



Government of Nepal



National Examinations Board

Item Development Skill for the Standardized Test

Handbook

English

Grades 6-8 Model Items

Sanothimi, Bhaktapur

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Preface

National Examinations Board (NEB) is developing standardized test for grades 8, 10 and 12. In case of grade 8, NEB is developing items for three subjects at present – Science and Technology, Mathematics and English. This handbook of English Subject provides the item writers and teachers a framework of developing good test items and make Basic Level Examination (BLE) standardized, more reliable, valid and comparable across the Local Governments gradually. Item development is the first step in the development of standardized test which is based on the ‘framework for grade 8 standardized tests’ of NEB approved by MoEST. The framework elaborates curriculum and specification grid (CDC, 2021) and items are developed accordingly. Item formats and cognitive level of items specified by the curriculum are followed to develop test items.

This handbook presents model items of English subject. Items include samples for grades 6-8. The sample items for these grades have been developed on the basis of content areas, item formats, and cognitive levels. Each of the model items include:

- Item format
- Content coverage (language skills and aspects in line with curriculum)
- Objective of the item (in line with the learning outcome mentioned in the curriculum)
- Description of the format
- Description of the cognitive level(s) that the individual item assesses.

In this handbook, item formats are described with examples first, and then description of the cognitive levels are presented along with the model items from grades 6-8. This handbook has been developed with the support of School Sector Development Plan Technical Assistant (SSDP-TA). Mr. Parshuram Tiwari, Mr. Ramesh Dhakal, and Ms. Mallika Joshi contributed as the subject experts in the development of this handbook. Similarly, Dr. Kamal Raj Devkota, the subject expert for English, facilitated the task, Mr. Durga Prasad Aryal, Member Secretary of NEB, made required management, Mr. Subash Pant, the Under Secretary of NEB, coordinated the task, Mr. Nogendra Khanal, Section-officer for administrative coordination for English subject at NEB, accomplished the administrative tasks. I thank the team for its hard work, and reviewers for their constructive inputs to bring this handbook in this form. I expect constructive inputs and suggestions from the users and implementers of this handbook for its improvement. Thank you.

Dr. Mahashram Sharma
Chairperson, NEB

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1. Introduction

This handbook presents the model items of English subject prescribed for Grades 6-8. It includes item formats, language skills and content areas to be assessed in this subject. It also mentions different cognitive levels, and their descriptions along with the sample items for the respective item formats as the specification grid of English subject has outlined. The item writers and the concerned can use it for developing test items in consideration with the given item formats and cognitive levels.

2. Item Format

2.1 Multiple Choice Question (MCQ)

Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) is an objective test item in which student selects one of the given alternatives. In English subject for Grades 6-8, MCQs will be used in testing reading comprehension, vocabulary and grammar. MCQs with four alternatives will be used in testing reading comprehension; and MCQs with three alternatives will be used in testing grammar in grades 6-8. One of the given alternatives is the correct answer. The major components of MCQs are mentioned below:

1. *The Stimulus:* MCQ can be asked with stimulus that provides the context for the item.
2. *The Stem:* The stem of the MCQ is the leading sentence that puts up a question or a problem to be solved. Stem can be in the form of a question, incomplete sentence, fill in the blank form, or a part of cloze such as in a gap-fill passage. In whatever form, the stem should provide enough information to the examinee so that the well-prepared examinee can choose the right answer (key) from the given distractors. In a test, all the MCQs should follow the same format of the stem. In Grade 8 standardized test, the stem of MCQs will be used in question form in the case of the items for reading passage.
3. *The options/alternatives:*

3a. Distracters: A distracter is an alternative in the MCQ format which would lead less able/less prepared student think as the correct answer, and thus attracts him/her.

3b. Key: The 'key' is the correct answer among the alternatives given in the MCQ.

Example #1 [Grammar]

1. Sushant has been herehalf an hour.

- A) during
- B) for
- C) while
- D) since

In this example, 'Sushant has been here.....half an hour' is the STEM, 'during', 'for', 'while' and 'since' are OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES, 'during', 'while' and 'since' are DISTRACTERS, and 'for' is the KEY. This item does not have 'context' or 'stimulus'.

Example#2 [Reading text 1]

Based on the text, choose the correct answer from the alternatives given.

The Galapagos penguin is one of the smallest and the most endangered of all penguins. What does the word 'endangered' mean in the sentence?

- A) It is the most dangerous of all penguins.
- B) It harms all other species of penguins.
- C) It is likely to disappear from the earth.
- D) It is not friendly and loving of all penguins.

