Step-by-Step Guidelines for teachers | kaiako:

Marking assessments in SMART

Introduction

Welcome to marking in SMART.

These guidelines support teachers | kaiako to mark assessments accurately and consistently in SMART. They are designed to clarify roles, responsibilities, and processes across different marking scenarios—online assessments, scanned paper-based assessments, and fully manual marking—so that results are reliable and ready for reporting within required timeframes. The Guideline is both generic for all assessments, and specific to writing I tuhituhi.

SMART uses automated and AI-assisted marking tools to streamline marking and reduce teacher | kaiako workload, particularly for short-answer items and extended writing. While these tools can provide significant efficiency gains, they do not replace teacher | kaiako professional judgement. Instead, in writing I tuhituhi AI-suggested scores are intended as informed starting points that require considered review, confirmation, or adjustment by teachers | kaiako using the published marking rubrics and the year-by-year exemplars (found on Tāhūrangi).

By following these guidelines, teachers | kaiako can be confident that marking decisions are grounded in evidence from each student's | mokopuna work, aligned with curriculum expectations, and applied consistently across learners. This ensures that assessment outcomes are trustworthy, pedagogically sound, and accurately reflect what each student | mokopuna has demonstrated under assessment conditions.

There are several scenarios in which marking an assessment in SMART can happen. You may wish to jump straight to sections that are relevant for your situation.

1. The assessment takes place online and SMART automatically marks both short answer and extended writing items. Note: even in this scenario there may be reasons why AI-marking is not successful for extended writing. More information on this is included in this document.
2. The assessment is paper-based, and you scan the completed assessments and send to SMART for marking.
3. The assessment is paper-based, and you mark manually but want to record the results in SMART and access the reports.

Each of these scenarios is addressed in the following sections:

- Section 1: Marking an online assessment in SMART
- Section 2: Navigating Marking in SMART

Section 1: Marking an online assessment in SMART

When assessments are taken online in SMART, the marking is completed automatically by the system. This scenario provides the fastest pathway from assessment completion to reporting, while still requiring teacher | kaiako oversight for extended writing responses.

What is auto-marked

For online assessments, SMART automatically marks all short answer items. This includes:

- Reading and Pānui
- Mathematics and Pāngarau
- Short answer writing items (NZC only)

These assessments consist entirely of short answer questions and therefore do not require any teacher | kaiako marking input once students | mokopuna have submitted their assessment.

For these assessments:

- results are available as soon as the assessment session is closed
- no review or submission action is required by the teacher | kaiako
- results flow directly into reporting once available.

Marking compositions in online assessments

Online writing assessments include one extended piece of writing which is marked using AI-assisted marking.

- NZC extended writing assessments use Vantage machine marking
- TMoA tuhituhi uses Vision Marker (one tuhituhi response Tau 3-5, two from Tau 6-10)

The relevant **marking rubric** is applied and produces **AI-suggested scores** for each criterion.

Teacher | kaiako role in AI-assisted marking

Teacher | kaiako input is essential for all extended writing responses. Teachers | kaiako must:

- review each AI-suggested score
- confirm scores where they align with the evidence
- adjust scores where required using the evidence in the student | mokopuna response
- submit the final scores in SMART.

AI suggestions are not final results. Teacher | kaiako confirmation of the scores ensures that marking is consistent, pedagogically sound, and aligned with the rubric.

When AI may not produce a score

In some cases, AI may be unable to confidently score an extended writing response. These responses are flagged for teacher | kaiako marking.

Common reasons include:

- very brief responses
- unclear or inconsistent meaning
- Off topic content
- repetition or copied text
- handwriting or formatting issues (for scanned scripts).

Flagging indicates that human judgement is required, not that the response is invalid.

Flagged responses must be:

- Fully reviewed by the teacher | kaiako
- Marked against the rubric (visit Tāhūrangi for guidance on marking or reviewing writing using the Rubric in SMART)
- Considered against the appropriate exemplar (NZC only, found on Tāhūrangi)
- Entered and submitted in SMART

Teacher | kaiako actions summary

For online assessments, teachers | kaiako are required to:

- ensure all students | mokopuna submit assessments within the assessment window
- close the assessment session
- review and submit extended writing scores
- ensure all required marking is completed by the end of the assessment window.

No scoring or data entry is required for short answer items.

Marking scanned paper-based assessments in SMART

Paper-based assessments can be marked and processed within SMART by scanning student | mokopuna responses into the system. This approach allows teachers | kaiako to benefit from SMART's marking workflows, including AI-assisted or machine marking while maintaining flexibility for schools | kura and students | mokopuna to use paper-based assessments.

When paper-based assessments are scanned to SMART, the system treats them in a similar way to online assessments. Short answer items will be automarked, and extended writing responses will receive AI-suggested scores. Teachers | kaiako remain responsible for reviewing all results and confirming or adjusting scores as required.

Scanning paper-based assessments to SMART

To enable marking in SMART, completed paper assessments must be scanned and uploaded according to the SMART scanning requirements. Clear, complete scans are essential for accurate processing. Schools | kura should ensure that:

- all pages are included and in the correct order
- student | mokopuna identification details and QR codes are clearly visible
- handwriting is as legible as possible
- scans are free from shadows, blurring, or page cut-offs.

Information on scanning requirements and upload processes is provided in the separate **SMART Marking and Reporting Module** guidance available on Tāhūrangi.

How SMART processes scanned assessments

Once uploaded:

- short answer items are automatically marked where SMART can confidently recognise student | mokopuna responses. Some responses may be flagged for teacher review.
- extended writing responses are analysed using AI-assisted or machine marking tools (Vantage for NZC and Vision Marker for TMoA)
- where AI can generate a score, an AI-suggested score appears for each criterion (slider)
- where AI cannot confidently score a response, the assessment is flagged for teacher | kaiako review.

Flagging is expected and does not indicate a problem with the assessment or the student's | mokopuna work. It simply means that automated marking is not appropriate and that teacher | kaiako marking is required.

Teacher | kaiako review and marking responsibilities for writing

All scanned paper-based assessments require teacher | kaiako oversight. Teachers | kaiako must:

- review the AI-suggested scores against the rubric, then use the relevant exemplars/rubrics to confirm or refine the scores for the student's | mokopuna work.
- confirm scores where they accurately reflect the evidence
- adjust scores where the evidence supports a different judgement
- fully mark any responses that are flagged and unscored.

Teachers | kaiako should base decisions solely on the evidence contained in the scanned response and the published marking rubric, using professional judgement to ensure consistency.

Limitations of AI-assisted marking for paper-based assessments

AI-assisted or machine marking of scanned scripts may be limited when:

- handwriting is unclear or inconsistent
- responses are very brief
- students | mokopuna have written outside expected response areas
- spelling, syntax, or layout makes meaning difficult to interpret

In these situations, SMART will flag an issue and prompt teachers | kaiako to complete the marking process manually within the system.

Fully manual marking

If scanning is not possible or appropriate, teachers | kaiako may choose to mark paper-based assessments entirely offline and then record results directly in SMART. This process is explained in the following section.

Manual marking of paper-based assessments and recording results in SMART

In some situations, teachers | kaiako may choose to mark paper-based assessments manually outside of SMART and then record the results in SMART in order to access analysis and reporting features. This approach may be used when scanning is not possible or practical, or when schools | kura prefer to complete marking offline.

When assessments are marked manually, SMART is used solely as the system of record for student | mokopuna results. Teachers | kaiako are responsible for ensuring that marks entered into SMART accurately reflect the evidence from the student's | mokopuna paper-based response and align with the relevant marking rubric. See Appendix 1 for the marking rubrics. These are also downloadable from Tāhūrangi.

When manual marking is required

Manual marking and result entry may be appropriate when:

- assessments have been completed on paper and are not scanned to SMART
- handwriting quality or layout makes automated marking unreliable
- schools | kura choose to complete marking collaboratively or offline
- re-marking or moderation is required before results are finalised.

Regardless of the marking approach used, it is expected that all final results will be entered and submitted to SMART so that students, teachers | kaiako and schools | kura to have access to a range of reports and they are included in system analyses.

Recording marks in SMART

Once marking has been completed on paper, teachers | kaiako record results in SMART by:

1. Logging in to SMART and opening **Mark assessments** from the Home Page.
2. Selecting the relevant assessment event and student | mokopuna group.
3. Locating each student's | mokopuna assessment attempt.
4. Entering scores directly into the scoring fields or rubric sliders, based on the evidence in the paper-based response.
5. Checking that all criterion scores (sliders) are complete.
6. Submitting the results once marking is final.

SMART does not retain paper-based annotations or comments. Any notes used during manual marking should be kept according to school or kura assessment policies.

Professional judgement and consistency

When entering manually determined scores, teachers | kaiako are expected to:

- use the published marking rubrics (and the year-by-year NZC exemplars) as the basis for judgement
- base decisions only on the evidence in the student's | mokopuna response
- apply criteria consistently across all students | mokopuna
- engage in moderation processes where required by the school | kura.

Where multiple teachers | kaiako are marking, schools | kura are encouraged to carry out moderation before results are entered into SMART to ensure reliability and consistency.

Submission requirements

Manually entered results follow the same submission rules as other marking approaches:

- results must be entered and submitted within the assessment window
- submitted results are final and cannot be edited
- incomplete or unsubmitted results will not be included in reporting.

Teachers | kaiako should ensure sufficient time is allowed for both marking and result entry when planning assessment administration.

