



Key stage 1 English writing teacher assessment - FAQs

General

Will the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) be providing moderator training for key stage 1 (KS1) maths or English reading?

STA will not provide national training for KS1 English reading or mathematics in 2018/2019. Local authorities (LAs) have a statutory responsibility to ensure a robust and accurate moderation system is in place within their LA, and should provide whatever training they consider necessary.

Have we moved to a 'best fit' model of teacher assessment or not?

No. While teachers will still be assessing pupils against all the 'pupil can' statements, they now have the discretion to determine that a pupil meets a standard overall despite a particular weakness in relation to the statements.

This is not the same as the 'best fit' model used under national curriculum levels. The more flexible approach to English writing retains an expectation that pupils are secure in the fundamentals of the subject represented by 'pupil can' statements. As a summative judgement, there is scope for teacher discretion to ensure that a judgement about a pupil reflects their true overall attainment.

How many times does a teacher or moderator need to see evidence of a 'pupil can' statement?

There is no requirement to see a specific number of examples to evidence a statement – the focus is on whether the evidence is sufficient to support the judgement. Some 'pupil can' statements are likely to be evidenced less frequently due to the context of the work, for example, the integration of dialogue in narratives to convey character and advance the action (key stage 2 (KS2) expected standard English writing). Teachers and moderators should also take account of the qualifiers (some/many/most) when judging whether there is sufficient evidence to meet a statement.

Can teachers use tests as evidence?

Tests can be used to evidence statements and do not necessarily need to be supplemented with work in pupils' books. As with the use of a single example to evidence statements, this depends on the nature of the statement. The published guidance uses the example of telling the time, where one answer in a test may be sufficient to show that a pupil has grasped this skill. You would not need to 'produce' evidence in the pupil's book for the sake of moderation. The focus must remain on whether the evidence supplied is sufficient to convince a teacher and moderator that the pupil has independently demonstrated the 'pupil can' statement.

What type of evidence should be provided by teachers, to support teacher assessment judgements?

Teachers should not produce evidence specifically for local authority moderation. A sample of evidence from the pupil's classroom work must support how teachers reached their judgements. Photographs of practical work are not required as evidence.

Local authorities may find it useful to refer to the exemplification materials to support external moderation visits. The materials show what meeting the 'pupil can' statements might look like for each standard. However, moderators should not expect or require teachers to provide specific evidence similar to the examples in the exemplification documents. Evidence will come from day to day work in the classroom and can be work taken from textbooks.

LA related queries

Writing: references to a particular weakness

Does 'a particular weakness' refer to a learning difficulty?

The same overall standard must be applied equally to all pupils. A particular weakness may relate to a specific learning difficulty, but it is not limited to this, nor does a specific learning difficulty automatically constitute a particular weakness. The teacher's judgement about a pupil's overall attainment will be borne out in their classroom work, and teachers should be able to justify their decisions during moderation.

Writing: general

If the requirement of a 'pupil can' statement is not applicable within a piece of writing, or a pupil chooses not to use it, should teachers encourage them to 'shoe-horn' in the evidence?

Teachers should not look to 'produce' evidence: it should be evident in a pupil's work what they can and cannot do. The 'pupil can' statements are designed to represent the key elements of the national curriculum, and do not require every specific writing device or form of punctuation to be evidenced. Every requirement within the frameworks is expected only when it is relevant within the context of that piece of writing. For example, the spelling of words from appendices within the national curriculum relates only to those which pupils have used.

Teachers should be able to find evidence relating to each of the statements in the standard awarded. This can come from a range of sources, provided the writing has been completed independently. Some statements will be met less frequently across the range of a pupil's writing, for example, the integration of dialogue in narrative to convey character and advance the action.

What does writing 'coherently' and 'effectively' mean?

The national curriculum states that effective composition involves forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. A pupil's ability to do this will be based on a teacher's professional judgement. STA's exemplification material can support teachers in their understanding of the expectations for the different standards of writing.

Does the pupil have to use all forms of co-ordination in order to be awarded the 'pupil can' statement?

At the expected standard, pupils are likely to use different co-ordinating conjunctions, according to the meaning they wish to convey; however, the emphasis is on being able to join clauses in the context of a piece of writing, rather than demanding the use of specific conjunctions. The co-ordinating conjunctions, *and*, *or*, *but* are given only as examples.

Does a pupil now have to use question marks whenever they are required in their writing?

In order to achieve the 'pupil can' statement for the expected standard, pupils must demarcate most sentences with capital letters and full stops, and use question marks correctly when required. This means that in most sentences where question marks are required, they should be used.

For 'greater depth', does a pupil have to use all the punctuation that is taught at KS1?

Yes. The expectation is that pupils can use all of the punctuation taught within the KS1 national curriculum programme of study, which is detailed within the grammar and punctuation appendix of the national curriculum (English Appendix 2).

There is very little punctuation to be taught at KS1 - capital letters, full stops and other end punctuation, commas in lists, apostrophes for singular possession, apostrophes for contraction.

Pupils are likely to use most of the punctuation taught at KS1 in their independent writing; however, evidence can be used from other sources, including tests.

At 'greater depth', in the KS1 writing framework, how can a teacher prove that a pupil is making revisions and proof-reading corrections to their own writing?