In this example, 'The Galapagos penguin is one of the smallest and the most endangered of all penguins' is the CONTEXT/STIMULUS; 'What does the underlined word 'endangered' mean in the sentence?' is the STEM; '(a) 'It is the most dangerous of all penguins', (b) 'It harms all other species of penguins', (c) 'It is likely to disappear from the earth' and (d) 'It is not friendly and loving of all penguins' are OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES; 'a', 'b' and 'd' are the DISTRACTERS; and 'c' is the KEY.

2.2 Matching

Matching is an objective type of test item in which students are asked to pair an item from **Column A (premises)** to a related item from **Column B (responses)**. Matching items will be used to test reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge of the students. Generally, the number of responses will be more than the premises in order to avoid guessing for the item presented at last.

Example#3 [Reading text 1]

Match the words/phrases in Column A with the related information in Column B.

Column A	Column B
A) Penguins	i. help the penguins stay cool
B) Emperor penguins	ii. help the penguins keep them warm
C). Galapagos penguins	iii. make the penguins disappear
D) Feathers of a penguin	iv. need to conserve warmth
E) Flippers of a penguin	v. walk instead of flying
	vi. need to stay cool

Answer key

- A) v. walk instead of flying
- B) iv. need to conserve warmth
- C) vi. need to stay cool
- D) ii. help the penguins keep them warm
- E) i. help the penguins stay cool

2.3 Ordering

Ordering is another objective type of test item in which examinees are asked to rearrange the sentences or ideas given. Ordering will be used to test reading comprehension and grammar.

Example#4 [Reading text 2]

Put the following sentences in the correct order as they occurred in Jackson's life.

- A) Jackson got success in his solo music career.
- B) Jackson released *Invincible*.
- C) Jackson's first marriage lasted only for two years.
- D) Jackson practised music under the strict guidance of his father.

E) Jackson became a famous pop star.

Answer key

D) Jackson practised music under the strict guidance of his father.

A) Jackson got success in his solo music career.

E) Jackson became a famous pop star.

C) Jackson's first marriage lasted only for two years.

B) Jackson released *Invincible*.

* Students get marks if they write the sentences in order, number and sentences both, **OR** number only.

2.4 True/False

In True/False items, students are asked to point out whether the given statements are TRUE and FALSE on the basis of the reading passage given. True/False item will be used to assess reading comprehension.

Example#5 [Reading text 1]

Write T for 'True' and F for the 'False' statements within the given brackets.

Penguins are the world's most loving animals. []

Answer key: [T]

2.5 Fill in the gaps

'Fill in the gaps' is an objective type of test item in which students are asked to fill a gap with a word or a phrase that is appropriate in the blank space. 'Fill in the gaps' items will be used in assessing reading comprehension and vocabulary.

Example#6 [Reading text 1]

Based on the text, fill in the gap with appropriate word/phrase.

The Emperor penguin is found in

Answer key: Antarctica

2.6 Short Answer Questions (SAQs)

Short Answer Questions (SAQs) are the test items which assess students' ability to respond in a single word OR a phrase OR one sentence to a maximum. SAQs will be used to assess reading comprehension. Item writers need to supply the

marking scheme along with the SAQs. The marking scheme should include all the possible answers for the particular SAQ.

Example#7 [Reading text 1]

Read the given text and answer the question given.

Why do the Emperor penguins huddle in group?

Marking scheme

Any item that mentions 'to conserve heat'.

- The Emperor penguins huddle in group to conserve heat.
- To conserve heat.
- for heating themselves

Reading text #1

Read the following passage and do the exercises given.

Have you ever heard about penguins? They are one of the world's most interesting and loving birds. They waddle when they walk, and have flippers instead of wings. They live in the cold and ice. They are found in Antarctica, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, South America and Galapagos Islands. Among the 17 species, the Emperor penguin is found in Antarctica and Galapagos penguin is in Galapagos Islands. The Emperor penguin is the world's largest penguin of all. Its oily feathers help keep it dry. Its dense inner down feathers and thick fat layer help keep it warm. Emperor penguins also often huddle in groups to conserve heat.

Unlike Emperor penguin, the Galapagos penguin lives in an area much warmer than Antarctica. The Galapagos Islands are on the Equator 600 miles west of the South American country of Ecuador. The Galapagos penguin is one of the smallest and the most endangered of all penguins. Instead of having to stay warm the Galapagos penguin must find ways to stay cool. When a Galapagos penguin does get out of the water it often spreads its flippers to cool off. Penguins love hunting small fish, squid and krill for their food. Climate change, rise in the water temperature and food scarce in the ocean they live are pushing the Galapagos penguins to disappear from the earth in the near future.

