

**Diagnostic Writing Tool
For use with Advanced Bilingual Learners**

From

**National Strategies
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2009**

**Ensuring the Attainment of more advanced
learners of English as an Additional Language
Secondary CPD modules
Ref: 00045-2009FLR-EN**

Text Level – Key features			Evidence – well done	Evidence – not well done	No evidence
T1	Engages the reader	AF2			
T2	Text type (explanation, instruction, analysis...) and register appropriate (e.g. use of Standard English, if appropriate) to purpose	AF2			
T3	Appropriate length	AF2			
T4	Number and range of ideas	AF3			
T5	Ideas used appropriately from source text	AF3			
T6	Presentation and layout	AF3			
T7	Appropriate opening and closing	AF3			
T8	Organisation (paragraphs, by topic, appropriate sequence...)	AF3			
T9	Development of theme(s) & ideas	AF1			
T10	Relevant subject knowledge shown				
Sentence level – Key features			Evidence – well done	Evidence – not well done	No evidence
S1	Cohesion - linking ideas within and between paragraphs	AF4			
S2	Use of simple and compound sentences (e.g. using and, then, next)	AF5			
S3	Use of complex sentences (e.g. using connectives such as: when, because, or at a higher level: if...then, although, in spite of the fact that...)	AF5			
S4	Variation within sentences (e.g. change of word order, subject or length; use of phrases, clauses & connectives)	AF5			
S5	Accurate use of prepositions, especially with verbs (e.g. goes to, stay at, get over, get through...)	AF6			
S6	Accurate use of collocation (words that occur together in set phrases, such as high probability, perform an operation, audible range, cliff face, tectonic plate)	AF6			
S7	Accurate use of idiom (set expressions such as jump to the wrong conclusion, window of opportunity, the last straw)	AF6			
S8	Tenses used accurately (e.g. irregular past tenses such as buy/bought, shake/shook)	AF6			
S9	More complex tense forms used accurately (e.g. past perfect – they had sent a message before they left)	AF6			
S10	Nominalisation used appropriately, e.g. Macbeth is a play about betrayal , witchcraft and justice .	AF2 AF5			

Sentence level – Key features			Evidence – well done	Evidence – not well done	No evidence
S11	Passive voice used accurately and appropriately (e.g. I heated the liquid in the beaker (active) / The liquid was heated in the beaker (passive))	AF2A F6			
S12	Accurate use of modal verbs (e.g. would, can, could, should, must, must have, ought)	AF6			
S13	Accurate use of comparatives (more/less + adjective, adjective + –er ending) and superlatives (most/least + adjective, adjective + –est ending)	AF6			
S14	Articles (a, an, the) used accurately	AF6			
S15	Pronouns (it, this, they...) used so that it is clear what the pronoun refers to	AF6			
S16	Agreements used accurately (e.g. subject/verb - I take, it takes)	AF6			
S17	Accurate use of plural form (e.g. sources, children, women)	AF6			
S18	Accurate punctuation: full stops/capital letters	AF6			
	commas to separate phrases/clauses				
	direct speech				
	questions/exclamations				
	more complex, such as colons & semi-colons				
Word level – key features			Evidence – well done	Evidence – not well done	No evidence
W1	Wide choice of vocabulary	AF7			
W2	Accurate use of vocabulary – specialist, technical, concrete and abstract	AF7			
W3a	Delexical verbs (e.g. make, do, get, put) used appropriately, but not overused (e.g. She put out the fire)	AF7			
W3b	Ambitious use of a variety of verbs (e.g. She extinguished the fire), not always apt	AF7			
W4	Spelling generally accurate	AF8			

The Diagnostic Writing Tool -Glossary

Handout 2

Text level:

Text type: the kind of writing appropriate for the subject matter - explanation, analysis, discursive, narrative, report, information text...

Register: this describes the relative formality of the language and will depend upon audience and purpose. In a story about teenagers or a tabloid news article, a very informal register is appropriate. However, for many forms of examination writing, formal or Standard English would be expected.

Organisation: this will depend upon the text type or form. A discursive essay should be set out in paragraphs with an introduction and a conclusion. An information text would usually be set out in chronological or thematic order. An analytical text would often have ideas organised in order of importance.

Sentence level:

Simple sentence: Simple sentences have only one clause, e.g. I made a cup of tea.

Compound sentence: contains two or more main clauses and is linked by a connective such as or, but, nor, for, so, yet or and e.g. I made a cup of tea and I sat down. In this sentence neither clause depends on the other and either could stand alone.

Complex sentence: contains one main clause and one or more dependent clause linked by a connective such as after, although, because, as, when, where, until... In a complex sentence one idea is more important than the others – I made a cup of tea is the main action whereas because I was thirsty gives you the reason for the main action. However, shifting the position of the dependent clause gives a different emphasis: e.g. Because I was thirsty, I made a cup of tea.

Phrase: a group of words without a subject or main verb e.g. in the kitchen or using Earl Grey teabags in the sentence: I made a cup of tea in the kitchen, using Earl Grey teabags.

Clause: a group of words containing a subject and a main verb, e.g. I made a cup of tea or I brewed up. A sentence must have one or more clauses.

Connectives: these link clauses and show the relationship between them, e.g. and, because, therefore, and also, hence, although, until...