Key reminder

SMART supports a range of assessment and marking approaches. Whether marking is completed online, via scanned scripts, or manually on paper, teacher | kaiako professional judgement remains

central. Recording results in SMART ensures that student | mokopuna achievement is captured accurately and consistently for reporting and analysis.

Reporting and availability of results in 2026

SMART provides teachers with two sets of information following assessments.

The first includes the interim Guttman and Question Summary reports, which are available immediately. These show how learners responded to different questions, what they got right or wrong, and provide teachers with an early picture of strengths and learning needs. Teachers can use this information straight away and do not need to wait for the next set of reports before adjusting their planning or supporting individual learners.

The second set is the scaled score reports which include information on a student's | mokopuna demonstrated practices, gaps and next learning focus.

For Assessment Window 1 in 2026, this process of scaling and equating SMART will take six weeks to complete, meaning there will be a delay before teachers receive this set of scaled-score reports. This is a necessary part of establishing a new assessment tool and is the same approach that was taken when e-asTTle was first introduced. From Term 4 2026 onwards, schools will receive scaled-score reports without delay.

For Assessment Window 1 in 2026 reporting of results will take place in two stages as shown below.

Assessment Window 1	Scaling and equating by psychometricians	Detailed Reports available
20 April – 22 May 2026	25 May – 2 July 2026	3 July →
Interim Guttman Report and Question Summary Report available for teachers | kaiako following close of assessment session and all marking completed (for extended writing)		A range of reports will be available with scaled scores and aligned with New Zealand curricula

Fig 1: Reporting timeline

Immediately following the close of assessment session, teachers | kaiako will have access to:

- Interim Guttman Report
- Question Summary Report

These interim reports display raw scores only and will be available for reading, writing and maths, pānui, tuhituhi and pāngarau. They will be available once:

- Students | mokopuna have submitted their assessments, and
- all required teacher | kaiako marking (extended writing or flagged short answer items) has been completed.

Following Assessment Window 1:

- Scaling and equating of SMART will be carried out by psychometricians.
- Reports with scaled scores aligned to the NZ Curriculum will become available.

Reports with scaled scores are released once this process is complete (for Assessment 1, 2026, on **3 July 2026**).

For following Assessment Windows, the detailed, scaled scores will be available immediately.

Section 2: Navigating Marking in SMART

1. Getting started – Finding an assessment to mark

- Log in to SMART and open **Mark assessments** **from the SMART Home Page**

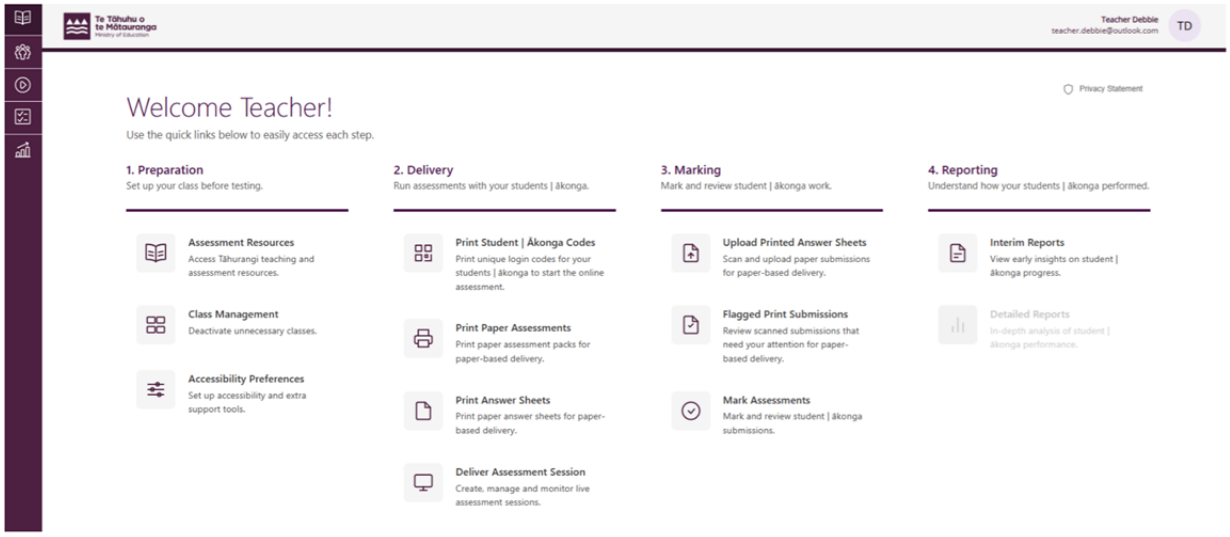

Fig 2: Teacher | kaiako dashboard/home page

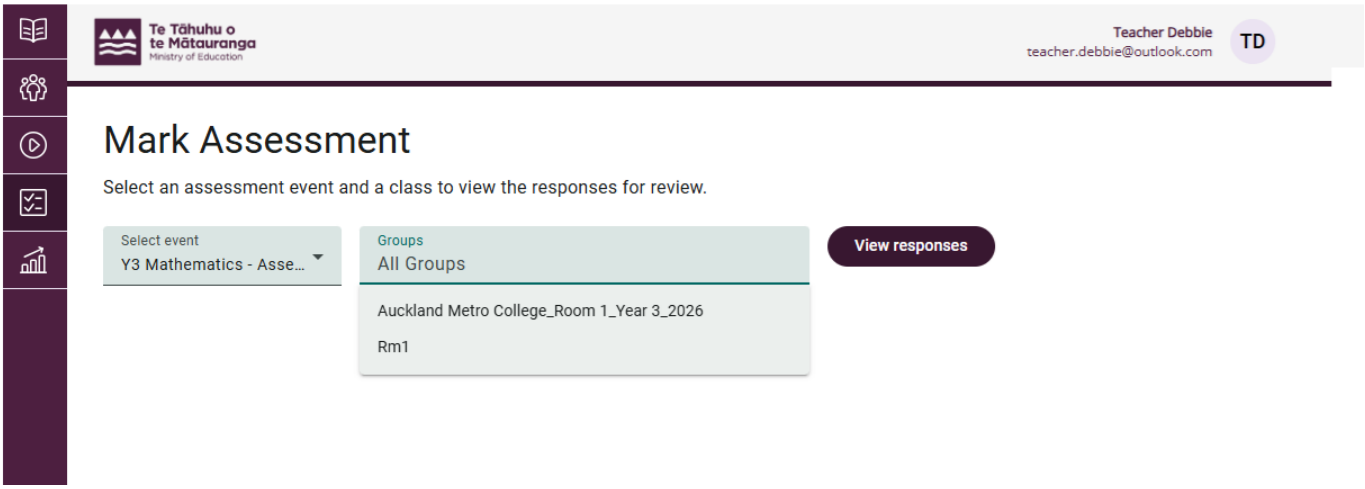

Fig 3: Mark Assessment

On the Mark Assessment screen above:

- use the ‘Select event’ dropdown to select the required assessment
- select the ‘Groups’ dropdown and select the required class or group of students | mokopuna
- select ‘View Responses’ to display the ‘Assessment Responses’ listing for the assessment and class you have selected.

- select one of these and choose an assessment attempt for review.

2. Finding a student's | mokopuna writing to mark – Assessment Responses page

This page (Fig 4) helps you filter a student's | mokopuna responses. Follow the steps below to navigate and use each part of the interface.

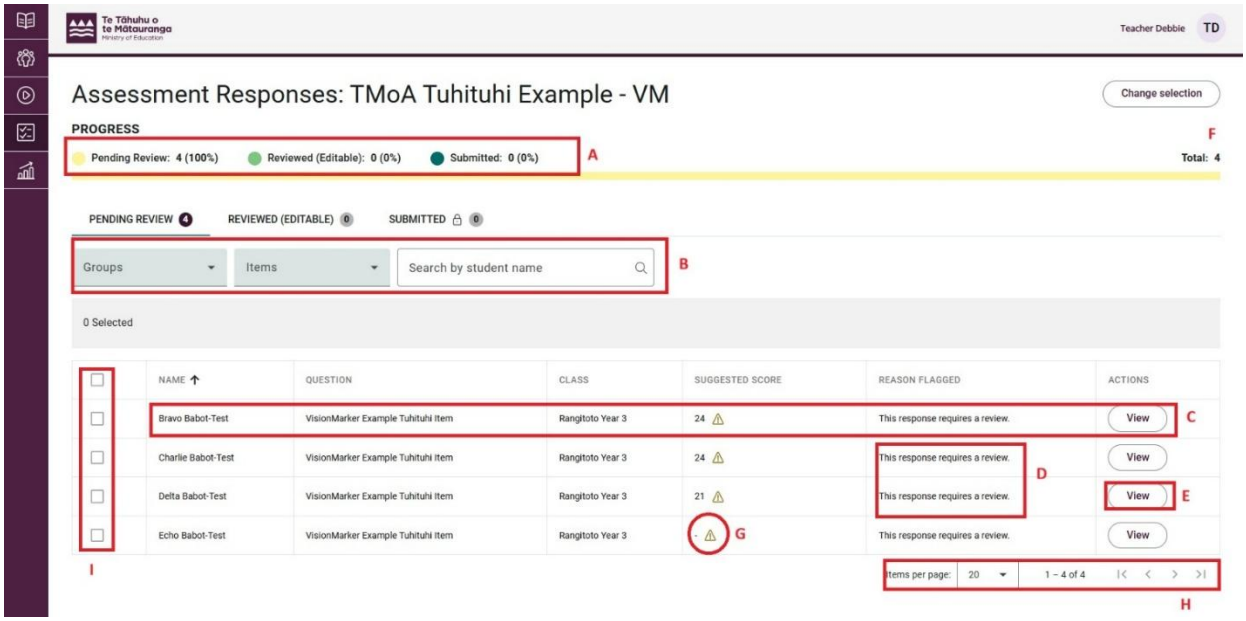

Fig 4: Assessment Responses Page

Step 1: Understand the layout

You will see three tabs along the top of the table (A):

- **Pending Review** shows responses that still need to be reviewed or marked.
- **Reviewed (Editable)** shows responses you have already reviewed but can still adjust.
- **Submitted** shows responses that have been finalised and submitted and cannot be changed.