Adapted from Guy Belleranti's Talking About Penguin

3. Reading Assessment

3.1 Assessing Reading

Reading is one of the four major skills of language learning. The curriculum of English Subject for Grades 6-8 mentions different reading competencies that the students should

achieve after learning from this course. These competencies include: understanding the description of events, feelings and wishes; extracting relevant information from the everyday materials; understanding and retrieving the required information from graphic texts (charts, tables, graphs and maps); finding the meaning of the unfamiliar words from the context; finding out the main ideas and supporting details; comprehending short biographies of national and international figures; reading and understanding short poems and stories for pleasure; and consulting dictionary to learn different aspects of words.

Reading assessment for Grades 6-8 involves whether the students have acquired these reading competencies. The assessment framework in the curriculum mentions the following reading skills to be assessed in both internal and external assessments. External assessment is required to cover 25 marks, and should follow the following structure.

	Description	Text types	Question types
Reading 1 (R1)	One short reading text from the textbook with one type of comprehension question (5 marks)	- Reading texts from the textbooks. - Text type should be different for reading 1 and 2. For example, letter in Reading 1 and story in reading 2. - Type of texts in Reading 1 and 2 should not be repeated in Reading 3 and 4 too. - Type of texts: Story, dialogue, timetable, menus, charts, calendar, notice, letter, news stories, brochure, biography and short essay - The reading texts for reading 3 and 4 should not exceed 250 and 300 words respectively. - Reading 4 should contain at least three questions for testing vocabulary.	- True/False - Fill in the gaps - Multiple choice - Matching - Ordering - Short Answer Questions
Reading 2 (R2)	One short reading text from the textbook with one type of comprehension question (5 marks)		
Reading 3 (R3)	One short reading text not given in the textbook with one type of comprehension question (5 marks)		
Reading 4 (R4)	One short reading text not given in the textbook with two types of comprehension questions (10 marks)		

Basic Education Curriculum – Grades 6-8 (CDC, 2078)

3.2 Cognitive levels

The curriculum and specification grid of English subject for Grades 6-8 mentions four cognitive levels for assessing reading competencies. The curriculum also mentions the number of questions that each of these cognitive levels is required to cover.

<i>Types of comprehension</i>	<i>Number of questions</i>
Literal comprehension	10
Reorganization	6

Inference	6
Evaluation and reflection	3
Total items (R1, R2, R3 and R4)	25 (1 mark for each item)

Basic Education Curriculum – Grades 6-8 (CDC, 2078)

These types of comprehension are also understood as the cognitive levels. These cognitive levels are discussed below along with the sample test items and descriptors.

3.2.1 Literal comprehension

Literal comprehension is the basic level of reading competency in which students are required to recognize the information explicitly given in the text. The test item under literal comprehension assesses the student's ability to:

- recognize ideas and information in the text,
- locate explicit information given in the text,
- read for facts and stated central idea in the text,
- understand the straightforward and explicitly mentioned information of the text, such as facts, vocabulary, dates, times and locations.

3.2.2 Reorganization

Reorganization is the competence level just beyond literal comprehension. At this level, students are required to reorder or reconstruct two or more pieces of information explicitly mentioned in the text. The test item under reorganization assesses the student's ability to:

- reconstruct two or more pieces of information to form a complete idea,
- reorder the ideas and facts explicitly mentioned in the text,
- use information from various parts of the text and combine them for additional understanding,
- read the text in its entirety, locate the relevant information explicitly stated in the text and combine to answer the item.

3.2.3 Inference

Inference is another level of reading comprehension in which students are required to infer the meaning on the basis of their prior knowledge, intuition, and the ideas or clues given in the text. The test item under inference assesses the student's ability to:

- make meaning or sense for the item on the basis of their prior knowledge, intuition and the ideas and facts given in the text,
- infer the idea which is not explicitly stated in the text
- make generalization or future predictions
- show cause and effect relationships.

3.2.4 Evaluation and reflection

Evaluation and reflection is the highest level of reading comprehension in which students are required to make judgement of the text or some parts of the text to answer the test item. The test item under evaluation and reflection assesses the student's ability to:

- make comprehensive judgement of the text in its entirety or some parts of it,
- judge the text and context, information and character,
- relate text with personal experience, opinion or reflection,
- judge the purpose of the text or part of text (paragraph) and audience.

