

Levels of Comprehension

Level	Definition	Examples
Literal	An understanding of what is explicitly stated in the text	Story: 'The Headless Giant' by Thecla Maim (2002 Senior PNG School Journal) Who is Froggie? What did Froggie and the girl do together?
Inferential	Going beyond the author's literal statements to draw inferences	Why was the girl thinking a lot after the story ended? Why did the grandmother want to tell that frightening story in the night?
Evaluative	Making some kind of judgement or interpretation of a text such as the validity of a fact or opinion	Do you think grandmother was right in telling the story in the night? Is it good to have frightening dreams?
Applied or creative	Going beyond the text:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply information to new situations • make generalisations • gain additional insights • seek out words and express new ideas • respond emotionally 	Who do you think might feel sorry for the girl in the dream?

Three-level guide

The purpose of this strategy is to encourage students to read and view texts critically, reflect on materials read and make close references to texts read in order to substantiate their interpretations of texts and develop understanding of key levels of comprehension: literal, inferential, evaluative or applied.

Three-level guide	Text	Chapter or page
The author said it.	The author meant it	The author would agree with it.
Tick the statements that say what the authors actually said. Be able to show where you found the answers in the text <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Tick the statements that you think the author meant. Prepare reasons for your answer. Use the text to help you. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Tick the statements that you think the author would agree with. Be able to give reasons for your answer. Your reasons might come from the text or other sources. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____

Compare your responses with those of your group members. Use the text to help explain why you did or did not tick each statement.

How to implement

- Identify the key concepts or objectives by asking students to read the text.
- Write about three correct and or incorrect statements for each level of comprehension. Write evaluative or applied statements first, as these are what provide direction and purpose for the guide.
- Ask students to read the text silently then complete the true or false task.
- Work in pairs or groups to compare answers.

What to observe or assess

You may observe:

- students' ability to comprehend texts at different levels,
- the level of students' critical thinking skills,
- cooperative learning skills,
- developing and supporting ideas,
- the students' level of understanding concepts,
- how students consider ideas of others.

Note-taking framework

The purpose of this strategy is to provide:

- structure to help students to extract and organise information,
- demonstrate how to develop a note-taking framework that reflects the structure of a text form.

How to implement

- Provide students with a note-taking framework appropriate for the specific text form.
- Model the transfer of information from text to the note-taking framework.
- Model the construction of topic sentences, identify key words and phrases that help develop and support main ideas.
- Once students show confidence, gradually remove framework to enable them to recognise the structure.

What to observe or assess

You may observe the following:

- level of understanding of language concepts,
- extent to which students are able to select an appropriate note making form,
- extent to which students locate, extract and organise key words and phrases,
- degree to which students are able to construct effective topic sentences,
- degree to which students are able to support and develop their ideas,
- extent to which students are able to monitor and modify their writing according to audience and purpose,
- extent to which students apply the strategy independently.

Summarising

The purpose of this strategy is to help students use language to think through ideas and concepts in a text. Students will need assistance to distinguish between main ideas and supporting details in texts, and learn how to translate these understandings without copying parts or whole of a text.

Note-taking		Summarising
Subheading	Key words and phrases	Paragraphs

How to implement

- Using prepared summary sheet, model to the whole class how to extract key words and phrases. 'Think aloud' to justify selections made. Begin with short and simple texts.
- Use opportunities that encourage peer modelling and learning through talk. Allow students to work in pairs to practise selecting key words and phrases. The emphasis should be on justifying to each other the choice of key words and phrases.
- To start off, provide a guide for students to follow subheadings but with practice, students will be able to generate their own.

What to observe or assess

Examples of the skills or understanding to observe include the extent to which students:

- understand the language concepts,
- distinguish between the main idea and supporting detail,
- justify their selection of key words and phrases,
- understand that reading is an active, meaning making activity.

Writing Strategies

Dictagloss

The purpose of this strategy is to provide students with practice in hearing and using subject-specific vocabulary.