Select the relevant tab depending on the stage of your marking. For Fig 4, the line under **Pending Review** shows it has been selected.

Step 2: Use filters to find student | mokopuna responses

The screen includes several dropdowns and a search bar to help you refine the list of responses (B):

- Groups dropdown - filter by class group or cohort to view only the students you are responsible for.
- Questions dropdown - select a specific writing question if the assessment includes multiple items.

- Search by student | mokopuna name - type a student's | mokopuna name to quickly locate an individual response.

These tools help you locate exactly the responses you want to mark or re-check.

Step 3: Adjusting items per page (Fig 4 – H)

At the bottom right of the table, you can change how many responses display per page (e.g., 20, 50, 100) and you can navigate through the pages. Use this to work at a pace that suits your workflow.

Step 4: Understanding the table columns (Fig 4)

Each row in this screen represents one student's | mokopuna response to the selected writing question. The columns display (C):

a. Student | mokopuna name - the student | mokopuna who submitted the response.

b. Question - the specific writing task completed.

c. Class - the class group assigned to the student | mokopuna.

d. Suggested score - this may appear filled or contain an AI-flag indicator.

e. Reason flagged - if a response has been flagged by the system, a short explanation appears here.

Examples (from the screenshot) of **Reason flagged** are:

- *"The response is too brief* [for AI] *to evaluate meaningfully."*
- *"The response primarily repeats or copies the question without adding original content."* (D)

f. Actions - select View (E) to open the full student | mokopuna response you wish to mark.

Step 5: Bulk selections to save time

Where you are confident in the AI-suggested scoring you can select multiple responses to mark as reviewed or submit:

- Select multiple responses by checking the responses you wish to select (Fig 4 – I)
- Use **Mark as reviewed** to move them forward in one step.

You can still revisit any response individually.

3. Understanding the Response Review page

When you select View to review a response, the student's | mokopuna writing will open in a detailed view – the **Response Review page** (Fig 5).

This page is designed to give teachers | kaiako everything needed to complete high quality marking in one place.

By becoming familiar with the page, teachers | kaiako can confidently review and score student | mokopuna writing in a structured and consistent way.

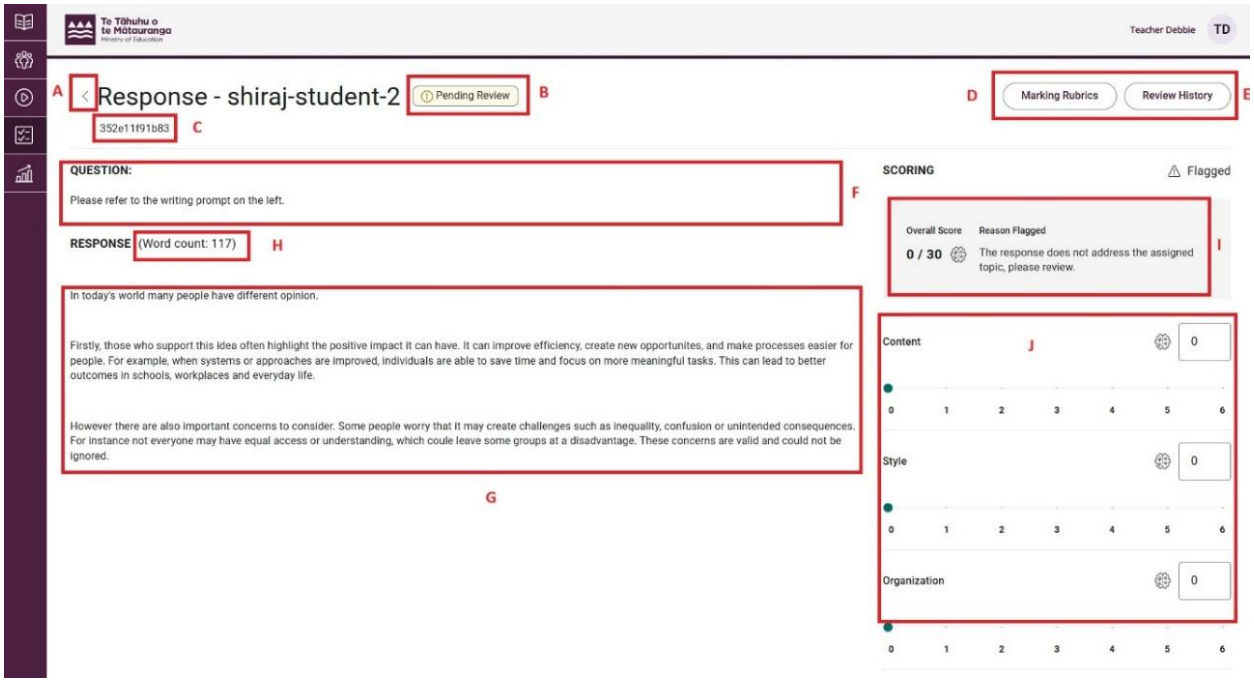

Fig 5: Response Review page

The *Response Review* page is where teachers | kaiako see the prompt, read a student's | mokopuna writing response, and confirm or apply marks. Each section of the page has a specific purpose to help you review effectively.

Navigating the Response Review page

1. Header area

a. Back arrow (Fig 5 A): Located at the top left, this allows you to return to the list of student | mokopuna responses.

b. Review stage (e.g., "Pending Review") (Fig 5 B): Indicates the review status of this response:

- *Pending Review* – needs marking
- *Reviewed (Editable)* – marked but still editable
- *Submitted* – fully finalised

c. Prompt title (Fig 5 C)

Displays the name of the prompt

e. Top-right buttons

- **Marking Rubrics** (Fig 5 D) – Opens the detailed marking rubric for reference.

- **Review History** (Fig 5 E) – Shows previous marking actions, useful for moderation or tracking edits.

2. Question section (Fig 5 F)

This section displays the full **writing prompt** exactly as the student | mokopuna saw it.
Use this to:

- revisit what the student | mokopuna was asked to do
- check whether the student | mokopuna addressed all required parts of the task
- ensure marking aligns with task expectations.

3. Student | mokopuna response section

Under the heading **Response** (Fig 5 G) **(Word count: …)** (Fig 5 H), you will see the student's | mokopuna full written answer and how many words the student | mokopuna has written.

This area helps you:

- Read the entire response without distractions
- Look for qualities related to content, structure, clarity, organisation, etc.

When reviewing, teachers | kaiako typically:

- Read once for overall impression
- Read again with rubric criteria in mind
- Assess the writing in relation to the relevant exemplars
- Look for evidence of strengths and areas needing improvement

4. Scoring Panel (right side)

The panel on the right is where you see the AI-suggested scores or apply marks using the scoring sliders.

a. Overall score (Fig 5 I) shows a running total based on the criteria scores assigned.

b. Rubric sliders (Fig 5 J) - each slider corresponds to a marking criterion in the marking rubric:

- Audience and purpose
- Content development/elaboration
- Structure
- Language use, choice and style
- Writing conventions, grammar, punctuation and spelling

The slider can be adjusted if your review suggests a change is needed. See next section.

Each criterion also displays:

- A number box for precise score entry
- A scale (1–6) based on the Marking Rubric

4. Reviewing a response for which there is an AI-suggested score

Vantage AI and Vision Marker provide **suggested scores** where they can. Think of these scores as helpful starting points. As you review a student's | mokopuna extended writing response, you will need to keep in mind that this is one piece of writing, written in limited time and in assessment conditions. This is not a polished piece of writing written over several sessions, having gone through the full writing process. Taking account of these constraints, do a quick review of the piece of writing and the Suggested Scores. If the score does not reflect the evidence you see in the piece of writing, you will do a more in-depth review.

Remember to base your judgement solely on the evidence contained **within this one piece**, not on what you know about the student's | mokopuna wider capabilities or past performance. You may notice important aspects the AI has missed—such as culturally nuanced meaning, identity related expression, or context that you understand because you know the learner—but any changes you make to the score must be supported by clear evidence in the writing itself. This ensures every decision is consistent and grounded in what the student | mokopuna has actually demonstrated in this particular task.

Below is a step-by-step process for reviewing a student's | mokopuna response with Suggested Scores.

Step 1 — Read the prompt/question

Familiarise yourself with the prompt the student | mokopuna has chosen so your review stays aligned. (Fig 5 – F)

Step 2 — Read the entire student | mokopuna response

Get a full understanding before reviewing the scoring, noticing the writing skills and practices the student | mokopuna is demonstrating and what they are not demonstrating. (Fig 5 – G)

Step 3 — Open the Marking Rubric:

Using the Marking Rubrics button (Fig 5 - D) at the top right of the screen, open the rubric.

Step 4 – Consider the Marking Rubric **(Fig 6 - A):**

Using the rubric identify evidence of key strengths and weaknesses in the student's | mokopuna response.

