Stage 6 Continuers – answering listening and reading questions



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# Context

This document provides generic advice only. It is the responsibility of individual teachers to ensure their students are adequately prepared for the HSC examinations.

The advice is current as at 19 May 2022.

Where you see [language], replace this with the language you are studying, for example French or Japanese.

# Disclaimer

This advice has been developed for the following courses only:

* Arabic Continuers
* Chinese Continuers
* French Continuers
* German Continuers
* Indonesian Continuers
* Italian Continuers
* Japanese Continuers
* Korean Continuers
* Modern Greek Continuers
* Spanish Continuers.

# Introduction

This document explores a range of question keywords used in Stage 6 [Language] Continuers courses, a range of questions that address outcomes 3.1-3.6. and a range of sample answers to demonstrate ways to effectively answer these questions.

After reading this document, you and your students should be able to:

* understand the differences between the question key words used in a Stage 6 [Language] Continuers course
* apply the PEEL strategy to write comprehensive answers that appropriately address the question keyword
* understand the different requirements for each of the outcomes (3.1-3.6) when answering questions
* know where to find more resources from the Department of Education and NESA.

In Stage 6 [Language] Continuers courses, students are required to answer different types of listening and reading questions, depending on the outcome(s) being assessed. Each outcome can be addressed with a range of question types, and different comprehension skills are required to answer questions effectively.

The outcomes assessed in Stage 6 [Languages] Continuers courses are:

* 3.1 conveys the gist of texts and identifies specific information
* 3.2 summarises the main ideas
* 3.3 identifies the tone, purpose, context and audience
* 3.4 draws conclusions from or justifies an opinion
* 3.5 interprets, analyses and evaluates information
* 3.6 infers point of view, attitudes or emotions from language and context.

NESA's [glossary of key words](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/hsc/hsc-student-guide/glossary-keywords) contains key words that appear frequently in NESA syllabuses, performance descriptions and examinations.

The words applicable to the skills required to answer listening and reading questions in Stage 6 [Language] Continuers courses are:

* **describe –** provide characteristics and features
* **summarise –** express relevant details concisely
* **identify –** recognise and name
* **outline –** sketch in general terms; indicate the main features of
* **recount – r**etell a series of events
* **analyse** **–** identify components and the relationship between them; draw out and relate implications
* **assess** **–** make a judgement of value, quality, outcomes, results or size
* **compare** **–** show how things are similar or different
* **discuss** **–** identify issues and provide points for and/or against
* **evaluate** **–** make a judgement based on criteria; determine the value of
* **examine** **–** inquire into
* **explain** **–** relate cause and effect; make the relationships between things evident; provide why and/or how
* **interpret** **–** draw meaning from
* **justify** **–** support an argument or conclusion
* **predict** **–** suggest what may happen based on available information.

Other relevant words:

* **infer** **–** derive by reasoning, conclude or judge from evidence
* **account for** **–** give an explanation of

# Answering questions assessing outcomes 3.1, 3.2

Outcomes 3.1 and 3.2 require students to demonstrate a literal understanding of the text. This may require a range of comprehension skills, such as **describe, summarise, identify**, **outline** and **recount**. Questions can be expressed in different ways to elicit this understanding from students.

Some examples of the comprehension skills required to answer these types of questions and sample questions are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Outcome | Comprehension skills | Sample questions |
| 3.1 conveys the gist of texts and identifies specific information | describe  identify  outline  recount | What does Peter tell Sally about tomorrow’s excursion?  What is the woman wearing?  What will the students do on the excursion?  What happened at the summer camp?  Who will attend the meeting?  Which tour option did Jenny choose?  Where will the girls go after their HSC?  Fill in the table with the correct information.  Put these sentences in the correct order. |
| 3.2 summarises the main ideas | summarise | Summarise the roles of Nick’s parents in the family.  Summarise Gabriel’s feelings about returning from homestay.  What is the main idea expressed in the first paragraph? |

## Example of a question assessing outcome 3.1

Below is a sample listening text. The text is provided in English but would be in [language] for this activity.