How to implement

- Explain to students that they will need to listen to the text being read or view a visual program. They will need to focus on meaning. Explain that the text will be re-read or reviewed and they will need to write down key words and phrases.
- Read aloud or play the text at normal speed.
- Read the text aloud or replay the video, pausing at appropriate places. Students write down key words and phrases.
- Ask the students to compare notes with a partner adding or clarifying information.
- Ask the pairs to join together and share information,
- Ask students to write up their information as a group, in pairs or individually. They should read their final draft copies to the group.

What to observe or assess

You may observe:

- the extent to which students understand the subject,
- the students' ability to extract and record main ideas in the text,
- the students' ability to ask questions for clarification,
- the students' ability to write and correct in English,
- the degree to which subject specific vocabulary is used in students' writing,
- the degree to which students distinguish between main and supporting ideas.

Journal writing

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a non-threatening way to predict, explore, record, reshape, reflect, analyse and evaluate ideas.

How to implement

- Discuss with students the value and purpose of a journal. Point out that the audience for journal writing is the writer and that writing is a helpful tool for learning.
- Before or after completing a learning task, model how to write in the form of a journal. 'Think aloud' so that students can 'hear' the cognitive processes involved.
- Provide students with opportunities to read interesting models of journal writing.
- While the audience of the journal is mainly the writer, the teacher may collect and read student journals and provide written feedback in response to ideas in the journal.
- Avoid setting journal writing as punishment or routine homework.

What to observe or assess

You may observe:

- the students' ability to develop and support ideas,
- the extent to which subject specific vocabulary is used in students' writing,
- the students' ability to analyse, evaluate and apply ideas critically,
- the degree to which students know when it is useful to use a journal,
- the degree to which students apply this strategy independently to appropriate contexts.

Paragraph writing

The purpose of this strategy is to teach students how to write effective paragraphs. Students will also extend their skills and understandings about topic sentences, how to develop and support their ideas and how to make one paragraph flow to the next.

How to implement

- Provide the students with two models of a paragraph. Ask them to work in pairs or small groups to identify the different functions of sentences in both paragraphs.
- Ask individual students to call out their ideas and use a copy of the same paragraph on the board to label the functions of different sentences.
- Prompt students where they have not observed all the functions by asking, 'Can you see how the last two sentences have the same function?'
- Model how to generate ideas and organise them into a structure appropriate to the paragraph. 'Think aloud' to model how to write a paragraph.
- Provide scaffolding and ask students to write a paragraph as a group, in pairs and finally independently.

What to observe or assess

You may observe students' ability:

- to understand the subject or concepts,
- to write effective topic sentences,
- to develop and support their ideas,
- to construct concluding or linking sentences,
- to transfer their understanding to other contexts,
- to monitor and modify their writing according to the purpose.

Strategies for teaching grammar

The strategies used to teach grammar and punctuation can be divided into two groups. The first includes strategies that can be integral parts of the writing process. The second involves methods like cloze activities and exercises that are removed from the writing process. Each strategy has advantages and should be chosen according to the need.

Text innovations Rhyme and repetition and a range of sentence patterns are often read, chanted or recited aloud. The resulting intonation and expression give another dimension to students' understanding of how grammar and punctuation contribute to the text.

Students can create mix and match books that allow students to manipulate sentence patterns and become familiar with parts of speech and punctuation marks within the context of an enjoyable activity.

Daily writing Students should have the opportunity to write for 15–20 minutes of uninterrupted writing as distinct from the lengthier process of moving a piece of writing from draft to publication. Daily writing provides opportunities for students to:

- have regular practice they need in applying the conventions of writing,
- generate drafts before writing,
- test theories about writing in a safe situation.

Sentence manipulation Students often find it difficult to control the flexibility of sentences. Shared literature, individual writing and newspaper texts, all provide authentic contexts for these activities. The following can be used with a whole class, small groups or with individual students.

Sentence makers A simple handful of cards bearing words can be used in a range of activities carried out in a class or on an individual basis some of which are outlined below.