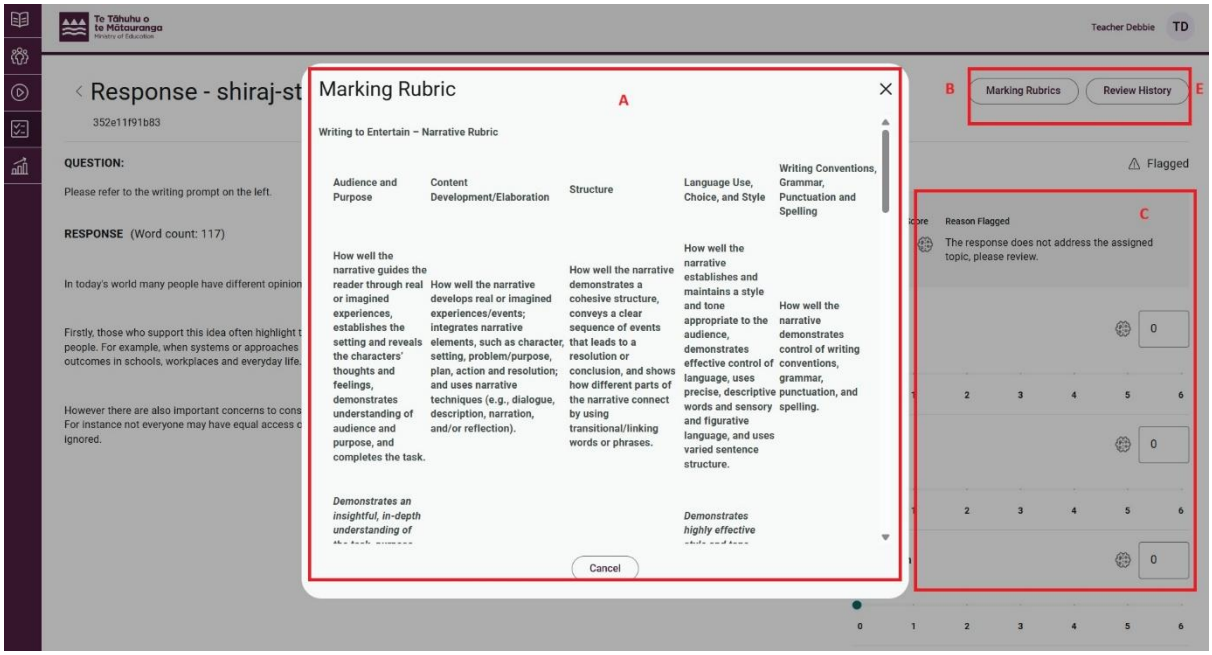

Fig 6 – The Marking Rubric

When you open the rubric (Fig 6 – A) using the Marking Rubrics button (Fig 6 - B), you will no longer be able to fully see the question or the response, but you will still be able to see the sliders, scores and overall score Fig 6 – C). See the full rubrics in Appendix 1.

Step 5 – Consider the writing in relation to the relevant exemplars

Compare the student's writing with the relevant year level exemplars to judge which scored piece of writing it most closely aligns with.

Step 6 — Check the sliders and overall score

Consider whether the AI-suggested scores reflect the evidence you see in the student's | mokopuna writing and align with rubric and exemplar expectations. (Fig 6 – C, D).

If yes:

Step 7 – Ready to Submit scores **(Fig 7 – A)**

If the scores are final:

- Click the **Submit & Next** button at the bottom right of the screen if you plan to mark another student's | mokopuna writing.
- Click **Submit & Exit** if you are not planning to mark further responses right now.

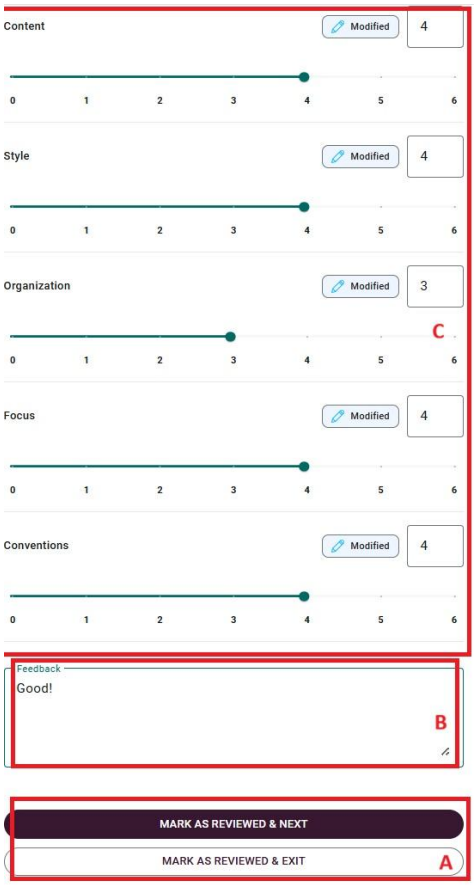

Fig 7 – Scoring sliders

Step 8 – Not ready to *Submit* scores?

If you are not ready to submit the scores, (for example, you want someone else to check them first or your school | kura plans to do moderation) leave the sliders as they are, and use the Back Arrow (Fig 5 – A) to go to the next response.

Do not Submit if you might want to make changes to the scores in the future. Once submitted you will not be able to change the score.

If no:

Step 9 – Adjust the scores

Use the sliders on the right-hand scoring panel to adjust the marks for any dimensions requiring change (Fig 7 – B). Your changes will be recorded in the Review History (Fig 7 – E)

Step 10 – Leave a comment (Fig 7 – C)

Leave a comment to explain your reasons for any change to the score. These comments are for internal use only and don't appear in the students' | mokopuna reports.

Step 11: Ready to Submit scores now? (Fig 7 – A)

If the scores are final

- Click the **Submit & Next** button at the bottom right of the screen if you are ready to submit the scores and plan to continue to mark another student's | mokopuna writing.
- Click **Submit & Exit** if this is the last piece of writing you will mark in this session.

Step 12: Not ready to *Submit* scores?

If you are not ready to submit the scores, (for example, you want someone else to check them first or your school | kura plans to do moderation) leave the sliders as they are and use the Back Arrow (Fig 5 – A) to go to the next response or exit and you will be prompted to save. This will save it but not submit it.

In summary:

1. read the mokopuna response
2. check the suggested score against the rubric, the year level exemplars and the evidence in the student's | mokopuna response
3. keep or adjust the score as the evidence and your professional judgement guides you
4. leave a comment to explain your reasons for changing the score. These comments are for internal use only and don't appear in the students' | mokopuna reports.

Further information about reviewing and marking a response using rubrics and exemplars can be found on Tāhūrangi.

5. Reviewing a response which is flagged

When AI cannot confidently score a response, it flags it for you in the **Suggested Score** column (Fig 4 - G). This is not an error — it's simply AI acknowledging the limits of automated marking. The **Reason flagged** column provides the reason the AI was unable to confidently mark the response (Fig D).

Flagged items do not receive a score and **need to be marked by the teacher | kaiako.**

Reasons AI might not be able to mark writing include:

- Too brief – not enough language for the AI to interpret meaning. Less than 100 words may not provide enough content for AI marking.
- Off-topic content – the response doesn't relate to the prompt in a predictable way.
- Repetition – repeated phrases make it hard to evaluate development.
- Insufficient detail – ideas are present but not developed enough for the rubric.
- Unrecognisable words – spelling or invented words make intent unclear.
- Broken syntax or structure – the meaning is uncertain.
- Copied text – the response mainly repeats the question.
- Inappropriate content – e.g., unnecessary violent themes.
- Handwriting many be too hard for the AI to 'read'

In all of these cases, the AI is simply signalling: *"I'm not sure — a human needs to look at this."*

For these responses the teacher | kaiako then goes through the review process and applies the rubric as outlined below:

Step 1 — Read the prompt/question

Familiarise yourself with the prompt the student | mokopuna has chosen so your review stays aligned. (Fig 5 – F)

Step 2 — Read the entire student | mokopuna response

Get a full understanding, noticing the writing skills and practices the student | mokopuna is demonstrating and what they are not demonstrating. (Fig 5 – G)

Step 3 — Open the Marking Rubric

Using the Marking Rubrics button (Fig 5 - D) at the top right of the screen, open the rubric.

Step 4 – Consider the Marking Rubric (Fig 6 - A):

Using the rubric identify evidence of key strengths and weaknesses in the student's | mokopuna response.

Step 5 – Consider the exemplars

Step 6 – Add scores

Use the sliders on the right-hand Scoring Panel to add marks for each dimension (Fig 7 – B).

Your scores will be recorded in the Review History (Fig 6 – D)

Step 7 – Leave a comment (Fig 7 – C)

Leave a comment to explain your reasons for any change to the score. These comments are for internal use only and don't appear in the students' | mokopuna reports.

Step 8: Ready to Submit scores? (Fig 7 – A)

If the scores are final:

Click the **Submit & Next** button at the bottom right of the screen if you are ready to submit the scores and plan to continue to mark another student's | mokopuna writing.

Click **Submit & Exit** if this is the last piece of writing you will mark.

Step 9 – Not ready to *Submit* the score?

If you are not ready to submit the scores, (for example, you want someone else to check them first or your school | kura plans to do moderation) leave the sliders as they are and use the Back Arrow (Fig 5 – A) to go to the next response.

Do NOT Submit if you might want to make changes to the scores in the future.

5. Using rubrics and exemplars to support marking and review scores in NZC

For NZC, one writing rubric is used across all year levels (Years 3–10) for each purpose (entertain, inform and persuade).

