European) supremacy that underpins in all.
>
> The lack of focus on critical engagements with texts is disappointing. These guidelines largely promote generic practices that could be located in any place in the world and any time in the past 100 years. It is important that we are promoting teaching [that is] grounded in Aotearoa for 2026 and beyond.

Assessment for learning guidance

Some respondents liked the section on assessment, commenting positively on its formative assessment focus.

> The assessment section is good, especially the focus on low stakes testing, adaptive teaching and high expectations.
>
> The emphasis on assessment for learning is particularly valuable, as it fosters a responsive approach to teaching.

However, some respondents felt concerned that their ability to provide quality formative feedback would be hindered by the large amount of material they would be required to cover.

> Assessment for learning is our current practice. We have concerns about continuing to do this well amidst the extensive range of texts to be covered, assessments to cover and skills to be taught.

Other respondents wanted more guidance in providing formative assessment, and in linking assessment to reporting.

> The assessment part really should include more guidance for teachers, especially around reporting back to parents and how this should be done.
>
> This section would be even more impactful if it included ... stronger links between assessment and reporting, especially in relation to tracking progress against the year-level sequence.
>
> Some respondents wanted more clarity around summative assessment, especially for phase 5.
>
> There is no clarity (or mention!) of summative assessment, which is paramount in phase 5. What good is formative assessment if it doesn't have a summative measurable outcome?
>
> One area that needs clarification is the use of formative assessment at the end of units. In most schools, this is typically a summative checkpoint. If the curriculum intends for these to be formative, it should provide clearer guidance on how this shift can be made in practice—what it looks like, and how it informs next steps in teaching and learning.
>
> There is a notable absence of clarity around summative assessment in the curriculum, which becomes especially critical in later phases. While formative assessment is important, it must eventually contribute to clear, measurable outcomes. The lack of attention to summative processes raises concerns about how student progress will be recognised and communicated, especially in preparation for national qualifications.

These respondents wanted advice on alignment of the curriculum with current or future NCEA standards.

> More clarity will be needed on how to implement this in Y11/12/13. How the standards and NCEA assessments will accommodate the changes.
>
> Assessment largely articulates a frequent, ongoing formative approach. Where does NCEA fit into this? How do students raised on NCEA respond to this redirection? What does this mean for the marking workload of teachers, who are already stretched?
>
> The emphasis on frequent, ongoing formative assessments is also encouraging, yet the place of NCEA remains unclear. How does NCEA fit into this framework and the new Level One standards in particular?

Other suggestions for improvement included providing guidance on assessments connected to Structured Literacy and on assessing the hard to assess aspects of English, such as critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative work.

Guidance for planning

There were some positive comments on the guidance for planning section.

> It breaks down what you need to do very clearly. The planning section is well structured.

Respondents considered this section would be useful for new teachers, and for ensuring national consistency in teaching and learning.

> This section regarding 'Teaching guidance' will be invaluable for those [younger] teachers, and brings us on par with overseas curricula, such as in the UK, and also other programmes, such as Cambridge.

> The gap was increasingly widening—this new document enables that gap to be closed. This guidance builds on what I am already doing, so I am thrilled with it.
>
> We support this. Being clear about what needs to be taught and how it should be taught helps ensure students know what success looks like and receive consistent, purposeful instruction. It allows for more effective planning, targeted assessment, and supports collaboration across teachers. Ultimately, it leads to better learning outcomes and greater equity for students.

However, some respondents did not consider planning completely new courses in time for implementation at the start of 2026 to be feasible. These respondents described the time frame as "unachievable", "untenable", and "unacceptable".

> Under planning we are told to 'Map out a year's programme composed of 'units' by looking for opportunities to teach statements from the year together'. When will we have time to do this planning? The final version of this curriculum is being released in the last part of this year, for implementation at the start of next year.
>
> It is already June. Schools are having or have had open days already and we can't even plan our classes because no one knows what a year will look like. It's too fast and should be delayed until 2027.
>
> Providing examples in 2026 when we are supposed to have started planning and teaching is not acceptable.
>
> How much preparation and planning time will be required to implement this curriculum effectively? There is minimal time for us to have effective professional development and then time to plan for this. When would the professional learning take place? How would we access all new teacher resources and support materials?

Some respondents predicted that the consequences of rushed planning would be "narrow" and "shallow" implementation.

> There is a ton of work for teachers to do here and very little time. I think it may well overwhelm teachers and risks becoming narrow and shallow in its application.
>
> A curriculum like this, which you want to do properly, cannot be rushed, otherwise all these aspirations will be lost in the reality of weeks, terms and overloaded classrooms.

Respondents concerned about the amount of material to cover in one school year wanted examples of cross-school and within-class planning that showed how this could be achieved.

> Examples of plans and programmes that cover the required text content, assessment opportunities and skill acquisition such as writing and reading would be useful as we cannot see how all of this fits in.
>
> Overall, there is a lot more to plan for, and it would be good to see examples of the detail required before we begin.
>
> A summary of planning priorities per phase, which would help with alignment across year levels and teams.

Respondents concerned about how to plan for teaching year-level content to classes of students with a wide range of strengths and needs wanted examples of planning that showed how this could be achieved.

> Our students come from a broad range of feeder schools and their prior knowledge reflects the variety of learning experiences they have had. The draft states that teachers would need to 'find ways to accelerate their progress through such approaches as targeted and explicit small-group teaching' in order for them to fully engage with the teaching sequence statements they are struggling with. This sounds ideal in theory but putting it into practice would be challenging to say the least.

Feedback on the teaching guidance, overall

As well as commenting on the parts part of the Teaching Guidance section, some respondents gave feedback on this section, overall. The main themes in this more general feedback related to the "overly detailed", "prescriptive", "patronising", and "low trust" nature of the guidance; the "unrealistic" expectations about lifting student achievement; and the lack of visibility of Te Tiriti.

Prescriptive nature of the teaching guidance

While some respondents acknowledged that the guidance would be beneficial for beginning teachers, others found it overly detailed and, in some cases, "patronising".

> It would be helpful for beginning teachers, but it is offensive to tell teachers who have taught for years and have done this—it bulks up our curriculum unnecessarily. Too prescriptive. Too much. The curriculum should be focused on what we teach and not how. It is a curriculum and not a teacher training manual.
>
> The rest of the guidance in this section I found pretty patronising, to be honest. It almost feels as if it has been written to explain teaching to someone who knows nothing about it. New Zealand teachers do have qualifications after all.
>
> Why not have flexibility and a high trust model for teachers who know what is best for their students?
>
> This seems a disconnect between whether this is a document for telling teachers what to do or giving them professional autonomy.

In line with these views, some teachers questioned the purpose of teaching guidance within the curriculum, with comments suggesting that:

> Teaching Guidance is about general teaching practice which should be in our Code of Practice rather than in a curriculum document.
>
> This section is heavy on telling kaiako how to teach. It is not the role of a curriculum to tell us how to teach and this appears to be the role of the teaching guidance section.

Several teachers also advocated for more flexibility and autonomy in teaching, emphasising that:

> I think for experienced teachers there are components that are helpful reminders, but I think there also needs to be trust in teachers to teach in a way that is most helpful for the students they have in the room. Every classroom is different and requires a different approach depending on who the students are and what they need.
>
> If we want to develop critical, creative, and engaged learners, the teaching guidance must shift away from a compliance-based model and instead empower teachers to co-construct learning alongside their students and communities.

These responses highlight a concern that the curriculum may be too prescriptive and that teachers should be trusted to use their expertise and judgement in delivering lessons that meet the specific needs of their students.

Expectations related to lifting student achievement

Despite a few comments noting that "This is basically how we teach it anyway", several respondents raised concerns about the unrealistic expectations placed on students under the new curriculum:

> If this curriculum is based on students experiencing success, why are we hammering them with concepts that they know very little about and that are beyond their realms of experience?

> The document states that there is an intention to 'reduce students' cognitive load when building on that knowledge'; however, the scope and sequence of the guidance does not reflect this at all. There is no revisiting or room to 'gap-fill' in the document—it moves forward at a rate of knots and assumes all prior learning has been successfully embedded. This simply is not true. We know students require multiple opportunities to revisit and embed learning, but this document does not reflect this at all.
>
> At [this] stage the support for teachers doesn't address the fact that most of our students are not catered for in this document. The gap between what our students can do and what is proposed is huge. You are asking them to climb Mt Everest when Maungakiekie is a stretch. We do not have a problem with raising the standard but do have a problem with bridging such an enormous gap.
>
> With an increasing number of students who are entering Year 9 with very little of the prior knowledge required to read or write at the level required, the reality of delivering the amount of content indicated by this curriculum while being able to target and small group teach those students who are struggling would be incredibly challenging. Classrooms of 30–32 students, where one-third may be below the required stanine levels of comprehension and writing, do not allow for this kind of intervention on a consistent basis already, let alone if you add in up to five extra text types to cover each year.

Several respondents expressed concern about the curriculum being implemented for all levels at once. One respondent pointed out that, because the curriculum was to be rolled out all at once, high school teachers would be expected to follow the layout of phase 4 even though the students in their classes had not encountered phases 1, 2, or 3, or gone through the structured literacy curriculum.

> While a raise in expectations is a good thing (and will have a positive impact long term), there is still the concern over the ability level of our current students trying to attempt this new curriculum next year without the support of the same curriculum in their previous years of learning.
>
> Phase 4 has been written to build on phase 3 (and phase 5 builds on phase 4) but if students have not been through these earlier phases, then they are unlikely to be ready to meet the demands of phase 4. So, you're asking high school teachers to follow a curriculum that assumes students have gone through an earlier curriculum that will only come into existence at the same time, which—unless the National government has discovered time travel—is impossible to achieve.

Te Tiriti is invisible

Several respondents raised concerns about "very little acknowledgement of our bicultural identity" and "the removal of any references to mātauranga Māori or Te Tiriti o Waitangi within the Teaching Guidance".

> Te Tiriti is invisible. No part of pages 10–17 names Te Tiriti o Waitangi, mana whenua relationships, or kaupapa Māori aspirations. Treating biculturalism as implicit rather than explicit risks recentring Pākehā default settings. Name the partnership up-front. Insert a short statement in the Teaching-guidance preamble recognising Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the curriculum's founding covenant and committing to the three Ps: partnership, protection, participation.

5. Phase 3

Phase 3 progress outcomes

The survey asked respondents to consider whether the phase 3 progress outcomes clearly communicate what students need to be able to know and do by the end of phase 3. There were 93 responses.

Positive responses

There were some positive comments about the clarity of this section, emphasis on oral language, guidance around the writing purposes, focus on decoding, fluency, grammar, handwriting, and keyboarding skills.