- Basic sentence making: allow students to construct sentences at will, using news session, exciting events and favourite things read to stimulate their choice of words.
- Sentence expansion: use sentence makers to expand existing sentences by inserting additional adjectives, adverbs, phrases and clauses
- Sentence reduction: use sentence makers to reduce long sentences to its simplest form by removing one word at a time. Sentences must be read each time to see if it still makes sense.
- Sentence transformation: use sentence makers to transform a sentence by taking turns to change one word at a time. A noun must be changed for a noun, a verb for a verb and so on. Decide whether nonsense will be allowed.

Matching sentence parts Copy a series of sentences from a book onto card strips. Cut them up into individual word cards, mix them up and have students make them into sense or nonsense.

Sentence completion Make a series of sentence beginnings and endings and have the students invent the missing parts.

Sentence modelling Use a familiar sentence pattern from a shared text as the basis for constructing more sentences.

Sentence comparison Rewrite the text using the students' own language and discuss the different forms and assist students to understand how word order affects meaning and how sentences may be rearranged to be more appealing.

Sentence transformation from singular to plural Discuss the changes necessary when the subject of the sentence becomes plural.

Sentence transformation: tenses Compare the construction of the same sentence in the three tenses: present, past, future.

Sentence stems Manipulate the sentence structure to enhance the meaning of the sentence.

Chain writing:

- Select a word related to a particular theme that is being developed.
- Ask the students to suggest a describing word.
- Then ask what the noun does and add the words to the list.
- Now combine the words to make sentences.
- Next list where the noun does things, and add them to the list.
- Other questions such as when and why can be asked to gather more information.

Physical sentence reconstruction The obvious extension to sentence making and chain writing is to list words and phrases on individual cards, and to use them for sentence creation and reconstruction. This is best done by making individual students responsible for one card each. The students must then rearrange themselves with the cards in an order that makes sense.

Assessment

Introduction

Assessment and reporting requires that students are able to demonstrate what they know and can do. It is integral to the learning and teaching process. It links the relationship between the experiences that promote learning and the assessment tasks that allow students to demonstrate their progress towards the learning outcomes.

Each learning outcome contains a statement of what students should know and be able to do. Assessment relates to specific set outcomes and indicators: skills, knowledge, and attitudes. The behaviours students are demonstrating indicate their progress towards the learning outcomes sought. Learning outcomes inform the assessment process and should indicate which assessment methods are appropriate in their demonstration.

Responsibility for assessment lies both with the teacher and student. Assessment is diagnostic in terms of identifying those areas where the students may be experiencing difficulties and those they have understood. As a result of this information, the teacher must revise his or her program to ensure the student is making positive progress towards the learning outcomes.

Assessment aids reporting. Teachers will use assessment to report on students' strengths and achievement of the learning outcomes as well as suggest what needs to be done to improve student performance.

What are you required to assess?

Student performances or demonstration of the Language learning outcomes are what you assess and report. Your assessment activities should be built around the three key strands of language, Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing and relate to the knowledge, skills and attitudes outlined in indicators for those outcomes being assessed.

Each assessment task may take place in one lesson or in a small part of one lesson. Other outcomes may have to be learned and demonstrated over a sequence of lessons, particularly if the skills, knowledge or attitudes sought is new and involve a number of related elements.

Assessment methods

A variety of assessment methods should be used to assess students' abilities to demonstrate the learning outcomes. Teachers can record evidence of students' demonstrations of learning outcomes using assessment methods that are manageable and easily included into classroom activities. These include:

- annotated work examples,
- observation notes and anecdotal records,
- student portfolios,
- assignments, projects and research reports,
- self and peer reflective writings,
- written responses,
- homework, work sheets and assignments.

There are different methods of assessing student achievements, some of them you are familiar with.