Reading text #2

Read the following passage and do the tasks given. (279 words)

Michael Jackson (August 29, 1958 – June 25, 2009) was an American singer, dancer, entertainer, and recording artist. Michael Jackson began his music career with his brothers and family members in the Jackson Five. His career began in 1964, aged only six. The group, led by Jackson's father, worked hard touring many clubs and bars performing their music.

Although he achieved his goal to be a music performer, Michael's childhood was far from happiness. He was regularly beaten and threatened by his strict father. His father used to sit in a chair with his belt in his hand to watch the Jackson Five rehearse - and if they got anything wrong, he would beat them.

By the late 1970s, Michael was increasingly looking to pursue a solo career. With the help of music producer, Quincy Jones, Michael produced the solo album '*Off The Wall*'. The album was a great success eventually selling over 20 million copies. His second solo album, *Thriller*, made him the most famous pop singer in the world. In March 1983, Michael Jackson performed live on Motown 25: Yesterday, Today, Forever- a special TV programme. He performed his unique and memorable dance move – the Moonwalk. Jackson's next albums were *Bad* (1987) and *Dangerous* (1991). His final album was *Invincible* (2001).

He married Lisa Marie Presley in 1994; it lasted two years. In 1996, he married Deborah Rowe in Sydney. Together they had two children. They divorced in 1999 and Rowe gave legal rights to care for the children to Jackson. Towards the end of his life, he faced money troubles and ill health. He took drugs which was the cause of his poor health and early death.

3.2.5 Items: SAQs and MCQs and Description

Table 1: Cognitive levels and SAQs from Reading text 2

S.N.	Cognitive Levels	Items	Marking scheme	Descriptions
Level 1	Literal Comprehension	What is Michael Jackson's memorable dance movement called? (LC)	Any answer that mentions ' (the) Moonwalk'.	This item tests the student's ability to recognize the explicit information given in the text. For example, while answering this item, student locates the fact in the sentence "He performed his unique and memorable dance move – <u>the Moonwalk</u> ". Here, the fact 'the Moonwalk' has been explicitly mentioned in the text.
Level 2	Reorganization	Why did Michael Jackson marry Rowe?	Any answer that mentions the idea that 'Because his first marriage or marriage between Michael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley/ Lisa/ Presley lasted two years'. - Because his first marriage or marriage between Michael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley/ Lisa/ Presley ended in divorce/ lasted two years - Because of the break-up of his first marriage	This item tests student's ability to make meaning by relating two pieces of explicit information across the sentences in a paragraph. To answer this item, students need to relate the information in the second sentence 'he married Deborah Rowe' across the information from the first sentence 'his first marriage lasted two years' in the last paragraph of the text.
Level 3	Inference	What would have happened if Michael Jackson had not taken drugs?	Any answer that states the idea of his 'healthy life' and/or 'long life'. - He would have lived a healthy life. - He would not die earlier.	This item tests student's ability to infer based on the prior knowledge in interaction with the text given. To answer this item, students need to use their prior knowledge, the clues given in the text, and their intuition that relates 'taking drugs cause poor health and early death'.
Level 4	Evaluation	3) Do you think Michael's father's behavior was good? Write your answer using the evidence from the text. (E)	Answer that mentions 'No' with the idea that his father was strict/ rude and used to punish him for Michael Jackson's mistake in musical rehearse. No. Because his father was strict/ rude and used to punish him for his [Michael Jackson's] mistake in musical rehearse. Answer that mentions 'Yes' with the idea that his father was always serious about Michael Jackson's career. He	This item tests the student's ability to make a judgement about the character on the basis of the evidence given in the text. For example, student judges Michael Jackson's father as rude/strict for his regular punishment to Michael. Student may also argue that he was a good person for guiding Michael's music career.

			used to be present himself in the musical rehearse to teach him well. • Yes. Because his father was always serious about Michael Jackson's career. He used to be present in the musical rehearse to teach him well.	
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Table 2: Cognitive levels and MCQs from Reading text 2