> We like the clear breakdown of 'oral, reading, writing'. We like that there is more emphasis being put on oral language for Years 7 & 8 students … We like the clear guidance around 'inform, entertain, persuade' for writing.

> The phase 3 Knows and Dos offer a strong foundation in structured literacy. They clearly emphasise the decoding, fluency, and syntactic skills essential for learners in Years 7–8.

> I'm happy to see a focus on grammar and syntax, both areas often seem to be of low quality in the public.

Concerns and suggested improvements

Many respondents expressed concerns or suggested improvements to the phase 3 progress outcomes. These suggestions related to content, clarity, and coherence.

Content of the phase 3 progress outcomes

Some respondents wanted more emphasis on unconstrained skills such as comprehension strategies, literary analysis, critical literacy, and reading and writing for pleasure. Quotes representing these views are shown below.

> Potentially would be good to see the word 'strategies' used in the reading section. We believe mastering comprehension strategies is key to becoming confident readers.

> Where are the rich tasks such as communication and analysing? Phase 3 needs this type [of] teaching and learning.

> I have concerns about the passive engagement with text that is encouraged (e.g., 'identify the author's purpose') and the absence to writing for enjoyment. Considering the world we are teaching and living within, the failure to have any reference for critical engagements with text is seriously negligent. Years 7 & 8 are years that students are starting to encounter texts online independently. If English teachers are not encouraging them to be discerning and critical readers of texts at this age they are failing their learners.

> [W]hile they prioritise form and accuracy, they do not sufficiently outline how knowledge of themes, genres, and literary forms should begin to develop at this level. There is a risk that the conceptual side of English—such as understanding justice, identity, or storytelling conventions—is underemphasised. We recommend adding guidance that signals the importance of early exposure to genre, theme, and multimodal text. For instance, introducing literary concepts through accessible formats (like graphic novels or short allegorical films) builds schema for more abstract senior-level texts.

Respondents also identified content that they thought should *not* be included, such as handwriting and keyboarding skills.

> Why is keyboarding skills specified in this curriculum? This is far beyond English curriculum and more of an overview for all curricula.
>
> Typing and digital skills can be addressed through Digitech rotations.

Some respondents felt there was too much material to cover; some felt the material was too difficult for many students at phase 3.

> We, as teachers, know that a number of students at these levels are still learning to read and are not yet ready for full novel studies. Currently, novel study occurs late in the year. Text coverage is already demanding, and adding film and drama texts will require rotation and careful long-term planning. Suggestions like teaching Hone Tuwhare at this level are not developmentally appropriate. We currently cover journal stories, poetry, and novels (aligned to Level 4).
>
> I do NOT know how students are meant to do an extended speech, do all this writing AND read a novel, non-fiction, play poetry and study a film. AND this is not taking into account all the other subjects that need to be covered.
>
> The expectation that kids will be able to write error free and genre specific at the age of 10–12 is laughable. The focus on writing at this age should be for enjoyment and then correcting common errors only (e.g., misuse of commas, common spelling mistakes, how to use speech marks correctly). If we emphasise the need for total accuracy too early, we will create nervy and reluctant writers whose anxiety will cripple them from writing more than a sentence at a time for fear they will get it wrong. This will be disastrous if they are to try and sit the CAAs in their early high school years.

Clarity and coherence

Some respondents commented on a lack of alignment between the progress outcomes and the Understandings.

> As at other stages of the curriculum, the 'Knows and Dos' do not seem to be clearly aligned with the 'Understand'.

There were also comments about the lack of consistency in the content and structure of phase 3 and the other two phases.

> The phase 3 doesn't follow [on] from the phase 2. This does not follow on cohesively. There is no Understand. Why has this been taken away? Why are the strands' labels not as specific or unpacked? We are missing the diagram. Phase 3 looks like a reduction or simplification of the strands. Phases 1 and 2 feel more comprehensive.
>
> The introductory document says that the Understand, Know, Do (UKD) model is being used in the new curriculum. However, this is not the case in phases 3–5 of the English curriculum, which only incorporates Know and Do. Is there evidence that the UKD model is the best for students? If this evidence exists, why does the English curriculum not use the UKD model, only KD?

Some respondents found the information in this section “vague” and wanted more “concrete” and “specific” information. Others had suggestions for improving the clarity of this section using bullet points, subheadings, summaries, and a glossary to make it “more digestible”. Others said:

> Specifically, we are looking for more concrete information within the ‘Knows’ and ‘Dos’ sections and find the current level of detail quite vague, especially when compared to the maths curriculum.

Phase 3 Teaching sequence

The survey asked respondents to give feedback on the phase 3 teaching sequence, suggesting they consider whether:

- the descriptors about text range, form, and complexity support effective planning and practice at phase 3
- the year-by-year teaching sequence clearly builds towards achievement of the Knows and Dos by the end of phase 3
- all aspects of the teaching sequence are at the appropriate level of detail and difficulty
- each of the strands is represented appropriately
- there is anything else needed in the teaching sequence to support learning.

There were 92 responses.

Usefulness of the text descriptors for supporting planning and practice

There were some positive comments about the requirement to cover a range of text types, including those by authors from Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific.

> Great to see a variety of texts, including NZ and Pacific. Good flexibility of texts to cater for a range of learning.

> We like the explicit breakdown of text forms and numbers to ensure variety and diversity in texts being selected … We like the inclusion of selecting texts by New Zealand authors.

However, many respondents saw the text types required at each phase as arbitrary and limiting. These respondents wanted the freedom to tailor text selection to the strengths, needs, and interests of the young people in front of them, rather than adhering to a generic list based on a student’s year level. Some respondents recommended other text types to be included at phase 3 such as graphic texts, abridged drama, and short films.

> Text requirements should be changed to text guidance. The draft suggested text lists are not relevant to students’ lives and culture … We have to ensure our students are engaged in appropriate texts. More texts and a wider range of texts could be suggested. Maybe an example of what the text could LOOK like such as in phase 2.

Some respondents argued that progression in terms of vocabulary and syntax should not be the only determinant of text difficulty. They wanted texts that:

> allow students to explore theme, voice, and literary form while still developing fluency and vocabulary. Embedding these [texts] in the sequence will make the ‘step up’ to phase 4 texts and concepts feel much more natural.

Some respondents wanted to see more “curriculum coherence” and a conceptually based rationale for the texts and text types required.

> There is no sense that texts are 'conversant' with each other, that ideas in one text are an advancement of ideas previously encountered. There is no sense of theme (power, the hero's journey, coming of age, redemption etc.) or genre (dystopia, gothic, fantasy etc.) woven through the curriculum to create curricular coherence. I would advocate for (a) a wider range of recommended texts and (b) examples of how a school could assemble a coherent curriculum with texts conversant with each other.

Some respondents felt there were too many text types to cover in adequate depth.

> Does this mean that schools would be expected to have all students cover the above [text types] over the TWO YEARS of Y7/8?
>
> How are teachers going to do all that well? We are trying to get a richness from texts.

The year-by-year teaching sequence

The survey prompted respondents to consider how clearly the year-by-year teaching sequence builds towards achievement of the Knows and Dos by the end of phase 3. There were some positive comments about the clarity and detail of the progressions.

> I think the teaching sequence is adequate for the majority of students. It is expected that the students will build on previous learning and move to a less structured environment.
>
> The teaching sequence shows it builds between Yr 7 and Yr 8 … giving you two years to complete them. The teaching sequence is very detailed.
>
> As an English teacher I think it's purposeful and flexible enough to teach in your own way to help students meet the goals and standards.

There were many suggested improvements. Some respondents considered that keyboarding skills, handwriting, and spelling did not belong in phase 3, or in the English learning area at all, because they were cross-curricular skills.

> Handwriting should be phases 1 and 2, Not phase 3. Should be established by this point. Keyboarding skills do not belong in the English Curriculum. This should be in the Technology, Digital Technology Curriculums.
>
> Phase 3 lacks the practices stated in phase 4+. Think there should be less emphasis on the handwriting as there appears to be more focus on spelling and handwriting than developing thinking within reading and writing.

These respondents wanted more "visible progression in conceptual depth and literary understanding". One respondent considered that there was "no connection" between the teaching sequence and the Understandings from page 6, asking, "How are these [Understandings] shown?" Other respondents commented on the lack of coherence between phases 3 and 4.

> While the sequence offers valuable clarity on text range and fluency goals, it lacks a visible progression in conceptual depth or literary understanding.
>
> The phase 4 setting out of Knowledge and Practices was much easier to follow. Is there a way to link this format—and make the phase 3 document more succinct?

Detail and difficulty of the teaching sequence

The survey prompted respondents to consider the level of detail and the level of difficulty of the teaching sequence. Several respondents thought the level of difficulty was high for students at phase 3.

> The progress statements are more difficult than they have previously been.

> Some descriptors, particularly around writing structures and grammar (e.g., compound-complex sentences, participle use), feel very ambitious for some Year 7 students. More emphasis on flexibility and responsiveness to student readiness would be helpful to avoid unnecessary pressure.
>
> Could there be a stronger link made to the 'zone of proximal development'? We understand the accelerated learning principles about using age-appropriate text; however, with high proportions of ELL and priority students, teachers need to have confidence in choosing 'appropriate text'—not necessarily age related.

Representation of the strands

There were some general positive comments about the representation of the strands overall.

> The sequence appears to be clear. There is plenty of each strand. I doubt that anything additional is needed.
>
> Yes, we feel the strands now foreground interpretation and analysis and how to back up ideas with evidence.

There were also many concerns and recommended improvements. Suggestions for improving the reading strand included supporting progression from reading to literary and critical analysis.

> The content is too focused on generic literacy. By Year 8 students should be learning more about literature and language.
>
> There is no clear path that helps students build from reading to literary analysis. We recommend [texts that] … allow students to explore theme, voice, and literary form while still developing fluency and vocabulary. Embedding these in the sequence would make the 'step up' to phase 4 texts and concepts feel much more natural.
>
> Why is there no critical focus?

Respondents also wanted to see more of a focus on digital and multimodal texts, reading for pleasure, and personal response to text.

> Reading digital texts gets little mention, and multimodal texts, while mentioned in the section 'working with texts', are not present in any meaningful way in the teaching statements for reading.
>
> These teaching sequences include nothing (that I can see) that engages with students' personal responses to text. One of the most effective approaches I've had for teaching English is to have students describe their response to a text and then look at the aspects of the text that provoked that response. It also helps to identify the ways texts may work to manipulate or persuade them as readers.
>
> The reference to 'high quality' texts in reading for enjoyment is misguided. At this age it is important that teachers support authentic reading practices that will continue for the following years. If teachers start vetting texts that are read for enjoyment for their 'quality' it would seriously undermine that. It also does not resemble the ways adults who read for pleasure make text selections. Personally, I read widely and part of that is reading texts that would be deemed 'low quality'—but that I enjoy.