Assessment methods	What are they?
Annotated work examples	Student work examples with teacher's comments relating to the the student's achievement of the outcomes sought
Observation notes and anecdotal records	Ongoing teacher observations, as you move around the class, about students' learning and behaviour
Student portfolios	A collection of student's work assembled over a period of time such as examples of daily activities: working portfolios, a collection of work, self-assessment comments and other evidence of student's learning
Assignments, projects and research reports	Assessing pieces of work taken over a period of time. This often involves the collection and analysis of data and the preparation of a written report
Self and peer reflective writings	Student and peer writing that reflects on their own progress as learners
Written responses	Summative tasks based on students demonstrating set behaviours under strict time and other conditions. Most common forms are short answers and essays
Homework, worksheets and assignments	Activities set to provide students with opportunities to practise and extend their learning

Student self assessment

This is a process where students are provided with opportunities to critically and honestly assess themselves as learners. Students identify their strengths and weaknesses and adjust their learning, according to the needs identified. The method also encourages students to take charge and responsibility of their own learning.

To effectively do this, students should be informed at the beginning of any learning, what the expected or target learning outcomes are for the student to work towards. Teachers then break these outcomes into assessment criteria for each assessment task that describe specifically what the students most know and be able to do.

This method of assessment can be very specific, for selected skills or very general, for students to reflect on their own progress over a period of time.

Evidence of student achievement

Student work in progress including:

- students' rough notes,
- first drafts,
- students' plans for writing, oral presentations and reading,
- students' performances such as role plays,
- research projects progress and plans,
- major work in progress such as a summative task.

Final products of student work over time including:

- oral reports, productions,
- finished written work,
- student oral performances,
- finished research reports,
- a reading performance.

Teacher anecdotal notes from:

- observing students complete class activities,
- observing students answering questions, talking to peers and others and listening to others,
- talking to parents,
- talking to students,
- conferencing with students,
- keeping running records.

Formal assessment tasks including:

- oral reports,
- assignments,
- research projects,
- cloze passages,
- written tests,
- essays.

Recording

Recording information about student progress towards learning outcomes sought, has to provide a balance between too much detail and requiring a huge amount of teacher time and providing superficial information that does not inform the teaching program. Recording must support planning and be manageable and easily maintained. It must also provide accurate evidence drawn from a range of contexts about student learning related to the demonstrations of learning outcomes.

Teachers will use a range of recording procedures such as checklists, dated and detailed written reports, observation notes and anecdotal records. Recording student behaviour does not have to be done on a daily basis and may occur when students have completed a more substantial activity. Recording may also occur over a number of lessons after which the students were consistently demonstrating specific learning behaviour.

Teachers will have to decide what to record based on the indicators and learning outcomes sought. Using this criterion-referenced assessment, teachers expand the indicators into assessment criteria that describe what students know and can do. Teachers should not select too many behaviours to record, as they will not be able to effectively manage the task.

When planning a lesson or activity, teachers are encouraged to determine the precise skills and knowledge that students must demonstrate. This will provide teachers with specific information about what they should record. Recording information on checklists is a simple matter of ticking and dating the boxes provided. Adding comments, where and when appropriate, will provide useful information.

Written reports require more teacher input. Using the identified knowledge, skills and attitudes that may make up, the behaviours sought, teachers will qualify how often, how much and to what extent students are demonstrating achievement of the outcomes.

Reporting

Reporting is communicating clearly to students, parents, guardians, teachers and others the information gained from assessing students' learning (*National Assessment and Reporting Policy, 2003*). Its main purpose is to acknowledge and support student learning. Reporting may be formal or informal.

Teachers are required to report or feed back to parents the progress their children have made since their last report. Properly maintained and updated recording of assessment data provides a wealth of information for reporting.

Reporting should include information about the learning students have made since the last reporting cycle including areas where students have shown progress. As well, reporting should include those areas where students have yet to demonstrate the behaviours sought. This kind of reporting is an important and ongoing part of the learning and teaching process and can occur incidentally as well as in planned ways.

Teachers need to share with parents the strategies that they could be using at home to assist their child learn. For instance, a student in Grade 6 may have limited background knowledge of a particular context or may have limited knowledge of letter sounds and blends. Parents could be provided with information about a particular context and specific letter sounds and blends and be encouraged to assist their child.

Information reported to students and parents as part of the ongoing learning and teaching process may include:

- explanations of particular assessment opportunities,
- evidence about demonstration of the learning outcomes,
- judgements about achievement of particular learning outcomes,
- clarification about learning outcomes and how they could be demonstrated,
- identification of future assessment opportunities and anticipated evidence.