**Question**: What does Peter tell Sally about tomorrow’s excursion? (3 marks)

**Text**: *Hi Sally, it’s Peter. Are you okay? You were away from school today, so I want to give you the details of tomorrow’s science excursion. Please get to school before 7:30 because the bus will leave school at 7:45. You can bring your lunch, but we are also able to buy it in the city. Don’t forget to bring water and wear comfortable shoes.*

**Comprehension skills**: identify and describe

**Sample response**: Sally needs to arrive by 7:30. She can bring her own lunch or buy it in the city. She needs to bring water and comfortable shoes.

## Example of a question assessing outcomes 3.2

Outcome 3.2 assesses students’ ability to **summarise**. It is important, and not often well understood by students, that summarise does not mean translate. **Summarise** means to concisely express the main points.

Below is a sample listening text. The text is provided in English but would be in [language] for this activity.

**Question**: Summarise the roles of Nick’s parents in the family. (4 marks)

**Text**: *Hello everyone. My name is Nick. I have 4 people in my family. There are my parents, my older sister and me. We also have a cat. My mum is a doctor and she doesn’t have much time to do housework. However, she gets up at 6 am and makes our lunches. My dad is a cleaner and he starts work at 5 pm. He looks after everybody in my family. He does the housework, takes us to school, does the cooking and the gardening. He enjoys cooking and spending time at home. My mum doesn’t like cooking, but she often helps us with our homework.*

**Comprehension skill**: summarise

**Sample response**: Nick's mother doesn’t have much time as she works as a doctor, although she gets up early to make the lunches and helps with homework. Nick's father does most of the jobs relating to the family because he works at night. His jobs include housework, gardening and cooking, which he enjoys.

# Answering questions assessing outcomes 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6

Outcomes 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 require students to infer information from the text and may be worth more marks (3-6 marks) than questions addressing outcomes 3.1 and 3.2. The answers are from the text but also require students to use higher order thinking skills to respond. To answer these types of questions, students must demonstrate an ability to **analyse, assess, compare, discuss, evaluate, examine, explain, interpret, justify**, **predict, infer and account for**.

To answer some of these more challenging types of questions, it can be helpful to teach students the **PEEL writing approach**:

* **Point** – make your point
* **Evidence** – bring in evidence and examples from the text
* **Explain** – show your understanding by explaining your point
* **Link** – link back to the question being asked (if needed).

Some examples of the comprehension skills required to answer these types of questions and sample questions are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Outcome | Comprehension skills | Sample questions |
| 3.3 identifies the tone, purpose, context and audience | identify  infer | What is the tone of Kate’s text message?  What is the purpose of this text?  Where would you hear this announcement?  Where is this conversation taking place?  Who is the speaker addressing in this announcement?  Where might you read this text?  How did the man’s tone change throughout the conversation? |
| 3.4 draws conclusions from or justifies an opinion | assess  compare  discuss  evaluate  examine  explain  justify  predict  account for | Compare Gina’s and Martin’s future plans.  How likely is it that the couple will move?  Is John likely to accept the job?  How likely is Taka to go to Japan next year?  Discuss the relationship between the sisters.  To what extent does Luca’s mother support his decision to do a gap year? |
| 3.5 interprets, analyses and evaluates information | analyse  assess  compare  discuss  evaluate  examine  explain  interpret  justify  account for | What does this diary reveal about Pierre’s personality?  Explain Olivia’s decision.  How effective is the man’s speech?  How would you describe the relationship between the speakers?  Evaluate the student’s decision.  Evaluate Hiro’s choice.  Why does Helga decide not to go on exchange?  Evaluate both speakers’ arguments.  Explain why Anna has chosen this tour.  Analyse and evaluate the personality of the boy’s father.  Why is the male speaker opposed to the new development? |
| 3.6 infers points of view, attitudes or emotions from language and context | analyse  assess  compare  discuss  evaluate  examine  explain  justify  predict  infer  account for | Discuss the language used by James in his posts in the forum.  Compare Kate and Jack’s views on what is a healthy lifestyle.  Assess Emily’s suitability for the job.  Explain how this advertisement seeks to appeal to its target audience.  Do you think that Tom will work at a pet shop again? Justify your answer with reference to the text.  How did the man’s tone change during the conversation?  How does Sasha feel about the future?  How do Gina’s feelings about her friend’s comments change during the conversation?  How does the speaker try and engage the audience when promoting the new facility? Support your answer with reference to language and content. |

## Examples of questions assessing outcome 3.3

Below are sample listening texts. The texts are provided in English but would be in [language] for this activity.

