NAPLAN tests general information – Parent Information

The National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests were first implemented in May 2008 when national tests were held in literacy and numeracy for all students in Australia in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. These tests replaced the previous State and Territory-based assessments (in Years 3, 5 & 7) and have the support of all Education Ministers.

The Curriculum Corporation was appointed to project manage the tests for 2008 and 2009. It is responsible for monitoring and reporting progress of the project and for the development of:

- individual items and tests
- agreed marking standards
- quality control standards and risk management.

Although the Curriculum Corporation manages the national tests, the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) coordinates the administration, marking, and reporting of the assessments for all Queensland schools.

Purpose of the tests

The NAPLAN tests are designed to assess the skills of Australian students in literacy and numeracy. The specific purposes are:

- to collect data from the population of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students for reporting to parents/carers and schools for systematic reporting
- comparing students’ achievements on the tests against national minimum standards.

What is tested?

A series of tests assess some aspects of literacy and numeracy.

The following areas of literacy are assessed:
• Language conventions - spelling, grammar and punctuation
• Writing - knowledge and control of written language
• Reading - comprehension.

In **numeracy**, the content areas assessed are:

- Number
- Measurement, chance and data
- Space
- Algebra, function and pattern (formal algebra for Year 9 only).

Following NAPLAN tests, schools and students receive statements of performance in relation to the national minimum standards.

NAPLAN information about achievements of students in years 3, 5, 7, and 9 in some aspects of the curriculum supplements the richer and more continuous school-derived learning-data about learners in all year levels and for all aspects of the curriculum that are the focus of our schools’ regular twice-yearly reports.

**Format of the tests**

NAPLAN 2009 will be conducted from Tuesday, 12 to Thursday, 14 May. Friday, 15 May is a ‘make-up’ day for students who miss any of the tests earlier in the week.

For **Years 3 and 5** there will be 4 tests: Language conventions, Writing, Reading and Numeracy.

For **Years 7 and 9** there will be 5 tests: Language conventions, Writing, Reading, Numeracy-non-calculator and Numeracy-calculator allowed.

For the Writing test, students will be given a stimulus and asked to write a response to the task in a maximum of three pages. Students will be required to write a story/narrative.

The response formats for questions on all other test papers will be either multiple choice - shade a bubble to indicate the answer - or constructed response - write the answer in a box or on a line.

**Eligibility to sit the tests**

All eligible students in Years 3, 5, 7 or Year 9 enrolled at State, Catholic or Independent schools must sit the tests unless they are exempt or withdrawn by parents/carers.

**Preparation for the tests**

The NAPLAN tests, except for Writing, are scored by computers. They are therefore of a type and style that is different from the wider variety of assessing techniques that are more normally used in our schools’ continuous assessing and reporting programs.
NAPLAN tests can not replicate the richer aspects of such things as ongoing folios of student work, performances, and production of artefacts that contribute to the more contextualised assessing judgments about learners’ progress along the learning continua that are the current focus of curriculum planning in our community of schools.

Schools have helped prepare their students for NAPLAN tests in a variety of ways. Practising multiple choice ‘pen and paper’ tests conducted within a specific time-frame is one way of helping students be ‘test-wise’. Because some multi-age classes have to be restructured for the NAPLAN tests and some classrooms rearranged so that students are sitting independently of each other, some schools ‘practice’ NAPLAN under different classroom conditions. Helping students to be relaxed about NAPLAN’s different testing environment is important.

The QSA website has a series of Test Preparation Materials that have a NAPLAN ‘look and feel’ about them that schools have used to help students become familiar with the NAPLAN ‘test genre’.

Our schools have analysed their NAPLAN 2008 results to identify any curriculum areas that might need additional attention. Our Senior Education Officer – Student Learning Data provides assistance to schools in their analysis of results and our Curriculum personnel assist with enhancing school curriculum planning and professional development of teachers.

The content of NAPLAN tests is meant to be representative of the National Statements of Learning. It is noted that currently, different states and territories have different curriculum frameworks that attend to the National Statements of Learning in different ways. Until there is a national curriculum, a single national test like NAPLAN will have test items not specifically related to some parts of the current Queensland curriculum. Like NAPLAN 2008, it is expected that there will be some test items in NAPLAN 2009 that are not directly related to the content of the current Queensland curriculum.

We contend that the best ‘content’ preparation for NAPLAN 2009 continues to be quality teaching and the enactment of a comprehensive school curriculum, based on current Queensland syllabuses.

More information

Information about the tests for parents and schools is available on the NAPLAN website: <www.naplan.edu.au>

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