Suggestions for improving the oral language strand included: referencing more contemporary text types; focusing more on rhetorical devices, the nuances of language, and intonations; and recognising te reo Māori as an oral language.

> In the oral language strand, it would be helpful to see slightly more guidance or examples around contemporary formats like podcasts, vlogs, or spoken word performances, reflecting real-world text forms students increasingly encounter.

Suggestions for improving the writing strand included widening the application of the writing process to all text types, suggestions related to the teaching of spelling and grammar, and objections to the expectation that English teachers focus on keyboarding skills.

> The writing process section assumes that planning and drafting apply only to research-based writing. These skills are equally applicable and necessary when writing to entertain or persuade and that needs to be made clear in the layout and design of this part of the curriculum.
>
> Students need to know past simple, past continuous, past perfect, past perfect continuous and the same for present and future tenses, PLUS present historical for the writing of essays on novels and film. Explicit teaching on this skill is essential … It needs to be part of Years 3–10, please.
>
> P.32 is the first mention of keyboarding, but students are expected to be able to use efficient keyboarding with fluency, accuracy, and stamina. When do English teachers get time to teach this skill with only 6 hours a week? … Spelling: Is a programme being developed for teachers to use or do they have to develop their own programme? It would be helpful to have word lists at each level.

6. Phase 4

Phase 4 progress outcomes

The survey asked respondents to consider whether the phase 4 progress outcomes clearly communicate what students need to be able to know and do by the end of phase 4. There were 173 responses.

Positive responses

Some respondents were positive about the phase 4 progress outcomes.

> I like the expectation of range of text across the two years in terms if genre and range.
>
> Love the inclusion of non-fiction text and the focus on reading actual books as well as poetry, drama and extended written text. It's great to see standards being lifted. As a teacher I find it aspirational and inspirational.
>
> We like that this part is explicit that English is more than literacy. This is a recognition that English is its own discipline.
>
> Yes. We can see our teaching programmes already fulfil these requirements. We feel the Know and Dos match the needs of Years 9 and 10 students.

Concerns and suggested improvements

Many respondents expressed concerns or suggested improvements related to the content, flexibility, and coherence of the phase 4 progress outcomes.

Content

Some respondents considered that this phase need to provide better scaffolding towards the more conceptual aspects of the English learning area.

> We appreciate the transition from foundational to conceptual literacy. However, this phase lacks scaffolding into more abstract genres. The Knows and Dos are a strong shift toward conceptual literacy, but they need more clarity on genre and form development. Students should start encountering and experimenting with structured literary styles (e.g., dystopia, memoir, protest drama) in preparation for abstract texts in phase 5. We recommend making explicit: Expectations around genre knowledge (e.g., allegory, satire, personal essay); Exposure to voice and identity in text selection (especially NZ and Pasifika); Scaffolding of analytical skills (e.g., symbol, setting, narrative structure).

These respondents also wondered why the phase 4 progress outcomes included "generic" literacy skills which they saw as the responsibility of all learning areas, not just of subject English.

> Why is English being seen as the subject area that's given the responsibility of literacy skills—purely information based, instructional, unbiased writing is the responsibility of all.
>
> Oral communications—will all other learning areas be teaching about how to listen? Is it only our responsibility (in terms of what is explicitly described in the curriculum)?

> The lines between expository and persuasive writing are blurred. This raises concerns about English being positioned as the sole subject responsible for teaching foundational literacy skills, particularly when purely informational or instructional writing should be a cross-curricular responsibility.

Some respondents wanted greater visibility of hybrid text forms, visual texts, and digital texts.

> Under 'Text analysis', you have listed various forms of text-types … Is this list exhaustive? … What about hybrid forms, like spoken-word poetry? … Or graphic novel? The only visual text in here is film … What about the persuasive speech?
>
> We should not stick multimodal and digital texts tacked on the end … It is clear that those who wrote this section have not meaningfully engaged with exotic and different texts.
>
> Others felt that the content of the phase 4 progress outcomes did not adequately reflect the diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand, including mātauranga Māori.
>
> The content is framed as neutral and universal, but in reality it privileges formal written English and Western text structures while ignoring the diverse linguistic and cultural realities of students in Aotearoa. There is no meaningful inclusion of critical literacy, Indigenous frameworks, or student voice.
>
> This section fails to give teachers a clear picture of how to prepare students for the complex social and linguistic world they are already part of. It is not fit for purpose in a country with Aotearoa's commitments to equity, Te Tiriti, and student wellbeing.
>
> I also think we need to have it explicitly outlined that it is an expectation we apply a mātauranga Māori lens over texts and information we consume.

Some respondents considered the content to be too difficult at this phase and wanted more flexible expectations that considered students working at different levels.

> Whilst it is good to be idealistic … some would say 'aspirational', it is important to realise that the language of expectation in this section does not understand the real landscape that NZ English teachers are facing.

Some felt that the focus on knowledge was at the expense of skills.

> I'm not a fan of the shift towards a more knowledge-based curriculum. The best thing about the current NZ Curriculum is that it's skills-based and non-prescriptive. Most of specific bullet point breakdowns in the Knowledge sections of the document would be better expressed as skills.
>
> I'm not sure that parents and those unfamiliar with teaching English would know what this looks like in a practical sense. Parents want the reassurance of a skills-based approach so that they know exactly what skills their child is learning and how they are expected to apply them and demonstrate mastery of them.

Clarity and coherence

Some respondents were concerned about a lack of consistency between the structure of the phase 4 outcomes and that of the phase 3 outcomes.

> It is unclear why there is a shift from the three 'know' titles outlined in phase 3 to five in phase 4. Could 'Text analysis', 'critical analysis' and 'responding to texts' fit into one section?
>
> It is surprising to see new 'Know' dimensions introduced here. This inconsistency is very disappointing considering the apparent emphasis on being 'knowledge rich' and grounded in the 'science of learning' … Having a clear understanding of the discipline would enable 'Know' dimensions that are consistent throughout the year levels.

Flexibility

Some respondents considered the phase 4 progress outcomes to be too prescriptive, especially the allocation of text types to phases.

> The irony of teachers choosing texts and yet we have been given lists of genres we HAVE to teach.

Others were concerned that the phase 4 progress outcomes were "overly focused on technical literacy and procedural knowledge" with "little regard for identity, creativity, or cultural context".

> The framework reduces literacy to mechanical performance—spelling, sentence construction, genre features—rather than positioning English as a space to develop critical thinking, cultural understanding, and personal expression. The skills described are disconnected from purpose and audience in any authentic sense. There's little guidance on how to link these competencies to texts and contexts that matter to students.
>
> 'In order to successfully analyse a text, students know that they need detailed knowledge of the specific context(s) relevant to that text' is simply incorrect. There are ways to engage with texts beyond a focus on [the] author's purpose. In the limited space that is available for critical engagement with texts it is consistently through this lens of the author's purpose and in the process students' own engagement and response to the text is supressed. Again very passive engagements with texts are encouraged, with no opportunities to 'talk back' to them.

Phase 4 teaching sequence

As with phase 3, the survey asked respondents to consider whether:

- the descriptors about text range, form, and complexity support effective planning and practice at phase 4
- the year-by-year teaching sequence clearly builds towards achievement of the Knows and Dos by the end of phase 4
- all aspects of the teaching sequence are at the appropriate level of detail and difficulty
- each of the strands is represented appropriately
- there is anything else needed in the teaching sequence to support learning.

There were 175 responses giving feedback on the phase 4 teaching sequence.

Usefulness of the text descriptors for supporting planning and practice

Some respondents made positive comments about the usefulness of the text descriptors for supporting planning and practice.

> The principle of having a range of different texts, both NZ texts and texts from overseas, is sound.
>
> However, others thought the range of recommended text types, and the concept of "what counts as text" more generally, was "limited and limiting". These respondents asked why seminal world texts were specified, given that "these texts have often shaped literature because a particular privileged perspective has been championed while other voices have been silenced".
>
> We felt we would like more explanation as to what 'seminal world texts' are and who is deciding their worth. Texts by 'Aotearoa New Zealand' authors does not specifically refer to Māori writers, and it should. Better definitions of multi-modal and digital texts would be helpful.

> I think that 'seminal world texts' seems to take precedence over New Zealand texts or texts from Māori authors. In previous iterations of the draft curriculum, mātauranga Māori has been a core focus. This draft curriculum barely mentions it, and Māori texts are not compulsory whereas other texts are. If we are serious about redressing inequities in our curriculum, this seems like a serious omission.
>
> As a teacher in a rural school, with students who live very rural, outdoor lives, I am endlessly seeking out texts and approaches to try and engage them. Being forced to do something, to meet a 'quota' seems absurd … I would really like to see this prescriptive list softened to something like—engages meaningfully in a range of different texts over a phase. A range could be specified as 3 or more different text types.
>
> The descriptors around text complexity and form are overly prescriptive and framed through a deficit lens. There is no space for students' lived experiences, linguistic diversity, or cultural literacies. Teachers are asked to scaffold access to increasingly complex texts, but complexity is defined almost exclusively in academic, Western terms. Texts from youth culture, oral traditions, or community contexts are treated as optional, rather than as rich sources of learning in their own right.

Some respondents argued that, while they liked the "renewed emphasis on extended texts", they felt there were too many text types to cover in one year of school. They worried that attempting to do so would lead to surface coverage rather than deep analysis of text.

> Given there are only 4 terms per year, it seems that there are a lot of requirements to include ALL of the text types. Especially if we want to prepare them adequately for the CAA.
>
> The sheer volume of suggested texts that are expected to be taught is somewhat alarming. Covering this volume can only be achieved if there is less of an assessment expectation.
>
> I am concerned about the time pressure each year with the high volume of texts and how this fits with the NCEA assessments. I also wonder how this amount of texts fits within 4, 45-minute lessons in Year 9?

The year-by-year teaching sequence

The survey prompted respondents to consider whether they felt the year-by-year teaching sequence clearly builds towards achievement of the Knows and Dos by the end of phase 4. Some felt that it did.

> The teaching sequence works well with our current MYP curriculum delivery. It gives an opportunity to explore texts through choosing a text to suit the needs and interests of the students.
>
> The teaching sequence felt really clear and easy to follow without being prescriptive. There is a sense of purpose behind each aspect of the sequence. There is scope for differentiation for Tier 2 students.
>
> Yes, it is clear how the year-by-year teaching sequences builds towards achievement of the Knows and Dos by the end of phase 4. It encourages positive mastery of knowledge and skills.

However, others thought that the year-by-year teaching sequence did not take account of the diversity of students in today's classrooms.

