



NEMINGHA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Community • Opportunity • Excellence

REPORT WRITING GUIDELINES

UPDATED 06.04.22

***A guide to writing academic reports at
Nemingha Public School***

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Assessment and Comments

Comments

- Keep language simple and parent friendly. Do not use the jargon found in the curriculum.
- If necessary, use full word the first time, then use abbreviation e.g. key learning area rather than KLA.
- Make specific comments about area/s in which the student is achieving/experiencing success and about area/s in which the student needs further development.
- Be careful about repeating the same comment for every student as parents do compare reports.
- No referrals should be made to professional agencies or external providers.
- Phrase comments positively.

When writing comments, the following structure should be adhered to as much as possible:

- Achievement/progress statement
- Outline what the student has done and can do – give examples
- Identify focus areas or next learning steps for the student

Example:

_____ has made progress in all areas of English this semester and is achieving at a high level. _____ has continued to develop her skills as a writer. She uses figurative language, direct speech and persuasive techniques such as rhetorical questions to engage the reader. _____ makes accurate spelling approximations of unfamiliar words based on her strong knowledge of letter and sound patterns and spelling rules. _____ is a confident reader who responds appropriately to all punctuation to ensure accuracy and to maintain meaning. _____'s next steps include maintaining the effective use of persuasive and imaginative language throughout a text and neatly linking her handwriting with consistent size, shape and slope.

Assessment

- Be consistent
- All grading of students A-E is to be based on evidence from a variety of sources – assessments, work samples, observations.

- There is no expectation or pressure to have a certain number of students in your class achieving at 'High' or 'Outstanding'.
- Remember - You may be asked to justify your allocation of specific grades

The Common Grade Scale

The Common Grade Scale shown below can be used to report student achievement in both primary and junior secondary years in all NSW schools.

The Common Grade Scale describes performance at each of five grade levels.



A

The student has an **extensive** knowledge and understanding of the content and can readily apply this knowledge. In addition, the student has achieved a **very high level of competence** in the processes and skills and can apply these skills to new situations.

B

The student has a **thorough** knowledge and understanding of the content and a **high level of competence** in the processes and skills. In addition, the student is able to apply this knowledge and these skills to most situations.

C

The student has a **sound** knowledge and understanding of the main areas of content and has achieved an **adequate level of competence** in the processes and skills.

D

The student has a **basic** knowledge and understanding of the content and has achieved a **limited level of competence** in the processes and skills.

E

The student has an **elementary** knowledge and understanding in few areas of the content and has achieved **very limited competence** in some of the processes and skills.

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure anything you say about a student can be substantiated. Parents have every right to request an interview as a result of a report and you will need to back up comments/grades. ✓ Offer a balance, be direct and truthful. ✓ Be constructive, not destructive. Tell the truth as you would have it told to you. Include statements portraying achievement, preferably in outcome style. Always find something positive to say but be honest. ✓ Report what has happened - eliminate emotive phrases/words. Do not punish poor performance, report it. ✓ Phrase comments for written form - some things can be said in an interview that are inappropriate in writing. Remember we teach students to recognise and write in a certain manner and our reports should model that. ✓ Check previous teachers' comments / your own half yearly comments. ✓ Use a high standard of grammar, spelling and punctuation. ✓ Be careful when using "practice/practise" - 'practise' is the verb and 'practice' is the noun. ✓ Ensure comments match assessment/grade and social development and commitment to learning grades ✓ Make reference to specific examples which demonstrate a student's achievement and skill acquisition e.g. 'xxx confidently solves addition and subtraction problems using the split strategy.' 'xxx uses figurative language such as simile and metaphor to effectively add detail when writing imaginative texts.' ✓ Keep tense the same for all KLAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Sugar-coat a student's shortcomings or give inflated grades. This makes the job of next year's teacher very difficult. ✗ Contradict your own half yearly comments. ✗ Overuse teacher jargon. Be aware of the audience and use plain language. ✗ Predict the future or make promises - you will often be wrong. E.g. "if xxx does xxx s/he will improve" could be re-written as "xxx gives him/herself a greater chance to develop skills if s/he xxx." ✗ Suggest all improvements will come from more work at home. ✗ Place yourself at the centre of the child's report. It is about them, not you. If the comment ends with a bland statement such as "I am pleased with Julie's work in English", there is little information provided at all. A clear statement such as "Julie has shown greater accuracy in her use of punctuation and is employing a wider vocabulary to enhance her writing" is more specific and clearer. ✗ Overuse the term "however". E.g. "xxx is good at maths, however ..." If he is good, give detail. E.g. "xxx shows ability in maths as can be seen by his work on..." ✗ Overuse "needs to" – This can appear as a subjective expectation and does not clarify how the need is to be met. Where such expression is employed, it should be qualified in terms of the outcome sought. E.g. "In order to be able to... Johnny needs to..." However, it may be more appropriate to express these expectations in terms of a focus area and / or consolidation with regard to outcomes. E.g. "An area for further focus is Consolidation of skills in ..."
Remember	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you finish writing your reports look at the whole group. Any pattern of negative comment is more likely the result of missed opportunities on the teacher's behalf, rather than student concerns. • Your report will be seen by a number of people. 	