What the rubric scores mean

Each rubric score (for example, 1–6) describes how well a response demonstrates the criteria in the rubric. A score of 6 always represents writing that is highly effective.

- A score of 6 in Year 3 reflects highly effective writing for a developing writer, given expected language, experience, and curriculum exposure.
- A score of 6 in Year 10 reflects highly effective writing for a more experienced writer, where ideas, structure, and language are expected to be more complex, precise, and sustained.
- In both cases, the score of 6 represents writing that strongly meets the rubric criteria.

Why exemplars are provided by year level

Year-level exemplars are provided to show how the same rubric criteria can look different at different stages of schooling.

The exemplars are all written using the year-level prompts for Term 2, 2026.

There are 5 to 6 writing exemplars in each set, starting with the highest scoring exemplar and finishing with the lowest. Across the exemplars, most individual scores from 1 to 6 for each criterion in the rubric are covered.

For example:
- A Year 3 exemplar with a score of 6 may show clear purpose, logical sequencing, and mostly correct sentence structures using simpler language and ideas.
- A Year 10 exemplar with a score of 6 may show sustained argument, nuanced vocabulary, deliberate stylistic choices, and precise control of conventions.
- Both are valid demonstrations of the same rubric level, expressed at different stages of schooling.

How to use rubric scores and exemplars together when marking

When marking or reviewing extended writing in SMART:

1. Read right through the piece of writing.
2. Use the rubric to judge the level of effectiveness demonstrated in the student's writing. Ask, is it effective for a Year 3 student, for a Year 8 student?
3. Use exemplars to sense check whether your judgement aligns with what that level typically looks like for learners at a similar stage. Choose the process that works best for you.
4. Remember the judgement is always based on the evidence in the writing and alignment to the rubric criteria and exemplars.
5. When multiple teachers | kaiako are marking, schools | kura are encouraged to use the rubric and exemplars as shared reference points during moderation. This supports reliability across classes, cohorts, and marking methods (AI-assisted, scanned, or manual).

6. Submission requirements for flagged and extended writing

All marking must be completed and submitted by the end of each five-week assessment window. Because of these tight timelines, schools | kura should plan to administer the writing assessment early within the five-week window. Doing so provides teachers | kaiako with enough time to complete marking and ensure that all materials can be submitted before the final deadline. Beginning early also helps reduce pressure on both teachers | kaiako and students | mokopuna and avoids last minute bottlenecks.

If the deadline is not met for writing | tuhituhi assessments and paper-based assessments with flagged items that have not been marked and the assessments submitted, **results and reporting will NOT be available**. It is essential to complete all marking and flagged items and submit the assessment prior to the close of each assessment window.

To summarise:

- all marked writing assessments and paper-based assessments with flagged items, must be submitted by the end of the assessment window
- early administration is strongly recommended to allow ample time for marking
- failure to meet the deadline will result in reports not being delivered to schools for some assessments.

Final Note

SMART and its AI-assisted marking tools are designed to support teachers | kaiako, not to make final decisions on their behalf. Throughout all marking pathways, teacher | kaiako expertise remains central to ensuring that assessment results are consistent, valid, and meaningful. AI can assist by identifying patterns and suggesting scores, but it is the teacher's | kaiako responsibility to apply professional judgement, interpret the rubric, and make final marking decisions based on the evidence in each response.

Using these guidelines helps ensure that marking is completed efficiently, consistently, and within required timelines, supporting high-quality reporting and system-wide analysis. When teachers | kaiako combine their professional knowledge with the structured workflows in SMART, assessment outcomes are more reliable and better able to inform teaching, learning, and next steps for students | mokopuna.

Appendix 1: Marking rubrics for NZC & TMoA

Please find the marking rubrics for NZC and TMoA on the following pages. They can also be found on Tāhūrangi under the “Assessing with SMART” tab: SMART – Overview and access

Writing to Entertain – Narrative 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.

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

RUBRIC CRITERIA

RUBRIC SCORES

	Audience and Purpose	Content Development/ Elaboration	Structure	Language Use, Choice, and Style	Writing Conventions, Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling
	How well the narrative guides the reader through real or imagined experiences, establishes the setting and reveals the characters' thoughts and feelings, demonstrates understanding of audience and purpose, and completes the task.	How well the narrative develops real or imagined experiences/events; integrates narrative elements, such as character, setting, problem/purpose, plan, action and resolution; and uses narrative techniques (e.g., dialogue, description, narration, and/or reflection).	How well the narrative demonstrates a cohesive structure, conveys a clear sequence of events that leads to a resolution or conclusion, and shows how different parts of the narrative connect by using transitional/linking words or phrases.	How well the narrative establishes and maintains a style and tone appropriate to the audience, demonstrates effective control of language, uses precise, descriptive words and sensory and figurative language, and uses varied sentence structure.	How well the narrative demonstrates control of writing conventions, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
6	***Demonstrates an insightful, in-depth understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** Expertly establishes a setting and reveals characters' thoughts and feelings. Thoroughly engages readers by constructing a rich narrative that focuses on one or several themes and/or central ideas. Completes all parts of the narrative and may go beyond the limits of the task.	***Expertly develops real or imagined experiences.*** Creates a vivid picture for readers by using a variety of narrative elements, techniques, and descriptive details.	***Demonstrates use of a cohesive and unified structure by seamlessly connecting the events in a specific sequence, leading to a resolution or conclusion.*** Uses transitional/ linking words or phrases that clarify relationships between elements in the narrative. Creates very effective paragraphs.	***Demonstrates highly effective style and tone, precise control of language, and an exceptional awareness of audience.*** Integrates vivid words and sensory and figurative language that clearly advance the overall style, tone, and purpose of the narrative. Consistently uses well-structured and varied sentences.	***Highly effective level of accuracy:*** contains few or no errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling.
5	***Demonstrates a clear understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** Effectively establishes a setting and reveals characters' thoughts and feelings. Engages readers by constructing a narrative that focuses on one or several themes and/ or central ideas. Narrative is fully complete.	***Fully develops real or imagined experiences.*** Creates a detailed picture for readers by using a variety of narrative elements, techniques, and descriptive details.	***Demonstrates use of a mostly unified structure by smoothly connecting the events in a specific sequence, leading to a resolution or conclusion.*** Uses transitional/linking words or phrases that clarify relationships between elements in the narrative. Creates effective paragraphs.	***Demonstrates effective style and tone, consistent control of language, and a clear awareness of audience.*** Integrates well-chosen words, sensory and figurative language that clearly advance overall style, tone, and purpose of the narrative. Mostly uses well-structured and varied sentences.	***Effective level of accuracy:*** contains a few minor errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling that do not interfere with the communication of the message.
4	***Demonstrates a competent understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** Adequately establishes a setting and reveals characters' thoughts and feelings. Begins to engage the reader by constructing a narrative that focuses on one or several themes and/or central ideas. Narrative is mostly complete.	***Competently develops real or imagined experiences.*** Creates a clear picture for readers by using some narrative elements, techniques, and descriptive details.	***Demonstrates use of a generally unified structure by sufficiently connecting events in a sequence, leading to a resolution or conclusion.*** Uses transitional/linking words or phrases that illustrate relationships between elements in the narrative. Uses suitable paragraphs.	***Demonstrates appropriate style and tone, suitable control of language, and a general awareness of audience.*** Uses some descriptive words and sensory and figurative language that support the overall style, tone, and purpose of the narrative. Mostly uses correct sentence structure with some sentence variety.	***Competent level of accuracy:*** 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	***Demonstrates a growing understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** Provides a basic setting and offers simple insights into characters' thoughts and feelings. Constructs a narrative, though it may not be fully complete	***Develops real or imagined experiences.*** Attempts to use narrative elements, techniques, and descriptive elements to engage the reader, though the picture may not be fully clear.	***Demonstrates growing use of an organisational structure that connects events. May lead to a resolution or conclusion.*** Shows some use of transitional/linking words or phrases. Paragraphing is used and may be inconsistent.	***Demonstrates growing awareness of appropriate style and tone, some control of language, and some awareness of audience.*** Some words and sentence structures may not support the overall style, tone, and purpose of the narrative. May use simple or repetitive sentence structures. May make some errors in sentence structure.	***Growing level of accuracy:*** contains several noticeable errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling that may interfere with the communication of the message.
2	***Demonstrates a basic understanding of narrative writing, purpose, and audience.*** May provide a setting and reveal characters' thoughts and feelings. Begins to construct a narrative, though it is mostly incomplete.	***Partially develops real or imagined experiences.*** Uses some narrative elements, techniques, and descriptive details. Begins to develop a picture for the reader.	***Demonstrates basic understanding of how to use an organisational structure to connect events.*** Some transitional/linking words or phrases may be used. Attempts to use paragraphing.	***Demonstrates basic awareness of style and tone, basic control of language, and some partial awareness of audience.*** Attempts to use descriptive language and a consistent tone. Relies on simple sentence structures. May have some errors in sentence structure.	***Basic level of accuracy:*** contains a number of frequent errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling that interfere with the clear communication of the message.
1	***May demonstrate a beginning understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** The setting and the characters' thoughts and feelings may be ambiguous or absent. Completes few or no parts of the task.	***Begins to develop real or imagined experiences.*** Narrative elements, techniques, and details are limited or absent.	***May begin to connect events and use an organisational structure.*** Limited or no use of transitional/linking words or phrases or paragraphing.	***Demonstrates initial efforts to establish style, tone, or control of language.*** Often contains confusing or unclear word choice and demonstrates limited awareness of audience. Considerable errors in basic sentence structure.	***Beginning level of accuracy:*** 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.