> The progression from Year 9 to Year 10 is largely implicit and does not account for the wide range of students' literacy backgrounds or the uneven development of skills in real classrooms. There is little flexibility built in to adapt teaching in culturally sustaining or localised ways.
>
> It looks practical and effective on paper, but I would need to see the assessment criteria to understand how the diverse student body will be supported.
>
> The oral language doesn't take into account those who are neurodivergent who interact with oral and other texts differently. Asking questions etc. is neurotypical so this curriculum is inherently ableist.

Some called for greater guidance on exactly how to cater for students working below the expected level.

> The document mentions 'Students who need intensive, accelerative, targeted support to build their decoding skills need age-appropriate materials that reflect their interests. At the same time, they need scaffolded access to year-level texts so that the development of their content knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehension skills is not restricted to the level of their decoding skills.' What does this look like? How are teachers without knowledge of SL and acceleration meant to do this?

Some highlighted inconsistencies, especially between the "Know" and the "Do" statements.

> There seems to be a real lack of clarity around the matching up of the knowledge and the practices for oral communication. E.g., you have to know what participating in a debate requires, however in practice you are not required to do it. You have to know what an individual formal presentation requires, but does not specifically and explicitly require an individual formal presentation in the practices. This seems very odd. What is the knowledge for?

Detail and difficulty of the teaching sequence

Some felt the teaching sequence did not contain enough detail to support teachers without tertiary qualifications in English. One described the progression from Year 9 to Year 10 in the draft as "largely implicit". These respondents highlighted the need for teaching support material to provide this missing detail.

> I think that supporting documents need to be produced that get into specifics of aspects like style etc. A number of teachers of English no longer come through with English in their degree, are not coming into departments with staff who experienced the rigours and specificity of things like bursary English and therefore the inconsistencies between schools will be large.

Some respondents felt the content of the teaching sequence to be too difficult.

> I think that it is all at a very hard level for most of the Year 9 students we get through … Even with our mixed ability Year 9s we are still having to work on capital letter rules. The expectations then for these students with low literacy in terms of the number of texts studied and the level is not acceptable.
>
> This curriculum appears designed for the top 10% of English students … There seems little scope to adapt and prioritise core skills for students whose English reading and writing abilities are sorely lacking. I currently have a low-ability Year 9 class … They are being pushed every lesson to learn more, but they simply move at a pace that would see them get through less than a quarter of this new curriculum in a year.
>
> The language expectations are VERY high—Thesis statements for Years 9 and 10? Overall, the level of skill required for structuring essays is incredibly high—not realistic, in our view. Some punctuation expectations are aspirational—good but we are not seeing students coming from Year 8 with the foundations to build this upon.
>
> The texts given are far too difficult and inappropriate for Years 9 and 10.

As noted already, others felt that there were too many text types and texts to cover.

> Far too much—high schools have students 3 or 4 lessons a week and we are now teaching poetry, writing, plays, novels, films and non-fiction … this will be surface level at best.
>
> The expectations of what teachers can cover over this phase are too high. There is not enough time in the school year to teach the number of texts and text types to the depth expected … In the real world of state schools, it takes seven–eight weeks minimum to work through one complex, extended text.

Representing the strands

There were a few positive responses to the representation of the strands, such as, “Yes, I feel that each strand is represented appropriately. It is ensuring sound coverage.”

There were also many concerns. Suggestions for improving the text analysis, critical analysis, and responding to texts strands, included strengthening and updating the critical analysis component, broadening the language modes used for responding to texts beyond the “written essay”, and increasing the prominence of reading for pleasure.

> The critical analysis content is overly simplistic and out of date by 50 or 60 years. It lacks sufficient attention to power as a key consideration in analysing at text as well as to the role of identity in the production and reception of texts. This is core knowledge of the learning area; any curriculum which claims to be knowledge rich should include this.
>
> The absence of digital text forms is again noticeable as is the notion that the only ways students are encouraged to respond to texts is through a formal essay. Some of the most enjoyable and enriching experiences I have had in English classes have been through more creative forms of responding to texts. There is a rich tradition of novels, play, poems, films and other creative forms that respond to other texts (often canonical texts) … To not continue and encourage that is foolish.
>
> Reading for pleasure is outlined but is not specified in the strands.

Suggestions for improving the crafting texts strand included expanding expectations around creating texts, broadening the focus beyond persuasive writing, and more clearly differentiating between expository and persuasive writing, and expanding the focus on visual texts.

> It is very clear that whoever wrote the section on crafting texts doesn’t involve a single author. It is very biased from those who analyse texts and do not engage in creation. Everyone who writes knows there are many ways to develop sophisticated texts. Often creative texts can engage with the audience using setting and characters not just very basic language features like imagery. This implies that whoever wrote this section only knows basics about text creation and not the nuance of creative writing.
>
> It is excellent that there is specificity in the teaching of essay writing. This is extremely important! However, teaching film is also an important part of Aotearoa English classrooms. The descriptor for evidence in essay writing says that students will know how to ‘use relevant quotations and examples from the texts’. I’d prefer to see this updated to read ‘use relevant quotations for written texts and visual/verbal language features for visual texts’.
>
> The use of the term ‘film’ is definitive and reductionist. What about other visual media?

Suggestions for improving the oral communication strand included referencing a wider range of text types than “formal persuasive speech” and “participation in a debate” to include text types and forms such as spoken word poetry, podcasts, and seminars, oral storytelling, and whaikōrero.

> Oral language is underrepresented. Although it appears in the structure, it does not receive the same depth of attention as reading and writing and tends to focus on formal presentation skills rather than oral storytelling, whaikōrero, or collaborative learning.
>
> Why is debating a specific requirement?
>
> Debating seems to appear heavily as the preferred oral language type. There needs to be variations to this.
>
> Debating is an extra-curricular activity—is this really English’s responsibility?

7. Phase 5

Phase 5 progress outcomes

The survey asked respondents to consider whether the Know and Do sections clearly communicate what students need to be able to know and do by the end of phase 5. There were 155 responses.

Positive responses

Some respondents were positive about the phase 5 progress outcomes.

> The Knows and Dos for phase 5 build beautifully on the phase 4 Knows and Dos. Once again, they clearly communicate what students need to be able to know and do by the end of phase 5. There ought to be no ambiguity.
>
> There is scope for flexibility through an integrated thematic approach, particularly when linking to Text Connections, and the curriculum's broad structure allows adaptability to student needs.

Concerns and suggested improvements

Many respondents expressed concerns or suggested improvements. These related to the content and the coherence of the phase 5 progress outcomes.

Content

Some respondents saw the content as "old fashioned", "overly academic", "rigid", "formal", "canonical", and "technicist".

> While this aligns closely with existing practice in many English programmes, and oral language appears to be given greater prominence, the overall approach has a distinctly late-20th-century feel.

Some respondents felt that the content did not adequately reflect the Aotearoa New Zealand context.

> A work from Shakespeare and 19th century. No. This is not what many of our students need. How is Jane Eyre helping us with tikanga Māori? This is OLD school C and bursary level of prescribing text types will KILL our subject across NZ and take away why many of us love teaching and learning English … There is a reason we moved away from this in 2003 onwards.
>
> Again, there is a body of knowledge derived for our bicultural heritage that is completely absent. A handful of translations of the 5 aspects is embarrassing.

Some respondents felt the content disadvantaged certain groups of students. These groups included working class, disabled, neurodiverse, Māori, and Pacific students, as well as those with English as an additional language. These respondents wanted more culturally responsive and inclusive approaches.

> It actively disincentivises engagement, especially for Māori, Pacific, multilingual, working-class, and neurodiverse students, whose ways of knowing are not reflected or valued in this model.
>
> Again, there is ableism in this curriculum when it comes to active listening and other ways to communicate that are not the norm. There is no scope here for those who speak NZSL or those who use devices to communicate.

Some respondents wanted to see more space for student voice, agency, identity, and more opportunities for creativity, critical thinking, and critical literacy.

> Critical and creative literacies are underdeveloped or absent, and student agency is missing entirely. This phase should be where students refine their own voices, build on prior knowledge, and explore how language can be used to reflect, critique, and shape the world around them. Instead, it positions students as technicians of form and analysis.
>
> What is missing from this list? A stronger focus on 'creating meaning' through writing and presenting (including visual language). Where are the opportunities for ākonga to be creative rather than receptive?
>
> It displays a very limited, and uncritical, notion of criticality and ignores students' personal and creative responses to texts. Throughout the curriculum document the focus on authors needs to be balanced with an awareness of students as readers.

Some respondents felt that the content was too prescriptive and queried the requirement to teach Shakespeare and a 19th century text.

> What weighting does Shakespeare and 19th Century text have on the assessment? What value are these texts adding to this that other texts can't do?
>
> I don't understand the need for 19th century text. Why is this century seen as more important than other centuries or today?

As with previously mentioned feedback, some respondents expressed concern about the number of text types that were required at each phase.

> There are a large number of text types—at least 6–7. I will be interested to see what depth we should be teaching to and what assessments they will generate. I personally would struggle to cover all those texts and also introduce them to a historical or cultural context—unless they are primarily personal responses with one literary assessment and one speech.
>
> It raises the ongoing tension between breadth and depth: How much can realistically be achieved within the time constraints of a typical programme?

Some respondents felt the material was too difficult. One felt the "intellectual depth" expected by the end of phase 5 was appropriate but that there needed to be more opportunities at phases 3 and 4 to begin developing the skills and knowledge needed to prepare students for this.

> Too lofty! I myself did not learn a lot of these things until I was in Year 13 and they were elaborated on at university. I got through an English Literature degree with good marks without having in depth knowledge of some of the things you want these kids to know at 15 (Year 11).
>
> I didn't read Freud or Lacan until university, and even then, it was a challenge. Surely the deployment of complex analytical frameworks is best left for specialised English study at university or else what will occur is superficial readings or summaries of psychoanalysis, or any other framework selected, with students really only parroting ideas and concepts provided by their teachers or the internet.
>
> It does clearly communicate what students should be able to do, but some of the ideas sound like university level study rather than Year 13 levels of learning.
>
> The Knows and Dos reflect the intellectual depth appropriate to senior study and the demands of NCEA. However, they do not make clear how earlier conceptual learning is expected to culminate in senior literacy. Without spiral scaffolding, these demands may feel sudden to students and difficult to manage for teachers. Students would benefit from clearer guidance on how to build knowledge of literary tradition, socio-political commentary, and symbolism—especially in the context of 19th-century texts and abstract genres.

As with feedback on earlier phases, some respondents identified aspects that were missing or needed greater prominence such as working with visual texts and reading for pleasure. Some respondents wanted the Do section to "more explicitly emphasise the practical how-to application of skills".