Information reported to students and parents at particular points of time could include:

- records of learning outcomes previously demonstrated,
- descriptions of learning outcomes students have had opportunities to demonstrate since reporting last occurred,
- statements about what students are expected to know and demonstrate,
- descriptions of contexts in which learning and assessment has occurred,
- records of learning outcomes demonstrated since reporting last occurred,
- records of learning outcomes that students are working towards,
- information that is specific to individual students, such as student self assessment.

Assessing speaking and listening

Assessing students' speaking and listening achievement will be a challenge for you because:

- activities will mainly be oral rather than written,
- it is difficult to assess many students, especially in a class of 40 to 45 students,
- it is difficult to identify what students are 'doing' when they are 'listening'.

You should keep records of students' performances in activities involving speaking and listening. These should not be the only speaking and listening activities that you should observe and assess. You should look out for other opportunities and use these to evaluate the level of speaking and listening skills in your students. Many of these opportunities will occur when teaching other subjects.

Assessment of speaking and listening activities will take place mostly through observation.

Assessing speaking

Speaking or speech making, is normally, fast-moving and changing. You need to assess it in manageable and consistent ways. One suggested way to assess speaking is through self and peer assessment.

Self and peer assessment

You should get students to assess their own and others' oral work to provide you with back-up. Students will often pick up things that you did not. At other times they will confirm your impressions. This is like putting students in the place of assessor and evaluator. It also helps students to assess their own oral performances and to see how they can improve in their own work.

Create and use an assessment criteria checklist or other structured format to help students focus on important elements of speech while assessing their own and others' oral performances. The assessment sheets should be kept and used as part of their own continuing self evaluation.

Peer assessment criteria for oral presentation

Name of speaker _____ **Date** _____

Topic _____

Purpose: _____

Did the speaker:	Yes / No	Suggestions for improvement
Select a topic of interest to you?		
Stay on the topic?		
Have a clear purpose?		
Give you enough information about the topic (e.g. tell you about who, what, when, where, why, how?)		
Give too much information on the topic or part of it?		
Organise the information clearly so that you could follow easily?		
Showed evidence of preparation and rehearsal of his or her presentation.		

Preparing for assessment opportunities

Criteria checklists and other structured formats help you as well as your students. Be sure to keep a supply of them with you for use whenever appropriate.

Using the spotlight approach

The spotlight approach is useful when trying to assess in a large class using observation. You can spotlight students especially during group work because it is impossible to assess them all at the same time. Focus on a few students each time to enable you to see enough to make formal observations about students in your anecdotal record books. Over a few lessons you can spotlight all the students in the class.

Assessing listening

Assessing listening is difficult because it is all oral. Unlike writing where students produce and show written work as evidence of learning, listening can only be assessed through observation and questioning.

You can learn about students' listening skills through observation. The outcome in the Syllabus focus on:

- the development of attentive listening skills while communicating for a range of purposes and audiences,
- the use of a range of listening strategies in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts.

Other aspects of students' listening skills may be assessed using more focussed techniques, such as analysing student's written responses or oral responses to questions related to a listening activity.

Assessing reading

Reading should be assessed through observation of reading behaviours and strategies used by students during reading activities. Observations should be made:

- during silent reading,
- while small groups are working collaboratively,
- in shared reading sessions,
- in discussion,
- from students written responses.

The active process of comprehension, before, during and after reading should be valued and any evaluation should include processes as well as product outcomes.

Assessment procedures rely heavily on your observations of students at work. The following suggestions will assist you to identify what to look for and how to record information observed.

When talking to students conduct:

- reading conferences,
- interviews.

Use students' self-assessment records in:

- reading logs,
- reading journals.

When analysing students' responses consider:

- analysis of retells,
- miscue analysis,
- cloze activities,
- analysis of readers' written or oral responses,
- analysis of word identification strategies.