Revisions and corrections will often be apparent in a pupil's work, but to evidence this skill, teachers may draw upon their knowledge of the pupil during the professional discussion with a moderator.

Do pupils have to use joined handwriting to be awarded 'greater depth' at KS1?

By the end of KS1, as stated in the national curriculum, pupils are expected to start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters, and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined. There is no expectation for handwriting to be fully joined at any standard in the KS1 frameworks.

Spelling

For the key stage 1 expected standard, do common exception words have to be spelt correctly, or are phonically plausible attempts acceptable?

When assessing pupils' spelling, phonically plausible but incorrect spellings should be regarded as errors unless that explicit expectation is stated in the statement (for example as in 'working towards the expected standard': *spelling some words correctly and making phonically plausible attempts at others*). At the expected standard, pupils are required to spell many of the common exception words, correctly.

Do I have to assess pupils against the common exception word lists in the national curriculum?

The common exception words are non-statutory examples of words with grapheme-phoneme correspondences that do not fit in with what has been taught so far. A pupil would not necessarily have to use the specific examples of common exception words listed in Appendix 1 of the national curriculum, in order to meet the 'pupil can' statement. However, as these words are common, it is likely that their work will contain many of them.

If a pupil uses a challenging word that is beyond the KS1 programme of study, must the root word and the suffix be spelt correctly to meet the statement: *add suffixes to spell most words correctly in their writing (for example, -ment, -ness, -ful, -less, -ly)*?

In the spelling of words with suffixes, both the root word and the suffix must be correct if the root word uses the rules and patterns taught in the KS1 programme of study. If the root word uses spelling rules and patterns which have not yet been taught, any errors in the root word should be ignored and providing the suffix is applied and spelt correctly, it can be used as evidence for the statement. For example, where a KS1 pupil chooses to use a word that requires the application of rules and patterns from the KS2 programme of study, for example 'mysteriously', there is no expectation for the spelling of the root word (mystery), or an associated suffix (-ous), to be correct.

Disabilities/dyslexia

Do pupils with dyslexia have to meet the 'pupil can' statements relating to spelling?

The expectation is that a pupil's writing should meet all the statements within the standard at which they are judged. However, teachers can use their discretion to ensure that, on occasion, a particular weakness does not prevent an accurate judgement being made of a pupil's overall attainment. The particular weakness may relate to a specific learning need, such as dyslexia, but it is not limited to this, nor does it automatically constitute a particular weakness which would prevent an accurate overall judgement.

It is possible that a teacher judges a pupil with dyslexia to be working at a particular standard overall despite not yet meeting, for example, the statement(s) relating to spelling. In such cases, the evidence overall should convince the teacher that the pupil has met that standard. The focus should be on whether it would prevent an accurate judgement overall, and teachers should use their discretion on a pupil-by-pupil basis.

A pupil is dyslexic all of the time, not on occasion. Can I still judge that a pupil has met the standard if they miss out on spelling statements entirely?

We are clear that spelling, of course, remains a fundamental part of the national curriculum which will equip pupils with the skills they need to succeed in secondary school and beyond. It is therefore an important part of the teacher assessment frameworks in English writing. However, teachers can use their discretion if they feel a particular weakness in spelling would prevent an accurate judgement of the standard described overall. A teacher's professional judgement about whether the pupil has met the standard overall takes precedence.

Reading

Are teachers expected to time pupils to be sure that they can read at over 90 words per minute?

Some pupils need to read slower than others to understand what they are reading but, as a guide, *approximately* 90 words per minute is a good indicator of sufficient fluency for a pupil learning to read. As stated in the frameworks, the examples do not dictate the evidence required, but show only how the statements might be met.

In English reading, what is 'age-appropriate' reading?

This is a question for individual schools to determine, benchmarking against expectations in the national curriculum. However, as a guide, teachers should compare the books that their pupils read with the texts provided for the relevant (KS1/KS2) statutory reading test. The sources for the reading tests are listed in the copyright acknowledgements in published test materials.

Maths

Is one single example of evidence, such as an answer to one question in a test, sufficient to show that a pupil has met a statement?

A pupil's answers to specific questions in tests or exercises can provide evidence that they have met a 'pupil can' statement. Teachers should use their professional judgement to determine whether an answer provides sufficient evidence to demonstrate that a pupil is secure in the knowledge or skill being assessed: this will vary according to the statement.

For example, a single calculation, made by adding two two-digit numbers within 100 is unlikely to provide sufficient evidence that the pupil has secured this skill, and other examples of similar additions are likely to be found in the pupil's day-to-day work. However, reading the time to the nearest 15 minutes is not knowledge that will necessarily be evident throughout a pupil's work, and one good example of this would suffice.

Do pupils need evidence of 1/2 as well as 2/4?

This has not changed from previous years. A pupil needs to show that they can identify both, as referenced in the attainment targets in the national curriculum.

Science

The science frameworks are very long. Are teachers expected to gather evidence for every statement for all of their pupils?

The 'pupil can' statements in the science frameworks have not changed.

There is no requirement to have evidence from the classroom that pupils have met statements relating to science content taught before the final year of the key stage. Teachers should refer to the national curriculum to identify these statements. Where possible, teachers should draw on assessments that have been made earlier in the key stage to make their judgement about a pupil's attainment against this framework. It is acknowledged that this might not always be possible, for example if the pupil has just joined the school.