> In the 'Know' category the oral should also include visual communication. It should also include rhetoric and social metacognition. Astute social thinking is different from critical thinking.
>
> The Do section needs to more explicitly emphasize the practical 'how to' application of skills. For example, rather than just saying 'Students know how to ...' there should be guidelines for practical application with examples of how they can demonstrate these skills.

Clarity and coherence

As with phase 4, respondents expressed concerns related to the clarity of the phase 5 progress outcomes, coherence between the phase 5 outcomes and those of other phases, and coherence with NCEA.

> The sequence between Y12 and Y13 is not clearly unpacked ... How will the students progress from Y12 to Y13 and develop the skills? This is not clearly outlined.
>
> Oral communication is again clearly shown as an important part of our curriculum but does not align with NCEA Level 1.
>
> How will the curriculum align with NCEA? Curriculum should underpin and inform assessment, and we see no evidence of this.

Phase 5 teaching sequence

As with phases 3 and 4, the survey asked respondents to consider whether:

- the descriptors about text range, form, and complexity support effective planning and practice at phase 5
- the year-by-year teaching sequence clearly builds towards achievement of the Knows and Dos by the end of phase 5
- all aspects of the teaching sequence are at the appropriate level of detail and difficulty
- each of the strands is represented appropriately
- there is anything else needed in the teaching sequence to support learning.

There were 175 responses.

Usefulness of the text descriptors for supporting planning and practice

Some respondents were positive about the expectations to cover certain text types at each phase. These respondents considered the requirements would "raise the bar" on teaching and learning and inspire teachers and learners "bored by a culture of mediocrity".

> Mandating the text types is fantastic. I'm sick of seeing curriculums that are dumbed down, or where students go through school with a qualification but never having read a novel. This is great!
>
> I think the text range is vital. I have been surprised at the simplicity of some texts taught in the English lists group. It is like cultural choice over effective crafting and large universal ideas. I think we as a country are parochial enough.
>
> The focus on rich literature from a range of text types is inspiring and is what made me want to become an English teacher in the first place. Mandating the classics and Shakespeare is long overdue.

However, while agreeing with the importance of text range, many respondents disagreed with the requirement to cover the text types identified at each phase, arguing that this level of prescription was "counterproductive". These respondents argued that text selection requires the professional skill of teachers to ensure that their English programme is coherent within and across year levels and that students are appropriately engaged and challenged as learners. They described the allocation of text types to phases as "arbitrary" and "bizarre" and questioned the rationale.

> I think the wording of saying it has to be a 'collection' of poetry is arbitrary.

> Other respondents saw the required range of text types as "limited to traditional forms". Some commented on the absence of more contemporary text types and forms such as social media and online games.

> The kinds of text forms students engage with today are absent—social and online media, forms of gaming. Media literacy is so much more important to our students than these privileged literary forms. How does a curriculum that harks back decades prepare our students for the world they inhabit?

Some respondents questioned the validity of the criteria used to determine text difficulty, while others highlighted the need to consider other criteria for text selection, such as "relevance" or "critical potential".

> Text difficulty is framed in terms of abstract complexity, but not emotional relevance, cultural accessibility, or critical potential.

Some were worried that the number of texts to cover would result in breadth at the cost of depth and superficial coverage rather than in-depth analysis.

> My concern is in the range of texts that must be covered every year at this level. Covering such a large range of different texts will result in covering each text in less depth, resulting in less understanding being developed by students.

As mentioned earlier, many respondents objected to the "mandating" of Shakespeare and 19th century text for all students at Year 13. Some felt their professional judgement was being undermined.

> You say texts must include 'a text from the 19th century'. Why? It's bizarre. What 19th century New Zealand literature should students study in preference to 20th century NZ literature?

> I love Shakespeare, and many 19 century texts; and love teaching them. It is not suitable, however, for all ākonga. Making it compulsory flies in the face of respect for our professional judgement for what is best for the students in front of us.

> We need to … leave scope for teachers to use the degree they have achieved at university to choose texts—like we are qualified to do—and that will not always involve Shakespeare.

Some respondents objected to the focus on "Eurocentric, white, male" canonical texts at the expense of texts foregrounding the voices of Indigenous groups and other minorities, both in Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world.

> Why the focus on these forms when canon creation was discredited as a hieratic preserve of dangerous Eurocentric academies, even when I was a Uni student in the 1990s.

> It also seems to hark back to a very Eurocentric white male 'canon' that I thought many of us moved on from a long time ago.

> It narrows what counts as knowledge, who gets to be successful, and how success is measured. Instead of supporting teachers to plan relevant, equitable, and empowering programmes, it reinforces outdated hierarchies under the guise of rigour. It is not fit for purpose in a curriculum that claims to uphold Te Tiriti or serve all ākonga.

> While I have no objection to complex texts, dictating what these are leaves too much scope for ableism, racism and sexism to invade our learning area.

As with feedback mentioned earlier, some respondents wanted better representation of Māori authors and Indigenous world authors.

> I would like it to state NZ literature should include at least one Māori author. I would like it to be clear if world literature refers to foreign authors or works in translation.

> To teach both a Shakespearean play and 19th century novel take up a considerable amount of time in the teaching schedule—in effect leaving little or no space for other extended texts. This results in marginalising New Zealand, and particularly Māori and Pacific texts.

> We don't support making any texts compulsory, but if any texts are to be compulsory, they surely must be those by NZ/Māori writers. This is Aotearoa/New Zealand after all … We feel that the requirement for any compulsory texts removes the appeal of senior English for many students, and we have huge concerns that it will put them off choosing English as an option.

Some respondents argued that the English learning area should cater for *all* students, and not just those on an academic pathway to study English literature at university. These respondents suggested expanding the recommended knowledge and practices beyond the "purely academic" to include more "day-to-day", "practical", and "inclusive" uses of English.

> The point of literature studies at high school is to create lifelong readers—readers who will be able to go into a library and confidently select a book from the adult section. We should aspire to this possibility being almost everyone. Making teenage boys read *Pride and Prejudice* will likely have the opposite effect.

> Not all students are doing a literary English course, and this curriculum makes English non-inclusive. Why are we told specifically at this phase what texts we have to use? Why do we have a 19th Century text and a Shakespeare text?

> This is very academic and sophisticated. Where are our less-academic students being represented and supported? … Where is student-engagement for 21st C teenagers represented here—how are we preparing them the current society by mandating texts that are over 200 years old (up to 600 for Shakespeare‼)?

> I am worried by the prescriptive nature of the content and the leaning towards the, what works in our more academically inclined institutions, whereas a curriculum needs to cater to all needs. I am interested in the focus on 19th century texts and wonder why?

The year-by-year teaching sequence

There were a few generic positive comments about the clarity of the teaching sequence.

> Yes, the year-by-year teaching sequence spells out clearly how it builds towards achievement by the end of phase 5.

> Easy enough to follow and is a similar format to the other phases.

Some respondents felt there was a lack of overall coherence in the teaching sequence, along with little to differentiate the statements at each level. Others argued that the technical, linear nature of the teaching sequence does not align with the spiral, relational nature of teaching and learning in English.

> It does feel as though the strong conceptual framework needed for a curriculum is lacking. The former curriculum's strands were more clearly defined—this seems to be overly complicated and lacks a streamlined approach.

> The year-by-year teaching sequences are not very useful. As it is basically rinse and repeat with no significant development over the years. It will be impossible to actually tell what curriculum level students are at as the sequences melt into obscurity the further along it goes.
>
> There needs to be more differentiation between the statements for each level.

Some felt there was too much material to cover.

> There is too much to cover in each year of phase 5. I worry that too much breadth is going to result in too little depth.

Detail and difficulty of the teaching sequence

A few respondents made positive, generic comments about the detail and difficulty of the teaching sequence.

> Good clear communication of what is expected for each strand at this level. Good descriptors that will support effective planning.
>
> The Achievement Objectives are easy to understand.

However, there were many concerns and suggestions for improvement. Some respondents felt that the content to be covered was too difficult.

> Concerns: 19th-century text requirement is not prepared for in earlier years.
>
> I have grave concerns about the expectations around the use of psycho-analytical frameworks etc. These are NOT necessary to achieve excellence at any level. Will the kids need to produce a thesis to pass any new standards coming their way?
>
> I think that the level of learning and engagement expected at these year levels is beyond what secondary school students are often capable of … This is a university level of analysis and engagement from my perspective—while many Year 13 students are interested and engaged in English, this is not something that all or even a majority would be able to aspire to … [This] will limit the ability of a large proportion of students to engage with English at senior levels due to the advanced and literature-heavy nature of the curriculum which will be not only inaccessible but also may not appeal to students who are looking for a more practical application of ideas and skills.

Some respondents felt the knowledge prioritised would be more difficult for certain groups of students, making the school experience an inequitable one.

> With a new curriculum that is 100% more intense than before and a mix of vague and prescriptive expectations I am concerned that the struggle and gaps with those students not at the level will suffer.
>
> The Achievement Objectives are easy to understand. However, there is a greater deal of sophistication to them that will limit at-risk students' abilities to engage.
>
> I also worry about how we will fit this in with our literacy weak and neurodiverse students. Is this curriculum appropriate for all of our diverse learners?

Some felt there was too much content to cover, especially in relation to NCEA assessments.

> There is simply no way a teacher with a class doing a full NCEA Level 1, 2, or 3 course can incorporate all the texts or strands … expected. Reducing your expectations by about a quarter or less is more realistic of the 130 hours (max) of teaching time available.

Representation of the strands

There were a few general, positive statements about the representation of the strands, such as, “Yes, each strand is represented appropriately” and “Yes, I think each strand that prepares them for the outside world is represented”.

Many respondents expressed concerns about, or suggested improvements to, the representation of the strands. Some expressed concern about the structure of the strands overall and the relationship between the three strands in phases 1–3, and the five strands and two knowledge areas in the subsequent phases. One respondent commented at length on this.

> Language studies, as outlined in this document, appears to more closely resemble language arts and communication (creating meaning and crafting texts). If it is language studies, where is the study of language in this strand? (e.g., close reading of language, linguistics, etc.) I believe this label of language studies creates confusion. Additionally, there are three main writing types outlined under ‘crafting texts’ (expository, persuasive, and creative), as well as ‘visual’. I am curious as to why visual is parked under ‘crafting texts’ but oral communication is not; it has its own strand. Do we not craft oral texts, too? … The organisation of the document isn’t consistent. I am assuming oral communication has a strand of its own because it is valued more than visual text creation, but then maybe create consistency by labelling it and organising it as follows: ‘crafting written texts’, ‘crafting visual texts’, and ‘crafting oral texts’ … Text studies sounds like a label used to capture more than just literature (i.e., film, advertising, web pages, seminars, etc.) but it doesn’t quite capture the ‘language’ part of ‘English literature (text) and language’, even though this strand does indeed include the study of language (within texts). I guess the point you’d make here is that language is studied as part of a text study. But what about language use outside of ‘texts’? Also, with the first strand labelled language studies, my previous point about the confusion this label might cause is again relevant …

Suggestions for improving the text analysis, critical analysis, and responding to texts strands focused mainly on the need for more emphasis on literary theory and critical analysis.