### Example 1

**Question**: What is the tone of Kate’s text message? (3 marks)

**Text**: *Hi Ben. Can you please help me? Do you know a good maths tutor? My final HSC maths exam is next week and I really need to pass maths. If I don’t pass maths I can’t get into the course I want at university and I will be in trouble. Let me know as soon as possible. From Kate*

**Comprehension skills**: identify and infer

**Sample response**: The tone of Kate’s message is desperate **(point)**. She uses words like ‘help me’, ‘I really need to pass’ and ‘I’ll be in trouble’ (**evidence**) to express how important it is (**explain**) that she finds a maths tutor (**link**).

### Example 2

**Question**: Who is this speaker addressing in this announcement? (1 mark)

* 1. students
  2. parents
  3. teachers
  4. school prefects

**Text**: *Good morning, everyone. Today is the election of school captain and prefects. On the form, please choose 5 students you think are suitable. Please consider their participation in school activities, relationships with other students, behaviour, and leadership qualities. Academic performance is not relevant to this selection.*

**Comprehension skills**: identify and infer

**Response**: c) Teachers

## Examples of questions assessing outcome 3.4

Below are sample listening texts. The texts are provided in English, but would be in [language] for this activity.

### Example 1

**Question**: Compare Gina’s and Martin’s future plans. (5 marks)

**Text**:

*F: Martin, will you go to uni?*

*M: I don’t really like studying so I don’t think I will. How about you, Gina?*

*F: Yes, I’m going. I am going to study economics and after I graduate, work at a bank. I will get paid well and I can maybe work overseas.*

*M: Wow, you’ve really thought about it. I haven’t thought so much about the future.*

*F: What kind of job would you like to do?*

*M: I would like a job where I can contribute to others. My mum and I cook every weekend for homeless people and then volunteer to serve the food on Sunday afternoon. I would like to do a job like that. It is kind of difficult but it makes people happy and I think that is rewarding.*

*F: But the pay in that kind of job is low.*

*M: It is more important to me to be in a job to help others than earn lots of money.*

**Comprehension skills**: analyse and compare

**Sample response**: Gina and Martin are similar in that they both have plans for the future according to their skills and values, but they have very different ideas for the future (**point**). Gina will study economics at university so she can become a banker. As well as good pay, it will give her the opportunity to work overseas (**evidence**). This shows that Gina has definite plans, is ambitious and wants a job that pays well (**explain**). Martin gives the example of how rewarding the work he does with the homeless is to him (**evidence**). Martin says he has not thought much about the future yet, so is not as ambitious as Gina but wants a job where he can contribute to people, even if it is hard and the pay is low (**explain**). Gina is more ambitious and values money for her future, whereas Martin is not as ambitious and values the personal rather than financial reward (**link**).

### Example 2

**Question**: How likely is it that the couple will move? (4 marks)

**Text**:

*F: Our apartment is so small. When the baby gets bigger, there is nowhere for her to play.*

*M: Yes, when I was a child I lived in the country and after school every day I went straight to the river with my friends and went fishing. Or we went for long rides on our bikes. It was so much fun and so good for me.*

*F: For me growing up in the city wasn’t as fun. I came home every day and spent a lot of time inside watching TV or playing games.*

*M: I think it will be better for our child to grow up in the country. We could move, but what about my job? It will be too far to commute to the city and finding a new job in a small town will be hard.*

*F: What about you ask your boss if you can work from home? Rent will be cheaper. Maybe we can buy a house with a garden. It will be such a healthy lifestyle for all of us.*

**Comprehension skills**: evaluate and predict

**Sample response**: It is likely the couple will move (**point**). They are living in an apartment now, which means their child will have no space to play. The man grew up in the country and loved being able to go fishing and cycling and it was good for him. The woman didn’t have as much fun growing up in the city, being mostly inside (**evidence**). They both think it will be good to move to the country as it will be good for their child and their lifestyle, rent will be cheaper, and they may be able to buy a house. It will depend, however, on the man being allowed to work from home as he needs to ask his boss (**explain and link**).

## Examples of questions assessing outcome 3.5

Below are sample listening texts. The texts are provided in English but would be in [language] for this activity.