Talking to students

Reading Conferences

Student-teacher conferences may be conducted on a one-to-one basis or with a small group. They provide the opportunity for teachers to assess reading understandings and skills in an informal way that gives readers a chance to explain and substantiate their answers, ask questions and discuss any problems encountered. Conferences are made more effective if some guiding questions or frameworks are established as a basis for discussion.

The following conference was used as a starting point for conferences when students were engaged in selecting and reading books from which they were gathering information for Social Science projects.

Reading Conference Framework

Teacher: Why did you choose that book?

Student: I looked at four books, but this one had the information I needed and interesting diagrams.

Teacher: Where you able to read the book easily?

Student: Some of the words were difficult, but I could work them out by reading on.

Teacher: Did the page layout help you?

Student: The book had a table of contents so that was useful. Some of the writing was grouped in different parts of the page, so that was a bit hard.

Teacher: How did the text help you with your project writing?

Student: I used the heading from the table of contents for my project. I did not copy out the words. I already had some information of my own so I fitted these under my headings.

Teacher: How did you decide on the information that you needed?

Student: That was a bit hard so I talked to my neighbour.

The student's responses indicate knowledge and understandings about conventions found in non-fiction texts and how knowledge organisation can assist comprehension. Adjust the conference framework according to the type of text being read.

Interviews

Reading interviews can assist students and teachers to focus on the reading process and strategies needed to improve understanding.

The following questions are suggested as a guide only and should be modified for different students.

- What is reading?
- What is reading for?
- Are you a reader?
- How do you choose material to read?
- What do you do before you start reading?
- What do you do if you don't know a word?
- When you read, what happens inside your head?
- How do you find answers to questions about things you have read?
- How do you find the main ideas from a text?
- What could you do to become a better reader?
- How do you feel about reading?
- Do you believe everything you read?

Using students' self assessment

When students are involved in self assessment, they are able to set goals and reflect on their achievements. They can make plans and seek assistance when it is required. The honest comments made by students can provide teachers with insights into the problems their students may face.

Reading logs: A reading log is used to provide students and teachers with information about the types of books students are reading.

Procedure: Provide pages already ruled for students to enter information. Invite students to share their entries. Use a double page of an exercise book.

Name:

Date started	Title	Date finished	Comments	Activities completed	Parents/teachers comments

Reading Journal

A reading journal provides opportunities for students to reflect on and respond to texts. It provides information about the students' thinking processes and understandings as they interact with the text.

Before asking students to start a journal, discuss the idea with them and then brainstorm to produce a range of suggestions for journal entries. Teachers must model the use of a journal. A journal could include:

- a set of personal goals for reading,
- a list of texts read,
- thoughts and feelings recorded as the student reads,
- drawings of settings and characters,
- interesting, exciting or puzzling phrases and words,
- predictions,
- suggested changes to events or characters,
- comments on events, characters and language used.

The first page could be set aside in the students' journals to record goals and comments about reading.

For example:

Date	My goals (What I want to achieve as a reader)	By when	My success (What I've learned as a reader)	Date

Personal Reading Reports

Invite students to write reports on themselves as readers. The report can be structured using questions developed by the teacher. A class brainstorm session could provide a useful list of statements or questions to guide students' responses.

When students are able to take part in evaluating their reading strategies, they can reflect on their practices and decide what works for them. They can begin to take control of their learning.

Analysis of responses

Retelling as a part of the evaluation process provides valuable information about literacy development. Before using retells for evaluation, students should have some background knowledge of texts of the same kind and or same topic.

What could be evaluated?

- students' prior knowledge,
- student behavior during reading, writing and sharing time,
- knowledge of text structure,
- knowledge of the language features of the text,
- knowledge of language conventions — punctuation, syntax, spelling,
- knowledge of ideas from the text,
- knowledge of technical language.

Retells

These can be evaluated by assessing:

Meaning

- ideas,
- clarity,
- relevance.

Organisation

- sequence,
- unity between the parts.

Conventions

- punctuation,
- spelling,
- vocabulary.

Cognitive abilities

- to infer,
- to predict,
- to analyse and evaluate.