S.N.	Cognitive Levels	Items	Key	Descriptions
Level 1	Literal Comprehension	i) When did Machel Jackson start his career? (LC) A. 1958 B. 1983 C. 1964 D. 1970	C.1964	This item tests the student's ability to locate the explicit information given in the text. For example, while answering this item, student locates the year in the sentence "His career began in 1964, aged only six". Here, the year '1964' has been explicitly/directly mentioned in the text.
Level 2	Reorganization	ii) 'They divorced in 1999.....' What does the word 'they' refer to? A. Michael Jackson and Deborah Rowe B. Michael Jackson and Quincy Jones C. Michael Jackson and Jackson Five D. Michael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley	D. Michael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley	This item tests student's ability to make meaning by relating two pieces of explicit information across the sentences in a paragraph. To answer this item, students need to relate the referent ' <u>they</u> ' across the pieces of information: 'he married Deborah Rowe' mentioned in the second sentence, and "They divorced in 1999..." in the fourth sentence of the last paragraph. Moreover, the student also needs to relate 'he' with Michael Jackson mentioned in the earlier paragraph.
Level 3	Inference	iii) Which of these events happened first? A. performed live on a TV programme B. released his musical album- <i>Bad</i> C. visited different clubs to perform D. released his solo album ' <i>Off The Wall</i> '	C. visited different clubs to perform	This item tests student's ability to infer based on prior knowledge and intuition in interaction with the textual information given. To answer this item, students need to draw a conclusion from the chronological order of events that happened in Jackson's life.
Level 4	Evaluation	v) Which of the following paragraph does NOT talk about Jackson's musical work? A. First B. Second C. Third D. Fourth	D. Fourth	This item tests the student's ability to make a comprehensive judgement of textual information. Here, the students draw the main idea of each paragraph, and judge which one of the paragraphs does not mention Jackson's musical work.

Example: Unseen text (Proposed for Grade: 7)

Read the following passage and do the tasks given.

Long ago, there lived a lion in a dense forest. One morning his wife told him that his breath was bad and unpleasant. The lion became very angry and got embarrassed to hear this comment. He wanted to check this fact with his advisors, as well. So, he ordered them one by one to his palace.

First came the sheep. "Hello friend, sheep," said the lion, opening his mouth wide, "Tell me, if my mouth smells bad?" The sheep thought that the king lion wanted an honest answer from him, so he said, "Yes, Your Majesty. There seems to be something wrong with your breath." This plain speak did not go well with the king lion. He pounced upon the sheep, killed him, and ate him.

Then the king lion called the wolf and said, "What do you think? Do I have a bad breath?" The wolf knew the fate of his colleague, the sheep. He wanted to be very cautious in answering a royal question. So, the wolf said, "Who says that Your Majesty's breath is unpleasant. It's as sweet as the smell of roses." When the king lion heard the reply he roared in anger and immediately attacked the wolf and killed it. "The flatterer!" growled king lion.

Finally, came the turn of the fox, who was the lion's third advisor. When the fox came, the lion asked him the same question. The fox was well aware of the fate of his two colleagues. So, he coughed and cleared his throat again and again and then said, "Your Majesty, for the last few days, I have been having a very bad cold. Due to this, I can't smell anything, pleasant or unpleasant." The king lion freed the fox's life.

<https://www.kidsgen.com/stories/panchatantra/>

1. Choose the correct answer from the alternatives given.

a) Who told the lion about his bad breath first? (LC)

- A. The lion himself
- B. The lion's wife
- C. The lion's advisor sheep
- D. The lion's advisor wolf

b) Who said, "Hello friend, sheep." (LC)

- A. Lion's wife
- B. Sheep
- C. Lion
- D. Wolf

c) Which of the following words in the text addresses the lion? (R)

- A. Your Majesty
- B. The flatterer

- C. Honest
- D. Cautious

- d. This plain speak did not go well with king lion.
What do you mean by 'plain speak'? (I)
- A. rude answer
 - B. straight answer
 - C. twisted answer
 - D. unreal answer
- e. Which of the following phrases means 'pounced upon'? (R)
- A. roared at
 - B. attacked to
 - C. growled at
 - D. freed on

2. Answer the following questions.

- a) Why did the lion tell all the advisors to visit his palace? (R)
- b) Who knew the fate of the sheep? (LC)
- c) Who was the lion's third advisor? (LC)
- d) Which advisor is the cleverest one in the story? Why? (E)
- e) Which advisor has not been killed by the lion? (LC)

Answer Key/Scoring guidelines

1. Tick the correct answer.
 - a) B. The lion's wife
 - b) C. Lion
 - c) A. Your Majesty
 - d) B. straight answer
 - e) B. attacked to
2. Answer the following questions:
 - a) Any answer that mentions the idea ' to check if the lion's breath was bad and unpleasant.
 - To find/ check/ test if/ whether his or the lion's breath was bad and unpleasant (bad or unpleasant)
 - For finding/ checking/ testing whether/ if his breath was bad and unpleasant (bad or unpleasant)
 - Because the lion or he wanted to find/ check/ test if/ whether his or the lion's breath was bad and unpleasant (bad or unpleasant)
 - b) Any answers that mention ' (the) wolf'
 - c) Any answers that mention ' (the) fox'.
 - d) Any answers that mention '(the) fox' with the reason supported by the text.