> Are we expected, in 2025, to accept an English curriculum for upper-secondary students that does not include any real discussion of the power of language to shape reality? It is 1940? Are we simply going to pretend that the entire post-structuralist movement didn’t happen and just lurch backwards into some imagined Golden Age when books were just books, and we all knew who the ‘right’ authors were? This is dishonest, regressive, and just utterly disappointing, especially after the extended wait for this material.
>
> I would recommend including guidance on how to integrate conceptual understandings and big ideas—such as the relationship between reader and writer, contextual influence, and critical lenses—into the teaching of texts. This would support deeper engagement and better prepare students for senior English.
>
> In Year 13 we should be introducing Kaupapa Māori analytical frameworks. Aotearoa is a world leader in Indigenous research methods, and so these theories should be valued.
>
> Literary theory could explicitly be mentioned. I start teaching it at Year 9 so that students are highly confident and competent with it before their senior years.

However, it should be noted that a small number of respondents wanted a less theoretical approach at phase 5.

Other suggestions for improvement focused on the need to foreground reading for pleasure and the need to include the study of hybrid text forms, such as graphic novels, as well as traditional text forms.

> Understanding the body of strong and undeniable evidence showing the impact Reading for Pleasure has on not only academic success but social success too, why has it been demoted in this English curriculum? It should be front and centre of everything we do. Bring back Connections at Level 1 so that ākonga can enjoy reading again.

Suggestions for improving the crafting texts strand included increasing the prominence of this strand overall to ensure a better balance in phase 5 between interpreting and creating texts.

> Particularly in Years 12 and 13, there needs to be more focus on academic writing that is not just literary essays that seem to be meant for single text analysis. I would like to see us maintaining something like the connections essay we currently do as it seems to us to embody the essence of studying English—cycles of storytelling, writer's craft, genre conventions, etc.
>
> The focus on personal responses has few real-life applications. It would be good to go from personal response to writing reviews and recommendations.
>
> In the Crafting Texts strand of phase 5, it would be good to have objectives towards students using increasingly complex grammatical features and structures to create meaningful effects. The focus seems to be lost on developing meaning through complex use of grammar. This limits students' ability to excel.
>
> Writing is treated as a tool for proving knowledge, not as a process of inquiry, creation, or resistance. This teaching sequence does not serve the students we teach.
>
> 'Persuasive texts' is included three times, at Years 11, 12, 13. Sure, purpose and audience could diversify the range of text types we get the kids to write, but the emphasis on persuasive writing is reductive at senior levels. Persuasive writing is also at Years 9 and 10—one genre for 5 years of school? Why are we narrowing the focus of what children can write, when this is what they need the most?
>
> The 2025 curriculum moves significantly away from emphasising students' own storytelling as a central curriculum goal, choosing to frame text creation more as a procedural aspect of 'Language Studies'. It is predominantly a curriculum that talks at them, with little interest in listening to them, or understanding them. There is a concerning lack of real-world awareness of young people and their needs.

As with earlier phases, the main concern with the oral language strand was the limited range of text types described.

> There is a clear imbalance across strands. Oral language is again treated as presentation and argumentation, with no reference to oral traditions, collective discussion, or performative storytelling.
>
> In oral language, restricting the mode of presentation to debating is again an unnecessary narrowing of scope and possibility. This is where Māori oratory, karanga, waiata, oriori and many other forms of oral language could be used to develop an understanding of tikanga and cultural locatedness.
>
> On page 70, under Knowledge for Presenting, all of the knowledge needed by Years 12 and 13 students presupposes that they are participating in formalised debates. Is this a mandated activity? If it is not, how can they show their knowledge of debating requirements? Is any other form of presenting oral communication allowed?
>
> Again, the obsession with debates (P70) is odd. Why is this format of oral communication lauded above all others? If students have been debating since Year 9/10, they are going to be thoroughly sick of it! There are many other interesting forms of oral presentation—please allow us to choose or offer choice to our students.

8. Overall feedback

The survey asked for any overall feedback about the draft *English Years 7–13* content, suggesting that respondents consider the questions:

- Is it knowledge rich, underpinned by the science of learning, inclusive of evidence-informed teaching practices, and internationally comparable?
- Is it organised logically, clear and easy to use, with consistent and clear language?
- Is it inclusive of all students?

There were 244 responses.

Knowledge rich and evidence based

The survey asked respondents to consider whether they thought the draft was knowledge rich, underpinned by the science of learning, inclusive of evidence-informed teaching practices, and internationally comparable.

Responses were mixed. Some responded positively, noting that "It is knowledge rich and sets students up to operate as part of a global community".

> The draft content will prepare students well for the requirements of both university and the world more broadly—but the additions of cursive and basic Latin would bolster the content further.
>
> We do believe it has moved to a much more knowledge- and skills-rich format, much more in line with superior curriculum documents from the UK, South Africa and Australia. The systematic approach and clear step-by-step approach should make it easier to move through a teaching and learning program than the more vague standards in the 2007 Curriculum.

Others expressed concerns about the "narrow", "exclusionary", "ideologically driven", "one-size-fits-all", "Eurocentric", "print-dominant", "prescriptive", and "canonical" nature of the content, the amount to be covered, and the lack of a conceptual framework.

Several respondents questioned the narrow framing of English as a "knowledge-rich" subject, arguing that this emphasis "seems to be at the expense of critical thinking skills—there is very little explicit direction given for teaching critical thinking skills which is an essential part of the English learning area".

> A key concern with the draft curriculum is the lack of clarity and inclusiveness around what is defined as 'knowledge-rich'. Phrases such as 'seminal texts' suggest a narrow, traditional view of literary value—one that often centres around Shakespeare and predominantly 18th-century Western texts. This raises the question: Who decides what counts as knowledge-rich, and whose knowledge is being privileged?
>
> English is not a 'knowledge-rich' subject; it is a subject that is rich in thinking skills, thought process, synthesising information, the developing of personal expression and response, making interpretations, judgements, critical evaluations and questioning. These skills are crucial in our current society where truth, facts and reality are so often misrepresented, misunderstood or ignored. Our young people need to be equipped with deliberate critical thinking skills to deal with the many challenges of our society. This document is severely lacking in addressing this.

> In its current form, the curriculum appears to privilege a narrow, academic model of English. We urge a revision that ensures the content is inclusive, coherent, culturally grounded, and realistically implementable, while still allowing room for teacher expertise, student voice, and engagement with language and literature.

Many respondents highlighted the importance of being "careful not to confuse knowledge rich with knowledge heavy", with concerns that "the volume of the content is unrealistic and coverage of texts is not possible in limited time".

> How will students engage with everything given the depth and breadth? Reduction needed. The document is aspirational (which is great) but unrealistic based on current time with students, programmes, student choice … Reduce jargon used throughout and consolidate down so that the document is more user friendly and realistic to achieve.

> The claim is that this draft curriculum is more 'knowledge rich' than the previous draft. It seems to us that 'knowledge rich' simply means more to cover and, in some areas, quality learning has been replaced with quantity.

Clarity, consistency, and coherence

The survey asked respondents to consider whether the draft was organised logically, was clear and easy to use, and had consistent and clear language.

Some respondents gave positive feedback that "the language is consistent and clear" and "it is organised logically, clearly, and will be easy to use".

However, other respondents felt the draft was difficult to read, lacked consistency, and did not adequately distinguish pedagogy and content.

> There is a confusing wording in both 'Draft Suggested Text List' and 'Te Mātaiaho: The New Zealand Curriculum'—'In each year across phase 5, students must engage meaningfully with … at least one … at least one …' (Draft suggested text list, p.4) and 'During years 12 and 13 … a work by Shakespeare and a text from the 19th Century' (Curriculum, p.62). Please clarify. Is it one drama, one poetry collection, one film, two extended written texts FOR EACH OF THE THREE YEARS?

> A concern consistently raised by respondents was that the lack of clarity in the draft might make it 'it difficult for teachers to implement in a meaningful way'.

> This is vague, impractical, old-fashioned and eurocentric. It lacks depth, practicality and usability.

> Key areas such as structured literacy, oral language, and differentiation for diverse learners (e.g., neurodivergent, ESOL, or disengaged students) are underdeveloped, with little clear guidance on implementation.

Inclusiveness

The survey asked respondents to consider whether the new curriculum was inclusive of all students. A few respondents felt that it was, noting its "Strong focus on inclusion: multilingual learners, diverse communication modes, equitable access to texts".

However, the most common concern raised in the "Overall Feedback" section was that the draft overlooks learners with diverse needs. Many respondents felt that "We must consider all of our students, not the top English students. This has one type of learner in mind."

> Clear lack of inclusion of the diversity of our learners overall—learners from a range of different cultural heritage, language perspectives, neurodiverse needs, specific learning needs and other forms of diversity. None of these are acknowledged or affirmed or given space in the document. Learners are not at the centre of this document; knowledge of language (literacy) is. More important than the knowledge of grammar, spelling and punctuation is the cultural affirmation of our learners and the powerful positive impacts literature can have on people.

> The curriculum is not inclusive of all students. It fails to centre Māori knowledge, Pacific worldviews, multilingual learners, or neurodiverse ākonga. Instead, it treats difference as something to be accommodated after the fact, rather than as a foundation to build from.

> The proposed changes seem to veer away from this inclusive approach, instead elevating global or Eurocentric content that may not resonate with or empower all learners.

> I'm not sure if it is inclusive of neurodiverse students or those with learning challenges, because it is ramping up the volume of teaching with very little thought given to how to support these students with this.

Many respondents expressed concern about a failure to reflect Te Tiriti commitments and obligations.

> There is a concerning lack of emphasis on mana ōrite and mātauranga Māori, which are essential to ensuring that the curriculum is truly bicultural. Without these elements being explicitly embedded, there is a real risk that the curriculum fails to reflect Aotearoa's bicultural foundation and the principles of equitable education.

> The language used throughout is surface-level and often tokenistic. 'Culture' is mentioned only 11 times in 39 pages. 'Māori' and 'Pacific' appear four times each. 'Indigenous' is completely absent. This is not just an omission—it is a clear indication of whose knowledge is valued and whose is being erased.