Miscue analysis

Readers make errors as they read. They may omit words, make substitutions or add words, sometimes making corrections and sometimes not. By analysing errors, teachers can discover why these are made. The errors give clues to what the reader's reading system is trying to do. This will provide insight into the strategies readers are using or not using.

For example:

Text: The artist painted the wall with a mural.

Student 1: The artist painted the brick with a mural.

Students 2: The artist painted the ball with a mural.

Both students have made an error by a miscue. Student 1's substitution of 'brick' shows that he or she believes that when reading it is important to get words that make sense in context even if it means not using graphophonic information. Student 2 is probably using graphophonic information and has not used the meaning to help decode. Both students have used words that conform to the conventional syntactic patterns of the language.

How to use miscue analysis

Teachers select a text that is enjoyable, but slightly more difficult than usual. Students should look over the text before reading aloud. The teacher must have a copy of the text initially to record the miscues. There are many examples of recording. The following is a simple coding system suitable for use in the classroom:

Type of error	Coding
Substitution	Write word above
No attempt made	Underline
Insertion	Write word
Omission	Circle omission

Cloze analysis

Cloze activities can be designed as a teaching strategy that encourages students to use different cuing systems and as a comprehension evaluation method. If cloze is used to assess comprehension, it is necessary to analyse the words students use to complete the cloze.

In the example below, the students' responses are recorded in bold type.

"Kila quickly ran the narrow **road**. Maggie and Grace were sitting under a **tree** in the shade. They were watching a game of netball. Kila stopped **when** she reached her friends.

'**We** like the way the red team goalie gets the ball'.

'We like the umpire'.

'We like most things about the red team, but **not** when they are losing!'

The three **girls** all shrieked when the ball came flying towards them, just as they **were** rearranging a shady space for Kila under the tree. They all moved to one side and the **ball** missed hitting the girls. Grace laughed and got up. She threw the ball back to the umpire. She smiled to **herself** as she thought about how much she **would** like to be the umpire, **but** she was too short and **too** young."

Comparison

Original text	Reader's substitution
road	street
tree	seat
when	as
not	never
girls	meris
were	are
ball	ball
herself	Kila
would	—
but	—
too	too

Analysis of readers' written or oral activities

To evaluate students' writing, it is often useful to observe how students are using strategies within the context of classroom reading events before, during and after reading a text.

The following checklist has been suggested as a guide and could be used together with dated samples of work that show the use of particular strategies.

Strategies	Observed				Comment
Before reading					
• Asks questions to gain information					
• Uses background knowledge appropriately					
• Can predict what the text is about					
• Can describe how to complete activities (plan)					
During reading					
• Uses picture cues appropriately					
• Locates and underlines key words					
• Can substantiate responses:					
– Explicit (from text)					
– Implicit (from knowledge)					
• Recognises miscomprehension					
• Can self-correct					
After reading					
• Can summarise key points					
• Can substantiate:					
– Response					
– Strategies used					
• Recognises when activity is complete					

Analysis of word identification strategies

There are some basic strategies that are used by effective readers. Teachers may wish to record student's use of these strategies as various reading tasks are undertaken in the classroom.

Strategies	Observed				Comment
• Can describe how to identify words (plan)					
• Can self correct – words in isolation – words in context					
• Can give reasons for attempts at words					
• Uses the following information – inferred meaning cues (semantic) – grammatical connection cues (syntax) – graphophonic cues					
• Specific strategies relied on – context cues – focus on initial letters – focus on word parts – sounding out – blending					
• Uses a range of strategies when dealing with unfamiliar words in text					
• Predicts unknown words on basis of inferred meaning and syntactic clues					
• Confirms or rejects predictions often on basis of graph phonic clues					

Assessing writing

In order to identify the aspects of writing over which students are developing control, and those which they need help to develop, you should gather information across a range of writing activities where students are working in different contexts.

Here are some suggested writing activities in which you can engage students in order to observe and assess the level of writing skills.

Analysis of unassisted writing sample

One formal context in which this can be done is by collecting unassisted writing samples. Students' level of independence in writing and in revising can be observed over a period of time.