- Fox is the cleverest one/ animal/ advisor because he/ it saved his/ its life telling a lie to the lion.
 - Fox is the cleverest one,/ animal/ advisor because he/ it saved his/ its life pretending that it/ he is suffering from cold and unable to smell.
- e) Any answer that mentions ' (the) fox'.

Example: Seen text (Proposed for Grade: 6)

Read the following passage and do the exercises given.

March 18th
19 Burns Avenue, Peebles, Scotland

Dear Ms. Shaw,

Thank you for your letter. I'm sorry to hear you're having problems with the flat. I can't solve them all. But I'll try to be helpful.

1. Furniture: You liked it when you moved in! You told me so! But now you've changed your mind. Well, I'm sorry I can't help you there.
 2. Heating: I agree the flat can be cold in winter. I lived there myself for twenty years, so I know! But I always used electric fires and I'm afraid you must do the same. But get someone to look at the windows, by all means.
 3. Kitchen: Yes, it probably does need painting. Your idea is a good one. Please buy the paint and send me the bill. But make sure you choose a suitable colour (nothing too 'modern' please). And why not do the bathroom at the same time!
- I'm sorry I can't come to inspect the flat personally, but I do live rather a long way off, you know.

Yours sincerely,
Janet MacDonald

Write True for true statements and False for false statements.

- i) MacDonald accepted to solve all the problems. (LC)
- ii) MacDonald proposed to paint the bathroom. (R)
- iii) MacDonald lives near the flat. (LC)
- iv) Ms. Shaw owned the flat in rent. (I)
- v) The main purpose of this letter is to tell Ms. Shaw to paint the flat. (E)

Answer key

- i) False
- ii) True
- iii) False
- iv) True
- v) False

4. Writing Assessment

4.1 Assessing writing

Like reading, writing is another major skill of language learning. The curriculum of English for Grades 6-8 mentions different competencies that the students should be able to achieve after having this course taught. These competencies include writing personal and official letters, writing application, writing simple instructions, interpreting charts, tables and diagrams, writing impressions and opinions about topics of personal interest (e.g. lifestyles and culture, stories, etc.), writing simple biographies, essays, past events and activities, and using punctuation marks correctly.

The curriculum mentions different tasks for assessing writing. Equally, it mentions the structure of writing skill. The following table presents the writing tasks, the framework of external assessment for writing skills including grammar.

Writing tasks	External Assessment: Writing tasks (25 marks)
1) A writing task that covers the mechanics of writing, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, etc. 2) Writing tasks like: a. A short paragraph b. A short story c. A news story d. A short dialogue e. A personal letter f. A leave application g. A description of table/charts/diagrams h. A short essay i. A dialogue (Note: The tasks chosen for the assessment of students' learning should reflect the tasks they have practised in the assessment period.)	The assessment of writing skill follows the following structure: 1) Punctuation: A short and simple paragraph containing ten punctuation errors (5 marks) 2) Guided writing: One task: paragraph/news story/story/description of tables/charts and diagrams and some guidelines (5 marks) 3) Free writing: one task: personal or official letter or a short essays (10 marks) Grammar: 5 marks The grammar questions should cover the following contents: 1. Article 2. Preposition 3. Tense 4. Connectives 5. Question tag 6. Reported speech 7. Voice 8. Conditional sentences 9. Subject-verb agreement 10. Question and negation Types of questions: 1) Reproduction: It should cover tense, question tag, reported speech voice, question and negation (5*0.5 = 2.5 marks) 2) Multiple choice (individual sentences or a contextual passage): It should contain article, preposition, connectives, conditional sentence and subject-verb agreement (5*0.5 = 2.5) <i>Note:</i>

	<i>The writing task type should not be similar to that of reading texts given in the reading section.</i> <i>Basic Education Curriculum – Grades 6-8 (CDC, 2078)</i>
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4.2 Cognitive levels

4.2.1 Knowledge

Knowledge level is the lowest level of cognition in which the students are expected to recall information and ideas to answer the question. This level emphasizes remembering and memorisation of the contents learnt/taught. In language assessment at this level, students mostly perform rote learning, and remember the contents or ideas learnt or taught, and answer the test item.

4.2.2 Understanding

Understanding is another cognitive level in which students are expected to understand, interpret and extrapolate the information while solving the given problem or responding a question. Understanding occurs in the case of narrating events in writing. Yet, narrating events also demand more higher-order thinking skills as well.

