

SMART Writing rubrics



Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

The NZC English learning area focusses on three purposes for writing. SMART assesses these three purposes using marking rubrics aligned to the writing strand.

For Years 3–8 texts are marked using Writing to Persuade rubric, to Entertain (Narrative) rubric, and to Inform rubric.

For Years 9 and 10 creative texts are marked using the Writing to Entertain (Narrative) rubric, and persuasive texts are marked using the Writing to Persuade rubric.

The rubrics score how well students respond across five areas that align with the sub-elements of the English learning area in the New Zealand Curriculum. Although the element names are not used explicitly, the alignment has been built into the rubric design.

Student responses score between 1 (lowest) and 6 (highest) for each of the 5 areas, adding to a total of 30. Students' scores are likely to vary across the 5 areas.

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The same rubrics are used to mark student responses at all year levels. The scoring will take into consideration:

- differing curriculum expectations for each year level, illustrated through accompanying exemplars (available soon)
- differing writing purposes with different prompts.

After completion of scaling, SMART will translate scores into progress descriptors to ensure all reporting is consistent nationally and for all audiences.

Writing to Persuade – Rubric

The NZC English learning area focusses on three purposes for writing. SMART assesses these three purposes using marking rubrics aligned to the writing strand. SMART reports will translate rubric scores into progress descriptors.



RUBRIC CRITERIA

Audience and Purpose	Content Development/Elaboration	Structure	Language Use, Choice, and Style	Writing Conventions, Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling
How well the response establishes and maintains an opinion or position, demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose and audience, and completes all parts of the task.	How well the response provides credible elaboration for arguments using logical reasoning and relevant elaboration (e.g., facts, details, evidence, examples, rhetorical devices, and anecdotes).	How well the response demonstrates a cohesive and unified structure, paragraphing, and uses transitional/linking words and phrases to support the logical progression of ideas presented in the argument.	How well the response establishes and consistently maintains a style and tone appropriate to the audience, demonstrates effective control of language, and uses appropriate word choice and varied sentence structure.	How well the response demonstrates control of mechanics and conventions, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
6 <i>Demonstrates a thorough and insightful understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.</i> Establishes and maintains a precise position which powerfully addresses the issue presented in the task. Completes all parts of the task and may go beyond the limits of the task.	<i>Very effectively develops arguments with logical reasoning and adeptly integrates relevant elaboration to support claims being made.</i> Uses a variety of elaborative techniques in a very effective way. Convincingly addresses opposing claims.	<i>Demonstrates the use of a cohesive and unified structure that supports the logical progression of ideas.</i> Contains an engaging introduction and an insightful conclusion. Uses very effective and skilful paragraphing and transitional/linking words or phrases throughout.	<i>Demonstrates highly effective style and tone, precise control of language, highly appropriate word choice, and an exceptional awareness of audience.</i> Consistently uses well-structured and varied sentences.	<i>Highly effective level of accuracy:</i> contains few or no errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling.
5 <i>Demonstrates a clear understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.</i> Establishes and maintains a well-defined position which directly addresses the issue presented in the task. Completes all parts of the task.	<i>Effectively develops arguments with logical reasoning and successfully integrates relevant elaboration to support the position.</i> Consistently and effectively uses details to elaborate. Clearly addresses opposing claims.	<i>Demonstrates the use of a mostly unified structure that supports the logical progression of ideas.</i> Contains a strong introduction and conclusion. Uses effective paragraphing and transitional/linking words or phrases.	<i>Demonstrates effective style and tone, consistent control of language, appropriate word choice, and a clear awareness of audience.</i> Mostly uses well-structured and varied sentences.	<i>Effective level of accuracy:</i> contains a few minor errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling that do not interfere with the communication of the message.
4 <i>Demonstrates a competent understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.</i> Adequately maintains a position and attempts to address the issue presented in the task. Completes most parts of the task.	<i>Competently develops arguments with logical reasoning and integrates some relevant elaboration to support the position.</i> Uses some elaborative techniques in a competent way. Sufficiently addresses opposing claims.	<i>Demonstrates the use of a generally unified structure that supports the logical progression of ideas.</i> Contains a suitable introduction and conclusion. Uses suitable paragraphing and transitional/linking words or phrases.	<i>Demonstrates appropriate style and tone, suitable control of language, appropriate word choice, and a general awareness of audience.</i> Mostly uses correct sentence structure with some sentence variety.	<i>Competent level of accuracy:</i> contains some errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling that do not significantly interfere with the communication of the message. Attempts to spell more difficult words.
3 <i>Demonstrates a developing understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.</i> Establishes a basic position and attempts to address the issue presented in the task, though the claim may not fully align with the task. Completes some parts of the task.	<i>Develops arguments with reasoning and sometimes includes relevant elaboration to support the position.</i> Demonstrates developing understanding of elaborative techniques. Begins to address opposing claims.	<i>Demonstrates growing use of an organisational structure that supports the progression of ideas.</i> Contains an introduction and conclusion, though these may require further clarity. Paragraphing is used, though it may be inconsistent. A small range of transitional strategies are used.	<i>Demonstrates growing awareness of appropriate style and tone, some control of language and word choice. Some awareness of audience.</i> May use simple or repetitive sentence structures with room to improve sentence variety. May have a few errors.	<i>Growing level of accuracy:</i> contains several noticeable errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling that may interfere with the communication of the message.
2 <i>Demonstrates an emerging understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.</i> Establishes a position, though it may be vaguely defined or otherwise not particularly well-suited to the task. Completes a few parts of the task.	<i>Partially develops arguments with reasoning and includes a few details to support the position.</i> Demonstrates emerging understanding of elaborative techniques. May begin to address opposing claims.	<i>Demonstrates basic understanding of how to use an organisational structure.</i> Contains an introduction and/or conclusion, though these may be brief/lacking clarity. Some transitional/linking words or phrases may be used. Attempts to use paragraphing.	<i>Demonstrates basic understanding of style, tone, or control of language.</i> Attempts appropriate word choice, and some limited understanding of audience shown. May have some errors in sentence structure and rely on simple sentence structures with occasional attempts at variety.	<i>Basic level of accuracy:</i> contains a number of frequent errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling that interfere with the clear communication of the message.
1 <i>May demonstrate the beginning stages of understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.</i> May not establish a position, and the issue presented in the task is either partially addressed or not addressed. Completes few or no parts of the task.	<i>Begins to develop arguments, though reasoning may require further clarity, and few to no details are provided to support the position.</i> Elaborative techniques may not be used. Opposing claims may not be addressed.	<i>May begin to show understanding of organisational structure.</i> Introduction and/or conclusion may not be present. Limited or no use of transitional/linking words or phrases. Claims or paragraphing.	<i>Beginning to develop style, tone, or control of language.</i> Often contains confusing or unclear word choice and demonstrates limited awareness of audience. Considerable errors in sentence structure.	<i>Beginning level of accuracy:</i> contains substantial errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling that significantly interfere with communication of the message.

SMART & PATs share a common framework for assessing writing quality and progression which is helpful as schools work to understand and implement the refreshed curriculum. While the rubric is shared, the assessments themselves have different features and affordances. This work was adapted by the Ministry of Education, New Zealand (2005) from material originally developed by Vantage Learning (2004) and subsequently adopted by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER). Vantage Learning material is used with permission. All rights in the original material remain with Vantage Learning. NZCER material is used with permission. Copyright in NZCER's adaptation remains with NZCER.