> The previous acknowledgement in the original draft refreshed curriculum (2023) of the effects of colonisation, power structures and imbalances and fundamental nature of Te Tiriti within the curriculum have been erased. This is of deep and serious concern. I am concerned for my current students and for the future generation of young people who face the prospect of this bland, traditional curriculum of erasure where te ao Māori is merely mentioned in passing and the rich, intelligent and thoughtful taonga of Aotearoa New Zealand literature is sidelined and almost ignored in favour of other texts and traditions. There is an inherent imbalance in power structures within the curriculum document itself.

> How does the curriculum document as a whole meet Te Tiriti obligations? There is no mention of te Ao Māori or requirement to view the content we deliver through a te Ao Māori lens.

It worth nothing that there was divergence among respondents regarding the inclusion of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the English curriculum. Despite concerns that there is "very little mentioned about bicultural practices and teaching with Te Tiriti in mind", several respondents felt "concerned about the ideological capture of education". Some of these respondents considered that "there should be no mention of Te Tiriti o Waitangi".

> Inclusivity is a key idea, but everyone needs to appreciate that it is ENGLISH and therefore that English-based texts must be used. How one focuses on The Treaty of Waitangi when studying English learning is difficult to understand.

The process of developing English in Years 7–13

Some respondents were concerned about the process of developing *English Years 7–13,* describing it as "chaotic", "incredibly messy", and "driven by ideological commitments rather than any real concern for teachers, schools, or students". Some of these respondents felt that the writers did not accurately represent the teaching population of Aotearoa New Zealand and questioned the process used to form the writing panel. One respondent said, "It reeks of dishonesty and bad faith".

> [W]hen our biggest organisation NZATE had to ask for OIA information and walked away from this process, you KNOW this document has NOT been created by NZ English teachers FOR NZ English teachers, let alone our students. Our code of conduct says 'do no harm'. The irony that this process and document does just that, is NOT lost on us.
>
> I have significant concerns around the process used to write this curriculum document. The Ministerial Advisory Group was conflated into a curriculum writing group when there was no legal statutory authority for this group of people to actual[ly] write the curriculum (this is work for the government). The deliberate challenging of authority and a clear legal process is of deep concern. Moreover, the people who wrote the curriculum do not reflect or represent the diversity of our secondary schools across the country. Proper consultation with English teachers and NZATE was also not undertaken.
>
> The entire process of this draft English curriculum refresh has been flawed. From the lack of meaningful representation of ALL schools in Aotearoa NZ.
>
> We deplore the process of the creation of this draft curriculum. Experienced practising teachers … should have been involved in this process right from the start.

These respondents wanted to see major changes to *English Years 7–13,* "and not just tweaks". They wanted these changes made with teachers and "in unity with Indigenous [voices] and them showing us the way forward".

> If the Ministry is serious about equity, inclusion, and culturally responsive pedagogy, this draft must be fundamentally rethought. It cannot be 'refreshed' with tweaks. It needs to be rebuilt from the ground up, in partnership with teachers, iwi, hapū, and communities, with a clear commitment to the aspirations of Te Mātaiaho and the students of Aotearoa.
>
> I implore you to step back from this draft, engage with actual English practitioners in the classroom, and take the time to create a realistic, open and aspirational curriculum that includes all ākonga and values teachers.
>
> As a first-year teacher, I am concerned that my future in this career does not align with the values that I chose this career for, nor seem to encourage meaningful engagement between students and the subject. I urge you to rewrite this document in a way which centres and values te reo Māori and te Tiriti, as well as explicitly includes creation of both written and oral texts.
>
> In its current form, the curriculum appears to privilege a narrow, academic model of English. We urge a revision that ensures the content is inclusive, coherent, culturally grounded, and realistically implementable, while still allowing room for teacher expertise, student voice, and engagement with language and literature.

Other overall feedback

Some respondents provided overall feedback that is already captured in earlier sections of the report, such as concerns about the “unrealistic” amount of material to be covered at each phase, requirements to teach certain text types at certain levels, assessment, reporting to parents, and potential changes to NCEA. Many expressed concern that there was not enough time to prepare for teaching the new curriculum at the beginning of 2026—a theme that is covered in the next chapter of this report.

9. Teacher support

The survey asked school respondents to consider “Which parts of this learning area might you need more support to better understand so that you can integrate it into your English programme?” There were 172 responses.

Respondents wanted support with planning, teaching, and assessment. They wanted lead-in time to familiarise themselves with the new curriculum, to plan, and to order class sets of texts needed to meet new curriculum requirements.

Support for planning

In terms of planning, respondents most frequently wanted exemplars of school-wide, cross-phase plans for subject English underpinned by clear rationale. They wanted these model schoolwide plans to demonstrate a holistic, coherent, and spiral approach within and across year levels and phases.

> Outline of a realistic learning programme over a year that would meet the criteria for Years 11, 12 & 13 and link to the assessment criteria.
>
> Examples of year, unit and lesson plans and resources for text studies and language studies that work with this curriculum. If a curriculum is this prescriptive, then these must be provided as guidelines for teachers.
>
> Examples (and non-examples) of a model curriculum would be useful, with the thinking that determines the choices. e.g. We’ve chosen to study ‘Mythos’ at Y7 because it provides a basis of knowledge that supports texts in the senior school.
>
> Example year plans covering all aspects, including time for skill development, learning that enhances engagement, quality assessment, and time for meaningful learning that makes real-world connections.

Respondents also wanted exemplar unit plans at a range of levels that they could adapt to meet their context-specific needs or use as models to develop their own.

> Sample unit or lesson planning templates that model how to link multiple curriculum statements together effectively.
>
> Concrete, contextually relevant teaching sequences that model how to integrate the stated values (such as non-linear learning and student agency) into day-to-day classroom practice.
>
> Sample unit plans that model spirals (e.g., justice texts across 4 years). NZ and Pasifika author profiles across multiple levels.
>
> Practical exemplars showing how the strands can be integrated meaningfully in both reading and writing programmes.

While, in general, respondents did not want a list of texts they were required to teach, they did want guidance on how to select texts, and examples of suitable texts at the difficulty level recommended for each phase.

> Text complexity exemplars: Sample texts showing expected levels across Years 7–13 would help calibrate selection and teaching.

> Instead of just saying 19th century lit, provide a list of literary works that fit well with teaching and learning within that category. The list does not act as prescriptive but instead gives teachers an idea.
>
> A list of suggested texts needs to be extensive in order to avoid implicitly making texts compulsory.
>
> Along with the suggested text lists, it would be helpful if rationale could be provided as to why the texts—or at least some of them—are suggested for each year level/phase. This will provide more clarity for teachers which allows better teaching programmes to be planned.
>
> Would the MoE look at creating anthologies of short texts (e.g., short stories, poetry) deemed suitable for each year level then distributing these to schools?

Support for teaching

In terms of teaching, respondents most frequently wanted practical examples of how to meet the diverse needs of students when teaching year-level content, and how to teach decoding and encoding at secondary school to students who were in the early stages of developing these skills.

Support for teaching new areas of focus

Some respondents were concerned about the expertise required to teach certain aspects of the curriculum. Secondary school respondents frequently wanted support with how to teach constrained literacy skills, given that teaching these skills has not previously been a core component of teaching English at Years 9–13.

> Better literacy support materials. How do we support students with weak literacy skills and/or neurodiversity? As high school English teachers, most of us were not trained to teach people how to read, yet more and more, we are having to support students with very weak skills in this area.
>
> Everything from Year 9 is okay but if I want to link it to prior learning in Years 7/8, I would need to know more about phonics, teaching handwriting, morphology, echo-reading and grapheme-phoneme correspondence.
>
> Guidance and professional development on how to apply structured literacy approaches in a secondary context, particularly for teaching reading and supporting learners with literacy gaps.
>
> We would need support with how to teach mechanics effectively in a way that engages the students. The average age of our department means that this was not a huge focus in our education in the late 80s and early 90s, therefore this is not a huge area of confidence for the department.

Some respondents considered teachers who had not completed an English degree at university may need support teaching Shakespeare and 19th century texts.

> Few teachers in my department are able to teach Shakespeare or other canonical texts explicitly. The focus on explicit teaching in this document is essential, but it does require a high level of teacher content knowledge and confidence. This is often not the case as teachers are poorly served by their university degrees (especially recently) and are often teaching outside their subject expertise.
>
> ... specifically support for teaching of Shakespeare for those teachers who don't have a background in it and classic poetic texts, perhaps some of Shakespeare's sonnets?

Teaching year-level content to students with diverse abilities

In terms of support for teaching, respondents most frequently wanted guidance on how to teach the required year-level content to a class made up of students with a wide range of strengths and needs.

> How to differentiate within phases, and how to address the needs of both advanced learners and those requiring additional support (including neurodivergent and ESOL students).

Additional materials showing how to scaffold access to complex texts for students at different literacy stages would be useful.

Materials and exemplars for differentiated teaching—for neurodivergent learners, ESOL students, and those working below curriculum level.

Support to unpack the new phase-based model—how it aligns with students' developmental stages, how to differentiate within phases, and how to address the needs of both advanced learners and those requiring additional support (including neurodivergent and ESOL students).

Culturally inclusive support

Some respondents also wanted guidance on how to support learners in a culturally inclusive way.

Culturally responsive teaching: Resources and frameworks to authentically integrate Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles and mana-enhancing Māori and Pacific texts.

Guidance on implementing inclusive practices within the English classroom, including Te Ao Māori, Pasifika worldviews, and students with learning differences.

Support for assessment

The two areas of assessment that respondents most frequently wanted support with were how to assess and report against the phases, and how to align teaching with NCEA.

Assessing and reporting against the phases

Many respondents wanted PLD and resources on how to assess against the phases and report to parents and school boards.

Material on Summative Assessment and Reporting. If we are no longer using National Curriculum levels to give feedback, what is replacing them and why?

How are schools to assess using the phases? There needs to be a lot of work and support around this in particular, as well as resources supplied.

Clarity around progression across year levels, especially how the curriculum differentiates between Years 7–10 and Years 11-13.

Information around how schools should report progress in this curriculum at each year level for whānau and boards of trustees.

Some of these respondents asked for exemplars to support assessment.

We need annotated examples of work to clearly demonstrate learning outcome expectations for each phase. We need better guidance on how we will assess student progress across the phases—rubrics, exemplars of work. Are the indicators in the 'Practices' area meant to be viewed as progress markers against which we assess students?

Clarity around the 'Knows' and 'Dos': These require exemplification and unpacking to be practically useful. We need clear indicators, exemplars, and assessment rubrics that align with them and provide guidance on what progression looks like in real terms.

Google-sheet tracker template pre-loaded with all phase-4/5 statements. Shift from three strands (Y7–8) to two knowledge areas (Y9–13)? Exactly how the phase 3 strands map onto the phase-4/5 Knowledge & Practices tables when planning a Year 9 course.