4.2.3 Application

Application is another level of cognition in which students are expected to apply the learnt knowledge to solve similar or slightly different problems. At this level, students respond the question or item using the information in new ways. If the problem raised by the question or item is similar, students perform at lower level of application. However, if the problem raised by the question is different, students are expected to apply higher level application.

4.2.4 Higher Order Thinking Skills (Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation and Production)

Higher order thinking skills (HOTS) demand students to analyse, synthesise and/or evaluate information or ideas to answer the question. At this level in language assessment, students are expected to either break ideas into constituent parts (analyse), put information and ideas together to form a coherent or functional whole (synthesise), make judgements based on criteria (evaluate), and/or generate and produce new information (create). This level is the highest level of cognitive development, and it prompts students to produce a response using multiple cognitive processes.

Though it is not explicitly stated in the curriculum and assessment grid of English for Grades 6-8, the grammar and punctuation items assess students' knowledge and application levels of cognition. And, guided and free writing items assess students' ability to draw analysis, synthesis, judge (evaluate) and produce/create new information. These higher order thinking skills simultaneously present in guided and free writing activities.

4.3 Types of items/questions

4.3.1 Guided Writing

Item/Question:

Develop a readable story using the clues given below.

a farmerbuys a well from neighbour.....goes to draw waterneighbour refusessays he sold the well not the water.....farmer goes to the king for justice.....king calls the neighbour.....tells him to keep his water away or pay the rent.....moral.

Rubrics Answers are expected to be written in English. Any response in another language even if it is in Roman script should be marked 0. In order to mark a student at a certain level, a majority of the conditions mentioned should be met.				
Criteria/Scale	2	1	0.5	0
Structure:Total:2 -organization -flow of thought -transitions (connectors, cohesive devices) - Format	-clear flow of ideas -wider use of transitional words mostly appropriate -all elements of the format are present and correct -paragraphs are correctly created	-flow of ideas but sometimes interrupted -use of some transitional words, used appropriately when used -all elements of the format are present and correct -some paragraphs, yet not appropriately divided	-lacks the flow of the ideas -Few transitional words are used appropriately but rarely. -some elements of the format are present - no paragraphing (Single paragraph)	-no use of transitional words -no elements of the format -too little text to assess
Content/ information: Total 1 -quantity and quality of ideas -relevance -use of examples		many powerful and convincing ideas with elaboration.	-One or two relevant ideas with some elaboration -some irrelevant ideas may be present	-No new ideas, text may be copied from the question paper

Grammar/ mechanics: Total 1 -sentence structure/grammar -Punctuation/spelling		-very few errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation -structure is varied -Errors do not make it difficult to understand	- more errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, errors interrupt the flow of reading -less variation in sentence structure	-full of grammatical and/or spelling errors -full of punctuation errors - errors make it very difficult to understand what is written
Language: Total 1 -vocabulary -tone (Formal, informal...)		-wide range of vocabulary used appropriately -appropriate tone	-limited range of vocabulary, inappropriate use in some cases (mostly common words/ words from the textbook used) -tone is confusing	-very few words used -no clear tone

4.3.2 Free Writing

Item/Question:

Recently, you attended a birthday party of your close friend. Write a letter to your friend living in a foreign country describing the birthday party and your experience in about 100 words.

Rubrics Answers are expected to be written in English. Any response in another language even if it is in Roman script should be marked 0. In order to mark a student at a certain level a majority of the conditions mentioned should be met.				
Criteria/Scale	3	2	1	0
Structure:Total :3 -organization -flow of thought -transitions (connectors, cohesive devices) - Format	- clear flow of ideas -wider use of transitional words mostly appropriate -all elements of the format are present and correct -paragraphs are correctly created	-flow of ideas but interrupted sometimes -use of some transitional words with occasionally appropriate occurrence, used appropriately when used -all elements of the format are present and correct	-lacks the flow of the ideas -few transitional words are used but rarely appropriately. -some elements of the format are present - no paragraphing (single paragraph)	- no use of transitional words -no elements of the format -too little text to assess