Preposition: these normally go before a noun or a phrase to show where, when, how or why: e.g. in, on, under, between - I made a cup of tea during the advert break

Phrasal verb: these are verbs with a second part, often a preposition e.g. go to, stay at, get over, get through, drop off. They cause particular difficulties for bilingual learners because the meanings can often bear no relation to the meaning of the preposition, or the verb can have more than one meaning: I dropped the parcel off at the office (meaning: stop and give); while he was driving, he dropped off and had an accident (meaning: fall asleep); He started the race well, but his speed gradually dropped off (meaning: decline)

Collocation: words that occur together in set phrases, such as high probability, perform an operation, crystal clear. Collocations are unusual in that you cannot substitute similar words as you can in other phrases; you can say she was red in the face (embarrassed) or she was blue in the face (angry), but not yellow in the face

Idiom: set expressions such as she jumped to the wrong conclusion, he dragged his feet, she kicked the bucket, where the meaning of the expression cannot necessarily be deduced from the literal meaning of each word.

Nominalisation: when a verb is nominalised it becomes a concept rather than an action and as a consequence the tone of writing will become more abstract and more formal. Compare 'Because only a few people have most of the money and power in this country, I conclude that it is not an equal society' with 'The inequitable distribution of wealth is yet another indicator of lack of equality'.

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¹ Adapted from 'Nominalisation', <http://unilearning.uow.edu.au/academic/3b.html>

Sentence level:

Passive: this is used where you do not or cannot stress who or what carried out an action, so the object of the action comes first: e.g. the boiling tube was filled by the gas from the reaction; hundreds were injured in the attack. The Passive uses the verb 'to be' (is, was, were, are, etc) and will often include the word 'by' to indicate who or what carried out the action. Using the passive removes the person (I, me) and enables the writer to deal with abstraction and generalisations.

Modal verbs: The meaning of these verbs is usually connected with doubt, certainty, possibility, probability, obligation or permission: can, could, shall, should, will, would, ought to, may, might, must. These are also difficult for bilingual learners and potentially a problem as they help to convey the strength of a request, e.g. the difference between 'You must clean that table' and 'Would you clean that table?'

Degrees of comparison:

In general, the rule is that you use -er or -est where the adjective is one syllable long: 'Ali is bright, but Farida is brighter'. More or most are used when the adjective is three syllables or longer: 'He is the most intelligent child I have met'.

Comparative: more / -er, e.g. Lemon is more acidic than ... / This is the weaker solution

Superlative: most / -est, e.g. ... is the most alkaline solution / Acid is the strongest ...

Articles: definite article = the; indefinite article = a, an, some, any. Particular issues here include not using an article at all, using a instead of the and vice-versa, not remembering that any replaces some after a negative: 'I want some coffee' 'I don't want any coffee'.

Articles come in the category of determiners, which also includes words such as: which, this, that, these, those

Pronouns: e.g. it, he, she, they, them. In the following sentence, it is not clear who 'he' refers to in the second sentence, e.g. 'Kuldip met Ajay as he was walking along the road. He was tall, with a gold stud in his ear.' Another common issue for bilingual learners is repeating the noun rather than using a pronoun.

Topic sentence: a sentence which introduces what the paragraph will be about.

Word level:

Specialist vocabulary: vocabulary with a specific meaning in a subject e.g. cell has a particular meaning in Science, but a different meaning in everyday language (e.g. prison cell)

Technical vocabulary: vocabulary specific to a subject, e.g. DNA, tectonic plate

Delexical verbs: verbs that can be used in many situations – examiners, especially in English, look for more precise meanings. Examples: make, do, get, put, have. Consider: We did the experiment / We carried out the experiment and She got a new computer/ She received new computer

Diagnostic writing tool process

Handout 3

DIAGNOSTIC WRITING TOOL (APP)

ASSESSING PUPILS' PROGRESS

Collect one or more pieces of extended writing (min. 100 words), completed as part of the normal teaching process.



Consider the text, sentence and word level key features on the DWT. Look through the pupil's writing and identify whether there is evidence for each key feature.



On the pupil's writing sample, highlight the evidence and annotate using the appropriate text (T), sentence (S) and word (W) level code from the DWT, e.g. T7 *where the pupil has used an appropriate opening and closing.*

On the DWT, tick 'Evidence - well done', 'Evidence - not well done' as you identify evidence; if there is no evidence for any particular key feature, tick 'No evidence'.



Consider the purpose and context for the pupil's writing, identifying **three strengths** and **three areas for development**. Ensure that at least two of the three areas for development are features at text or sentence level. These will form the basis of the pupil's literacy targets.

Collect one or more pieces of extended writing (min. 100 words), completed as part of the normal teaching process.



On the APP grid, consider which set of level descriptors will be your starting point (Level 3/4, L4/5, L5/6 or L6/7).



Consider the assessment criteria in each column respectively then look through the pupil's writing. Highlight on the APP grid the assessment criteria for which you find evidence in the pupil's writing. At this point, refer to the Diagnostic Writing Tool for key features of writing that present particular difficulties for EAL learners.



Annotate the pupil's writing to show **evidence** of highlighted criteria. Annotations may be written in this way:

AF6, L4, b1

[AF6 (technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation), L4 (refers to level 4 criteria), b1 (bullet point one: sentences demarcated accurately throughout the text, including question marks)]



Consider the purpose and context for the pupil's writing, identifying **five strengths** and **three areas for development**. Ensure that at least two of the three areas for development are features at text or sentence level. These will form the basis of the pupil's curricular targets.