### Example 1

**Question**: What does the diary reveal about Pierre? (5 marks)

**Text**: Diary entry

*20 February 2022*

*Today I went with our exchange student Pierre to the Sydney Festival. He is returning home next week so I thought it would be a great thing to do together before he leaves and a perfect way for him to see Sydney. Unfortunately, it wasn’t much fun for me. We went to an exhibition at the art gallery, but it was really crowded and you couldn’t even walk around. But Pierre said ‘It’s okay, I don’t mind crowds’. I tripped over someone and ripped my pants! Then when we left the gallery, it suddenly started to rain so the parade that was planned was cancelled. Pierre said ‘Don’t worry I am sure I will have another chance to visit Sydney one day’.*

*We then tried to go to a café to eat but we couldn’t get a table anywhere. On the way home on the train, he said ‘My English is so much better than before, but I want to become an interpreter, so I have to study more so that I can say anything in English’. The person sitting next to us on the train was smoking. He turned to them and said, ‘Excuse me, you aren’t allowed to smoke on the train’. I think Pierre can already express himself very well in English.*

**Comprehension skills**: analyse and interpret

**Sample response**: Pierre is a positive person (**point**). Even when things go wrong, such as the gallery being crowded or the parade being cancelled, he says he doesn’t mind crowds, and he will come to Sydney again (**evidence**), showing he is able to look on the bright side (**explain**). Pierre is also confident (**point**). He tells a person on the train that they shouldn’t smoke (**evidence**), reflecting that even though English is not his native language, he is able to express his opinion (**explain**). Pierre is capable at English (**point**). He says he wants to be better at English but is able to tell people exactly his point in perfect English (**evidence, explain**).

### Example 2

**Question:** Explain Olivia’s decision. (5 marks)

**Text:**

***M: Olivia, what will you study next year?***

***F: Veterinary science, of course. I have had an interest in it since I was a child.***

***M: Which university? If you go to my university, we can travel together in my car every day.***

***F: That would have been good, but your university doesn’t offer veterinary science.***

***M: But the university that does is far and you won’t be able to live at home.***

***F: Yes, but it is important to me to study veterinary science so I will look for an apartment near campus.***

***M: Wow. That will be expensive and your parents will have to pay for it.***

***F: No, they won’t. I have some money saved and will get a part-time job.***

***M: Wow, studying and working means you will have no free time.***

***F: Yes, but hopefully I can get a job in a vet clinic, so that will be so much fun.***

**Comprehension skill: explain**

**Sample response: Olivia will go to university to study veterinary science because she has wanted to do that since she was a child (point). Her friend tries to dissuade her by pointing out that the university she will go to will be far away, so she can’t easily go together with him, and she will have to rent an apartment which will cost money. This means she will have to live away from home (evidence). She explains that she will rent an apartment which will cost money and although that means she won’t have free time, she is happy to do so as she can hopefully get a job in a vet clinic which she will enjoy. She also does not want her parents to pay for her rent (explain). Although there are some things that make it challenging to study veterinary science, Olivia displays independence and determination to pursue what she wants to do (link).**

## Examples of questions assessing outcome 3.6

### Example 1

When analysing language in texts, there are often specific factors to consider for different languages. For example:

* in Japanese, there is a different form of the verb used when expressing oneself colloquially than when expressing oneself politely
* in some languages, there are different personal pronouns used for ‘you’ depending on whether you are expressing yourself colloquially or politely
* in Arabic, emotions and attitudes are usually expressed through the use of figurative language, such as metaphors, personification, rhetorical questions, repetitions and sarcasm.

Below is an extract from a sample reading text. The text is provided in English but would be in Japanese for this activity.

**Question**: Discuss the language used by James in forum posts. (4 marks)

**Text**: Extract from a forum:

**James’ first comment**: *Hannah, I am also from Sydney. This is my second time in Japan and I am one year older than you, in 2nd year senior high. Therefore, I am your senpai\*. Last year I had the opportunity to participate in the school’s Culture Festival. It was fun so you should definitely go to it.*

\*Japanese term for one older/more experienced

(This comment is written using the ‘plain’ form of Japanese, rather than the polite form).