- It is perfectly okay and expected that you ask for assistance if needed. Some individuals can be tricky to write comments about.
- Don't be passive "I hope" or "may improve". Use "I look forward" or "I am confident" or "will improve"
- Keep under limit Eg General comment 600 so make 615/620 your limit
- Don't start a sentence with a preposition.
- Look for different words. Not sentences with repeating the same word. (Use thesaurus)
- Practice is the noun practise the verb. See sheet
- It's just developing not "working on developing"
- "To the best of her ability" is a put down. "doing their best", efficiently.
- "# has made pleasing progress this semester, for which he is to be commended" should be "# is to be commended for the pleasing progress he has made this semester"
- "Congratulated on" and "commended for"
- "should be congratulated" is "is congratulated" or "congratulations Billy on the"
- Use the correct strand names (Eg Talking and listening).
- "Understandings" there is no plural.
- Look at the structure of a sentence. "Uses strategies to read for information such as skimming a scanning" should be "Uses strategies such as skimming and scanning to read for information"
- "liked peers" are friends.
- DONT USE "Keep it up" You can say "Keep up the good work"
- Maths and math. It's mathematics.
- 2s, 5s and 10s. No apostrophe. Numbers in place of words.
- Numerals 0 to 9999 no gap once into tens of thousands there is a gap Eg 10 000, 150 000 etc
- Hyphenating. When you're combining two or more words to form a compound adjective in front of a noun, hyphenate it. Eg well-mannered, quarter-hour, hands-on, two-dimensional, well-behaved, one-to-one".
- NO Hyphenation of skip count, sight words, letter sounds.
- Bookwork, schoolwork, hardworking. One word.
- 2-digit and 2D
- "# is progressing well in.." or "Making good progress...." Not just "progressing in..."
- Reread NOT re-read.
- "During reading" or "When reading instead of "In Reading".
- "Achieved the answer" rather than "Got the answer"
- "develop" rather than "to work on".
- Early Stage 1, Semester 2
- Learnt – past participle, learned – adjective eg "a learned professor". Spelt

- Full stop is two words.
- “Working towards” is beginning to, learning to
- “own ability” and “own writing” Just “writing” and “ability”
- NOT “needs encouraging” but “is encouraged”
- NOT “class members” but “peers” or “classmates”

Language Conventions and Style

- Capital letter English only, all others use lower case. Activities have a small letter e.g. handwriting, developing reading skills – no capital for reading or handwriting.
- **Great** (artwork, assignment...) do not use – Instead use excellent, impressive, exciting, inspiring, thoughtful, successful
- **Keep it up!** Do not use this phrase
- **Working on developing** – just use 'is developing'
- Knowledge **about** – it is '**knowledge of**'
- Enthusiasm **to** – it is '**enthusiasm for**'
- Has learnt, has used, has performed, has displayed – leave out the '**has**'
- **Best of his ability** – Do not use. Instead try efficiently, diligently, conscientiously, effectively
- '**gets involved**' – Instead use, participates
- **Is able to** – instead use 'can'
- Grab the reader's attention – Instead use, 'capture', 'attract'
- xxx has made progress in During this semester. – Either leave out 'during' or change 'this' to 'the' e.g. xxx has made progress in this semester/during the semester
- When he/she **needs it** – when necessary
- Work on/working on – Instead try develop/developing, improve/improving
- Use Australian conventions e.g. s not z in recognise, organise.
- 2D or 3D use capital letter but two-dimensional or three-dimensional use small letter
- 2D refers to shapes; 3D refers to objects or solids. There is no such thing as a 3D shape.
- No inverted commas for split strategy, counting on, counting back
- When referring to tables use, **2x, 3x tables or multiplication tables** not times tables
- There is no such word as **alot**. It is '**a lot**'
- Be careful when you say that the child needs more practice in.... Parents will naturally ask why you haven't provided this as the teacher.
- The child does not do something over the semester. They do it throughout or during the semester.
- DO NOT use `but'. Use `and', `however', `although', `yet', `while', etc. instead of `but', `but' negates anything that comes before it.
- Please use 'and' instead of `&' – unless absolutely essential.
- Commas should be used for pause and effect and clarity.