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Writing to Inform – 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.

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

RUBRIC CRITERIA

RUBRIC SCORES

	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 a main idea, demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose and audience, and completes all parts of the task.	How well the response develops ideas by integrating specific, relevant elaboration (e.g., concrete details, facts, definitions, examples, explanations and quotations).	How well the response demonstrates a cohesive and unified organisational structure, paragraphing, and uses transition/linking words and phrases to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts.	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 writing conventions grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
6	***Demonstrates a thorough and insightful understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** Establishes and maintains a clearly focused main idea throughout the response. Completes all parts of the task and may go beyond the limits of the task.	***Develops ideas by adeptly integrating specific details to support the main idea.*** Purposefully uses a variety of elaborative techniques.	***Demonstrates a cohesive and unified structure that clarifies relationships among ideas and concepts.*** Contains an engaging introduction and an insightful conclusion. Uses very effective and skillful paragraphing and transitional/ linking words or phrases throughout.	***Demonstrates highly effective style and tone, precise control of language, highly appropriate word choice, and an exceptional awareness of audience.*** Consistently uses well-structured and varied sentences.	***Highly effective level of accuracy:*** contains few or no errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling.
5	***Demonstrates a clear understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** Establishes and maintains an effective main idea throughout the response. Completes all parts of the task.	***Develops ideas by successfully integrating specific details to support the main idea.*** Uses consistent and effective elaborative techniques.	***Demonstrates a mostly unified structure that clarifies relationships among ideas and concepts.*** Contains a strong introduction and conclusion. Uses effective paragraphing and transitional/linking words and phrases.	***Demonstrates effective style and tone, consistent control of language, appropriate word choice, and a clear awareness of audience.*** Mostly uses well-structured and varied sentences.	***Effective level of accuracy:*** contains a few minor errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling that do not interfere with the communication of the message.
4	***Demonstrates a competent understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** Adequately establishes and maintains a main idea throughout the response. Completes most parts of the task.	***Develops ideas by competently integrating some specific details to support the main idea.*** Uses sufficient elaborative techniques in a competent way.	***Demonstrates a generally unified structure that sufficiently connects ideas and concepts.*** Contains a suitable introduction and conclusion. Uses suitable paragraphing and transitional/linking words or phrases.	***Demonstrates appropriate style and tone, suitable control of language, appropriate word choice, and a general awareness of audience.*** Mostly uses correct sentence structure with some sentence variety.	***Competent level of accuracy:*** 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	***Demonstrates a growing understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** A main idea is present, but may be unclear or not fully aligned with the task. Completes some parts of the task.	***Develops ideas with use of some details to support the main idea.*** Demonstrates developing understanding of elaborative techniques.	***Demonstrates growing understanding of organisational structure that connects ideas and concepts.*** Contains an introduction and conclusion, though these may require further clarity. Paragraphing is used, though it may be inconsistent. A small range of transitional/ linking words or phrases are used.	***Demonstrates growing awareness of appropriate style and tone, and some control of language and word choice. Some awareness of audience.*** May use simple or repetitive sentence structures with room to improve sentence variety. May have a few errors.	***Growing level of accuracy:*** contains several noticeable errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling that may interfere with the communication of the message.
2	***Demonstrates a basic understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** A main idea is present but may need to be expressed more clearly and with greater focus. Completes a few parts of the task.	***Partially develops ideas with use of a few details to support the main idea.*** Demonstrates an emerging understanding of elaborative techniques	***Demonstrates basic understanding of how to use an organisational structure that connects ideas and concepts.*** 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.	***Demonstrates basic understanding of style, tone, or control of language.*** Attempts appropriate word choice, and some limited understanding of audience shown. May have some errors in sentence structure. May rely on simple sentence structures with occasional attempts at sentence variety.	***Basic level of accuracy:*** contains a number of frequent errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling that interferes with the clear communication of the message.
1	***May demonstrate the beginning stages of understanding the task, purpose, and audience.*** A main idea may be present, but is unclear, confusing or inappropriate. Completes few or no parts of the task.	***Begins to develop ideas with minimal or no details to support the main idea.*** Elaborative techniques may not be used.	***May begin to show understanding of organisational structure and connect ideas.*** Introduction and/or conclusion not present. Limited or no use of transitional/linking words or phrases, or paragraphing.	***Beginning to develop style, tone, or control of language.*** Often contains confusing or unclear word choice and demonstrates limited awareness of audience. Considerable errors in sentence structure.	***Beginning level of accuracy:*** 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.

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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.

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

RUBRIC CRITERIA

RUBRIC SCORES

	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	***Demonstrates a thorough and insightful understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** 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.	***Very effectively develops arguments with logical reasoning and adeptly integrates relevant elaboration to support claims being made.*** Uses a variety of elaborative techniques in a very effective way. Convincingly addresses opposing claims.	***Demonstrates the use of a cohesive and unified structure that supports the logical progression of ideas.*** Contains an engaging introduction and an insightful conclusion. Uses very effective and skillful paragraphing and transitional/ linking words or phrases throughout.	***Demonstrates highly effective style and tone, precise control of language, highly appropriate word choice, and an exceptional awareness of audience.*** Consistently uses well-structured and varied sentences.	***Highly effective level of accuracy:*** contains few or no errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling.
5	***Demonstrates a clear understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** Establishes and maintains a well- defined position which directly addresses the issue presented in the task. Completes all parts of the task.	***Effectively develops arguments with logical reasoning and successfully integrates relevant elaboration to support the position.*** Consistently and effectively uses details to elaborate. Clearly addresses opposing claims.	***Demonstrates the use of a mostly unified structure that supports the logical progression of ideas.*** Contains a strong introduction and conclusion. Uses effective paragraphing and transitional/linking words or phrases.	***Demonstrates effective style and tone, consistent control of language, appropriate word choice, and a clear awareness of audience.*** Mostly uses well-structured and varied sentences.	***Effective level of accuracy:*** contains a few minor errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling that do not interfere with the communication of the message.
4	***Demonstrates a competent understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** Adequately maintains a position and attempts to address the issue presented in the task. Completes most parts of the task.	***Competently develops arguments with logical reasoning and integrates some relevant elaboration to support the position.*** Uses some elaborative techniques in a competent way. Sufficiently addresses opposing claims.	***Demonstrates the use of a generally unified structure that supports the logical progression of ideas.*** Contains a suitable introduction and conclusion. Uses suitable paragraphing and transitional/linking words or phrases.	***Demonstrates appropriate style and tone, suitable control of language, appropriate word choice, and a general awareness of audience.*** Mostly uses correct sentence structure with some sentence variety.	***Competent level of accuracy:*** 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	***Demonstrates a developing understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** 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.	***Develops arguments with reasoning and sometimes includes relevant elaboration to support the position.*** Demonstrates developing understanding of elaborative techniques. Begins to address opposing claims.	***Demonstrates growing use of an organisational structure that supports the progression of ideas.*** 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.	***Demonstrates growing awareness of appropriate style and tone, some control of language and word choice. Some awareness of audience.*** May use simple or repetitive sentence structures with room to improve sentence variety. May have a few errors.	***Growing level of accuracy:*** contains several noticeable errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling that may interfere with the communication of the message.
2	***Demonstrates an emerging understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** 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.	***Partially develops arguments with reasoning and includes a few details to support the position.*** Demonstrates emerging understanding of elaborative techniques. May begin to address opposing claims.	***Demonstrates basic understanding of how to use an organisational structure.*** 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.	***Demonstrates basic understanding of style, tone, or control of language.*** 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.	***Basic level of accuracy:*** contains a number of frequent errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling that interfere with the clear communication of the message.
1	***May demonstrate the beginning stages of understanding of the task, purpose, and audience.*** 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	***Begins to develop arguments, though reasoning may require further clarity, and few to no details are provided to support the position.*** Elaborative techniques may not be used. Opposing claims may not be addressed.	***May begin to show understanding of organisational structure.*** Introduction and/ or conclusion may not be present. Limited or no use of transitional/linking words or phrases strategies or paragraphing.	***Beginning to develop style, tone, or control of language.*** Often contains confusing or unclear word choice and demonstrates limited awareness of audience. Considerable errors in sentence structure.	***Beginning level of accuracy:*** contains substantial errors in grammar, writing conventions, punctuation, and spelling that significantly interfere with communication of the message.

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Tūārere 1: Tau 3

Tuhituhi prompts are used to stimulate mokopuna knowledge and writing capabilities, supporting the production of coherent, meaningful, and purposeful written text. At each year, one prompt focuses on expressing cultural identity through an appropriate text purpose.