Process for unassisted writing sample

- Students write unassisted by teachers or peers for ten minutes. The time can be increased for older students if they still seem engaged.
- Explain to students that they should write on every second line so that they can return to the piece and revise, edit and proofread more easily.
- After writing, the students use a coloured pen to make any changes to the text without obscuring or erasing the first effort. Allow ten minutes for students to complete this process.
- While students are writing, teachers should record any writing and spelling behaviors they observe and the kinds of resources students use.
- It is recommended that three samples are taken over a three-week period.

Observation of students' writing behaviour can also be made during other subject writing times.

Text summaries

Sampling written text summaries of books students have read over time can enable you to assess the students':

- understanding of what they read,
- use of conventions,
- how the sentences are constructed into paragraphs,
- selection and focus of content.

Teacher designed writing tasks

Writing tasks can be designed to assess specific strengths and weakness in aspects of language such as:

- use of specific genres,
- components of the writing process such as revising writing,
- conventions of writing and spelling,
- dictated passages and editing and proofreading exercises.

Negotiated lists of criteria

Monitoring students' development and refinement of their own lists of writing criteria can give you information about students' perceptions of a written product and the strategies and techniques they use to construct these criteria. These lists of criteria can also be modified and used as a checklist for students' self evaluation.

Journals, diaries and drafts

Students' free choice writing in a journal or diary and draft writing book can give you a clearer idea of their independent composing skills, as well as their interests and ideas for writing.

Spelling checklists

Analysis of students' written drafts can be used to assess the range of vocabulary, use of common words and spelling strategies. These could be recorded on checklists.

Using a general criteria sheet framework

This is a general criteria sheet framework (see next page) for written and oral language activities which you can modify and use while observing developments of specific or related language skills for all the Strands: Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing.

General criteria sheet framework: written and oral language

Name of speaker: _____ **Date:** _____

Task: _____

Type of text: _____

Other information: such as teacher assistance, class time taken, worked done at home

Analysing written and spoken language

Texts

What has the student done with what kind of text?

Has the student:

- written / spoken briefly or at length
- listed related ideas
- experimented with interrelating ideas
- developed ideas, events and information
- explored different perspectives
- dealt with familiar and unfamiliar topics and ideas
- explored challenging ideas and issues
- evidence of achievement of outcome

**Contextual understanding
 Organisation**

How well has the student:

- focused on writing or speech
- ordered the ideas and information
- used a clear structure to shape and unify the text

Language and style

How well has the student:

- manipulated sentence structure
- selected appropriate vocabulary
- used language to achieve appropriate tone and style

Grammar and conventions

How well has the student used:

- spelling
- punctuation
- grammar
- body language and voice

Has the student evidence of achievement of the outcome?

What understanding about the social context has the student drawn on to construct this text?

Has the student:

- fulfilled the purpose of the task
- taken in account the needs of readers, viewers of listeners
- attempted to resist or accommodate readers' expectations
- adopted appropriate style and tone for intended audience
- evidence of achievement of outcome

Linguistic structures and features

How has the student used linguistic structures and features to construct the text?

Strategies

How did the student go about constructing the text?

How did the student plan, revise, review or proofread the text? To what extent was this a result of teacher prompting or was it independently initiated?

In writing, what kind of spelling strategies do the student's errors reveal?

Has the student evidence of achievement of the outcome?

Note: Plans, notes, drafts and observations of the student while writing and rehearsing are needed to provide evidence of this aspect of the student's achievement. This sheet is not intended to be used as a checklist but as a guide to what criteria to use when assessing students' written and oral language.

Remember there are many ways of telling if students are learning or not. Whatever method or practices you are familiar with or use, make sure that it is a simple and time-effective assessment system for checking and keeping continuous records based on:

- observations and notes,
- conferences with students,
- collecting samples of students work.

Language assessment in the classroom is not about comparing one student to another. It is about assessing the skills and knowledge students have mastered and those aspects they are having difficulties with so that more focussed guidance and attention can be given to individual students.