Making Reports Objective

1. Describe what the student has done

- ✓ work students have produced, tasks they have completed
- ✓ goals they have met
- ✓ experience students have had

2. Describe what the student can do

- ✓ what the student has learnt, is capable of
- ✓ what specific skills, characteristics student exhibits

3. Indicate the criteria by which the student is being assessed

- ✓ what the teacher values, is looking for - may be inferred

4. Make comments specific and neutral, not general and partial

- ✓ "John has completed two of the ten set assignments" is both more accurate and less emotive than "John is lazy".
- ✓ comments should be substantiated by reference to student's work

5. Distinguish between students and their work

- ✓ because change is not only desirable, but also possible, we should apply terms like "disruptive" to a behaviour and not a person (they are not fixed aspects of a character)

6. Distinguish between ability and competence

- ✓ assessment should measure the effectiveness of teaching, not the natural endowments of the student
- ✓ refer to skills, understandings, values developed not innate potential

7. Acknowledge all growth made

- ✓ include learning that might have been outside what was intended, expected

8. Avoid pseudo-adjectives

- ✓ can you really determine what is "satisfactory"?
- ✓ focus on growth achieved

9. Focus on the known

- ✓ avoid speculation
- ✓ don't predict the future

10. Write with the assessment data at your elbow

- ✓ student work samples and assessments are the best data you have
- ✓ comprehensive data will provide you with growth information

Semester 1 Report Timeline

Term 1 Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive to arrange access to Semester 1 reports on Sentral for all teachers. • Class teachers to have completed Term 1 assessments and entered all data onto Sentral Markbook
<p style="text-align: center;">Optional</p> Term 2 Week 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teachers to submit 3 complete reports to supervisors • Supervisors to proofread and return to class teachers with any changes clearly marked
Term 2 Week 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teachers to complete Term 2 assessments • Class teachers to proofread and edit their own completed reports
Term 2 Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teachers to have another stage member proofread a sample of their reports – <i>at least 10</i>. This will be done during our Week 6 staff meeting • Class teachers to submit proofread and edited reports to supervisors by Friday at the latest (10.06.22) • Supervisors to read reports and return to class teachers with any changes clearly marked • Class teachers make any changes suggested by supervisors
Term 2 Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teachers to submit reports to the principal by Friday at the latest (17.06.22) • Class teachers to have entered all Term 2 assessment data onto Sentral Markbook
Term 2 Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teachers to distribute reports to students coordinating

Semester 2 Report Timeline

Term 3 Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive to arrange access to Semester 2 reports on Sentral for all teachers.
Term 4 Week 4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teachers to complete Term 4 assessments • Class teachers to proofread and edit their own completed reports • Class teachers to have another stage member proofread a sample of their reports – <i>at least 10. <u>Time will be allocated for this during a Stage meeting in Week 5</u></i>
Term 4 Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During stage meetings peer edit reports – Tuesday • Class teachers to submit twice proofread and edited (self and peer) reports to supervisors
Term 4 Week 6-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors to read reports and return to class teachers with any changes clearly marked • Class teacher make any changes suggested by supervisors
Term 4 Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teachers to submit reports to the principal
Term 4 Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teachers to have entered all Term 4 assessment data onto Sentral Markbook
Term 4 Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports printed for teachers to sign
Term 4 Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teachers to distribute reports to students