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

RUBRIC SCORES

RUBRIC CRITERIA

	Orthography	Vocabulary	Grammar	Text purpose	Text construction 2026
6	Writing is consistently clear and accurate. Punctuation used correctly throughout.	Uses a wide range of appropriate vocabulary.	Uses multiple sentence types accurately. Writing shows control and variation.	Writing is purposeful, detailed, and coherent. Expands on characteristics with explanation or examples.	Writes an extended text. Includes several relevant details, such as: iwi, waka, maunga, where they live, name, age, height, eye colour, hair colour, likes and dislikes. Ideas are sequenced and connected.
5	Writing is clear and legible. Uses punctuation correctly most of the time.	Uses a variety of vocabulary.	Uses 3 or more sentence types appropriately. Writing shows control of sentence structures.	Information is organised and relevant. Adds descriptions or explanations about characteristics.	Writes 5–6 connected sentences. Includes 4 or more of the following details in their writing: iwi, waka, maunga, name, age, height, eye colour, hair colour, likes and dislikes. Writing shows flow.
4	Writes legibly. Uses punctuation (caps, fullstops).	Vocab choices are appropriate. Uses a range of word types – nouns, adjectives.	Uses 2-3 sentence types (e.g., He, E, Ko, Ka).	Writes to the topic. Details one or more appropriate characteristics (e.g., attributes, features, behaviours, properties, functions, location).	Writes 1 text. Writes at least 4 sentences about themselves. Includes at least 3 of the following details in their writing: iwi, waka, maunga, name, age, height, eye colour, hair colour, likes.
3	Writing is legible. Use of capital letters and fullstops is mostly correct.	Appropriate vocabulary choices. Uses nouns and some adjectives.	Uses at least 2 different sentence patterns (e.g., Ko ...; He ...). Sentences are mostly complete.	Writes clearly. Describes 1 or more relevant characteristics.	Writes 3–4 sentences. Includes 2–3 personal details such as: Where they are from, waka, maunga, name, age, height, eye colour, hair colour, likes.
2	Writing is mostly legible. Some correct capital letters or fullstops used.	Uses high frequency vocabulary appropriately. Includes some descriptive words.	Uses 1–2 sentence patterns (e.g., Ko ...; He ...). Attempts to write complete sentences.	Writes some relevant details. Information may be disconnected.	Writes 2–3 sentences. Includes a few (2–3) personal details (e.g., their name, age, iwi).
1	Writing may be difficult to read. Limited or inconsistent use of capital letters or full stops.	Very limited word range. Mostly single nouns or high frequency words.	Uses 1–2 simple sentence patterns only (e.g., Ko ...). Sentences may be incomplete.	Topic may be unclear or not connected to the expected purpose. Very little personal information provided.	Writes 1–2 simple sentences. Includes only very basic personal details (e.g., name, iwi).

Disclaimer: These rubrics have been developed for the purposes of marking responses to the 2026 tuhituhi prompts. They have not undergone formal validation and should be used as a guiding tool only. The rubrics are informed by the redesigned Te Reo Rangatira wāhanga ako within Te Marautanga o Aotearoa. Ongoing review and refinement are anticipated to ensure they remain appropriate and fit for purpose.

Tūārere 2: Tau 4–6 (page 1 of 2)

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

Tuhituhi prompts are used to stimulate mokopuna knowledge and writing capabilities, supporting the production of coherent, meaningful, and purposeful written text. At each year, one prompt focuses on expressing cultural identity through an appropriate text purpose. At years 6–10 mokopuna respond to two prompts, each with a different text purpose and form.

RUBRIC SCORES

RUBRIC CRITERIA

	Orthography	Vocabulary	Grammar	Text purpose	Tau 4–5: Text construction 2026	Tau 6: Text construction 2026
6	Handwriting (if relevant) is legible and accurate in form. Consistent and accurate use of common punctuation.	Vocabulary choices are appropriate to text purpose, audience, context.	Uses a range of grammatical structures. Joins two or more ideas together in a sentence (compound sentences).	Uses descriptions or explanations to express themselves more fully. Extends ideas by providing descriptive detail and examples.	Writes at least 5 sentences. Writes a recount of an event. Provides clear details of what happened. Time sequence is clear. Includes an element of reflection (what they thought, how they felt). Some aspects of structure of a personal recount are evident e.g., heading, scene setting, sequencing of events, summary statement.	Writes 2 linked paragraphs/texts. Each text is 4 or more sentences in length. Clearly addresses each part of the task. Part 1: Writes about a place or location; Includes descriptions of specific features; Clearly states why the place is special. Part 2: Writes a recount; Details a time or event at the chosen location; Includes three or more details such as: when, where, reason for going, who was there, what happened. Includes reflection (what they thought, how they felt). May include a whakataukī or other cultural reference to contextualise or support particular ideas in their writing. Structure of a personal recount is evident e.g., heading, scene setting, sequencing of events, summary statement.
5	Handwriting (if relevant) is legible accurate in form. Applies spelling conventions and punctuation usually accurately and with some consistency (e.g. macrons or double vowels).	Uses subject-specific vocabulary.	Produces a variety of sentences which may include some longer sentences (compound). Uses tense forms with accuracy.	Writes appropriately for purpose. Conveys information and ideas clearly. Recount is organised and logical. Provides some detail in descriptions.	Writes at least 5 sentences. Writes a recount of an event. Provides clear details of what happened. Time sequence is clear. Includes an element of reflection (what they thought, how they felt).	Writes 2 linked paragraphs/texts. Each text is 4 or more sentences in length. Clearly addresses each part of the task. Part 1: Writes about a place or location; Identifies the name of a location or place; Includes 1 or more features of the place; States 1 or more reasons why the place is special. Part 2: Writes a recount; Details a time or event at the chosen location; Includes two more details such as: when, where, reason for going, who was there, what happened. Clear time sequencing. Includes an element of reflection (what they thought, how they felt). May include a whakataukī or other cultural reference to contextualise or support particular ideas in their writing.
4	Handwriting (if relevant) is accurate in form. Spelling is accurate most of the time (including macron/ double vowel use). Punctuation is usually correct.	Uses some less common topic specific, vocabulary (e.g., words to describe places). Uses appropriate form when using verb and derived now suffixes (e.g., -tia, -tanga, -hia, -hanga, -ria, -ranga).	Writes using a range of sentence constructions accurately and clearly.	Writes to topic. Writing and structure is appropriate for the text purpose i.e., recount/ narrative, informational/ descriptive. Describes characteristics of people, places, or things.	Writes at least 5 sentences. Writes a recount. Details a time or event at a chosen location. Includes three or more details such as: when; where; reason for going; who was there; what happened.	Writes at least 2 texts — one for each part of the task. Writes at least 4 full sentences for each part. Writes a recount that details a time or event at a chosen location. Includes three or more details such as: when; where; reason for going; who was there; what happened. Clear time sequencing.

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Disclaimer: These rubrics have been developed for the purposes of marking responses to the 2026 tuhituhi prompts. They have not undergone formal validation and should be used as a guiding tool only. The rubrics are informed by the redesigned Te Reo Rangatira wāhanga ako within Te Marautanga o Aotearoa. Ongoing review and refinement are anticipated to ensure they remain appropriate and fit for purpose.

Tūārere 2: Tau 4–6 (page 2 of 2)

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

Tuhituhi prompts are used to stimulate mokopuna knowledge and writing capabilities, supporting the production of coherent, meaningful, and purposeful written text. At each year, one prompt focuses on expressing cultural identity through an appropriate text purpose. At years 6–10 mokopuna respond to two prompts, each with a different text purpose and form.

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RUBRIC CRITERIA

RUBRIC SCORES

	Orthography	Vocabulary	Grammar	Text purpose	Tau 4–5: Text construction 2026	Tau 6: Text construction 2026
3	Handwriting (if relevant) is mostly accurate in form. Uses punctuation. (caps, fullstops) and macrons/ double vowels (may not always be accurate).	Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary (for the context) including words that have common affixes, and multi-syllables.	Uses multiple sentence types (may be with variable accuracy). Uses some appropriate time markers or tenses.	Writes to the topic. Writes with clarity. Demonstrates understanding of the purpose of a text e.g., uses descriptive language to describe features, characteristics; sequences events in a logical order.	Writes at least 5 sentences. Writes a recount. Details a time or event at a chosen location. Includes two or more details such as: when; where; reason for going; who was there; what happened.	Attempts both parts of the task. Writes at least 4 full sentences for each part. Identifies a place or location of event as the main topic. May include some relevant details such as: when; where; reason for going; who was there. Some evidence of time order.
2	Handwriting (if relevant) is legible. Punctuation used but may not be accurate.	Uses a range of vocabulary.	Uses at least 3 different sentence types (nominal, verbal, descriptive / adjectival). Writing shows control and variation.	Attempts to retell a past event. Writing shows some sequencing of events.	Writes at least 3 sentences. Identifies a place or location of event as the main topic. May include some relevant details such as: when; where; reason for going; who was there. Some evidence of time order.	Attempts both parts of the task. Produces some full sentences. Identifies a place or location of event as the main topic. May include some relevant details such as: when; where; reason for going; who was there. Some evidence of time order.
1	Handwriting (if relevant) is sometimes legible. Attempts to use punctuation	Uses a limited range of vocabulary.	Uses 1-2 sentence types. Writing shows limited control of sentence structures.	Demonstrates limited understanding of the text purpose i.e., to retell an event. No awareness of audience.	Produces some sentences. Some information may be sequenced in time order.	Produces some sentences. May or may not attempt both parts of the task. Some information may be sequenced in time order.

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Tūārere 3: Tau 7–8 (page 1 of 2)

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

Tuhituhi prompts are used to stimulate mokopuna knowledge and writing capabilities, supporting the production of coherent, meaningful, and purposeful written text. At each year, one prompt focuses on expressing cultural identity through an appropriate text purpose. At years 6–10 mokopuna respond to two prompts, each with a different text purpose and form.