**James’ second comment**: *Miki, because you are thinking of going to Australia next year after you graduate, you have to go to the Culture Festival. I think you will enjoy it. The event has an ‘Australian corner’ at the festival. If you go, you can learn lots of information about Australia.*

(This is written using the ‘polite’ form of Japanese, rather than the plain form).

**Comprehension skills**: examine and discuss

**Sample response**: James uses plain form in the first post to Hannah (**point**) because he is older than her and has more experience in Japan, so is her ‘senpai’ (**evidence, explain**). However, Jack uses polite/formal language with Miki (**point**). She is obviously in 3rd year senior high, and he does not know her (**evidence, explain**). For both posts, he uses modality language such as, ‘you should definitely go’, ‘you have to go’ and ‘if you go, you can learn lots’ (**point, evidence**) to encourage them to go to the festival (**explain**).

### Example 2

Below is an extract from a sample reading text. The text is provided in English but would be in [language] for this activity.

**Question**: Compare Kate and Jack’s views on what is a healthy lifestyle.

**Text:**

*M: Kate, what are you doing for your health and fitness at the moment?*

*F: I get up at 6:30 am. I don't eat breakfast and I go straight to the gym to train. I do weights and fitness training.*

*M: Every day before school? Wow!*

*F: Yes, every day, and on top of that, I swim 1 km three times a week at the pool near school.*

*M: Do you watch what you eat?*

*F: No Jack. I eat and drink whatever I like really. I eat lots of junk food. What about you? What’s your fitness routine?*

*M: I walk to school for exercise but that's about it, but I try to eat healthily.*

*F: Is that all you do for exercise? That’s not much.*

*M: Other things are more important to me than exercise. I go to sleep early, so I don't do things like check social media and study until late at night like you. You go to sleep too late. I get up early and I have a proper breakfast.*

**Comprehension skills**: compare, explain

**Sample response**: Kate values exercise for having a healthy lifestyle, but doesn’t value diet and sleep as much (**point**). She says that she goes to the gym every day, swims 3 times per week but doesn’t eat healthily and stays up late (**evidence, explain**). In contrast, Jack doesn’t value exercise as much but values a good sleep routine and a good diet for a healthy lifestyle (**point**). He makes sure he doesn’t stay up late checking social media and studying and has a healthy breakfast (**evidence, explain**). They both do things to maintain a healthy lifestyle but differ about what is important to them (**link**).

# Marking guidelines

* Marking guidelines allow students to understand how the teacher will award marks to their response.
* They provide validity and reliability for the question and ensure it relates to the relevant NESA syllabus outcome.
* The sample answer is where the teacher provides the specific detail with regard to the response as it relates to the marking guidelines, which are expressed in more general terms.
* It is important that the sample answer relates to the number of marks allocated to the question.

Here are sample marking guidelines for [example 2](#_Example_2_1) from the questions assessing outcome 3.6 above:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Criteria | Mark |
| Provides a perceptive and comprehensive comparison of Jack and Kate’s view of what a healthy lifestyle is | 5 |
| Provides a comprehensive comparison of Jack and Kate’s view of what a healthy lifestyle is | 4 |
| Provides a sound comparison of Jack and Kate’s view of what a healthy lifestyle is | 3 |
| Provides some comparison of Jack and Kate’s view of what a healthy lifestyle is | 2 |
| Provides some relevant information | 1 |

# Resources

## NESA

[Stage 6 Languages Continuers courses](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/stage-6-languages/continuers) section of the website contains resources useful when considering listening and reading questions for Stage 6. On this page, you will find links to each of the Stage 6 [Languages] Continuers courses. For each [language], you will find the syllabus, assessment and examination materials and other support materials, including:

* Standards materials
* Assessment and reporting advice
* Year 11-12 assessment advice
* Sample formal assessment tasks.

The [HSC exam papers](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/resources/hsc-exam-papers) section has past HSC examination packs for each Stage 6 [Language], including the exam papers, listening audio files and transcripts, marking guidelines and HSC marking feedback.

## NSW Department of Education

The [Languages – Stage 6](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/languages/s6) section of the department’s website includes links to resources and information for 11 Continuers courses, including sample listening and reading tasks.

The [Stage 6 school-based assessment in languages eCourse](https://myplsso.education.nsw.gov.au/q/AC00014) is a self-paced course that will assist you to implement a range of assessment strategies with your Stage 6 students.