		-some paragraphs, yet not appropriately divided		
Content/ information: Total 3 -quantity and quality of ideas -relevance -use of examples	many powerful and convincing ideas are present -examples are clear relevant and many in number	-Some relevant ideas with elaborations -some relevant examples	- few relevant ideas with some elaboration different from those demanded by the question -some irrelevant ideas may be present -very few examples	-No new ideas, text may be copied from the question paper -no example at all
Grammar/ mechanics: Total 2 -sentence structure/grammar - Punctuation/spelling		-very few errors in grammar spelling and punctuation -structure is varied -errors do not make it difficult to understand	- more errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, errors interrupt the flow of reading -less variation in sentence structure	-full of grammatical and/or spelling errors -full of punctuation errors - errors make it very difficult to understand what is written
Language: Total 2 -vocabulary -tone (Formal, informal...)		-wide range of vocabulary used appropriately -appropriate tone	-limited range of vocabulary, inappropriate use in some cases (mostly common words/words from the textbook used) -tone is confused	-very few words used, most words repeated from the question -no clear tone

Cognitive Level

The items designed for guided writing and free writing both assess the students' higher-order cognitive behavior of language learning. Rather than recalling and memorizing the learnt knowledge, students are expected to analyse, synthesise, evaluate and produce a response on the basis of their background knowledge of structure, content, tone of language, and writing mechanics. Of course, the space for creativity differs in guided and free writing. In guided writing, the students are mostly guided by the prompts or clues given. Students will have a little space for production. However, in the case of free writing, there exists more space to explore relevant ideas, analyse, synthesise, make a judgement and produce new information.

4.3.3 Punctuation

English curriculum for Grades 6-8 mentions punctuation as a part of writing competence. Considering punctuation as a learning outcome, the assessment framework states that it requires a test item with 10 errors in language use in context. The item is designed to test the students' ability to use the punctuation marks correctly. Though it is not explicitly stated in the assessment framework, the punctuation item should include the errors as follows:

- Capitalisation: 3 (proper nouns – 2, sentence initial – 1)
- Full stop – 2
- Question mark – 1
- Exclamation mark – 1
- Comma – 1
- Apostrophe – 1
- Inverted comma - 1

Sample question

Identify and correct the errors in the given passage. (10*0.5 = 5)

Wow It was the first day after a long vacation The bell rang for the first period and the students moved noisily through the door. Manisha was talking with her teacher. she asked her teacher "Should I talk to Mrs. Lama" Then she added, "Or the gym teacher, Mr. tharu?" Her friend, Victor was waiting to talk to her He didn't want to wait long. He called her She smiled and said, Hello.

Marking scheme:

Award 0.5 mark for each correct answer.

Wow! It was the first day after a long vacation! The bell rang for the first period and the students moved noisily through the door. Manisha was talking with her teacher. She asked her teacher, "Should I talk to Mrs lama?" Then she added, "Or the gym teacher, Mr. Tharu?" Her friend, Victor was waiting to talk to her. He didn't want to wait long. He called her! She smiled and said "Hello."

Cognitive level

This item assesses the students' knowledge and low-level application. Here, students need not to be creative enough, yet, they need to recall the explicit rules of punctuation and capitalization and apply where appropriate.

4.3.4 Grammar

4.3.4.1 Reproduction

Change the following sentences as directed in the brackets. (5*.5=2.5)

- a. Children jump a lot in the garden. (Simple past)
- b. Dolma cut her leg,? (Tag question)
- c. Mala said to me, 'Help me, please.' (Indirect speech)

- d. The students have solved the problem. (Passive voice)
- e. Ramesh bought a lot of books. (Negative)

Answer key

- a. Children jumped a lot in the garden.
- b. Dolma cut her leg, didn't she?
- c. Mala requested me to help her.
- d. The problem has been solved by the students.
- e. Ramesh did not buy many books.

4.3.4.2 Grammar in context: MCQs

B. Choose the correct answer from the given options in the brackets: (5*0.5=2.5)

A lion once fell in love1. (from, to, with) a farmer's daughter. The farmer thought that all the lion really wanted was.....2. (a, an, the) good meal. So he made a clever plan. He said to the lion, "I think you might be the best son-in-law for me. I won't need a scarecrow3. (for, to, so that) keep the crows away from you around". The lion laughed politely.

The farmer said, "You are a lion. My daughter is a little bit frightened. If you really.....4. (will love, love, had loved) her, you will need to pull out your teeth and cut off your claws."

Finally, the lion did what the farmer suggested. Later no-one.....5.(was, were, does) frightened of him anymore, and the farmer beat him with a stick and drove him away.

Answer key

- 1. with
- 2. a
- 3. to
- 4. love
- 5. was

Cognitive level

This question assesses the students' knowledge in grammar and low-level application of the grammar in context. Though the students need to work with the language context, they again use the knowledge of preposition, article, verbs and connectives.

Reference:

CDC (2078). *Basic Education Curriculum – Grades 6-8*. Curriculum Development Centre, Sanothimi, Bhaktapur.