Aligning curriculum content and NCEA

Respondents had a range of concerns related to NCEA internal assessments. One was that, with NCEA, the large number of text types required would necessitate more internal assessment which would in turn eat up more time. Another was that new curriculum content would not always align with NCEA standards and assessments.

> It would also be beneficial if we could see how this works with an NCEA programme, especially at Years 12 and 13.
>
> Existing internal assessments would need to be reviewed, adjusted, or replaced to align with revised outcomes and updated moderation guidance.
>
> Resources that bridge the gap between formative and summative assessment within this curriculum, including how it aligns with NCEA. Clear examples of assessment tasks, student work samples, and moderation advice would be helpful.
>
> Clarity around the L2 and L3 timeline—Also L1, as there is talk of that being dropped completely. I would also like to understand more about the assessments and if they are likely to change or will they stay the same for the foreseeable future? Will L1 changes stay in place?

Lead-in time

Respondents wanted lead-in time to familiarise themselves with the new curriculum, to plan, and to order class sets of texts needed to meet new curriculum requirements. Some of the most strongly worded responses pertain to the need for this form of support.

> It is rather astounding that the actual curriculum is being released in Term Four and is expected to be rolled out at the start of 2026. I question why the curriculum writing team were allowed to continue to delay the release of this Draft, but that we teachers won't be afforded the same time to upskill. Not only does this place stress on teachers, who are already burnt-out, but it puts our learners in an unfair position (guinea pigs for a new system).
>
> Lead-in time! It is completely unrealistic to suggest this could be implemented in 2026 when this document is still in its consultation stage and may not be finalised until the end of the year. To plan, document, resource and implement a new curriculum across 5 year levels and at least 10 courses at our kura is an impossibility within a few weeks or months. Stop working to an election cycle and give teachers a realistic chance to make the best they can with this flimsy politicised document.
>
> This raises the issue of the expectation that we will deliver this curriculum in 2026 with the PD and support materials only coming in the same year. This is not an international model for curriculum change. Cambridge, for example, allows a two-year time frame for planning and implementation following signalled changes.
>
> Most secondary teachers receive only one non-contact period per day and are expected to complete the rest of this work in the limited two hours after school. We urgently need to reflect on how realistic it is to expect all of this to be achieved within a 9–5 framework. It is a lot. Burnout is real.

Respondents raised the challenge of being able to order and purchase books in time for the start of 2026.

> ... the ability to source texts online (as many of these texts will be near impossible to buy and get into schools within the time frame given).
>
> Access to the texts ... seems close to impossible.

> Purchasing texts to fulfil the requirements of this curriculum is going to be an issue. Most schools require HOFs to submit their budget well before the time that this curriculum is due to be gazetted. Even if the finance departments at our schools can make this work, accessing and purchasing in-demand texts in going to be challenging and even if we can devise ways of fitting them into our programmes, we may not be able to guarantee timely arrivals of book orders.
>
> The amount of texts we will be required to teach will need to be located, paid for, and then closely enough read to be taught effectively, using plans and programmes that take huge amounts of time to create. How many teacher-only days will be allocated for this in term 4?

Respondents also wanted financial support to purchase class sets of texts needed to meet new curriculum requirements.

> We do not have the resources in our school to meet the needs of our students at the moment. We cannot afford more texts.
>
> The document was designed to ensure equity across NZ schools. The cost of resourcing this new document means that it will not ensure equity. Schools in higher socioeconomic areas will be able to provide the texts and support needed to implement it, whereas lower socioeconomic areas will struggle to resource it.
>
> For older texts we need to have ebook formats as well as paper formats as some students need to be able to change the page colour and font size to be able to read easily. How are schools and families without the budget for new books or e-readers going to access all the resources they need to be able to teach/learn so many different types of books/texts in one year?

There was strong support for targeted PLD to ensure smooth implementation.

> Individual school PD to address issues and explain the approach to teachers would probably be necessary in many cases due to the wholesale shifts in approach that this document suggests will be needed.
>
> There needs to be subject-specific PD. Jumbo days used to be a way for teachers to get together and gave support to single teachers in rural or small schools and helped build connections. These should be a given with something like a new curriculum.
>
> There is a huge need for professional learning, support, and understanding in implementing a curriculum that makes Shakespeare and a 19th-century text compulsory.
>
> Clear professional learning about the planning demands to ensure teachers do not ‘fragment’ learning into compartmentalised units.

10. Submissions

In addition to the survey, 68 submissions on the draft English curriculum were received from individuals or groups. Most submissions (around 60%) were received from individuals, mostly teachers and academics currently working in education as well as some who had retired. The remainder of submissions (40%) were from groups, with around half of these being from school teams, including one Kāhui Ako. Other group submissions were also received from subject associations, academic groups based in universities, educational unions and stakeholders, and community health and wellbeing agencies.

Submissions were read and summarised to identify the extent and nature of feedback. The length of submissions varied, from short paragraphs or emails through to extensive, lengthy documents. There were 13 submissions that were 5+ pages in length and two of these were over 23 pages. Most submissions provided detailed feedback on multiple parts of the draft English curriculum.

A total of five submissions provided wholly positive feedback and justification for the English curriculum draft. One of these submissions was from a member of the writers group, with the other four respondents stating their support for this public submission.

Around another eight submissions highlighted positive feedback as well as concerns.

The remaining 55 submissions raised concerns about the curriculum draft, often with suggestions for improvement.

Analysis of the submissions showed similar themes to survey data. Positive feedback centred around the proposed vision for a knowledge-rich curriculum; the benefits of increased prescription and structure; more consistency in teaching and learning across schools; and the helpful level of detail provided in the teaching of some phases.

> Given the uncertainty of the past few years, there are many aspects of this draft that are a welcome sight. The teaching sequences are aspirational and well-sequenced, and the details provided in the 'knowledge' and 'text requirement' sections align with our expectations of a knowledge-rich curriculum.

Conversely, significant concerns were raised about the greater level of prescriptiveness; mandated text requirements; a lack of attention to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Mātauranga Māori, and cultural responsiveness; negative impacts on equity, inclusivity, and student-centred learning; challenges around implementation and teacher workload; the diminished focus on reading for pleasure and creative expression; a lack of cohesion across all curriculum phases; and concerns about the curriculum consultation process itself.

> The absence of culturally responsive practices and texts is not just a glaring omission—it is a regression. We have spent the last two decades reshaping our practice to reflect Aotearoa's diversity, particularly to support Māori ākonga, and we will not accept a document that threatens to undo this vital progress.
>
> This draft does not seem to take into consideration the time frame restraints we have in the classroom. The required number/type of texts that we are directed to teach is unrealistic … It is far more beneficial to do fewer and better. To prescribe types of texts (Shakespeare/19th C/drama text) is outdated and

arrogant. We, as successful practitioners, should have the ability to make these decisions based on the students in front of us. You are taking the students out of the picture by whitewashing and standardising their experience. A good curriculum should both hold a mirror and a window up for students.

Teachers are exhausted by constant change, shifting expectations and increasing administrative load—all without the time, training, or resources to implement those changes well. The rate and scale of reform … has created instability and burnout … We urge the Ministry to slow down, listen to the profession, and make immediate, substantive changes.

Appendices

Appendix A: Demographics of school respondents—by respondent

The tables in Appendix A show the school demographics of every feedback response that included a school ID or identifiable school name (*n* = 134). There were three responses "from a school" that could not be matched to a school name or ID. Some schools may be counted more than once in these demographics (e.g., where more than one response was received from the same school).

Total unique schools = 134		
Urban/rural	**Count**	**Percent**
(Unknown)	1	1
Large urban area	14	10
Major urban area	64	48
Medium urban area	18	13
Rural other	10	7
Rural settlement	2	1
Small urban area	25	19

Total unique schools = 134		
School type	**Count**	**Percent**
Composite	21	16
Composite (Years 1–10)	2	1
Correspondence School	1	1
Full primary	11	8
Intermediate	7	5
Restricted composite (Years 7–10)	1	1
Secondary (Years 11–15)	1	1
Secondary (Years 7–10)	1	1
Secondary (Years 7–15)	23	17
Secondary (Years 9–15)	66	49

Total unique schools = 134		
Education region	**Count**	**Percent**
Bay of Plenty, Waiariki	6	4
Canterbury, Chatham Islands	23	17
Hawke's Bay, Tairāwhiti	3	2
Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast	13	10
Otago, Southland	8	6
Tai Tokerau	4	3
Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatū	7	5
Tāmaki Herenga Manawa	11	8
Tāmaki Herenga Tāngata	16	12
Tāmaki Herenga Waka	9	7
Waikato	15	11
Wellington	19	14

Total unique schools = 134		
EQI group	**Count**	**Percent**
Fewer	39	29
Moderate	72	54
More	17	13
Not applicable	6	4

Total unique schools = 134		
Roll	**Count**	**Percent**
0–100	1	1
101–300	18	13
301–500	19	14
501–1,000	39	29
>1,000	57	43

Appendix B: Demographics of school survey respondents—by unique school ID

The tables in Appendix B show the demographics of schools from which responses were received. In these tables, each school is counted only once, regardless of how many responses were received from that school. In these tables, *n* = 171.

School demographics—all respondent schools

Total unique schools = 171		
Urban/rural	**Count**	**Percent**
(Unknown)	1	1
Large urban area	21	12
Major urban area	74	43
Medium urban area	29	17
Rural other	12	7
Rural settlement	2	1
Small urban area	32	19

Total unique schools = 171		
School type	**Count**	**Percent**
Composite	21	12
Composite (Years 1–10)	4	2
Correspondence School	1	1
Full primary	11	6
Intermediate	7	4
Restricted composite (Years 7–10)	1	1
Secondary (Years 11–15)	1	1
Secondary (Years 7–10)	1	1
Secondary (Years 7–15)	27	16
Secondary (Years 9–15)	97	57

Total unique schools = 171		
Education region	**Count**	**Percent**
Bay of Plenty, Waiariki	6	4
Canterbury, Chatham Islands	27	16
Hawke's Bay, Tairāwhiti	9	5
Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast	15	9
Otago, Southland	11	6
Tai Tokerau	4	2
Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatū	9	5
Tāmaki Herenga Manawa	13	8
Tāmaki Herenga Tāngata	19	11
Tāmaki Herenga Waka	14	8
Waikato	17	10
Wellington	27	16

Total unique schools = 171		
EQI group	**Count**	**Percent**
Fewer	48	28
Moderate	99	58
More	18	11
Not applicable	6	4

Total unique schools = 171		
Roll	**Count**	**Percent**
0–100	1	1
101–300	20	12
301–500	21	12
501–1,000	42	25
>1,000	87	51

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