RUBRIC CRITERIA

RUBRIC SCORES

	Orthography	Vocabulary	Grammar	Text purpose	Text construction 2026
6	Accurate and controlled use of punctuation throughout.	Uses varied and precise vocabulary. Descriptive words are appropriate. Includes some low frequency vocabulary.	Uses simple, compound, and complex sentences accurately. The range of sentence structures enhances the writing.	Explanations and descriptions are detailed and well developed. Instructional language is clear, purposeful, and easy to follow. Writing shows awareness of audience.	Writes 2 well-developed texts. Each text exceeds the required length. Text 1: Identifies and explains at least 3 of the following features of a local cultural story with good detail and description: the iwi or hapū it is related to; the purpose or theme; the characters; lessons or messages from the story. Text 2: Writes a full set of detailed instructions about arriving at kura. Instructions are clear, sequenced, and appropriate for a fellow student to follow. Instructions include at least 2 of the following details: time of arrival; what to do before the bell rings; what to do if arriving late; where to go on arrival at kura. Writing may include additional guidance or information.
5	Uses consistent correct sentence indication i.e., caps, full stops, question and exclamation marks.	Uses descriptive words and phrases appropriate to the topic.	Uses most grammatical constructions correctly when writing simple, compound, and complex sentences. Uses a variety of sentence structures.	Writes instructions clearly. Uses some features of instructional/ procedural language (e.g., Me, Kia, Kaua Kātahi ka, Tuatahi...) Descriptions provide added detail. Ideas /instructions are organised in a logical sequence Writing shows consideration of the audience (e.g., through appropriate vocabulary, use of pronouns, modifiers etc).	Writes 2 texts. Each text is at least 6 sentences in length. Text 1: Identifies and explains at least 3 of the following features of a local cultural story: the iwi or hapū it is related to; the purpose or theme; the characters; lessons or messages from the story. Text 2: Writes a set of instructions about arriving at kura. Instructions are clear and appropriate for a fellow student to follow. Instructions include at least 2 of the following details: time of arrival; what to do before the bell rings; what to do if arriving late; where to go on arrival at kura.
4	Consistent use of common punctuation.	Vocab choices are appropriate to text purpose, audience, context.	Uses a range of grammatical structures. Joins two or more ideas together in a sentence (compound sentences).	Uses descriptions or explanations to express themselves more fully. Extends ideas by providing descriptive detail and examples	Writes 2 texts. Each text is at least 6 sentences in length. Text 1: Identifies and explains at least 3 of the following features of a local cultural story: the iwi or hapū it is related to; the purpose or theme; the characters; lessons or messages from the story. Text 2: Writes a set of instructions about arriving at kura; instructions are clear and appropriate for a fellow student to follow; instructions include at least 2 of the following details: time of arrival, what to do before the bell rings, what to do if arriving late, where to go on arrival at kura.

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Tūārere 3: Tau 7–8 (page 2 of 2)

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

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RUBRIC SCORES

RUBRIC CRITERIA

	Orthography	Vocabulary	Grammar	Text purpose	Text construction 2026
3	Handwriting (if relevant) is clear with mostly accurate form. Uses punctuation. (caps, fullstops) and macrons/double vowels (may not always be accurate).	Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary (for the context). Vocabulary includes descriptive or instructional words appropriate to the topic.	Uses simple and some compound sentences. Joins ideas within sentences.	Writes to the topic. Describes or explains some ideas. Instructions are understandable to the reader but may lack detail.	Produces two texts. Texts may be shorter than expected. Texts show developing detail. In places, ideas are organised in logical sequence.
2	Handwriting (if relevant) is legible. Uses some correct punctuation.	Uses appropriate everyday vocabulary. Vocabulary includes some descriptive or instructional words.	Uses simple sentences accurately. Attempts to connect ideas within sentences.	Communicates some relevant information about the topic. Provides simple descriptions or instructions.	Writes 1 or 2 texts. Ideas in the texts are identifiable. Writing shows early organisation.
1	Handwriting (if relevant) is difficult to read. Some awareness of punctuation is evident.	Uses mainly familiar or high-frequency topic-related words.	Uses simple sentence structures. Ideas are mainly communicated in short phrases or incomplete sentences.	Demonstrates limited understanding of the text purpose e.g., narrative, instructional. Attempts basic description or instruction.	Writing is loosely connected to the topic. May produce one developing text.

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Tūārere 4: Tau 9–10 (page 1 of 2)

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

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RUBRIC CRITERIA

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	Orthography	Vocabulary	Grammar	Text purpose	Text construction 2026
6	Correct use of writing conventions, spelling, punctuation, compound words, capital letters, macrons/double vowels. Errors are rare and do not detract from meaning.	Vocabulary is precise, varied, and suited to purpose and audience. Maintains consistent register throughout. Uses subject-specific terminology confidently and accurately.	Uses grammatical conventions accurately. Demonstrates ability to vary sentences structures, lengths, and beginnings to enhance flow and cohesion.	Aligns writing is the specified purpose. Demonstrates strong awareness of the audience. Explanations are detailed. Persuasive argument is supported with examples and rationale.	Produces 2 fully developed texts. Each text is at least 1 well-developed paragraph. Text length meets or exceeds requirements. Text 1: Provides detailed explanation (not retelling) of the chosen text; provides and discusses information about the several details (e.g., the compose, the theme, special features, purpose, or rationale for selection of text) Text 2: Presents a well-structured argument; writes appropriately for the audience; reasons are convincing and well-explained.
5	Writing is generally accurate and follows standard written form (including punctuation, compound words, capital letters, macrons/double vowels etc.). Minor errors do not impede meaning.	Vocabulary selection maintains a similar register. Vocabulary is appropriate to audience and topic. Uses subject-specific terminology accurately.	Uses almost all grammatical conventions correctly when writing simple, compound, and complex sentences. Uses conjunctions accurately to formulate compound sentences.	Shows awareness of intended audience. Links ideas using linking words and phrases, conjunctions, or other connectives. Opinion is clear with examples. Provides rationale or examples to strengthen argument.	Produces 2 texts Each text is at least 1 paragraph, or 6 sentences in length. Text 1: Includes an explanation of a cultural text; should not be a simple repeat of recreation of the text; explanation should include some of the following details: name of the composer/writer, the theme or storyline, special features, details of when the text is used or heard, why it was composed/written, the reasons for selecting the text as the focus of the writing. Text 2: Persuasive writing; presents arguments for or against the topic; uses language appropriate to an adult audience who are parents of teenagers; provides examples or reasons to support their argument.
4	Mostly accurate use of spelling and punctuation conventions (including macron/double vowel, common punctuation, and compound words).	Uses subject-specific terminology appropriate to topic and audience.	Mostly accurate use of grammar conventions.	Writing is appropriate for the specified text purpose (content and style). Explains why they hold a particular view, providing examples where appropriate. Uses a range of sentence types, including sentence beginnings, structures and length for variety and interest.	Produces 2 texts Each text is at least 1 paragraph, or 6 sentences in length. Text 1: Includes an explanation of a cultural text; should not be a simple repeat of recreation of the text; explanation should include some of the following details: name of the composer/writer, the theme or storyline, special features, details of when the text is used or heard, why it was composed/written, the reasons for selecting the text as the focus of the writing. Text 2: Persuasive writing; presents arguments for or against the topic; uses language appropriate to an adult audience who are parents of teenagers; provides examples or reasons to support their argument.

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Tūārere 4: Tau 9–10 (page 2 of 2)

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
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	Orthography	Vocabulary	Grammar	Text purpose	Text construction 2026
3	Most common words are spelt correctly (including macron/double vowel use). Consistent use of basic punctuation. Any errors of spelling or punctuation do not cause misunderstanding.	Vocabulary is appropriate to topic and audience. Includes some topic-specific vocabulary and terms. Beginning to vary word choice for detail or clarity.	Uses some compound sentences. May attempt some more complex sentence structures. Some variety of sentence type and length evident.	Response to the task is generally appropriate with a clear explanation or opinion. Shows a growing awareness of audience and purpose. Includes some supporting details to strengthen ideas. Ideas are generally logical and may be connected.	Produces 2 texts. Texts meet the minimum length (at least 1 paragraph or 6 sentences each). Writing shows developing organisation and structure. Text 1: Explains a cultural text in a general way; includes several relevant details (e.g., theme, composer, context, reason for selection); moves beyond a simple retelling to attempts to interpret meaning. Text 2: Opinion of the topic is clear; provides one or more reasons for the opinion.
2	Spells common or familiar words correctly. Shows increasing awareness of writing conventions (e.g., capital letters, full stops, macrons/double vowels, compound words).	Uses vocabulary related to topic and task. Word choice is appropriate but may be repetitive (shows limited knowledge of alternative words or synonyms to add variety).	Writes mostly complete sentences. Simple grammar is generally accurate. May attempt compound sentences using basic conjunctions.	Shows an understanding of the task and attempts to write to the specific purpose. Expresses ideas in an understandable way. Shows some awareness of audience.	Produces 2 texts or makes a reasonable attempt at both. Writing is approximately 6 sentences per text. Ideas are beginning to be developed. Text 1: Explains a cultural text in a general way; includes some relevant details; moves beyond simple retelling of the chosen text. Text 2: States an opinion; attempts to provide a reason or to use persuasive language appropriate to the audience.
1	Shows awareness of some basic writing conventions (capital letters, full stops, macrons/double vowels).	Uses simple, familiar vocabulary related to topic. May attempt some topic-specific words.	Writes simple sentences, or partial sentences. Uses some basic grammatical structures.	Attempts to express ideas, opinions or explanations related to the topic and audience. Shows a basic or emerging understanding of the tasks.	Writing is brief. May or may not cover both topics. May include some relevant ideas. If Text 1 is attempted: identifies or describes a cultural text; includes at least 1 relevant detail. If Text 2 is attempted: expresses an opinion or viewpoint; may include a simple reason or example.

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